Generic Functions, Continued

A function might want to operate on multiple data types

**Last time:**
- Polymorphic functions using message passing
- Interfaces: collections of messages with a meaning for each
- Two interchangeable implementations of complex numbers

**Today:**
- An arithmetic system over related types
- Type dispatching instead of message passing
- Data-directed programming
- Type coercion

What's different? Today's generic functions apply to multiple arguments that don't share a common interface

### Rational Numbers

Rational numbers represented as a numerator and denominator

```python
class Rational(object):
    def __init__(self, numer, denom):
        g = gcd(numer, denom)
        self.numer = numer // g
        self.denom = denom // g
    def __repr__(self):
        return 'Rational({0}, {1})'.format(self.numer, self.denom)
    def add_rational(x, y):
        nx, dx = x.numer, x.denom
        ny, dy = y.numer, y.denom
        return Rational(nx * dy + ny * dx, dx * dy)
    def mul_rational(x, y):
        return Rational(x.numer * y.numer, x.denom * y.denom)
```

### Complex Numbers: the Rectangular Representation

```python
class ComplexRI(object):
    def __init__(self, real, imag):
        self.real = real
        self.imag = imag
    @property
def magnitude(self):
        return (self.real ** 2 + self.imag ** 2) ** 0.5
    @property
def angle(self):
        return atan2(self.imag, self.real)
    def __repr__(self):
        return 'ComplexRI({0}, {1})'.format(self.real, self.imag)
    def add_complex(self, z1, z2):
        return ComplexRI(z1.real + z2.real, z1.imag + z2.imag)
```

### The Independence of Data Types

Data abstraction and class definitions keep types separate

Some operations need to cross type boundaries

```python
>>> ComplexRI(1, 2) + ComplexMA(2, 0)
ComplexRI(3.0, 2.0)
>>> ComplexRI(0, 1) * ComplexRI(0, 1)
ComplexMA(1.0, 3.141592653589793)
```

http://docs.python.org/py3k/reference/datamodel.html#special-method-names

There are many different techniques for doing this!
**Type Dispatching**

Define a different function for each possible combination of types for which an operation (e.g., addition) is valid

```python
def iscomplex(z):
    return type(z) is (ComplexRI, ComplexMA)

def isrational(z):
    return type(z) is Rational

def add_complex_and_rational(z1, r):
    return add_complex(z1 + ComplexRI(z.real + (r.numer/r.denom) * z.imag)

def add_by_type_dispatching(z1, z2):
    """Add z1 and z2, which may be complex or rational.""
    if iscomplex(z1) and iscomplex(z2):
        return add_complex(z1 + z2)
    elif iscomplex(z1) and isrational(z2):
        return add_complex_and_rational(z1, z2)
    elif isrational(z1) and iscomplex(z2):
        return add_complex_and_rational(z1, z2)
    else:
        add_rational(z1, z2)
```

**Type Dispatching Analysis**

Minimal violation of abstraction barriers: we define cross-type functions as necessary, but use abstract data types

Extensible: Any new numeric type can “install” itself into the existing system by adding new entries to various dictionaries

```python
def add(z1, z2):
    types = (type_tag(z1), type_tag(z2))
    return add_implementations(types)(z1, z2)
```

**Tag-Based Type Dispatching**

Idea: Use dictionaries to dispatch on type

```python
def type_tag(x):
    return type_tag.tags(type(x))

type_tag.tags = {ComplexRI: 'com', Rational: 'rat'}
def add(z1, z2):
    types = (type_tag(z1), type_tag(z2))
    return add_implementations(types)(z1, z2)
```

```python
add.implementations = {}
ad.addImplementations([('com', 'com')] = add_complex
add.addImplementations([('rat', 'rat')] = add_rational
add.addImplementations([('rat', 'com')] = add_rational_and_complex
```

**Data-Directed Programming**

There’s nothing addition-specific about add_by_type

**Idea:** One dispatch function for (operator, types) pairs

```python
def apply(operator_name, x, y):
    tags = (type_tag(x), type_tag(y))
    key = (operator_name, tags)
    return apply.implementations[key](x, y)
```

**Coercion**

Idea: Some types can be converted into other types

Takes advantage of structure in the type system

```python
>>> def rational_to_complex(x):
...    return ComplexRI(x.numer/x.denom, 0)
```

```python
>>> coercions = {('rat', 'com'): rational_to_complex
```

**Message Passing**

```
Argument 1: Complex
Argument 2: Complex
Add: Complex
Multiply: Complex

Argument 1: Rational
Argument 2: Rational
Add: Rational
Multiply: Rational

Argument 1: Complex
Argument 2: Rational
Add: Complex
Multiply: Complex

Argument 1: Rational
Argument 2: Complex
Add: Complex
Multiply: Complex
```

**Question:** Can any numeric type be coerced into any other?

**Question:** Have we been repeating ourselves with data-directed programming?
Applying Operators with Coercion

1. Attempt to coerce arguments into values of the same type
2. Apply type-specific (not cross-type) operations

```python
def coerce_apply(operator_name, x, y):
    tx, ty = type_tag(x), type_tag(y)
    if tx != ty:
        if (tx, ty) in coercions:
            tx, x = ty, coercions[(tx, ty)](x)
        elif (ty, tx) in coercions:
            ty, y = tx, coercions[(ty, tx)](y)
        else:
            return 'No coercion possible.'
    assert tx == ty
    key = (operator_name, tx)
    return coerce_apply.implementations[key](x, y)
```

Coercion Analysis

Minimal violation of abstraction barriers: we define cross-type coercion as necessary, but use abstract data types

Requires that all types can be coerced into a common type

More sharing: All operators use the same coercion scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arg 1</th>
<th>Arg 2</th>
<th>Add</th>
<th>Multiply</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complex</td>
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<tr>
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