

## Class 37: Pairs and Pair Structures

**Held:** Friday, 6 November 2009

**Summary:** We consider *pairs*, the basic data type used to build lists and other structures in Scheme. We also consider why it is useful to understand about pairs.

### Related Pages:

- EBoard.
- Lab: Pairs and Pair Structures.
- Reading: Pairs and Pair Structures.

### Notes:

- You have a writeup on today's lab.
- Are there questions on Assignment 7?
- Quiz 8 (finally) returned.
- We'll go over the `palette-darken!` procedure from the lab on vectors.
- Are there pre-quiz questions on topics from the last week (randomness, vectors, strings, geometric art, ...)?
- When you finish the quiz, start the lab.
- Reading for Monday: Trees. (The reading may be updated over the weekend.)

### Overview:

- Pairs and cons cells.
- Why care?
- Lab.

## Cons Cells

- One set of interesting values in Scheme are the things that `cons` creates. We often call these *cons cells* or *pairs*.
- The first value of a pair is a reference to the first parameter to `cons`. The second value is a reference to the second parameter.
- I'll also draw some pictures of these things in class.

## Dotted Pairs

- Although we've used lists as the second parts of each cons cell, you can use other values. If the second part of a cons cell is not a list, you get what is called a *dotted pair*.
- The shorthand for a dotted pair is  $(x . y)$ .

- You'll also see the dot at the end of a long sequence of cons cells.
- Why is the dot there?
  - To distinguish things close to lists from lists.
- Why is it right before the last element, and not earlier?
  - Because we don't know until we hit the end that it's not a list.

## Why Care?

- *Why should we care about the underlying structure used for lists?*
- Because it helps explain why Scheme does some things the way it does.
- Because it helps us understand the hidden costs associated with some operations.
- Because it helps us better understand recursion over lists.
- Because it provides background for future discussions.

## Lab

- Any questions?
- Do the lab (preferably in pairs :-).
- Be prepared to reflect.

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