

CS100 Recitation 10

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Contents

- 1 Copy and Swap
- 2 Prevent Copying: An Interesting Way
- 3 Resource-managing Classes
 - Surrogate
 - Reference-counting Handles

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Swap of Vector

The `std::swap` (defined in `<algorithm>`):

```
template <typename T>
inline void swap(T &lhs, T &rhs) {
    T tmp = lhs;
    lhs = rhs;
    rhs = tmp;
}
```

- Swap is done by three copies.
- Inefficient on some special objects, like `Vector`.

Swap of Vector

Specialize the template function `std::swap`.

- Non-template > template-specialization > template.

```
namespace std {  
template <>  
inline void swap<Vector>(Vector &lhs, Vector &rhs) {  
    // What should we do here?  
}  
} // namespace std
```

It seems that `std::swap<Vector>` needs to access the private members.

Swap of Vector

By convention, we define a public member:

```
class Vector {  
    public:  
        void swap(Vector &other) noexcept {  
            using std::swap;  
            swap(m_size, other.m_size);  
            swap(m_capacity, other.m_capacity);  
            swap(m_data, other.m_data);  
        }  
        // other members  
};
```

Swap of Vector

Then we can let `std::swap<Vector>` call that member:

```
namespace std {  
template <>  
inline void swap<Vector>  
    (Vector &lhs, Vector &rhs) noexcept {  
    lhs.swap(rhs);  
}  
} // namespace std
```

Note that

- we are not adding any more things to `std`.
- in contrast to the default version, our swap functions are **exception-free**.

Copy and Swap

Surprisingly, we obtain a copy assignment operator that is both **self-assignment-safe** and **exception-safe**!

```
class Vector {  
public:  
    Vector &operator=(const Vector &other) {  
        auto temp = other;  
        swap(temp);  
        return *this;  
    }  
};
```


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Prevent Copying

Make the compiler unable to synthesize the copying operations?

- If the class has an uncopyable base class.
- If the class has an uncopyable member.

Which one is better?

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Which one is better?

Empty Base Optimization (EBO).

Uncopyable Class

```
class Uncopyable {
    Uncopyable(const Uncopyable &);
    Uncopyable &operator=(const Uncopyable &);
};

class Widget : public Uncopyable {
    // We don't define the copy operations.
    // The compiler is unable to synthesize them,
    // because the copy operations of the base class are
    // inaccessible.
};
```

Private Inheritance

Such definition causes problem: A reference or pointer to `Uncopyable` can be bound to objects of every such class!

Private Inheritance

Such definition causes problem: A reference or pointer to `Uncopyable` can be bound to objects of every such class!

- `private` inheritance: **The inheritance relationship is a secret.**
- Every operation that relies on such relationship cannot be performed, unless in the subclass or `friend` of the subclass.
 - upcasting and downcasting
 - accessing base members
 - dynamic binding
 -

Private Inheritance

```
class Uncopyable {  
    Uncopyable(const Uncopyable &);  
    Uncopyable &operator=(const Uncopyable &);  
};  
class Widget : private Uncopyable {  
    // ...  
};
```

Private Inheritance

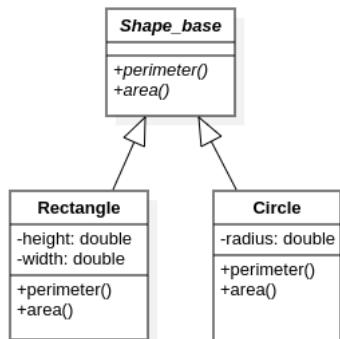
```
class Uncopyable {  
    Uncopyable(const Uncopyable &);  
    Uncopyable &operator=(const Uncopyable &);  
};  
class Widget : private Uncopyable {  
    // ...  
};
```

- This method is outdated from the perspective of C++11, but the way it uses inheritance is inspiring.

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Shape



```
class Shape_base {
public:
    virtual double perimeter() const = 0;
    virtual double area() const = 0;
    virtual ~Shape_base() = default;
    Shape_base() = default;
};
```

Shape

```
class Rectangle : public Shape_base {  
    double height, width;  
public:  
    Rectangle(double h, double w);  
    virtual double perimeter() const override;  
    virtual double area() const override;  
};  
  
class Circle : public Shape_base {  
    double radius;  
public:  
    Circle(double r);  
    virtual double perimeter() const override;  
    virtual double area() const override;  
};
```

Problem

How can we define an array of shapes? (also `newed` arrays, containers, ...)

- `Shape_base shapes[100];` does not work.
 - Abstract base class.
 - Object slicing.
 - The sting of coworkers' derision.
- `Shape_base *shapes[100];` seems to work, but...
 - What happens when `shapes[i] = shapes[j];`?
 - The burden of memory management is on the user's part.

Virtual Copy Function

How can we copy an object correctly?

Virtual Copy Function

How can we copy an object correctly?

DO NOT use downcasting like this!!

```
Shape_base *clone(Shape_base const *ptr) {  
    if (typeid(*ptr) == typeid(Rectangle))  
        return new Rectangle(dynamic_cast<Rectangle &>(*ptr));  
    else  
        return new Circle(dynamic_cast<Circle &>(*ptr));  
}
```

Virtual Copy Function

Use a group of virtual functions instead.

```
class Shape_base {  
    public:  
        virtual Shape_base *clone() const = 0;  
};  
class Rectangle : public Shape_base {  
    public:  
        virtual Shape_base *clone() const override  
        { return new Rectangle(height, width); }  
};  
class Circle : public Shape_base {  
    public:  
        virtual Shape_base *clone() const override  
        { return new Circle(radius); }  
};
```

Covariant Return-type

```
class Shape_base {  
    public:  
        virtual Shape_base *clone() const = 0;  
};  
class Rectangle : public Shape_base {  
    public:  
        virtual Rectangle *clone() const override  
            { return new Rectangle(height, width); }  
};  
class Circle : public Shape_base {  
    public:  
        virtual Circle *clone() const override  
            { return new Circle(radius); }  
};
```


Defining a Surrogate

Avoid manual memory management, while still keep the dynamic binding properties.

```
class Shape {  
    Shape_base *bp;  
public:  
    Shape_base() : bp(nullptr) {}  
    double perimeter() const {  
        return bp->perimeter();  
    }  
    double area() const {  
        return bp->area();  
    }  
};
```

Defining a Surrogate

- All other classes are **implementation details**, so all their members should be `private` (or `protected`).
- Declare `Shape` as a `friend` of them.
- Provide two interfaces `make_rectangle` and `make_circle`.
- Resource Acquisition Is Initialization, `RAII`.

Defining a Surrogate

- All other classes are **implementation details**, so all their members should be `private` (or `protected`).
- Declare Shape as a `friend` of them.
- Provide two interfaces `make_rectangle` and `make_circle`.
- Resource Aquisition Is Initialization, RAI.
- Since we allow default construction (so that we can define an array of Shape), we can provide an interface to tell whether bp is `nullptr`.

```
bool is_null() const { return !bp; }
```

Interfaces

```
class Shape {  
    friend Shape make_rectangle(double, double);  
    friend Shape make_circle(double);  
private:  
    Shape(Shape_base *p) : bp(p) {}  
};  
inline Shape make_rectangle(double h, double w)  
    { return new Rectangle(h, w); }  
inline Shape make_circle(double r)  
    { return new Circle(r); }
```

Make sure your surrogate is not influenced by outsider raw pointers!

Copy Control

Call the virtual clone function.

```
class Shape {  
public:  
    Shape(const Shape &other)  
        : bp(other.bp ? other.bp->clone() : nullptr) {}  
    Shape &operator=(const Shape &other) {  
        // Be careful with self-assignment!  
        auto p = other.bp ? other.bp->clone() : nullptr;  
        delete bp;  
        bp = p;  
        return *this;  
    }  
    ~Shape() { delete bp; }  
};
```

Homework Exercise

Use the copy-and-swap technique to define an assignment operator.

Use the Surrogate

Now we can use the shapes smoothly.

```
std::vector<Shape> shapeVec;  
for (int i = 0; i < n; ++i) {  
    if (some_condition(i))  
        shapeVec.push_back(make_rectangle(f(), g()));  
    else  
        shapeVec.push_back(make_circle(h()));  
}  
for (auto shape : shapeVec) {  
    std::cout << "perimeter == " << shape.perimeter()  
              << ", area == " << shape.area() << std::endl;  
}
```

The annoying pointers suddenly disappear!

Value Semantics and Reference Semantics

What will happen when we copy a surrogate object?

```
Shape a = somevalue(), b = somevalue();  
a = b;
```

- Value semantics: The object that b points to is copied. (The object is **unique**.)
- Reference semantics: a and b point to the same object. (The object is **shared**.)

Value Semantics and Reference Semantics

Pros and cons?

- Value semantics: always copy the object. Time- and space-costing.
- Reference semantics: avoid copying.
 - But if `b` is destroyed, should we destroy the object that `b` points to?

Value Semantics and Reference Semantics

Pros and cons?

- Value semantics: always copy the object. Time- and space-costing.
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We want both!

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Reference-counting

We define a new kind of 'surrogate', named a **handle**.

- Allow an object to be shared by many handles, and **set a counter on it**.
- Increase the counter when a new handle is pointing to it.
- Decrease the counter when a handle no longer points to it.
- **When the counter is decreased to zero, delete the object!**
 - *"A man is dead when he is forgotten."*

Reference-counting

```
class Shape_base {  
    friend class Shape;  
    int use{1};  
    virtual double perimeter() const = 0;  
    virtual double area() const = 0;  
protected:  
    virtual ~Shape_base() = default;  
    Shape_base() = default;  
};
```

A Reference-counting Handle

```
class Shape {  
    Shape_base *bp;  
public:  
    double perimeter() const {  
        return bp->perimeter();  
    }  
    double area() const {  
        return bp->area();  
    }  
    bool is_null() const { return !bp; }  
private:  
    Shape(Shape_base *p) : bp(p) {}  
};
```

Copy Control

Copy ctor and dtor: (Be careful with null pointers!)

```
class Shape {  
public:  
    Shape(const Shape &other) : bp(other.bp) {  
        if (bp)  
            ++bp->use;  
    }  
    ~Shape() {  
        if (bp && !--bp->use)  
            delete bp;  
    }  
};
```

Copy Control

Copy-assignment operator: Self-assignment-safe!!!

```
class Shape {  
public:  
    Shape &operator=(const Shape &other) {  
        if (other.bp)  
            ++other.bp->use;  
        if (bp && !--bp->use)  
            delete bp;  
        bp = other.bp;  
        return *this;  
    }  
};
```


Copy Control

This is **not** self-assignment-safe:

```
Shape &operator=(const Shape &other) {  
    if (bp && !--bp->use)  
        delete bp;  
    bp = other.bp;  
    if (other.bp)  
        ++other.bp->use;  
    return *this;  
}
```

Where is Copy?

It seems that we don't need the virtual `clone` functions at all!
But...

Where is Copy?

It seems that we don't need the virtual `clone` functions at all!
But... What if we allow some form of modification?

```
class Shape {  
public:  
    void some_modification(Type params) {  
        if (bp)  
            bp->some_modification(params);  
    }  
};
```

Where is Copy?

It seems that we don't need the virtual `clone` functions at all!
But... What if we allow some form of modification?

```
class Shape {  
public:  
    void some_modification(Type params) {  
        if (bp)  
            bp->some_modification(params);  
    }  
};
```

Suppose `Shape a = b;`. After modification on `a`, what if we still want `b` to hold the original object?

```
a.some_modification(/* ... */);
```

Copy on Write

Solution: We don't copy the object **until modification happens**.

- *Laziness is a virtue!*

```
class Shape {  
public:  
    void some_modification(Type params) {  
        if (bp) {  
            auto original = bp;  
            bp = original->clone();  
            if (!--original->use)  
                delete original;  
            bp->some_modification(params);  
        }  
    }  
};
```

Standard Library Support

Since C++11, the ideas of **surrogates** and **reference-counting handles** are supported in the standard library `<memory>` as **smart pointers**.

- `std::shared_ptr` is a reference-counting smart pointer.
- `std::weak_ptr` is a surrogate that keeps unique ownership of an object.
- `std::weak_ptr` might be used for some special purposes.

Reading Materials

- The ideas in this slides are from *Ruminations on C++* Chapter 5, 6, 7. Chapter 8 is related to Problem 3 in HW5. Chapter 9 and 10 talks about an interesting example.
- *Effective C++* Item 15, 17 talks about something else related.
- *C++ Primer* Chapter 12 (section 12.1) introduces smart pointers.
- To know about how to use smart pointers properly, see *Effective Modern C++* Item 18 - 22.