

gem5/SST Integration



First step: Install SST

We're not going to do this today.

What we'll do instead is use a docker container with sst installed.

Run the following to go into the docker container.

Note: You shouldn't use a container interactively like this, but I'm lazy.

```
cd /workspaces/2024
docker run --rm --volume
/workspaces/:/workspaces -w `pwd` ghcr.io/gem5/sst-env
```

gem5 as a Library: Hello, World!

To use gem5 as a "component" in SST, you need to build it as a library.
This is yet another unique build target...

Note: if you're building on a Mac, it's not ".so" it's ".dylib"

Compiling gem5 as a library

```
cd gem5/  
scons defconfig build/for_sst build_opts/RISCV  
scons build/for_sst/libgem5_opt.so -j8 --without-tcmalloc --duplicate-sources
```



Building the gem5 component in gem5

Compiling gem5 component

```
cd ext/sst  
cp Makefile.linux Makefile
```

Change the line with ARCH=RISCV to ARCH=for_sst

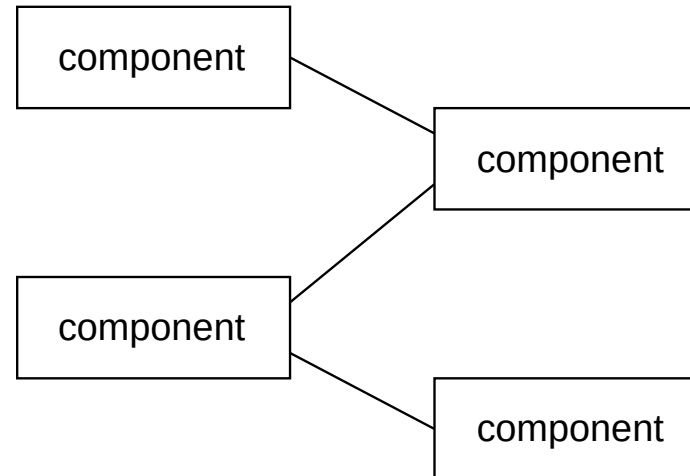
```
make -j8
```

Running the simulation,

```
sst --add-lib-path=. sst/example.py
```

gem5 as a Library: instantiation

Other Simulator System



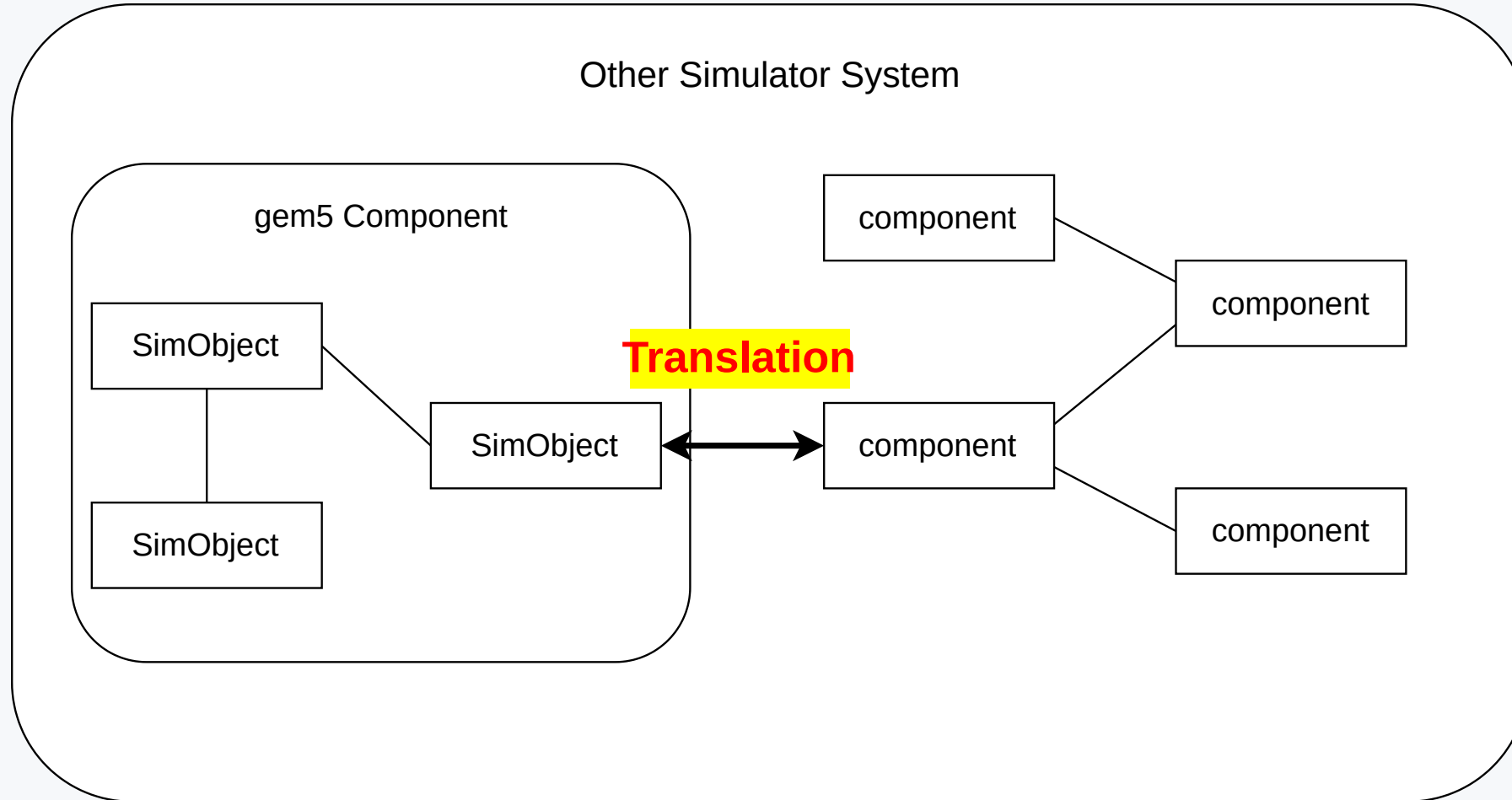
gem5 as a Library: instantiation



gem5 as a Library: instantiation



gem5 as a Library: instantiation



gem5 as a Library

How to set up gem5 in another simulator?

- Step 1: Setting up the gem5 Python environment.
 - Need to manually import the m5 module
- Step 2: Reading the gem5 Python system configuration file.
 - This includes setting up the communication data path for gem5 and the other simulator
- Notes:
 - `m5.instantiate()` must be called before any simulation.
 - `m5.simulate(K)` runs the gem5 simulation for `K` ticks.



gem5 as a Library: simulation



gem5 as a Library: simulation

For every external simulator clock tick:

```
external_simulator.advance_to_next_event()  
gem5_system.advance(n_ticks)
```

where `n_ticks` = time difference between this event and previous event of the external simulator

Case study: gem5/SST integration

SST: Structural Simulation Toolkit

<http://sst-simulator.org/>

- A highly parallelized discrete event simulator.
- Consists of:
 - SST-Core (the simulator)
 - SST-Elements (components)
 - SST-Macro



SST: Brief Overview

- Simulation objects:
 - SST::Component (similar to gem5::SimObject)
 - SST::Link (allows two components to send SST::Event to each other)
 - Bidirectional
 - SST::Event (similar to gem5::Event)
 - Sent via SST::Link
- Parallelization,
 - SST partitions components to multiple partitions.
 - Communication between partitions are done via MPI.
 - The partitioning process can be done automatically or manually

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- gem5 provides:
 - OutgoingRequestBridge: a Request port sending requests to external components.
 - SSTResponderInterface: an interface for a Response port for an external component.
- gem5 Component is an SST::Component, which has multiple SSTResponder's implementing the SSTResponderInterface.
- The packet translation happens within the gem5 Component.



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- Example (arm and RISC-V):
 - gem5 as an SST component: `gem5/ext/sst/`
 - SST system configuration: `gem5/ext/sst/sst/example.py`
 - gem5 system configuration: `gem5/configs/example/sst/riscv_fs.py`
- System setup:
 - SST drives the simulation.
 - One gem5 component, which consists of 4 detailed cores.
 - Cache and memory are SST::Components from SST-Elements.



gem5/SST Integration

- System setup:
 - SST drives the full-system simulation.
 - One gem5 component, which consists of 4 detailed cores.
 - Cache and memory are SST::Components from SST-Elements.
- Limitations:
 - gem5 cores wake up frequently per CPU clock tick.
 - The cores are frequently synchronized due to cache coherency protocol.
 - Needs work for block devices to work.



gem5/SST Integration

- However, we can set up multiple-node simulation.
- How?
 - Having multiple gem5 components, each represents a node.
 - Each gem5 component is in a different partition.
 - Communication between gem5 instances can be done via gem5 PIO devices.
- Why?
 - There are more parallelism at the node granularity.



Other Notes

- SST has its own Python environment, so gem5 within SST should not initialize the Python environment again.
- However, the m5 and gem5 libraries should be manually imported.
- m5 library has a function to find SimObject given a SimObject name.
 - Useful for finding the owner for a port in an external simulator.



Documentation

- Setup
 - `gem5/ext/sst/README.md`
- gem5 interfaces for communication with an external simulator,
 - `gem5/src/sst`
- gem5 as a component in an external library,
 - `gem5/ext/sst`
- Compiling the bootloader + kernel + custom workload in a binary,
 - <https://gem5.googlesource.com/public/gem5-resources/+/refs/heads/stable/src/riscv-boot-exit-nodisk/README.md>

