rust-verification

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We present an imperative programming language with unique references called Unique, aiming at modeling the semantics of mutable references of Rust. In Rust, (mutable) references borrow the ownership, the capacity to observe and modify the content they are referring to, for a certain amount of time. References can borrow not only from a local variable or a heap allocation but also from another reference. The latter case is called reborrowing. Reborrow forms a tree-like relation between references. While the borrow checker of the Rust compiler enforces the reborrow relation to be well-formed (mutable xor alias!) statically, Unique tracks it dynamically. Imagine running an abstract interpreter of Rust with a dynamic borrow checker. At every point of use of unique references, Unique asserts that the reference is in the reborrow relation (the reference is valid) and removes every other reference reborrowed from it so that it is the only valid unique reference to the location. We expect that this dynamic nature of Unique will help us deal with (type-) unsafe portion of Rust. Note that this project is greatly influenced by R. Jung's Stacked Borrows[1].

1 Definitions and Notations

1.1 Basic data types

```
type-synonym vname = string
datatype ty = Tbool \mid Tint \mid Tref ty
type-synonym tag = nat
type-synonym address = nat
datatype tag-kind = Unique
```

References consists of the address of the referent and the tag. A unique tag is assigned to each reference on creation.

```
datatype \ val = VBool \ bool \ | \ VInt \ int \ | \ Reference \ address \ tag
```

1.2 Expressions

```
datatype place = Var vname \mid Deref place
```

Datatype place represents an access path to data. It corresponds to Place in https://doc.rust-lang.org/nightly/nightly-rustc/rustc_middle/mir/struct.Place. html

```
datatype operand = Place place \mid Constant val
```

Datatype operand describes a value inside an rvalue. Place denotes the current value at the place, while Constant denotes a constant value. operand corrensponds to Place in https://doc.rust-lang.org/nightly/nightly-rustc/rustc_middle/mir/enum.Operand.html, though we simplified the differentiation between a move and a copy (i.e. Unique doesn't track the ownership).

datatype

```
rvalue = Use operand
| Box operand
| Ref place
| Reborrow place
| Plus operand operand
| Less operand operand
| Not operand
| And operand operand
```

Datatype rvalue corresponds to an expression in a usual programming language (as in the previous version of Unique). We chose the term rvalue because of parity with Rust MIR (https://doc.rust-lang.org/nightly/nightly-rustc/rustc_middle/mir/enum.Rvalue.html)

Note that *rvalue* is *not* recursive. Compound expressions need to be broken apart so that intermediate computation is stored to a variable.

The semantics of the constructs is as follows:

- Box :: operand ⇒ rvalue allocates memory in the heap, initializing with the argument (Box::new in Rust). Box returns a new unique reference. Note that Box in MIR doesn't initialize the location but only allocates. The semantics will be adapted to MIR's one as we formalize uninitialized memory.
- $Ref :: place \Rightarrow rvalue$ creates a unique reference pointing to the place.
- Reborrow :: place ⇒ rvalue creates a new unique reference reborrowing from the argument (&mut *p in Rust, although most of the reborrows are automatically inserted by Rust). (TODO: I guess Use(Copy(mutable ref)) in MIR corresponds to Reborrow in Unique.)

1.3 Commands

datatype

```
 \begin{array}{l} com = Skip \\ | \ Assign \ place \ rvalue \ (-::=-[1000,\ 61]\ 61) \\ | \ Seq \ com \ com \qquad (-::/-[60,\ 61]\ 60) \\ | \ If \ rvalue \ com \ com \qquad ((IF\ -/\ THEN\ -/\ ELSE\ -)\ [0,\ 0,\ 61]\ 61) \\ | \ WHILE \ rvalue \ com \qquad ((WHILE\ -/\ DO\ -)\ [0,\ 61]\ 61) \\ \end{array}
```

 $type-synonym \ gamma = vname \Rightarrow address * tag$

Unique implicitly performs boxing to variables. In other words, every variable behaves as a root reference to a memory cell.

```
type-synonym tags = tag-kind list

type-synonym borrow-list = tag list

type-synonym heap = (val * borrow-list) list

fun kill :: tag \Rightarrow borrow-list \Rightarrow borrow-list where

kill t [] = [] \mid

kill t (x \# xs) = (if t = x then [x] else

case \ kill \ t \ xs \ of

[] \Rightarrow [] \mid

xs \Rightarrow x \# xs)
```

The function *kill* calculates references to be invalidated by the use of the given reference. The following two lemmas show that the used reference will be the "leaf" of the borrow tree.

```
lemma [simp]: t \notin set \ ts \Longrightarrow kill \ t \ ts = [] \langle proof \rangle \langle proof \rangle \langle proof \rangle \langle proof \rangle \langle proof \rangle
lemma t \in set \ ts \Longrightarrow \exists \ ts'. \ kill \ t \ ts = \ ts' @ [t] \langle proof \rangle
fun kill-heap :: (address * tag) \Rightarrow heap \Rightarrow heap where kill-heap (a, \ t) \ H = (let \ (v, \ ts) = \ H \ ! \ a \ in \ H[a := (v, \ kill \ t \ ts)])
```

```
abbreviation kill-all :: (address * tag) list \Rightarrow heap \Rightarrow heap where kill-all refs H == foldr kill-heap refs H
```

```
fun writable :: heap \Rightarrow (address * tag) \Rightarrow bool where writable H (p, t) \longleftrightarrow p < length H \land t \in set (snd (H!p)) definition readable where readable = writable
```

Functions writable :: $(val \times nat \ list) \ list \Rightarrow nat \times nat \Rightarrow bool$ and readable :: $(val \times nat \ list) \ list \Rightarrow nat \times nat \Rightarrow bool$ determine whether the given reference can be used to write to/read from it. The validity of references is determined by the existence in the current borrow tree. In Unique, we allow only unique references. Thus readable is equivalent to writable.

```
definition allocated :: heap \Rightarrow address \Rightarrow bool where allocated H a \longleftrightarrow a < length H \langle proof \rangle \langle p
```

2 Semantics of Expressions

This section presents the big-step semantics of expressions.

```
inductive place-sem ::  gamma \Rightarrow heap \Rightarrow place \Rightarrow (address*tag) \ list*val \Rightarrow bool \ ((\cdot; \cdot \vdash \cdot \downarrow_p \cdot))  where  Var: \Gamma \ x = (a, \ t) \Longrightarrow \Gamma; \ H \vdash Var \ x \ \downarrow_p ([], \ Reference \ a \ t) \mid Deref: \llbracket \Gamma; \ H \vdash p \ \downarrow_p \ (refs, \ Reference \ a \ t); \ allocated \ H \ a \rrbracket \Longrightarrow \Gamma; \ H \vdash Deref \ p \ \downarrow_p \ ((a, \ t) \ \# \ refs, \ fst \ (H \ ! \ a))
```

The relation *place-sem* describes the semantics of places. Γ ; $H \vdash p \downarrow_p (refs, v)$ means that a place expression p evaluates to a value v under the environment Γ and H, where refs are the references used to retrieve the value (thus they need to be validated).

```
inductive operand-sem ::

gamma \Rightarrow heap \Rightarrow operand \Rightarrow (address*tag) \ list*val \Rightarrow bool

((\cdot; \cdot \vdash \cdot \downarrow_{op} \cdot))

where

Place: \Gamma; H \vdash p \downarrow_p v \Longrightarrow \Gamma; H \vdash Place p \downarrow_{op} v \mid

Constant: \Gamma; H \vdash Constant v \downarrow_{op} ([], v)

inductive rvalue-sem ::

gamma*tags*heap*rvalue \Rightarrow tags*heap*val \Rightarrow bool (infix \Downarrow 65)

where

Use: [\Gamma; H \vdash op \downarrow_{op} (refs, v); list-all (readable H) refs]
```

```
\implies (\Gamma, T, H, Use op) \downarrow (T, kill-all refs H, v)
  Box: \llbracket \Gamma; H \vdash op \downarrow_{op} (refs, v); p = length H; t = length T \rrbracket
         \Longrightarrow (\Gamma, T, H, Box op) \downarrow (T @ [Unique], H @ [(v, [t])], Reference p t) |
  Ref: \llbracket \Gamma; H \vdash p \downarrow_p (refs, Reference \ a \ t); \ list-all (readable \ H) \ refs \rrbracket
         \implies (\Gamma, T, H, Ref p) \downarrow (T, kill-all refs H, Reference a t) \mid
  Reborrow: \Gamma; \Pi; \Pi \vdash p \downarrow_p (refs, Reference a t); list-all (writable \Pi) refs;
                writable H(a, t); t' = length T;
                H' = kill-all\ ((a, t) \# refs)\ H;\ H'!\ a = (v, ts)
               \implies (\Gamma, T, H, Reborrow p) \downarrow (T @ [Unique], H'[a := (v, ts @ [t'])],
Reference a t') |
  Plus: [\Gamma; H \vdash lhs \downarrow_{op} (rl, VInt lhs'); \Gamma; H \vdash rhs \downarrow_{op} (rr, VInt rhs');
           list-all (readable H) rl; list-all (readable H) rr
         \implies (\Gamma, T, H, Plus lhs rhs) <math>\downarrow (T, kill-all (rr @ rl) H, VInt (lhs' + rhs')) |
  Less: \llbracket \Gamma; H \vdash lhs \downarrow_{op} (rl, VInt lhs'); \Gamma; H \vdash rhs \downarrow_{op} (rr, VInt rhs');
           list-all (readable H) rl; list-all (readable H) rr
         \implies (\Gamma, T, H, Less lhs rhs) <math>\downarrow (T, kill-all (rr @ rl) H, VBool (lhs' < rhs'))
  Not: \llbracket \Gamma; H \vdash op \downarrow_{op} (refs, VBool v); list-all (readable H) refs \rrbracket
          \implies (\Gamma, T, H, Not \ op) \downarrow (T, kill-all \ refs \ H, VBool \ (\neg v)) \mid
  And: [\Gamma; H \vdash lhs \downarrow_{op} (rl, VBool lhs'); \Gamma; H \vdash rhs \downarrow_{op} (rr, VBool rhs');
           list-all \ (readable \ H) \ rl; \ list-all \ (readable \ H) \ rr ]
         \implies (\Gamma, T, H, And lhs rhs) \downarrow (T, kill-all (rr @ rl) H, VBool (lhs' <math>\land rhs'))
```

Some TODO notes on the semantics of expressions:

- I don't get the semantics of *Ref* in MIR and how it should behave under the auto-boxing of variables.
- I'm not sure readable/writable checking is correct.

We present the intuition behind the selected rules. First, Box rule allocates a new slot at the end of heap, returning a reference pointing to the slot with a fresh tag.

$$\frac{\Gamma; \ H \vdash op \ \Downarrow_{op} \ (refs, \ v) \qquad p = |H| \qquad t = |T|}{(\Gamma, \ T, \ H, \ Box \ op) \ \Downarrow \ (T \ @ \ [Unique], \ H \ @ \ [(v, \ [t])], \ Reference \ p \ t)}$$
Box

Next, USE and REF rules allow us to read the content through a place (or give a constant). The validity of the access is checked by $readable :: (val \times nat \ list) \ list \Rightarrow nat \times nat \Rightarrow bool$. Moreover, they invalidate all descendant references to establish the uniqueness.

```
\frac{\Gamma; \ H \vdash op \ \Downarrow_{op} \ (refs, \ v) \qquad list-all \ (readable \ H) \ refs}{(\Gamma, \ T, \ H, \ Use \ op) \ \Downarrow \ (T, \ kill-all \ refs \ H, \ v)} \ \text{USE}} \\ \frac{\Gamma; \ H \vdash p \ \Downarrow_{p} \ (refs, \ Reference \ a \ t) \qquad list-all \ (readable \ H) \ refs}{(\Gamma, \ T, \ H, \ Ref \ p) \ \Downarrow \ (T, \ kill-all \ refs \ H, \ Reference \ a \ t)} \ \text{Ref}}{(\Gamma, \ T, \ H, \ Ref \ p) \ \Downarrow \ (T, \ kill-all \ refs \ H, \ Reference \ a \ t)} \ \text{Ref}
```

Last but not least, REBORROW rule creates a new reference pointing to the same object but with a fresh tag. The newly created reference is writable. Thus the original reference must be valid for writes. Reborrow is considered as the use of the original reference and hence it invalidates former children of the reference. As a result, the reborrow tree will have the original reference and the reborrowing reference as the last two element.

```
REBORROW RULE: \Gamma; H \vdash p \Downarrow_p (refs, Reference \ a \ t) list-all \ (writable \ H) \ refs \qquad writable \ H \ (a, \ t) t' = |T| \qquad H' = kill-all \ ((a, \ t) \cdot refs) \ H \qquad H'_{[a]} = (v, \ ts) \overline{(\Gamma, \ T, \ H, \ Reborrow \ p) \Downarrow (T \ @ \ [Unique], \ H'[a := (v, \ ts \ @ \ [t'])], \ Reference \ a \ t')}
```

We can prove that the semantics of expressions is deterministic.

```
lemma place-sem-det: \Gamma; H \vdash p \Downarrow_p (refs, v) \Longrightarrow \Gamma; H \vdash p \Downarrow_p (refs', v') \Longrightarrow (refs', v') = (refs, v) \langle proof \rangle
```

lemmas $place\text{-}sem\text{-}det' = place\text{-}sem\text{-}det[split\text{-}format(complete)]}$

lemma operand-sem-det: Γ ; $H \vdash op \Downarrow_{op} (refs, v) \Longrightarrow \Gamma$; $H \vdash op \Downarrow_{op} (refs', v') \Longrightarrow (refs', v') = (refs, v) \langle proof \rangle$

 $\mathbf{lemmas}\ operand\text{-}sem\text{-}det' = operand\text{-}sem\text{-}det[split\text{-}format(complete)]}$

```
lemma rvalue-sem-det: (\Gamma, T, H, rv) \Downarrow (T', H', v') \Longrightarrow (\Gamma, T, H, rv) \Downarrow (T'', H'', v'') \Longrightarrow (T'', H'', v'') = (T', H', v') \langle proof \rangle
```

The following lemmas are sanity checks of the semantics. We must be able to write through the references retrieved by Box and Reborrow

```
lemma box--writable: (\Gamma, T, H, Box e) \Downarrow (T', H', Reference a t) \Longrightarrow writable H' (a, t) 
 \langle proof \rangle
```

lemma reborrow--writable: $(\Gamma, T, H, Reborrow p) \Downarrow (T', H', Reference a t) \Longrightarrow writable <math>H'(a, t)$

```
\langle proof \rangle
end
\langle proof \rangle \langle proof \rangle
theory Unique
imports Main\ Definitions\ Exp\ Star
begin
```

3 Semantics of Commands

This section describes the small-step semantics of commands. The configuration of an execution consists of:

- the variable environment Γ (of type gamma);
- the heap H (of type heap) which holds the actual data and the reborrow trees for each address; and
- the command to be executed c (of type com).

```
type-synonym \ config = tags * heap * com
inductive com-sem :: gamma \Rightarrow config \Rightarrow config \Rightarrow bool ((- \vdash - \rightarrow -))
  Assign: [\Gamma; H \vdash p \downarrow_p (refs, Reference \ a \ t); list-all (writable \ H) refs; writable \ H
(a, t);
             H' = kill\text{-}all \ refs \ H; \ (\Gamma, \ T, \ H', \ rv) \downarrow (T', \ H'', \ v); \ H'' \ ! \ a = (-, \ ts)
            \Longrightarrow \Gamma \vdash (T, H, p ::= rv) \rightarrow (T', H''[a := (v, kill \ t \ ts)], Skip) \mid
  SeqL: \Gamma \vdash (T, H, Skip; c) \rightarrow (T, H, c)
  SeqR: \Gamma \vdash (T, H, c1) \rightarrow (T', H', c') \Longrightarrow \Gamma \vdash (T, H, c1;; c2) \rightarrow (T', H', c';; c2)
c2)
  If True: (\Gamma, T, H, b) \downarrow (T', H', VBool True)
            \implies \Gamma \vdash (T, H, IF b THEN c1 ELSE c2) <math>\rightarrow (T', H', c1) \mid
  If False: (\Gamma, T, H, b) \downarrow (T', H', VBool False)
            \implies \Gamma \vdash (T, H, IF b THEN c1 ELSE c2) \rightarrow (T', H', c2)
   While: \Gamma \vdash (T, H, WHILE \ b \ DO \ c) \rightarrow (T, H, IF \ b \ THEN \ (c;; WHILE \ b \ DO
c) ELSE Skip)
abbreviation com-sem-steps :: gamma \Rightarrow config \Rightarrow config \Rightarrow bool ((-\vdash - \rightarrow^* -))
```

Figure 1 shows the assignment rules. Other commands are standard.

 $\Gamma \vdash cfg \rightarrow^* cfg' == star (com\text{-}sem \ \Gamma) cfg cfg'$

The Assign rule assigns a value to the location. To assign through a reference, the reference must be valid for writes. Moreover, the write is considered as a use of the reference; it will invalidate the child references.

The following lemmas show that the execution of the commands is deterministic.

```
\Gamma; H \vdash p \Downarrow_p (refs, Reference \ a \ t) \quad list-all \ (writable \ H) \ refs
writable \ H \ (a, \ t) \quad H' = kill-all \ refs \ H
(\Gamma, \ T, \ H', \ rv) \Downarrow (T', \ H'', \ v) \quad H''_{[a]} = (uu, \ ts)
\Gamma \vdash (T, \ H, \ p ::= rv) \rightarrow (T', \ H''[a := (v, \ kill \ t \ ts)], \ Skip)
Assign
```

Figure 1: The assignment rule

4 Code examples

We need to assign a pre-allocated location to each variable to run a program. Currently we initialize those locations with zeros, but they will be uninitialized when we implement uninitialized slots.

```
abbreviation \Gamma_0 == \lambda-. undefined

fun preallocate' :: vname list <math>\Rightarrow gamma * tags * heap <math>\Rightarrow gamma * tags * heap

where

preallocate' [] ret = ret |

preallocate' (x \# xs) (\Gamma, T, H) =

(let \ t = length \ T \ in

let \ \Gamma' = \Gamma(x := (t, t)) \ in

let \ T' = T \ @ [Unique] \ in
```

```
let H' = H \otimes [(VInt \ 0, [t])] in preallocate 'xs (\Gamma', T', H'))

fun preallocate :: vname list \Rightarrow gamma * tags * heap where preallocate xs = preallocate' xs (\Gamma_0, [], [])

value preallocate [''x'', ''y'']

value map (fst \ (preallocate \ [''x'', ''y''])) \ [''x'', ''y'']

fun prealloc-com-sem :: vname list \Rightarrow com \Rightarrow config \Rightarrow bool ((-; - \rightarrow^* -)) where (xs; c \rightarrow^* cfg) = (let \ (\Gamma, T, H) = preallocate \ xs \ in \ (\Gamma \vdash (T, H, c) \rightarrow^* cfg))
```

Let Isabelle run Unique programs by generating code for the semantics.

```
code-pred [show-modes] place-sem \langle proof \rangle

code-pred [show-modes] operand-sem \langle proof \rangle

code-pred [show-modes] rvalue-sem \langle proof \rangle

code-pred [show-modes] com-sem \langle proof \rangle
```

4.1 Invalidating a reference

Consider the following Rust program.

```
let mut root = Box::new(42);
let mut px = &mut *root; // reborrowing from root

*px = 100;
let mut py = &mut *root; // another reborrow. invalidates px

*py = 200;
// *px = 300 // this write is invalid.
```

In line 1, we create a box that contains 42 in the heap. In the following two lines, we reborrow from it and use the reference to write. The interesting part is line 4. In this line, we create a new reference from root. As this reborrow asserts that py is the unique reference to the box, px must be invalidated at this point. Therefore, if we remove the comment in line 6, the program will perform an invalid write (thus rustc will reject the program). Let's execute the program with Unique. The following command is the

Let's execute the program with Unique. The following command is the translation of the program above without the last commented line.

```
definition XY :: com \text{ where }
```

```
XY = (Var "root") ::= (Use \circ Constant \circ VInt) \ 42;;

(Var "px") ::= (Reborrow \circ Var) "root";;

((Deref \circ Var) "px") ::= (Use \circ Constant \circ VInt) \ 100;;

(Var "py") ::= (Reborrow \circ Var) "root";;

((Deref \circ Var) "py") ::= (Use \circ Constant \circ VInt) \ 200
```

We can let Isabelle compute the program.

```
value preallocate ["root", "px", "py"] abbreviation \Gamma == \Gamma_0("root" := (0, 0), "px" := (1, 1), "py" := (2, 2)) abbreviation T == [Unique, Unique, Unique] abbreviation H == [(VInt \ \theta, [\theta]), (VInt \ \theta, [1]), (VInt \ \theta, [2])] lemma preallocate ["root", "px", "py"] = (\Gamma, T, H) \langle proof \rangle
```

```
values \{(T', H') \mid T' H' c', \Gamma \vdash (T, H, XY) \rightarrow^* (T', H', c')\}
```

The following shows the tags and the heap at the end of execution.

```
abbreviation T_{XY}:: tags where T_{XY} == [Unique, Unique, Unique, Unique, Unique] abbreviation H_{XY}:: heap where H_{XY} == [(VInt \ 200, \ [0, \ 4]), (Reference \ 0 \ 3, \ [1]), (Reference \ 0 \ 4, \ [2])]
```

We can also prove that the program result in the state shown above in theory, but it's really tedious (why can't Isabelle prove it by computing the execution?). The actual proof is left to the reader.

```
lemma final-xy: \Gamma \vdash (T, H, XY) \rightarrow^* (T_{XY}, H_{XY}, Skip) sorry
```

We show that accessing through px after the program will stuck.

```
lemma intermediate-xyx: \Gamma \vdash (T, H, XY;; ((Deref \circ Var) "px") ::= (Use \circ Constant \circ VInt) 300) 
 <math>\rightarrow^* (T_{XY}, H_{XY}, ((Deref \circ Var) "px") ::= (Use \circ Constant \circ VInt) 300) 
 \langle proof \rangle
```

```
lemma stuck-xyx: stuck \Gamma (T_{XY},\,H_{XY},\,((Deref\,\circ\,Var)\,\,''px''):=(\mathit{Use}\,\circ\,\mathit{Constant}\,\circ\,\mathit{VInt})\,\,300)\,\,\langle\mathit{proof}\,\rangle
```

```
lemma ∃ cfg. (\Gamma ⊢ (T, H, XY;; ((Deref \circ Var) "px") ::= (Use \circ Constant \circ VInt) 300) \rightarrow^* cfg
 \land stuck \Gamma cfg
 \land proof
```

4.2 Swap

The following program swaps the content the given two references pointing to.

```
fun swap :: place \Rightarrow place \Rightarrow com  where swap \ x \ y = (Var "reborrow-x") ::= Reborrow \ x;; (Var "reborrow-y") ::= Reborrow \ y;; (Var "tmp") ::= (Use \circ Place \circ Deref \circ Var) "reborrow-x";; ((Deref \circ Var) "reborrow-x") ::= (Use \circ Place \circ Deref \circ Deref \circ Var) "reborrow-y"; ((Deref \circ Var) "reborrow-y") ::= (Use \circ Place \circ Deref \circ Deref \circ Var) "tmp"
```

We can see the content swapped during the execution by running it on Isabelle.

```
values \{H \mid T \mid H \mid c.\}

\Gamma_0("reborrow-x") := (0, 0), "reborrow-y" := (1, 1), "tmp" := (2, 2), "a" := (3, 3), "b" := (4, 4)) \vdash ([Unique, Unique, Unique], [(VInt 0, [0]), (VInt 0, [1]), (VInt 0, [2]), (VInt 10000, [3]), (VInt 20000, [4])], swap <math>(Var "a") (Var "b") \rightarrow^* (T, H, c)\}
```

Proving the correctness of swap would need a Hoare Logic. The road continues...

 $\quad \mathbf{end} \quad$

References

[1] R. Jung, H. Dang, J. Kang, and D. Dreyer. Stacked borrows: an aliasing model for rust. *Proc. ACM Program. Lang.*, 4(POPL):41:1–41:32, 2020.