PFPL Supplement: Stack Machines By Name and By Value

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1 Introduction

This note expands on Chapters 28 and 29 of PFPL by considering both a by-name and a by-value stack machine, and proving safety for both cases.

2 By-Name Stack Machine

The abstract syntax of the by-name stack machine for PCF is given by the following grammar:

Types $\tau ::= \text{nat} | \tau_1 \rightarrow \tau_2$

Stacks $k ::= \varepsilon | k ; f$

Frames $f ::= \text{ap}(-;e_2) | \text{ifz}\{\tau\}(−;e_0;x.e_1)$

Expr’s $e ::= x | z | s(e) | \text{ifz}\{\tau\}(e;e_0;x.e_1) | \lambda\{\tau\}(x.e) | \text{ap}(e_1;e_2) | \text{fix}\{\tau\}(x.e)$

States $s ::= k # e$

The statics for the by-name stack machine is given in Figure 1; the typing rules for PCF-by-name expressions are omitted, as they can be found in the text. The dynamics for the by-name stack machine is defined in Figure 2.

The safety theorem for the by-name stack machine is stated according to the familiar pattern.

Theorem 2.1 (Safety). The by-name stack machine enjoys these properties:

1. If $s \mapsto s'$ then $s$ ok implies $s'$ ok.

2. If $s$ ok, then either $s$ final or $s \mapsto s'$ for some state $s'$.

To prove these requires two auxiliary lemmas, the canonical forms lemma and the stack lemma.

Lemma 2.2 (Canonical Forms By Name). If $e : \tau$ and $e$ val, then

1. if $\tau = \text{nat}$, then either $e = z$ or $e = s(e')$ for some $e' : \text{nat}$;

2. if $\tau = \tau_1 \rightarrow \tau_2$, then $e = \lambda\{\tau_1\}(x.e_2)$ with $x : \tau_1 \vdash e_2 : \tau_2$.

Lemma 2.3 (Stacks By Name). If $k \div \tau$ is non-empty, then

1. if $\tau = \text{nat}$, then $k = k' ; \text{ifz}\{\tau\}(−;e_0;x.e_1)$ for some $k' \div \tau$, $e_0 : \tau$, and $x : \text{nat} \vdash e_1 : \tau$.

2. if $\tau = \tau_2 \rightarrow \tau'$, then $k = k' ; \text{ap}(−;e_2)$ for some $k' \div \tau_2 \rightarrow \tau'$ and $e_2 : \tau_2$. 


\[
\begin{align*}
\varepsilon & \vdash \tau \\
k & \vdash \tau & f : \tau \rightsquigarrow \tau' \\
k & \vdash f : \tau' \\
k & \vdash \tau & f : \tau' \\
\text{ap}(-; e_2) & : \tau \rightarrow \tau \rightsquigarrow \tau \\
e_0 : \tau & \quad x : \text{nat} \vdash e_1 : \tau & \text{ifz} \{\tau\}(\neg; e_0; x.e_1) : \text{nat} \rightsquigarrow \tau \\
k & \vdash e : \tau & \quad k \# e & \text{ok}
\end{align*}
\]

Figure 1: Statics of By-Name Stack Machine

\[
\begin{align*}
\varepsilon & \# e \text{ initial} \\
e & \text{ val} & \varepsilon & \# e & \text{ final}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
k & \vdash \text{ifz} \{\tau\}(\neg; e_0; x.e_1) & \# z & \longrightarrow k \# e_0 \\
k & \vdash \text{ifz} \{\tau\}(\neg; e_0; x.e_1) & \# s(e) & \longrightarrow k \# [e/x]e_1 \\
k & \# \text{ifz} \{\tau\}(e; e_0; x.e_1) & \longrightarrow k ; \text{ifz} \{\tau\}(\neg; e_0; x.e_1) & \# e \\
k & \vdash \text{ap}(-; e_2) & \# \lambda \{\tau_2\}(x.e) & \longrightarrow k \# [e_2/x]e \\
k & \# \text{ap}(e_1; e_2) & \longrightarrow k ; \text{ap}(-; e_2) & \# e_1 \\
k & \# \text{fix} \{\tau\}(x.e) & \longrightarrow k \# [\text{fix} \{\tau\}(x.e)/x]e
\end{align*}
\]

Figure 2: Dynamics of By-Name Stack Machine
Both of these lemmas are proved by induction on the relevant typing judgments. Now, on to the proof the safety theorem.

Proof. 1. Preservation is proved by induction on the transitions of the state machine. Because the transitions are defined by rules free of premises, the induction reduces to a case analysis on each of the rules, with no appeal to any inductive hypothesis. Assume that \( s \) ok, and that \( s \mapsto s' \) for some \( s' \), with the intention to show that \( s' \) ok. By inversion on the first assumption, \( s = k \# e \) for some \( k \) and \( e \) such that \( k \div \sigma \) and \( e : \sigma \) for some mediating type \( \sigma \). Consider the possible transitions from \( s \):

(a) Rule (4a): The mediating type \( \sigma \) must be \( \text{nat} \), and so \( k' \div \tau \) where \( \epsilon_0 : \tau \) and \( x : \text{nat} \vdash e_1 : \tau \). But then \( k' \# e_0 \) ok, taking the mediating type to be \( \tau \).

(b) Rule (4b) Similar, using inversion to obtain the type of the predecessor.

(c) Rule (4c): The mediating type \( \sigma \) is the type \( \tau \) of the conditional, and so \( k \div \tau \), \( e_0 : \tau \), and \( x : \text{nat} \vdash e_1 : \tau \). But then \( k ; \text{ifz}(\tau)(-; e_0; x.e_1) \div \text{nat} \), which is enough to ensure \( k ; \text{ifz}(\tau)(-; e_0; x.e_1) \# e \) ok.

(d) Rules (4d) and Rule (4e): Similar.

(e) Rule (4f): immediate by inversion of typing.

2. Progress is proved by analysis of the assumption \( s \) ok. By inversion \( s \) must be \( k \# e \) for some \( k \) and \( e \) such that \( k \div \sigma \) and \( e : \sigma \) for some mediating type \( \sigma \). Proceed by cases on whether \( e \) is a value or not.

(a) If \( e \) val, then consider whether \( k \) is empty or not. If \( k = \epsilon \), then \( s \) final, which completes the proof. If \( k \) is non-empty, then the stack lemma applies, according to the mediating type \( \sigma \).

i. If \( \sigma = \text{nat} \), then by the stack lemma \( k = k' ; \text{ifz}(\tau')(\epsilon; e_0; x.e_1) \), where \( k' \div \tau' \), \( e_0 : \tau' \), and \( x : \text{nat} \vdash e_1 : \tau' \). By the canonical forms lemma either \( e = z \) or \( e = s(e') \) with \( e' : \text{nat} \). In the former case, apply Rule (4a), in the latter apply Rule (4b).

ii. If \( \sigma = \sigma_1 \rightarrow \sigma_2 \), then by canonical forms \( e = \lambda(\sigma_1)(x.e_2) \), and by the stack lemma \( k = k' ; \text{ap}(\epsilon; e_2) \), where \( k' \div \sigma_2 \) and \( x : \sigma_1 \vdash e_2 : \sigma_2 \). Then apply Rule (4e) to ensure progress.

(b) If \( e \) is not a value, then either \( e = \text{ap}(e_1; e_2) \) or \( e = \text{ifz}(\tau)(e'; e_0; x.e_1) \) or \( e = \text{fix}(\tau)(x.e) \). Rules (4c), (4e), and (4f) ensure progress in the respective cases.

The proof is not all that different from the usual one for \( \text{PCF} \), but for the explicit manipulation of the stack.

3 By-Value Stack Machine

The by-value stack machine is defined in \( \text{PFPL} \) using states of the form \( k \triangleright e \) and \( k \triangleleft e \) where \( e \) val. The by-value dynamics is given in Figure 3 for convenient reference. Observe that the successor operation is strict (evaluates its argument) and that applications evaluate their argument before calling the specified (recursive) function.
\[ k \triangleright z \mapsto k \triangleleft z \] (5a)

\[ k \triangleright s(e) \mapsto k ; s( - ) \triangleright e \] (5b)

\[ k ; s( - ) \triangleleft \overline{n} \mapsto k \triangleleft n + 1 \] (5c)

\[ k \triangleright ifz\{\tau\}(e; e_0; x.e_1) \mapsto k ; ifz\{\tau\}( - ; e_0; x.e_1) \triangleright e \] (5d)

\[ k ; ifz\{\tau\}( - ; e_0; x.e_1) \triangleleft 0 \mapsto k \triangleright e_0 \] (5e)

\[ k ; ifz\{\tau\}( - ; e_0; x.e_1) \triangleleft \overline{n} + 1 \mapsto k \triangleright [\overline{n}/x]e_1 \] (5f)

\[ k \triangleright fun\{\tau_2; \tau\}(f.x.e) \mapsto k \triangleleft fun\{\tau_2; \tau\}(f.x.e) \] (5g)

\[ k \triangleright ap(e_1; e_2) \mapsto k ; ap( - ; e_2) \triangleright e_1 \] (5h)

\[ k ; ap( - ; e_2) \triangleleft fun\{\tau_2; \tau\}(f.x.e) \mapsto k ; ap\{fun\{\tau_2; \tau\}(f.x.e); - \} \triangleright e_2 \] (5i)

\[ k ; ap\{fun\{\tau_2; \tau\}(f.x.e); - \} \triangleleft e_2 \mapsto k \triangleright [fun\{\tau_2; \tau\}(f.x.e), e_2/f, x]e \] (5j)

Figure 3: Dynamics of the By-Value Stack Machine
The proof of the safety theorem for the by-value stack machine proceeds along similar lines to
the proof for the by-name case, with the significant difference being the statements of the canonical
forms and stack lemmas. With regard to stacks, the type of the stack no longer uniquely determines
the topmost frame, because of the eager successor and call-by-value application.

Lemma 3.1 (Canonical Forms By Value). If \( e : \tau \) and \( e \text{ val} \), then

1. if \( \tau = \text{nat} \), then \( e = n \) for some \( n \in \mathbb{N} \).
2. if \( \tau = \tau_1 \rightarrow \tau_2 \), then \( e = \text{fun}\{\tau_1;\tau_2\}(f.x.e_2) \) with \( f : \tau_1 \rightarrow \tau_2, x : \tau_1 \vdash e_2 : \tau_2 \).

Lemma 3.2 (Stacks By Value). If \( k \div \tau \) for some non-empty stack \( k = k';f \), then

1. if \( \tau = \text{nat} \), then \( k' \div \tau' \), and either
   (a) \( f = \text{ifz}\{\tau'}\{\sim;e_0;x.e_1\} \) with \( e_0 : \tau' \) and \( x : \text{nat} \vdash e_1 : \tau' \), or
   (b) \( f = s(\sim) \) and \( \tau' = \text{nat} \), or
   (c) \( f = \text{ap}(e_1;\sim) \) with \( e_1 \text{ val} \) and \( e_1 : \text{nat} \rightarrow \tau' \).
2. if \( \tau = \tau_2 \rightarrow \tau' \), then \( k' \div \tau' \) and either
   (a) \( f = \text{ap}(\sim;e_2) \) with \( e_2 : \tau_2 \), or
   (b) \( f = \text{ap}(e_1;\sim) \) with \( e_1 \text{ val} \) and \( e_1 : \tau \rightarrow \tau' \), or
   (c) \( f = \text{ifz}\{\tau'}\{\sim;e_0;x.e_1\} \) with \( e_0 : \tau' \) and \( x : \text{nat} \vdash e_1 : \tau' \).

The by-value dynamics introduces many more possibilities for a stack of a given type! This
complicates the safety proof by requiring further case analyses according to the stacks lemma,
applying the appropriate rule in each case to established progress.

4 By-Value Stack Machine, Using Computation Types

The formulation of PCF-by-value given in Harper (2019) refines the statics to distinguish between
open values and computations, and defines a type of unevaluated computations whose elimination
form sequences the evaluation of one computation prior to another. In the presence of sequenc-
ing the principal arguments of elimination forms may be required to be open values, off-loading
responsibility for evaluating these arguments to the programmer (or compiler). PCF-by-value is
further extended to account for exceptions in Harper (2018) by generalizing the sequentialization
to account for both "normal" and "exceptional" completion of a computation. Correspondingly, the
dynamics for PCF-by-value is simplified by removing the obligation to evaluate the arguments to
elimination forms prior to performing the elimination itself. The stack machine for PCF-by-value is
similarly simplified to consider only one form of stack frame corresponding to the deferred evaluation
of the second component of a sequential binding.

Thus, the structural dynamics for sequential binding given in Harper (2019),

\[
\begin{align*}
  e & \mapsto e' \\
  \text{bnd}(\text{comp}(e);x.e_2) & \mapsto \text{bnd}(\text{comp}(e');x.e_2) \\
  e \text{ val} & \quad \text{bnd}(\text{comp}(e);x.e_2) \mapsto [e/x]e_2
\end{align*}
\] (6a) (6b)
are expressed by the following rules for the PCF-by-value stack machine:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{k} & \triangleright \text{bnd( comp(\(e\));\(x.e_2\))} \rightarrow \text{k} \; ; \; x.e_2 \triangleright e \\
\text{e val} & \rightarrow \text{k} \triangleright [e/x]e_2
\end{align*}
\]  

(7a)

Now the only form of stack frame is the abstractor, \(x.e_2\), which represents \(\text{bnd( comp(\(-\));\(x.e_2\))}\), with the “hole” being the computation site. No other form of frame is required, because the arguments to elimination forms are restricted to be values.

To relate the two formulations of the by-value stack machine, it is helpful to trace out an evaluation of the extended form of application,

\[
\text{ap}^*(e_1;e_2) \triangleq \text{bnd( comp(\(e_1\));\(x_1.\text{bnd( comp(\(e_2\));\(x_2.\text{ap( \(x_1;\(x_2\)\))})})\))}
\]

on some stack \(k\):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{k} \triangleright \text{ap}^*(e_1;e_2) & \rightarrow \text{k} \; ; \; x_1.\text{bnd( comp(\(e_2\));\(x_2.\text{ap( \(x_1;\(x_2\)\))}) \triangleright e_1} \\
& \rightarrow \ast \; \text{k} \; ; \; x_1.\text{bnd( comp(\(e_2\));\(x_2.\text{ap( \(x_1;\(x_2\)\))}) \triangleright v_1} \\
& \rightarrow \text{k} \; ; \; x_2.\text{ap( \(v_1;\(x_2\)\)) \triangleright e_2} \\
& \rightarrow \ast \; \text{k} \; ; \; x_2.\text{ap( \(v_1;\(x_2\)\)) \triangleright v_2} \\
& \rightarrow \text{k} \triangleright \text{ap( \(v_1;\(v_2\)\))} \\
& \rightarrow \text{k} \triangleright [v_1,v_2/f,x]e
\end{align*}
\]

where \(v_1 \triangleq \text{fun}\{\tau_2;\tau\}(\(f.x.e\))\) is the value of \(e_1\) and \(v_2\) is the value of \(e_2\). The abstractor

\[
x_1.\text{bnd( comp(\(e_2\));\(x_2.\text{ap( \(x_1;\(x_2\)\))})}
\]

pushed onto the stack during evaluation of \(e_1\) corresponds to the frame \(\text{ap( \(\(-\);\(e_2\))}\), and the abstractor \(x_2.\text{ap( \(v_1;\(x_2\)\))}\) pushed onto the stack during evaluation of \(e_2\) corresponds to the frame \(\text{ap( \(v_1;\(-\))}\).

References


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