

Polymorphism

A closer look at types....

polymorphism \equiv comes from Greek meaning 'many forms'

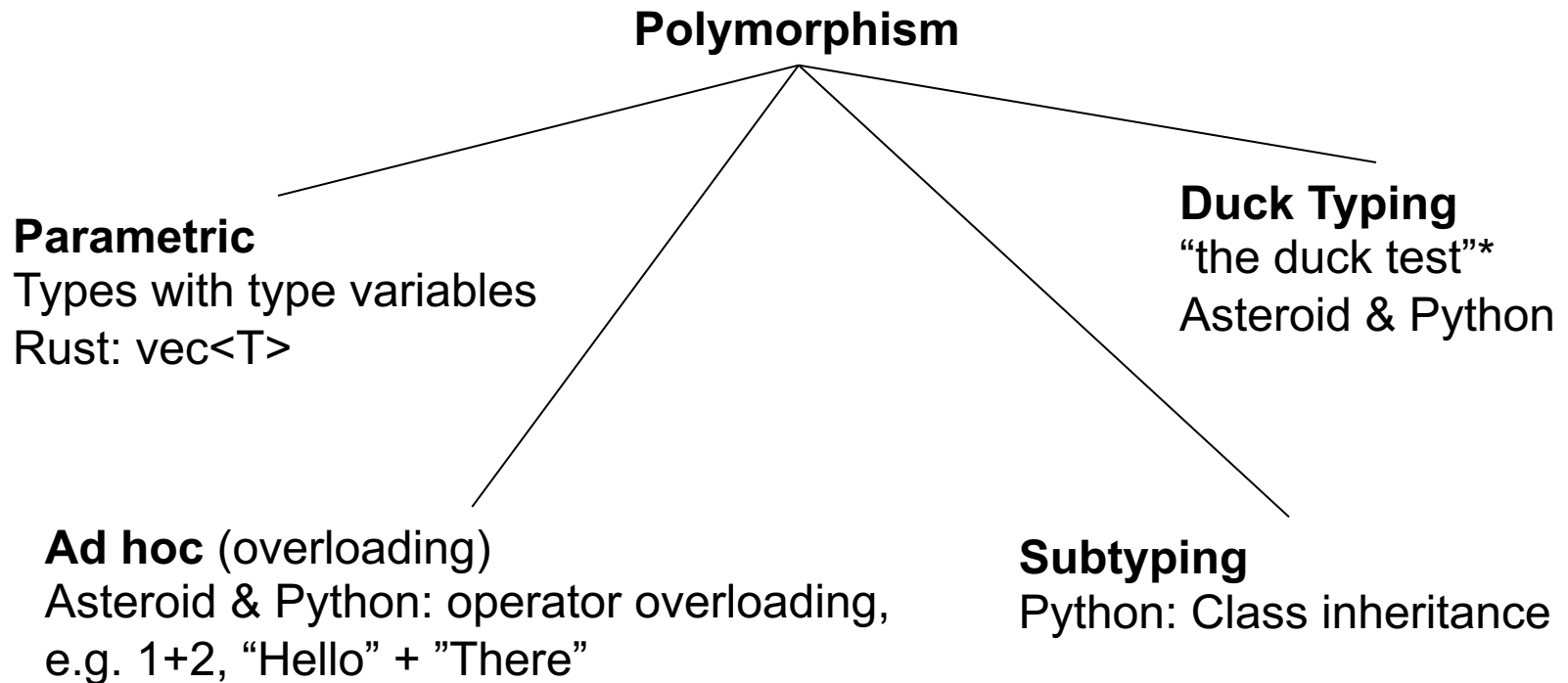
In programming:

Def: A function or operator is polymorphic if it has at least two possible types.

Read MPL Chap 8

Polymorphism

Different types of polymorphisms



*If it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it probably *is* a duck. --Wikipedia

Ad Hoc Polymorphism (overloading)

Def: An overloaded function name or operator is one that has at least two definitions, all of different types.

Example: In Asteroid the '+' operator is overloaded. It can function as a string concatenation operator or as an addition operator depending on the type context – polymorphism!

```
Asteroid Version 1.1.3
(c) University of Rhode Island
Type "asteroid -h" for help
Press CTRL-D to exit
[ast> "abc"+"def" == "abcdef"
true
[ast> 3+5 == 8
true
ast> █
```

Parametric Polymorphism

Def: A function/structure exhibits parametric polymorphism if it has a type that contains one or more type variables.

Example: Rust

```
1  struct Data<T> {  
2      value:T,    // T is a type variable  
3  }  
4  
5  fn main() {  
6      // instantiating Data with i32 data  
7      let t:Data<i32> = Data{value:350};  
8      println!("value is :{} ",t.value);  
9  
10     // instantiating Data with String data  
11     let t2:Data<String> = Data{value:"Tom".to_string()};  
12     println!("value is :{} ",t2.value);  
13 }
```

Subtype Polymorphism

Def: A function or operator exhibits subtype polymorphism if one or more of its types have subtypes.

Subtype Polymorphism

Example: Java

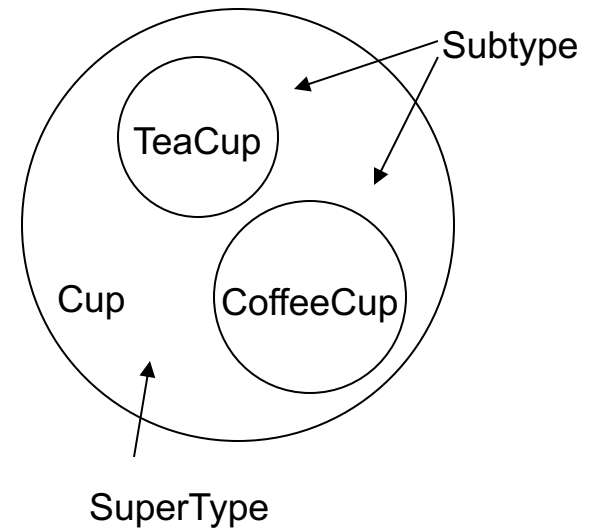
```
class Cup { ... };  
class CoffeeCup extends Cup { ... };  
class TeaCup extends Cup { ... };
```

```
TeaCup t = new TeaCup();  
Cup c = t; ← type coercion: TeaCup → Cup  
                        safe!
```

```
void fill (Cup c) {...}
```

```
TeaCup t = new TeaCup();  
CoffeeCup k = new CoffeeCup();
```

```
fill(t);  
fill(k); } subtype polymorphism
```



Duck Typing

- Duck typing in computer programming is an application of the duck test—*"If it walks like a duck and it quacks like a duck, then it must be a duck"*—to determine if an object can be used for a particular purpose.
 - With normal typing, suitability is determined by an object's type.
 - In duck typing, **an object's suitability is determined by the presence of certain methods and properties, rather than the type of the object itself. No common base type!**


Duck Typing

- Example: a polymorphic list with Duck Typing.

```
[lutz$ asteroid ducktyping.ast
a duck can fly
a plane can fly
lutz$ █
```

```
1  -- A demonstration of duck typing
2  load system io.
3
4  // -- define some types with the property 'fly'
5  structure Duck with
6  |   function fly with none do
7  |   |   io @println "a duck can fly".
8  |   end
9  end
10
11 structure Plane with
12 |   function fly with none do
13 |   |   io @println "a plane can fly".
14 |   end
15 end
16
17 -- create a polymorphic list
18 // let l = [Duck(),Plane()].
19
20 -- use the interface that is common to all the objects
21 for e in l do
22 |   e @fly ().
23 end
```

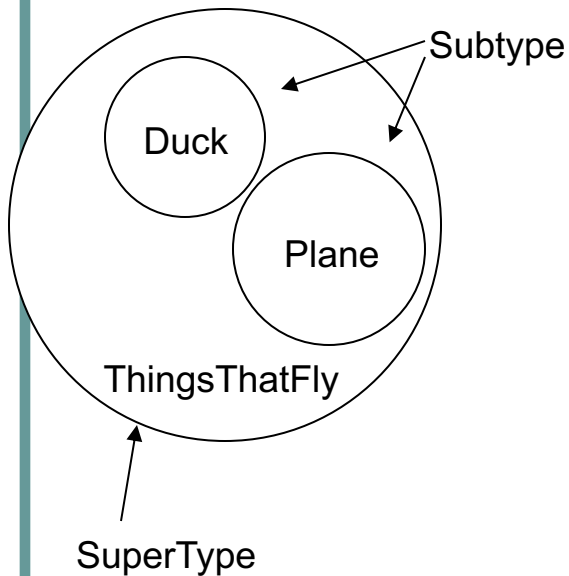
Polymorphic list



Duck Typing

- Duck typing is not possible in statically typed languages like Rust, C++, and Java
- Instead, in these languages one has to rely on subtype polymorphism in order to construct a polymorphic list.

Duck Typing



```
❯ javac Main.java
❯ java Main
a duck can fly
a plane can fly
❯
```

```
import java.util.*;

abstract class ThingsThatFly { // base class of the hierarchy
    abstract void fly();
}

class Duck extends ThingsThatFly {
    void fly() {
        System.out.println("a duck can fly");
    }
}

class Plane extends ThingsThatFly {
    void fly() {
        System.out.println("a plane can fly");
    }
}

class Main {
    public static void main(String args[]) {
        // create a list of ThingsThatFly
        ArrayList<ThingsThatFly> list = new ArrayList<ThingsThatFly>();
        list.add(new Duck());
        list.add(new Plane());
        // print the arraylist objects
        for (int i = 0; i < list.size(); i++) {
            list.get(i).fly();
        }
    }
}
```

