Low-Level Functional Programming

What's "Low-Level" About?

- "low-level" refers to the construction of functions by explicitly composing and decomposing lists.
- Previously we used higher-order functions to do most of the non-trivial work in a functional decomposition.
- Now we are going to use pattern matching rules, **recursion**, etc.

Fundamental List Dichotomy

- A list is either:
  - **empty**, [ ] or
  - **non-empty**, in which case it has both a
    - first
    - rest
- Most list definitions deal with these cases separately.
- Definitions are typically a form of **inductive definition**, in which [ ] is the basis.

List Decomposition Notation

- When a list is non-empty, it has a first element and the rest of the elements form a list.
- The general ***form*** of a **non-empty list** will be represented:

  [F | R]

  Here **F** is a variable represents the first element, and **R** is a variable representing the rest of the elements
  (**Note**: **R** has a list as its value, even though brackets aren't shown around R).

List Decomposition Example

- Consider a defining equation:

  [F | R] = [1, 2, 3, 4]

  F is a variable represents the first element, so:

  F == 1

  R is a variable representing the rest of the elements, so:

  R == [2, 3, 4]

List Decomposition Clarified

- A defining equation:

  [F | R] = *some list*

  can only be valid when the RHS list is non-empty.

  Thus

  [F | R] = [ ] can *never* be a valid equation.

Defining Functions by Rules

- Suppose we want to define a function taking an arbitrary list as an argument.
- It is sufficient to:
  - define the function on the empty list, and
  - define the function on a general non-empty list.

called the "basis"

called the "induction step" or "recursion"

Example

- Define the function **halve_all,** which divides every element in a list by 2.
  - halve_all([ ]) => [ ];
  - halve_all([F | R]) => [F/2 | halve_all(R)];
- This can be read:
  - "halving all of the empty list is the empty list."
  - "halving all of a non-empty list is half of the first element ***followed by*** halving all of the rest."
- This is our first example of a **recursive definition**.

Computation by "Rewriting"

- halve_all([2, 4, 6]) ➡
- [1 | halve_all([4, 6])] ➡
- [1 | [2 | halve_all([6])]] ➡
- [1 | [2 | [3 | halve_all([ ])]]] ➡
- [1 | [2 | [3 | [ ]]]] ==
- [1 | [2 | [3]]] ==
- [1 | [2, 3]] ==
- [1, 2, 3]

Extended Notation for Greater Readability

- The first so-many, rather than just the first, element, can be shown separated by commas:
  - [a, b, c, d | R] means a list with at least 4 elements, a, b, c, d, followed by the elements in list R (which could be empty).
- In the extended notation:
  - halve_all([2, 4, 6]) ➡
  - [1 | halve_all([4, 6])] ➡
  - [1, 2 | halve_all([6])] ➡
  - [1, 2, 3 | halve_all([ ])] ➡
  - [1, 2, 3]

A Way of Remembering

- The combination

  | […]

  inside a list "melts away" into

  , …

  unless … is empty, then it just melts away
- Examples:
  - [1 | [2, 3, 4]] == [1, 2, 3, 4]
  - [1, 2 | [3 , 4]] == [1, 2, 3, 4]
  - [1, 2, 3 | [4]] == [1, 2, 3, 4]
  - [1, 2, 3, 4 | [ ]] == [1, 2, 3, 4]

Alternate

- Of course, we could have just used ***map*** *in this particular case*:
  - halve(A) = A/2;
  - halve_all(X) = map(halve, X);
- Use higher order functions such as *map* when possible; resort to lower-order ones when you think you need to.
- Higher-order functions can often tell the story more succinctly.

Example

- Define the function **member** which tests whether the first argument is an element of the list in the second argument.
  - member(X, [ ]) => 0;
  - member(X, [F | R]) =>
    (X == F) ? 1 : member(X, R);

    conditional expression (as in C++, Java)

Alternate

- Instead of using a conditional expression, use a third rule with **pattern matching**:
  - member(X, [ ]) => 0;
  - member(X, [X| R]) => 1; Note: X's must match
  - member(X, [F| R]) => member(X, R);
- The rule used is always the **first** (from top to bottom) applicable one.

Rule Matching

- Consider evaluating
  - member(3, [1, 2, 3, 4]) ➡ rule 3 is the first to apply
  - member(3, [2, 3, 4]) ➡ rule 3 is the first to apply
  - member(3, [3, 4]) ➡ rule 2 is the first to apply
  - 1

```
member(X, [ ]) => 0;                  // rule 1
member(X, [X| R]) => 1;               // rule 2
member(X, [F| R]) => member(X, R);    // rule 3
```

Rule Matching

- Consider evaluating
  - member(5, [1, 2, 3]) ➡ rule 3 is the first to apply
  - member(5, [2, 3]) ➡ rule 3 is the first to apply
  - member(5, [3]) ➡ rule 3 is the first to apply
  - member(5, []) ➡ rule 1 is the first to apply
  - 0

Second Alternate
(less desirable)

- Use a **conditional guard**:
  - member(X, [ ]) => 0;
  - member(X, [F| R]) => (X == F) ? 1;

    conditional guard
  - member(X, [F| R]) => member(X, R);
- The condition is tested after any other matching is applied.
- If the condition fails, then subsequent rules are tried.

Matching with Two or More List Arguments

- Some functions have more than one list argument.
- Induction might, or might not, use rules that dichotomize both lists.

Example: List Equalty
First Rule

- Two lists are equal if they both are empty:

  equals([ ], [ ]) => 1;

List Equalty:
Second Rule

- Two lists are equal if they both are non-empty and
  - the first elements of each are the same, and
  - the lists of the rest of the elements of each are equal.

  equals([A | L], [A | M]) => equals(L, M);

List Equalty:
Third Rule

- Otherwise, the two lists are not equal:

  equals(X, Y) => 0;

Summary of Equality Rules

1. equals([ ], [ ]) => 1;
2. equals([A | L], [A | M]) => equals(L, M);
3. equals(X, Y) => 0;

Example of List Equality

- Revisit our earlier example:
  - Are these lists equal:

    [1, 2, 3] vs. [1, 2] ?
- Try the rules:
  - equals([1, 2, 3], [1, 2]) ➡ (rule 2)
  - equals([2, 3], [2]) ➡ (rule 2)
  - equals([3], [ ]) ➡ (rule 3)
  - 0
- i.e. the lists are not equal.

Mixed Functional Programming Examples

- Use low-level or high-level, whatever fits best
  - Maybe start with low-level, and the use high-level retrospectively
- Radix conversion
  - Tail recursion
- Tree searching

Convert Number to Binary

- Example:
  - toBinary(37) ⇨ [1, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1]
    32 + 0*16 + 0*8 + 4 + 0*2 + 1
- First try:
  - divide by 2, record remainder, continue with quotient
  - until 0

Convert Number to Binary

- Rules:
  - toBinary1(0) => [ ];
  - toBinary1(N) => [$\underbrace{\text{N\%2}}_{\text{remainder}}$ | toBinary1($\underbrace{\text{N/2}}_{\text{quotient}}$)];
- Problems with this definition?

Convert Number to Binary

- Another try:
  - toBinary(N) = toBinary2(N, []);
  - toBinary2(0, Acc) => Acc;
  - toBinary2(N, Acc) =>
    toBinary2($\underbrace{\text{N/2}}_{\text{quotient}}$, [$\underbrace{\text{N\%2}}_{\text{remainder}}$ | Acc]);
- Why is this definition better?

Accumulators and Tail Recursion

- From previous slide:
  - toBinary2(0, Acc) => Acc;
  - toBinary2(N, Acc) =>
    toBinary2(N/2, [N%2 | Acc]);
- Acc is called an "accumulator" argument:
  - It "accumulates" the result until the basis case is reached, the "unloads" it.
- This type of recursion is called "tail recursion":
  - There is no "cleanup" to be done after the recursive call to toBinary2, and therefore no need to **"stack"** calls.
  - We can effectively "turn over control" to the subordinate call; giving a form of **iteration**.

Accumulators and Tail Recursion

- toBinary2(37, []) ➡
- toBinary2(18, [1]) ➡
- toBinary2(9, [0, 1]) ➡
- toBinary2(4, [1, 0, 1]) ➡
- toBinary2(2, [0, 1, 0, 1]) ➡
- toBinary2(1, [0, 0, 1, 0, 1]) ➡
- toBinary2(0, [1, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1]) ➡
- [1, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1]

- toBinary1(37) ➡
- [1 | toBinary1(18)] ➡
- [1, 0 | toBinary1(9)] ➡
- [1, 0, 1 | toBinary1(4)] ➡
- [1, 0, 1, 0 | toBinary1(2)] ➡
- [1, 0, 1, 0, 0 | toBinary1(1)] ➡
- [1, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1| toBinary1(0)] ➡
- [1, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1| [ ]] ⇨
- [1, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1]

Notes:

- Can similarly convert to any given base.
- Can pass the base as an argument.
- Can convert back (from numeral list to number).

Exercise

- Construct fromBinary, e.g.
  - fromBinary([1, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1]) ➪ 37
- Considerations:
  - Do we need an accumulator?
  - Can it be done with tail-recursion?
  - Try it and see.

An Approach

- Write **iterative** pseudo-code, then construct recursive equivalent.
- ```
  L = ... list to be converted ...;
  Result = 0;
  while(L != [ ])
        {
        Result = 2*Result + first(L);
        L = rest(L);
        }
  ... answer is in Result ...
  ```

- Defining fromBinary3(L, Result):
- fromBinary3([], Result) => Result;
- fromBinary3([F | R], Result) =>
      fromBinary3(R, 2*Result+F);
- fromBinary(L) = fromBinary3(L, 0);

- fromBinary3([1, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1], 0) ➡
- fromBinary3([0, 0, 1, 0, 1], 1) ➡
- fromBinary3([0, 1, 0, 1], 2) ➡
- fromBinary3([1, 0, 1], 9) ➡
- fromBinary3([0, 1], 9) ➡
- fromBinary3([1], 18) ➡
- fromBinary3([], 37) ➡
- 37

Exercise

- What if the list were least-significant bit first?
  - Can you do construct the function?
  - Can you construct a tail-recursive implementation?

Exercises

- Compare "obvious" and tail-recursive forms of:
  - factorial function (fac(n) = 1*2*3*...*n)
  - length function
  - sum of a list
  - reduce
  - reverse

Essential Non-Tail Recursions

- Some functions don't admit a tail-recursive version (unless *reverse* is used before or after):
  - Examples:
    - map, keep, drop
    - append

appendectomy

- When maximum efficiency is desired, uses of append should be avoided.
- It is often possible to get rid of append by defining versions of functions with an extra accumulator argument.
- Example:
  ```
  nodes(Graph) =
      remove_duplicates(append(map(first, Graph),
                                                   map(second, Graph)));
  ```
- Show how to avoid append by generalizing map to take an accumulator.
  ```