IMMUTABILITY, FUNCTIONAL PROGRAMMING

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A Few Words On References

- Repetedly made the case: references are difficult to reason about
- Why? It’s the same old story...
  - — Method method1 creates an object called obj1
  - — Puts a reference to obj1 into container object obj2 (aliasing!)
  - — method1 calls method method2, passes (as a param) a reference to obj2
  - — method2 gets the reference to obj1 via the obj2 parameter; updates obj1
  - — method2 completes execution
  - — Back in method1, obj1 has changed, though method1 never sent it as a param!
  - — When you debug, it looks like magic...

How To Deal With This?

- Classic solution:
  - — Make all of your objects “immutable”
  - — That is, unchangable after initialization
  - — So (in Java) all member variables are “final”
- Many basic Java types are immuatable
  - — Strings, integers, doubles
- Why does this help?
  - — Aliasing can’t be a problem if you can’t update object state, right?
  - — No one can ever change a value out from under you!

But How Do You Write Programs?

- OK, having the little built-in types be immutable is fine
- But can you make more interesting types immutable?
  - — Ex: how to insert into a container
  - — Does that not change the state of a container?
- It’s actually easy
  - — Especially if you are not too concerned with performance
  - — Just make every method a *function* (in the purest mathematical sense)
  - — A function is equivalent to a map
  - — Takes an input tuple (set of params)
  - — Maps it to an output object
  - — No alteration of input in a function... it’s just a map!

“Function Heads” Take This to the Extreme

- They argue no assignment after intialization
  - — Ever!
  - — Will come back to this shortly

Example “Functional” Linked List

- Remember this?

```
interface ListWRemove <T extends Comparable <T>> {
  // insert an item into the list
  public void insert (T insertMe);

  // remove a specific item
  public T remove (T removeMe);

  // print the list so the first item inserted is first
  public void print ();
}
```

Example “Functional” Linked List

- Here’s the functional version

```
interface ListWRemove <T extends Comparable <T>> {
  // insert an item into the list
  public ListWRemove <T> insert (T insertMe);

  // remove a specific item
  public Tuple <T, ListWRemove <T>> remove (T removeMe);

  // print the list so the first item inserted is first
  public void print ();
}
```

Term used lovingly!

- Few notes
  - — Every method returns result, **does not change input params**
  - — We assume we have a “Tuple” generic that allows two things to be returned
  - — Note the “void” type on print... true function-heads **hate** I/O!

To Imp This, Need a Node

```
abstract class GenericNode <T extends Comparable <T>> {

  // insert an item into the list, returns new list
  public GenericNode <T> insert (T insertMe);

  // remove a specific item, return the resulting list
  public Tuple <T, GenericNode <T>> remove (T removeMe);

  // print the list so the first item inserted is first
  public void print ();
}
```

Concrete For End-Of-List Is Easy

```
class EndNode <.> extends GenericNode <.> {

  public GenericNode <T> insert (T insertMe) {
    return new NodeWithChild <T>  (insertMe, this);
  }

  // remove a specific item, return the resulting list
  public Tuple <T, GenericNode <T>> remove (T removeMe) {
    return new Tuple <T, GenericNode <T>> (null, this);
  }

  // print the list so the first item inserted is first
  public void print () {}
}
```

Node With a Child Is Not Too Bad

```
class NodeWithChild <.> extends GenericNode <.> {

  private final GenericNode <T> child;
  private final T myGuy;

  public GenericNode insert (T insertMe) {
    return new NodeWithChild <T> (insertMe, this);
  }

  public Tuple <T, GenericNode <T>> remove (T removeMe) {
    if (removeMe.compareTo (myGuy) == 0) {
      return new Tuple <T, GenericNode <T>> (myGuy, child);
    } else {
      Tuple <T, GenericNode <T>> res = child.remove (removeMe);
      return new Tuple <.> (res.getFirst (),
          new NodeWithChild <T> (myGuy, res.getSecond ()));
    }
  }

  public NodeWithChild (T data, GenericNode <T> nextOne) {
    myGuy = data;
    child = nextOne;
  }
```

What About Actual List?

```
class ChrisList <.> implements ListWRemove <.> {

  private final GenericNode <T> listHead;

  public ListWRemove <T> insert (T insertMe) {
    return new ChrisList <T> (listHead.insert ());
  }

  public Tuple <T, ListWRemove> remove (T removeMe) {
    Tuple <T, GenericNode <T>> res = listHead.remove ();
    return new Tuple <T, ChrisList <T>> (res.getFirst (),
      new ChrisList <T> (res.getSecond));
  }

  private public ChrisList (GenericNode <T> useThisHead) {
    listHead = useThisHead;
  }

  public ChrisList () {
    listHead = new EndNode <T> ();
  }
}
```

What Is Different From Before?

- At top level
  - — All ops over nodes return the head of a new list
  - — “ChrisList” always constructs a new list with this new head
- Removing an item
  - — We don’t just cut out the item
  - — Because just cutting it out would require changing the reference at the cut
  - — So we effectively cut it out and then build a copy of the list before the cut

Using This Immutable List Type

- Let’s insert a bunch of numbers into it:

```
ChrisList <Integer> foo0 = new ChrisList <Integer> ();
ChrisList <Integer> foo1 = foo0.Insert (1);
ChrisList <Integer> foo2 = foo1.Insert (2);
ChrisList <Integer> foo3 = foo2.Insert (3);
```

- Can now look at each of the 4 lists...
  - — The “i”th list will contain the numbers from 1 through i
  - — Insertion did not change any of the lists

Can Take This Idea Even Further

- Say I want to insert 20 numbers into a ChrisList

```
ChrisList <Integer> foo = new ChrisList <Integer> ();
for (int i = 0; i < 20; i++) {
  foo = foo.insert (i + 1);
}
```

- A true function head won't like this... why?

Can Take This Idea Even Further

- You are assigning to “foo” and to “i” after initialization
- They’d argue your code should have looked like:

```
class RecursionShell {

  public ChrisList <Integer> loadUp (int i) {
    if (i == 0) {
      return new ChrisList <Integer> ();
    } else {
      return loadUp (i - 1).insert (i);
    }
  }
}
...
RecursionShell temp = new RecursionShell ();
ChrisList <Integer> foo = new temp.loadUp (20);
```

Some Final Topics Related to FP

- Deep copies and the “clone” method
- Lambdas
- Final throughts re. Java and suitability for FP

Deep Copies and Cloning

- We've seen that it is possible to write purely "functional" code
  - — Even some non-trivial containers
  - — But it required re-designing algorithms and re-writing a lot of code
- Say you want to employ some of these ideas in your programs
  - — Even if you don't want to go all the way and be a "function head"
- Does this mean you have to re-write the standard library?

Deep Copies and Cloning

- Is there an easier way?
- Might copying substitute?
  - — In theory, sure. Say you want to call a method that modifies an object
  - — But you want to be functional
  - — The easiest way is to make a copy and **then** modify the copy
  - — Might be inefficient, but you don’t have to write new code
  - — And you know you won’t have bugs due to aliasing
  - — Efficiency is often over-rated
  - — And this is idiot-proof, right?

Wrong!

- Beware... in the general case, there is no easy way to copy in Java
- So if you use copying as a path to FP, be aware...
  - — You are going to need to write your own copy code
- You might reply: “Hey, doesn’t Object have a clone method?”
  - — Yes it does
  - — The convention is that “clone ()” first calls “super.clone ()”
  - — Then it clones its internal structure
  - — But it does ***not*** clone any objects it has a reference to
  - — Why?!? I have no idea
  - — So it can be dangerous to use

So Sometimes It Does What You Want

```
public void testX() {

  TreeMap <Integer, Integer> foo = new TreeMap <Integer, Integer> ();
  for (int i = 0; i < 10; i++) {
    foo.put (i, i);
  }

  TreeMap <Integer, Integer> bar = (TreeMap <Integer, Integer>) foo.clone ();
  for (int i = 10; i < 20; i++) {
    foo.put (i, i);
  }

  System.out.println (foo);
  System.out.println (bar);
}
```

— As you would expect, this will output

```
{0=0, 1=1, 2=2, 3=3, 4=4, 5=5, 6=6, 7=7, 8=8, 9=9, 10=10, 11=11, 12=12, 13=13, 14=14,
15=15, 16=16, 17=17, 18=18, 19=19}
{0=0, 1=1, 2=2, 3=3, 4=4, 5=5, 6=6, 7=7, 8=8, 9=9}
```

But Often It Does Not

```
public void testY() {

  ArrayList <ArrayList <Integer>> foo = new ArrayList <ArrayList <Integer>> ();
  for (int i = 0; i < 10; i++) {
    ArrayList <Integer> temp = new ArrayList <Integer> ();
    for (int j = 0; j < 2; j++) {
      temp.add (i);
    }
    foo.add (temp);
  }

  ArrayList <ArrayList <Integer>> bar = (ArrayList <ArrayList <Integer>>) foo.clone ();
  for (int i = 0; i < 10; i++) {
    foo.get (i).add (12);
  }

  System.out.println (foo);
  System.out.println (bar);
}
```

— This will output

```
[[0, 0, 12], [1, 1, 12], [2, 2, 12], [3, 3, 12], [4, 4, 12], [5, 5, 12], [6, 6, 12], [7, 7,
12], [8, 8, 12], [9, 9, 12]]
[[0, 0, 12], [1, 1, 12], [2, 2, 12], [3, 3, 12], [4, 4, 12], [5, 5, 12], [6, 6, 12], [7, 7,
12], [8, 8, 12], [9, 9, 12]]
```

Moral Of The Story

- Use “clone” with care!

Java and FP

- So, why has functional programming been relegated to some dead space towards the end of class?
  - — Not because functional programming is useless
  - — Or because it is unloved
  - — Or because these ideas are unimportant

Java and FP

- So, why has functional programming been relegated to some dead space towards the end of class?
  - — Not because functional programming is useless
  - — Or because it is unloved
  - — Or because these ideas are unimportant
- It’s just that pre-release-8 Java is an un-functional language
  - — In fact, Java did not even have functions!
  - — That’s why we have the silly “RecursionShell” class
  - — The “Java style” does not encourage immutability
  - — No lambdas in Java pre-release 8. In list of 39 widely-used languages; only 3 don’t have any recognizable form of lambdas (C, Java, Pascal)

Java and FP

- Perhaps this will change?
  - — Lambdas + streams clearly move Java out of the “OO” camp...
  - — ...and into the “multi-paradigm” camp
  - — Can now write some pretty clean functional code in Java!

Java and FP

- So my final message is:
  - — FP is a great paradigm to be aware of
  - — You should always have the functional ideal in mind whenever you write code
  - — Use it when appropriate

Questions?