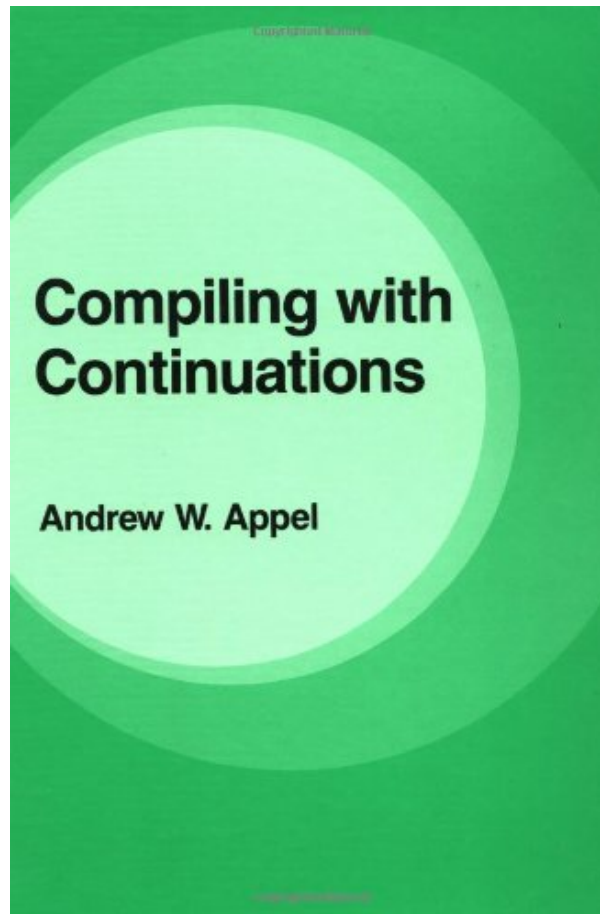
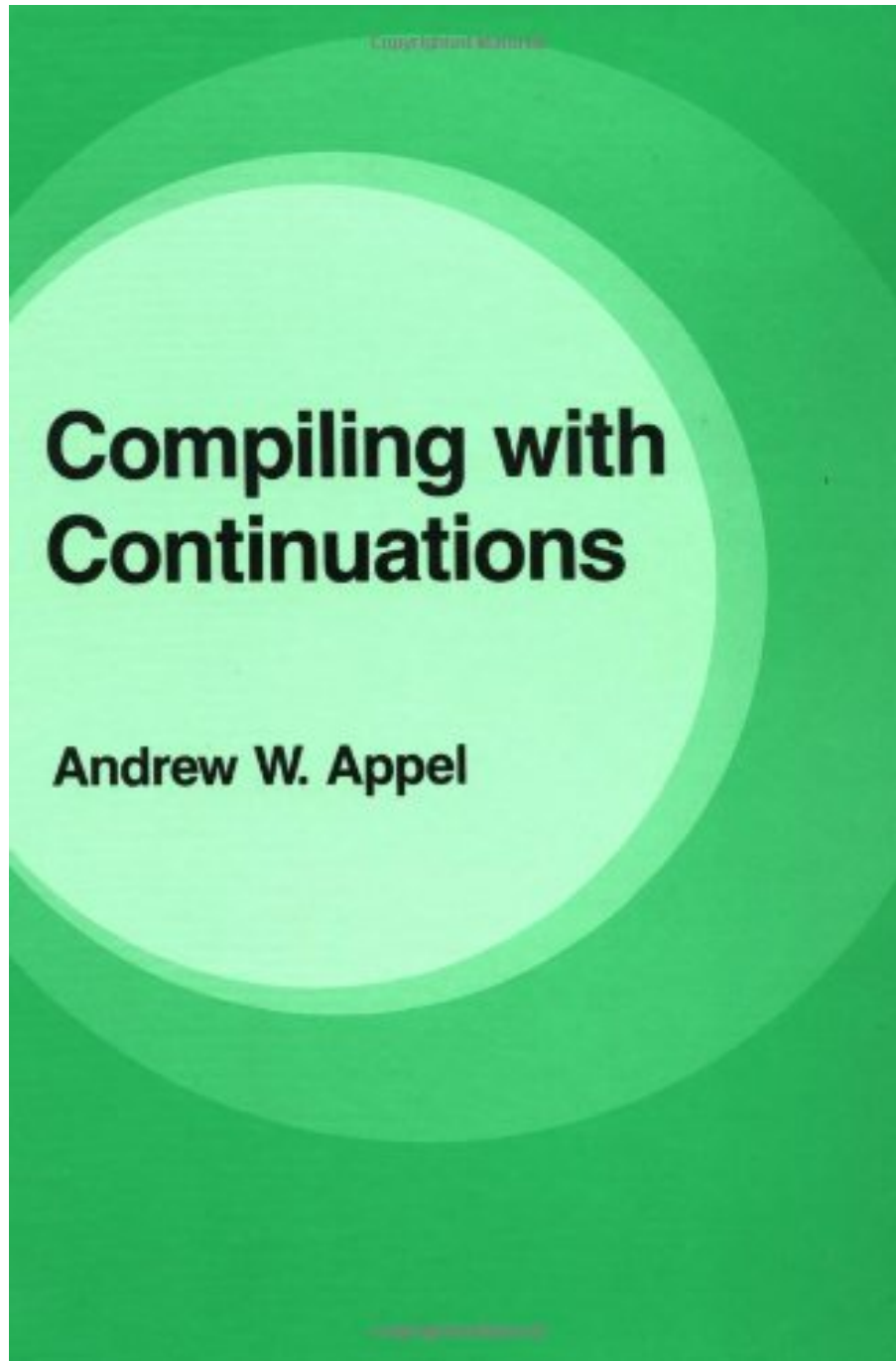


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Review

"I recommend the book to language designers and implementors specializing in the functional paradigm."

F.G. Pagan, Computing Reviews

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COMPILING WITH CONTINUATIONS BY ANDREW W. APPEL PDF

This book shows how continuation-passing style is used as an intermediate representation to perform optimizations and program transformations. Continuations can be used to compile most programming languages. The method is illustrated in a compiler for the programming language Standard ML. Prior knowledge of ML, however, is not necessary, as the author carefully explains each concept as it arises. This is the first book to show how concepts from the theory of programming languages can be applied to the production of practical optimizing compilers for modern languages like ML. All the details of compiling are covered, including the interface to a runtime system and garbage collector.

- Sales Rank: #2825451 in Books
- Brand: Cambridge University Press
- Published on: 1991-11-29
- Ingredients: Example Ingredients
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 10.00" h x .79" w x 7.01" l, .15 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 272 pages

Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

Review

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F.G. Pagan, Computing Reviews

Most helpful customer reviews

17 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

This book changed my life

By Matthew Fuchs

I found this book while trying to build a interpreter for a distributed language. Appel's approach not only solved my immediate issues (a uniform means of procedure call in the presence of mobility) but opened my mind to the utility of continuations in many areas of CS. It was a real mind opener, and the explanations were clear enough that I could adopt this approach with little difficulty.

12 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

Surprisingly relevant given its age

By Brian L.

This book was fantastic. It opened my mind to a different mindset towards the compilation process while at the same time demystifying many concepts that I had previously only partially understood.

It is clear, concise, well-written, and unusually approachable for its genre. That said, I recommend some familiarity with ML-family languages as a prerequisite for approaching the book. He does include an appendix that's supposed to explain ML, but there are plenty of subtleties that I would have easily missed if that were my only resource.

This book doesn't discuss the front end of the compiler at all--there is no discussion of lexical analysis, parsing or type inference. If that's what you're after, look elsewhere. This text is limited to the back end of the compiler.

The biggest quibble that I have with it is that the code generation chapter used MIPS/MAX/SPARC/68020 for case studies. In today's climate, ARM/x86/LLVM would be far more relevant and practical. This is an unfortunate consequence of the age of the text.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Great source for general understanding of continuations and closures

By Brian Beckman

Read this book if you wish to understand continuations. It's the first source I've seen that emphasizes that continuations are not functions in the ordinary sense even though they look like functions, syntactically. If you only read papers and books that "sugar" continuations by calling them functions, you will never understand them because your intuitions about function calling will mislead you and you will find only paradoxes. You can only implement continuations if you have tail-call optimization (TCO). That's their little secret and that's why papers about them written by Schemers don't go out of their way to explain that they aren't ordinary functions. In Scheme, they ARE ordinary functions because Scheme requires TCO. But you will go mad trying to implement them or even trying to imagine how to implement them in most other programming languages. Continuations don't return and they don't push stack frames when you call them. They're more like a fixupable goto with an environment containing assignments of value to variables. And that segue's to my second recommendation:

Read this book if you want to understand closures.

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