Design Patterns: The Visitor

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Recall: Design Patterns

- Capture programming idioms
- Exploit polymorphism in well understood ways
Recall: Design Patterns

- Capture programming idioms
- Exploit polymorphism in well understood ways
- 3 primary categories:
  - **Creational** – provide flexibility in creating objects
  - **Structural** – compose classes to add new behavior
  - **Behavioral** – focus on communication between entities
Recall: Design Patterns

- Capture programming idioms
- Exploit polymorphism in well understood ways
- 3 primary categories:
  - Creational – provide flexibility in creating objects
  - Structural – compose classes to add new behavior
  - Behavioral – focus on communication between entities
- We have seen: prototype, decorator, command, ...
A New Problem

- Different classes can perform the same action differently
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```java
Manager manager;
manager.updatePay();

Underling underling;
underling.updatePay();
```
A New Problem

- Different classes can perform the same action differently
- Sometimes you want to add a *new kind of action* to a set of related classes
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```java
Manager manager;
manager.serialize();

Underling underling;
underling.serialize();
```
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- Sometimes you want to add a new kind of action to a set of related classes
- There may be many different types of actions to add
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**Operations for Employees**

updatePay
A New Problem

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Operations for Employees

- updatePay
- serialize
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Operations for Employees

- updatePay
- serialize
- printPerformanceReview
A New Problem

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Operations for Employees

updatePay
serialize
printPerformanceReview
...

A New Problem

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- Sometimes you want to add a new kind of action to a set of related classes
- There may be many different types of actions to add
- Sometimes, you can't even know all of the actions in advance!
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- Sometimes you want to add a *new kind of action* to a set of related classes
- There may be many different types of actions to add
- Sometimes, you can't even know all of the actions in advance!

Why are these problems?
A New Problem

• Let us take a look at our Employee base class...

class Employee {
public:
    ...
    virtual void updatePay() = 0;
    virtual void performJob() = 0;
    virtual void serialize() = 0;
    virtual void displayAvatar() = 0;
    virtual void printPerformanceReview() = 0;
    virtual void findFavoriteOfficeMate() = 0;
    virtual void procrastinate() = 0;
};
A New Problem

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    ...
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```

Why does this feel so wrong?
A New Problem

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**Why does this feel so wrong?**
Solutions

- We need to find a better way
  - What are the tools at our disposal?
Solutions

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    - Classes
    - Polymorphism
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  - How can we use them to attack the problem?
Solutions

- We need to find a better way
  - What are the tools at our disposal?
    - Classes
    - Polymorphism
  - How can we use them to attack the problem?
    - Group related behaviors into classes
    - Invoke them when desired
Grouping Related Behavior

- How should we group related behaviors?

What does SRP dictate?
Grouping Related Behavior

- How should we group related behaviors?
  - Each offending method becomes a new class
Grouping Related Behavior

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  - Each offending method becomes a new class

```cpp
class EmployeeSerializer {
public:
    void serialize(Manager &manager);
    void serialize(Underling &underling);
};

class PerformanceReviewPrinter {
public:
    void printReview(Manager &manager);
    void printReview(Underling &underling);
};
```
How Do We Invoke It?
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```cpp
EmployeeSerializer serializer;
std::vector<Employee*> employees;

for (auto *employee : employees) {
    serializer.serialize(*employee);
}
```
EmployeeSerializer serializer;
std::vector<Employee*> employees;

for (auto *employee : employees) {
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- Problem:
  - We want to call a method based on *multiple dynamic types*

```java
serializer.serialize(*employee);
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serializer.serialize(*employee);
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EmployeeSerializer
How Do We Invoke It?

- Problem:
  - We want to call a method based on multiple dynamic types

```java
serializer.serialize(employee);
```

EmployeeSerializer  Manager/Underling
How Do We Invoke It?

- Problem:
  - We want to call a method based on multiple dynamic types
  - *Multiple Dispatch* (or double dispatch in this case)

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serializer.serialize(employee);
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serializer.serialize(employee);
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But we only know that `employee` is an `Employee*`
How Do We Invoke It?

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```cpp
serializer.serialize(*employee);
```

EmployeeSerializer   Manager/Underling

But we only know that `employee` is an `Employee*`

```cpp
for (auto* employee : employees) {
    serializer.serialize(*employee);
}
```
How Do We Invoke It?

- Problem:
  - We want to call a method based on multiple dynamic types
  - *Multiple Dispatch* (or double dispatch in this case)

```java
serializer.serialize(employee);
```

But we only know that `employee` is an `Employee`

How can we resolve the issue?
How Do We Invoke It?

- Problem:
  - We want to call a method based on multiple dynamic types
  - *Multiple Dispatch* (or double dispatch in this case)

```csharp
serializer.serialize(*employee);
```

- Solution:
  - The Visitor Pattern
The Visitor Pattern

Abstract away the added behaviors:

class EmployeeSerializer : public Visitor {
public:
    void visit(Manager &manager) override;
    void visit(Underling &underling) override;
};
The Visitor Pattern

Change the original classes:

class Employee {
public:
    virtual void accept(Visitor &v) = 0;
}
class Manager : public Employee {
    ...
    void accept(Visitor &v) override {
        v.visit(*this);
    }
};
The Visitor Pattern

Change the original classes:

class Employee {
  public:
    virtual void accept(Visitor &v) = 0;
};
class Manager : public Employee {
  ...
  void accept(Visitor &v) override {
    v.visit(*this);
  }
};

The dynamic type of Employee is known!
Calls visit(Manager &manager) here.
Use the new behaviors through their classes:

```cpp
EmployeeSerializer serializer;
PerformanceReviewPrinter reviewer;
std::deque<Employee*> employees;

for (auto *employee : employees) {
    employee->accept(serializer);
    employee->accept(reviewer);
}
```
The Visitor Pattern

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EmployeeSerializer serializer;
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for (auto *employee : employees) {
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```

What if we want a return value?
The Visitor Pattern

- A behavioral pattern
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- Useful for adding new behaviors to a collection of related classes
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  - *It also keeps those behaviors isolated!*
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- A behavioral pattern
- Useful for adding new behaviors to a collection of related classes
  - *It also keeps those behaviors isolated!*
  - Useful for designing APIs open to extension
The Visitor Pattern

- A behavioral pattern
- Useful for adding new behaviors to a collection of related classes
- But what are the downsides?
  - Can we overcome them?