Casanova: a language for game development

Candidate: G. Maggiore ^{1,2}

Supervisors: M. Bugliesi ¹ P. Spronck ³

¹Università Ca' Foscari - Venezia, Italy

²NHTV University - Breda, Netherlands

 $^3\mathsf{Tilburg}$ University, Netherlands

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Outline

- Motivation
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Motivation

Game development

- Very large industry
- Impact on
 - technology
 - culture
 - society

Motivation

Challenges in game development

Costs and complexity...

Motivation

Challenges in game development

- Costs and complexity...
- ...resulting in less innovation
- Especially by smaller developers
 - independent (indie)
 - research
 - serious

Outline

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Making a game

Structure of a game

- game world/state
- game loop
 - continuous logic of the game world (P := P + V * dt)
 - drawing of all drawables ∀ d : Drawable ∈ world do draw(d)
 - discrete logic of the game world (in_room(player) -> light := ON)
 - high performance

Game world

```
class World {
   public List<Ship> Ships;
   public List<Planet> Planets;
   ...
}

class Ship {
   public Vector3 Position;
   public Vector3 Velocity;
   ...
   public Sprite HealthBar;
   public Model3D Appearance;
}
```

Game loop

```
void Update(World world, float dt) {
  foreach(var s in world.Ships)
   if (!UpdateShip(world, s, dt))
     world.Ships.Remove(s);
  world.Ships.Add(NewShips(world, dt));
   ...
}
```

Continuous dynamics

```
void UpdateShip(World w, Ship s, float dt) {
    s.Position += s.Velocity * dt;
    s.Velocity += s.Acceleration * dt;
    s.Life -= s.Damage(w) * dt;
    ...
    return s.Life > 0.0f;
}
```

Drawing

```
void Draw(World world, float dt) {
  foreach(var s in world.Ships)
    DrawShip(s);
...
}

void DrawShip(s) {
    s.HealthBar.Transform =
        Matrix.CreateTranslation(s.Position) *
        Matrix.CreateScale(s.Life, 1.0f, 1.0f);
    DrawSprite(s.HealthBar);
    s.Appearance.Transform =
        Matrix.CreateTranslation(s.Position) *
        Matrix.CreateTranslation(s.Position) *
        Matrix.CreateTranslation(s.Position) ;
        DrawModel3D(s.Appearance);
}
```

Discrete dynamics (state machines)

```
class ShipSpawnTimer {
  public float Time;
  public bool Tick(float dt) {
    Time -= dt;
    if (Time <= 0.0f) {
        Time = ShipSpawnTime;
        return true;
    } else
        return false;
  }
}
Seq<Ship> NewShips(World world, float dt) {
    foreach(var s in world.ShipSpawnTimers)
        if(s.Tick(dt)) yield new Ship(...);
}
```

Discrete dynamics (state machines)

```
class DragSelector {
  DragSelectionState state;
  Vector2 start:
  public Rectangle? Tick() {
    switch(state)
      case NotStarted:
        if (Mouse.LeftButton == ButtonState.Down) {
          state = Started:
          start = Mouse.Position:
          CreateSelectionRectangle(start);
          return null; }
      case Started:
        if (Mouse.LeftButton == ButtonState.Up) {
          state = Ended;
          end = Mouse.Position:
          return null: }
      case Ended:
        state = NotStarted:
        RemoveSelectionRectangle();
        return new Rectangle(start, end);
```

Optimization

```
class Ship {
  public float Damage(World w) {
    // use a spatial partitioning index to quickly find the
    // adversary's ships close enough to this one to damage it
    ...
}
```

Game code

The code above is:

- a lot: traversing, updating, and drawing a large and complex game world
- error-prone: explicit handling of state machines, keeping in sync update and draw code
- complex: order of updates, order of draws, optimization algorithms
- boilerplate: large portion of code not specific to the game

Game code

Coping with complexity

- libraries
 - low-level libraries of utilities
 - high-level OO libraries for game worlds (components)
- game engines
 - scripting for customizing an existing game
 - visual environment to fill the scene graph

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A game-development DSL

- part of the ML family
- specific syntax and semantics
 - less code
 - less complexity
 - less boilerplate
- specific optimizations
 - higher performance
 - less complexity
 - less bugs



Features

- no game loop
- update logic through declarative, referentially transparent, local rules
- automated, declarative drawing with transparent batching
- state machines through (a calculus of) coroutines
- automated optimizations

Syntax - ML Types

Syntax - Rules

Syntax - ML expressions

```
<tvpe-init>
              ::= <tuple-init> | tist-init>
              | <record-init> | <union-init> | <intrinsic-type-init>
<tuple-init>
              ::= <expr> | <expr>, <tuple-init>
t-init>
              ::= '[' <expr-list> ']' | '[' <list-compr> ']'
              ::= 'for' <id>'in' <expr> 'do' <expr>
t-compr>
              ::= '' | <expr> ';' <expr-list>
<expr-list>
<record-init>
              ::= '{' <labels-init> '}'
<lahels-init>
              ::= <id> '=' <expr> | <id> '=' <expr> ':' <labels-init>
              ::= <id> | <id> <tuple-init>
<union-init>
<intrinsic-type-init> ::= 'ref' <expr> | 'var' <expr>
              | 'Vector2(' <expr> '.' <expr> ')' | ...
              ::= 'let' <ids> '=' <expr> | <match-case>
<type-dest>
                | '[]' | <id>'::' <id> | <id>'.' <id>
              ::= 'match' <expr> 'with' <patterns>
<match-case>
              ::= <pattern> | <pattern> '|' <patterns>
<patterns>
<pattern>
              ::= <id> | <id> | <id> '(' <pattern-args> ')'
<pattern-args> ::= <pattern-arg> | <pattern-arg> ',' <pattern-args>
<pattern-arg>
              ::= <id> | <const>
<id-decl> ::= <id> | <id> ':' <type-expr>
              ::= <id> | <id> ', ' <ids>
<ids>
<id> ::= ... (* an alphanumeric string *)
<const> ::= ... (* a constant value *)
```

Syntax - ML expressions/coroutines

Syntax - Program

Typing rules

```
type E = { 11:T1; 12:T2; ... ln:Tn }
rule li = (ei:World * E * float<s> -> Ti)
```

Typing rules

```
type E = { 11:T1; ...; 1i:{k1:V1; k2:V2; ... km:Vm} ln:Tn }
rule li.kj = (eij:World * E * float<s> -> Vj)
```

ML-style typing rules

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash t_1 : \mathtt{U}, \, \Gamma, x : \mathtt{U} \vdash t_2 : \mathtt{V}}{\Gamma \vdash \mathsf{let} \, \, x = t_1 \, \mathsf{in} \, \, t_2 : \mathtt{V}} \qquad \frac{\Gamma \vdash \mathsf{cond} : \mathsf{bool}, \, t_1 : \mathtt{U}, \, t_2 : \mathtt{U}}{\Gamma \vdash \mathsf{if} \, \, \mathsf{cond} \, \, \mathsf{then} \, \, t_1 \, \, \mathsf{else} \, \, t_2 : \mathtt{U}} \qquad \frac{\Gamma \vdash f : \mathtt{U} \to \mathtt{V}, \, t : \mathtt{U}}{\Gamma \vdash \mathsf{ft} : \mathtt{V}}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash t : \{I_1 : \, T_1; \, I_2 : \, T_2; \ldots I_n : \, T_n\}}{\Gamma \vdash t : I_j : \, T_j} \qquad \ldots$$

Coroutines typing rules

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash t_1 : \text{Var} < \text{T}>}{\Gamma \vdash ! t_1 : \text{T}} \qquad \frac{\Gamma \vdash t_1 : \text{Var} < \text{T}>, t_2 : \text{T}}{\Gamma \vdash t_1 := t_2 : \text{Co} < \text{Unit}>} \qquad \frac{\Gamma \vdash x : \text{T}}{\Gamma \vdash \text{return } x : \text{Co} < \text{T}>}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash t_1 : \text{Co} < \text{U}> \Gamma, x : \text{U} \vdash t_2 : \text{Co} < \text{V}>}{\Gamma \vdash \text{let}! \quad x = t1 \text{ in } t2 : \text{Co} < \text{V}>} \qquad \qquad \vdash \text{yield} : \text{Co} < \text{Unit}> \qquad \frac{\Gamma \vdash t : \text{float} < \text{s}>}{\Gamma \vdash \text{wait} \quad t : \text{Co} < \text{Unit}>}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash t_1 : \text{Co} < \text{U}>, t_2 : \text{Co} < \text{V}>}{\Gamma \vdash t_1 : \text{Co} < \text{U}>, t_2 : \text{Co} < \text{V}>} \qquad \frac{\Gamma \vdash t_1 : \text{Co} < \text{U}>, t_2 : \text{Co} < \text{V}>}{\Gamma \vdash t_1 : \text{U}>} \qquad \frac{\Gamma \vdash t_1 : \text{Co} < \text{Dool}>, t_2 : \text{Co} < \text{V}>}{\Gamma \vdash t_1 : \text{Co} < \text{Unit}>}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash t_1 : \text{Co} < \text{Unit}>}{\Gamma \vdash t_1 : \text{Co} < \text{Unit}>}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash t_1 : \text{Co} < \text{Unit}>}{\Gamma \vdash t_1 : \text{Co} < \text{Unit}>}$$

Overall game semantics

```
let rec update world dt =
  let world' = apply_rules world dt
  let world'' = tick_scripts world'
  do draw world''
  update world'' dt
```

World traversal semantics

```
apply rules (world: World) (dt:float<s>) = update world [World] world dt
update_world [World] (world:World) (dt:float<s>) =
  update_entity [World] [World] world world dt
update_entity [World] [Primitive(T)]
              (world:World)(v:T) dt = ()
update_entity [World] [T1 * T2 * ... * Tn]
              (world:World) (x1:T1, x2:T2, ..., xn:Tn) dt =
  update entity [World] [T1] world x1 dt
  update_entity [World] [T2] world x2 dt
  update_entity [World] [Tn] world xn dt
update entity [World] [Var<T>]
              (world:World) (v:Var<T>) dt =
  update_entity [World] [T] (world:World) !v dt
update_entity [World] [Ref<T>]
              (world:World) (v:Ref <T>) dt = ()
update_entity [World] [List<T>]
              (world:World) (1:List<T>) dt =
  for x in 1 do update entity [World] [T] world x dt
```

World traversal semantics

```
update entity [World] [T=UnionCase(C1(T11 * ... * T1n1).
                                   C2(T21 * ... * T2n2), ...,
                                   Cn(Tn1 * ... * Tnnn)))]
              (world:World) (c:T) dt =
  match c with
  | C1(x1,...,xn1) ->
    update_entity [World] [T11] world x1 dt
    update entity [World] [T12] world x2 dt
    update_entity [World] [Tin1] world xn1 dt
  | C2(x1,...,xn2) ->
    update_entity [World] [T21] world x1 dt
    update_entity [World] [T22] world x2 dt
    update_entity [World] [T2n1] world xn2 dt
  | Cn(x1,...,xnn) ->
    update_entity [World] [Tn1] world x1 dt
    update_entity [World] [Tn2] world x2 dt
    update entity [World] [Tnnn] world xnn dt
```

Rule application semantics

Coroutines semantics

```
type ScriptStep<s,a> = Done of a * s | Next of Script<s,a> * s
and Script<s,a> = s → ScriptStep<s,a>

let s1 >>= s2 =
  fun s ->
  match s1 s with
  | Done(x,s') -> Next(s2 x,s')
  | Next(k,s') -> Next(k >>= s2,s')

let return x = fun s -> Done x

let yield = fun s -> Right(s, (fun s -> ((),s)))
```

Coroutines operators semantics

```
let (&&) (p:Co<'a>) (q:Co<'b>) : Co<'a * 'b> =
    match p(), q() with
    | Done x, Done y -> Done(x,y)
    | Next p', Next q' -> Next (p' && q')
    | Next p', Done y -> Next(p' && return y)
    | Done x, Next q' -> Next(return x && q')

let (||) (p:Co<'a>) (q:Co<'b>) : Co<Choice<'a,'b>> =
    match p(), q() with
    | Done x, _ -> Done(Choice10f2 x)
    | _, Done y -> Done(Choice20f2 y)
    | Next p', Next q' -> Next (p' || q')

let repeat (p:Co<Unit>) : Co<Unit> = p >>= (fun _ -> repeat p)
```

Draw batching semantics

```
layers = []
draw_world [World] (world:World) =
draw_entity [World] world
for layer in layers do
    layer.Draw()
layer.Clear()
```

Draw traversal semantics

```
draw_entity [Primitive(T)] (v:T) = ()
draw_entity [T1 * T2 * ... * Tn] (x1:T1, x2:T2, ..., xn:Tn) =
    draw_entity [T1] x1
    ...
    draw_entity [Tn] xn
    draw_entity [Var<T>) = draw_entity [T] !v
    draw_entity [Ref<T>] (v:Var<T>) = ()
    draw_entity [ListT>] (1:ListT>) =
    for x in 1 do draw_entity [T] x
```

Draw traversal semantics

Actual drawing semantics

```
draw_entity [Drawable(T)] (d:T) = d.Layer.AddT(d)
draw_entity [Layer(T)] (1:T) = layers.Add(1)
```

Note: easily extensible with additional drawable datatypes.

Game of life

```
type World = {
  Cells : List < Cell >
  UpdateNow : Var < bool >
type Cell = {
  Position · Vector2<m>
  Value · int
  Sprite : Sprite }
 rule Value(world.self.dt) =
   if world.UpdateNow then
      let around = sum [for c in world.Cells do
                          if dist(self.Position, c.Position < 1.5f<m> then
                            vield c.Valuel
      match around with
      I 3 -> 1
      2 -> self.Value
       -> 0
    else self.Value
  rule Sprite.Color(world, self, dt) =
    if self. Value = 0 then Color. Black else Color. White
```

Structure of a game

```
let main world =
  repeat co{
    do! wait 1.0<s>
    do! world.UpdateNow := true
    do! yield
    do! world.UpdateNow := false }

let input = [
    wait_key_down Keys.Space =>
    co{
        do! world.UpdateNow := true
        do! yield
        do! world.UpdateNow := true
        do! yield
        do! world.UpdateNow := false }
]
```

Implementation

- presented syntax is not implemented in practice
- embedding into F#, leveraging existing high quality:
 - development environment
 - debugging tools
 - libraries (MonoGame)
- Casanova compiler
 - compiles a stub dll with the F# compiler
 - reflects the existing type and script definitions
 - emits the missing functionality in the final dll



Type translation into F#

```
translate types [] = ()
translate_types type::types =
  translate_type type
  translate types types
translate_type Primitive(type) = type
translate_type Var<type> = Var<translate_type type>
translate_type List<type> = List<translate_type type>
translate_type Union(cases) = Union([translate_case case | case in cases])
translate_type Tuple(types) = Tuple([translate_type type | type in types])
translate type Record(labels.rules) = Record([translate label label rules |
     label in labels1)
translate case UnionCase(case.tvpes) = UnionCase(case. [translate type type |
     type in types1)
translate_label Label(name, type) rules =
  if exists(rule.Name = name) in rules then
    if type = List<type'> then
      Label(name, RuleList < translate_type type '>)
    else
      Label(name.Rule<translate type type'>)
```

Rule double buffering

```
type Rule<'T> = {
  mutable current : 'T;
  mutable next : 'T }
let (!) r = r.current
let (:=) r v' = r.next <- v'</pre>
```

Optimizations

- aggressive inlining
- multi-threaded draw/update
- memory recycling across frames
- batched drawing

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Comparison with other languages

	Cnv	C#/XNA	pygame	C++/DX
Game loop	V	V	V	V
State traversal	V	X	X	X
State machines	V	X (iter.)	X (iter.)	X
Drawing	V	X	V	X
High performance	V	V	X	V

C#

```
class World {
  public List<Ship> Ships;
  public List<Planet> Planets;
  ...
}
```

```
type World = {
  Ships : List<Ship>
  Planets : List<Planet>
   ...
}
```

C#

```
void Update(World world, float dt) {
foreach(var s in world.Ships)
  if (!UpdateShip(world, s, dt))
   world.Ships.Remove(s);
world.Ships.Add(NewShips(world,dt));
   ...
}
```

Casanova

```
type World = {
    ..
} rule Ships =
    [for s in self.Ships do
        if s.Life > 0.0f then yield s]
```

One less source of bugs for free!

C#

```
void UpdateShip(World w, Ship s,
    float dt) {
    s.Position += s.Velocity * dt;
    s.Velocity += s.Acceleration * dt;
    s.Life -= s.Damage(w) * dt;
    ...
    return s.Life > 0.0f;
}
```

```
type Ship = {
    ...
} rule Position = self.Position +
    self.Velocity * dt
rule Velocity = self.Velocity +
    self.Acceleration * dt
rule Life = self.Life - ...
```

C#

```
void Draw(World world, float dt) {
  foreach(var s in world.Ships)
    DrawShip(s):
void DrawShip(s) {
  s. HealthBar Transform =
    Matrix CreateTranslation(s.
         Position) *
    Matrix.CreateScale(s.Life, 1.0f,
         1.0f):
  DrawSprite(s.HealthBar);
  s. Appearance. Transform =
    Matrix.CreateTranslation(s.
         Position) *
    Matrix.CreateRotationY(atan2(norm
         (s. Velocity))):
  DrawModel3D(s.Appearance);
```

C#

```
class ShipSpawnTimer {
  public float Time;
  public bool Tick(float dt) {
    Time -= dt:
    if (Time \leq 0.0f) {
      Time = ShipSpawnTime:
      return true:
    } else
      return false:
Seq < Ship > New Ships (World world, float
      dt) {
  foreach(var s in world.
       ShipSpawnTimers)
    if (s. Tick(dt)) yield new Ship
          (\ldots);
```

```
repeat
co{
do! wait ShipSpawnTime
do! world.Ships.Add(new Ship(...))
}
```

C#

```
class DragSelector {
  DragSelectionState state:
  Vector2 start:
  public Rectangle? Tick() {
    switch(state)
      case NotStarted:
        if (Mouse.LeftButton ==
              ButtonState.Down) {
          state = Started:
          start = Mouse.Position:
          CreateSelectionRectangle(
                start):
          return null: }
      case Started:
        if (Mouse.LeftButton ==
              ButtonState.Up) {
          state = Ended;
          end = Mouse.Position;
          return null: }
      case Ended:
        state = NotStarted:
        RemoveSelectionRectangle():
        return new Rectangle (start,
              end); } }
```

```
repeat
co{
  let! start = wait_left_mouse_down
  do CreateSelectionRectangle(start)
  let! end = wait_left_mouse_up
  do RemoveSelectionRectangle()
}
```

Comparisong with systems

	Cnv	Unity	Game maker
Game loop	V	V	V
State traversal	V	V	V
State machines	V	V (no ser.)	X
Drawing	V	V	V
Comparison	V	V	X
Custom games	V	V (fixed comp.)	X

Making games with Casanova?

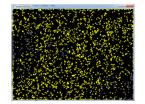
- several samples
- research prototypes
- student games
- even a commercial game!

DEMO













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Future work

Already built

- SQL-style, declarative actions to implement resource economies
- declarative menus and global state transitions
- nesting of visuals for relative positioning
- actual assembly, no interpretation steps

About actions

C#

```
class Ship {
  public float Damage(World w) {
    // use a spatial partitioning
        index to quickly find the
    // adversary's ships close enough
        to this one to damage it
    ...
}
```

Future work

Under construction

- networking support
- support for mobile/non-Windows platforms
- support for 3D and hierarchical visibility culling
- integration with Unity 3D
- audio support
- compiler front-end
- static analysis tools and techniques (correct dynamics, load upper bounds)



Impact of Casanova

- game development is relevant
- game development is expensive
- Casanova makes it easier, quicker, and safer
- hopefully to the benefit of smaller developers: indie, research, and serious

Relevant publications - preliminary studies

- Giuseppe Maggiore, Michele Bugliesi, and Renzo Orsini. Monadic scripting in F# for computer games.
 TTSS, 2011.
- Giuseppe Maggiore, Fabio Pittarello, Michele Bugliesi, and Mohamed Abbadi. A compilation technique to increase x3d performance and safety. SAC, 2012.
- G. Maggiore and G. Costantini. Friendly F# (book).

Relevant publications - Casanova

- Giuseppe Maggiore, Alvise Spanò, Renzo Orsini, Giulia Costantini, Michele Bugliesi, and Mohamed Abbadi.
 Designing casanova: A language for games. ACG, 2011.
- Giuseppe Maggiore, Alvise Spanò, Renzo Orsini, Michele Bugliesi, Mohamed Abbadi, and Enrico Steffinlongo. A formal specification for casanova, a language for computer games. EICS, 2012.
- Giuseppe Maggiore, Renzo Orsini, and Michele Bugliesi. On casanova and databases or the similarity between games and dbs. SEBD, 2012.
- Giuseppe Maggiore, Pieter Spronck, Renzo Orsini, Michele Bugliesi, Enrico Steffinlongo, and Mohamed Abbadi. Writing real-time .Net games in casanova. ICEC, 2012.

Relevant publications - work in progress

- LGOAP: adaptive layered planning for real-time videogames. Giuseppe Maggiore, Carlos Santos, Dino Dini, Frank Peters, Hans Bouwknegt, and Pieter Spronck (submitted to IEEE 2013 Conference on Computational Intelligence in Games).
- The Domain of Parametric Hypercubes for Static Analysis of Computer Games Software. Giulia Costantini, Pietro Ferrara, Giuseppe Maggiore, and Agostino Cortesi (submitted to 15th International Conference on Formal Engineering Methods).
- Resources, Entities, Actions. A generalized design pattern for RTS games and its language extension in Casanova. Mohamed Abbadi, Francesco Di Giacomo, Renzo Orsini, Aske Plaat, Pieter Spronck, and Giuseppe Maggiore. (submitted to 8TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COMPUTER AND GAMES 2013).

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Conclusions

Relevant publications - our game

Galaxy Wars. http://www.galaxywarsthegame.com/.

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This is it

Thank you!

Questions?