

Class 45: Higher-Order Procedures, Revisited

Held: Monday, April 26, 2010

Summary: We revisit the topic of *higher-order procedures*, one of the most important techniques in languages like Scheme. Higher-order procedures are procedures -- like `map`, `left-section`, or `compose` -- that take other procedures as parameters, return other procedures as values, or both.

Related Pages:

- EBoard.
- Lab: Design Patterns and Higher-Order Procedures.
- Reading: Design Patterns and Higher-Order Procedures.

Notes:

- Reading for Tuesday: Search Algorithms.
- Myra Cohen from UNL is visiting on Friday and will be giving a lunchtime talk (Free Pizza!). I'll need to get a headcount in Wednesday's class.
- My son encourages you to stop by the gallery this week.

Overview:

- Elegance.
- Procedures as parameters.
- Procedures as return values.
- Writing `map`.
- Writing `all?`.

Background: Guiding Principles

- *Write less, not more*
- *Refactor*
- *Name appropriately*
 - Good names for things that need names
 - No names for things that don't need names

Background: A Related Philosophy

The following is variant of something John Stone says ...

- The first time you read a new procedure structure (such as recursion over a list), you learn something.
- The second time you read the same structure, you learn something else.
- The third time, you learn a bit more.
- After that, reading doesn't give much benefit.
- The first time you write the same structure, you learn something more about that structure
- The second time, you learn even more.
- The third time, you learn a bit more.
- After that, there's no benefit.
- So ... extract the common code so you don't have to write it again. d yes, you learn something

Two Motivating Examples

- `all-real?` and `all-integer?`
- `add-5-to-each` and `multiply-each-by-5`

Procedures as Parameters

- We've been writing it a lot.
- Useful
- Concise
- Supports refactoring

Procedures as Return Values

- Another way to create procedures (anonymous and named).
- Strategy: Write procedures that return new procedures.
- These procedures can take plain values as parameters:

```
(define redder
  (lambda (amt)
    (lambda (color)
      (rgb ...))))
```

- How to think about this:
 - a procedure that takes *amt* as a parameter,
 - returns a new procedure that takes *color* as a parameter
- Can also take procedures as parameters
- One favorite: `compose`

```
(define compose
  (lambda (f g)
    (lambda (x)
      (f (g x)))))
```

- Examples
 - sine of square root of x: `(compose sin sqrt)`

- last element of a list: (compose car reverse)
- Another: left-section


```
(define left-section
  (lambda (func left)
    (lambda (right)
      (func left right))))
(define l-s left-section)
```
- Examples:
 - add two: (l-s + 2)
 - double: (l-s * 2)
- Not mentioned in the reading, but there's a corresponding right-section


```
(define right-section
  (lambda (func right)
    (lambda (left)
      (func left right))))
(define r-s right-section)
```

Encapsulating Control

- Possible for complex common code, too (particularly control).
- map is the standard example.

```
(define map
  (lambda (fun lst)
    (if (null? lst)
        null
        (cons (fun (car lst))
                (map fun (cdr lst))))))
```

- Another issue: Checking the type of elements in a list

```
(define all-numbers?
  (lambda (lst)
    (or (null? lst)
        (and (pair? lst)
              (number? (car lst))
              (all-numbers? (cdr lst))))))
(define all-symbols?
  (lambda (lst)
    (or (null? lst)
        (and (pair? lst)
              (symbol? (car lst))
              (all-symbols? (cdr lst))))))
```

- Common code

```
(define all
  (lambda (test? lst)
    (or (null? lst)
        (and (pair? lst)
              (test? (car lst))
              (all test? (cdr lst))))))
```

Concluding Comments

- Yes, skilled Scheme programmers write this way.
 - It's quick.
 - It's clear (at least to skilled Schemers).
 - It reduces mistakes.
- The ability to encapsulate control in this way is fairly unique to Scheme (well, to functional languages).
- It's one of the reasons we love it at Grinnell.
 - Or at least a reason I love it.

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