**CS61A Notes – Week 12: Metacircular evaluator**

**Meta-metaevaluation**

Let's examine how the metacircular evaluator represents things in underlying Scheme. A primitive procedure is represented as list whose first element is the word PRIMITIVE and whose second element is the actual procedure:

 (PRIMITIVE #[subr car]) ;; car in mceval

Non-primitive procedures are a bit more interesting. They're actually a list of four elements: the word PROCEDURE, a list of its parameters, a list of expressions in the body, and the environment it was *created in*:

 (define (foo a b) (+ a b)) =>

 (PROCEDURE (a b) ((+ a b)) <the-global-environment>)

Does that last part sound familiar? The metacircular evaluator is just about as powerful as real Scheme, and the primary reason for that is because we're using applicative order and the **environment model**.

Let's look at how environments are represented. The pair structure handles the environment model; each environment corresponds to a pair whose its car points to the variable/value bindings (which we'll call a **frame** from now on) and whose cdr points to the next environment (just like in the environment model). The global environment, then, has a null cdr. What does a frame look like? Well, it's a pair whose car contains all of the variables, and whose cdr contains all of the values. Here's an example environment created through a let call:

 (let ((x 3) (y 5)) ...) =>

 (((x y) 3 5) <the-global-frame>) ;; the printout of environment 1

Of course, multiple environments can and will point to the same environment, so the entire environment diagram is not a straight list structure. Notice, however, that it's simple to simulate evaluating a variable with this model! Simply check the current frame for a binding, and if it's not there, cdr to the next environment until we either find our variable or go past the global environment – in which case the next environment is null.

**QUESTION**

**Write lookup-variable-value, which takes a variable and starting environment and returns the value associated with the variable or an error if it isn't found after the global environment.**

**Regular Metaevaluation**

So all that above was simple, right? Now let's look at some code (with helpful comments written by yours truly):

(define (mc-eval exp env)

 (cond

 ((self-evaluating? exp) exp)

 ((variable? exp) (lookup-variable-value exp env)) ;; you just did this above

 ((quoted? exp) (text-of-quotation exp)) ;; (cadr exp)

 ((assignment? exp) (eval-assignment exp env)) ;; question 1 below

 ((definition? exp) (eval-definition exp env)) ;; question 2 below

 ((if? exp) (eval-if exp env)) ;; essentially uses Scheme if

 ((lambda? exp)

 (make-procedure (lambda-parameters exp) ;; (cons 'procedure args)

 (lambda-body exp)

 env))

 ((begin? exp)

 (eval-sequence (begin-actions exp) env))

 ((cond? exp) (mc-eval (cond->if exp) env)) ;; makes nested ifs

 ((application? exp)

 (mc-apply (mc-eval (operator exp) env)

 (list-of-values (operands exp) env))) ;; map mc-eval onto exps

 (else

 (error "Unknown expression type -- EVAL" exp))))

(define (mc-apply procedure arguments)

 (cond ((primitive-procedure? procedure)

 (apply-primitive-procedure procedure arguments)) ;; use underlying Scheme apply

 ((compound-procedure? procedure)

 (eval-sequence

 (procedure-body procedure)

 (extend-environment ;; question 3 below

 (procedure-parameters procedure)

 arguments

 (procedure-environment procedure))))

 (else

 (error

 "Unknown procedure type -- APPLY" procedure))))

A lot of code, but remember mc-eval is just an implementation of environment diagrams. One of the mysteries not covered above is eval-sequence. This is how begin statements and, more importantly, compound procedures are handled:

(define (eval-sequence exps env)

 (cond ((last-exp? exps) ;; last-exp? => (null? (cdr exps)))

 (mc-eval (first-exp exps) env)) ;; first-exp => car

 (else (mc-eval (first-exp exps) env)

 (eval-sequence (rest-exps exps) env))))

Fairly uninteresting for begin statements, but notice how it's called in mc-apply for compound procedures – the evaluating environment is a new environment created using extend-environment, which you'll code in about 2 questions.

**QUESTIONS**

1. **(define (eval-assignment exp env)**

 **(set-variable-value! (assignment-variable exp) ;; (cadr exp)**

 **(mc-eval (assignment-value exp) env) ;; (caddr exp)**

 **env)**

 **'okay)**

**Modify your lookup-variable-value code above to create set-variable-value! (which takes an additional value argument).**

1. **(define (eval-definition exp env)**

 **(define-variable! (definition-variable exp) ;; (cadr exp)**

 **(mc-eval (definition-value exp) env) ;; (caddr exp)**

 **env)**

 **'okay)**

**Modify your set-variable-value! code above to create define-variable!. You should write a helper add-binding-to-frame! that takes a variable, value, and frame, and adds the binding into the given frame.**

1. **Write (extend-environment vars vals base-env) that takes in a list of variables, a list of values, and an environment to extend, and creates the new environment (as when you call a procedure in the environment model).**
2. **Scheme's map won't work in mc-eval. Why?**
3. **Write (mc-map fn ls) to work with mc-eval. It will be installed as the primitive procedure associated with map. fn is defined in our new representation.**

**Dynamic Scope**

The major difference between lexical and dynamic scope's apply: In lexical scope, we extend the *procedure environment* (right bubble) of the procedure we're invoking, whereas in dynamic scope, we extend the *current environment*. (Review: Which one does Scheme use?)

Note that in dynamic scope, the right bubble is entirely unnecessary. Dynamic scope tends to be much easier to implement and model, but lexical scope gives us a nice way to do **local state**. It is important to understand dynamic scope though, and it may prove to be of some relevance to you in the near future (\*cough\* proj4).

There are various advantages that one has over the other, and I'll let you read about those in the lecture notes.

**Analyzing Evaluator – “This is where the magic happens”**

*The intuition is quite easy. We want to “compile” expressions into procedures that take in an environment. This is mainly for speeding up procedure calls (and note, NOT for just recursive procedures).*

For instance, in mc-eval, let's suppose I use the square procedure a lot. Let's look at the sample call (square 7):

1. (square 7): not self-evaluating, not a symbol...

 application: eval square, eval 7

 apply square to operands: (7)

1. apply: not primitive, compound procedure

 extend environment, eval (\* x x)

1. (\* x x): not self-evaluating, not a symbol...

 application: eval \*, lookup x, lookup x

 apply \*

Annoying, isn't it? Every time we call square, we have to go through mc-eval's cond clause, checking for what type of expression the body of square is.

What if we could analyze the square procedure once so that we know what type of expression the body of square is? That's what the analyzing evaluator does:

1. (analyze (square 7)) => <analyzed-procedure>

 returns analyzed procedure that takes in an environment

1. (<analyzed-procedure> env) => value

 applies the body of the procedure to the operands

And that's it! Well, sort of. *How* do we actually do this? First, we analyze the expression. After analysis, we package the information into a procedure:

 (lambda (env) (apply (lookup \* env)

 (list (lookup x env) (lookup x env))))

Then, every time we call square, we just call the above procedure with the appropriate environment. (Disclaimer: This isn't exactly how it looks, because analyzing-eval has to handle general cases.)

So here's the model: (define (analyzing-eval exp env) ((analyze exp) env)). Analyze the expression, and when it's time for evaluation, plug in the environment.

 (define (analyze-lambda exp)

 (let ((vars (cadr exp))

 (analyzed-body (analyze-sequence (lambda-body exp))))

 (lambda (env) (make-procedure vars analyzed-body env))))

Here's where most of the benefits of analysis will come. The difference is that we analyze the body BEFORE we make the procedure, so when it comes to calling this procedure, all we have to do is take the analyzed-body and pass in the appropriate environment.

 (define (analyze-application exp) ;; for lambda-created procs, not directly from code

 (lambda (env)

 (let ((analyzed-proc (analyze (operator exp)))

 (analyzed-operands (map (lambda (a) (a env)) (map analyze (operands exp)))))

 ((procedure-body proc)

 (extend-environment (procedure-parameters analyzed-proc)

 analyzed-operands

 (procedure-environment analyzed-proc))))

So in the example of square, it first goes through analyze-lambda, then every time we want the value of square called with some argument, we use analyze-application.

If you haven't noticed by now, all the analyzing evaluator does is **package procedures into regular Scheme procedures**. But the idea is still important – if we can compile procedures into regular Scheme procedures, it's not much harder to compile it into something else, like machine language. This is what compiling is!

(Note: When you see analyze-application in the code, it won't look like above. But it's just split between analyze-application and execute-application.)

**QUESTIONS**

**Which of the following would have speed up in analyzing-evaluator?**

1. **(+ 1 2)**
2. **(((lambda (x) (lambda (y) (+ x y))) 5) 6)**
3. **(map (lambda (x) (\* x x)) '(1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10))**
4. **(define fib**

 **(lambda (n)**

 **(if (or (= n 0) (= n 1)) 1**

 **(+ (fib (- n 1)) (fib (- n 2)))))**

**(fib 5)**

1. **(define fact**

 **(lambda (x) (if (= x 0) 1 (\* x (fact (- x 1))))))**

1. **(accumulate cons nil '(1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10))**