

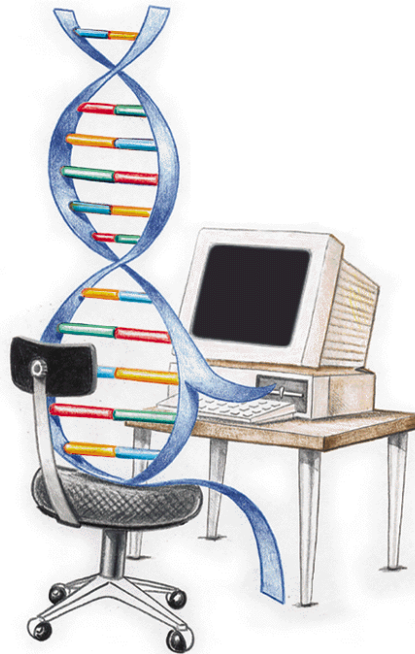
**TOWARD INDUSTRIAL-STRENGTH
AUTOMATED DESIGN OF ANALOG
CIRCUITS BY MEANS OF GENETIC
PROGRAMMING**

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GENETIC PROGRAMMING OVER 15- YEAR PERIOD 1987–2002

System	Period of usage	Petacycles (10^{15} cycles) per day for entire system	Speed-up over previous system	Speed-up over first system in this table	Human-competitive results
Serial Texas Instruments LISP machine	1987–1994	0.00216	1 (base)	1 (base)	0
64-node Transtech transputer parallel machine	1994–1997	0.02	9	9	2
64-node Parsytec parallel machine	1995–2000	0.44	22	204	12
70-node Alpha parallel machine	1999–2001	3.2	7.3	1,481	2
1,000-node Pentium II parallel machine	2000–2002	30.0	9.4	13,900	12

PROGRESSION OF RESULTS

System	Period	Speed-up	Qualitative nature of the results produced by genetic programming
Serial LISP machine	1987–1994	1 (base)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toy problems of the 1980s and early 1990s from the fields of artificial intelligence and machine learning
64-node Transtech 8-biy transputer	1994–1997	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two human-competitive results involving one-dimensional discrete data (not patent-related)
64-node Parsytec parallel machine	1995–2000	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One human-competitive result involving two-dimensional discrete data • Numerous human-competitive results involving continuous signals analyzed in the frequency domain • Numerous human-competitive results involving 20th-century patented inventions
70-node Alpha parallel machine	1999–2001	7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One human-competitive result involving continuous signals analyzed in the time domain • Circuit synthesis extended from topology and sizing to include routing and placement (layout)
1,000-node Pentium II parallel machine	2000–2002	9.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous human-competitive results involving continuous signals analyzed in the time domain • Numerous general solutions to problems in the form of parameterized topologies • Six human-competitive results duplicating the functionality of 21st-century patented inventions
Long (4-week) runs of 1,000-node Pentium II parallel machine	2002	9.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generation of two patentable new inventions

**PROGRESSION OF QUALITATIVELY
MORE SUBSTANTIAL RESULTS
PRODUCED BY GENETIC
PROGRAMMING IN RELATION TO FIVE
ORDER-OF-MAGNITUDE INCREASES IN
COMPUTATIONAL POWER**

- **toy problems**
- **human-competitive results not related to patented inventions**
- **20th-century patented inventions**
- **21st-century patented inventions**
- **patentable new inventions**

WHAT NEXT?

- **Industrial-Strength**

WHAT FIELD?

“The major reason underlying this lack of analog design automation tools has been the difficulty of the problem, in our opinion. Design in the analog domain requires creativity because of the large number of free parameters and the sometimes obscure interactions between them. ... Thus, analog design has remained more of an ‘art’ than a ‘science.’ ”

—Balkir, Dundar, and Ogrenci (2003)

PROMISING FACTORS

(1) Previous runs of the six 21st-Century patented analog circuits solved with an unusually and unexpectedly high success rate (100%)—thus suggesting that we are currently nowhere near the limit of the capability of existing, previously used techniques.

PROMISING FACTORS—CONTINUED

(2) GP has historically demonstrated the ability to profitably exploit the relentless increase in computer power tracked by Moore's law—thus suggesting that evermore complex problems can be solved as increased computer power becomes available,

PROMISING FACTORS—CONTINUED

(3) Previous work (intentionally) did not take advantage of elementary general domain knowledge about analog circuits (in order to emphasize the ability of genetic programming to produce human-competitive results in a relatively “clean hands” setting)

- **We did not cull egregiously flawed circuits**
 - **drawing enormous amounts of current**
 - **no connection to the circuit’s incoming signals, the circuit’s output ports, or power supplies**

PROMISING FACTORS—CONTINUED

(4) Previous work (intentionally) did not take advantage of opportunities to employ problem-specific knowledge.

- **Genetic programming started from “scratch.” However, a practicing engineer does not start each new assignment from first principles and “reinvent the wheel” on each occasion there is a need for an already known solution to a subproblem.**

PROMISING FACTORS—CONTINUED

(5) The techniques used in the previous work were (intentionally) rigidly uniform

- **No ADFs, even when there was manifest parallelism, regularity, symmetry, and modularity**

PROMISING FACTORS—CONTINUED

(6) Existing techniques can be improved by applying certain aspects of the theory of genetic algorithms

- **Not very attentive to building blocks in some cases**

PROMISING FACTORS—CONTINUED

(7) Previous work did not take advantage of commercially available faster circuit simulation software

PROMISING FACTORS—CONTINUED

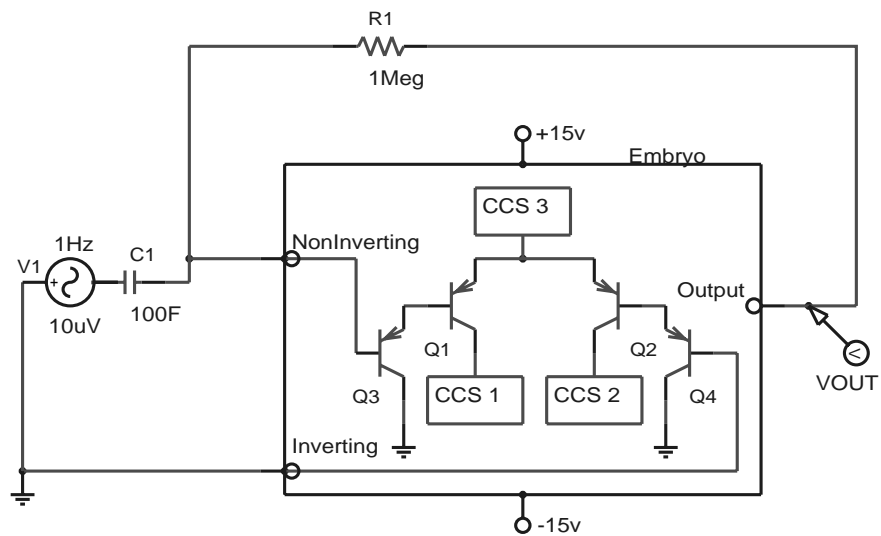
(8) Previous work contained some “intention-reality disparities”

THE BAD GNU'S

- The **M**ultiobjective fitness measures associated with real-world design problems
- Corners
- Layout and parasitics (not covered here)

MULTIOBJECTIVE FITNESS MEASURES—CONTINUED

- Previous work rarely involved more than 4 elements in the fitness measure
- Single test fixture



MULTIOBJECTIVE FITNESS MEASURES—CONTINUED

- **Combining the various (“apples and oranges”) elements of the fitness measure usually is vexatious**
 - **Amplifiers: Gain, bias, distortion**
 - **Local optima**

CORNERS

- Temperature
 - Variations in the power supply
 - Manufacturing variations
 - Loads
 - Inputs
-
- This is at least a 2^N impact

LAYOUT AND PARASITICS

- **Layout**
- **Parasitics**

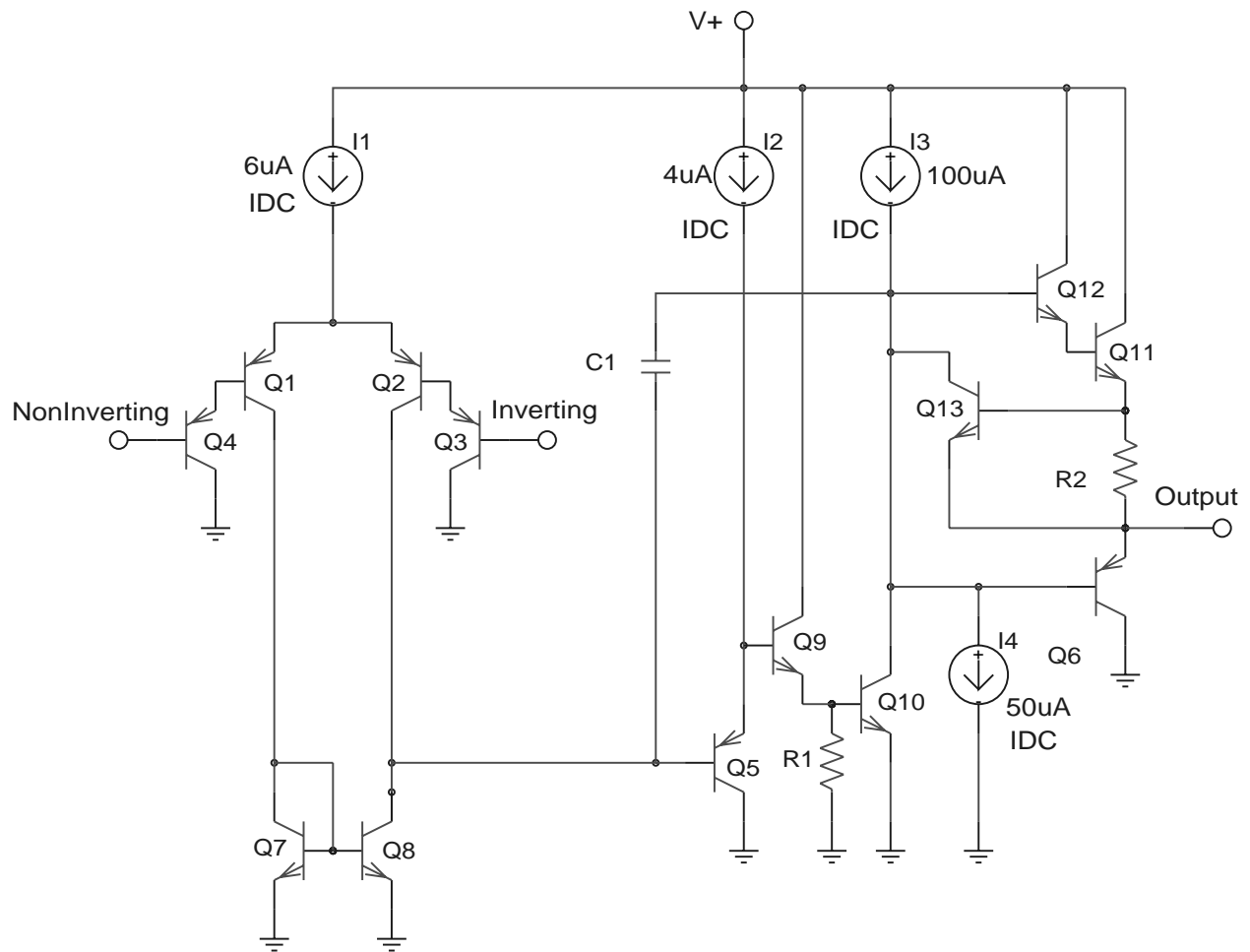
BALANCING

- **8 promising factors**
- **3 negative factors**

LM124 AMPLIFIER

- **LM124 amplifier is a well-known commercial amplifier that delivers 100 dB of gain**
- **LM124 has 13 transistors, two resistors, one capacitor, and four current sources**
- **The LM124 has two inputs (an inverting input and non-inverting input) and one output**
- **The circuit connects to a single +5 volt power source and ground**
- **“Data sheet” at**
<http://www.national.com/pf/LM/LM124.html>

LM124 AMPLIFIER



APPROACHES

- **4 ways for using elementary general domain knowledge about circuits**
- **2 ways for employing problem-specific knowledge**
- **4 ways of improving on previously published GP techniques**
- **4 ways of grappling with multiobjective fitness measure**

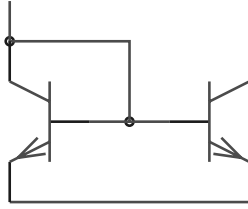
EXPLOITING GENERAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CIRCUITS

- **Cull egregiously flawed circuits**
 - **drawing enormous amounts of current**
 - **no connection to the circuit's incoming signals, output ports, or power supplies**

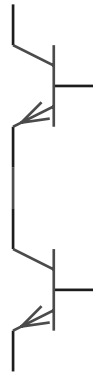
EXPLOITING GENERAL KNOWLEDGE —CONTINUED

- **Make certain building blocks into primitive component-inserting functions**
- **Graeb, Zizala, Eckmueller, and Antreich (2001) identified (for a purpose entirely unrelated to evolutionary computation) a promising set of frequently occurring combinations of transistors that are known to be useful in a broad range of analog circuits.**
- **From their set involving 2 transistors, we have implemented circuit-constructing functions that insert a**
 - **current mirror**
 - **a loaded current mirror**
 - **2 types of voltage references**
 - **a level shifter**

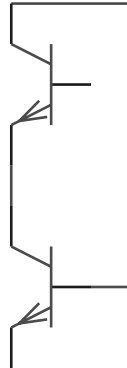
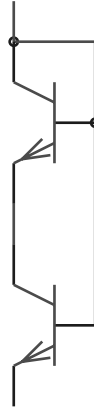
GRAEB—CURRENT MIRROR



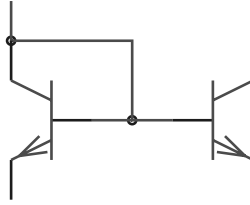
GRAEB—LOADED CURRENT MIRROR



GRAEB—VOLTAGE REFERENCES



GRAEB—LEVEL SHIFTER



EXPLOITING GENERAL KNOWLEDGE —CONTINUED

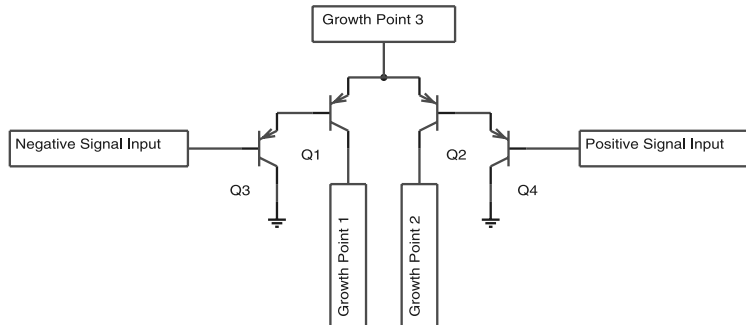
- **Narrower (only 3 orders of magnitude) range of values for resistors and capacitors**

EXPLOITING GENERAL KNOWLEDGE —CONTINUED

- **Current flow analysis (Sripramong and Toumazou 2002)**

EXPLOITING PROBLEM-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE

- A differential pair that receives the inverting input and non-inverting input is a useful first stage in designing an amplifier with the characteristics of the LM124.



- 2 ways to implement
 - Hard-wired into the embryo
 - Hard-wired into the top of every program tree (S-expression) and then immunizing these nodes from modification by the genetic operations

IMPROVED GP TECHNIQUES

- We previously used `VIA`, `PAIR_CONNECT`, `NODE` functions. Now we have `NODE_INCREASED_SCOPE` function (along with `VIA`)
- Three-argument Y division function
- The two new resistors produced by a series or parallel division to be assigned values such that the new topological composition has the same overall behavior as the original single component (Trent McConaghy)
- All inserted components (2-leaded and N-leaded) are now non-modifiable after insertion into the developing circuit (eliminating asymmetry that promises to get even worse with use of the Graeb components)

IMPROVED GP TECHNIQUES— CONTINUED

- **Three-argument Y division function**
- **The two new resistors produced by a series or parallel division to be assigned values such that the new topological composition has the same overall behavior as the original single component**
- **All inserted components (2-leaded and N-leaded) are now non-modifiable after insertion into the developing circuit**

GRAPPLING WITH A MULTI-OBJECTIVE FITNESS MEASURE

- **The fitness measures used in previously published examples of the synthesis of analog circuits (evolvable hardware) by means of genetic programming (and genetic algorithms) typically consist of only a small handful of different elements—rarely as many as 4**
- **Previously published work typically employs only a single test fixture (test bench) to measure the circuit's fitness.**

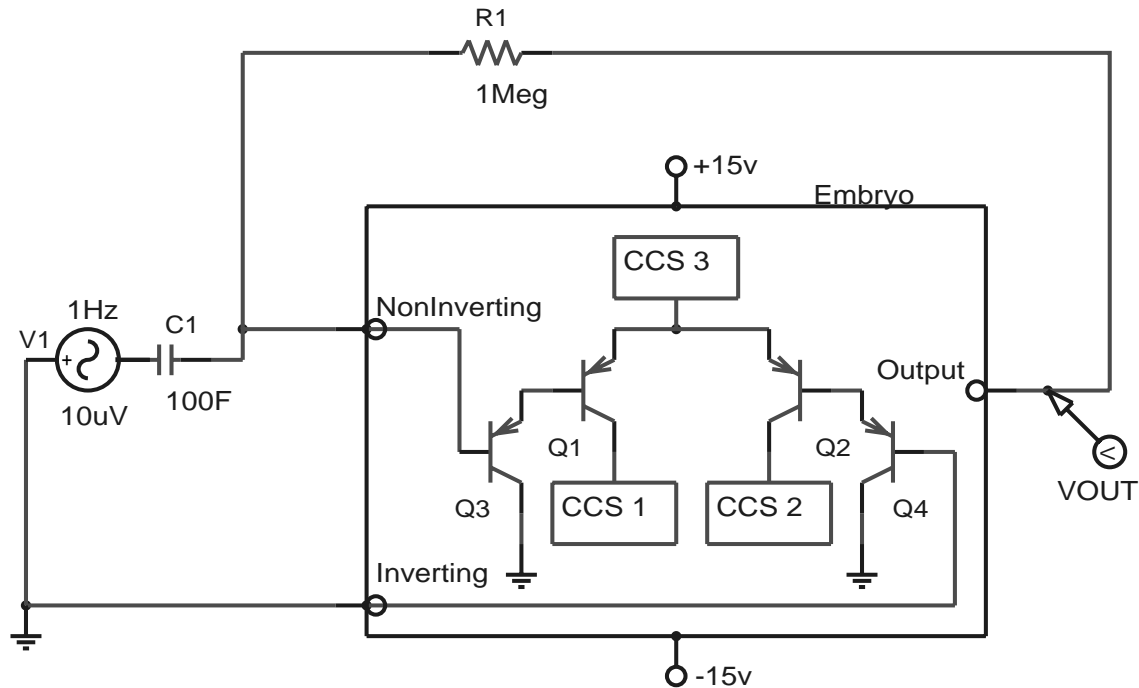
LM124 PROJECT

- **16 elements**
- **5 test fixtures**

LM124 PROJECT—16 ELEMENTS

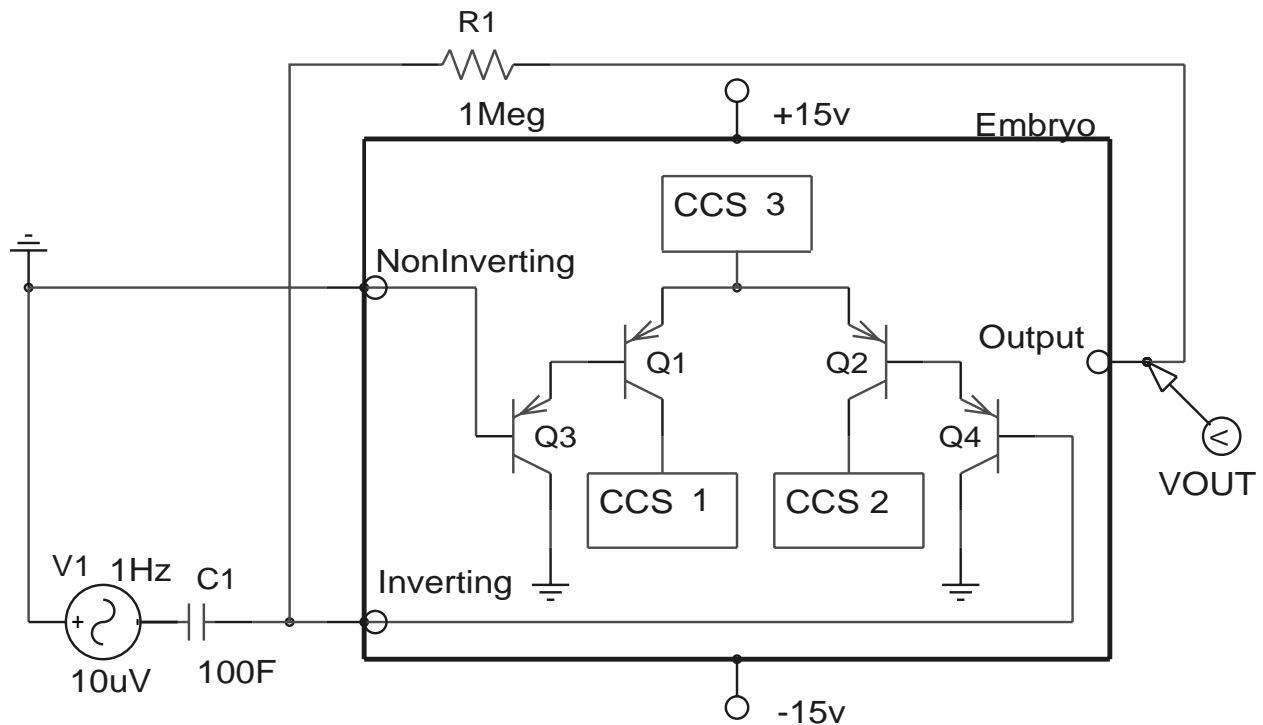
- (1) 10dB initial gain,**
- (2) supply current,**
- (3) offset voltage,**
- (4) direction cosine,**
- (5) gain ratio,**
- (6) output swing,**
- (7) output swing direction cosine,**
- (8) variable load resistance signal output,**
- (9) open loop gain for the non-inverting configuration,**
- (10) 900 KHz unity gain bandwidth for the non-inverting configuration,**
- (11) phase margin for the non-inverting configuration,**
- (12) open loop gain for the inverting configuration,**
- (13) 900 KHz unity gain bandwidth for the inverting configuration,**
- (14) phase margin for the inverting configuration,**
- (15) inversion enforcement across test fixtures for the inverting and non-inverting configurations, and**
- (16) bias current.**

TEST FIXTURE NO. 1—NON-INVERTING CONFIGURATION



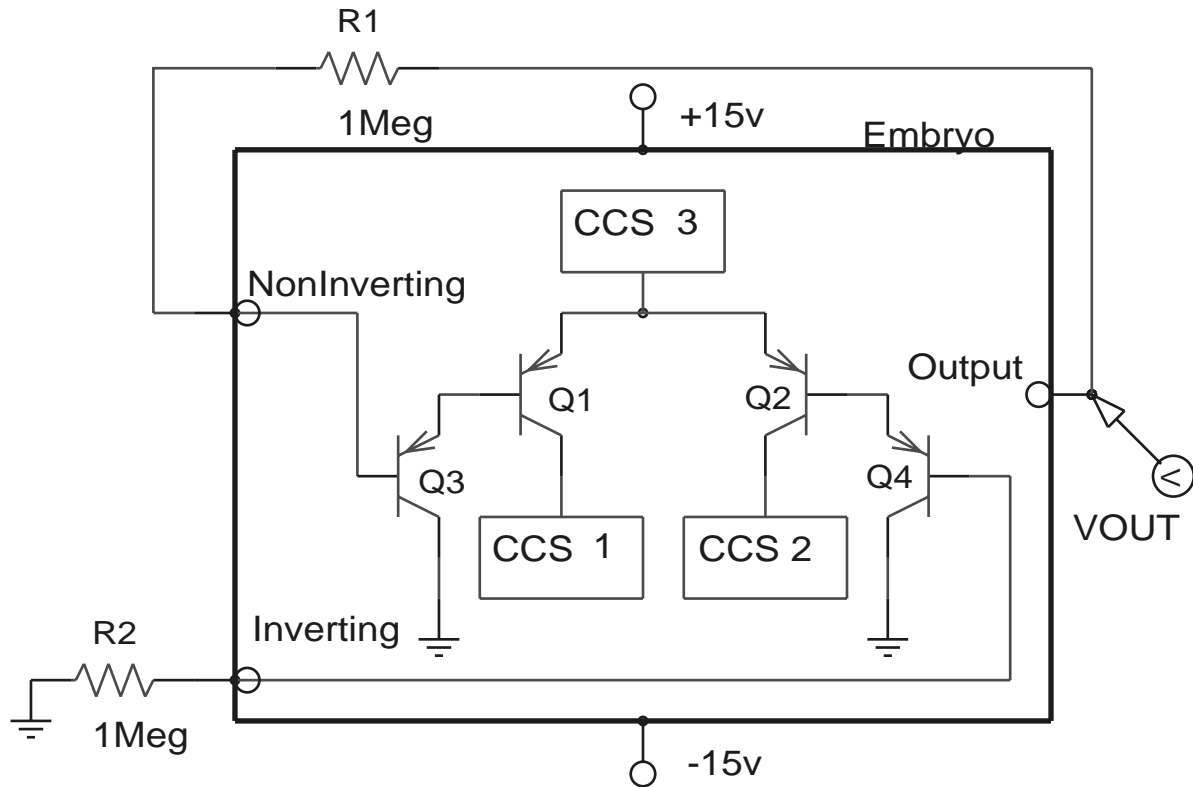
- **Open loop gain (in decibels) for the NON-INVERTING configuration**
- **900 KHz unity gain bandwidth for the NON-INVERTING configuration**
- **Phase margin for the NON-INVERTING configuration**

TEST FIXTURE NO. 2—INVERTING CONFIGURATION



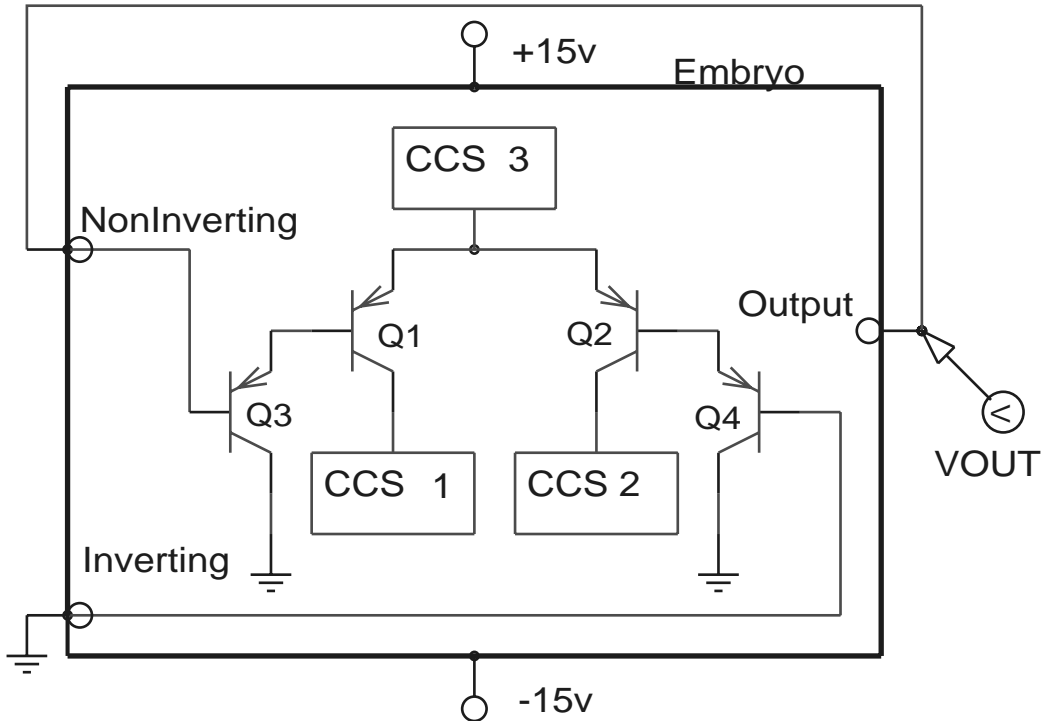
- This test fixture differs from first one in that the inverting and non-inverting inputs are switched
- Open loop gain (in decibels) for the INVERTING configuration
- 900 KHz unity gain bandwidth for the INVERTING configuration
- Phase margin for the INVERTING configuration

TEST FIXTURE NO. 3—BIAS CURRENT



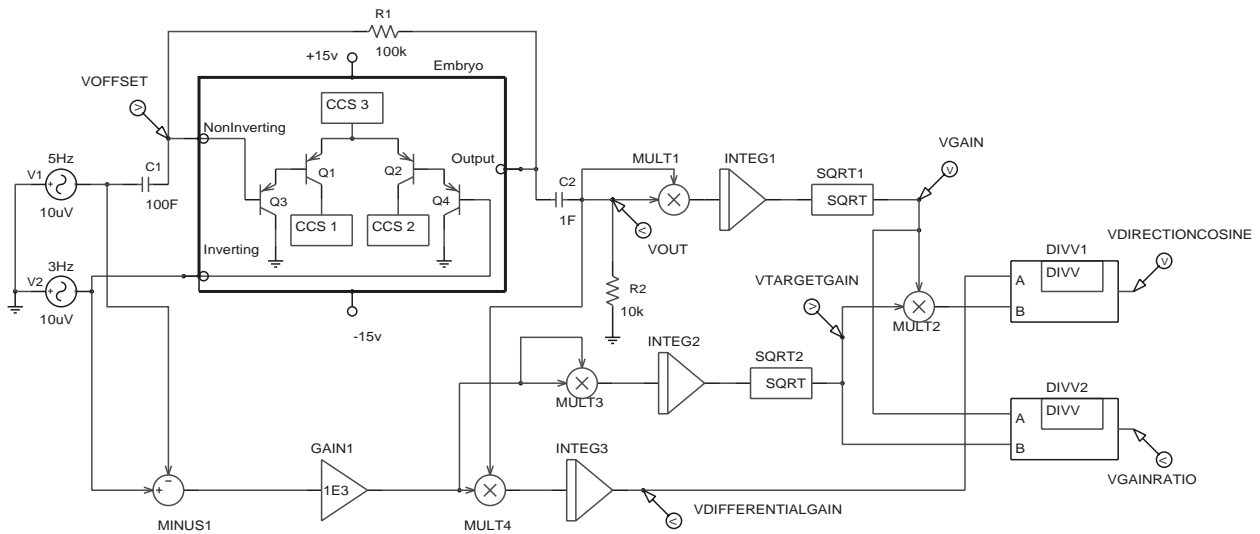
- This test fixture differs from first one only in that there is no signal source, that there is no capacitor, and that there is a 1 mega-Ohm resistor between ground and the inverting input.

TEST FIXTURE NO. 4— OFFSET VOLTAGE (BIAS)



- This test fixture differs from first one only in that there is no signal source, that there is no capacitor, and that the 1 mega-Ohm feedback resistor at the top of first figure is replaced by a wire.

TEST FIXTURE NO. 5—FOUR PROBE POINTS, SEVEN MEASUREMENTS, AND HARD-WIRED CALCULATIONS



- the initial 10dB amplification
- output voltage under different loads (corners)
- direction cosine
- the gain ratio
- the offset voltage
- the output swing
- the output swing direction cosine

GRAPPLING WITH A MULTI- OBJECTIVE FITNESS MEASURE

- **The goal to conduct an automated search (without human interaction) when one does not have any detailed information about the interrelationships among the various elements of the fitness measure**

GRAPPLING WITH A MULTI- OBJECTIVE FITNESS MEASURE— CONTINUED

- **Even in such situations, one usually knows a little.**
- **A little information can go a long way toward constructing a serviceable fitness measure that can navigate a complex search space in a surprisingly effective way.**

GRAPPLING WITH A MULTI- OBJECTIVE FITNESS MEASURE— CONTINUED

- **One thing that is almost always known is the identity of the preeminent element of the fitness measure.**
- **Acknowledging the special role of a preeminent element of the fitness measure and disproportionately rewarding the attainment of a certain modest threshold level for that element may avoid some alluring sub-optimal basins of attractions.**
- **By heavily rewarding circuits that deliver as little as 10 dB of gain, one can direct the search away from the large and alluring subspace of totally degenerate circuits that deliver no gain at all (e.g., single wires) but that achieve non-zero scores for secondary elements of the fitness measure (e.g., freedom from bias and distortion).**

GRAPPLING WITH A MULTI- OBJECTIVE FITNESS MEASURE— CONTINUED

- **Identify all the elements of the fitness measure for which there is no practical advantage to any improvement once some minimal level of performance has been achieved.**
- **As soon as the required minimal level is achieved for these elements, the detrimental contribution to fitness from that element should be defined to be 0 and no subsequent reward given for additional improvement.**
 - **Eliminates the potentially distracting effects of already satisfied elements of the fitness measure**
 - **Relieves the human user of the need to arbitrarily pre-specify a tradeoff between disparate elements of the fitness measure**

THE 16 ELEMENTS ORGANIZED INTO 4 GROUPS

Preeminent element	Amplifier-like behavior	Achievement of one required value	Time-domain signal matching
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10dB initial gain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase margin (inverting) • Phase margin (non-inverting) • Unity gain bandwidth (inverting) • Phase and amplitude inversion • Unity gain bandwidth (non-inverting) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desired Decibel gain (inverting) • Desired decibel gain (non-inverting) • Output swing • Offset voltage • Bias current • Variable load performance • Supply current 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direction cosine • Gain ratio • Output swing direction cosine

GRAPPLING WITH A MULTI- OBJECTIVE FITNESS MEASURE— CONTINUED

- **In practice, not all measurements of fitness are completely independent. For example, the gain ratio, output swing, decibel gain, and variable load performance are all related to the amplification performance of the evolved circuit in time domain and frequency sweep contexts. The offset voltage, supply current, bias current and direction cosine are related to each other in a more subtle fashion, but all become harder to achieve as the amplification of the evolved circuit grows.**
- **The remaining elements of the fitness measure are equalized so that their expected worst case contributions are equal (arbitrarily chosen to be 30,000 here).**

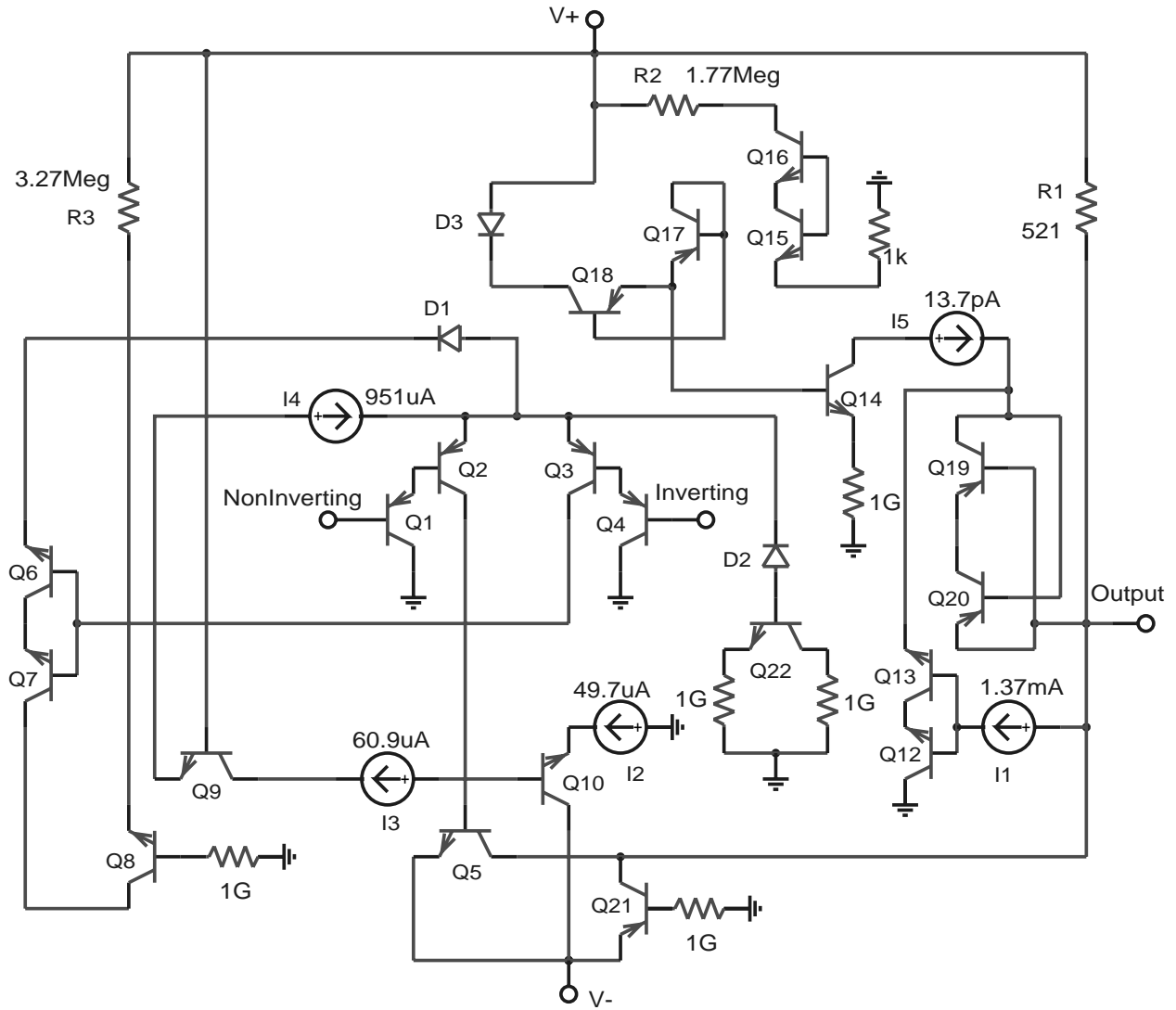
4 OBSERVED PHASES IN RECENT RUNS—40 dB AMPLIFIER PROBLEM

- (1) initial topology search**
- (2) formation of a core topology**
- (3) component solution**
- (4) refinement**

PHASE 1

- **For 40 DB, phase 1 is done by generation 1 and establishes initial topologies that deliver at least 10 dB of gain and that exhibit amplifier-like behavior (i.e., the elements of the fitness measure in columns 1 and 2)**

BEST-OF-RUN CIRCUIT OF GENERATION 120



PHASE 2

- **Phase 2 searches for a core topology. In generation 17, a core topology emerges that links the differential pair (Q1–Q4), a transistor (Q5), a resistor (R1), the positive power supply (V+), and the output.**
- **This topology persists for the remainder of the run.**
- **During this phase, the magnitude of each of the remaining elements of the fitness measure is substantially reduced. Although none of these elements are actually driven to 0, this phase establishes a baseline value for each of these elements for the next phase.**

PHASE 3

- There are 3 sub-phases in which the run concentrates on one, two, or three elements of the six elements of the fitness measure shown in the third column.
 - 1st sub-phase of phase 3: Between generations 18 and 29, a current mirror is added to the circuit to help drive the gain ratio and output swing to 0. (This then disappears).
 - 2nd sub-phase of phase 3: Between generation 30 and 73, the run concentrates on offset voltage, bias current, and variable load performance (i.e., the “corners” of the load envelope). The variable load performance becomes satisfied with the addition of the current source I1 to the core topology.

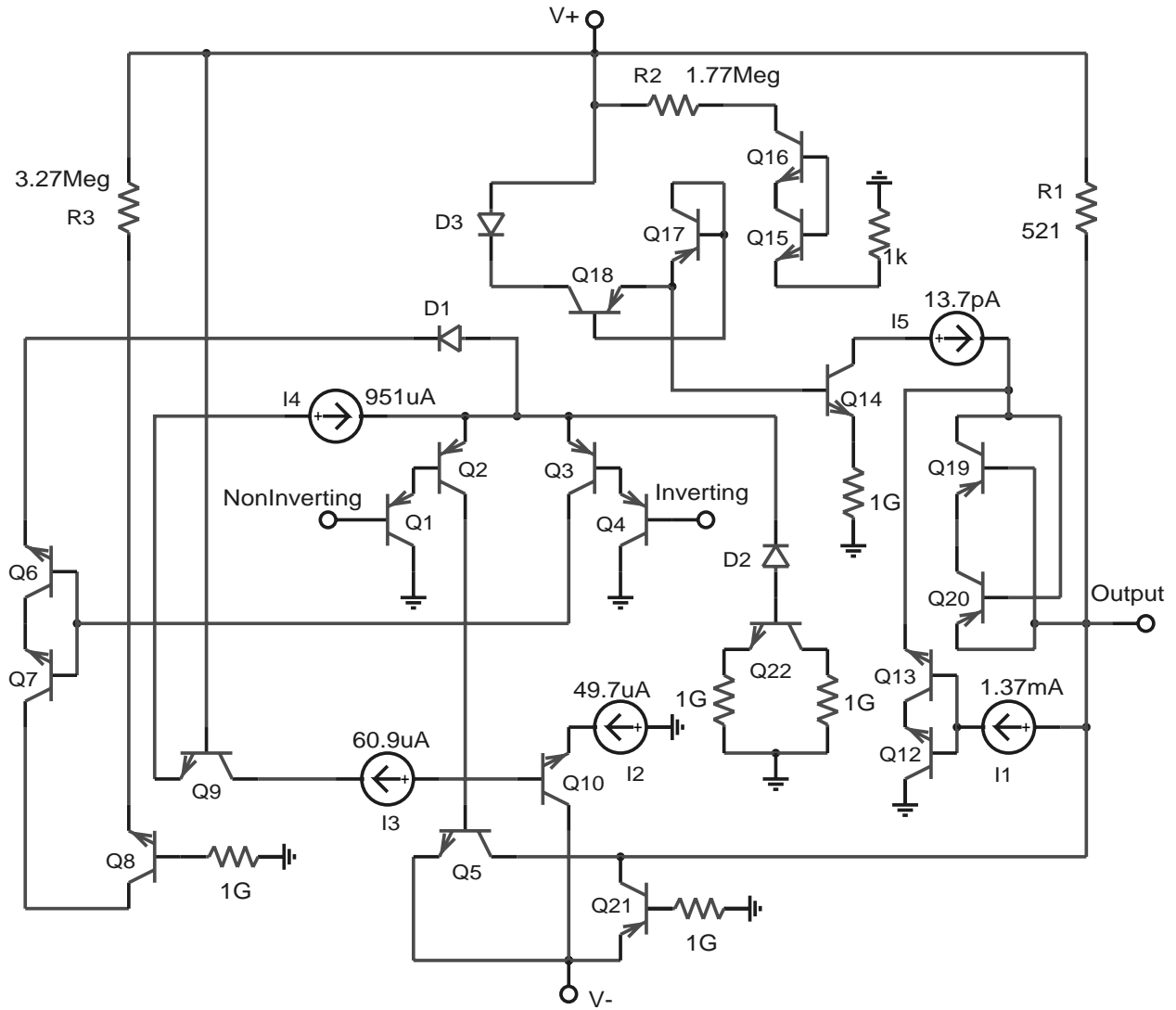
PHASE 3—CONTINUED

- **3rd sub-phase of phase 3: Between generation 74 and 113), the offset voltage and bias currents become satisfied. In generation 104 the bias currents are pulled below the specified values with the introduction of current source I4. Generation 113 sees the offset voltage satisfied by substitution of a previously placed transistor with a current mirror consisting of Q6 and Q7, completing what would be the core of the solution circuit.**

PHASE 4

- In phase 4, the remaining residual error of the fitness measure elements in the third column are pushed toward their ideal values

BEST-OF-RUN CIRCUIT OF GENERATION 120



SUMMARY FOR GRAPPLING WITH 16-ELEMENT FITNESS MEASURE WITH 5 TEST FIXTURES

- **Identify the preeminent element of the fitness measure and disproportionately reward the attainment of a modest threshold level for that element**
- **Identify all the elements of the fitness measure for which there is no practical advantage to any improvement once some minimal level of performance has been achieved.**
- **The remaining elements of the fitness measure are equalized so that their expected worst case contributions are equal (arbitrarily chosen to be 30,000 here).**

OVERALL SUMMARY

- **4 ways for using general domain knowledge about circuits**
- **2 ways for employing problem-specific knowledge**
- **4 ways of improving on previously published GP techniques**
- **4 ways of grappling with multiobjective fitness measure**