

CSE 401/M501 – Compilers

x86-64, Running MiniJava,
Basic Code Generation and Bootstrapping

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Running MiniJava Programs

- To run a MiniJava program
 - Space needs to be allocated for a stack and a heap
 - %rsp and other registers need to have sensible initial values
 - We need some way to allocate storage (new) and communicate with the outside world

Bootstrapping from C

- Idea: take advantage of the existing C runtime library
- Use a small C main program to call the MiniJava main method as if it were a C function
- C's standard library provides the execution environment and we can call C functions from compiled code for I/O, malloc, etc.

Assembler File Format

- Compiler output is an assembly language program (ascii)
- GNU syntax is roughly this (src/runtime/demo.s in project starter code is a runnable example, although not generated by a MiniJava compiler)

```
.text                # code segment
.globl asm_main      # label at start of compiled static main
<generated code>    # repeat .code/.data as needed
asm_main:           # start of compiled "main"
...
.data
<generated method tables>
# repeat .text/.data as needed
...
end
```

External Names

- In a Linux environment, an external symbol is used as-is (`xyzy`)
- In Windows and OS X, an external symbol `xyzy` is written in asm code as `_xyzy` (leading underscore)
- Your compiler needs to generate code that runs on attu using Linux conventions, but if you want to support the other as an option, feel free to add a compiler switch or something

Generating .asm Code

- Suggestion: isolate the actual compiler output operations in a handful of routines
 - Usual modularity reasons & saves some typing
 - Possibilities

```
// write code string s to .asm output
void gen(String s) { ... }

// write "op src,dst" to .asm output
void genbin(String op, String src, String dst) { ... }

// write label L to .asm output as "L:"
void genLabel(String L) { ... }
```
 - A handful of these methods should do it

A Simple Code Generation Strategy

- Goal: quick 'n dirty correct code, optimize later if time
- Traverse AST primarily in execution order and emit code during the traversal
 - Visitor might want to traverse the tree in ad-hoc ways depending on sequence that parts need to appear in the code
- Treat the x86-64 as a 1-register machine with a stack for additional intermediate values(!)

(The?) Simplifying Assumption

- Store all values (reference, int, boolean) in 64-bit quadwords
 - Natural size for 64-bit pointers, i.e., object references (variables of class types)
 - C’s “long” size for integers
 - Better to use `int64_t` in C code to guarantee size (declared in `<stdint.h>`)

x86 as a Stack Machine

- Idea: Use x86-64 stack for expression evaluation with %rax as the “top” of the stack
- Invariant: Whenever an expression (or part of one) is evaluated at runtime, the generated code leaves the result in %rax
- If a value needs to be preserved while another expression is evaluated, push %rax, evaluate, then pop when first value is needed
 - Remember: **always pop what you push**
 - Will produce lots of redundant, but correct, code
- Examples below follow code shape examples, but with some details about where code generation fits

Example: Generate Code for Constants and Identifiers

Integer constants, say 17

```
gen(movq $17,%rax)
```

- leaves value in %rax

Local variables (any type – int, bool, reference)

```
gen(movq varoffset(%rbp),%rax)
```

Example: Generate Code for $exp1 + exp1$

Visit $exp1$

- generates code to evaluate $exp1$ with result in `%rax`

`gen(pushq %rax)`

- push $exp1$ onto stack

Visit $exp2$

- generates code for $exp2$; result in `%rax`

`gen(popq %rdx)`

- pop left argument into `%rdx`; cleans up stack

`gen(addq %rdx,%rax)`

- perform the addition; result in `%rax`

Example: `var = exp;` (1)

Assuming that `var` is a local variable

Visit node for `exp`

- Generates code to eval `exp` and leave result in `%rax`

```
gen(movq %rax,offset_of_variable(%rbp))
```

Example: `var = exp;` (2)

If `var` is a more complex expression (object or array reference, for example)

visit `var`

`gen(pushq %rax)`

- push lvalue (address) of variable or object containing variable onto stack

visit `exp`

- leaves rhs value in `%rax`

`gen(popq %rdx)`

`gen(movq %rax, appropriate_offset(%rdx))`

Example: Generate Code for obj.f(e1,e2,...en)

In principal the code should work like this:

Visit obj

- leaves reference to object in %rax

gen(movq %rax,rdi)

- “this” pointer is first argument

Visit e1, e2, ..., en. For each argument,

- gen(movq %rax,correct_argument_register)

generate code to load method table pointer located at
0(%rdi) into some register, probably %rax

generate call instruction with indirect jump

Method Call Complications

- Big one: code to evaluate any argument might clobber argument registers (i.e., computing an argument value might require a method call)
 - Possible strategy to cope on next slides, but feel free to do something better
- Other one: what if a method has too many parameters?
 - OK for CSE 401/M501 to assume all methods have ≤ 5 parameters plus “this” – do better if you want

Method Calls in Parameters

- Suggestion to avoid trouble:
 - Evaluate parameters and push them on the stack
 - Right before the call instruction, pop the parameters into the correct registers
- But....

Stack Alignment (1)

- Above ~~idea~~ hack works provided we don't call a method while an odd number of parameter values are pushed on the stack!
 - (violates 16-byte alignment on method call...)
- We have a similar problem if an odd number of intermediate values are pushed on the stack when we call a function while evaluating an expression
- (We might get away with it if it only involves calls to our generated, not library, code, but that would be wrong*)
 - *i.e., might work, but it's not the right way to solve the problem

Stack Alignment (2)

- Workable solution: keep a counter in the code generator of how much has been pushed on the stack. If needed, emit extra `gen(pushq %rax)` to align the stack before generating a call instruction
 - Be sure to pop it after!!
- Another (cleaner, but more work) solution: make stack frame big enough and use `movq` instead of `pushq` to store arguments and temporaries
 - Will need some extra bookkeeping to keep track of how much to allocate and how temps are used

Sigh...

- Multiple registers for method arguments is a big win compared to pushing on the stack, but complicates our life since we do not have a fancy register allocator
- Feel free to do better than this simple push/pop scheme – but remember, simple and works wins over fancy and broken

Code Gen for Method Definitions

- Generate label for method
 Classname\$methodname:
- Generate method prologue
 Push rbp, copy rsp to rbp, subtract frame size from rsp
- Visit statements in order
 - Method epilogue is normally generated as part of a return statement (next)
 - In MiniJava the return is generated after visiting the method body to generate its code

Registers again...

- Method parameters are in registers
- But code generated for methods also will be using registers, even if there are no calls to other methods
- So how do we avoid clobbering parameters?
- Suggestion: Allocate space in the stack frame and save copies of all parameter registers on method entry. Use those copies as local variables when you need to reference a parameter.

Example: return exp;

- Visit exp; this leaves result in %rax where it needs to be
- Generate method epilogue (copy rbp to rsp, pop rbp) to unwind the stack frame; end with ret instruction

Control Flow: Unique Labels

- Needed in code generator: a String-valued method that returns a different label each time it is called (e.g., L1, L2, L3, ...)
 - Improvement: a set of methods that generate different kinds of labels for different constructs (can really help readability of the generated code)
 - (while1, while2, while3, ...; if1, if2, ...; else1, else2, ...; fi1, fi2,)

Control Flow: Tests

- Recall that the context for compiling a boolean expression is
 - Label or address of jump target
 - Whether to jump if true or false
- So the visitor for a boolean expression should receive this information from the parent node

Example: while(exp) body

- Assuming we want the test at the bottom of the generated loop...

```
gen(jmp testLabel)
```

```
gen(bodyLabel:)
```

```
visit body
```

```
gen(testLabel:)
```

```
visit exp (condition) with target=bodyLabel and  
sense="jump if true"
```

Example: $exp1 < exp2$

- Similar to other binary operators
- Difference: context is a target label and whether to jump if true or false
- Code
 - visit exp1
 - gen(pushq %rax)
 - visit exp2
 - gen(popq %rdx)
 - gen(cmpq %rdx,%rax)
 - gen(condjump targetLabel)
 - appropriate conditional jump depending on sense of test

Boolean Operators

&& (and || if you add it)

- Create label(s) needed to skip around the two parts of the expression
- Generate subexpressions with appropriate target labels and conditions

!exp

- Generate exp with same target label, but reverse the sense of the condition

Reality check

- Lots of projects in the past have evaluated all booleans to get 1 or 0, then tested that value for control flow
- Would be nice to do better (as above), but “simple and works” ...

Join Points

- Loops and conditional statements have join points where execution paths merge
- Generated code must ensure that machine state will be consistent regardless of which path is taken to get there
 - i.e., the paths through an if-else statement must not leave a different number of values pushed onto the stack
 - If we want a particular value in a particular register at a join point, both paths must put it there, or we need to generate additional code to move the value to the correct register
- With a simple 1-accumulator model of code generation, this should usually be true without needing extra work; with better use of registers it becomes a bigger issue
 - With more registers, would need to be sure they are used consistently at join point regardless of how we get there

Bootstrap Program

- The bootstrap is a tiny C program that calls your compiled code as if it were an ordinary C function
- It also contains some functions that compiled code can call as needed
 - Mini “runtime library”
 - Add to this if you like
 - Sometimes simpler to generate a call to a new library routine instead of generating in-line code
 - Suggestion: do this for “exit if subscript out of bounds” check
- File: `src/runtime/boot.c` in project starter code

Bootstrap Program Sketch

```
#include <stdio.h>
extern void asm_main(); /* compiled code */
/* execute compiled program */
void main( ) { asm_main(); }
/* write x to standard output */
void put(int64_t x) { ... }
/* return a pointer to a block of memory at least nBytes
   large (or null if insufficient memory available) */
char* mjalloc(size_t nBytes) { return calloc(1,nBytes); }
```

Main Program Label

- Compiler needs special handling for the static main method label
 - Label must be the same as the one declared `extern` in the C bootstrap program and declared `.globl` in the `.s` asm file
 - `asm_main` used above
 - Could be changed, but probably no point
 - Why not “main”? (Hint: where is the real `main`?)

Interfacing to “Library” code

- Trivial to call “library” functions
- Evaluate parameters using the regular calling conventions
- Generate a call instruction using the “library” function label
 - (External names need leading _ in Windows, OS X)
 - Linker will hook everything up

System.out.println(exp)

MiniJava's "print" statement

<compile exp; result in %rax>

```
movq    %rax,%rdi    # load argument register
```

```
call    put          # call external put routine
```

- If the stack is not kept 16-byte aligned, calls to external C or library code can cause a runtime error (*will* cause on OS X)

And That's It...

- We've now got enough on the table to complete the compiler code generator
 - (Once we finish the lectures on objects, vtables, and method calls – which we did earlier 😊)
- Coming Attractions
 - Lower-level IR and control-flow graphs
 - Back end (instruction selection and scheduling, register allocation)
 - Middle (optimizations)