CMSC 330: Organization of Programming Languages

Closures

(Implementing Higher Order Functions)

Returning Functions as Results

- In OCaml you can pass functions as arguments
  - to **map**, **fold**, etc.
- and you can return functions as results

```
# let pick_fn n =
  let plus_three x = x + 3 in
  let plus_four x = x + 4 in
  if n > 0 then plus_three else plus_four
val pick_fn : int -> (int->int) = <fun>
```

- Here, **pick_fn** takes an **int** argument, and returns a function

```
# let g = pick_fn 2;;
val g : int -> int = <fun>
# g 4;;    (* evaluates to 7 *)
```

Multi-argument Functions

- Consider a rewriting of the prior code (above)

```
let pick_fn n =
  if n > 0 then (fun x->x+3) else (fun x->x+4)
```

- Here’s another version

```
let pick_fn n =
  (fun x -> if n > 0 then x+3 else x+4)
```

- … the shorthand for which is just

```
let pick_fn n x =
  if n > 0 then x+3 else x+4
```

I.e., a multi-argument function!

Currying

- We just saw a way for a function to take multiple arguments!
  - I.e., no separate concept of multi-argument functions – can encode one as a *function that takes a single argument and returns a function that takes the rest*
- This encoding is called currying the function
  - Named after the logician Haskell B. Curry
  - But Schönfinkel and Frege discovered it
    - So maybe it should be called Schönfinkelizing or Fregging

Curried Functions In OCaml

- OCaml syntax defaults to currying. E.g.,

```
let add x y = x + y
```

  - is identical to all of the following:

```
let add = (fun x -> (fun y -> x + y))
let add = (fun x y -> x + y)
let add x = (fun y -> x+y)
```

- Thus:
  - `add` has type `int -> (int -> int)`
  - `add 3` has type `int -> int`
    - `add 3` is a function that adds 3 to its argument
  - `(add 3) 4 = 7`
- This works for any number of arguments

Syntax Conventions for Currying

- Because currying is so common, OCaml uses the following conventions:
  - `->` associates from the right
    - Thus `int -> int -> int` is the same as
    - `int -> (int -> int)`
  - function application associates from the left
    - Thus `add 3 4` is the same as
    - `(add 3) 4`

Quiz 1: Which f definition is equivalent?

```
let f a b = a / b;;
```

```
A. let f b = fun a -> a / b;;
B. let f = fun a | b -> a / b;;
C. let f (a, b) = a / b;;
D. let f = fun a -> (fun b -> a / b);;
```

Quiz 1: Which f definition is equivalent?

```
let f a b = a / b;;
```

A. `let f b = fun a -> a / b;;`

B. `let f = fun a | b -> a / b;;`

C. `let f (a, b) = a / b;;`

D. `let f = fun a -> (fun b -> a / b);;`

Quiz 2: What is enabled by currying?

A. Passing functions as arguments
B. Passing only a portion of the expected arguments
C. Naming arguments
D. Recursive functions

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Multiple Arguments, Partial Application

- Another way you could encode support for multiple arguments is using tuples
  - `let f (a,b) = a / b (* int*int -> int *)`
  - `let f a b = a / b (* int-> int-> int *)`
- Is there a benefit to using currying instead?
  - Supports **partial application** – useful when you want to provide some arguments now, the rest later
  - `let add a b = a + b;;`
  - `let addthree = add 3;;`
  - `addthree 4;; (* evaluates to 7 *)`

Currying is Standard In OCaml

- Pretty much all functions are curried
  - Like the standard library map, fold, etc.
  - See /usr/local/ocaml/lib/ocaml on Grace
    - In particular, look at the file list.ml for standard list functions
    - Access these functions using **`List.<fn name>`**
    - E.g., **`List.hd`**, **`List.length`**, **`List.map`**
- OCaml works hard to make currying efficient
  - Because otherwise it would do a lot of useless allocation and destruction of closures
  - What are those, you ask? Let's see …

Closure

Java Example

```
public class Test{
        public void doSomething(){
                int a = 10; //must be final
                Runnable runnable = new Runnable(){
                    public void run(){
                            int b = a + 1;
                            System.out.println(b);
                    }
                };
                (new Thread(runnable)).start(); //runs later
                //a = 100; //not allowed
        }
        public static void main(String[] args){
                Test t = new Test();
                t.doSomething();
        }
}// a=10 is removed from the stack here
```

Needed later, makes copy of a

OCaml Example

```
let foo x =
  let bar y = x + y in
bar
;;
```

```
foo 10 = ?
```

```
(fun y -> x + y) ?
```

Where is x?

Another Example

```
let x = 1 in
let f = fun y -> x in
let x = 2 in
f 0
```

What does this expression should evaluate to?

A. 1
B. 2

Another Example

```
let x = 1 in
let f = fun y -> x in
let x = 2 in
f 0
```

What does this expression should evaluate to?

A. 1
B. 2

Scope

- **Dynamic scope**
  - The body of a function is evaluated in the current dynamic environment at the time the function is **called**, not the old dynamic environment that existed at the time the function was defined.

- **Lexical scope**
  - The body of a function is evaluated in the old dynamic environment that existed at the time the function was **defined**, not the current environment when the function is called.

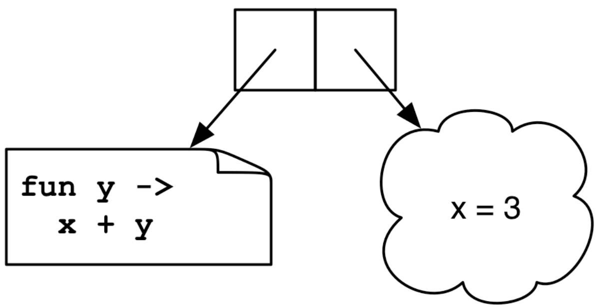
Closure

```
let foo x =
  let bar y = x + y in
bar ;;
```

```
let x = 1 in
let f = fun y -> x in
let x = 2 in
f 0
```

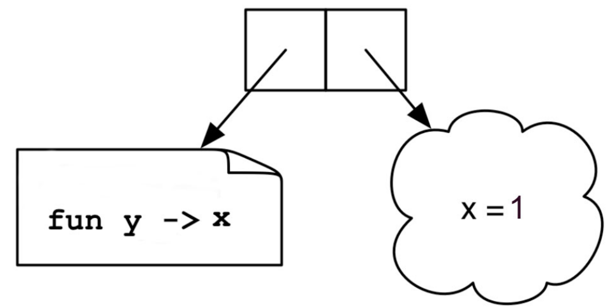
```
bar 3
```

Closure



Function Environment

Closure



Function Environment

Closures Implement Static Scoping

- An environment is a mapping from variable names to values
  - Just like a stack frame

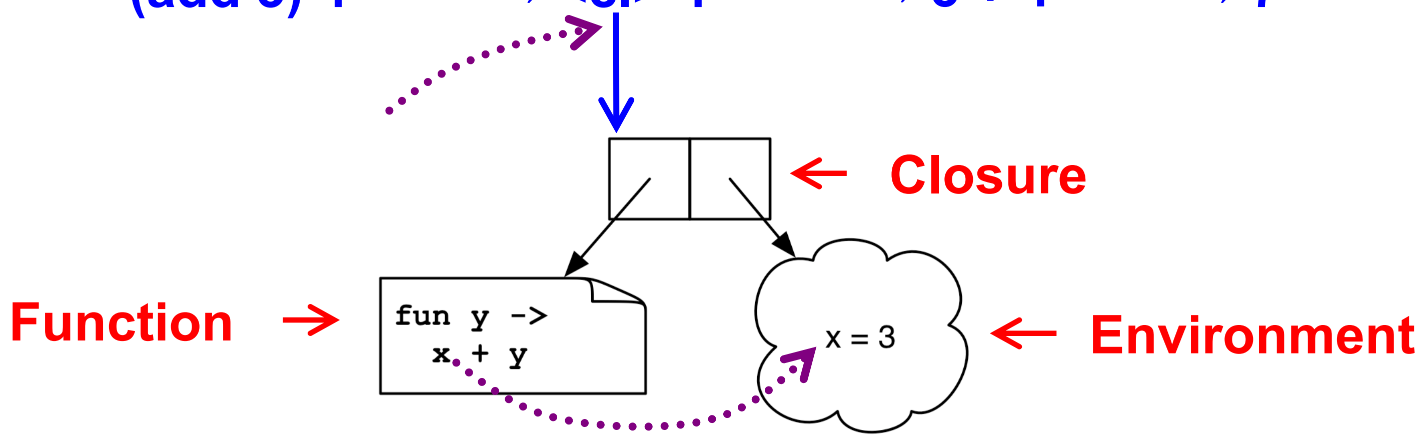
- A closure is a pair (f, e) consisting of function code f and an environment e

- When you invoke a closure, f is evaluated using e to look up variable bindings

Example – Closure 1

```
let add x = (fun y -> x + y)
```

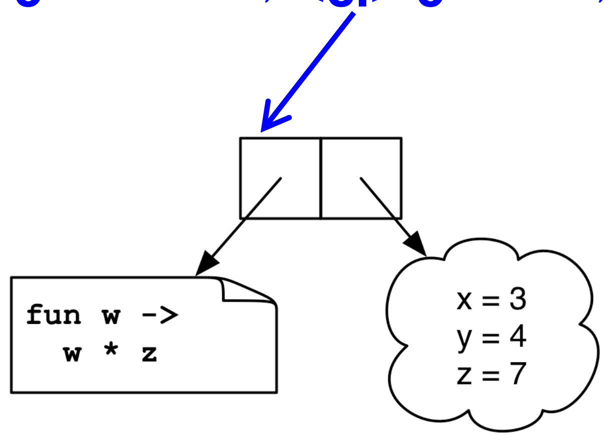
(add 3) 4 → <cl> 4 → 3 + 4 → 7



Example – Closure 2

```
let mult_sum (x, y) =
  let z = x + y in
    fun w -> w * z
```

(mult_sum (3, 4)) 5 → <cl> 5 → 5 * 7 → 35



Quiz 3: What is x?

```
let a = 1;;
let a = 0;;
let b = 10;;
let f () = a + b;;
let b = 5;;
let x = f ();;
```

A. `10`
B. `1`
C. `15`
D. Error - variable name conflicts

Quiz 3: What is x?

```
let a = 1;;
let a = 0;;
let b = 10;;
let f () = a + b;;
let b = 5;;
let x = f ();;
```

A. `10`

B. `1`

C. `15`

D. Error - variable name conflicts

Quiz 4: What is z?

```
let f x = fun y -> x - y in
let g = f 2 in
let x = 3 in
let z = g 4 in
z;;
```

A. 7

B. -2

C. -1

D. Type Error – insufficient arguments

Quiz 4: What is z?

```
let f x = fun y -> x - y in
let g = f 2 in
let x = 3 in
let z = g 4 in
z;;
```

A. 7
B. -2
C. -1
D. Type Error – insufficient arguments

Quiz 5: What does this evaluate to?

```
let f x = x+1 in
let g = f in
g (fun i -> i+1) 1
```

A. Type Error
B. 1
C. 2
D. 3

Quiz 5: What does this evaluate to?

```
let f x = x+1 in
let g = f in
(g (fun i -> i+1)) 1
```

A. Type Error – Too many arguments passed to g (application is *left associative*)

B. 1

C. 2

D. 3

Higher-Order Functions in C

- C supports function pointers

```
typedef int (*int_func)(int);
void app(int_func f, int *a, int n) {
  for (int i = 0; i < n; i++)
    a[i] = f(a[i]);
}
int add_one(int x) { return x + 1; }
int main() {
  int a[] = {5, 6, 7};
  app(add_one, a, 3);
}
```

Higher-Order Functions in C (cont.)

- C does not support closures
  - Since no nested functions allowed
  - Unbound symbols always in global scope

```
int y = 1;
void app(int(*f)(int), n) {
  return f(n);
}
int add_y(int x) {
  return x + y;
}
int main() {
  app(add_y, 2);
}
```

Higher-Order Functions in C (cont.)

- Cannot access non-local variables in C
- OCaml code

```
let add x y = x + y
```

- Equivalent code in C is illegal

```
int (* add(int x))(int) {
  return add_y;
}
int add_y(int y) {
  return x + y; /* error: x undefined */
}
```

Higher-Order Functions in C (cont.)

- OCaml code

```
let add x y = x + y
```

- Works if C supports nested functions
  - Not in ISO C, but in gcc; but not allowed to return them

```
int (* add(int x))(int) {
  int add_y(int y) {
    return x + y;
  }
  return add_y; }
```

  - Does not allocate closure, so x popped from stack and add_y will get garbage (potentially) when called

Java 8 Supports Lambda Expressions

- Ocaml's

```
fun (a, b) -> a + b
```

- Is like the following in Java 8

```
(a, b) -> a + b
```

- Java 8 supports closures, and variations on this syntax

Java 8 Example

```
public class Calculator {
    interface IntegerMath { int operation(int a, int b);  }
    public int operateBinary(int a, int b, IntegerMath op) {
        return op.operation(a, b);
    }
    public static void main(String... args) {
        Calculator myApp = new Calculator();
        IntegerMath addition = (a, b) -> a + b;
        IntegerMath subtraction = (a, b) -> a - b;
        System.out.println("40 + 2 = " +
            myApp.operateBinary(40, 2, addition));
        System.out.println("20 - 10 = " +
            myApp.operateBinary(20, 10, subtraction));
    }
}
```

Lambda expressions