

15-411: Dynamic Semantics

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Dynamic Semantics

- **Static semantics:** definition of valid programs
 - **Dynamic semantics:** definition of how programs are executed
 - So far: Dynamic semantics is given in English on lab handouts
 - This only works since you know how C programs should behave
 - Sometimes needed to consult the reference compiler
 - A description in English will always be ambiguous
- ➡ **Need precise ways of defining the meaning of programs**

Types of (Formal) Dynamic Semantics

- **Denotational Semantics:** Abstract and elegant.
 - Each part of a program is associated with a denotation (math. object)
 - For example: a procedure is associated with a mathematical function
- **Axiomatic Semantics:** Strongly related to program logic.
 - Gives meaning to phrases using logical axioms
 - The meaning is identical to the set of properties that can be proved
- **Operational Semantics:** Describes how programs are executed
 - Related to interpreters and abstract machines
 - Most popular and flexible form of semantics

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Operational Semantics

- **Many different styles**

- Natural semantics (or big-step semantics or evaluation dynamics)
- Structural operational semantics
- Substructural operational semantics
- Abstract machine (or small-step with continuation)

- **We will use an abstract machine**

- Very general: can describe non-termination, concurrency, ...
- Low-level and elaborate

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How to pick the right dynamic semantics?

Evaluating Expressions

Continuations

Want to model a single evaluation step

$$e \rightarrow e'$$

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$$e \triangleright K$$

“Evaluate expression e and pass the result to K ”

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A stack of partial computations.

“Evaluate expression e and pass the result to K ”

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Evaluation Rules: Addition

$$e_1 + e_2 \triangleright K \quad \longrightarrow \quad e_1 \triangleright (_ + e_2, K)$$

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Two constants

Actual addition.

Evaluation Rules: Binary Operations

Arithmetic operations are treated like addition

$$e_1 \oplus e_2 \triangleright K \quad \longrightarrow \quad e_1 \triangleright (_ \oplus e_2, K)$$

$$c_1 \triangleright (_ \oplus e_2, K) \quad \longrightarrow \quad e_2 \triangleright (c_1 \oplus _, K)$$

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What about
effects?

Evaluation Rules: Binops with Effects

In case of an arithmetic exception: Abort the computation and report and error

$$e_1 \oslash e_2 \triangleright K \quad \longrightarrow \quad e_1 \triangleright (_ \oslash e_2, K)$$

$$c_1 \triangleright (_ \oslash e_2, K) \quad \longrightarrow \quad e_2 \triangleright (c_1 \oslash _, K)$$

$$c_2 \triangleright (c_1 \oslash _, K) \quad \longrightarrow \quad c \triangleright K \quad (c = c_1 \oslash c_2)$$

$$c_2 \triangleright (c_1 \oslash _, K) \quad \longrightarrow \quad \text{exception}(\text{arith}) \quad (c_1 \oslash c_2 \text{ undefined})$$

There is no rule for further evaluating an exception.

Example Evaluation

$$((4 + 5) * 10) + 2 \triangleright \cdot$$

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$$\longrightarrow (4 + 5) * 10 \quad \triangleright _ + 2$$

$$\longrightarrow 4 + 5 \quad \triangleright _ * 10, _ + 2$$

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$$\longrightarrow 5 \triangleright 4 + _, _ * 10, _ + 2$$

Example Evaluation

$$((4 + 5) * 10) + 2 \triangleright \cdot$$

\longrightarrow	$(4 + 5) * 10$	\triangleright	$_ + 2$
\longrightarrow	$4 + 5$	\triangleright	$_ * 10, _ + 2$
\longrightarrow	4	\triangleright	$_ + 5, _ * 10, _ + 2$
\longrightarrow	5	\triangleright	$4 + _, _ * 10, _ + 2$
\longrightarrow	9	\triangleright	$_ * 10, _ + 2$

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\longrightarrow	2	\triangleright	$90 + _$
\longrightarrow	92	\triangleright	\cdot

Evaluation Rules: End of and Evaluation

If we reach a constant and the empty continuation then we stop

$$c \triangleright \cdot \longrightarrow \text{value}(c)$$

Evaluation Rules: Boolean Expressions

$$e_1 \ \&\& \ e_2 \triangleright K \quad \longrightarrow \quad e_1 \triangleright (_ \ \&\& \ e_2 \ , \ K)$$

$$\text{false} \triangleright (_ \ \&\& \ e_2 \ , \ K) \quad \longrightarrow \quad \text{false} \triangleright K$$

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true and *false* are also values

(We could also use 1 and 0 but distinguishing helps detect errors.)

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Notice the short-cutting.

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$$\eta \vdash e \triangleright K$$

Variables and Environments II

The rules we have seen so far just carry over

$$\eta \vdash e_1 \oplus e_2 \triangleright K \quad \longrightarrow \quad \eta \vdash e_1 \triangleright (_ \oplus e_2, K)$$

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The environment never changes when evaluating expressions

Executing Statements

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Executions of statements don't pass values to the continuation

Statements have usually an effect on the environment

Machine configurations:

$$\eta \vdash s \blacktriangleright K$$

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A terminating execution ends with a nop.

Executing Statements II

Interaction with expressions is straightforward

Assignments:

$$\eta \vdash \text{assign}(x, e) \blacktriangleright K \quad \longrightarrow \quad \eta \vdash e \triangleright (\text{assign}(x, _) , K)$$

$$\eta \vdash v \triangleright (\text{assign}(x, _) , K) \quad \longrightarrow$$

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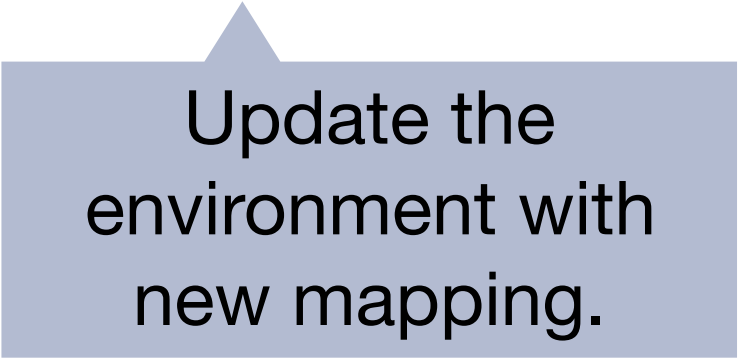
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Update the
environment with
new mapping.

Executing Statements III

Conditionals:

$$\eta \vdash \text{if}(e, s_1, s_2) \blacktriangleright K \quad \longrightarrow \quad \eta \vdash e \triangleright (\text{if}(_, s_1, s_2), K)$$

$$\eta \vdash \text{true} \triangleright (\text{if}(_, s_1, s_2), K) \quad \longrightarrow \quad \eta \vdash s_1 \blacktriangleright K$$

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Executing Statements IV

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Non-termination:

$$s_0 \longrightarrow s_1 \longrightarrow s_2 \longrightarrow \dots$$

We can make an infinite number of steps without reaching a final state

Executing Statements V

Assertions:

$$\eta \vdash \text{assert}(e) \blacktriangleright K \quad \longrightarrow \quad \eta \vdash e \triangleright (\text{assert}(_), K)$$

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Declarations:

$$\eta \vdash \text{decl}(x, \tau, s) \blacktriangleright K \quad \longrightarrow \quad \eta[x \mapsto \text{nothing}] \vdash s \blacktriangleright K$$

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If C0 had shadowing then we would have to save and restore the previous value of x.

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$$\eta \vdash \text{assert}(e) \blacktriangleright K \quad \longrightarrow \quad \eta \vdash e \triangleright (\text{assert}(_), K)$$

$$\eta \vdash \text{true} \triangleright (\text{assert}(_), K) \quad \longrightarrow \quad \eta \vdash \text{nop} \blacktriangleright K$$

$$\eta \vdash \text{false} \triangleright (\text{assert}(_), K) \quad \longrightarrow \quad \text{exception}(\text{abort})$$

Declarations:

$$\eta \vdash \text{decl}(x, \tau, s) \blacktriangleright K \quad \longrightarrow \quad \eta[x \mapsto \text{nothing}] \vdash s \blacktriangleright K$$

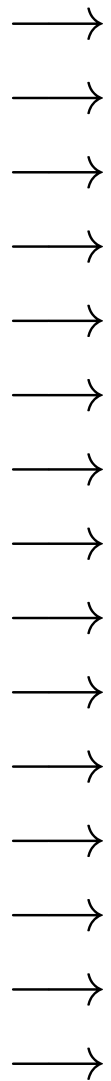
Final states:

$$\text{exception}(E), \quad \text{nop} \blacktriangleright \cdot$$

If C0 had shadowing then we would have to save and restore the previous value of x.

Example: Infinite Loop

$\text{while}(x > 0, \text{assign}(x, x + 1)) \quad \eta = [x \mapsto 1]$



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$\text{while}(x > 0, \text{assign}(x, x + 1)) \quad \eta = [x \mapsto 1]$

$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash \text{while}(x > 0, s) \quad \blacktriangleright \quad .$

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Example: Infinite Loop

$$\text{while}(x > 0, \text{assign}(x, x + 1)) \quad \eta = [x \mapsto 1].$$
$$\begin{array}{l} [x \mapsto 1] \vdash \text{while}(x > 0, s) \quad \blacktriangleright \quad . \\ \longrightarrow [x \mapsto 1] \vdash \text{if}(x > 0, \text{seq}(s, \text{while}(x > 0, s)), \text{nop}) \quad \blacktriangleright \quad . \end{array}$$


Example: Infinite Loop

$$\text{while}(x > 0, \text{assign}(x, x + 1)) \quad \eta = [x \mapsto 1].$$
[illegible]

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$\text{while}(x > 0, \text{assign}(x, x + 1)) \quad \eta = [x \mapsto 1]$

	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash \text{while}(x > 0, s)$	► .
→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash \text{if}(x > 0, \text{seq}(s, \text{while}(x > 0, s)), \text{nop})$	► .
→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash x > 0$	▷ $\text{if}(_, \text{seq}(s, \text{while}(x > 0, s)), \text{nop})$
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→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash 0$	▷ $1 > _; \text{if}(_, \text{seq}(s, \text{while}(x > 0, s)), \text{nop})$
→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash \text{true}$	▷ $\text{if}(_, \text{seq}(s, \text{while}(x > 0, s)), \text{nop})$
→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash \text{seq}(s, \text{while}(x > 0, s))$	► .
→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash \text{assign}(x, x + 1)$	► $\text{while}(x > 0, \text{assign}(x, x + 1))$
→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash x + 1$	▷ $\text{assign}(x, _); \text{while}(x > 0, s)$
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→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash \text{seq}(s, \text{while}(x > 0, s))$	► .
→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash \text{assign}(x, x + 1)$	► $\text{while}(x > 0, \text{assign}(x, x + 1))$
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→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash x$	▷ $_ + 1; \text{assign}(x, _); \text{while}(x > 0, s)$
→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash 1$	▷ $_ + 1; \text{assign}(x, _); \text{while}(x > 0, s)$
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→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash \text{seq}(s, \text{while}(x > 0, s))$	► .
→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash \text{assign}(x, x + 1)$	► $\text{while}(x > 0, \text{assign}(x, x + 1))$
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→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash 1$	▷ $1 + _; \text{assign}(x, _); \text{while}(x > 0, s)$
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→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash \text{assign}(x, x + 1)$	► $\text{while}(x > 0, \text{assign}(x, x + 1))$
→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash x + 1$	▷ $\text{assign}(x, _); \text{while}(x > 0, s)$
→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash x$	▷ $_ + 1; \text{assign}(x, _); \text{while}(x > 0, s)$
→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash 1$	▷ $_ + 1; \text{assign}(x, _); \text{while}(x > 0, s)$
→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash 1$	▷ $1 + _; \text{assign}(x, _); \text{while}(x > 0, s)$
→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash 2$	▷ $\text{assign}(x, _); \text{while}(x > 0, s)$
→		
→		

Example: Infinite Loop

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	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash \text{while}(x > 0, s)$	► .
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→	$[x \mapsto 2] \vdash \text{nop}$	► $\text{while}(x > 0, s)$
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	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash \text{while}(x > 0, s)$	► .
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→	$[x \mapsto 1] \vdash \text{seq}(s, \text{while}(x > 0, s))$	► .
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→	$[x \mapsto 2] \vdash \text{while}(x > 0, s)$	► .
...		

Functions

Function Calls

What needs to happen at a function call?

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Function Calls

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- Execute the body of the callee in a new environment that maps the formal parameters to the argument values
- Pass the return value to the environment of the caller

Call Stack

We need to keep track of continuations and environment in stack frames

Call stack:

$$S ::= \cdot \mid S, \langle \eta, K \rangle$$

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Environment

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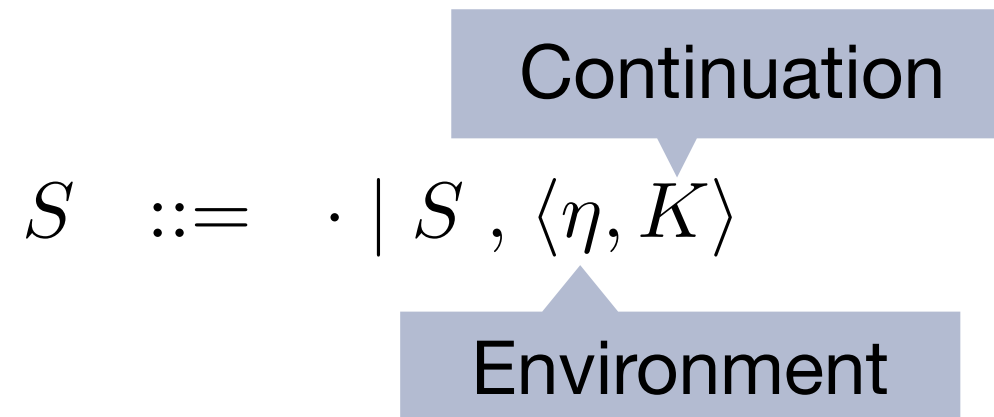
Continuation

Environment

Call Stack

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Call stack:



Configurations:

Evaluation $S ; \eta \vdash e \triangleright K$

Execution $S ; \eta \vdash s \blacktriangleright K$

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Continuation

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Existing rules can be lifted to the new configurations by passing through the call stack

Rules for Function Calls

We only show the special case of 0 and 2 arguments

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No arguments:

$$\begin{array}{l} S ; \eta \vdash f() \triangleright K \quad \longrightarrow \quad (S, \langle \eta, K \rangle) ; \cdot \vdash s \blacktriangleright \cdot \\ \text{(given that } f \text{ is defined as } f()\{s\}) \end{array}$$

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Store callee's
stack frame

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Evaluate s in empty environment.

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(given that f is defined as $f()\{s\}$)

Store callee's stack frame

Two arguments:

$$S ; \eta \vdash f(e_1, e_2) \triangleright K \longrightarrow S ; \eta \vdash e_1 \triangleright (f(-, e_2), K)$$

$$S ; \eta \vdash c_1 \triangleright (f(-, e_2), K) \longrightarrow S ; \eta \vdash e_2 \triangleright (f(c_1, -), K)$$

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No arguments:

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$$S ; \eta \vdash c_2 \triangleright (f(c_1, -), K) \longrightarrow (S, \langle \eta, K \rangle) ; [x_1 \mapsto c_1, x_2 \mapsto c_2] \vdash s \blacktriangleright \cdot$$

(given that f is defined as $f(x_1, x_2)\{s\}$)

Rules for Returns

Need to restore continuation and environment and pass return value

$$S ; \eta \vdash \text{return}(e) \blacktriangleright K$$

$$S , \langle \eta', K' \rangle ; \eta \vdash v \triangleright (\text{return}(_) , K)$$

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Special case: returning void

$$S , \langle \eta' , K' \rangle ; \eta \vdash \text{nop} \blacktriangleright \cdot \longrightarrow S ; \eta' \vdash \text{nothing} \triangleright K'$$

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Special case: returning void

Will only be reached by
functions without return.

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Will only be reached by functions without return.

$$S , \langle \eta' , K' \rangle ; \eta \vdash \text{nop} \blacktriangleright \cdot \longrightarrow S ; \eta' \vdash \text{nothing} \triangleright K'$$

Dummy value

Rules for Returns

Need to restore continuation and environment and pass return value

$$S ; \eta \vdash \text{return}(e) \blacktriangleright K \longrightarrow S ; \eta \vdash e \triangleright (\text{return}(_) , K)$$

$$S , \langle \eta' , K' \rangle ; \eta \vdash v \triangleright (\text{return}(_) , K) \longrightarrow S ; \eta' \vdash v \triangleright K'$$

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Alternative: elaborate each function that returns void with **return(nothing)** statements.

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Statics, Dynamics, and Safety

Overview of Machine States (Configurations)

- $S ; \eta \vdash e \triangleright K$ – Evaluating the expression e with the continuation K
- $S ; \eta \vdash s \blacktriangleright K$ – Evaluating the statement s with the continuation K
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The language should be deterministic: there at most one transition per state

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then either \mathcal{ST}_n is a final state or else \mathcal{ST}_n is not-stuck because there exists a state \mathcal{ST}' such that $\mathcal{ST}_n \longrightarrow \mathcal{ST}'$.

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15-312 next term.

Expressions	e	$::=$	$c \mid e_1 \odot e_2 \mid \text{true} \mid \text{false} \mid e_1 \ \&\& \ e_2 \mid x \mid f(e_1, e_2) \mid f()$
Statements	s	$::=$	$\text{nop} \mid \text{seq}(s_1, s_2) \mid \text{assign}(x, e) \mid \text{decl}(x, \tau, s)$ $\mid \text{if}(e, s_1, s_2) \mid \text{while}(e, s) \mid \text{return}(e) \mid \text{assert}(e)$
Values	v	$::=$	$c \mid \text{true} \mid \text{false} \mid \text{nothing}$
Environments	η	$::=$	$\cdot \mid \eta, x \mapsto c$
Stacks	S	$::=$	$\cdot \mid S, \langle \eta, K \rangle$
Cont. frames	ϕ	$::=$	$_ \odot e \mid c \odot _ \mid _ \ \&\& \ e \mid f(_, e) \mid f(c, _)$ $\mid s \mid \text{assign}(x, _) \mid \text{if}(_, s_1, s_2) \mid \text{return}(_) \mid \text{assert}(_)$
Continuations	K	$::=$	$\cdot \mid \phi, K$
Exceptions	E	$::=$	$\text{arith} \mid \text{abort} \mid \text{mem}$

Summary I

All ops.

Expressions	e	$::=$	$c \mid e_1 \odot e_2 \mid \text{true} \mid \text{false} \mid e_1 \ \&\& \ e_2 \mid x \mid f(e_1, e_2) \mid f()$
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Summary I

$S ; \eta \vdash e_1 \odot e_2 \triangleright K$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash e_1 \triangleright (_ \odot e_2 , K)$
$S ; \eta \vdash c_1 \triangleright (_ \odot e_2 , K)$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash e_2 \triangleright (c_1 \odot _ , K)$
$S ; \eta \vdash c_2 \triangleright (c_1 \odot _ , K)$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash c \triangleright K \quad (c = c_1 \odot c_2)$
$S ; \eta \vdash c_2 \triangleright (c_1 \odot _ , K)$	\longrightarrow	exception(arith) $\quad (c_1 \odot c_2 \text{ undefined})$
$S ; \eta \vdash e_1 \&\& e_2 \triangleright K$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash e_1 \triangleright (_ \&\& e_2 , K)$
$S ; \eta \vdash \text{false} \triangleright (_ \&\& e_2 , K)$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash \text{false} \triangleright K$
$S ; \eta \vdash \text{true} \triangleright (_ \&\& e_2 , K)$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash e_2 \triangleright K$
$S ; \eta \vdash x \triangleright K$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash \eta(x) \triangleright K$

Summary: Expressions

$S ; \eta \vdash \text{nop} \blacktriangleright (s, K)$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash s \blacktriangleright K$
$S ; \eta \vdash \text{assign}(x, e) \blacktriangleright K$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash e \triangleright (\text{assign}(x, _) , K)$
$S ; \eta \vdash c \triangleright (\text{assign}(x, _) , K)$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta[x \mapsto c] \vdash \text{nop} \blacktriangleright K$
$S ; \eta \vdash \text{decl}(x, \tau, s) \blacktriangleright K$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta[x \mapsto \text{nothing}] \vdash s \blacktriangleright K$
$S ; \eta \vdash \text{assert}(e) \blacktriangleright K$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash e \triangleright (\text{assert}(_) , K)$
$S ; \eta \vdash \text{true} \triangleright (\text{assert}(_) , K)$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash \text{nop} \blacktriangleright K$
$S ; \eta \vdash \text{false} \triangleright (\text{assert}(_) , K)$	\longrightarrow	$\text{exception}(\text{abort})$
$S ; \eta \vdash \text{if}(e, s_1, s_2) \blacktriangleright K$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash e \triangleright (\text{if}(_, s_1, s_2) , K)$
$S ; \eta \vdash \text{true} \triangleright (\text{if}(_, s_1, s_2), K)$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash s_1 \blacktriangleright K$
$S ; \eta \vdash \text{false} \triangleright (\text{if}(_, s_1, s_2), K)$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash s_2 \blacktriangleright K$
$S ; \eta \vdash \text{while}(e, s) \blacktriangleright K$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash \text{if}(e, \text{seq}(s, \text{while}(e, s)), \text{nop}) \blacktriangleright K$

Summary: Statements

$S ; \eta \vdash f(e_1, e_2) \triangleright K$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash e_1 \triangleright (f(_, e_2), K)$
$S ; \eta \vdash c_1 \triangleright (f(_, e_2), K)$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash e_2 \triangleright (f(c_1, _), K)$
$S ; \eta \vdash c_2 \triangleright (f(c_1, _), K)$	\longrightarrow	$(S, \langle \eta, K \rangle) ; [x_1 \mapsto c_1, x_2 \mapsto c_2] \vdash s \blacktriangleright \cdot$ <i>(given that f is defined as $f(x_1, x_2)\{s\}$)</i>
$S ; \eta \vdash f() \triangleright K$	\longrightarrow	$(S, \langle \eta, K \rangle) ; \cdot \vdash s \blacktriangleright \cdot$ <i>(given that f is defined as $f()\{s\}$)</i>
$S ; \eta \vdash \text{return}(e) \blacktriangleright K$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta \vdash e \triangleright (\text{return}(_), K)$
$(S, \langle \eta', K' \rangle) ; \eta \vdash v \triangleright (\text{return}(_), K)$	\longrightarrow	$S ; \eta' \vdash v \triangleright K'$
$\cdot ; \eta \vdash c \triangleright (\text{return}(_), K)$	\longrightarrow	$\text{value}(c)$

Summary: Functions