Runtime Environments
Announcements

• Programming Project 3 checkpoint due Monday at 11:59PM.
  • This is a **hard deadline** and no late submissions will be accepted, even with late days.
  • Remainder of the project due a week from Monday at 11:59PM.
Where We Are

Source Code

Lexical Analysis
Syntax Analysis
Semantic Analysis
IR Generation
IR Optimization
Code Generation
Optimization

Machine Code
Where We Are

Source Code

Lexical Analysis
Syntax Analysis
Semantic Analysis
IR Generation
IR Optimization
Code Generation

Machine Code

Achievement unlocked
Arche-Type
Where We Are

Source Code

Lexical Analysis
Syntax Analysis
Semantic Analysis
**IR Generation**
IR Optimization
Code Generation
Optimization

Machine Code
What is IR Generation?

- **Intermediate Representation Generation.**
- The final phase of the compiler front-end.
- Goal: Translate the program into the format expected by the compiler back-end.
- Generated code need not be optimized; that's handled by later passes.
- Generated code need not be in assembly; that can also be handled by later passes.
Why Do IR Generation?

- **Simplify certain optimizations.**
  - Machine code has many constraints that inhibit optimization. (Such as?)
  - Working with an intermediate language makes optimizations easier and clearer.

- **Have many front-ends into a single back-end.**
  - `gcc` can handle C, C++, Java, Fortran, Ada, and many other languages.
  - Each front-end translates source to the GENERIC language.

- **Have many back-ends from a single front-end.**
  - Do most optimization on intermediate representation before emitting code targeted at a single machine.
Designing a Good IR

- IRs are like type systems – they're extremely hard to get right.
- Need to balance needs of high-level source language and low-level target language.
- Too high level: can't optimize certain implementation details.
- Too low level: can't use high-level knowledge to perform aggressive optimizations.
- Often have multiple IRs in a single compiler.
Architecture of \texttt{gcc}
Architecture of gcc
Architecture of \texttt{gcc}
Architecture of gcc
Architecture of gcc
Architecture of gcc
Architecture of gcc

Source Code --> AST

- GENERIC
- High GIMPLE
- SSA
- Low GIMPLE
- RTL
Architecture of gcc

Source Code

AST

 GENERIC

 High GIMPLE

 SSA

 Low GIMPLE

 RTL

Machine Code
Another Approach: High-Level IR

- Examples:
  - Java bytecode
  - CPython bytecode
  - LLVM IR
  - Microsoft CIL.
- Retains high-level program structure.
  - Try playing around with `javap` vs. a disassembler.
- Allows for compilation on target machines.
- Allows for JIT compilation or interpretation.
Outline

- **Runtime Environments** (Today/Monday)
  - How do we implement language features in machine code?
  - What data structures do we need?
- **Three-Address Code IR** (Wednesday)
  - What IR are we using in this course?
  - What features does it have?
Runtime Environments
An Important Duality

- Programming languages contain high-level structures:
  - Functions
  - Objects
  - Exceptions
  - Dynamic typing
  - Lazy evaluation
  - (etc.)
- The physical computer only operates in terms of several primitive operations:
  - Arithmetic
  - Data movement
  - Control jumps
Runtime Environments

• We need to come up with a representation of these high-level structures using the low-level structures of the machine.

• A **runtime environment** is a set of data structures maintained at runtime to implement these high-level structures.
  • e.g. the stack, the heap, static area, virtual function tables, etc.

• Strongly depends on the features of both the source and target language. (e.g compiler vs. cross-compiler)

• Our IR generator will depend on how we set up our runtime environment.
The Decaf Runtime Environment

• Need to consider
  • What do objects look like in memory?
  • What do functions look like in memory?
  • Where in memory should they be placed?

• **There are no right answers to these questions.**
  • Many different options and tradeoffs.
  • We will see several approaches.
Data Representations

• What do different types look like in memory?

• Machine typically supports only limited types:
  • Fixed-width integers: 8-bit, 16-bit- 32-bit, signed, unsigned, etc.
  • Floating point values: 32-bit, 64-bit, 80-bit IEEE 754.

• How do we encode our object types using these types?
Encoding Primitive Types

- Primitive integral types (\texttt{byte, char, short, int, long, unsigned, uint16\_t, etc.}) typically map directly to the underlying machine type.

- Primitive real-valued types (\texttt{float, double, long double}) typically map directly to underlying machine type.

- Pointers typically implemented as integers holding memory addresses.
  - Size of integer depends on machine architecture; hence 32-bit compatibility mode on 64-bit machines.
Encoding Arrays

- C-style arrays: Elements laid out consecutively in memory.
- Java-style arrays: Elements laid out consecutively in memory with size information prepended.
- D-style arrays: Elements laid out consecutively in memory; array variables store pointers to first and past-the-end elements.

 Wich of these works well for Decaf?
Encoding Arrays

- C-style arrays: Elements laid out consecutively in memory.

|--------|--------|--------|-----|---------|

Which of these works well for Decaf?
Encoding Arrays

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```
```

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Encoding Arrays

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  First  Past-End
Encoding Arrays

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- Java-style arrays: Elements laid out consecutively in memory with size information prepended.

- D-style arrays: Elements laid out consecutively in memory; array variables store pointers to first and past-the-end elements.

- (Which of these works well for Decaf?)
Encoding Multidimensional Arrays

- Often represented as an array of arrays.
- Shape depends on the array type used.
- C-style arrays:
  ```c
  int a[3][2];
  ```
Encoding Multidimensional Arrays

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Encoding Multidimensional Arrays

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- C-style arrays:
  ```c
  int a[3][2];
  ```

  How do you know where to look for an element in an array like this?
Encoding Multidimensional Arrays

- Often represented as an array of arrays.
- Shape depends on the array type used.
- Java-style arrays:
  ```java
  int[][][] a = new int [3][2];
  ```
Encoding Multidimensional Arrays

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Encoding Multidimensional Arrays

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```
Encoding Functions

- Many questions to answer:
  - What does the dynamic execution of functions look like?
  - Where is the executable code for functions located?
  - How are parameters passed in and out of functions?
  - Where are local variables stored?
- The answers strongly depend on what the language supports.
Review: The Stack

- Function calls are often implemented using a stack of activation records (or stack frames).
- Calling a function pushes a new activation record onto the stack.
- Returning from a function pops the current activation record from the stack.
- Questions:
  - Why does this work?
  - Does this always work?
Activation Trees

- An **activation tree** is a tree structure representing all of the function calls made by a program on a particular execution.
  - Depends on the runtime behavior of a program; can't always be determined at compile-time.
  - (The static equivalent is the **call graph**).
- Each node in the tree is an activation record.
- Each activation record stores a **control link** to the activation record of the function that invoked it.
Activation Trees
int main() {
    Fib(3);
}

int Fib(int n) {
    if (n <= 1) return n;
    return Fib(n - 1) + Fib(n - 2);
}
int main() {
    Fib(3);
}

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int Fib(int n) {
    if (n <= 1) return n;
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}
An activation tree is a *spaghetti stack*.
The runtime stack is an *optimization* of this spaghetti stack.
Why Can We Optimize the Stack?

• Once a function returns, its activation record cannot be referenced again.
  • We don't need to store old nodes in the activation tree.
• Every activation record has either finished executing or is an ancestor of the current activation record.
  • We don't need to keep multiple branches alive at any one time.

• These are not always true!
Breaking Assumption 1

• “Once a function returns, its activation record cannot be referenced again.”

• Any ideas on how to break this?
Breaking Assumption 1

• “Once a function returns, its activation record cannot be referenced again.”

• Any ideas on how to break this?

• One option: **Closures**

```javascript
function CreateCounter() {
    var counter = 0;
    return function() {
        counter ++;
        return counter;
    }
}
```
Breaking Assumption 1

• “Once a function returns, its activation record cannot be referenced again.”

• Any ideas on how to break this?

• One option: Closures

```javascript
function CreateCounter() {
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        return counter;
    }
}
```
Closures
Closures

```javascript
function CreateCounter() {
    var counter = 0;
    return function() {
        counter ++;
        return counter;
    }
}

function MyFunction() {
    f = CreateCounter();
    print(f());
    print(f());
    print(f());
}
```
function CreateCounter() {
    var counter = 0;
    return function() {
        counter ++;
        return counter;
    }
}

function MyFunction() {
    f = CreateCounter();
    print(f());
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Closures

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function MyFunction() {
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>Closure diagram details...
function CreateCounter() {
    var counter = 0;
    return function () {
        counter ++;
        return counter;
    }
}

function MyFunction() {
    f = CreateCounter();
    print(f());
    print(f());
}

>
Closures

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    var counter = 0;  
    return function() {  
        counter ++;  
        return counter;  
    }  
}  

function MyFunction() {  
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    print(f());  
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function CreateCounter() {
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> 1
function CreateCounter() {
    var counter = 0;
    return function() {
        counter ++;
        return counter;
    }
}

function MyFunction() {
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    print(f());
    print(f());
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Closures

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    var counter = 0;
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> 1
2
Control and Access Links

- The **control link** of a function is a pointer to the function that called it.
  - Used to determine where to resume execution after the function returns.
- The **access link** of a function is a pointer to the activation record in which the function was created.
  - Used by nested functions to determine the location of variables from the outer scope.
Closures and the Runtime Stack

- Languages supporting closures do not typically have a runtime stack.
- Activation records typically dynamically allocated and garbage collected.
- Interesting exception: gcc C allows for nested functions, but uses a runtime stack.
- Behavior is undefined if nested function accesses data from its enclosing function once that function returns.
  - (Why?)
Breaking Assumption 2

• “Every activation record has either finished executing or is an ancestor of the current activation record.”

• Any ideas on how to break this?
Breaking Assumption 2

• “Every activation record has either finished executing or is an ancestor of the current activation record.”

• Any ideas on how to break this?

• One idea: Coroutines

```python
def downFrom(n):
    while n > 0:
        yield n
    n = n - 1```

Breaking Assumption 2

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• Any ideas on how to break this?

• One idea: **Coroutines**

```python
def downFrom(n):
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```
Coroutines
Coroutines

def downFrom(n):
    while n > 0:
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def myFunc():
    for i in downFrom(3):
        print i
Coroutines

def downFrom(n):
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>
Coroutines

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Coroutines

def downFrom(n):
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def myFunc():
    for i in downFrom(3):
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> 3
def downFrom(n):
    while n > 0:
        yield n
        n = n - 1

def myFunc():
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Coroutines

def downFrom(n):
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def myFunc():
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> 3
Coroutines

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> 3
Coroutines

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> 3
Coroutines

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def myFunc():
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> 3
def downFrom(n):
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        yield n
        n = n - 1

def myFunc():
    for i in downFrom(3):
        print i
Coroutines

def downFrom(n):
    while n > 0:
        yield n
        n = n - 1

def myFunc():
    for i in downFrom(3):
        print i

> 3
2
Coroutines

def downFrom(n):
    while n > 0:
        yield n
        n = n - 1

def myFunc():
    for i in downFrom(3):
        print i

> 3
  2
Coroutines

def downFrom(n):
    while n > 0:
        yield n
        n = n - 1

def myFunc():
    for i in downFrom(3):
        print i

> 3
2
Coroutines

def downFrom(n):
    while n > 0:
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        n = n - 1

def myFunc():
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> 3
> 2
Coroutines

def downFrom(n):
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> 3
 2
def downFrom(n):
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def myFunc():
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Coroutines

def downFrom(n):
    while n > 0:
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        n = n - 1

def myFunc():
    for i in downFrom(3):
        print i

> 3
> 2
Coroutines

def downFrom(n):
    while n > 0:
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        n = n - 1

def myFunc():
    for i in downFrom(3):
        print i

> 3
> 2
Coroutines

def downFrom(n):
    while n > 0:
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        n = n - 1

def myFunc():
    for i in downFrom(3):
        print i
Coroutines

```python
def downFrom(n):
    while n > 0:
        yield n
        n = n - 1

def myFunc():
    for i in downFrom(3):
        print(i)
```

Output:

```
> 3
2
1
```
def downFrom(n):
    while n > 0:
        yield n
        n = n - 1

def myFunc():
    for i in downFrom(3):
        print i
Coroutines

def downFrom(n):
    while n > 0:
        yield n
        n = n - 1

def myFunc():
    for i in downFrom(3):
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Coroutines

def downFrom(n):
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      yield n
      n = n - 1

def myFunc():
   for i in downFrom(3):
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> 3
2
1
Coroutines

def downFrom(n):
    while n > 0:
        yield n
        n = n - 1

def myFunc():
    for i in downFrom(3):
        print i
Coroutines

- A **subroutine** is a function that, when invoked, runs to completion and returns control to the calling function.
  - Master/slave relationship between caller/callee.
- A **coroutine** is a function that, when invoked, does some amount of work, then returns control to the calling function. It can then be resumed later.
  - Peer/peer relationship between caller/callee.
- Subroutines are a special case of coroutines.
Coroutines and the Runtime Stack

- Coroutines often cannot be implemented with purely a runtime stack.
  - What if a function has multiple coroutines running alongside it?
- Few languages support coroutines, though some do (Python, for example).
So What?

• Even a concept as fundamental as “the stack” is actually quite complex.

• When designing a compiler or programming language, you must keep in mind how your language features influence the runtime environment.

• **Always be critical of the languages you use!**
Functions in Decaf

- We use an explicit runtime stack.
- Each activation record needs to hold
  - All of its parameters.
  - All of its local variables.
  - All temporary variables introduced by the IR generator (more on that later).
- Where do these variables go?
- Who allocates space for them?
Decaf Stack Frames

- The **logical** layout of a Decaf stack frame is created by the IR generator.
  - Ignores details about machine-specific calling conventions.
  - We'll discuss today.
- The **physical** layout of a Decaf stack frame is created by the code generator.
  - Based on the logical layout set up by the IR generator.
  - Includes frame pointers, caller-saved registers, and other fun details like this.
  - We'll discuss when talking about code generation.
A Logical Decaf Stack Frame

Stack frame for function \( f(a, ..., n) \)

- Param \( N \)
- Param \( N - 1 \)
- ...
- Param 1
- Storage for Locals and Temporaries
Stack frame for function $f(a, \ldots, n)$
A Logical Decaf Stack Frame

Stack frame for function $f(a, ..., n)$

- Param N
- Param N - 1
- ...
- Param 1
- Storage for Locals and Temporaries
- Param M
- ...

...
A Logical Decaf Stack Frame

Stack frame for function \( f(a, ..., n) \)
A Logical Decaf Stack Frame

Stack frame for function $f(a, \ldots, n)$
A Logical Decaf Stack Frame

Stack frame for function f(a, ..., n)

Stack frame for function g(a, ..., m)
A Logical Decaf Stack Frame

Stack frame for function \( f(a, ..., n) \)
A Logical Decaf Stack Frame

Stack frame for function f(a, ..., n)

- Param N
- Param N - 1
- ...
- Param 1
- Storage for Locals and Temporaries
  - Param M
  - ...
  - Param 1
A Logical Decaf Stack Frame

Stack frame for function \( f(a, \ldots, n) \)

- Param \( N \)
- Param \( N - 1 \)
- ...  
- Param 1
- Storage for Locals and Temporaries
Decaf IR Calling Convention

- Caller responsible for pushing and popping space for callee's arguments.
  - (Why?)
- Callee responsible for pushing and popping space for its own temporaries.
  - (Why?)
Parameter Passing Approaches

- Two common approaches.
- **Call-by-value**
  - Parameters are *copies* of the values specified as arguments.
- **Call-by-reference:**
  - Parameters are *pointers* to values specified as parameters.
Other Parameter Passing Ideas

- **JavaScript**: Functions can be called with any number of arguments.
  - Parameters are initialized to the corresponding argument, or `undefined` if not enough arguments were provided.
  - The entire parameters array can be retrieved through the `arguments` array.
- How might this be implemented?
Other Parameter Passing Ideas

• Python: **Keyword Arguments**
  • Functions can be written to accept any number of key/value pairs as arguments.
  • Values stored in a special argument (traditionally named `kwargs`)
  • `kwargs` can be manipulated (more or less) as a standard variable.

• How might this be implemented?
Summary of Function Calls

- The runtime stack is an optimization of the activation tree spaghetti stack.
- Most languages use a runtime stack, though certain language features prohibit this optimization.
- Activation records logically store a control link to the calling function and an access link to the function in which it was created.
- Decaf has the caller manage space for parameters and the callee manage space for its locals and temporaries.
- Call-by-value and call-by-name can be implemented using copying and pointers.
- More advanced parameter passing schemes exist!
Next Time

• **Implementing Objects**
  • Standard object layouts.
  • Objects with inheritance.
  • Implementing dynamic dispatch.
  • Implementing interfaces.
  • ... and doing so efficiently!