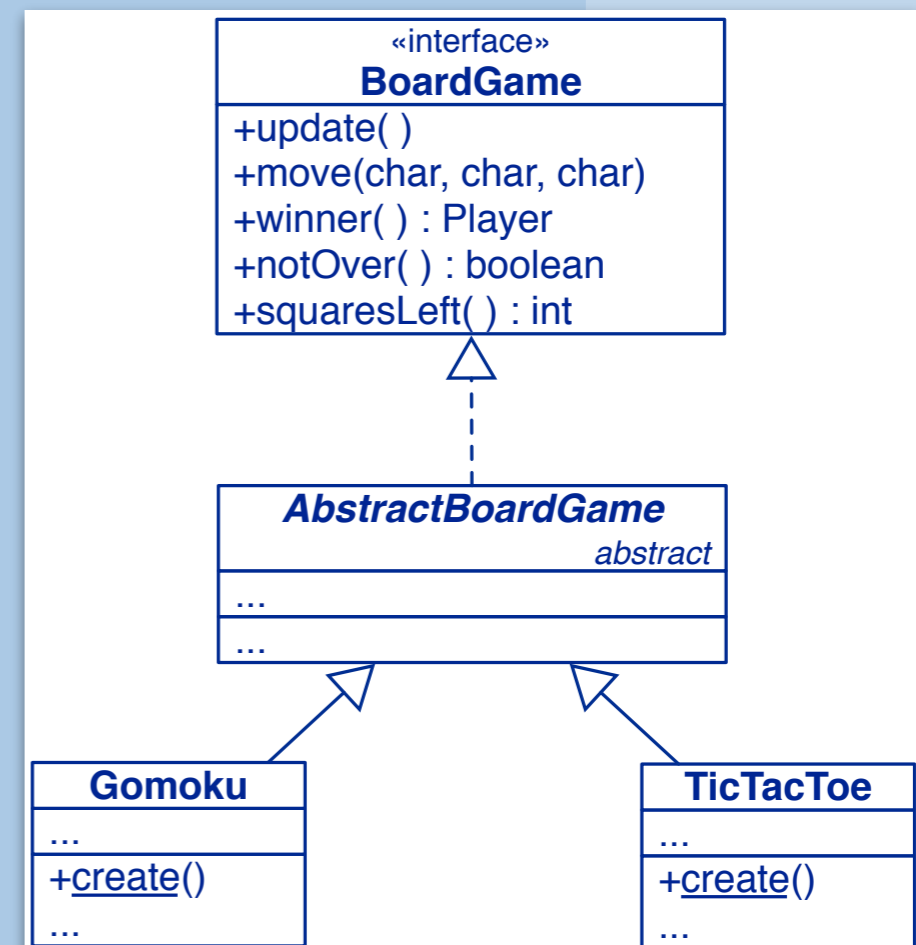


7. Inheritance and Refactoring

Oscar Nierstrasz



Inheritance and Refactoring

Source

- > Wirfs-Brock & McKean, *Object Design — Roles, Responsibilities and Collaborations*, 2003.



Roadmap

- > Uses of inheritance
 - conceptual hierarchy, polymorphism and code reuse
- > TicTacToe and Gomoku
 - interfaces and abstract classes
- > Iterative development
 - Quiet testing
- > Refactoring
 - iterative strategies for improving design
- > Top-down decomposition
 - decomposing algorithms to reduce complexity



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What is Inheritance?

Inheritance in object-oriented programming languages is a mechanism to:

- derive new subclasses* from existing classes
- where subclasses *inherit all the features* from their parent(s)
- and may *selectively override* the implementation of some features.

Seen strictly as a programming language feature, inheritance can be understood as mechanism to *incrementally modify* classes. A subclass inherits all the features of its parent class (or classes), may add new features, and may modify or extend inherited features.

In most object-oriented languages, “features” include both instance variables and methods.

Inheritance mechanisms

OO languages realize inheritance in different ways:

<i>self</i>	<i>dynamically access</i> subclass methods
<i>super</i>	<i>statically access</i> overridden, inherited methods
<i>multiple inheritance</i>	inherit features from <i>multiple superclasses</i>
<i>abstract classes</i>	<i>partially defined classes</i> (to inherit from only)
<i>mixins</i>	build classes from <i>partial sets of features</i>
<i>interfaces</i>	<i>specify</i> method argument and return types
<i>subtyping</i>	guarantees that subclass instances can be <i>substituted</i> for their parents

Inheritance in Java supports self (`this`), super (`super`), *single* inheritance, abstract classes (`abstract`), no mixins (but these can be simulated by *aspects* in AspectJ), interfaces, and subtyping.

Furthermore, Java supports *access modifiers* (`public`, `private`, `protected` and package scopes), and *overloaded methods* (same method name, but different argument types).

The Board Game

Tic Tac Toe is a pretty dull game, but there are many other interesting games that can be played by *two players with a board and two colours of markers*.

Example: Go-moku

“A Japanese game played on a go board with players alternating and attempting to be first to place five counters in a row.”

— Random House

We would like to implement a program that can be used to play several *different kinds of games using the same game-playing abstractions* (starting with TicTacToe and Go-moku).

Inheritance is used for three orthogonal, but related purposes

Conceptual hierarchy (domain modeling):

- > Go-moku *is-a kind of* Board Game; Tic Tac Toe is-a kind of Board Game

Polymorphism (design):

- > Instances of Gomoku and TicTacToe can be *uniformly manipulated* as instances of BoardGame by a client program

Software reuse (implementation):

- > Gomoku and TicTacToe reuse the BoardGame *interface*
- > Gomoku and TicTacToe reuse and extend the BoardGame *representation* and the *implementations* of its operations

Conceptual hierarchy refers to *specialization* (is-a) in the domain: a student *is a* person, a car *is a* vehicle. When we model domain objects in our programs we use inheritance to express the is-a relationship in the code.

Polymorphism refers to the fact that objects may have *many types*. This is very useful as we can then write code that can uniformly manipulate different kinds of objects, as long as they conform to the interface we require. A graphics program can manipulate many kinds of graphical shapes. The payroll program can deal uniformly with different kinds of employees.

Software reuse refers to the fact that subclasses inherit all the code of their parents.

These three users of inheritance are *orthogonal*, that is, we can have any one without the other two. When we apply object-oriented design principles consistently however, we often have all three at the same time.

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Class Diagrams

The TicTacToe class currently looks like this:

	Key
-	private feature
#	protected feature
+	public feature
<u>create()</u>	static feature
<i>checkWinner()</i>	abstract feature

TicTacToe
#gameState : char [3][3]
#winner: Player
#turn : Player
#player : Player[2]
#squaresLeft : int
+ <u>create</u> (Player, Player)
+update()
+move(char, char, char)
+winner() : Player
+notOver() : boolean
+squaresLeft() : int
#set(char, char, char)
#get(char, char) : char
#swapTurn()
#checkWinner()
#inRange(char col, char row) : boolean

A UML class diagram models one or more classes and their relationships. These diagrams may be used to model any kind of domain. Here we model our Java code design, but we can also model real-world objects.

A UML class has up to three compartments, representing the class name, the state (instance variables) and the behaviour (methods). The second and third parts are optional. You are not required to list all features, just those of interest for our model. Give at least the names of features. You may also indicate the type of each feature, if you wish, and its scope.

Static features (i.e., belong to the class, not instances) are underlined. Abstract features are indicated in italics.

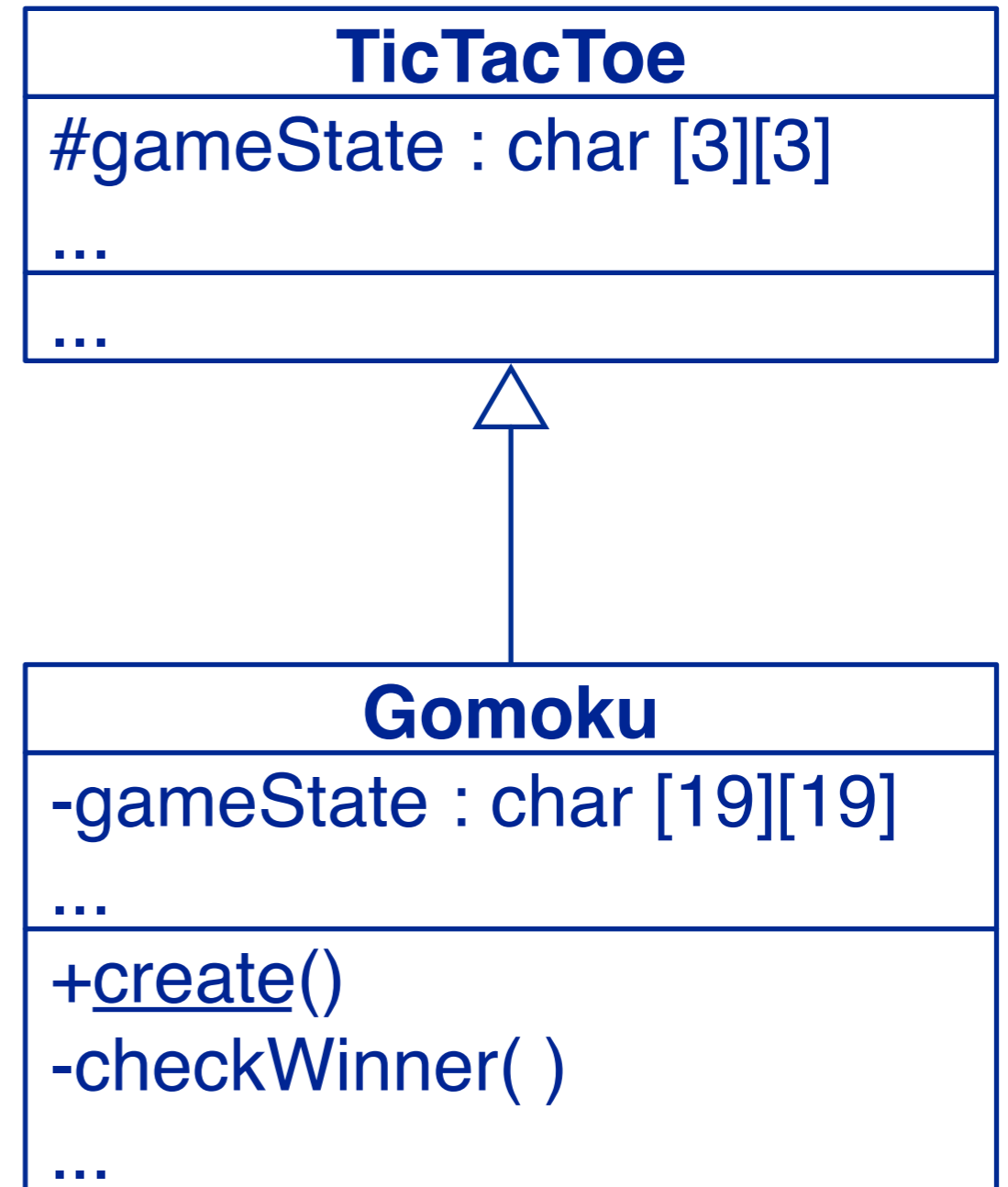
A bad idea ...

Why not simply use inheritance for incremental modification?

Exploiting inheritance for code reuse without refactoring tends to lead to:

- > *duplicated code* (similar, but not reusable methods)
- > *conceptually unclear design* (arbitrary relationships between classes)

Gomoku is not a kind of TicTacToe



A naive view of inheritance is purely as a mechanism for reuse:
“We already have the code for TicTacToe, so let’s inherit that and just modify what needs to be changed.”

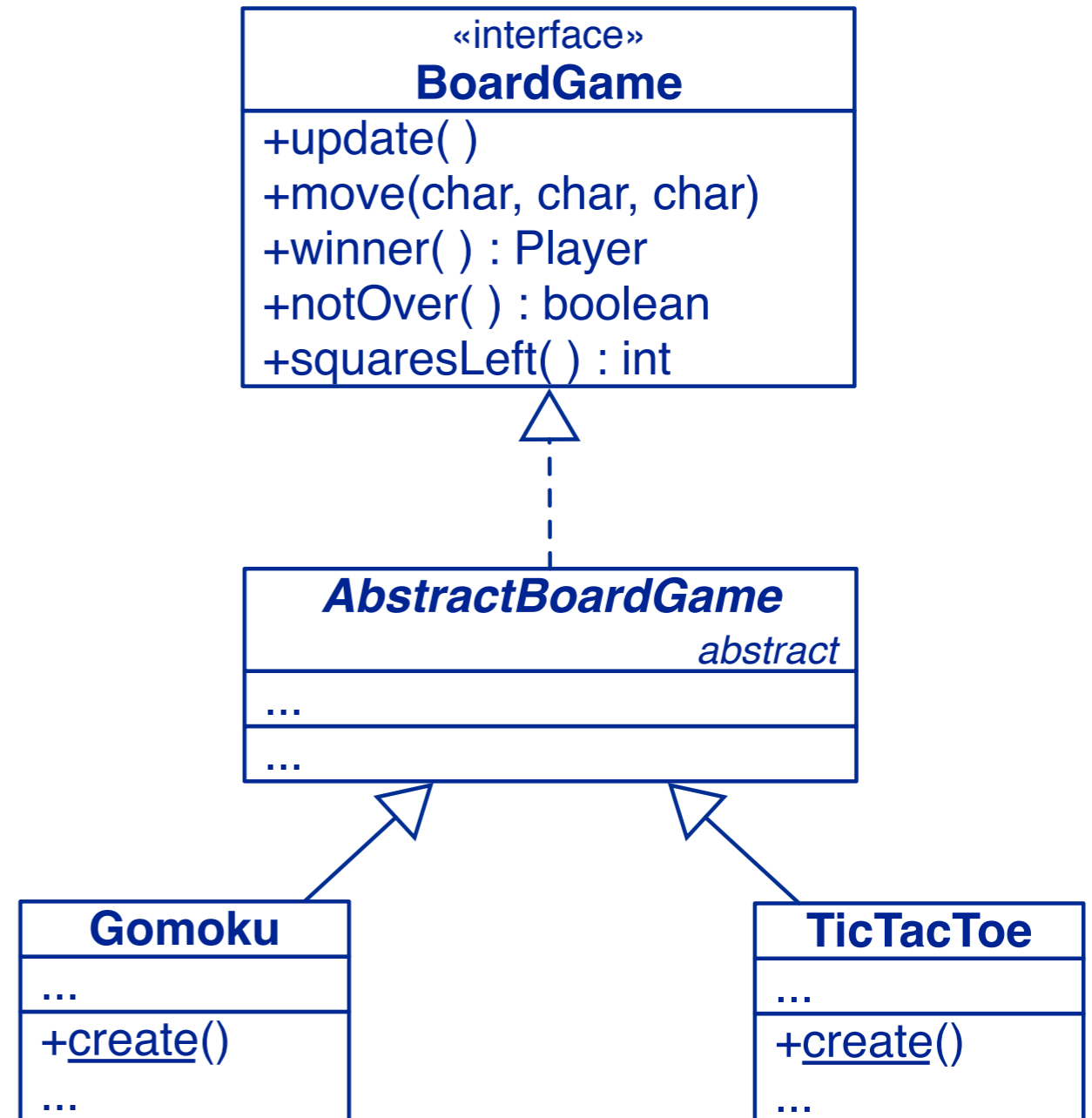
This kind of approach very quickly leads to a messy and confused design. A better strategy is to first *faithfully model the domain concepts*. With this approach, polymorphism and software reuse often come for free afterwards.

Class Hierarchy

Both Go-moku and Tic Tac Toe are *kinds of Board games* (IS-A).

We would like to define a *common interface*, and factor the common functionality into a *shared parent class*.

Behaviour that is not shared will be implemented by the subclasses.



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Iterative development strategy

We need to find out which TicTacToe functionality will:

- already work for both TicTacToe and Gomoku
- need to be adapted for Gomoku
- can be generalized to work for both

Example: set() and get() will not work for a 19×19 board!

Rather than attempting a “big bang” redesign, we will iteratively redesign our game:

- introduce a BoardGame interface that TicTacToe implements
- move all TicTacToe implementation to an AbstractBoardGame parent
- fix, refactor or make abstract the non-generic features
- introduce Gomoku as a concrete subclass of AbstractBoardGame

After each iteration we run our regression tests to make sure nothing is broken!

 When should you run your (regression) tests?

✓ *After every change to the system.*

Version 3 (add interface)

We specify the interface both subclasses should implement:

```
public interface BoardGame {
    public void update() throws IOException;
    public void move(char col, char row, char mark);
    public Player currentPlayer();    // NB: new method
    public Player winner();
    public boolean notOver();
    public int squaresLeft();
}
```

Initially we focus only on *abstracting* from the current TicTacToe implementation

Speaking to an Interface

Clients of TicTacToe and Gomoku should only depend on the BoardGame *interface*:

```
public class GameDriver {
    public static void main(String args[]) {
        Player X = new Player('X');
        Player O = new Player('O');
        playGame(new TicTacToe(X, O));
    }

    public static void playGame(BoardGame game) {
        ...
    }
}
```

Speak to an interface, not an implementation.

If your code is polymorphic, i.e., will handle objects belonging to different classes, then it is good practice to define an *interface* that these objects should conform to, and to make your code depend only on this interface, not on any of the concrete classes.

By keeping your code independent of specific classes, later implementors can design their own class hierarchies that implement your interface, but are fully independent of the classes existing at this time.

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Quiet Testing

Our current TestDriver prints the state of the game after each move, making it hard to tell when a test has failed.

Tests should be silent unless an error has occurred!

```
public static void playGame(BoardGame game, boolean verbose) {  
    ...  
    if (verbose) {  
        System.out.println();  
        System.out.println(game);  
    ...  
}
```

NB: we must shift all responsibility for printing to playGame().

Quiet Testing (2)

A more flexible approach is to let the *client* supply the `PrintStream`:

```
public static void playGame(BoardGame game, PrintStream out) {
    try {
        do { // all printing must move here ...
            out.println();
            out.println(game);
            out.print("Player "
                + game.currentPlayer().mark() + " moves: ");
            ...
        }
    }
}
```

The TestDriver can simply send the output to a Null stream:

```
playGame(game, System.out);
playGame(game, new PrintStream(new NullOutputStream()));
```

NullOutputStream

A Null Object implements an interface with null methods:

```
public class NullOutputStream extends OutputStream {  
    public NullOutputStream() { super(); }  
  
    // Null implementation of inherited abstract method  
    public void write(int b) throws IOException { }  
}
```

Null Objects are useful for eliminating flags and switches.

Flags are a well-known idiom and are easy to implement, but they can clutter your code if many parts depend on the value of the flag. In this case, we would need to check the flag *before every single print statement*. Alternatively we would have to implement our own print method that checks the flag, and be sure to use it consistently everywhere in our code.

The *Null Object* pattern solves this problem through an elegant application of polymorphism. A “Null Object” is an object that implements a known interface by simply doing nothing. It eliminates the need to explicitly check if that the target object is null (or in this case, if a flag is not set to true), by *plugging* the null object in where a regular object is expected.

TicTacToe adaptations

In order to pass responsibility for printing to the GameDriver, a BoardGame must provide a method to *export the current Player*:

```
public class TicTacToe implements BoardGame {  
    ...  
    public Player currentPlayer() {  
        return player[turn];  
    }  
}
```

Now we run our regression tests and (after fixing any bugs) continue.

Version 4 — add abstract class

AbstractBoardGame will provide common variables and methods for TicTacToe and Gomoku.

```
public abstract class AbstractBoardGame implements BoardGame {  
    static final int X = 0;  
    static final int O = 1;  
    ...  
}
```

In a first step we include the entire TicTacToe implementation ...

 When should a class be declared abstract?

✓ *Declare a class abstract if it is intended to be subclassed, but not instantiated.*

Roadmap

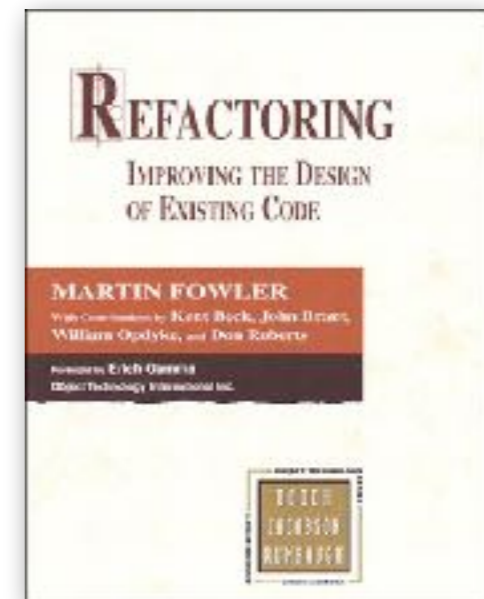
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Refactoring

Refactoring is a process of moving methods and instance variables from one class to another to improve the design, specifically to:

- reassign responsibilities
- eliminate duplicated code
- reduce coupling: interaction between classes
- increase cohesion: interaction within classes



Refactoring consists of arbitrary changes to code that *do not change existing functionality*. Refactoring operations are usually carried out to either *improve code quality* (i.e., to remove code smells, such as duplicated code), or to *increase flexibility*. In the latter case, refactoring is generally driven by the need to add new features. Due to limited flexibility, it may be hard to add the new features.

In the case of our TicTacToe game, we increase flexibility by adding the `BoardGame` interface. This in itself does not change the functionality of the existing code, but it *enables* the addition of the Gomoku functionality.

The book by Martin Fowler et al. provides a catalog of common refactorings.

Refactoring strategies

We have adopted one possible refactoring strategy, first moving everything except the constructor from TicTacToe to AbstractBoardGame. Since all features are protected, TicTacToe inherits everything:

```
public class TicTacToe extends AbstractBoardGame {
    public TicTacToe(Player playerX, Player playerO)
    {
        super(playerX, playerO);
    }
}
```

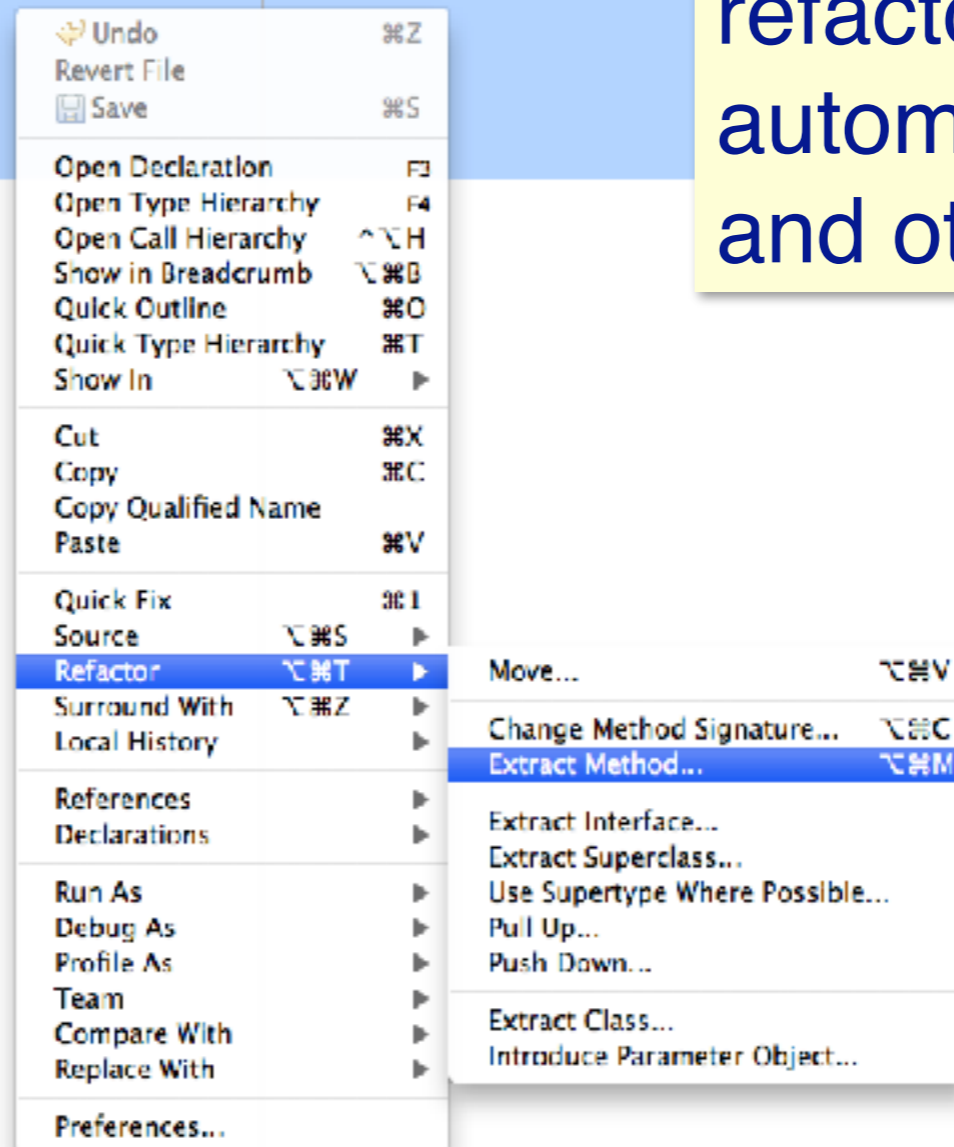
We could equally have started with an empty AbstractBoardGame and gradually moved shared code there.

Refactoring support in Eclipse

Many common refactorings are automated by eclipse and other IDEs.

```
protected void checkWinner()
{
    char player;
    for (char row='3'; row>='1'; row--) {
        player = this.get('a',row);
        if (player == this.get('b',row)
            && player == this.get('c',row)) {
            this.setWinner(player);
            return;
        }
    }
    for (char col='a'; col <='c'; col++) {
        player = this.get(col,'1');
        if (player == this.get(col,'2')
            && player == this.get(col,'3')) {
            this.setWinner(player);
            return;
        }
    }
    player = this.get('b','2');
    if (player == this.get('a','1')
        && player == this.get('c','3')) {
        this.setWinner(player);
        return;
    }
    if (player == this.get('a','3')
        && player == this.get('c','1')) {
        this.setWinner(player);
        return;
    }
}

/**
 * Look up which player is the winner, and set winner
 * accordingly. Hm. Maybe we should store Players
 * instead of chars in our array!
 */
protected void setWinner(char aPlayer) {
    if (aPlayer == ' ')
        return;
    if (aPlayer == player[X].mark())
        winner = player[X];
    else
        winner = player[0];
}
```



Version 5 — refactoring

Now we must check which parts of `AbstractBoardGame` are *generic*, which must be *repaired*, and which must be *deferred* to its subclasses:

- > the number of rows and columns and the winning score may vary
 - introduce instance variables and an `init()` method
 - rewrite `toString()`, `invariant()`, and `inRange()`
- > `set()` and `get()` are inappropriate for a 19×19 board
 - index directly by integers
 - fix `move()` to take `String` argument (e.g., “f17”)
 - add methods to parse string into integer coordinates
- > `getWinner()` and `toString()` must be generalized

AbstractBoardGame

We introduce an abstract init() method for arbitrary sized boards:

```
public abstract class AbstractBoardGame ... {  
    protected abstract void init();  
    ...  
}
```

And call it from the (abstract) constructor:

```
public AbstractBoardGame(Player playerX, Player playerO) {  
    player = new Player[2];  
    player[X] = playerX;  
    player[0] = playerO;  
    this.init();  
    squaresLeft = rows * cols;  
    ...  
}
```

Specializing game construction

Subclasses can specialize construction by implementing the `init()` method:

```
public class TicTacToe extends AbstractBoardGame {
    public TicTacToe(Player playerX, Player playerO) {
        super(playerX, playerO);
    }
    protected void init() {
        rows = 3;
        cols = 3;
        winningScore = 3;
    }
}
```

Note that although an abstract class cannot be instantiated, it can still make sense to define a constructor for one. Subclasses can then call the inherited constructor by calling `super (...)` (just as a class can call its own constructor using `this (...)`).

The inherited constructor is a classic example of the *Template Method* design pattern. It is a general method with the details of initialization deferred to a *hook method*, namely the `init()` method. Subclasses specialize the behaviour of the template method (the constructor) by implementing the hook method.

BoardGame

Most of the changes in `AbstractBoardGame` are to protected methods.

The only public (interface) method to change is `move ()`:

```
public interface BoardGame {  
    ...  
    public void move(String coord, char mark);  
    ...  
}
```

Player

The Player's `move()` method can now be radically simplified:

```
public void move(BoardGame game) throws IOException {  
    String line;  
    line = in.readLine();  
    if (line == null) {  
        throw new IOException("end of input");  
    }  
    game.move(line, this.mark());  
}
```


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Version 6 — Gomoku

The final steps are:

- > rewrite `checkWinner()`

- > introduce Gomoku

 - modify `TestDriver` to run tests for both `TicTacToe` and `Gomoku`

 - print game state whenever a test fails

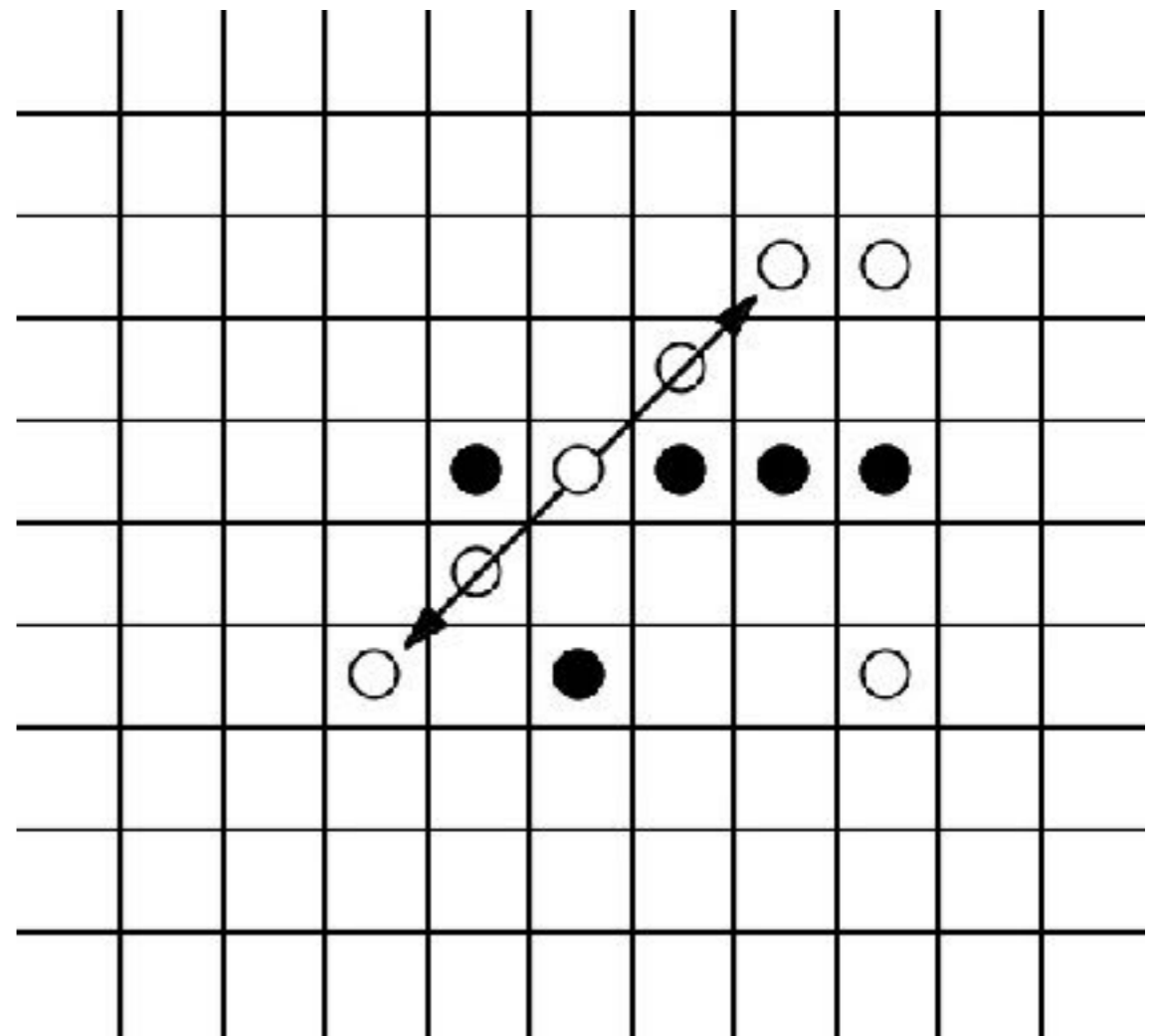
- > modify `GameDriver` to query user for either `TicTacToe` or `Gomoku`

Keeping Score

The Go board is *too large to search exhaustively* for a winning Go-moku score.

We know that *a winning sequence must include the last square marked*. So, it suffices to search in all four directions *starting from that square* to see if we find 5 in a row.

 *Whose responsibility is it to search?*



After each move we must check if there is a winner. We can safely assume that no winner was detected on the previous move, so *if there is a winner, it must include the last piece played.*

To check for a winner, we therefore only need to start from that piece, and check in all four directions if that piece includes 5 in a row. (This is considerably cheaper than checking the entire board after each move.)

A new responsibility ...

Maintaining the state of the board and searching for a winning run seem to be *unrelated responsibilities*. So let's introduce a new object (a Runner) to run and count a Player's pieces.

```
protected void checkWinner(int col, int row)... {
    char player = this.get(col,row);
    Runner runner = new Runner(this, col, row);
    // check vertically
    if (runner.run(0,1) >= this.winningScore)
        { this.setWinner(player); return; }
    // check horizontally
    if (runner.run(1,0) >= this.winningScore)
        { this.setWinner(player); return; }
    ...
}
```

The Runner

The `Runner` must know its game, its home (start) position, and its current position:

```
public class Runner {
    BoardGame game;
    int homeCol, homeRow;           // Home col and row
    int col=0, row=0;              // Current col & row

    public Runner(BoardGame myGame, int myCol, int myRow) {
        game = myGame;
        homeCol = myCol;
        homeRow = myRow;
    }
    ...
}
```

Top-down decomposition

Implement algorithms abstractly, introducing helper methods for each abstract step, as you decompose:

```
public int run(int dcol, int drow)
    throws AssertionError {
    int score = 1;
    this.goHome() ;
    score += this.forwardRun(dcol, drow);
    this.goHome();
    score += this.reverseRun(dcol, drow);
    return score;
}
```

Well-chosen names eliminate the need for most comments!

Recursion

Many algorithms are more naturally expressed with recursion than iteration.

Recursively move forward as long as we are in a run. Return the length of the run:

```
protected int forwardRun(int dcol, int drow) {  
    this.move(dcol, drow);  
    if (this.samePlayer())  
        return 1 + this.forwardRun(dcol, drow);  
    else  
        return 0;  
}
```


More helper methods

Helper methods keep the main algorithm *clear and uncluttered*, and are mostly *trivial to implement*.

```
protected int reverseRun(int dcol, int drow) ... {  
    return this.forwardRun(-dcol, -drow);  
}  
  
protected void goHome() {  
    col= homeCol;  
    row = homeRow;  
}
```

 *How would you implement `move()` and `samePlayer()`?*

BoardGame

The Runner now needs access to the `get()` and `inRange()` methods so we make them *public*:

```
public interface BoardGame {  
    ...  
    public char get(int col, int row);  
    public boolean inRange(int col, int row);  
    ...  
}
```

 Which methods should be public?

✓ *Only publicize methods that clients will really need, and will not break encapsulation.*

Gomoku

Gomoku is similar to TicTacToe, except it is played on a 19x19 Go board, and the winner must get 5 in a row.

```
public class Gomoku extends AbstractBoardGame {
    public Gomoku(Player playerX, Player playerO) {
        super(playerX, playerO);
    }
    protected void init() {
        rows = 19;
        cols = 19;
        winningScore = 5;
    }
}
```

In the end, Gomoku and TicTacToe could inherit *everything* (except their constructor) from AbstractGameBoard!

Abstract test framework

```
public abstract class AbstractBoardGameTest extends TestCase {
    protected BoardGame game;

    public AbstractBoardGameTest (String name) { super(name); }

    public void checkGame(String Xmoves, String Omoves,
                          String winner, int squaresLeft) {
        Player X = new Player('X', Xmoves);
        Player O = new Player('O', Omoves);
        game = makeGame(X,O);
        GameDriver.playGame(game, new PrintStream(new NullOutputStream()));
        assertEquals(game.winner().name(), winner);

        assertEquals(game.squaresLeft(), squaresLeft);
    }
    abstract protected BoardGame makeGame(Player X, Player O) ;
    ...
}
```

Here again we see the use of the Template Method design pattern. The template method is `checkGame ()`, and the (protected) hook method is `makeGame ()`. Object-oriented frameworks make heavy use of parameterized template methods to offer generic implementations to clients. Client applications configure the framework by implementing hook methods.

Gomoku tests ...







Subclasses specialize the factory method for instantiating the game

```
public class GomokuTest extends AbstractBoardGameTest {
    ...

    public void testXWinsDiagonal() {
        checkGame( "\naa\n" // nonsense input
            + "f6\ng5\ne7\nd8\nc9\n",
            "b2\nh4\nc3\nd4\n",
            "X", (19*19-9));
    }

    protected BoardGame makeGame(Player X, Player O) {
        return new Gomoku(X, O);
    }
}
```

What you should know!

-  *How does polymorphism help in writing generic code?*
-  *When should features be declared protected rather than public or private?*
-  *How do abstract classes help to achieve code reuse?*
-  *What is refactoring? Why should you do it in small steps?*
-  *How do interfaces support polymorphism?*
-  *Why should tests be silent?*

Can you answer these questions?

- ✎ What would change if we didn't declare `AbstractBoardGame` to be abstract?*
- ✎ How does an interface (in Java) differ from a class whose methods are all abstract?*
- ✎ Can you write `generic toString()` and `invariant()` methods for `AbstractBoardGame`?*
- ✎ Is `TicTacToe` a special case of `Gomoku`, or the other way around?*
- ✎ How would you reorganize the class hierarchy so that you could run `Gomoku` with boards of different sizes?*



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