Compiler Construction: Practical Introduction

Lecture 7
Semantic Analysis

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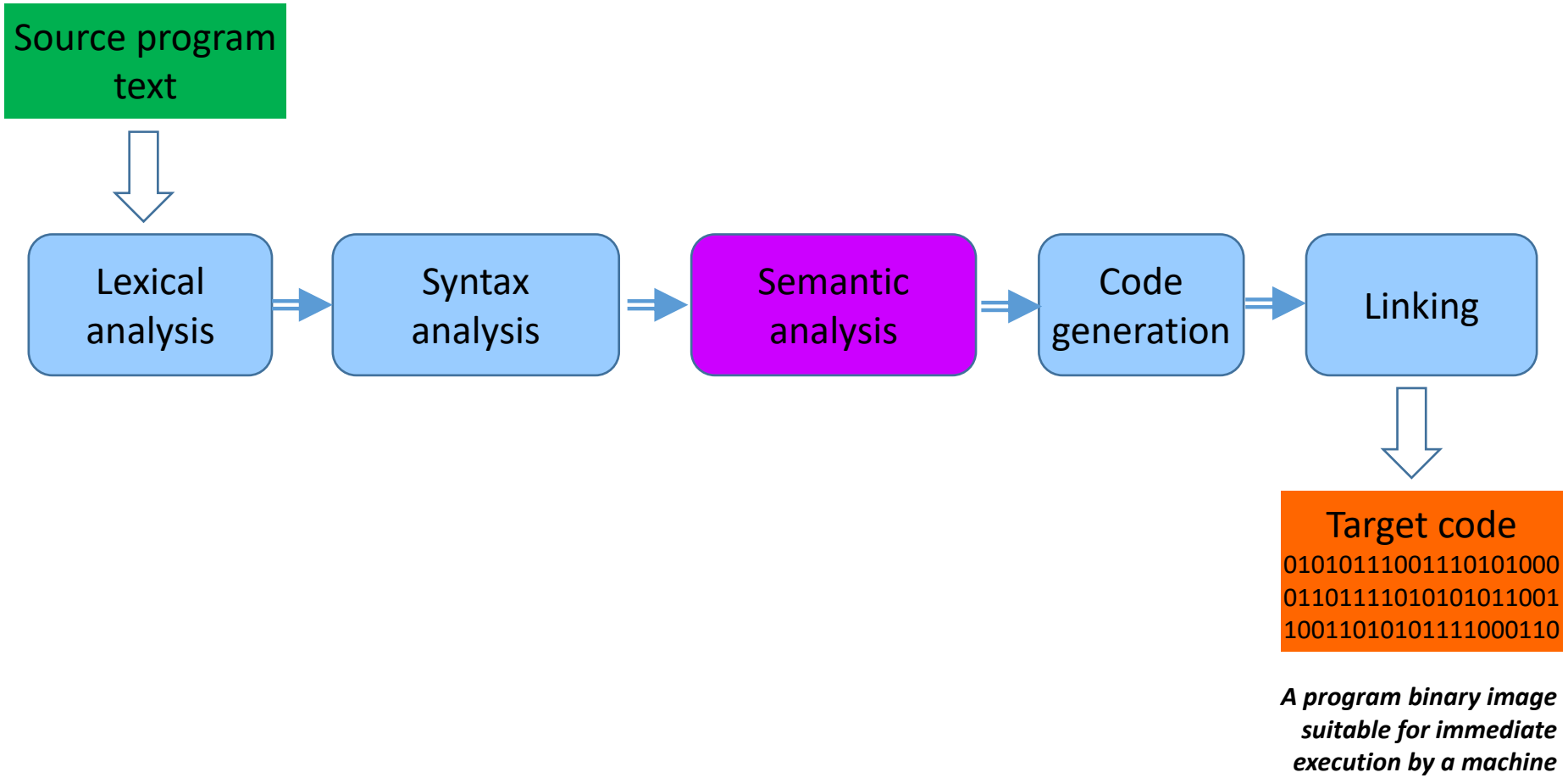
Main Topics

- Why and for semantic analysis is?
- Examples: type checks, standard conversions, initialization semantics, user-defined conversions, calculating constant expressions
- Source code optimizations: the general idea
- Examples: eliminating repeated calculations, replacing slow instructions, excluding redundant calculations, constant propagation etc.

Compilation: An Ideal Picture

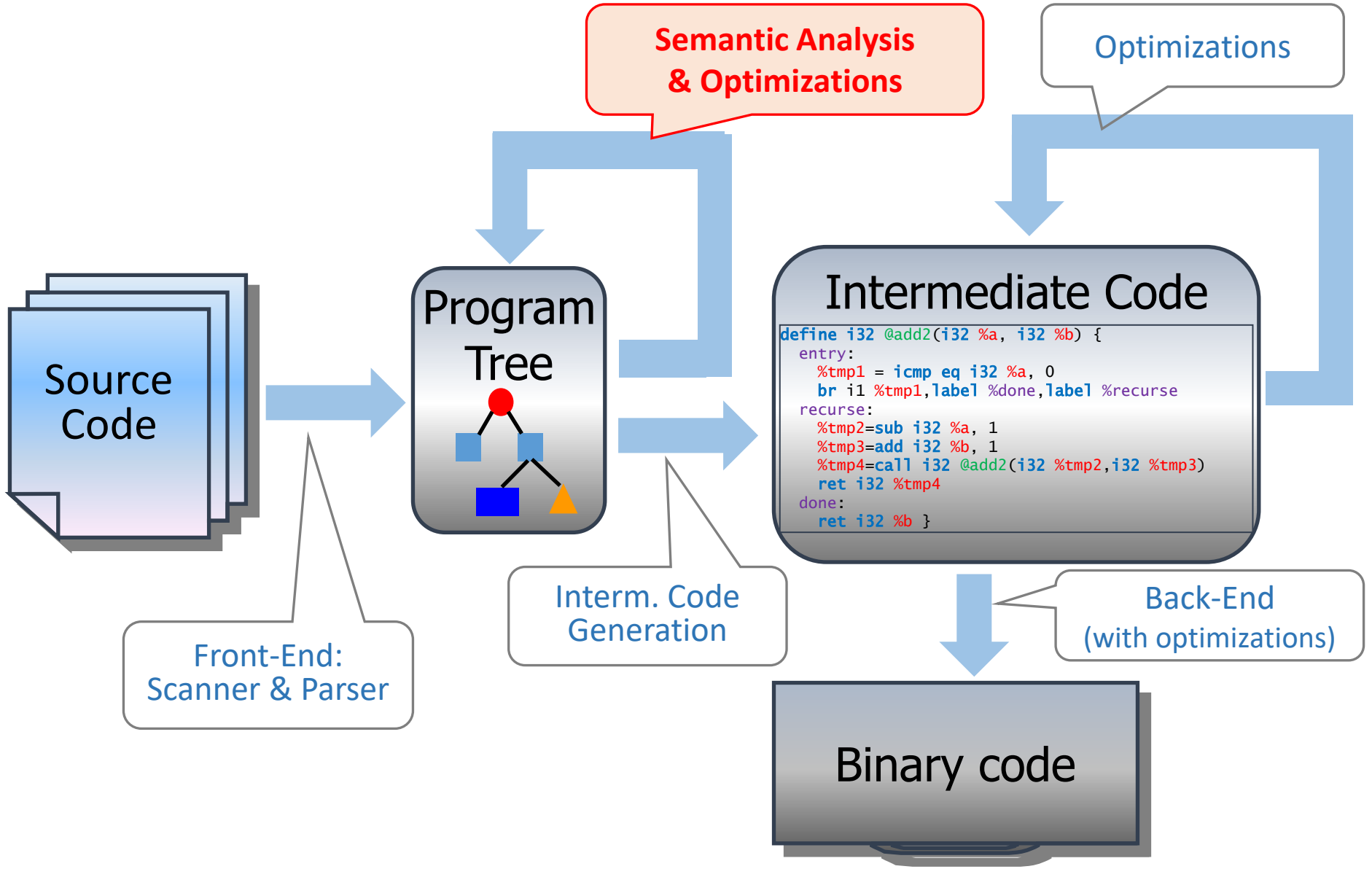
A program written by a human (or by another program)



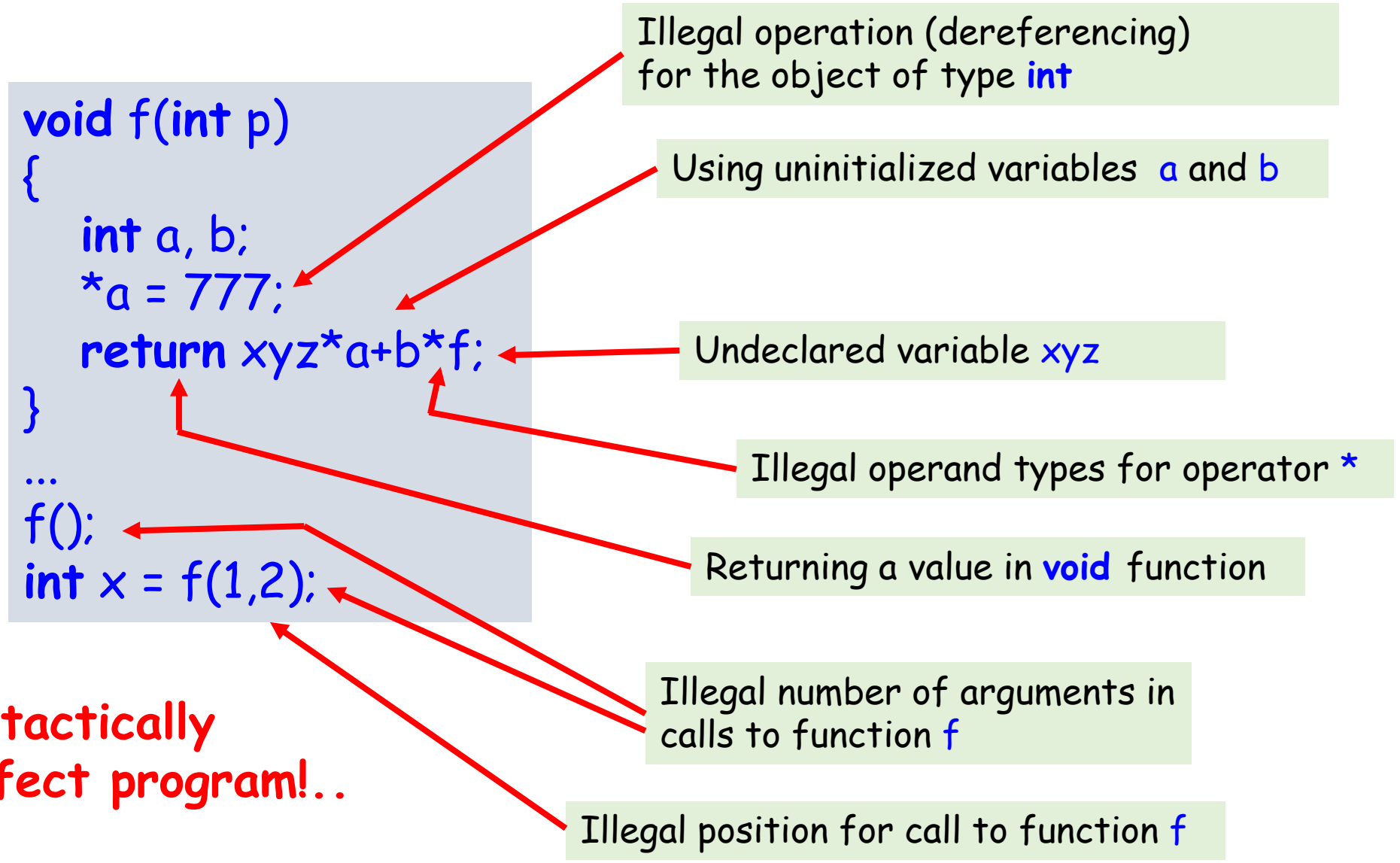
A program binary image suitable for immediate execution by a machine

Coming back to the today's topic

Where We Are Today



What Is Semantic Analysis For?



What Is Semantic Analysis For?

Some remarks

1. Errors like "undeclared identifier" are typically detected on syntax analysis stage – while building symbol tables and/or program tree.
2. Errors like "uninitialized variable" usually are not detected by all compilers because it requires deeper control flow and data flow analysis.
3. Analysis of the code snippet ...xyz*a... typically results in a message like "illegal operand types for * operator". Formally that's true but in fact the reason is that xyz is not declared – this is an example of and ***induced error***.

Наведенные ошибки

Semantic Analysis

- Typically semantic analysis runs on the program tree built on previous compilation stages (while syntax analysis).
- Semantic analysis is typically implemented as a series of tree traverses with some actions related to the source language semantics.
- The more complex semantics is the more passes (traverses) are needed.
  - For relatively simple languages semantic analysis can be done **together** with syntax analysis while building the program tree.
  - For "big" languages, typically multiple walks over the program tree are required (10+ passes for languages like Java or C#).
  - Usually, the last tree walk implements target code generation – either an intermediate representation (like C--) or assembler code.
  - Often, before code generation, some **additional stages** after semantic analysis are necessary like building CFG & SSA representations…

Semantic Analysis

- One or several semantic actions are performed on each tree walk.
- What's the result of each tree walk?
  - Either a modified program tree with **the same node types**; perhaps complex nodes get replaced for simpler ones.

    Example is the C# compiler: after each tree walk the tree consists of the same node types.
  - Or a modified program tree **with different node types** that are more primitive but are "closer" to the target architecture.

    Example is the Scala compiler: node types representing source program constructs get replaced for more primitive nodes ("ICode"), and the JVM (or MSIL) code is generated from ICode finally.

Semantic Analysis

The result of each tree walk is typically twofold:

- The tree changes its structure: some nodes/subtrees are added or removed, some nodes/subtrees get replaced for other nodes/subtrees…
- Tree nodes are annotated ("decorated" ☺) by attributes reflecting various semantic features; the attributes are deduced during the analysis process.

=> The Abstract Syntax Tree (AST) is converted to the **Annotated** Syntax Tree (AAST).

(An alternative solution is **attribute grammars**.)

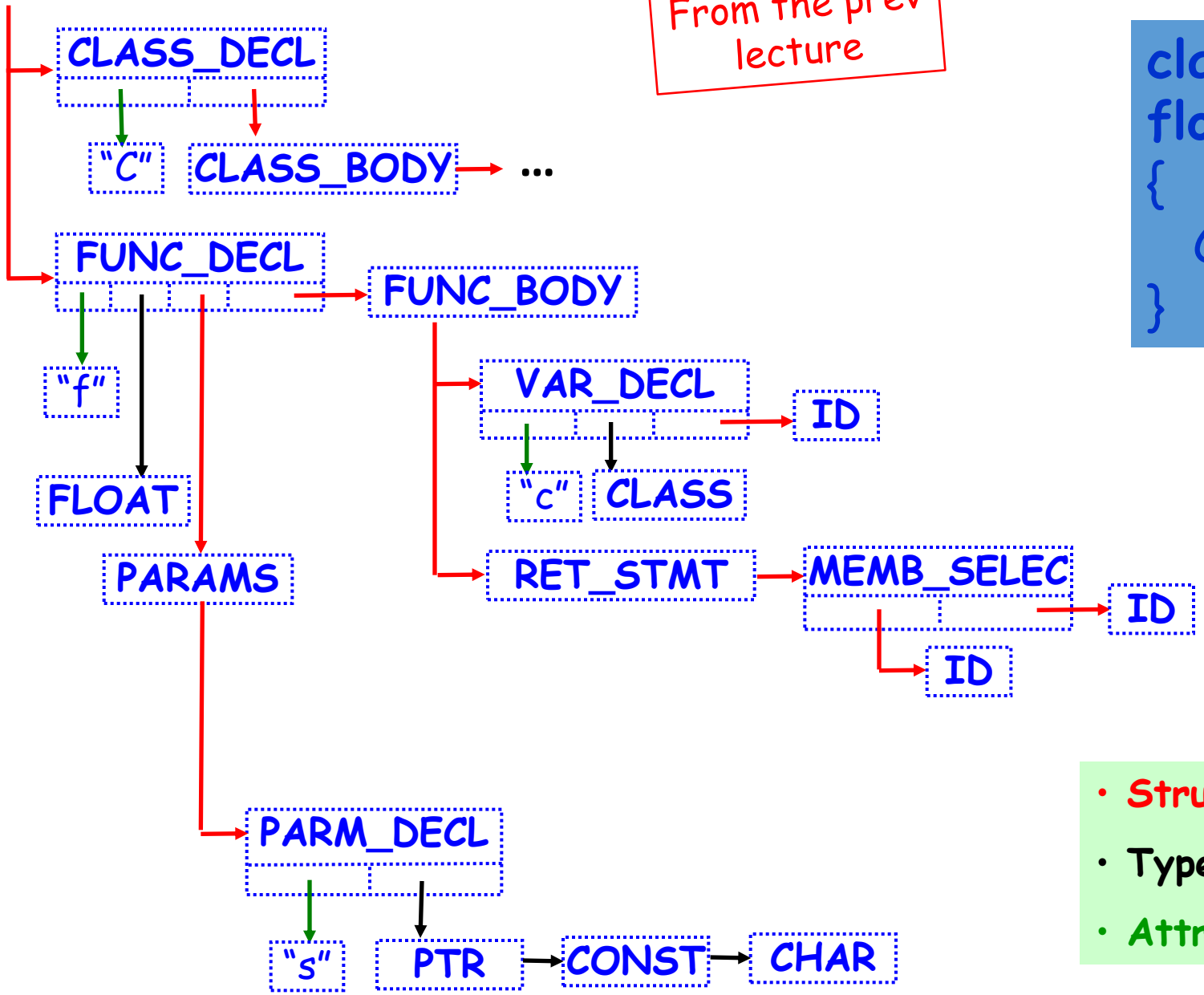
Semantic Analysis: Actions

Four categories of actions while semantic analysis:

- Semantic checks
  - Operand types consistency in expressions
  - Checking correctness for function calls (including destructors)
- Semantic conversions
  - Replacing conversions for function calls
  - Replacing infix operators for operator function calls
  - Inserting necessary type conversions
  - Template instantiating
- Identification of hidden semantics
  - Implicit destructor calls
  - Temporary objects
- Optimizations (!)

AAST example (a fragment)

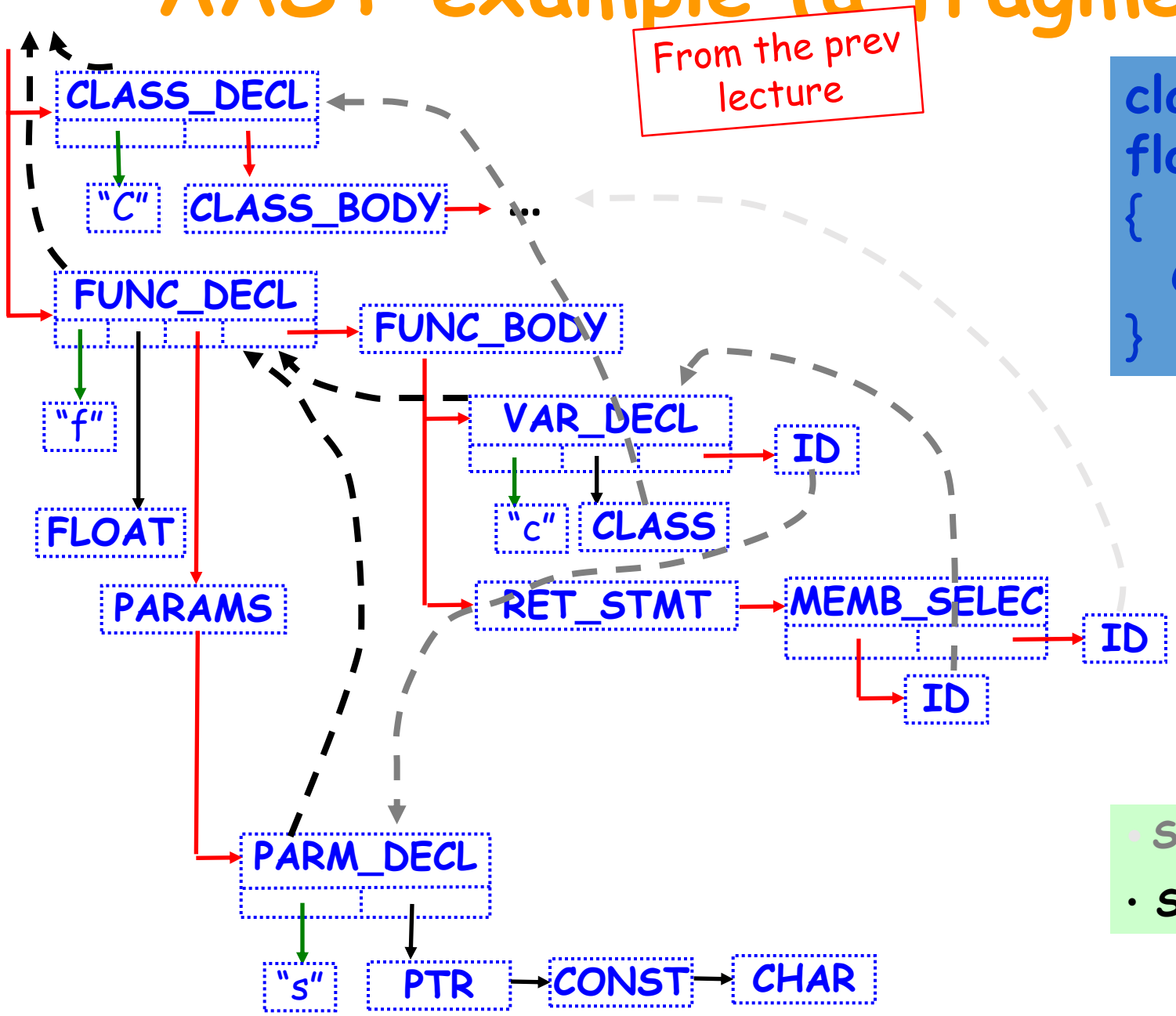
From the prev lecture




```
class C { ... };
float f(const char* s)
{
   C c(s); return c.m;
}
```

- Structural links
- Type information
- Attributes

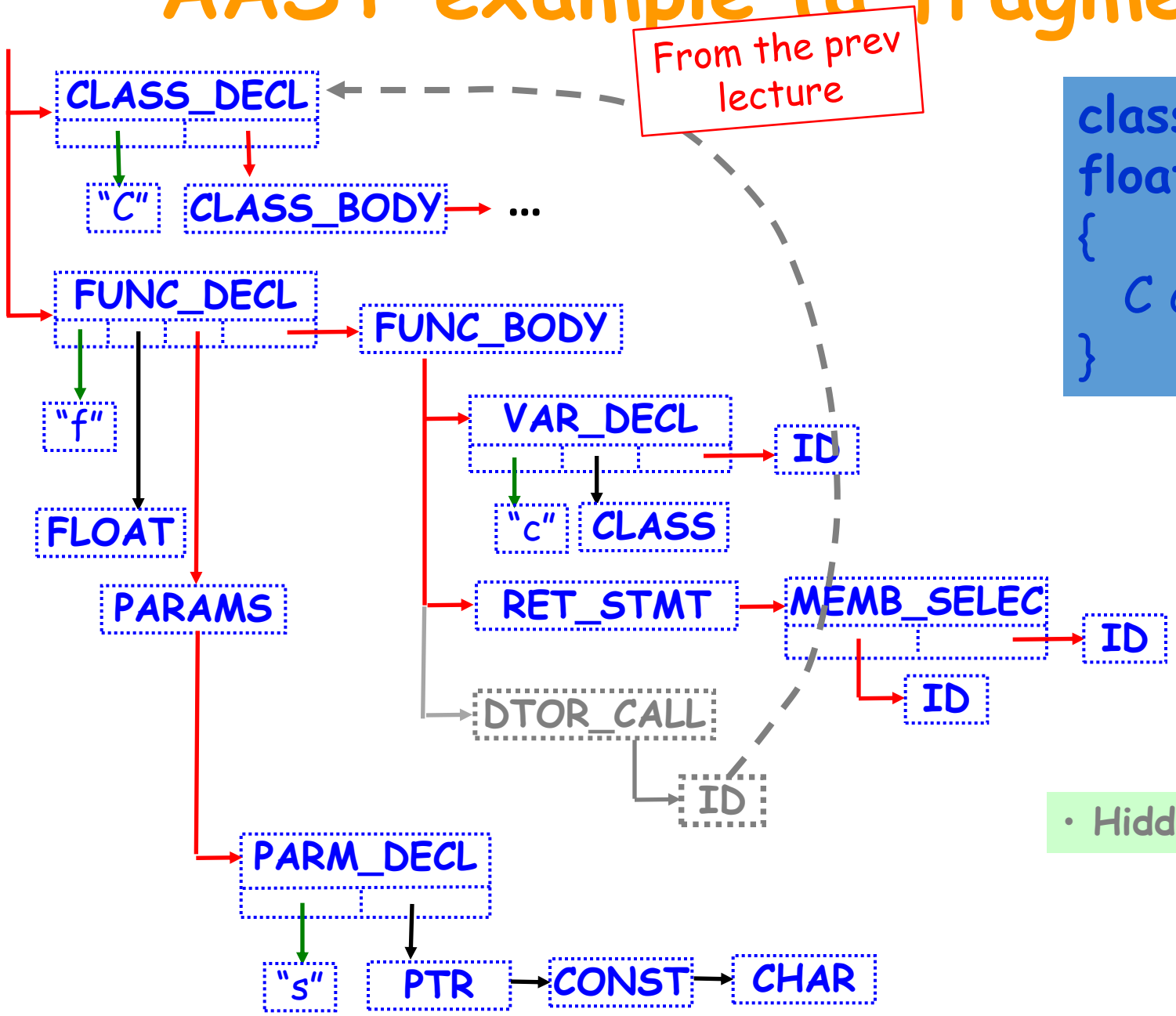
AAST example (a fragment)




```
class C { ... };
float f(const char* s)
{
   C c(s); return c.m;
}
```

- Semantic links
- **Scopes**

AAST example (a fragment)



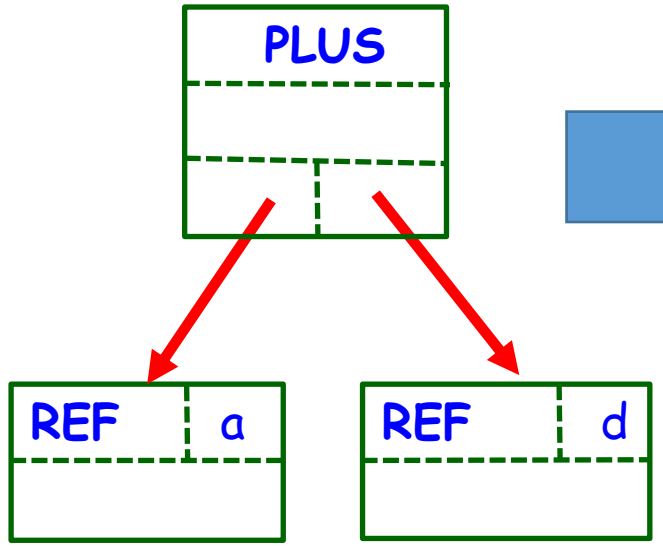

```
class C { ... };
float f(const char* s)
{
   C c(s); return c.m;
}
```

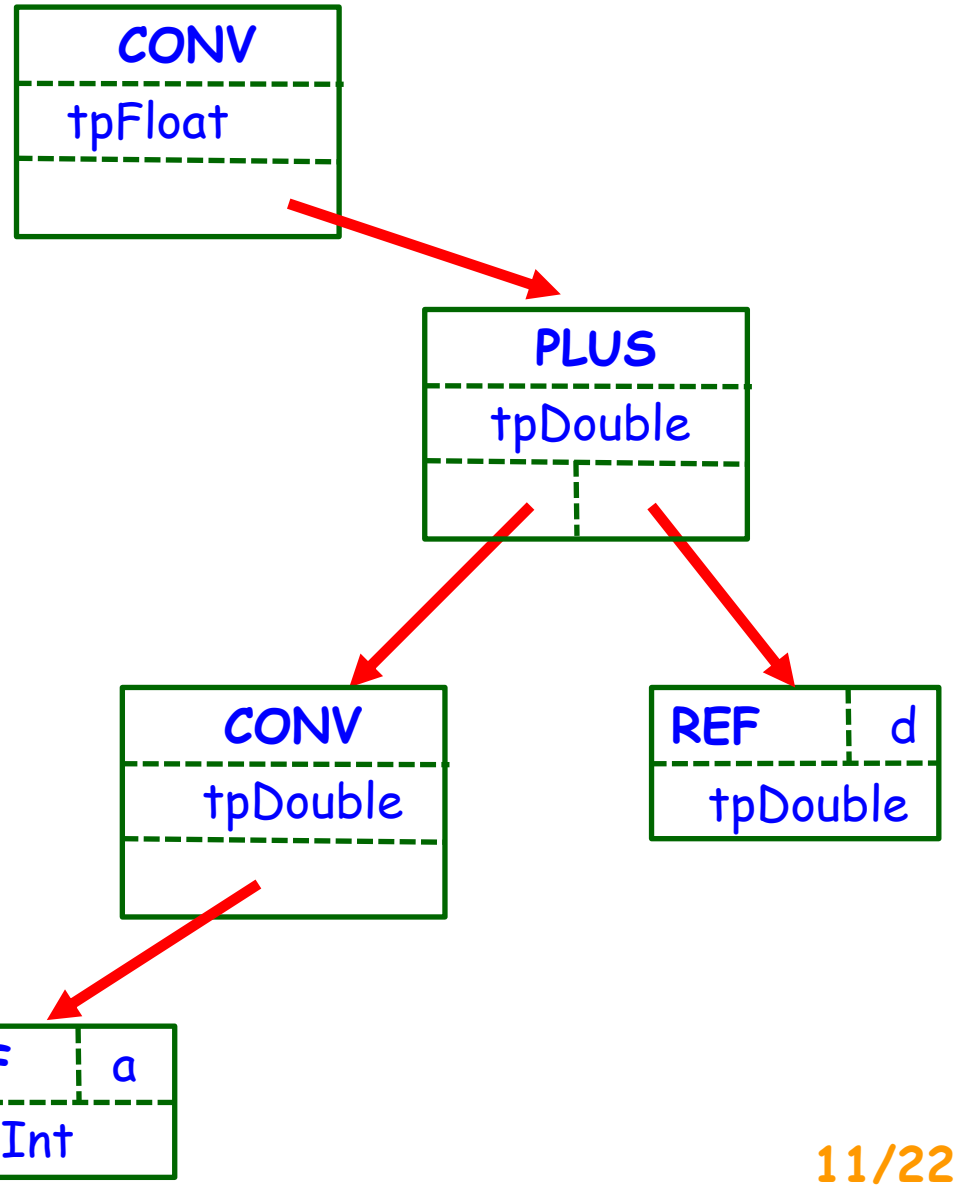
- Hidden semantics

Semantic Analysis: Example 1

Standard conversions

```
int a = 3;
double d = 7.55;
float x = a + d;
```






```
...
float x = (float)((double)a + d);
```

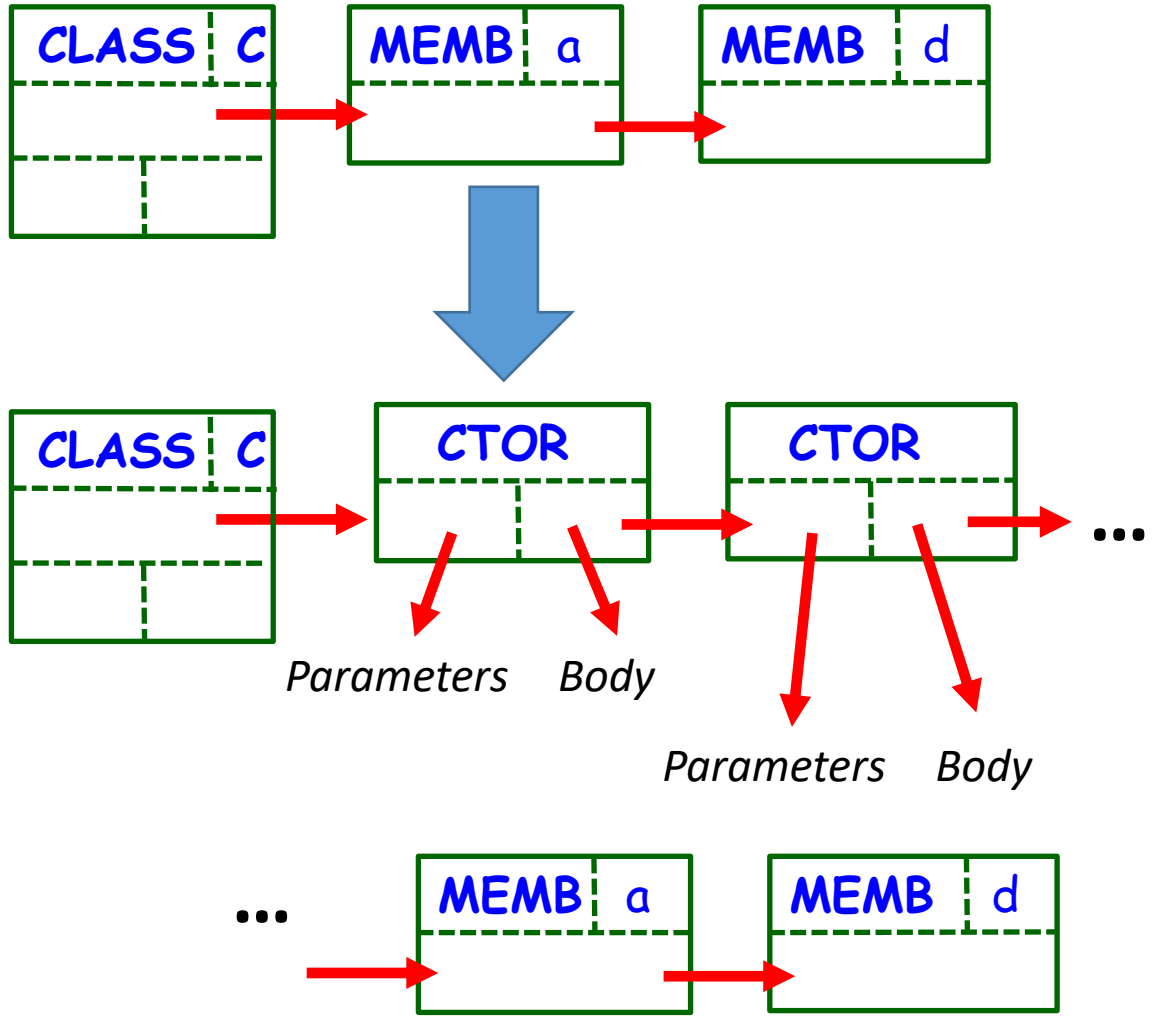
Semantic Analysis: Example 2

Class declaration

```
class C {
    public:
        int a, b;
};
```

```
class C {
    public:
        C() { a = 0; b = 0; }
        C(const C& c) { a = c.a; b = c.b; }
        ...
    int a, b;
};
```

Automatically generated:
- Default constructor
- Copy constructor
- Move constructor
- Copy assignment operator
- ...



Semantic Analysis: Example 3

Initialization semantics

```
class C { ... };
...
C c1;
C c2(1);
C c3(c2);
C c4 = 7;
C c5 = c1;
```

- Allocate memory for c1 object;
- Call **default constructor** of C for c1.

- Allocate memory for c2 object;
- Call **C(int)** constructor for c2.

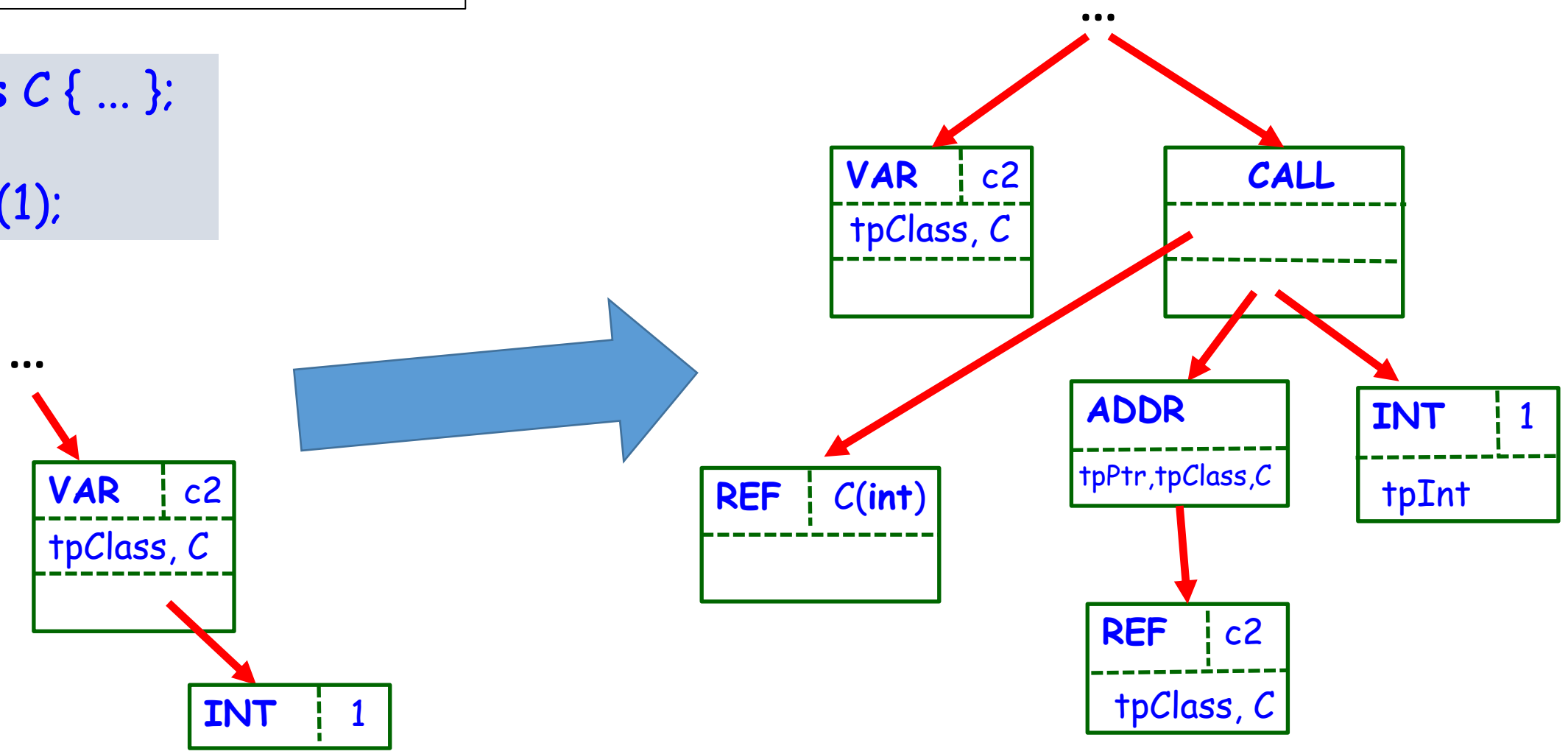
- Allocate memory for c3 object;
- Call **copy constructor** for c3.

- Allocate memory for c4 object;
- Create temporary object tmp;
- Call **C(int)** constructor for tmp;
- Call **copy constructor** for c4.

Semantic Analysis: Example 3

Initialization semantics

```
class C { ... };
...
C c2(1);
```



Semantic Analysis: Example 4

An algorithm for the if statement

if (*Expr*) *Stmt1* else *Stmt2*

- Analyze *Expr* calculating its the type.
- (*optimization*) If *Expr* is a constant, remove either *Stmt1* or *Stmt2* from the tree.
- If type is `Bool`, go to analyzing *Stmt*s.
- If type is not `Bool`, try to add a standard conversion to "*Expr* to `Bool`" to the tree.
- Else if type is a class, try to add a user-defined conversion "*Expr* to `Bool`" to the tree.
- Analyze *Stmt1*.
- Analyze *Stmt2*.

```
public class If : Statement
{
    // Sub-tree structure
    Expression condition;
    Block      falseBlock;
    Block      trueBlock;
    // Operations on sub-trees
    override bool validate()
    {
        if ( !condition.validate() ) return false;
        if ( condition.type != tpBool )
        {
            // Insert type conversion to the tree
        }
        if ( !trueBlock.validate() ) return false;
        return ( falseBlock == null ||
                 falseBlock.validate() )
    }
    override void generate() { ... }
}
```

Semantic Analysis: Example 5

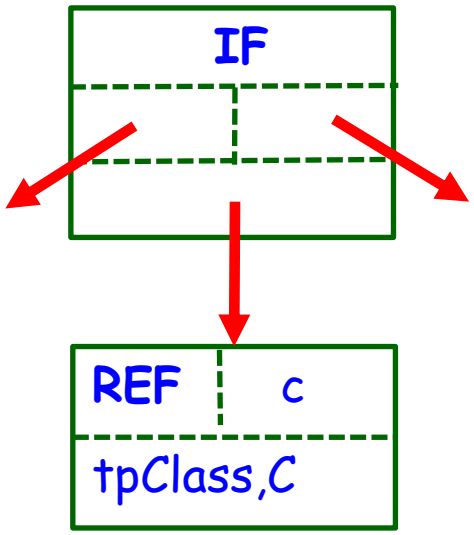
User-defined conversions

```
class C {
private:
    bool m;
public:
    operator bool() { return m; }
};
...
C c;
...
if ( c ) ...
```

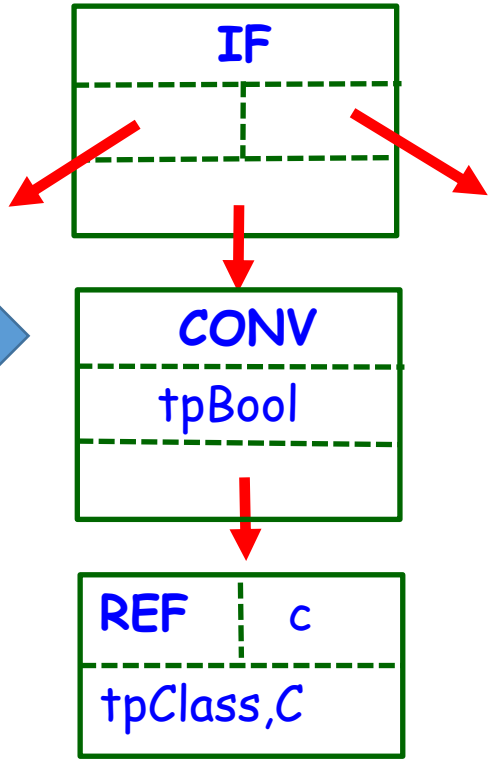
`if ( (bool)c ) ...` ← `if ( c.operator bool() ) ...`

Semantic Analysis: Example 5

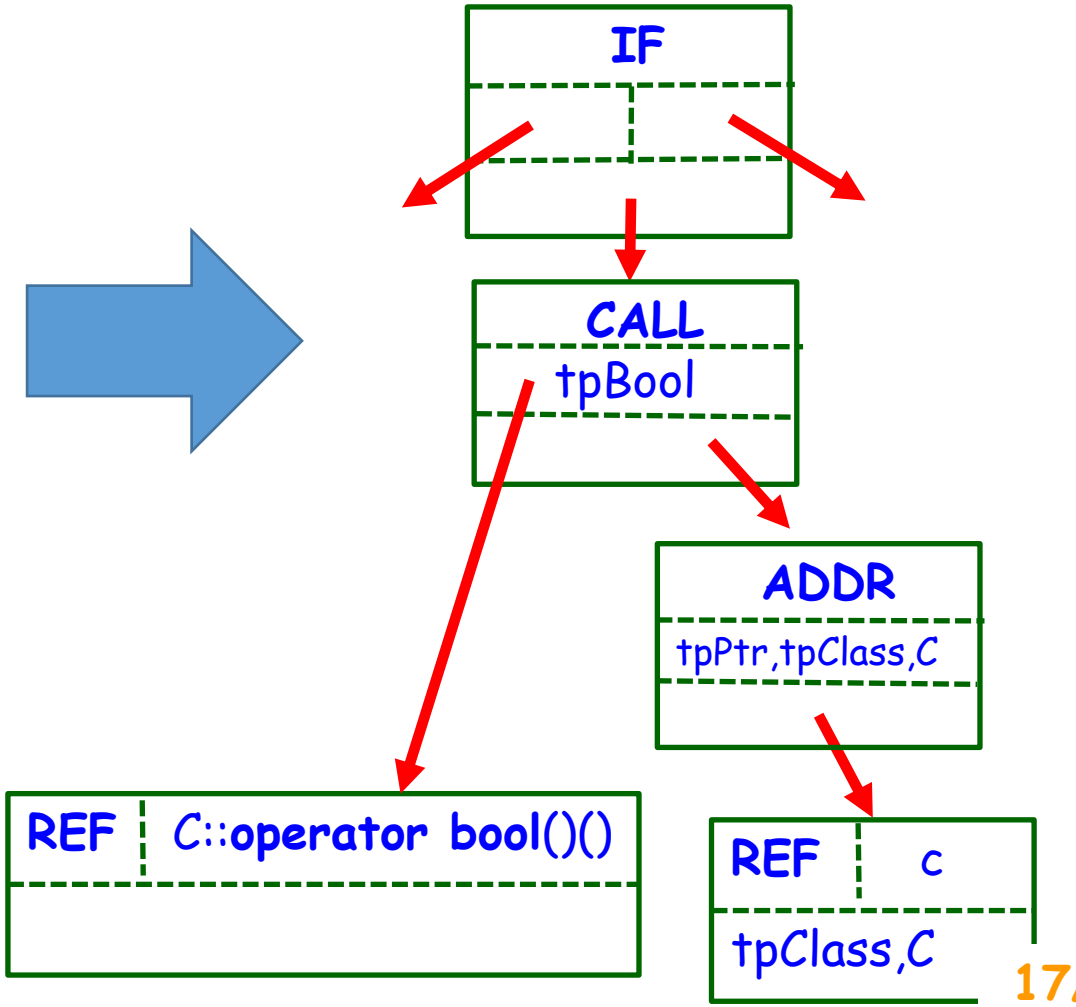
```
if ( c ) ...
```




```
if ( (bool)c ) ...
```



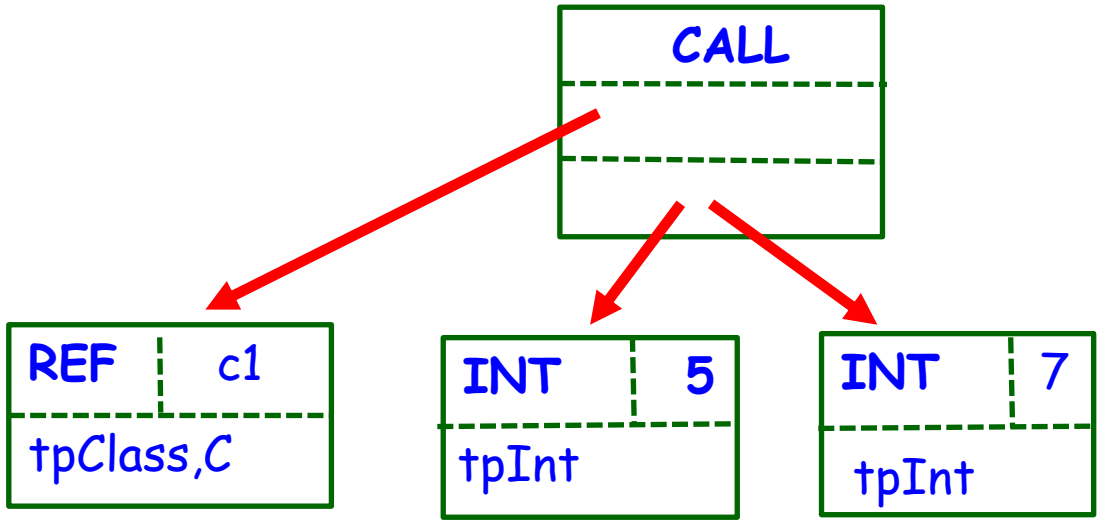

```
if ( c.operator bool() ) ...
if ( C::operator bool(&c) ) ...
```



Semantic Analysis: Example 6

Functional objects ("functors")

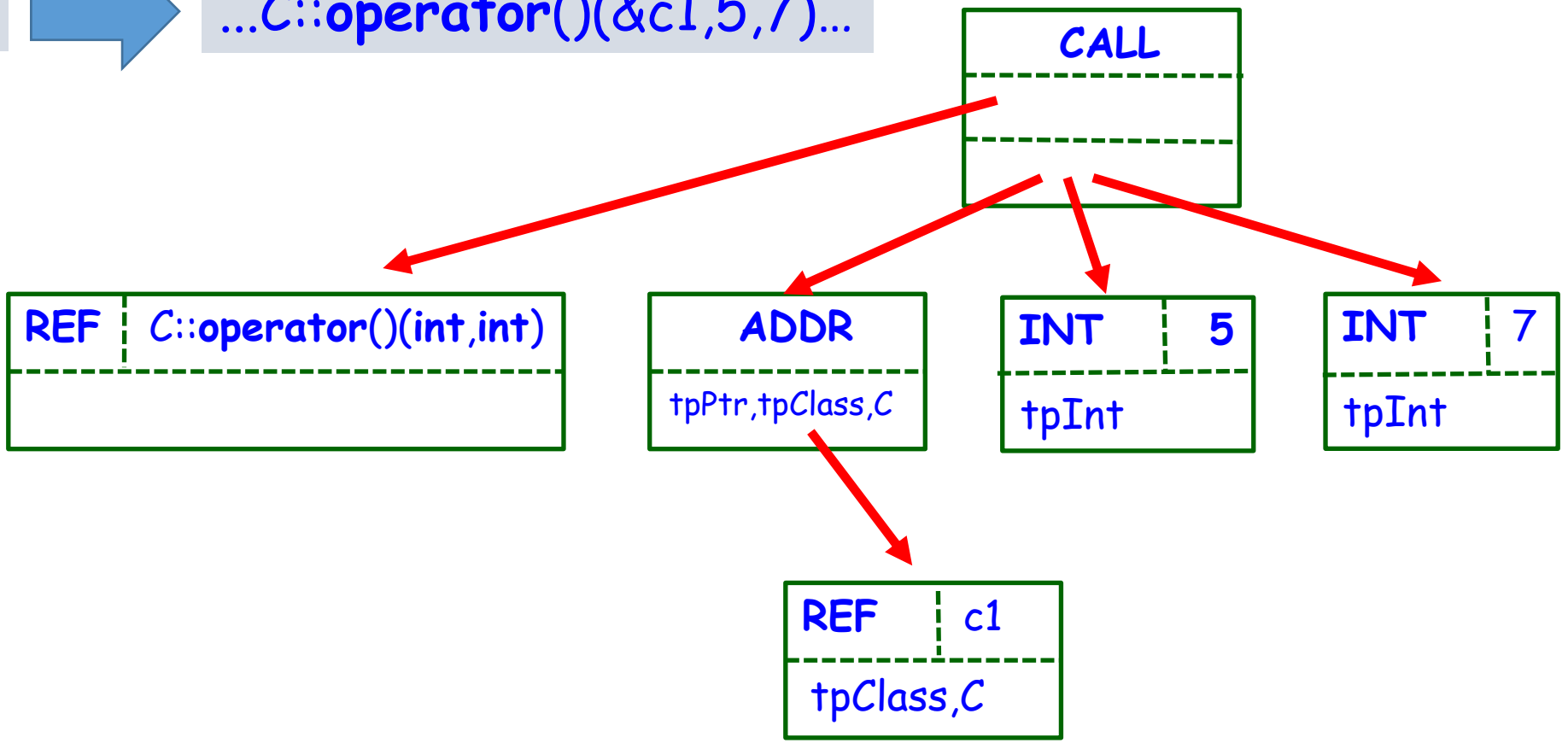
```
class C {
public:
    int operator()(int a,int b)
    { return a+b; }
};
...
C c1;
...
int res = c1(5,7);
```



Semantic Analysis: Example 6

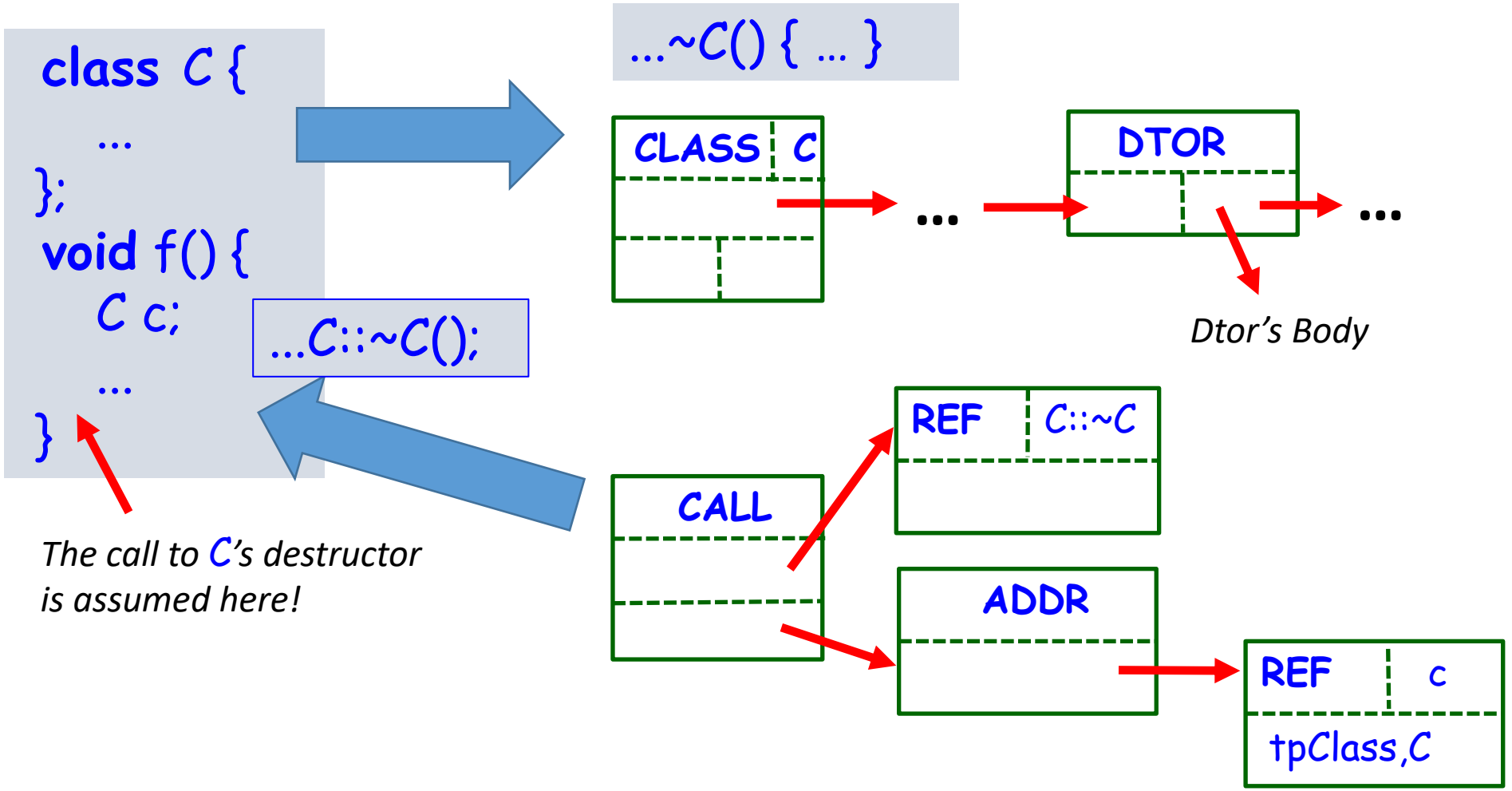
Functional objects ("functors")

...c1(5,7)... → ...C::operator()(&c1,5,7)...



Semantic Analysis: Example 7

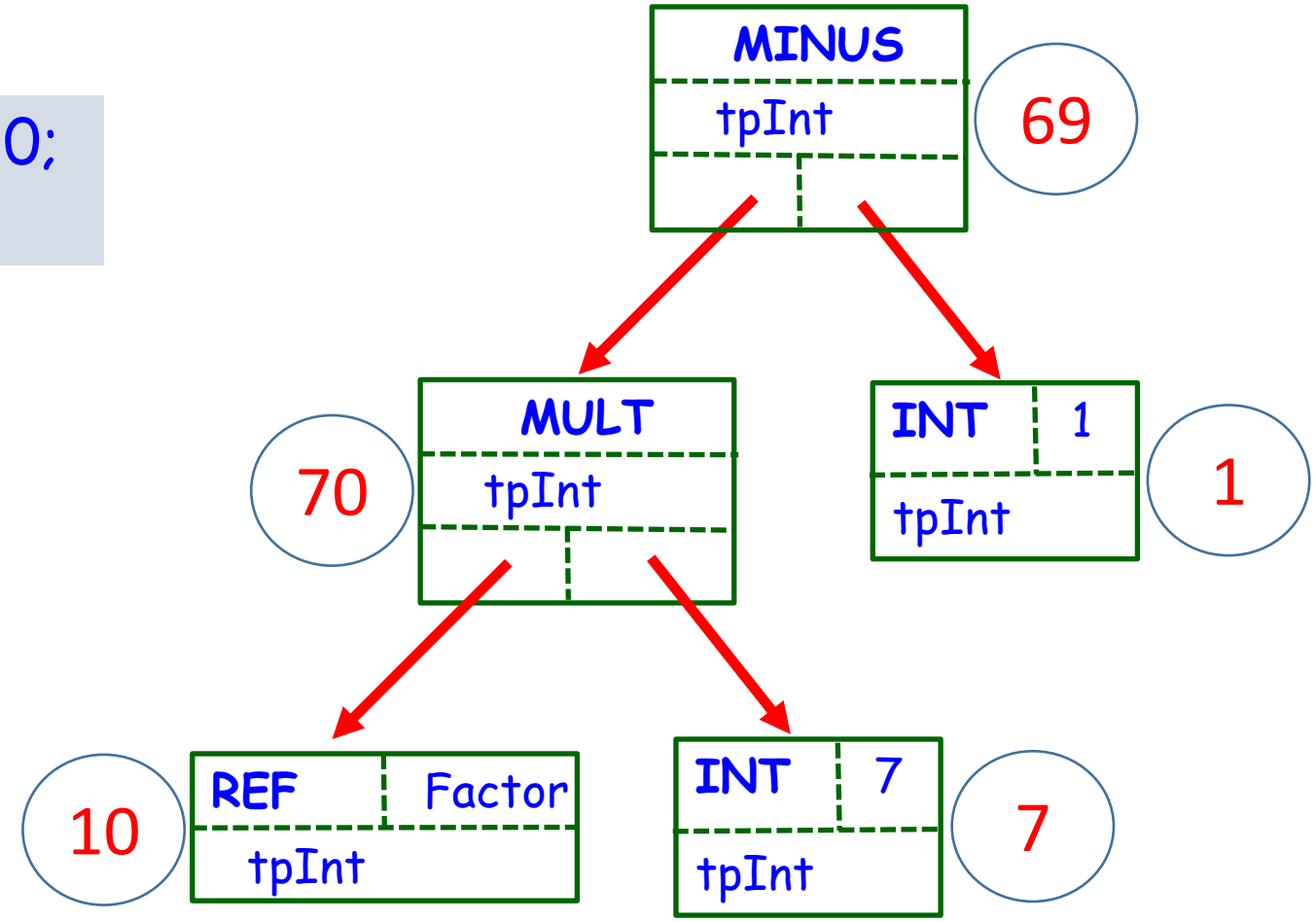
Hidden semantics: destructor call



Semantic Analysis: Example 8

Calculating constant expressions

```
const int Factor = 10;
int A[Factor*7-1];
```



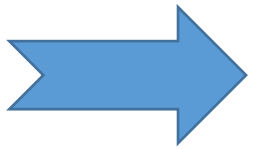
Semantic Analysis: Example 9

Template Instantiation

```
template<typename T>
class C {
  ...
}
```

Class template

```
C<int> c;
```



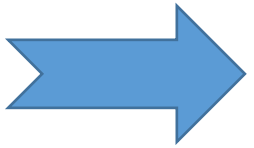
```
class C<int> {
  ...
};
```

Class template specialization

```
template<typename T>
void f(T p) {
  ...
}
```

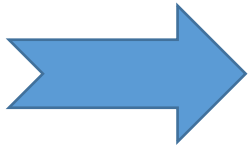
Function template

```
f(7);
```



```
void f_int (int p) {
  ...
};
```

Function template specialization



```
f_int(7);
```