

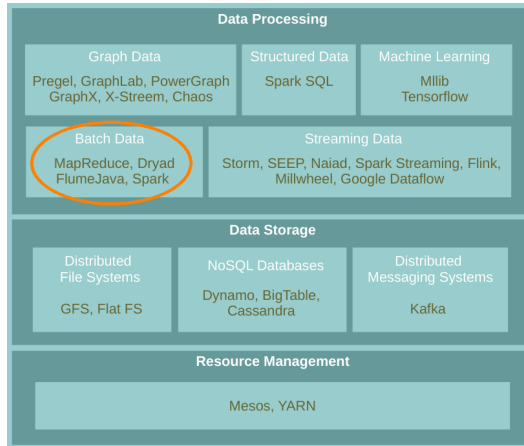


# Parallel Processing - Spark

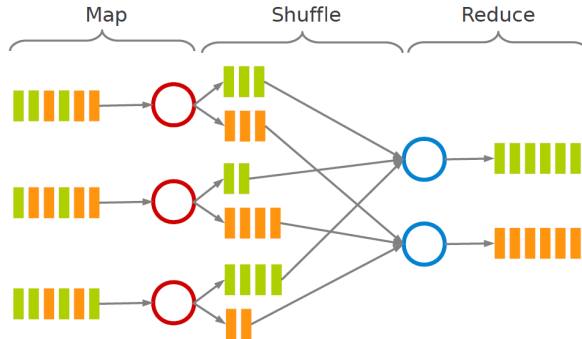
Amir H. Payberah  
payberah@kth.se  
2025-09-09



# Where Are We?

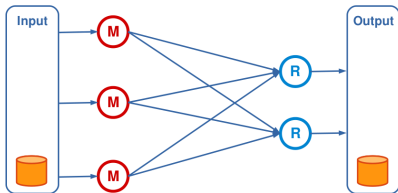


# MapReduce Reminder

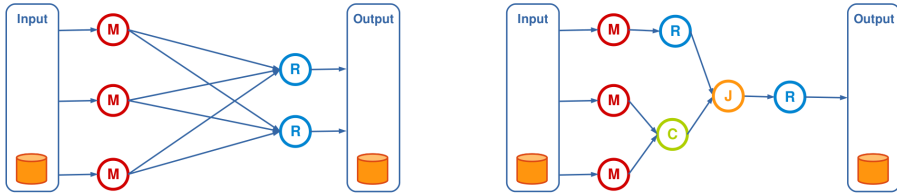


## Motivation (1/2)

- **Acyclic data flow** from stable storage to stable storage.

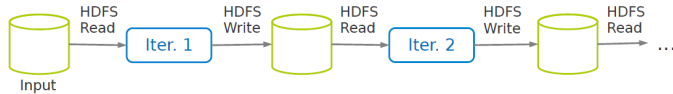


- **Acyclic data flow** from stable storage to stable storage.

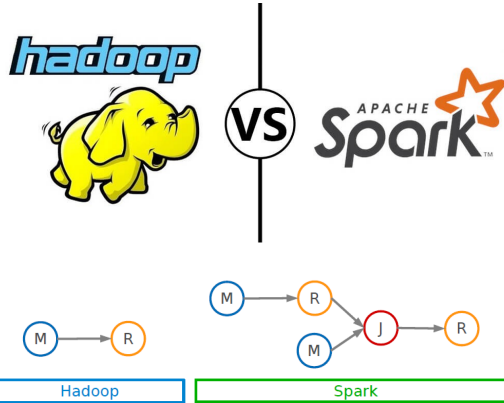


## Motivation (2/2)

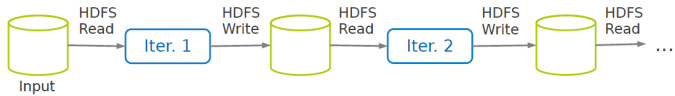
- MapReduce is **expensive** (**slow**), i.e., always goes to disk and **HDFS**.



## So, Let's Use Spark

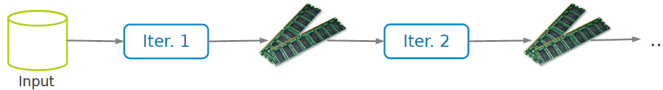
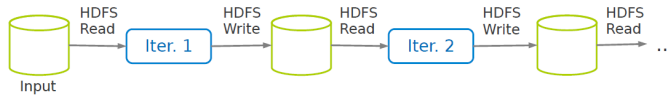


## Spark vs. MapReduce (1/2)



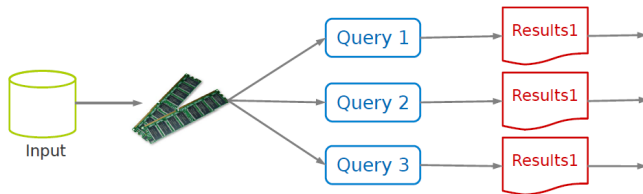
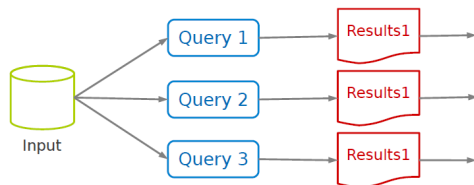


## Spark vs. MapReduce (1/2)





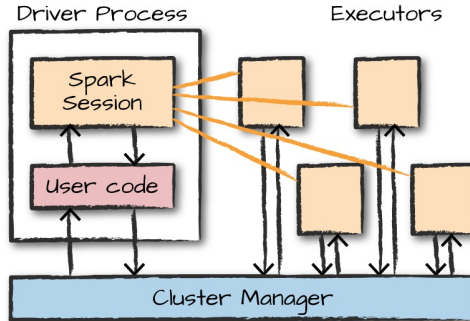
## Spark vs. MapReduce (2/2)



# Spark Application

# Spark Applications Architecture

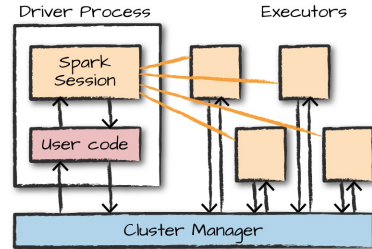
- ▶ Spark applications consist of
  - A driver process
  - A set of executor processes



[M. Zaharia et al., Spark: The Definitive Guide, O'Reilly Media, 2018]

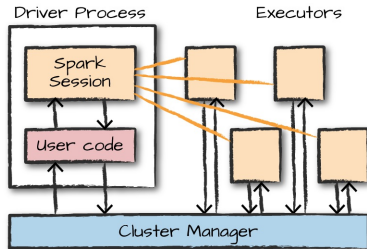
# Driver Process

- ▶ The **heart** of a **Spark** application
- ▶ Runs the `main()` function



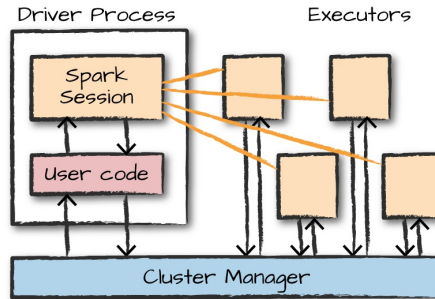
# Driver Process

- ▶ The **heart** of a **Spark application**
- ▶ Runs the `main()` function
- ▶ Responsible for **three** things:
  - **Maintaining information** about the Spark application
  - **Responding to a user's program or input**
  - **Analyzing, distributing, and scheduling** work across the **executors**



# Executors

- ▶ Executing code assigned to it by the driver
- ▶ Reporting the state of the computation on that executor back to the driver







# SparkSession

- ▶ A **driver process** that controls a **Spark application**.

```
SparkSession.builder.master(master).appName(appName).getOrCreate()
```



# SparkSession

- ▶ A **driver process** that controls a **Spark application**.
- ▶ A **one-to-one correspondence** between a **SparkSession** and a **Spark application**.

```
SparkSession.builder.master(master).appName(appName).getOrCreate()
```



# SparkSession

- ▶ A **driver process** that controls a **Spark application**.
- ▶ A **one-to-one correspondence** between a **SparkSession** and a **Spark application**.
- ▶ Available in **console** shell as **spark**.

```
SparkSession.builder.master(master).appName(appName).getOrCreate()
```



# SparkContext

- ▶ The entry point for **low-level API** functionality.
- ▶ You **access it** through the **SparkSession**.

```
val conf = new SparkConf().setMaster(master).setAppName(appName)
new SparkContext(conf)
```



# SparkContext

- ▶ The entry point for **low-level API** functionality.
- ▶ You **access it** through the **SparkSession**.
- ▶ Available in **console** shell as **sc**.

```
val conf = new SparkConf().setMaster(master).setAppName(appName)
new SparkContext(conf)
```



## SparkSession vs. SparkContext

- ▶ Prior to `Spark 2.0.0`, a the `spark driver` program uses `SparkContext` to connect to the cluster.
- ▶ In order to use APIs of `SQL`, `Hive` and `streaming`, `separate SparkContexts` should to be created.



## SparkSession vs. SparkContext

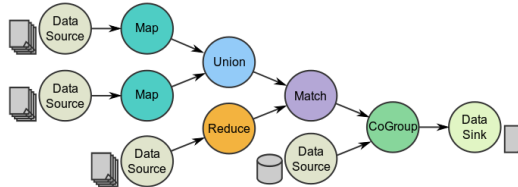
- ▶ Prior to `Spark 2.0.0`, a the `spark driver` program uses `SparkContext` to connect to the cluster.
- ▶ In order to use APIs of `SQL`, `Hive` and `streaming`, `separate SparkContexts` should to be created.
- ▶ `SparkSession` provides access to all the spark functionalities that `SparkContext` does, e.g., `SQL`, `Hive` and `streaming`.
- ▶ `SparkSession` internally has a `SparkContext` for actual computation.

# Programming Model



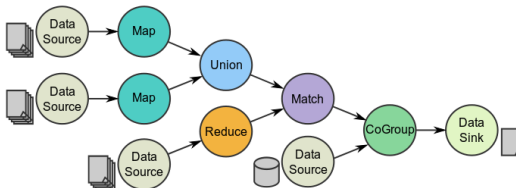
# Spark Programming Model

- **Job** is described based on **directed acyclic graphs (DAG)** **data flow**.



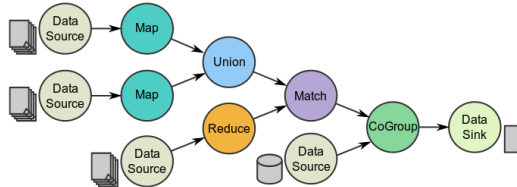
# Spark Programming Model

- ▶ **Job** is described based on **directed acyclic graphs (DAG)** **data flow**.
- ▶ A **data flow** is composed of any number of **data sources**, **operators**, and **data sinks** by connecting their inputs and outputs.



# Spark Programming Model

- ▶ **Job** is described based on **directed acyclic graphs (DAG)** **data flow**.
- ▶ A **data flow** is composed of any number of **data sources**, **operators**, and **data sinks** by connecting their inputs and outputs.
- ▶ **Parallelizable operators**



# Resilient Distributed Datasets (RDD) (1/3)

- ▶ A distributed memory abstraction.
- ▶ Immutable collections of objects spread across a cluster.
  - Like a `LinkedList` `<MyObjects>`



## Resilient Distributed Datasets (RDD) (2/3)

- ▶ An **RDD** is divided into a number of **partitions**, which are **atomic** pieces of information.
- ▶ **Partitions** of an RDD can be stored on **different nodes** of a cluster.





## Resilient Distributed Datasets (RDD) (3/3)

- ▶ RDDs were the primary API in the [Spark 1.x](#) series.
- ▶ They are **not commonly used** in the [Spark 2.x](#) series.
- ▶ Virtually all Spark code you run, [compiles down to an RDD](#).



## Types of RDDs

- ▶ Two types of RDDs:
  - Generic RDD
  - Key-value RDD
- ▶ Both represent a collection of objects.
- ▶ Key-value RDDs have special operations, such as aggregation, and a concept of custom partitioning by key.

# Creating RDDs





## Creating RDDs - Parallelized Collections

- ▶ Use the `parallelize` method on a `SparkContext`.
- ▶ This turns a `single node` collection into a `parallel` collection.
- ▶ You can also explicitly state the `number of partitions`.
- ▶ In the console shell, you can either use `sc` or `spark.sparkContext`



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```
val numsCollection = Array(1, 2, 3)
val nums = sc.parallelize(numsCollection)
```



## Creating RDDs - Parallelized Collections

- ▶ Use the `parallelize` method on a `SparkContext`.
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- ▶ You can also explicitly state the `number of partitions`.
- ▶ In the console shell, you can either use `sc` or `spark.sparkContext`

```
val numsCollection = Array(1, 2, 3)
val nums = sc.parallelize(numsCollection)

val wordsCollection = "take it easy, this is a test".split(" ")
val words = spark.sparkContext.parallelize(wordsCollection, 2)
```



## Creating RDDs - External Datasets

- ▶ Create RDD from an **external storage**.
  - E.g., **local file system**, **HDFS**, **Cassandra**, **HBase**, **Amazon S3**, etc.
- ▶ Text file RDDs can be created using **textFile** method.

```
val myFile1 = sc.textFile("file.txt")  
val myFile2 = sc.textFile("hdfs://namenode:9000/path/file")
```

# RDD Operations



# RDD Operations

- ▶ RDDs support **two** types of operations:
  - **Transformations**: allow us to **build the logical plan**
  - **Actions**: allow us to **trigger the computation**

# Transformations



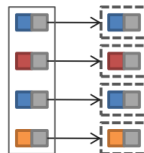
# Transformations

- ▶ Create a **new RDD** from an **existing one**.
- ▶ All transformations are **lazy**.
  - **Not compute** their results right away.
  - Remember the **transformations** applied to the base dataset.
  - They are only computed when an **action requires a result** to be returned to the **driver program**.



# Generic RDD Transformations

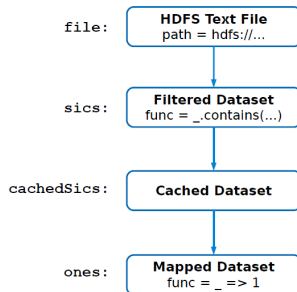
- `map` applies a given function on each RDD record **independently**.



```
val nums = sc.parallelize(Array(1, 2, 3))  
val squares = nums.map(x => x * x)  
// 1, 4, 9
```

# Lineage

- ▶ **Lineage:** transformations used to build an RDD.
- ▶ **RDDs** are stored as a chain of objects capturing the **lineage** of each RDD.



```
val file = sc.textFile("hdfs://...")
val sics = file.filter(_.contains("SICS"))
val cachedSics = sics.cache()
val ones = cachedSics.map(_ => 1)
val count = ones.reduce(_+_)
```

Convert each elements  $x$  of an RDD to  $(x, 1)$ ?

<https://tinyurl.com/4bys7j7t>





# Key-Value RDD Transformations

- ▶ In a  $(k, v)$  pairs,  $k$  is is the **key**, and  $v$  is the **value**.



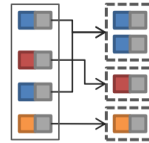
# Key-Value RDD Transformations

- ▶ In a  $(k, v)$  pairs,  $k$  is the **key**, and  $v$  is the **value**.
- ▶ To make a key-value RDD:
  - `map` over your current RDD to a basic **key-value** structure.

```
val words = sc.parallelize("take it easy, this is a test".split(" "))  
val keyword1 = words.map(word => (word, 1))  
// (take,1), (it,1), (easy,,1), (this,1), (is,1), (a,1), (test,1)
```

# Key-Value RDD Transformations - Aggregation

- Aggregate the values associated with each key.



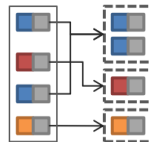
```
def addFunc(a:Int, b:Int) = a + b

val kvChars = ...
// (t,1), (a,1), (k,1), (e,1), (i,1), (t,1), (e,1), (a,1), (s,1), (y,1), (,,1), ...

val grpChar = kvChars.groupByKey().map(row => (row._1, row._2.reduce(addFunc)))
// (t,5), (h,1), (,,1), (e,3), (a,3), (i,3), (y,1), (s,4), (k,1))
```

# Key-Value RDD Transformations - Aggregation

- Aggregate the values associated with each key.



```
def addFunc(a:Int, b:Int) = a + b

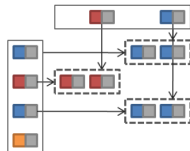
val kvChars = ...
// (t,1), (a,1), (k,1), (e,1), (i,1), (t,1), (e,1), (a,1), (s,1), (y,1), (,1), ...

val grpChar = kvChars.groupByKey().map(row => (row._1, row._2.reduce(addFunc)))
// (t,5), (h,1), (,1), (e,3), (a,3), (i,3), (y,1), (s,4), (k,1))
```

```
val redChar = kvChars.reduceByKey(addFunc)
// (t,5), (h,1), (,1), (e,3), (a,3), (i,3), (y,1), (s,4), (k,1))
```

# Key-Value RDD Transformations - Join

- ▶ `join` performs an **inner-join** on the key.
- ▶ `fullOuterJoin`, `leftOuterJoin`, `rightOuterJoin`, and `cartesian`.



```
val keyedChars = ...
// (t,4), (h,6), (,9), (e,8), (a,3), (i,5), (y,2), (s,7), (k,0)

val kvChars = ...
// (t,1), (a,1), (k,1), (e,1), (i,1), (t,1), (e,1), (a,1), (s,1), (y,1), (,1), ...

val joinedChars = kvChars.join(keyedChars)
// (t,(1,4)), (t,(1,4)), (t,(1,4)), (t,(1,4)), (t,(1,4)), (h,(1,6)), (,(1,9)), (e,(1,8)), ...
```



# Actions



# Actions

- ▶ Transformations allow us to build up our logical transformation plan (lineage graph).
- ▶ We run an action to trigger the computation.
  - Instructs Spark to compute a result from a series of transformations.



## RDD Actions (1/3)

- ▶ `collect` returns all the elements of the RDD as an array at the driver.

```
val nums = sc.parallelize(Array(1, 2, 3))  
  
nums.collect()  
// Array(1, 2, 3)
```



## RDD Actions (2/3)

- ▶ **reduce** aggregates the elements of the dataset using a **given function**.
- ▶ The given function should be **commutative and associative** so that it can be computed correctly in **parallel**.

```
sc.parallelize(1 to 20).reduce(_ + _)  
// 210
```



## RDD Actions (3/3)

- ▶ `saveAsTextFile` writes the elements of an RDD as a **text file**.
  - Local filesystem, HDFS or any other Hadoop-supported file system.
- ▶ `saveAsObjectFile` explicitly writes **key-value pairs**.

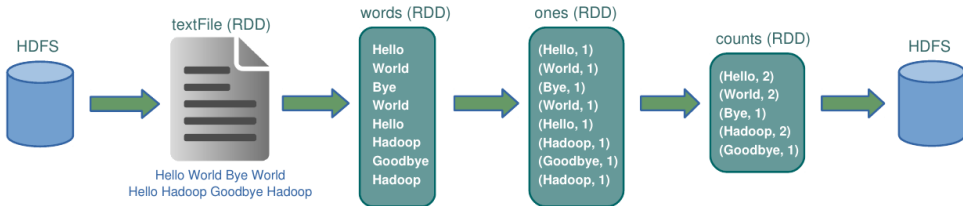
```
val words = sc.parallelize("take it easy, this is a test".split(" "))  
words.saveAsTextFile("file:/tmp/words")
```

# Spark Word-Count

```
val textFile = sc.textFile("hdfs://...")

val words = textFile.flatMap(line => line.split(" "))
val ones = words.map(word => (word, 1))
val counts = ones.reduceByKey(_ + _)

counts.saveAsTextFile("hdfs://...")
```





## What Is The Problem?

```
val uni = sc.parallelize(Seq(("RISE", 1), ("KTH", 2)))  
uni.foreach(println)
```

# Cache and Checkpoints





## Caching

- ▶ When you **cache an RDD**, each node stores **any partitions** of it that it computes **in memory**.
- ▶ An RDD that is **not cached** is **re-evaluated** **each time an action is invoked** on that RDD.
- ▶ A node **reuses the cached RDD** in other actions on that dataset.



# Caching

- ▶ When you **cache an RDD**, each node stores **any partitions** of it that it computes **in memory**.
- ▶ An RDD that is **not cached** is **re-evaluated** **each time an action is invoked** on that RDD.
- ▶ A node **reuses the cached RDD** in other actions on that dataset.
- ▶ There are **two** functions for caching an RDD:
  - **cache** caches the RDD into memory
  - **persist(level)** can cache in memory, on disk, or off-heap memory

```
val words = sc.parallelize("take it easy, this is a test".split(" "))  
  
words.cache()
```



# Checkpointing

- ▶ `checkpoint` saves an RDD to `disk`.
- ▶ Checkpointed data is `not removed` after `SparkContext` is destroyed.
- ▶ When we reference a checkpointed RDD, it will derive from the `checkpoint` instead of the `source data`.

```
val words = sc.parallelize("take it easy, this is a test".split(" "))  
  
sc.setCheckpointDir("/path/checkpointing")  
words.checkpoint()
```

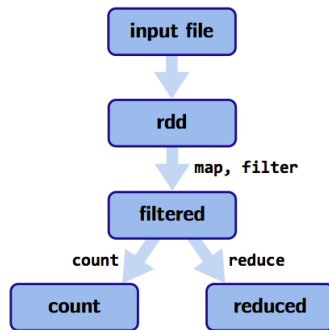
# Execution Engine



## More About Lineage

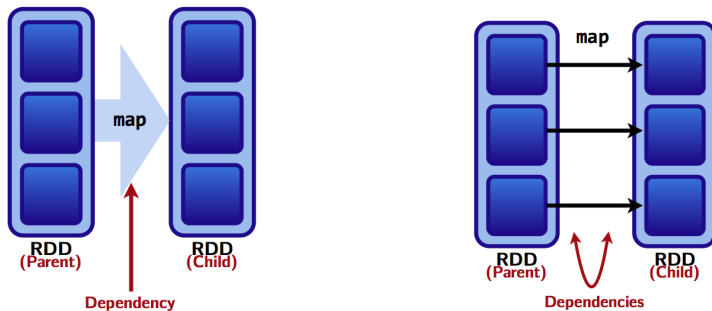
- ▶ A **DAG** representing the **computations** done on the RDD is called **lineage graph**.

```
val rdd = sc.textFile(...)
val filtered = rdd.map(...).filter(...).persist()
val count = filtered.count()
val reduced = filtered.reduce()
```



[<https://github.com/rohgar/scala-spark-4/wiki/Wide-vs-Narrow-Dependencies>]

- RDD dependencies encode when data must move across network.



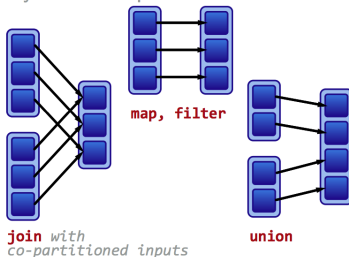
[<https://github.com/rohgar/scala-spark-4/wiki/Wide-vs-Narrow-Dependencies>]

## Two Types of Dependencies (1/2)

- **Narrow** transformations (dependencies)
  - Each **input partition** will contribute to **only one output partition**.
  - With narrow transformations, Spark can perform a **pipelining**

### Narrow dependencies:

Each partition of the parent RDD is used by at most one partition of the child RDD.



[<https://github.com/rohgar/scala-spark-4/wiki/Wide-vs-Narrow-Dependencies>]

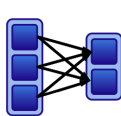
## Two Types of Dependencies (2/2)

### ► Wide transformations (dependencies)

- Each **input partition** will contribute to **many output partition**.
- Usually referred to as a **shuffle**

#### Wide dependencies:

Each partition of the parent RDD may be depended on by multiple child partitions.



**groupByKey**



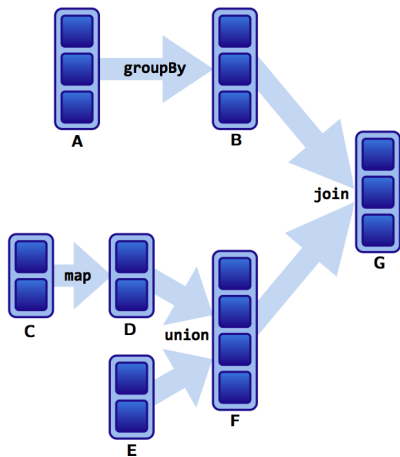
**join**

*with inputs not  
co-partitioned*

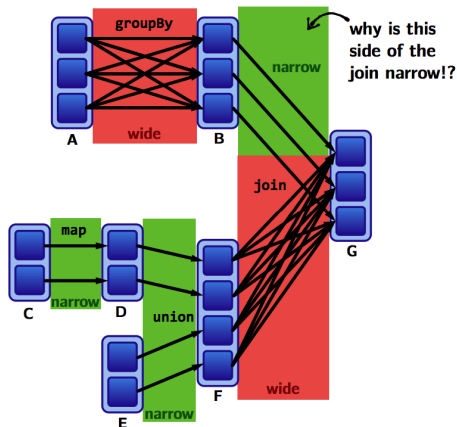
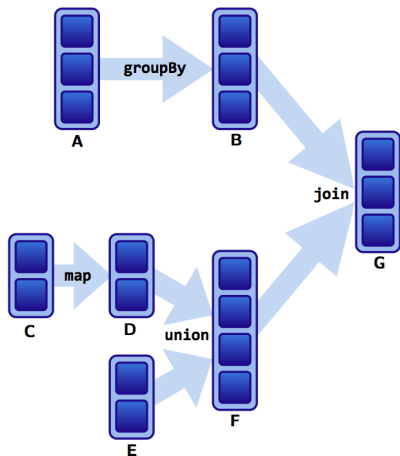
[<https://github.com/rohgar/scala-spark-4/wiki/Wide-vs-Narrow-Dependencies>]



## Example

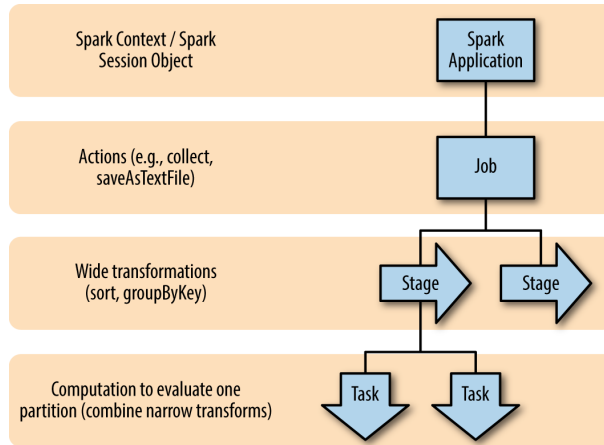


# Example



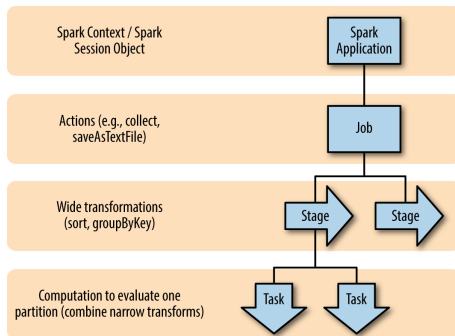
[<https://github.com/rohgar/scala-spark-4/wiki/Wide-vs-Narrow-Dependencies>]

# The Anatomy of a Spark Job



[H. Karau et al., High Performance Spark, O'Reilly Media, 2017]

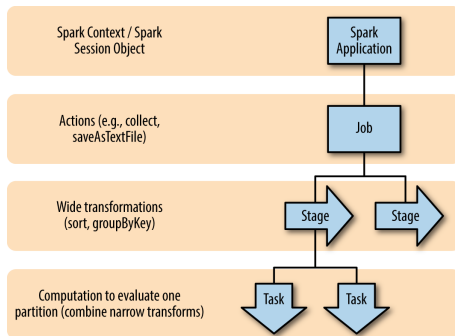
- ▶ A Spark **job** is the **highest** element of Spark's **execution hierarchy**.
  - Each Spark **job** corresponds to one **action**.
  - Each **action** is called by the **driver** program of a Spark application.



[H. Karau et al., High Performance Spark, O'Reilly Media, 2017]

# Stages

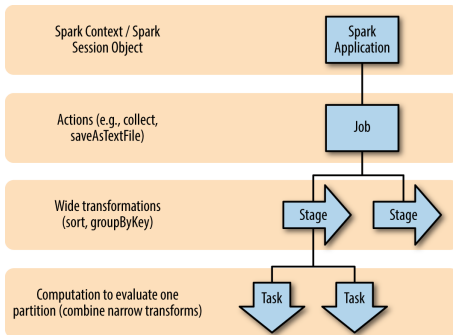
- ▶ Each **job** breaks down into a **series** of **stages**.
  - **Stages** in Spark represent **groups of tasks** that can be **executed together**.
  - **Wide transformations** define the **breakdown of jobs into stages**.



[H. Karau et al., High Performance Spark, O'Reilly Media, 2017]

# Tasks

- ▶ A **stage** consists of **tasks**, which are the **smallest execution unit**.
  - Each task represents one **local computation**.
  - All of the **tasks in one stage** execute the same code on a **different piece of the data**.



[H. Karau et al., High Performance Spark, O'Reilly Media, 2017]

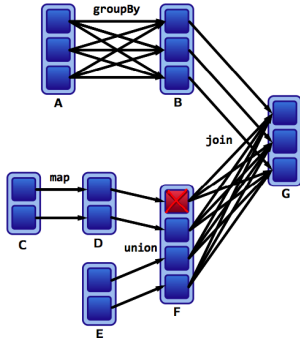


## Lineages and Fault Tolerance (1/2)

- ▶ No replication.
- ▶ Lineages are the key to fault tolerance in Spark.
- ▶ Recompute only the lost partitions of an RDD.

## Lineages and Fault Tolerance (2/2)

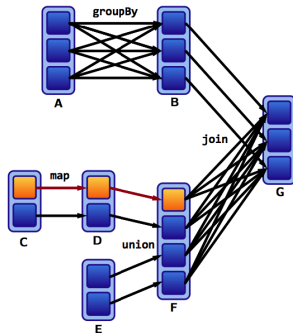
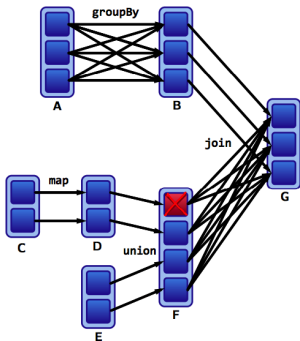
- Assume **one of the partitions** fails.





## Lineages and Fault Tolerance (2/2)

- ▶ Assume **one of the partitions** fails.
- ▶ We only have to **recompute** the data shown below to get back on track.



[<https://github.com/rohgar/scala-spark-4/wiki/Wide-vs-Narrow-Dependencies>]





## Questions

- ▶ If Spark became the standard tool for public decision-making (e.g., healthcare, housing, employment), what risks of reinforcing inequities might arise?



## Possible Answers

- ▶ Biased inputs  $\rightarrow$  biased outputs



## Possible Answers

### ► Biased inputs → biased outputs

- If the input data reflects past discrimination (e.g., in jobs or housing), Spark will repeat those patterns at scale.



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- ▶ Unfair results may look objective



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- Because decisions come from data and code, they can appear neutral even when they reinforce existing inequities.



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### ▶ Unfair results may look objective

- Because decisions come from data and code, they can appear neutral even when they reinforce existing inequities.

### ▶ Big players control the system

- Large companies or agencies with the most resources shape how Spark is used, leaving smaller communities behind.



# Questions

- ▶ Feminist Spark alternatives?



## Possible Answers

- ▶ Transparency and provenance



## Possible Answers

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  - OpenLineage/Marquez: open standards for tracking pipeline provenance.



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- ▶ Lightweight and community-friendly



## Possible Answers

### ► Transparency and provenance

- OpenLineage/Marquez: open standards for tracking pipeline provenance.

### ► Lightweight and community-friendly

- Dask: Python-native distributed system, runs on laptops or clusters, more accessible than Spark.

# Summary



## Summary

- ▶ RDD: a distributed memory abstraction
- ▶ Two types of operations: transformations and actions
- ▶ Lineage graph
- ▶ Caching
- ▶ Wide vs. narrow dependencies
- ▶ Alternatives: Openlineage, Marquez, Dask



- ▶ M. Zaharia et al., “Spark: The Definitive Guide”, O’Reilly Media, 2018 - Chapters 2, 12, 13, and 14
- ▶ M. Zaharia et al., “Resilient distributed datasets: A fault-tolerant abstraction for in-memory cluster computing”, USENIX NSDI, 2012.
- ▶ Dask: <https://www.dask.org>
- ▶ OpenLineage: <https://openlineage.io>
- ▶ Marquez: <https://marquezproject.ai/>

Questions?