Spring 2018 – set-car!, set-cdr!, and building tables

February 28, 2018
The basic memory allocator in Scheme is cons.

The function list is really defined in terms of cons, so it also allocates memory.

For example, suppose you start out like this:

```
(define x (list 'a 'b))
(define z1 (cons x x))
```

Then z1 evaluates to ((a b) a b).
(cons x x), where x is (list 'a 'b)
On the other hand, suppose we evaluate the following Scheme expression:

```
(define z2 (cons (list 'a 'b) (list 'a 'b)))
```

What is different here is that `list` is evaluated twice – that is, we are allocating memory two times instead of once. As a result, we will get the data structure represented here:
Note that the two lists have the same terminal nodes.

That's because symbols like ’a and ’b, and also the empty list, are guaranteed to be unique in Scheme’s memory.

**Exercise:**
If on the other hand, we defined

```
(define z3 (cons (list 2 3)(list 2 3)))
```

We would most likely get something else. Do you see why?
Note that we can't distinguish $z_1$ from $z_2$ by just printing them out:

```lisp
==> z1
  ((a b) a b)
==> z2
  ((a b) a b)
```

Look at this, however:

```lisp
==> (eq? z1 z2)
  #f
==> (eqv? z1 z2)
  #f
==> (equal? z1 z2)
  #t
```
These two procedures are just pretty much what you think they are. So for instance, if we have

```
(define aaa (cons 3 4))
```

then `aaa` will evaluate to `(3 . 4)`. And if then we evaluate

```
(set-car! aaa 7)
```

then `aaa` will evaluate to `(7 . 4)`. And so on.
Here is a straightforward example, which is pretty typical of the way these procedures are used: Suppose we start out by defining

```
(define x '((a b) c d))
(define y '(e f))
```

Here is what they look like in memory:
Now suppose we evaluate the expression

\[(\text{set-car! } x y)\]

\(x\) is now \(((e\ f)\ c\ d)\).
A Trickier Example

Suppose we define (as the book does) the following procedure:

\[
\text{(define (set-to-wow! l)}
  \text{(set-car! (car l) 'wow) l)}
\]

Then after evaluating

\[
\text{(set-to-wow! z1)}
\]

we will have

\[
z1 \Rightarrow ((\text{wow b}) \text{wow b})
\]

while after evaluating

\[
\text{(set-to-wow! z2)}
\]

we will have

\[
z2 \Rightarrow ((\text{wow b}) \text{a b})
\]

which shows that \( z1 \) and \( z2 \) really are different.
We can easily define \texttt{set-car!} and \texttt{set-cdr!} as message passing procedures.

\begin{verbatim}
(define (cons x y)
  (define (set-x! v) (set! x v))
  (define (set-y! v) (set! y v))
  (define (dispatch m)
    (cond ((eq? m 'car) x)
          ((eq? m 'cdr) y)
          ((eq? m 'set-car!) set-x!)
          ((eq? m 'set-cdr!) set-y!)
          (else (error "...")))))
  dispatch)
\end{verbatim}
Representing a pair as a dispatch procedure

(define (car z) (z 'car))
(define (cdr z) (z 'cdr))
(define (set-car! z new-value)
  ((z 'set-car!) new-value)
  z)
(define (set-cdr! z new-value)
  ((z 'set-cdr!) new-value)
  z)
Using these new functions, let us see how to construct tables. We’ll consider both 1-dimensional and 2-dimensional tables; they are both extremely useful, and this code is something you will find useful in the programming assignments (as well as any other Scheme code you end up writing).

Let us start with a 1-dimensional example

(define (lookup key table)
  (let ((record (assoc key (cdr table))))
    (if record
      (cdr record)
      #f)))
(define (assoc key records)
  (cond ((null? records) #f)
        ((equal? key (caar records)) (car records))
        (else (assoc key (cdr records))))
)

(define (insert! key value table)
  (let ((record (assoc key (cdr table))))
    (if record
      (set-cdr! record value)
      (set-cdr! table
        (cons (cons key value) (cdr table))))
    'ok) ;; maybe val would be better than 'ok
)

(define (make-table)
  (list '*table*))
Notice that new entries are inserted at the beginning.
(define (lookup key-1 key-2 table)
  (let ((subtable (assoc key-1 (cdr table))))
    (if subtable
      (let ((record (assoc key-2 (cdr subtable))))
        (if record
          (if record
            (cdr record)
            #f))
      #f)))

(define (insert! key-1 key-2 value table)
  (let ((subtable (assoc key-1 (cdr table))))
    (if subtable
      (let ((record (assoc key-2 (cdr subtable))))
        (if record
          (set-cdr! record value)
          (set-cdr! subtable
            (cons (cons key-2 value)
              (cdr subtable))))))
    (set-cdr! table
      (cons (list key-1
                    (cons key-2 value))
            (cdr table))))
  'ok) ;; maybe val would be better than 'ok
A 2-dimensional table represented as a set of procedures with internal state

- This is one way of implementing put and get. put and get were present from the early days of Lisp, but are not part of standard Scheme.
- If you really wanted them, however (and it’s not generally recommend), this is how you could implement them.

```
(define (make-table)
  (let ((local-table (list '*table*)))
    (define (lookup key-1 key-2)
      (let ((subtable (assoc key-1 (cdr local-table))))
        (if subtable
            (let ((record (assoc key-2 (cdr subtable))))
              (if record
                  (cdr record)
                #f))
          #f)))
```

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A 2-dimensional table represented as a set of procedures with internal state

```
(define (insert! key-1 key-2 value)
  (let ((subtable (assoc key-1 (cdr local-table))))
    (if subtable
      (let ((record (assoc key-2 (cdr subtable))))
        (if record
          (set-cdr! record value)
          (set-cdr! subtable
            (cons (cons key-2 value)
              (cdr subtable))))))
    (set-cdr! local-table
      (cons (list key-1
                    (cons key-2 value)
                    (cdr local-table)))
      'ok) ;; maybe val would be better than 'ok
```
A 2-dimensional table represented as a set of procedures with internal state

```
(define (dispatch m)
  (cond ((eq? m 'lookup-proc) lookup)
        ((eq? m 'insert-proc!) insert!)
        (else (error "Unknown operation - TABLE" m))))

(define operation-table (make-table))
(define get (operation-table 'lookup-proc))
(define put (operation-table 'insert-proc!))
```