Linking

15-213: Introduction to Computer Systems
11th Lecture, Sept. 30, 2010

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Today

- **Linking**
- Case study: Library interpositioning

Example C Program

main.c

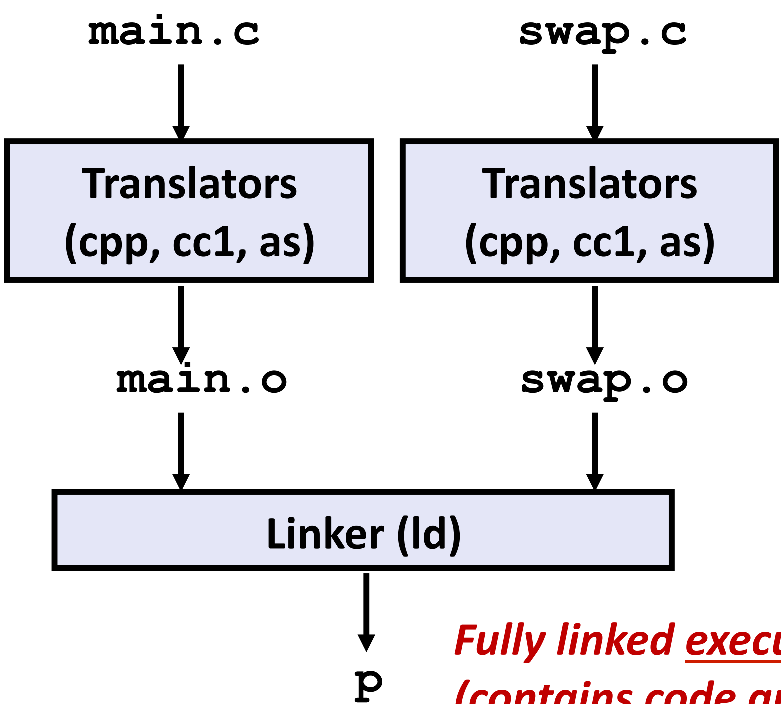
```
int buf[2] = {1, 2};

int main()
{
  swap();
  return 0;
}
```

swap.c

```
extern int buf[];

int *bufp0 = &buf[0];
static int *bufp1;

void swap()
{
  int temp;

  bufp1 = &buf[1];
  temp = *bufp0;
  *bufp0 = *bufp1;
  *bufp1 = temp;
}
```

Static Linking

- Programs are translated and linked using a *compiler driver*:
  - `unix> gcc -O2 -g -o p main.c swap.c`
  - `unix> ./p`



Source files

Separately compiled relocatable object files

Fully linked executable object file (contains code and data for all functions defined in `main.c` and `swap.c`)

Why Linkers?

- **Reason 1: Modularity**

  - Program can be written as a collection of smaller source files, rather than one monolithic mass.

  - Can build libraries of common functions (more on this later)
    - e.g., Math library, standard C library

Why Linkers? (cont)

- **Reason 2: Efficiency**
  - Time: Separate compilation
    - Change one source file, compile, and then relink.
    - No need to recompile other source files.
  - Space: Libraries
    - Common functions can be aggregated into a single file...
    - Yet executable files and running memory images contain only code for the functions they actually use.

What Do Linkers Do?

- **Step 1. Symbol resolution**

  - Programs define and reference *symbols* (variables and functions):
    - `void swap() {…}    /* define symbol swap */`
    - `swap();            /* reference symbol a */`
    - `int *xp = &x;      /* define symbol xp, reference x */`

  - Symbol definitions are stored (by compiler) in *symbol table*.
    - Symbol table is an array of structs
    - Each entry includes name, size, and location of symbol.

  - Linker associates each symbol reference with exactly one symbol definition.

What Do Linkers Do? (cont)

- **Step 2. Relocation**
  - Merges separate code and data sections into single sections
  - Relocates symbols from their relative locations in the `.o` files to their final absolute memory locations in the executable.
  - Updates all references to these symbols to reflect their new positions.

Three Kinds of Object Files (Modules)

- **Relocatable object file (`.o` file)**
  - Contains code and data in a form that can be combined with other relocatable object files to form executable object file.
    - Each `.o` file is produced from exactly one source (`.c`) file

- **Executable object file (`a.out` file)**
  - Contains code and data in a form that can be copied directly into memory and then executed.

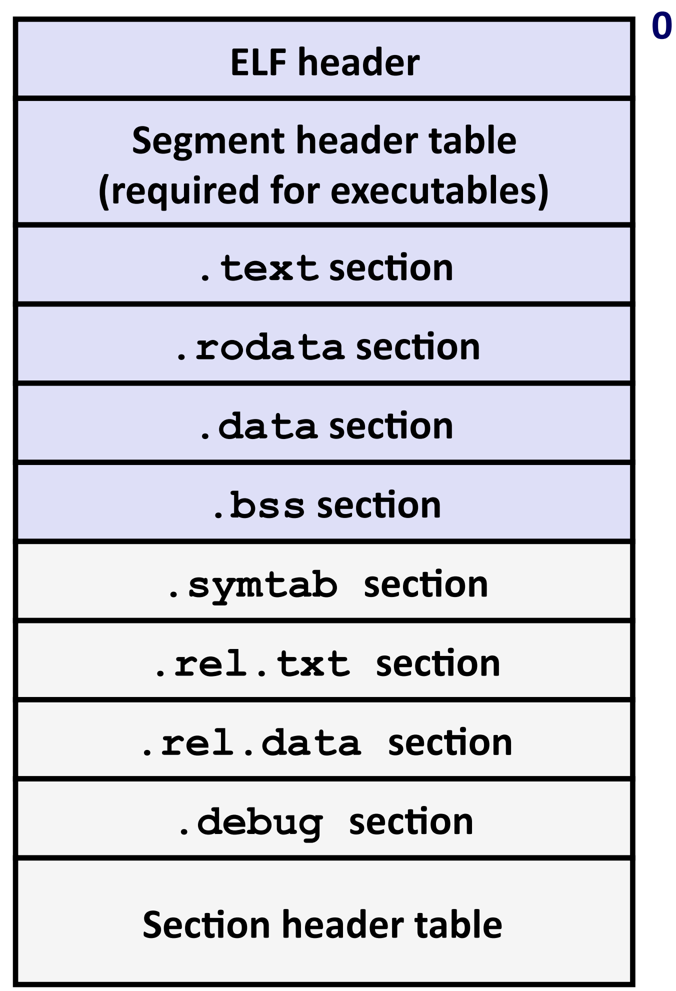
- **Shared object file (`.so` file)**
  - Special type of relocatable object file that can be loaded into memory and linked dynamically, at either load time or run-time.
  - Called *Dynamic Link Libraries* (DLLs) by Windows

Executable and Linkable Format (ELF)

- **Standard binary format for object files**
- **Originally proposed by AT&T System V Unix**
  - Later adopted by BSD Unix variants and Linux
- **One unified format for**
  - Relocatable object files (`.o`),
  - Executable object files (`a.out`)
  - Shared object files (`.so`)
- **Generic name: ELF binaries**

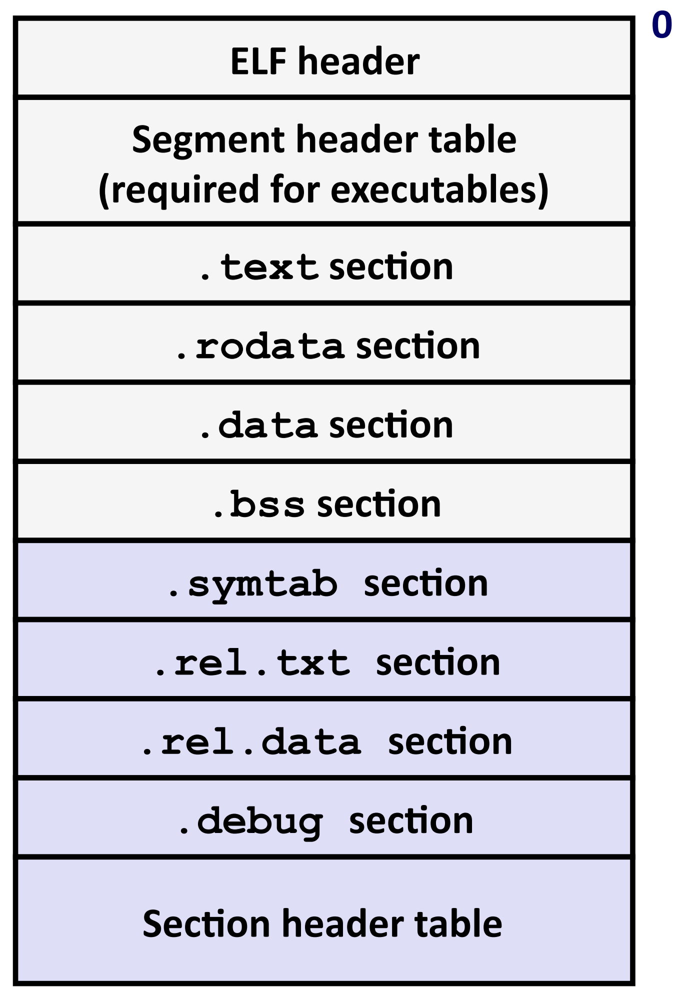
ELF Object File Format

- **Elf header**
  - Word size, byte ordering, file type (.o, exec, .so), machine type, etc.
- **Segment header table**
  - Page size, virtual addresses memory segments (sections), segment sizes.
- **`.text` section**
  - Code
- **`.rodata` section**
  - Read only data: jump tables, ...
- **`.data` section**
  - Initialized global variables
- **`.bss` section**
  - Uninitialized global variables
  - "Block Started by Symbol"
  - "Better Save Space"
  - Has section header but occupies no space



ELF Object File Format (cont.)

- **`.symtab` section**
  - Symbol table
  - Procedure and static variable names
  - Section names and locations
- **`.rel.text` section**
  - Relocation info for `.text` section
  - Addresses of instructions that will need to be modified in the executable
  - Instructions for modifying.
- **`.rel.data` section**
  - Relocation info for `.data` section
  - Addresses of pointer data that will need to be modified in the merged executable
- **`.debug` section**
  - Info for symbolic debugging (`gcc -g`)
- **Section header table**
  - Offsets and sizes of each section



Linker Symbols

- **Global symbols**
  - Symbols defined by module *m* that can be referenced by other modules.
  - E.g.: non-`static` C functions and non-`static` global variables.

- **External symbols**
  - Global symbols that are referenced by module *m* but defined by some other module.

- **Local symbols**
  - Symbols that are defined and referenced exclusively by module *m*.
  - E.g.: C functions and variables defined with the `static` attribute.
  - **Local linker symbols are *not* local program variables**

Resolving Symbols

Global

Global

External

Local

```
int buf[2] = {1, 2};

int main()
{
  swap();
  return 0;
}
```

main.c

External

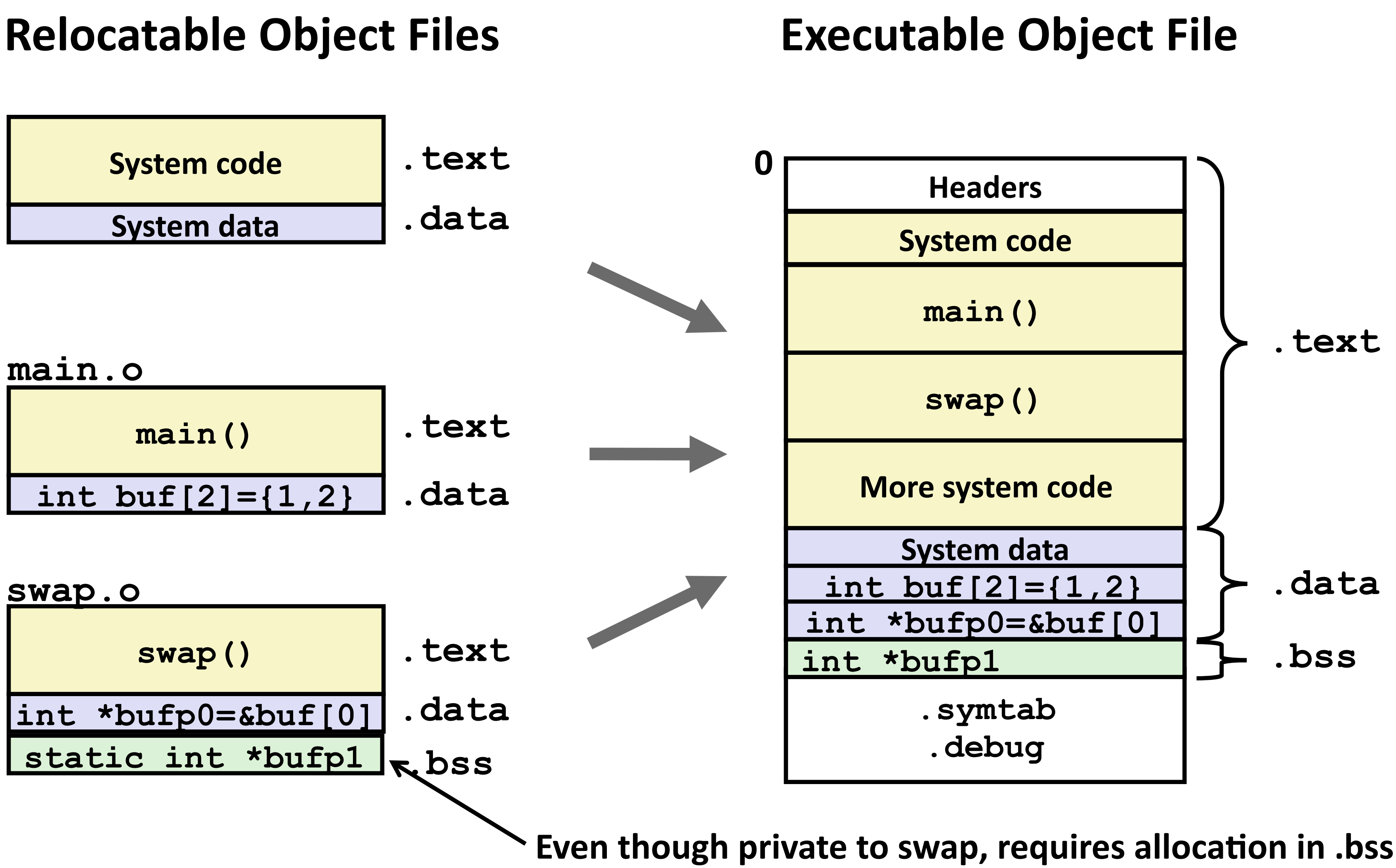
```
extern int buf[];

int *bufp0 = &buf[0];
static int *bufp1;

void swap()
{
  int temp;

  bufp1 = &buf[1];
  temp = *bufp0;
  *bufp0 = *bufp1;
  *bufp1 = temp;
}
```

Global

Linker knows nothing of temp

swap.c

Relocating Code and Data



Relocation Info (main)

main.c

```
int buf[2] =
  {1,2};

int main()
{
  swap();
  return 0;
}
```

main.o

```
0000000 <main>:
   0:   8d 4c 24 04       lea    0x4(%esp),%ecx
   4:   83 e4 f0          and    $0xfffffff0,%esp
   7:   ff 71 fc          pushl  0xfffffffc(%ecx)
   a:   55                push   %ebp
   b:   89 e5             mov    %esp,%ebp
   d:   51                push   %ecx
   e:   83 ec 04          sub    $0x4,%esp
  11:   e8 fc ff ff ff    call   12 <main+0x12>
                     12: R_386_PC32 swap
  16:   83 c4 04          add    $0x4,%esp
  19:   31 c0             xor    %eax,%eax
  1b:   59                pop    %ecx
  1c:   5d                pop    %ebp
  1d:   8d 61 fc          lea    0xfffffffc(%ecx),%esp
  20:   c3                ret
```

Source: `objdump -r -d`

```
Disassembly of section .data:

 00000000 <buf>:
   0:    01 00 00 00 02 00 00 00
```

Relocation Info (swap, `.text`)

swap.c

```
extern int buf[];

int
  *bufp0 = &buf[0];

static int *bufp1;

void swap()
{
  int temp;

  bufp1 = &buf[1];
  temp = *bufp0;
  *bufp0 = *bufp1;
  *bufp1 = temp;
}
```

swap.o

```
Disassembly of section .text:

00000000 <swap>:
   0:   8b 15 00 00 00 00       mov    0x0,%edx
                    2: R_386_32      buf
   6:   a1 04 00 00 00          mov    0x4,%eax
                    7: R_386_32      buf
   b:   55                      push   %ebp
   c:   89 e5                   mov    %esp,%ebp
   e:   c7 05 00 00 00 00 04    movl   $0x4,0x0
  15:   00 00 00
                    10: R_386_32     .bss
                    14: R_386_32     buf
  18:   8b 08                   mov    (%eax),%ecx
  1a:   89 10                   mov    %edx,(%eax)
  1c:   5d                      pop    %ebp
  1d:   89 0d 04 00 00 00       mov    %ecx,0x4
                    1f: R_386_32     buf
  23:   c3                      ret
```

Relocation Info (swap, .data)

swap.c

```
extern int buf[];

int *bufp0 =
             &buf[0];
static int *bufp1;

void swap()
{
  int temp;

  bufp1 = &buf[1];
  temp = *bufp0;
  *bufp0 = *bufp1;
  *bufp1 = temp;
}
```

```
Disassembly of section .data:

00000000 <bufp0>:
   0:   00 00 00 00

        0: R_386_32 buf
```

Executable Before/After Relocation (.text)

```
0000000 <main>:
   . . .
   e:   83 ec 04           sub    $0x4,%esp
  11:   e8 fc ff ff ff     call   12 <main+0x12>
                      12: R_386_PC32 swap
  16:   83 c4 04           add    $0x4,%esp
  . . .
```

```
0x8048396 + 0x1a
= 0x80483b0
```

```
08048380 <main>:
 8048380:      8d 4c 24 04          lea    0x4(%esp),%ecx
 8048384:      83 e4 f0             and    $0xfffffff0,%esp
 8048387:      ff 71 fc             pushl  0xfffffffc(%ecx)
 804838a:      55                   push   %ebp
 804838b:      89 e5                mov    %esp,%ebp
 804838d:      51                   push   %ecx
 804838e:      83 ec 04             sub    $0x4,%esp
 8048391:      e8 1a 00 00 00       call   80483b0 <swap>
 8048396:      83 c4 04             add    $0x4,%esp
 8048399:      31 c0                xor    %eax,%eax
 804839b:      59                   pop    %ecx
 804839c:      5d                   pop    %ebp
 804839d:      8d 61 fc             lea    0xfffffffc(%ecx),%esp
 80483a0:      c3                   ret
```

```
   0:   8b 15 00 00 00 00          mov     0x0,%edx
                  2: R_386_32      buf
   6:   a1 04 00 00 00             mov     0x4,%eax
                  7: R_386_32      buf
  ...
   e:   c7 05 00 00 00 00 04       movl    $0x4,0x0
  15:   00 00 00
                  10: R_386_32     .bss
                  14: R_386_32     buf
  . . .
  1d:   89 0d 04 00 00 00          mov     %ecx,0x4
                  1f: R_386_32     buf
  23:   c3                         ret
```

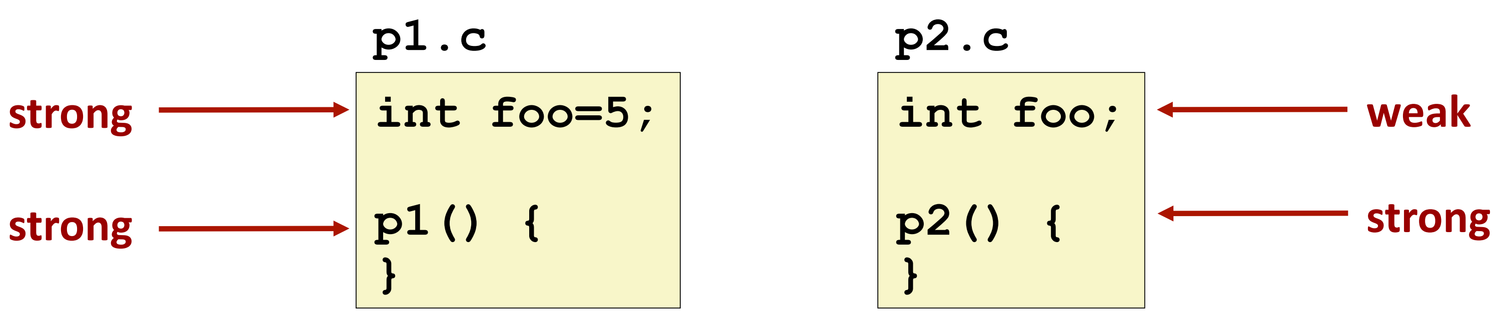
```
080483b0 <swap>:
 80483b0:       8b 15 20 96 04 08       mov    0x8049620,%edx
 80483b6:       a1 24 96 04 08          mov    0x8049624,%eax
 80483bb:       55                      push   %ebp
 80483bc:       89 e5                   mov    %esp,%ebp
 80483be:       c7 05 30 96 04 08 24    movl   $0x8049624,0x8049630
 80483c5:       96 04 08
 80483c8:       8b 08                   mov    (%eax),%ecx
 80483ca:       89 10                   mov    %edx,(%eax)
 80483cc:       5d                      pop    %ebp
 80483cd:       89 0d 24 96 04 08       mov    %ecx,0x8049624
 80483d3:       c3                      ret
```

Executable After Relocation (.data)

```
Disassembly of section .data:

08049620 <buf>:
 8049620:       01 00 00 00 02 00 00 00

08049628 <bufp0>:
 8049628:       20 96 04 08
```

Strong and Weak Symbols

- **Program symbols are either strong or weak**
  - ***Strong***: procedures and initialized globals
  - ***Weak***: uninitialized globals



Linker's Symbol Rules

- **Rule 1: Multiple strong symbols are not allowed**
  - Each item can be defined only once
  - Otherwise: Linker error

- **Rule 2: Given a strong symbol and multiple weak symbol, choose the strong symbol**
  - References to the weak symbol resolve to the strong symbol

- **Rule 3: If there are multiple weak symbols, pick an arbitrary one**
  - Can override this with `gcc -fno-common`

Linker Puzzles

Module 1	Module 2	Result
`int x;` `p1() {}`	`p1() {}`	Link time error: two strong symbols (**`p1`**)
`int x;` `p1() {}`	`int x;` `p2() {}`	References to **`x`** will refer to the same uninitialized int. Is this what you really want?
`int x;` `int y;` `p1() {}`	`double x;` `p2() {}`	Writes to **`x`** in **`p2`** might overwrite **`y`**! Evil!
`int x=7;` `int y=5;` `p1() {}`	`double x;` `p2() {}`	Writes to **`x`** in **`p2`** will overwrite **`y`**! Nasty!
`int x=7;` `p1() {}`	`int x;` `p2() {}`	References to **`x`** will refer to the same initialized variable.

Nightmare scenario: two identical weak structs, compiled by different compilers with different alignment rules.

Role of .h Files

c1.c

```
#include "global.h"

int f() {
  return g+1;
}
```

global.h

```
#ifdef INITIALIZE
int g = 23;
static int init = 1;
#else
int g;
static int init = 0;
#endif
```

c2.c

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include "global.h"

int main() {
  if (!init)
    g = 37;
  int t = f();
  printf("Calling f yields %d\n", t);
  return 0;
}
```

Running Preprocessor

c1.c

```
#include "global.h"

int f() {
  return g+1;
}
```

global.h

```
#ifdef INITIALIZE
int g = 23;
static int init = 1;
#else
int g;
static int init = 0;
#endif
```

-DINITIALIZE

```
int g = 23;
static int init = 1;
int f() {
  return g+1;
}
```

no initialization

```
int g;
static int init = 0;
int f() {
  return g+1;
}
```

#include causes C preprocessor to insert file verbatim

Role of .h Files (cont.)

c1.c

```
#include "global.h"

int f() {
  return g+1;
}
```

global.h

```
#ifdef INITIALIZE
int g = 23;
static int init = 1;
#else
int g;
static int init = 0;
#endif
```

c2.c

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include "global.h"

int main() {
  if (!init)
    g = 37;
  int t = f();
  printf("Calling f yields %d\n", t);
  return 0;
}
```

What happens:

```
gcc -o p c1.c c2.c
```

??

```
gcc -o p c1.c c2.c \
  -DINITIALIZE
```

??

Global Variables

- **Avoid if you can**

- **Otherwise**
  - Use **`static`** if you can
  - Initialize if you define a global variable
  - Use **`extern`** if you use external global variable

Packaging Commonly Used Functions

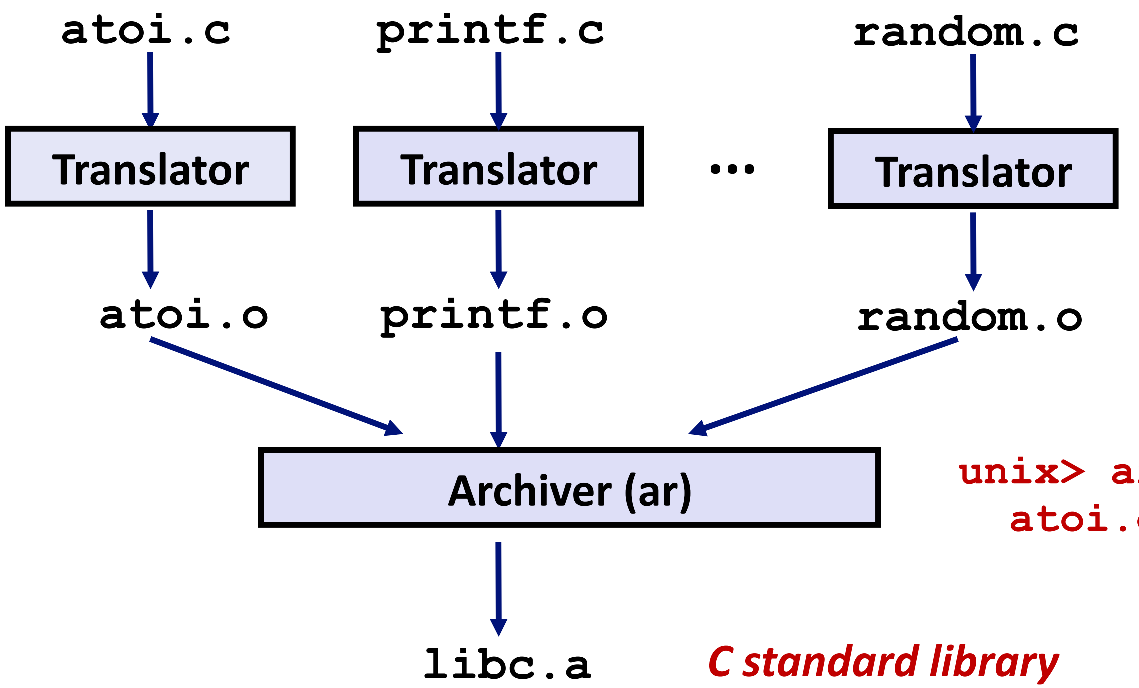
- **How to package functions commonly used by programmers?**
  - Math, I/O, memory management, string manipulation, etc.

- **Awkward, given the linker framework so far:**
  - **Option 1:** Put all functions into a single source file
    - Programmers link big object file into their programs
    - Space and time inefficient
  - **Option 2:** Put each function in a separate source file
    - Programmers explicitly link appropriate binaries into their programs
    - More efficient, but burdensome on the programmer

Solution: Static Libraries

- **Static libraries (.a archive files)**
  - Concatenate related relocatable object files into a single file with an index (called an *archive*).
  - Enhance linker so that it tries to resolve unresolved external references by looking for the symbols in one or more archives.
  - If an archive member file resolves reference, link it into the executable.

Creating Static Libraries




```
unix> ar rs libc.a \
  atoi.o printf.o … random.o
```

- Archiver allows incremental updates
- Recompile function that changes and replace .o file in archive.

Commonly Used Libraries

`libc.a` (the C standard library)

- 8 MB archive of 1392 object files.
- I/O, memory allocation, signal handling, string handling, data and time, random numbers, integer math

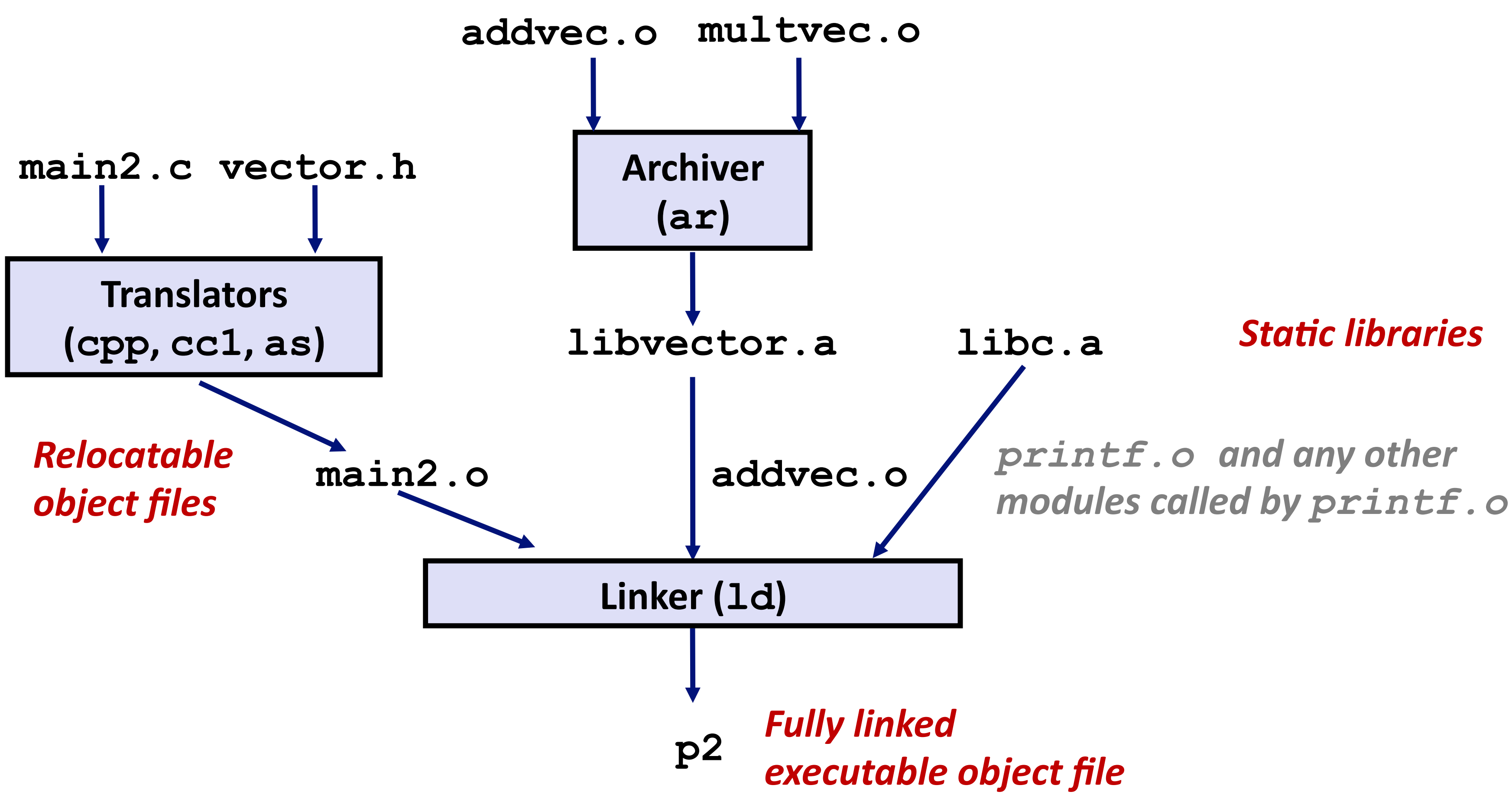
`libm.a` (the C math library)

- 1 MB archive of 401 object files.
- floating point math (sin, cos, tan, log, exp, sqrt, …)

```
% ar -t /usr/lib/libc.a | sort
…
fork.o
…
fprintf.o
fpu_control.o
fputc.o
freopen.o
fscanf.o
fseek.o
fstab.o
…
```

```
% ar -t /usr/lib/libm.a | sort
…
e_acos.o
e_acosf.o
e_acosh.o
e_acoshf.o
e_acoshl.o
e_acosl.o
e_asin.o
e_asinf.o
e_asinl.o
…
```

Linking with Static Libraries



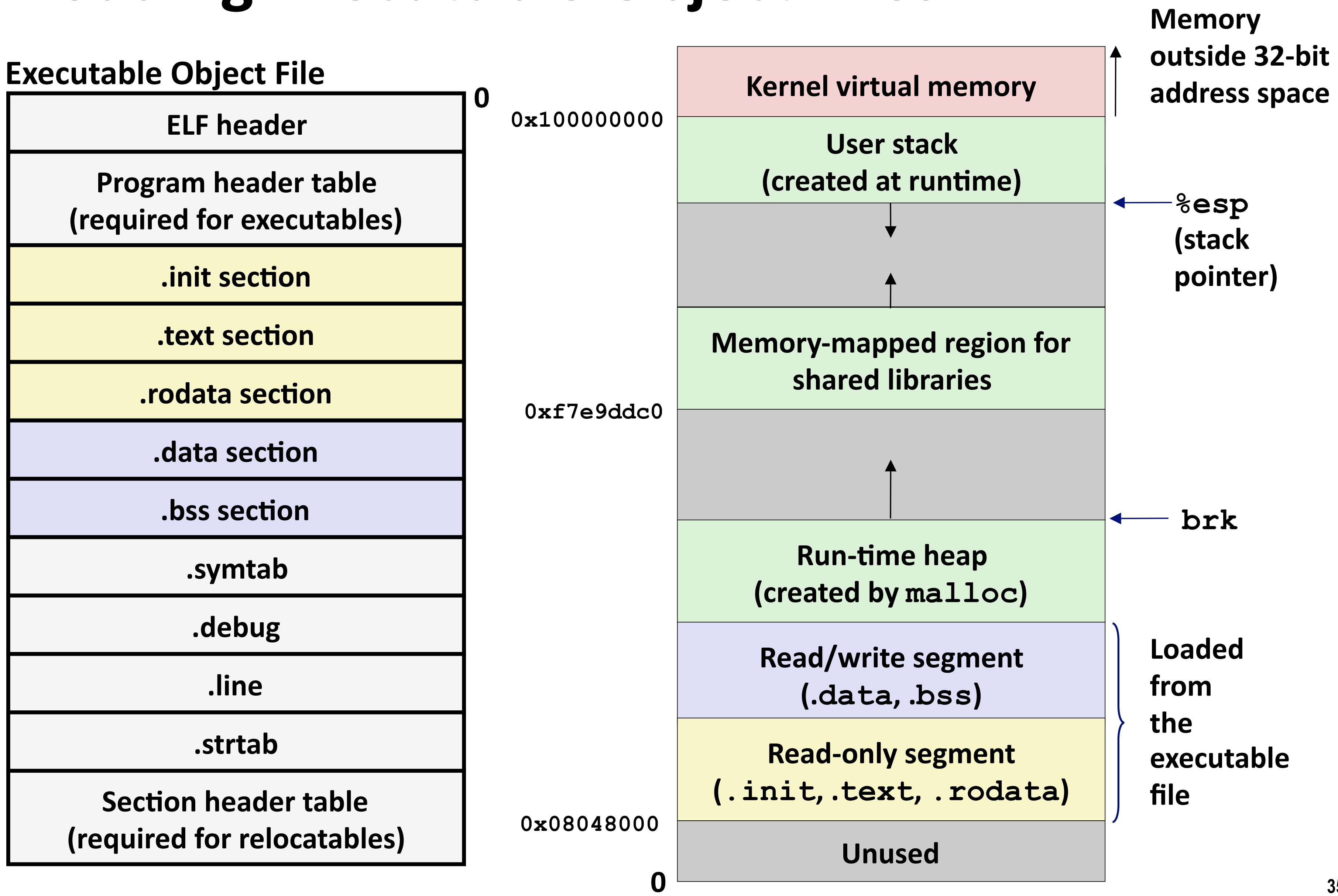
Using Static Libraries

- **Linker's algorithm for resolving external references:**
  - Scan **`.o`** files and **`.a`** files in the command line order.
  - During the scan, keep a list of the current unresolved references.
  - As each new **`.o`** or **`.a`** file, *obj*, is encountered, try to resolve each unresolved reference in the list against the symbols defined in *obj*.
  - If any entries in the unresolved list at end of scan, then error.

- **Problem:**
  - Command line order matters!
  - Moral: put libraries at the end of the command line.

```
unix> gcc -L. libtest.o -lmine
unix> gcc -L. -lmine libtest.o
libtest.o: In function `main':
libtest.o(.text+0x4): undefined reference to `libfun'
```

Loading Executable Object Files



Shared Libraries

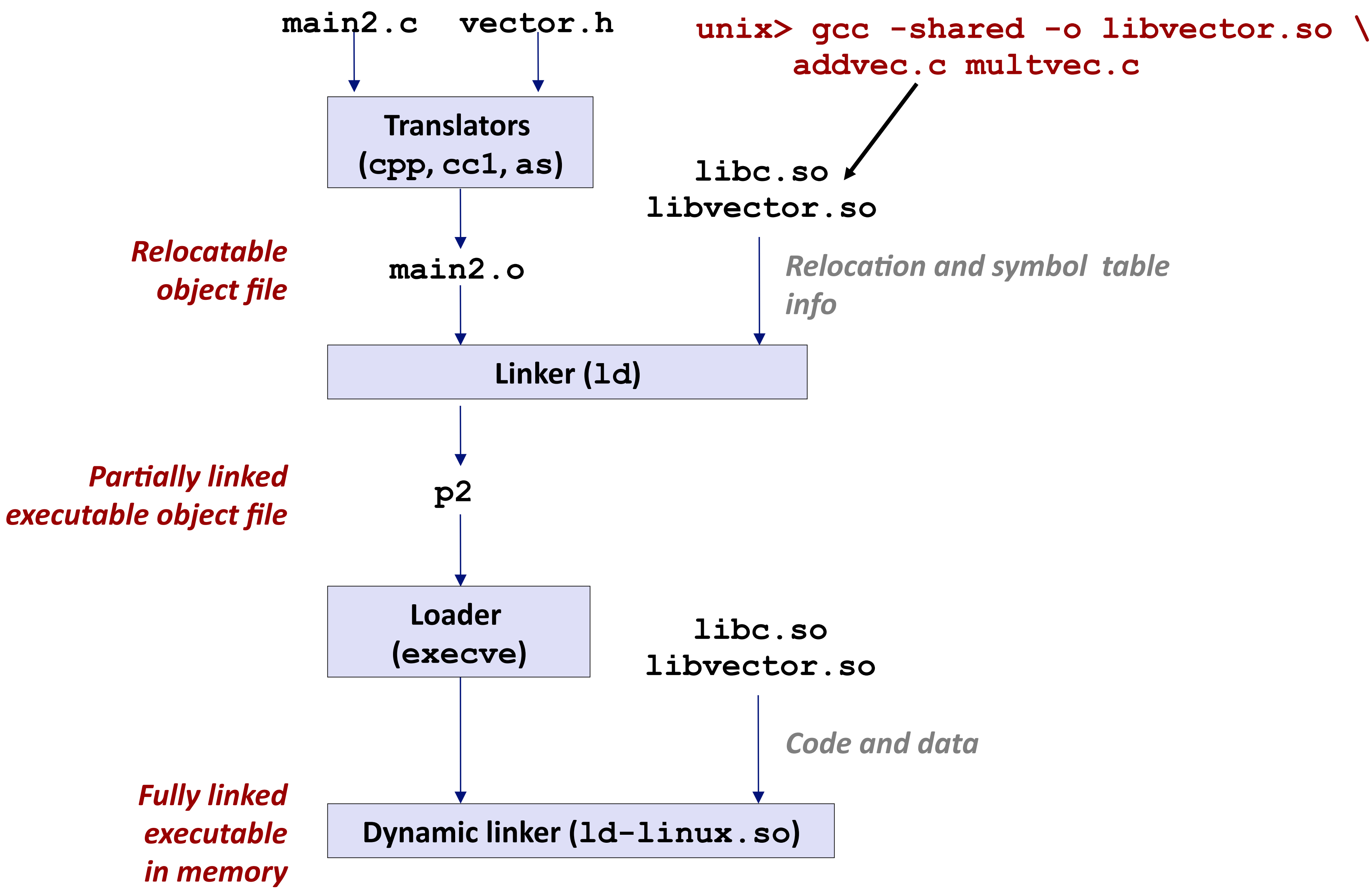
- **Static libraries have the following disadvantages:**
  - Duplication in the stored executables (every function need std libc)
  - Duplication in the running executables
  - Minor bug fixes of system libraries require each application to explicitly relink

- **Modern solution: Shared Libraries**
  - Object files that contain code and data that are loaded and linked into an application *dynamically,* at either *load-time* or *run-time*
  - Also called: dynamic link libraries, DLLs, `.so` files

Shared Libraries (cont.)

- **Dynamic linking can occur when executable is first loaded and run (load-time linking).**
  - Common case for Linux, handled automatically by the dynamic linker (`ld-linux.so`).
  - Standard C library (`libc.so`) usually dynamically linked.
- **Dynamic linking can also occur after program has begun (run-time linking).**
  - In Linux, this is done by calls to the `dlopen()` interface.
    - Distributing software.
    - High-performance web servers.
    - Runtime library interpositioning.
- **Shared library routines can be shared by multiple processes.**
  - More on this when we learn about virtual memory

Dynamic Linking at Load-time



Dynamic Linking at Run-time

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <dlfcn.h>

int x[2] = {1, 2};
int y[2] = {3, 4};
int z[2];

int main()
{
    void *handle;
    void (*addvec)(int *, int *, int *, int);
    char *error;

    /* dynamically load the shared lib that contains addvec() */
    handle = dlopen("./libvector.so", RTLD_LAZY);
    if (!handle) {
            fprintf(stderr, "%s\n", dlerror());
            exit(1);
    }
```

Dynamic Linking at Run-time

```
    ...

    /* get a pointer to the addvec() function we just loaded */
    addvec = dlsym(handle, "addvec");
    if ((error = dlerror()) != NULL) {
            fprintf(stderr, "%s\n", error);
            exit(1);
    }

    /* Now we can call addvec() just like any other function */
    addvec(x, y, z, 2);
    printf("z = [%d %d]\n", z[0], z[1]);

    /* unload the shared library */
    if (dlclose(handle) < 0) {
            fprintf(stderr, "%s\n", dlerror());
            exit(1);
    }
    return 0;
}
```

Today

- Linking
- **Case study: Library interpositioning**

Case Study: Library Interpositioning

- **Library interpositioning : powerful linking technique that allows programmers to intercept calls to arbitrary functions**
- **Interpositioning can occur at:**
  - Compile time: When the source code is compiled
  - Link time: When the relocatable object files are statically linked to form an executable object file
  - Load/run time: When an executable object file is loaded into memory, dynamically linked, and then executed.

Some Interpositioning Applications

- **Security**
  - Confinement (sandboxing)
    - Interpose calls to libc functions.
  - Behind the scenes encryption
    - Automatically encrypt otherwise unencrypted network connections.
- **Monitoring and Profiling**
  - Count number of calls to functions
  - Characterize call sites and arguments to functions
  - Malloc tracing
    - Detecting memory leaks
    - **Generating address traces**

Example program

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <malloc.h>

int main()
{
    free(malloc(10));
    printf("hello, world\n");
    exit(0);
}
```
hello.c

- Goal: trace the addresses and sizes of the allocated and freed blocks, without modifying the source code.
- Three solutions: interpose on the `lib` `malloc` and `free` functions at compile time, link time, and load/run time.

Compile-time Interpositioning

```
#ifdef COMPILETIME
/* Compile-time interposition of malloc and free using C
 * preprocessor. A local malloc.h file defines malloc (free)
 * as wrappers mymalloc (myfree) respectively.
 */

#include <stdio.h>
#include <malloc.h>

/*
 * mymalloc - malloc wrapper function
 */
void *mymalloc(size_t size, char *file, int line)
{
    void *ptr = malloc(size);
    printf("%s:%d: malloc(%d)=%p\n", file, line, (int)size,
ptr);
    return ptr;
}
```

mymalloc.c

Compile-time Interpositioning

```
#define malloc(size) mymalloc(size, __FILE__, __LINE__ )
#define free(ptr) myfree(ptr, __FILE__, __LINE__ )

void *mymalloc(size_t size, char *file, int line);
void myfree(void *ptr, char *file, int line);
```

malloc.h

```
linux> make helloc
gcc -O2 -Wall -DCOMPILETIME -c mymalloc.c
gcc -O2 -Wall -I. -o helloc hello.c mymalloc.o
linux> make runc
./helloc
hello.c:7: malloc(10)=0x501010
hello.c:7: free(0x501010)
hello, world
```

Link-time Interpositioning

```
#ifdef LINKTIME
/* Link-time interposition of malloc and free using the
static linker's (ld) "--wrap symbol" flag. */

#include <stdio.h>

void *__real_malloc(size_t size);
void __real_free(void *ptr);

/*
 * __wrap_malloc - malloc wrapper function
 */
void *__wrap_malloc(size_t size)
{
    void *ptr = __real_malloc(size);
    printf("malloc(%d) = %p\n", (int)size, ptr);
    return ptr;
}
```

mymalloc.c

Link-time Interpositioning

```
linux> make hellol
gcc -O2 -Wall -DLINKTIME -c mymalloc.c
gcc -O2 -Wall -Wl,--wrap,malloc -Wl,--wrap,free \
-o hellol hello.c mymalloc.o
linux> make runl
./hellol
malloc(10) = 0x501010
free(0x501010)
hello, world
```

- **The "`-Wl`" flag passes argument to linker**
- **Telling linker "`--wrap,malloc`" tells it to resolve references in a special way:**
  - Refs to `malloc` should be resolved as `__wrap_malloc`
  - Refs to `__real_malloc` should be resolved as `malloc`

Load/Run-time Interpositioning

```
#ifdef RUNTIME
 /* Run-time interposition of malloc and free based on
 * dynamic linker's (ld-linux.so) LD_PRELOAD mechanism */
#define _GNU_SOURCE
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <dlfcn.h>

void *malloc(size_t size)
{
    static void *(*mallocp)(size_t size);
    char *error;
    void *ptr;

    /* get address of libc malloc */
    if (!mallocp) {
        mallocp = dlsym(RTLD_NEXT, "malloc");
        if ((error = dlerror()) != NULL) {
            fputs(error, stderr);
            exit(1);
        }
    }
    ptr = mallocp(size);
    printf("malloc(%d) = %p\n", (int)size, ptr);
    return ptr;
}
```

mymalloc.c

Load/Run-time Interpositioning

```
linux> make hellor
gcc -O2 -Wall -DRUNTIME -shared -fPIC -o mymalloc.so mymalloc.c
gcc -O2 -Wall -o hellor hello.c
linux> make runr
(LD_PRELOAD="/usr/lib64/libdl.so ./mymalloc.so" ./hellor)
malloc(10) = 0x501010
free(0x501010)
hello, world
```

- **The `LD_PRELOAD` environment variable tells the dynamic linker to resolve unresolved refs (e.g., to `malloc`) by looking in `libdl.so` and `mymalloc.so` first.**
  - **`libdl.so`** necessary to resolve references to the **`dlopen`** functions.

Interpositioning Recap

- **Compile Time**
  - Apparent calls to malloc/free get macro-expanded into calls to mymalloc/myfree
- **Link Time**
  - Use linker trick to have special name resolutions
    - malloc → __wrap_malloc
    - __real_malloc → malloc
- **Compile Time**
  - Implement custom version of malloc/free that use dynamic linking to load library malloc/free under different names