

Transparent Proxy Objects

- Background (Proxy Objects) - 4
- Problem statement (A Java case analysis) - 6
- Implementation for Java - 4



Background (Proxy Objects) 1/4

- In most programming languages there is the concept of memory reading and memory writing.
- In object oriented programming languages this is modeled as object-field reading and writing.
- Methods can be considered "callable" fields of an object.



Background (Proxy Objects) 2/4

- Memory reading and writing is supported mainly by a plain/simple "memory contents copy" model: *assignment*.
 - $x = y$: copy contents of memory segment indicated by " y " to memory segment indicated by " x "
- Sometimes this simple notion of assignment is not enough.



Background (Proxy Objects) 3/4

- A *Proxy Object* will mediate between every memory access requested to it and another object.
- It can, however, *wrap* the assignment notion, adding further logic to it.
 - For example, counting field accesses.



Background (Proxy Objects) 4/4

- In Object-Oriented-Programming terms, a Proxy Object will run its own statements
 - *right before* an operation (method call) on an object,
 - *right after* an operation (method call) on an object.
- This happens transparently, as the programmer is not aware whether he is using a Proxy Object or the original object.



• Problem statement (A Java case analysis) 1/6

- Java, being an object oriented language, can adopt the TPO-pattern as described above.
 - An object can act as a proxy to another object, transparently ("the programmer doesn't have to know about it").



Problem Statement

(A Java case analysis) 2/6

- How to implement the TPO pattern in Java?
- A straightforward way:
 - Before every "field access" (field access or method call), call a "getInstance()" method on the proxy object.
 - "getInstance()" performs the extra proxy logic and then returns the original object instance.



Problem Statement

(A Java case analysis) 3/6

- This way, however, ignores the "transparent" characteristic: the programmer has to be aware of whether she is using a proxy object in order to call the "getInstance()" method before working on the actual object.
- Solution: post-processing byte code and inserting the "getInstance()" part of the code transparently.



Problem Statement

(A Java case analysis) 4/6

- The problem statement is:

Given a java program and some proxy-types ($ProxyT$), transform the program's bytecode so that proxy objects are used transparently, without the programmer having to write any extra code for it.



Problem Statement

(A Java case analysis) 5/6

- For example:

- ```
public class Main {
 public static void main(String[] args) {
 Foo f = fooBuilder.getAFoo();
 Proxy p = new Proxy(f);
 Foo pf = (Foo) (Object) p;

 f.m1(); pf.m1();
 }
}
```

- "f" points to a Foo object, "pf" points to a Proxy, but they are both used as Foo-s: transparency.



# Problem Statement

## (A Java case analysis) 6/6

- The code from the example should be automatically converted to:

```
■ public class Main {
 public static void main(String[] args) {
 Foo f = fooBuilder.getAFoo();
 Proxy p = new Proxy(f);
 Foo pf = (Foo) (Object) p;
 // replacement for "f.m1()"
 Foo tmp;
 if (f instanceof Proxy)
 tmp = (Foo) ((Proxy) f).getInstance();
 else
 tmp = f;
 tmp.m1();
 // ... same for "pf"
 }
}
```



# Implementation for Java 1/4

- The Soot library is used to load and manipulate Java bytecode.
- Soot provides a simplified java-bytecode view, called *Jimple*.
- Jimple transforms every kind of complex statement to some very basic forms, so it is easy to handle many cases of proxy-object-accesses in java with only 1-2 cases in Jimple code.



# Implementation for Java 2/4

- Soot also provides a Points-to analysis.
- A Points-to analysis is used to determine which variable *might* be pointing to a proxy object. Those variables get *tagged*.
- Going through the jimple-statements, we have to check whether proxy objects are referenced in:
  - Invocation statements
  - Assignment statements



# Implementation for Java 3/4

- In Invocation Statements:
  - If the variable on which the method is invoked is tagged, then perform the code transformation described before (if o instanceof proxy ...).
- In Assignment Statements:
  - If the rhs is a field access or a method call on a tagged variable, transform it.
  - Same for the lhs.



# Implementation for Java 4/4

- These two types of transformations are enough, as Jimple transforms everything to simple three-field statements.
- Also, only one statement is executed per Jimple triad. So, it is certain that at most one transformation has to be performed per Jimple statement.

