

Lecture #38

Next Friday: HKN surveys. [Extra points awarded to those who participate!](#)

Today: A little side excursion into nitty-gritty stuff: Storage management.

Scope and Lifetime

- *Scope* of a declaration is portion of program text to which it applies (*is visible*).
 - Need not be contiguous.
 - In Java, is static: independent of data.
- *Lifetime* or *extent* of storage is portion of program execution during which it exists.
 - Always contiguous
 - Generally dynamic: depends on data
- *Classes of extent*:
 - *Static*: entire duration of program
 - *Local* or *automatic*: duration of call or block execution (local variable)
 - *Dynamic*: From time of allocation statement (**new**) to deallocation, if any.

Explicit vs. Automatic Freeing

- Java has no means to free dynamic storage.
- However, when no expression in any thread can possibly be influenced by or change an object, it might as well not exist:

```
IntList wasteful ()
{
    IntList c = new IntList (3, new IntList (4, null));
    return c.tail;
    // variable c now deallocated, so no way
    // to get to first cell of list
}
```

- At this point, Java runtime, like Scheme's, recycles the object *c* pointed to: *garbage collection*.

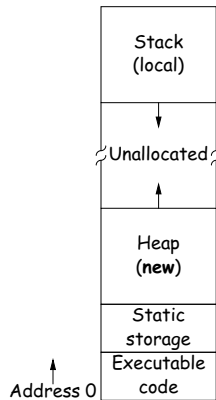
Under the Hood: Allocation

- Java pointers (references) are represented as integer addresses.
- Corresponds to machine's own practice.
- In Java, cannot convert integers ↔ pointers,
- But crucial parts of Java runtime implemented in *C*, or sometimes machine code, where you can.
- Crude allocator in *C*:

```
char store[STORAGE_SIZE]; // Allocated array
size_t remainder = STORAGE_SIZE;

/** A pointer to a block of at least N bytes of storage */
void* simpleAlloc (size_t n) { // void*: pointer to anything
    if (n > remainder) ERROR ();
    remainder = (remainder - n) & ~0x7; // Make multiple of 8
    return (void*) (store + remainder);
}
```

Example of Storage Layout: Unix



- OS gives way to turn chunks of unallocated region into heap.
- Happens automatically for stack.

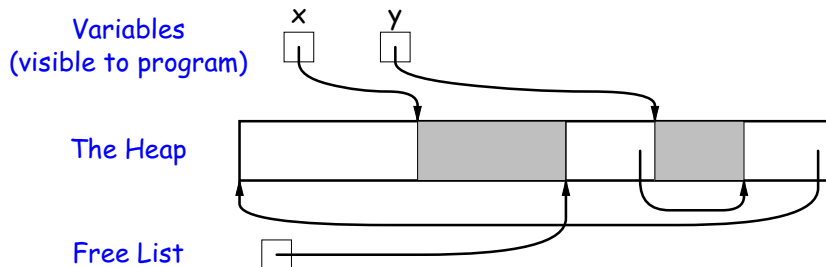
Explicit Deallocating

- C/C++ normally require explicit deallocation, because of
 - Lack of run-time information about what is array
 - Possibility of converting pointers to integers.
 - Lack of run-time information about *unions*:


```
union Various {
    int Int;
    char* Pntr;
    double Double;
} X; // X is either an int, char*, or double
```
- Java avoids all three problems; automatic collection possible.
- Explicit freeing can be somewhat faster, but rather error-prone:
 - Memory corruption
 - Memory leaks

Free Lists

- Explicit allocator grabs chunks of storage from OS and gives to applications.
- Or gives recycled storage, when available.
- When storage is freed, added to a *free list* data structure to be recycled.
- Used both for explicit freeing and some kinds of automatic garbage collection.
- Problem: free memory *fragments*.



Garbage Collection: Reference Counting

- Idea: Keep count of number of pointers to each object. Release when count goes to 0.

