

Lecture 13 – Lazy Evaluation

COSE212: Programming Languages

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- We learned two different evaluation strategies, **call-by-value** and **call-by-reference**, in the previous lecture.
 - **Call-by-value** (CBV) eagerly evaluates the arguments and passes the evaluated values to the function.
 - **Call-by-reference** (CBR) passes the references (i.e., addresses) of the arguments to the function.
- In this lecture, we will learn another evaluation strategy called **lazy evaluation**, while the previous two are called **eager evaluation**.
 - **Call-by-name** (CBN)
 - **Call-by-need** (CBN')
- **LFAE** – FAE with Lazy Evaluation
 - Interpreter and Natural Semantics

1. Lazy Evaluation

2. LFAE – FAE with Lazy Evaluation

- Interpreter and Natural Semantics

- Function Application

- Addition and Multiplication

- Identifier Lookup

3. Call-by-Name (CBN) vs. Call-by-Need (CBN')

- Interpreter for Call-by-Need (CBN')

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So far, all the languages we have defined are based on the **eager evaluation** strategy; all the expressions are eagerly evaluated regardless of whether they are really needed or not.

Consider two FAE expressions (division is supported):

```
/* FAE */  
val a = 1 + 2;  
val b = 5 / 0;      // runtime error: division by zero  
a * 3
```

```
/* FAE */  
val f = a => b => a * 3;  
f(1 + 2)(5 / 0)    // runtime error: division by zero
```

Is it possible to **delay** the evaluation until its result is really needed? **Yes!**

This is called **lazy evaluation**.

For example, Scala supports **lazy evaluation** for immutable variables with the `lazy` keyword and parameters with the `=>` notation.

```
val a = 1 + 2  
lazy val b = 5 / 0  
a * 3           // 9
```

```
def f(a: Int, b: => Int): Int = a * 3  
f(1 + 2, 5 / 0)    // 9
```

Now, the value `5 / 0` for the variable `b` and the argument `5 / 0` for the parameter `b` are not evaluated because they are not really needed.

Many programming languages support **lazy evaluation** for many reasons.

- **Short-circuit Evaluation:** It could avoid unnecessary computations for boolean expressions.

```
ture  && ((5 / 0) < 1)      // error  -- division by zero
false && ((5 / 0) < 1)      // false  -- (5/0)<1 is not evaluated
true  || ((5 / 0) < 1)      // true   -- (5/0)<1 is not evaluated
false || ((5 / 0) < 1)      // error  -- division by zero
```

Most programming languages (e.g., C++, Java, Python, JavaScript, and Scala) support **short-circuit evaluation** for boolean expressions.

Many programming languages support **lazy evaluation** for many reasons.

- **Optimization:** It could optimize the performance by avoiding unnecessary computations.

```
def f(x: Int, y: =>Int): Int =  
  if (x < 0) 0  
  else x * y  
f(-7, complex(...))    // 0 -- complex(...) is not evaluated
```

In fact, we already utilized lazy evaluation in our interpreter:

```
// The definition of `getOrElse` method in `Map`  
def getOrElse[V1 >: V](key: K, default: => V1): V1 = ...  
  
// The implementation of interpreter  
def interp(expr: Expr, env: Env): Value = expr match  
  ...  
  case Id(x) => env.getOrElse(x, error(s"free identifier: $x"))
```


Many programming languages support **lazy evaluation** for many reasons.

- **Infinite Data Structures:** It makes it possible to define and manipulate infinite data structures.
 - Scala

```
val nats: LazyList[BigInt] = 0 #:: nats.map(_ + 1)
nats.take(10).toList      // List(0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
```

- Haskell

```
let nats = 0 : map (+1) nats
take 10 nats      -- [0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9]
```

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Now, let's extend FAE into LFAE to support **lazy evaluation**. (Assume that `val` is supported in FAE as syntactic sugar.)

```
/* LFAE */  
val a = 1 + 2;  
val b = c + 3;  
a * 3      // 9
```

```
/* LFAE */  
val f = a => b => a * 3;  
f(1 + 2)(c + 3)      // 9
```

For LFAE, we don't have to extend any syntax.

Let's focus on how to extend the semantics of FAE to support **lazy evaluation** rather than **eager evaluation**.

While there are diverse ways to define the lazy evaluation semantics, we will define **call-by-name** (CBN) semantics for LFAE.

We want to **delay** the evaluation of **argument expressions** in function applications **as much as possible** until they are really needed.

For LFAE, we need to 1) implement the **interpreter** with environments:

```
def interp(expr: Expr, env: Env): Value = ???
```

and 2) define the **natural semantics** with environments:

$$\sigma \vdash e \Rightarrow v$$

with a new kind of values called **expression values** for lazy evaluation.

Values $\mathbb{V} \ni v ::= n$ (NumV)
 | $\langle \lambda x. e, \sigma \rangle$ (CloV)
 | $\langle\langle e, \sigma \rangle\rangle$ (ExprV)

```
enum Value:  
  case NumV(n: BigInt)  
  case CloV(p: String, b: Expr, e: Env)  
  case ExprV(e: Expr, env: Env) // for lazy evaluation
```

```
def interp(expr: Expr, env: Env): Value = expr match
...
case App(f, e) => interp(f, env) match
  case CloV(p, b, fenv) => interp(b, fenv + (p -> interp(e, env)))
  case v                => error(s"not a function: ${v.str}")
```

$$\sigma \vdash e \Rightarrow v$$

$$\text{App} \frac{\sigma \vdash e_0 \Rightarrow \langle \lambda x. e_2, \sigma' \rangle \quad \sigma \vdash e_1 \Rightarrow v_1 \quad \sigma'[x \mapsto v_1] \vdash e_2 \Rightarrow v_2}{\sigma \vdash e_0(e_1) \Rightarrow v_2}$$

We want to **delay** the evaluation of the **argument expression** e_1 as much as possible until it is really needed.

Let's define an expression value $\langle\langle e, \sigma \rangle\rangle$.

```
def interp(expr: Expr, env: Env): Value = expr match
...
case App(f, e) => interp(f, env) match
  case CloV(p, b, fenv) => interp(b, fenv + (p -> ExprV(e, env)))
  case v                  => error(s"not a function: ${v.str}")
```

$$\sigma \vdash e \Rightarrow v$$

$$\text{App} \frac{\sigma \vdash e_0 \Rightarrow \langle \lambda x. e_2, \sigma' \rangle \quad \sigma'[x \mapsto \langle \langle e_1, \sigma \rangle \rangle] \vdash e_2 \Rightarrow v_2}{\sigma \vdash e_0(e_1) \Rightarrow v_2}$$

```
/* LFAE */
(f => f(1))(x => x+1) // error -- not a function (expression value in f)
```

Unfortunately, in this expression, f has an expression value $\langle \lambda x. x + 1, \sigma \rangle$ rather than a closure value. It means that we need to evaluate the expression value $\langle \langle e, \sigma \rangle \rangle$ to get a closure value.

Let's define the **strict evaluation** for values to get its real value, a number or a closure, rather than an expression value.

$$v \Downarrow v$$

$$\text{StrictNum} \frac{}{n \Downarrow n}$$

$$\text{StrictClo} \frac{}{\langle \lambda x. e, \sigma \rangle \Downarrow \langle \lambda x. e, \sigma \rangle}$$

$$\text{StrictExpr} \frac{\sigma \vdash e \Rightarrow v \quad v \Downarrow v'}{\langle\langle e, \sigma \rangle\rangle \Downarrow v'}$$

```
def strict(v: Value): Value = v match
  case ExprV(e, env) => strict(interp(e, env))
  case _              => v
```

```
def interp(expr: Expr, env: Env): Value = expr match
  ...
  case App(f, e) => interp(f, env) match
    case CloV(p, b, fenv) => interp(b, fenv + (p -> ExprV(e, env)))
    case v                => error(s"not a function: ${v.str}")
```

$$\sigma \vdash e \Rightarrow v$$

$$\text{App} \frac{\sigma \vdash e_0 \Rightarrow \langle \lambda x. e_2, \sigma' \rangle \quad \sigma'[x \mapsto \langle\langle e_1, \sigma \rangle\rangle] \vdash e_2 \Rightarrow v_2}{\sigma \vdash e_0(e_1) \Rightarrow v_2}$$

Let's get the real value of function expression e_0 by using the strict evaluation of values to handle if the function expression evaluates to an expression value.


```
def interp(expr: Expr, env: Env): Value = expr match
  ...
  case App(f, e) => strict(interp(f, env)) match
    case CloV(p, b, fenv) => interp(b, fenv + (p -> ExprV(e, env)))
    case v                  => error(s"not a function: ${v.str}")
```

$$\sigma \vdash e \Rightarrow v$$

$$\text{App} \frac{\sigma \vdash e_0 \Rightarrow v_0 \quad v_0 \Downarrow \langle \lambda x. e_2, \sigma' \rangle \quad \sigma'[x \mapsto \langle \langle e_1, \sigma \rangle \rangle] \vdash e_2 \Rightarrow v_2}{\sigma \vdash e_0(e_1) \Rightarrow v_2}$$

Then, how to handle the identifier lookup and arithmetic operation?

```

type BOp = (BigInt, BigInt) => BigInt
def numBOP(x: String)(op: BOp)(l: Value, r: Value): Value =
  (strict(l), strict(r)) match
    case (NumV(l), NumV(r)) => NumV(op(l, r))
    case (l, r) => error(s"invalid operation: ${l.str} $x ${r.str}")

val numAdd: (Value, Value) => Value = numBOP("+")(_ + _)

def interp(expr: Expr, env: Env): Value = expr match
  ...
  case Add(l, r) => numAdd(interp(l, env), interp(r, env))

```

$$\sigma \vdash e \Rightarrow v$$

$$\text{Add} \frac{\sigma \vdash e_1 \Rightarrow v_1 \quad v_1 \Downarrow n_1 \quad \sigma \vdash e_2 \Rightarrow v_2 \quad v_2 \Downarrow n_2}{\sigma \vdash e_1 + e_2 \Rightarrow n_1 + n_2}$$

For addition, we require actual values for both operands to perform addition. Thus, we need to perform strict evaluation for both operands.

```

type BOp = (BigInt, BigInt) => BigInt
def numBOP(x: String)(op: BOp)(l: Value, r: Value): Value =
  (strict(l), strict(r)) match
    case (NumV(l), NumV(r)) => NumV(op(l, r))
    case (l, r) => error(s"invalid operation: ${l.str} $x ${r.str}")

val numMul: (Value, Value) => Value = numBOP("*")(_ * _)

def interp(expr: Expr, env: Env): Value = expr match
  ...
  case Mul(l, r) => numMul(interp(l, env), interp(r, env))
    
```

$$\sigma \vdash e \Rightarrow v$$

$$\text{Mul} \frac{\sigma \vdash e_1 \Rightarrow v_1 \quad v_1 \Downarrow n_1 \quad \sigma \vdash e_2 \Rightarrow v_2 \quad v_2 \Downarrow n_2}{\sigma \vdash e_1 \times e_2 \Rightarrow n_1 \times n_2}$$

Similarly, we need to perform strict evaluation for both operands for multiplication as well.

```
def interp(expr: Expr, env: Env): Value = expr match  
  case Id(x) => env.getOrElse(x, error(s"free identifier: $x"))
```

$$\sigma \vdash e \Rightarrow v$$

$$\text{Id} \frac{x \in \text{Domain}(\sigma)}{\sigma \vdash x \Rightarrow \sigma(x)}$$

We will not perform strict evaluation for the value of identifier lookup because we can just pass the value without knowing its actual value.

```
/* LFAE */  
(f => f(1))(x => x + 1) // 2
```

Now, it successfully evaluates to 2.

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Interpreter for Call-by-Need (CBN')

In Scala, lazy function parameters are evaluated using **call-by-name** evaluation strategy but lazy values are evaluated using **call-by-need**.

Call-by-Name (CBN) evaluation strategy evaluates delayed expressions **multiple times** if they are used multiple times:

```
def inc(x: Int): Int = { println("inc"); x + 1 }  
def mul5(x: => Int): Int = x + x + x + x + x  
mul5(inc(1))           // 10 and prints "inc" 5 times
```

Call-by-Need (CBN') evaluation strategy is a **memoized** version of CBN, which evaluates delayed expressions only **once** at the first time they are used and then **reuses** the result:

```
def inc(x: Int): Int = { println("inc"); x + 1 }  
lazy val x: Int = inc(1)  
x + x + x + x + x      // 10 and prints "inc" only once
```

Call-by-Name (CBN) vs. Call-by-Need (CBN')

In purely functional languages, CBN' is **equivalent** to CBN and only has **performance benefits** because it avoids unnecessary re-evaluations.

However, with **mutation**, CBN' is **not equivalent** to CBN because it evaluates function arguments **only once** the first time they are used, and thus, it may lead to **different** results:

```
var y: Int = 2
def f(x: Int): Int = x + y
def g(z: => Int): Int = { z; y = 5; z }    // Call-by-Name
g(f(1))                                  // 1 + 5 = 6
```

```
var y: Int = 2
def f(x: Int): Int = x + y
lazy val z: Int = f(1)                    // Call-by-Need
z; y = 5; z                               // 1 + 2 = 3
```

```
enum Value:
  ...
  case ExprV(e: Expr, env: Env, var value: Option[Value]) // For caching

def strict(v: Value): Value = v match
  case ev @ ExprV(e, env, v) => v match
    case Some(cache) => cache           // Reuse cached value
    case None =>                       // The first use
      val cache = interp(e, env)       // Evaluate the expression
      ev.value = Some(cache)           // Cache the value
      cache                           // Return the value
  case _ => v

def interp(expr: Expr, env: Env): Value = expr match
  ...
  case App(f, e) => strict(interp(f, env)) match
    // Initialize `value` with `None` to represent no caching
    case CloV(p,b,fenv) => interp(b, fenv + (p -> ExprV(e, env, None)))
    case v              => error(s"not a function: ${v.str}")
```


- The midterm exam will be given in class.
- **Date:** 13:30-14:45 (1 hour 15 minutes), October 25 (Wed.).
- **Location:** 535, Asan Science Building (아산이학관)
- **Coverage:** Lectures 1 – 13
- **Format:** 7–9 questions with closed book and closed notes
 - Fill in the blank in a Scala code snippet.
 - Define the syntax or semantics of extended language features.
 - Write the evaluation results of given expressions.
 - Yes/No questions about concepts in programming languages.
 - etc.
- Note that there is **no class** on **October 23 (Mon.)**.

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- Continuations

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