

COMP4075/G54RFP: Lecture 17

Arrows, FRP, and Games

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Perhaps not so surprising:

- Many pragmatical reasons: performance, legacy issues, ...
- State and effects are pervasive in video games: Is declarative programming even a conceptually good fit?

But Why **NOT**, Really?

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One key point: Program with whole values, not a word-at-a-time. (Will come back to this.)

Possible Gains

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E.g. pure, declarative code:

- promotes parallelism
- eliminates many sources of errors

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“Whole Values” for Games?

How should we go about writing video games “declaratively”?

In particular, what should those “whole values” be?

- Could be conventional entities like vectors, arrays, lists and aggregates of such.
- Could even be things like pictures.

But we are going to go one step further and consider programming with *time-varying entities*.

Take-home Message # 1

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- The totality of input from the player
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Take-home Message # 1

Video games can be programmed declaratively by describing *what* entities are *over* time.

Our whole values are things like:

- The totality of input from the player
- The animated graphics output
- The entire life of a game object

We construct and work with *pure* functions on these:

- The game: function from input to animation
- In the game: fixed point of function on collection of game objects

Take-home Message # 1 (cont.)

- That said, we focus on the core game logic in the following: there will often be code around the “edges” (e.g., rendering, interfacing to input devices) that may not be very declarative, at least not in the sense above.
- See Perez & Nilsson (2015) for one approach.

Take-home Message # 2

You too can program games declaratively ...

Take-home Message # 2

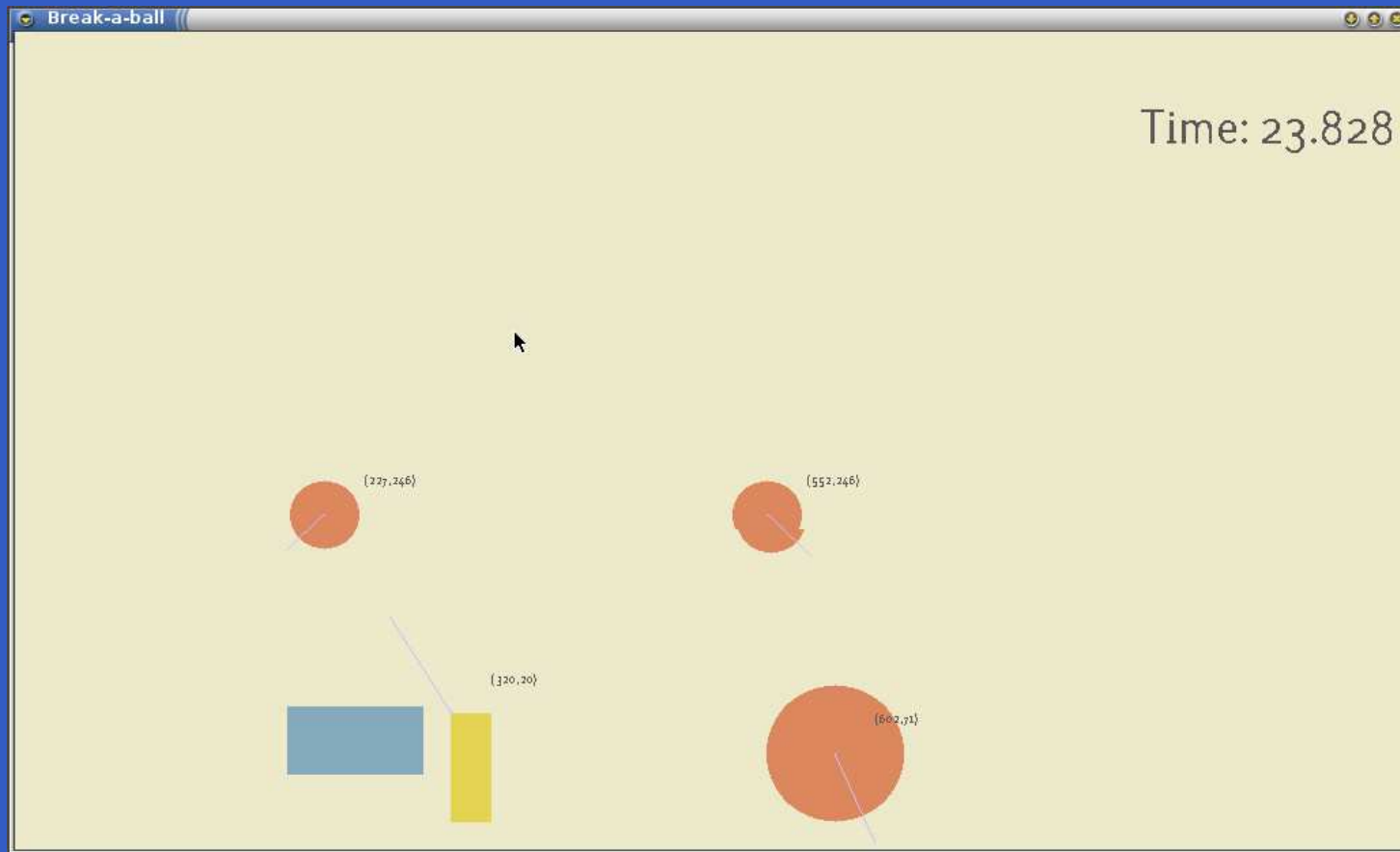
You too can program games declaratively ... today!



Play Store: Keera Breakout (Keera Studios)

Take-home Game!

Or download one for free to your Android device!



Play Store: Pang-a-lambda (Keera Studios)

This Tutorial

We will implement a Breakout-like game using:

- Functional Reactive Programming (FRP): a paradigm for describing time-varying entities
- Simple DirectMedia Layer (SDL) for rendering etc.

Focus on FRP as that is what we need for the game logic. We will use Yampa:

<http://hackage.haskell.org/package/Yampa-0.9.6>

Functional Reactive Programming

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- Key idea: Don't program one-time-step-at-a-time, but describe an evolving entity as whole.

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- FRP originated in Conal Elliott and Paul Hudak's work on Functional Reactive Animation (Fran). Highly cited 1997 ICFP paper; ICFP award for most influential paper in 2007.
- FRP has evolved in a number of directions and into different concrete implementations.
- We will use Yampa: an arrows-based FRP system embedded in Haskell.

FRP Applications

Some domains where FRP or FRP-inspired approaches have been used:

- Graphical Animation
- Robotics
- Vision
- Sound synthesis
- GUIs
- Virtual Reality Environments
- Games

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Combines conceptual simplicity of the synchronous data flow approach with the flexibility and abstraction power of higher-order functional programming:

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- Dynamic system structure

Good fit for typical video games
(but not everything labelled “FRP” supports them all).

Yampa

Yampa

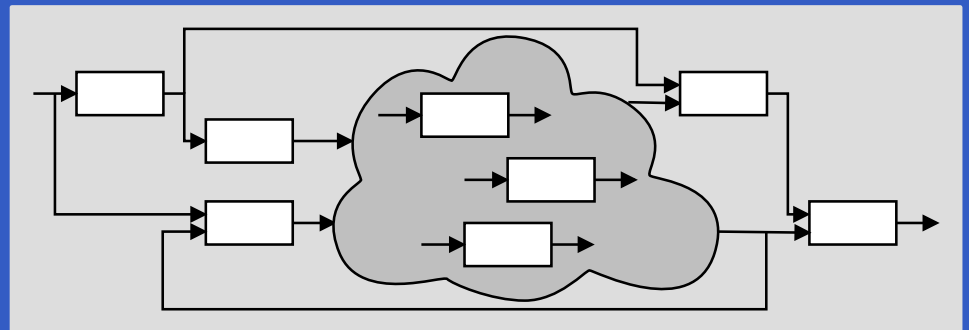
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 - **Signals**: time-varying values
 - **Signal Functions**: functions on signals
 - **Switching** between signal functions

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- Key concepts:
 - **Signals**: time-varying values
 - **Signal Functions**: functions on signals
 - **Switching** between signal functions
- Programming model:



Yampa?

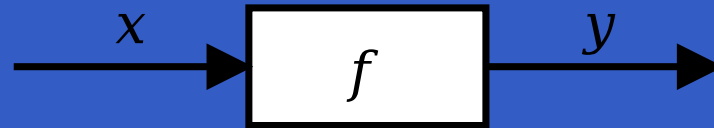
Yampa?

Yampa is a river with long calmly flowing sections and abrupt whitewater transitions in between.

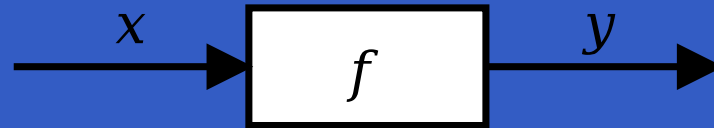


A good metaphor for hybrid systems!

Signal Functions

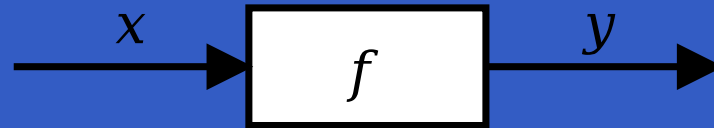


Signal Functions



Intuition:

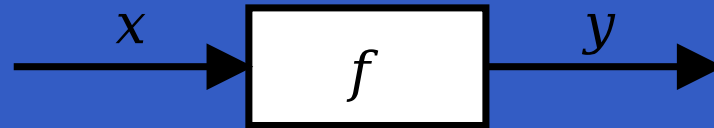
Signal Functions



Intuition:

$$Time \approx \mathbb{R}$$

Signal Functions



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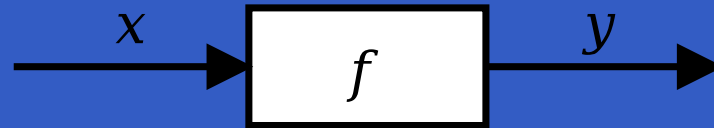
$Time \approx \mathbb{R}$

$Signal\ a \approx Time \rightarrow a$

$x :: Signal\ T1$

$y :: Signal\ T2$

Signal Functions



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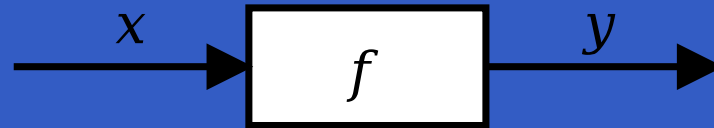
$x :: Signal\ T1$

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$SF\ a\ b \approx Signal\ a \rightarrow Signal\ b$

$f :: SF\ T1\ T2$

Signal Functions



Intuition:

Time $\approx \mathbb{R}$

Signal $a \approx \text{Time} \rightarrow a$

$x :: \text{Signal } T1$

$y :: \text{Signal } T2$

SF $a\ b \approx \text{Signal } a \rightarrow \text{Signal } b$

$f :: \text{SF } T1\ T2$

Additionally, **causality** required: output at time t must be determined by input on interval $[0, t]$.

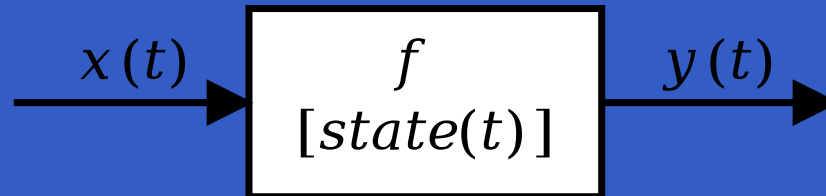
Signal Functions and State

Alternative view:

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Signal functions can encapsulate ***state***.

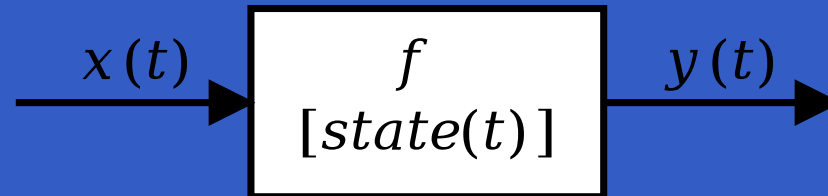


$state(t)$ summarizes input history $x(t')$, $t' \in [0, t]$.

Signal Functions and State

Alternative view:

Signal functions can encapsulate **state**.



$state(t)$ summarizes input history $x(t')$, $t' \in [0, t]$.

From this perspective, signal functions are:

- **stateful** if $y(t)$ depends on $x(t)$ and $state(t)$
- **stateless** if $y(t)$ depends only on $x(t)$

Some Basic Signal Functions

$identity :: SF\ a\ a$

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$identity :: SF\ a\ a$

$constant :: b \rightarrow SF\ a\ b$

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$integral :: VectorSpace\ a\ s \Rightarrow SF\ a\ a$

$$y(t) = \int_0^t x(\tau) \, d\tau$$

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$$y(t) = \int_0^t x(\tau) \, d\tau$$

Which are stateless and which are stateful?

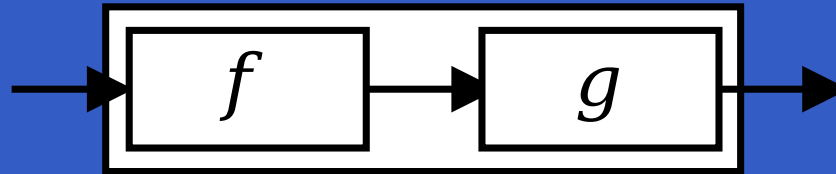
Composition

In Yampa, systems are described by combining signal functions (forming new signal functions).

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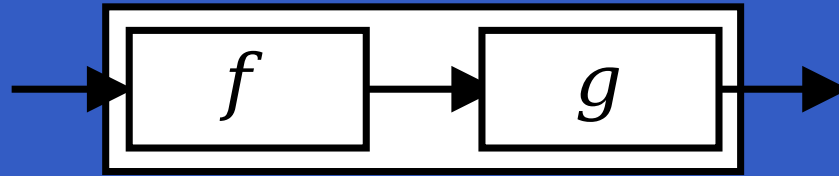
For example, serial composition:



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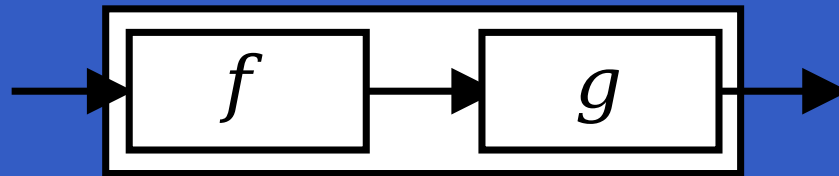
A *combinator* that captures this idea:

$$(\gg) :: SF\ a\ b \rightarrow SF\ b\ c \rightarrow SF\ a\ c$$

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For example, serial composition:



A *combinator* that captures this idea:

$$(\gg) :: SF\ a\ b \rightarrow SF\ b\ c \rightarrow SF\ a\ c$$

Signal functions are the primary notion; signals a secondary one, only existing indirectly.

Time

Quick exercise: Define time!

time :: SF a Time

Time

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time :: SF a Time

time = constant 1.0 >>> integral

Time

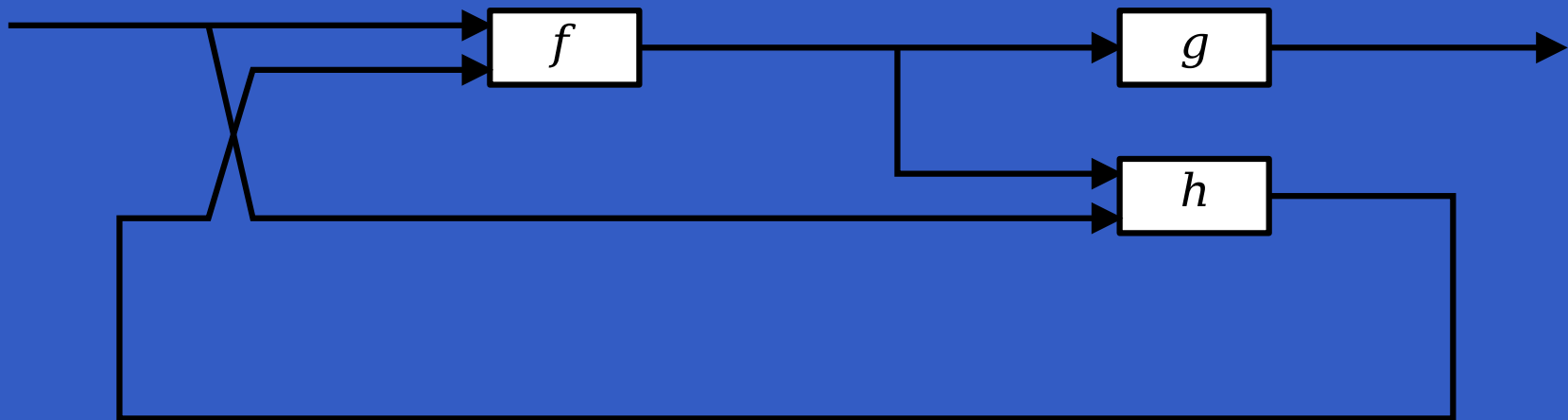
Quick exercise: Define time!

$$time :: SF \ a \ Time$$
$$time = constant\ 1.0 \ggg\ integral$$

Note: there is **no** built-in notion of global time in Yampa: time is always **local**, measured from when a signal function started.

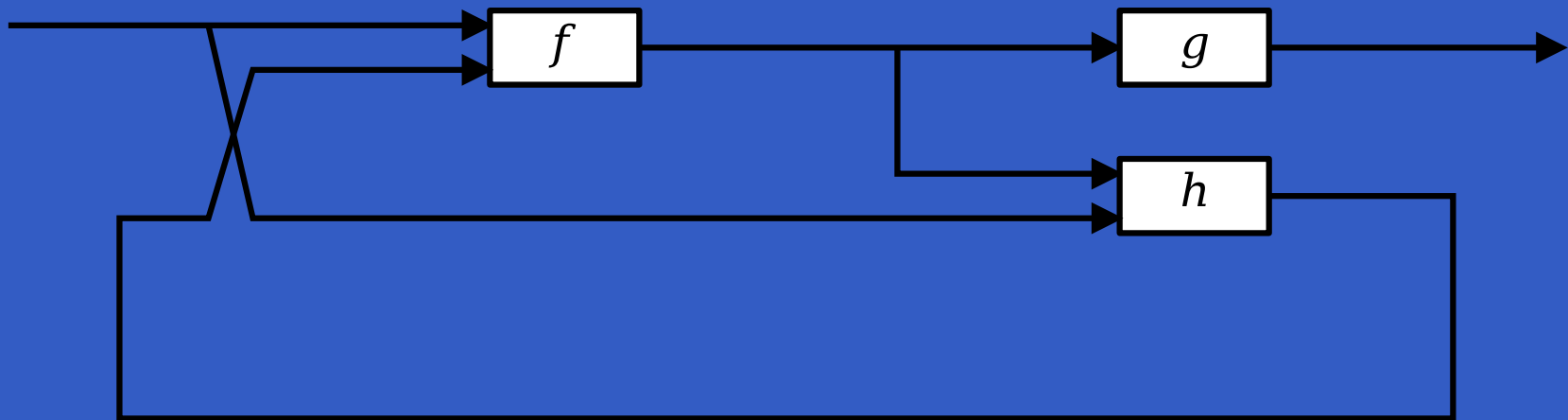
Systems

What about larger networks?
How many combinators are needed?



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How many combinators are needed?



John Hughes's **Arrow** framework provides a good answer!

The Arrow framework (1)

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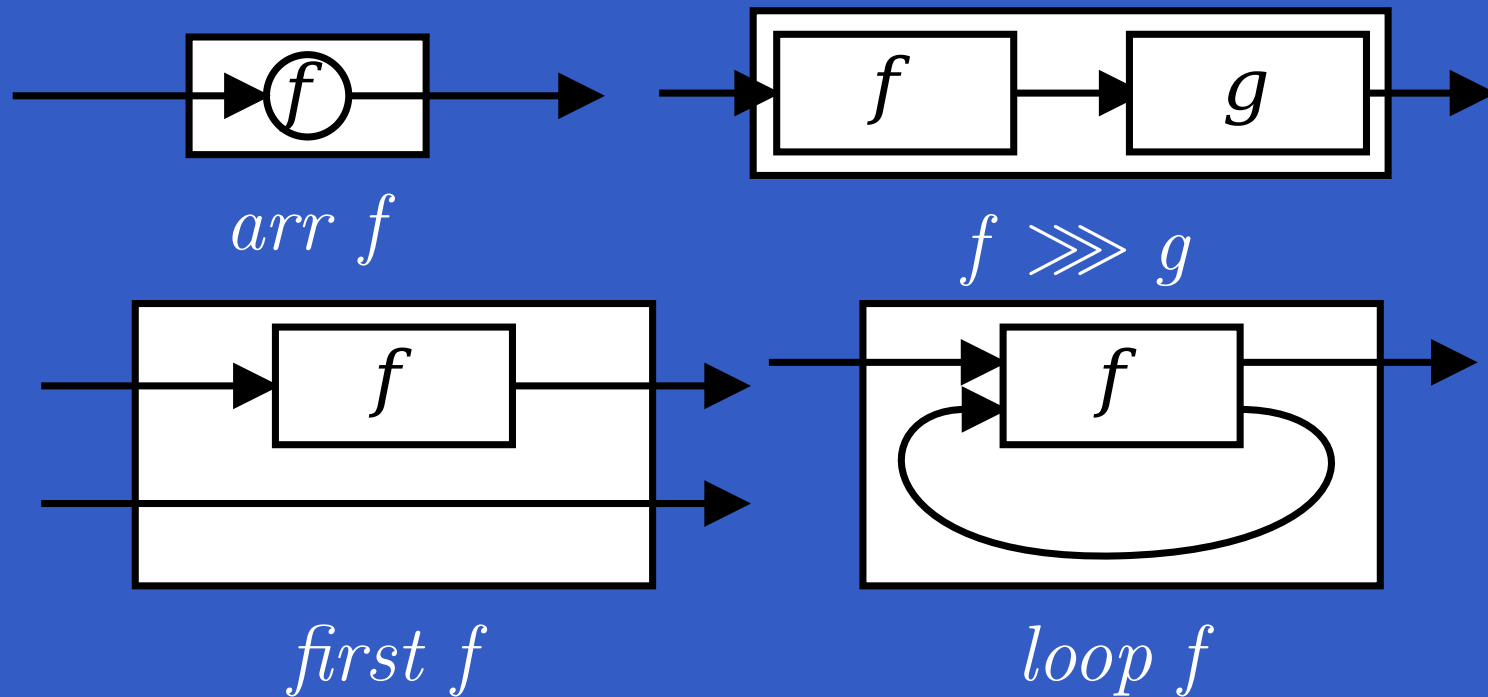
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The Arrow framework (1)

John Hughes' *arrow* framework:

- Abstract data type interface for *function-like objects* (or “blocks”) with *effects*.
- Particularly suitable for types representing *process-like computations*.
- Related to *monads*, since arrows are computations, but more general.
- Provides a minimal set of “wiring” combinators.

The Arrow framework (2)



$arr :: (a \rightarrow b) \rightarrow SF\ a\ b$

$(\ggg) :: SF\ a\ b \rightarrow SF\ b\ c \rightarrow SF\ a\ c$

$first :: SF\ a\ b \rightarrow SF\ (a, c)\ (b, c)$

$loop :: SF\ (a, c)\ (b, c) \rightarrow SF\ a\ b$

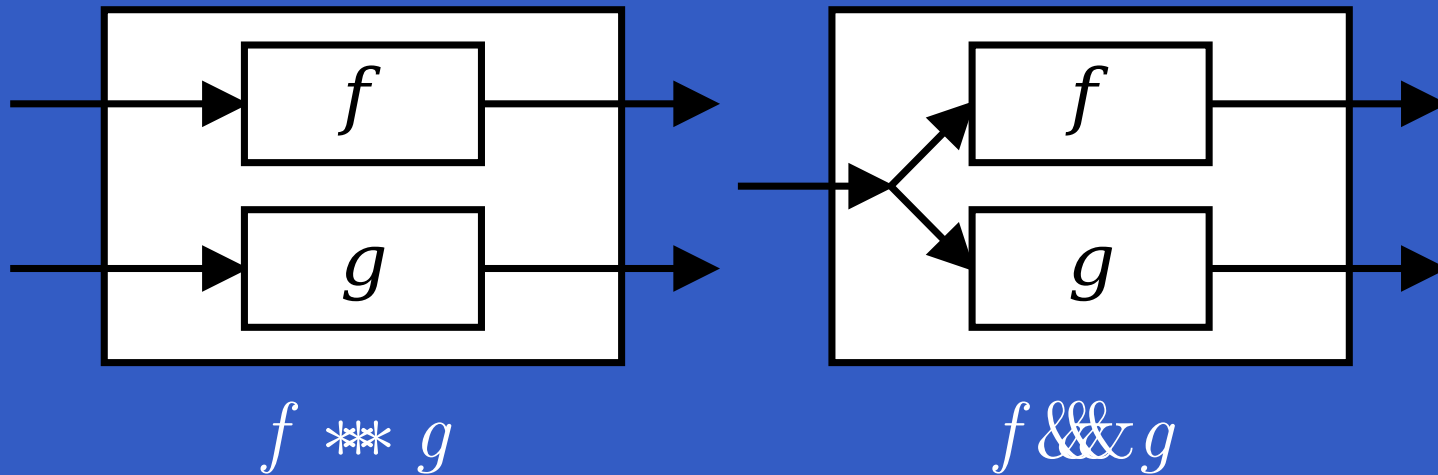
The Arrow framework (3)

Examples:

$$\text{identity} :: SF\ a\ a$$
$$\text{identity} = \text{arr}\ id$$
$$\text{constant} :: b \rightarrow SF\ a\ b$$
$$\text{constant}\ b = \text{arr}\ (\text{const}\ b)$$
$$\hat{\ll} :: (b \rightarrow c) \rightarrow SF\ a\ b \rightarrow SF\ a\ c$$
$$f \hat{\ll} sf = sf \ggg \text{arr}\ f$$

The Arrow framework (4)

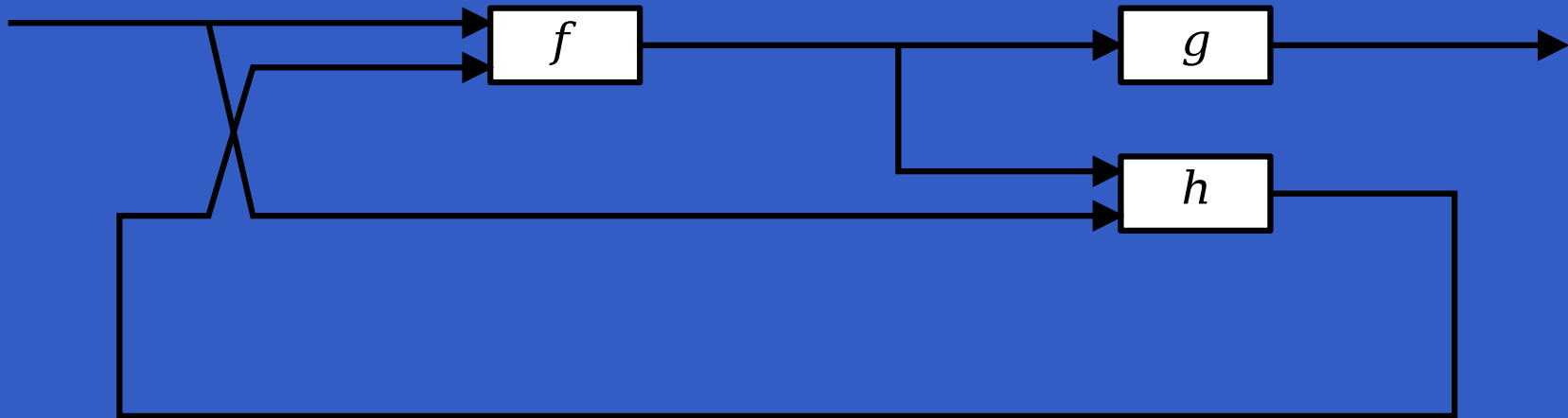
Some derived combinators:



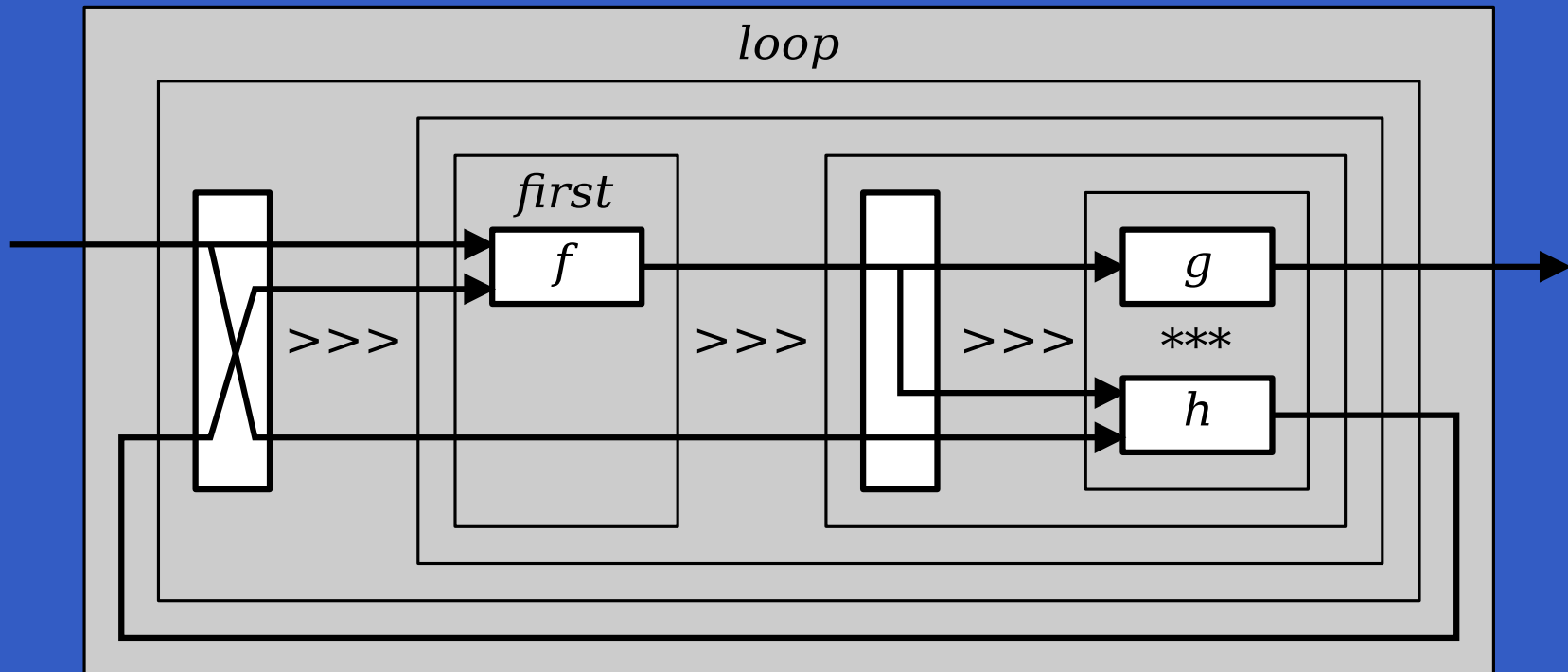
$(***) :: SF\ a\ b \rightarrow SF\ c\ d \rightarrow SF\ (a, c)\ (b, d)$

$(\&\&) :: SF\ a\ b \rightarrow SF\ a\ c \rightarrow SF\ a\ (b, c)$

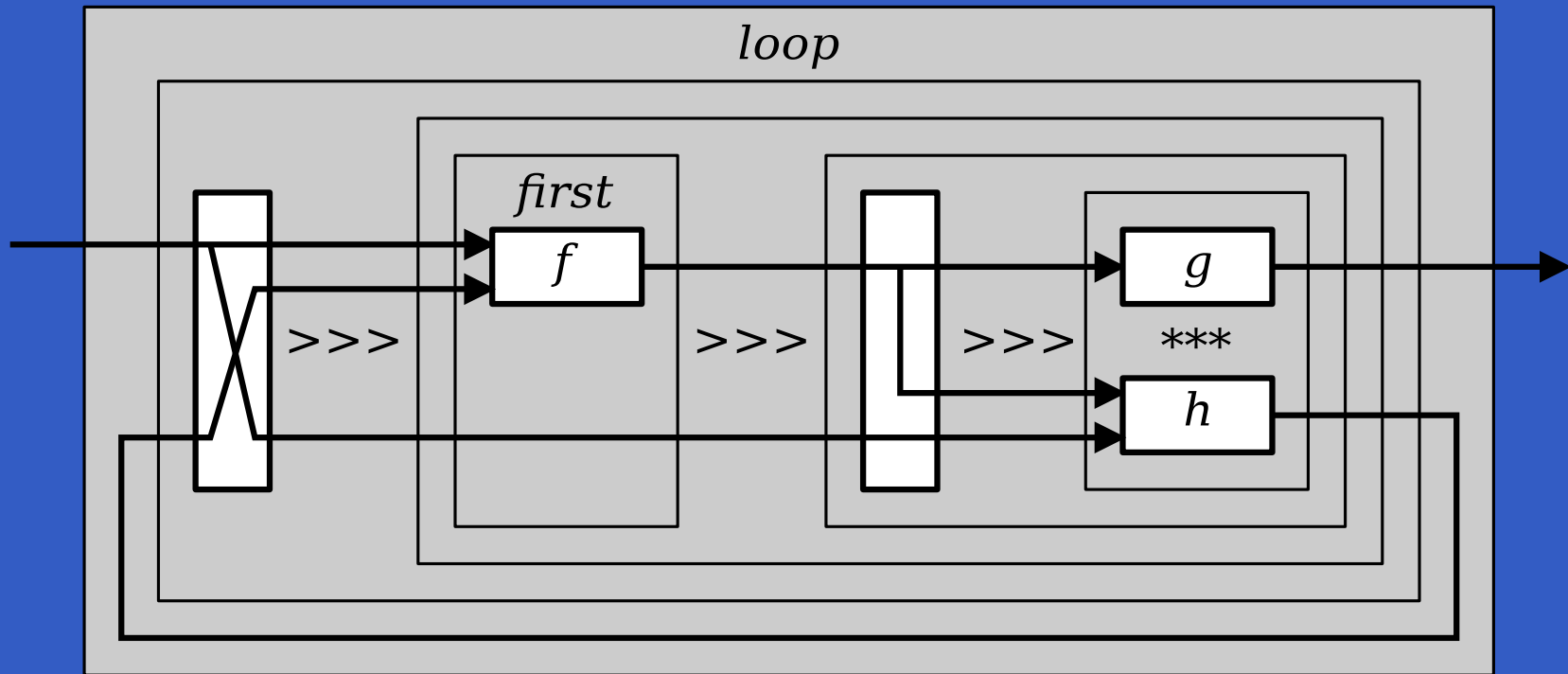
Constructing a network



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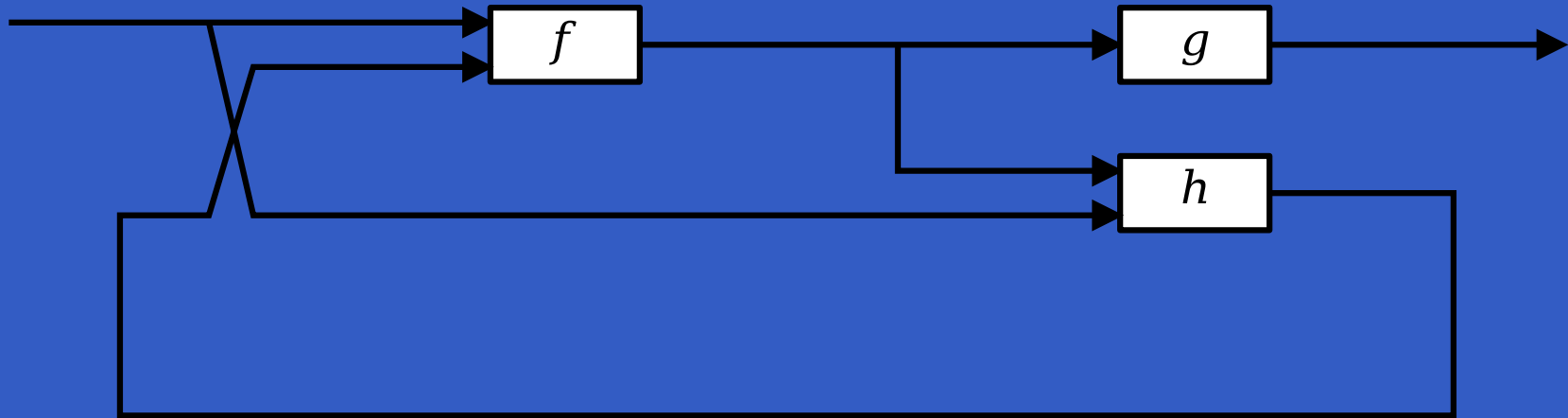


$loop \ (arr \ (\lambda(x, y) \rightarrow ((x, y), x)))$

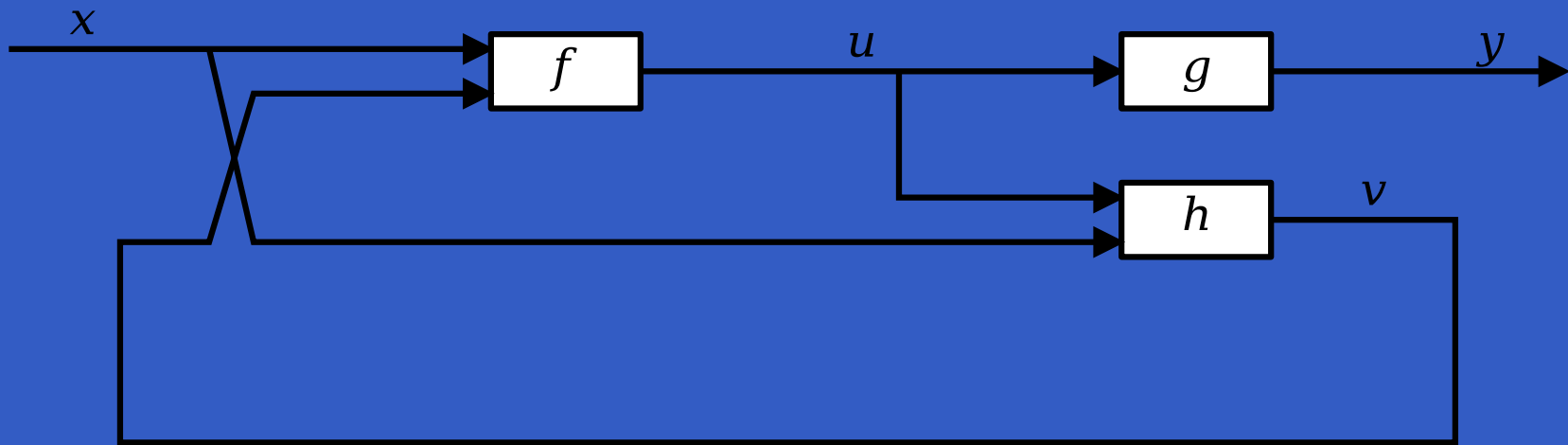
$\ggg \ (first \ f$

$\ggg \ (arr \ (\lambda(x, y) \rightarrow (x, (x, y))) \ggg \ (g \ ** \ h))))$

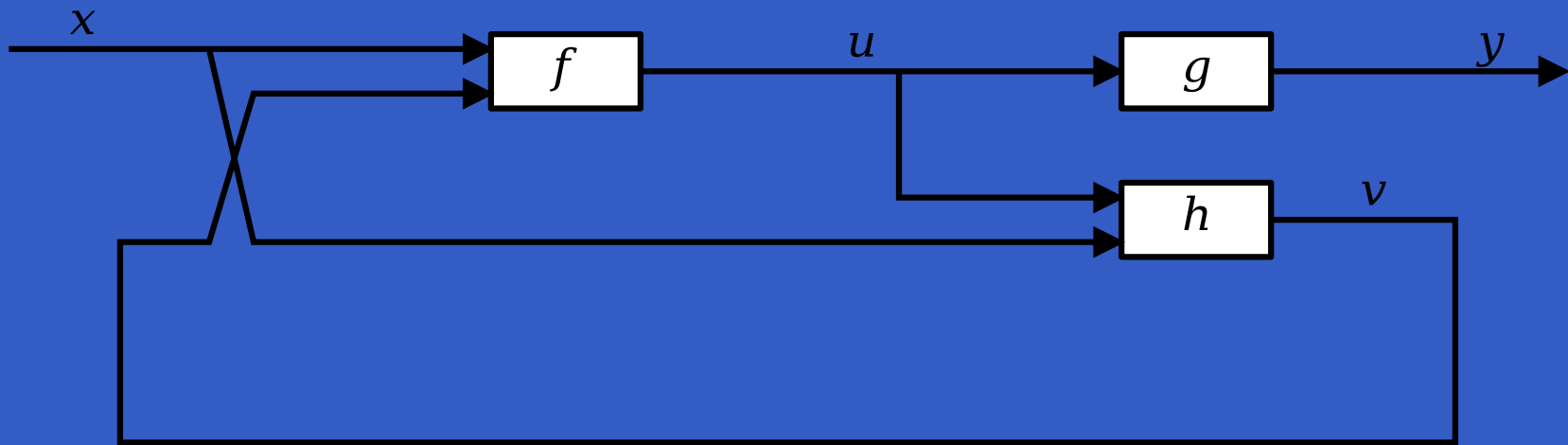
Arrow notation



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Arrow notation



proc $x \rightarrow$ do

rec

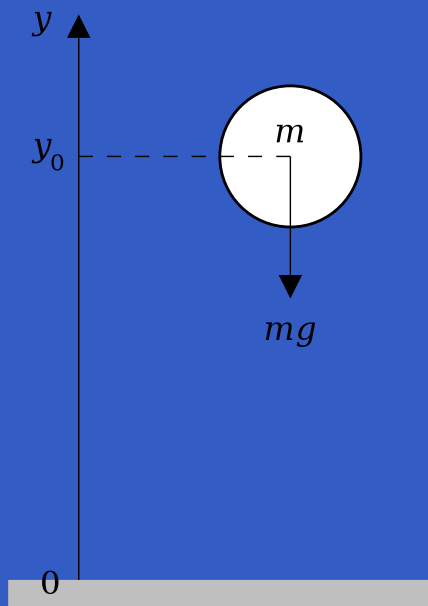
$$u \leftarrow f \multimap (x, v)$$

$$y \leftarrow g \multimap u$$

$$v \leftarrow h \multimap (u, x)$$

return $A \multimap y$

A Bouncing Ball



$$y = y_0 + \int v \, dt$$

$$v = v_0 + \int -9.81$$

On impact:

$$v = -v(t-)$$

(fully elastic collision)

Modelling the Bouncing Ball: Part 1

Free-falling ball:

type Pos = Double

type Vel = Double

fallingBall :: Pos → Vel → SF () (Pos, Vel)

fallingBall y0 v0 = proc () → do

v ← (v0+) ^<< integral ⌊ − 9.81

y ← (y0+) ^<< integral ⌊ v

returnA ⌊ (y, v)

Discrete-time Signals or Events

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Discrete-time signals: signals defined at discrete points in time.

Yampa models discrete-time signals by lifting the **co-domain** of signals using an option-type:

$$\text{data } \textit{Event } a = \textit{NoEvent} \mid \textit{Event } a$$

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Yampa models discrete-time signals by lifting the **co-domain** of signals using an option-type:

$$\text{data Event } a = \text{NoEvent} \mid \text{Event } a$$

Discrete-time signal = `Signal (Event α)`.

Some Event Functions and Sources

$tag :: Event\ a \rightarrow b \rightarrow Event\ b$

$never :: SF\ a\ (Event\ b)$

$now :: b \rightarrow SF\ a\ (Event\ b)$

$after :: Time \rightarrow b \rightarrow SF\ a\ (Event\ b)$

$repeatedly :: Time \rightarrow b \rightarrow SF\ a\ (Event\ b)$

$edge :: SF\ Bool\ (Event\ ())$

$notYet :: SF\ (Event\ a)\ (Event\ a)$

$once :: SF\ (Event\ a)\ (Event\ a)$

Modelling the Bouncing Ball: Part 2

Detecting when the ball goes through the floor:

fallingBall' ::

$Pos \rightarrow Vel \rightarrow SF () ((Pos, Vel), Event (Pos, Vel))$

fallingBall' *y0 v0* = **proc** () → **do**

yv@(*y*, *-*) ← *fallingBall* *y0 v0* \prec ()

hit ← *edge* $\prec y \leq 0$

returnA $\prec (yv, hit \text{ 'tag' } yv)$

Switching

Q: How and when do signal functions “start”?

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- The new signal function instance often replaces the previously running instance.

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A:

- **Switchers** “apply” a signal functions to its input signal at some point in time.
- This creates a “running” signal function **instance**.
- The new signal function instance often replaces the previously running instance.

Switchers thus allow systems with **varying structure** to be described.

The Basic Switch

Idea:

- Allows one signal function to be replaced by another.
- Switching takes place on the first occurrence of the switching event source.

switch::

$SF\ a\ (b, Event\ c)$

$\rightarrow (c \rightarrow SF\ a\ b)$

$\rightarrow SF\ a\ b$

The Basic Switch

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Initial SF with event source

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The Basic Switch

Idea:

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switch::

Function yielding SF to switch into

$SF\ a\ (b, Event\ c)$

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Modelling the Bouncing Ball: Part 3

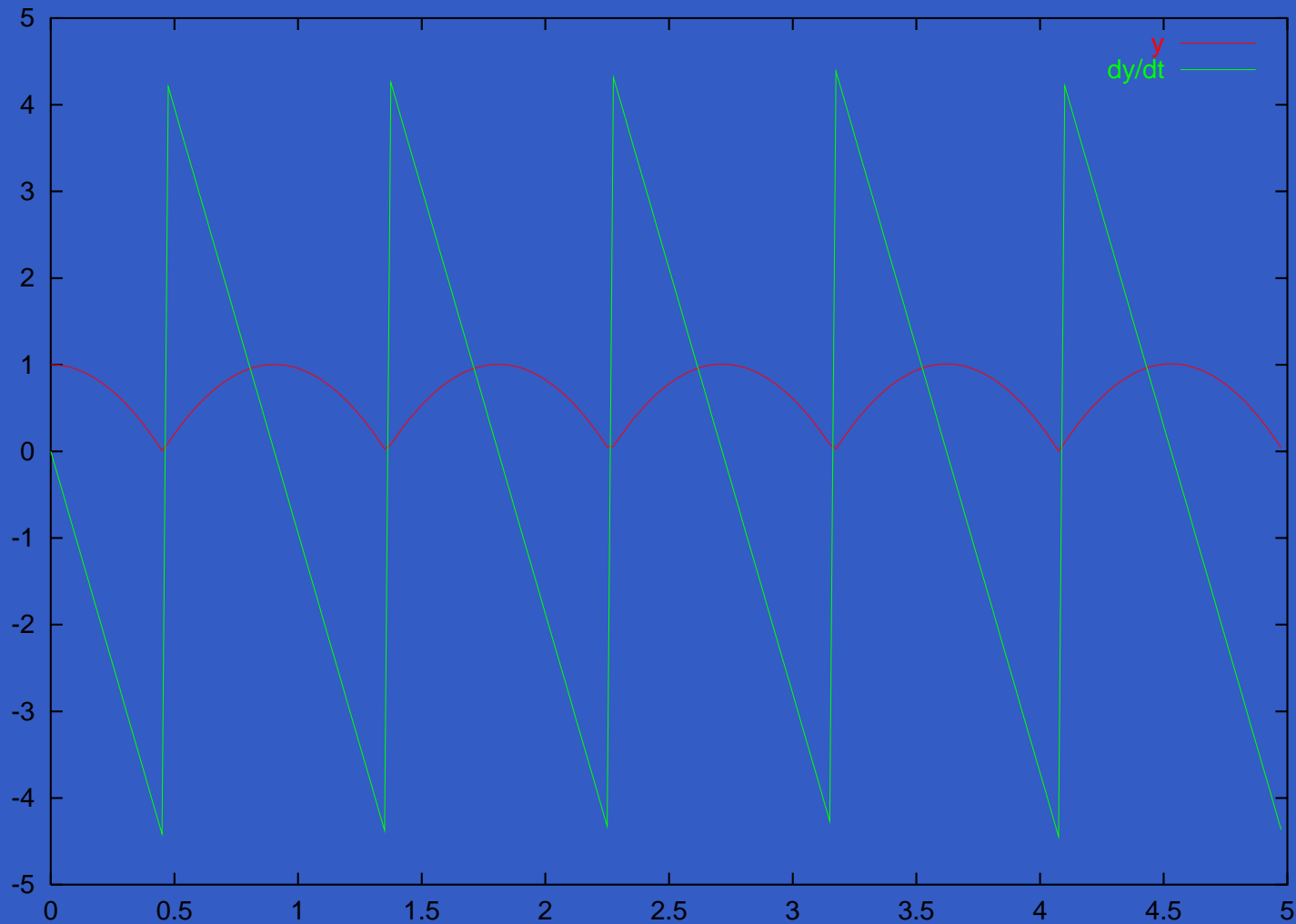
Making the ball bounce:

$$\textit{bouncingBall} :: \textit{Pos} \rightarrow \textit{SF} \ () \ (\textit{Pos}, \textit{Vel})$$
$$\textit{bouncingBall} \ y0 = \textit{bbAux} \ y0 \ 0.0$$

where

$$\textit{bbAux} \ y0 \ v0 =$$
$$\textit{switch} \ (\textit{fallingBall}' \ y0 \ v0) \ \$ \ \lambda(y, v) \rightarrow$$
$$\textit{bbAux} \ y \ (-v)$$

Simulation of the Bouncing Ball



The Decoupled Switch

dSwitch ::

SF a (b, Event c)

$\rightarrow (c \rightarrow SF\ a\ b)$

$\rightarrow SF\ a\ b$

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SF a (b, Event c)

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- Output at the point of switch is taken from the old subordinate signal function, **not** the new residual signal function.

The Decoupled Switch

$dSwitch ::$

$SF\ a\ (b, Event\ c)$

$\rightarrow (c \rightarrow SF\ a\ b)$

$\rightarrow SF\ a\ b$

- Output at the point of switch is taken from the old subordinate signal function, **not** the new residual signal function.
- **Output** at the current point in time thus **independent** of whether or not the **switching event** occurs at that point. Hence decoupled. Useful e.g. in some feedback scenarios.

Game Objects (1)

Observable aspects of game entities:

```
data Object = Object {  
    objectName :: ObjectName,  
    objectKind  :: ObjectKind,  
    objectPos   :: Pos2D,  
    objectVel   :: Vel2D,  
    objectAcc   :: Acc2D,  
    objectDead  :: Bool,  
    objectHit   :: Bool,  
    ...  
}
```

Game Objects (2)

```
data ObjectKind = Ball    Double
                  | Paddle Size2D
                  | Block   Energy Size2D
                  | Side    Side
```

Game Objects (3)

```
type ObjectSF = SF ObjectInput ObjectOutput
data ObjectInput = ObjectInput {
    userInput      :: Controller,
    collisions     :: [ Collision],
    knownObjects  :: [ Object]
}
data ObjectOutput = ObjectOutput {
    outputObject  :: Object,
    harakiri      :: Event ()
}
```

Observing the Game World

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- Note that $[Object]$ appears in the input type.
- This allows each game object to observe **all** live game objects.
- Similarly, $[Collision]$ allows interactions **between** game objects to be observed.
- Typically achieved through delayed feedback to ensure the feedback is well-defined:

$$\begin{aligned} loopPre &:: c \rightarrow SF\ (a, c)\ (b, c) \rightarrow SF\ a\ b \\ loopPre\ c_init\ sf &= \\ &\quad loop\ (second\ (iPre\ c_init)\ \gg\!\!\gg\ sf) \end{aligned}$$

Paddle, Take 1

objPaddle :: *ObjectSF*

objPaddle = **proc** (*ObjectInput ci cs os*) → **do**

let *name* = "paddle"

let *isHit* = *inCollision name cs*

let *p* = *refPosPaddle ci*

v ← *derivative* \lhd *p*

returnA \lhd *livingObject* \$ *Object* {

objectName = *name*,

objectPos = *p*,

objectVel = *v*,

 ... }

Paddle, Take 2

$$objPaddle :: ObjectSF$$

```
objPaddle = proc (ObjectInput ci cs os) → do
```

```
let name = "paddle"
```

```
let isHit = inCollision name cs
```

rec

```
let v = limitNorm (20.0 * ^ (refPosPaddle ci
                             ^- p))
```

$$\max VNorm$$
$$p \leftarrow (initPosPaddle \hat{+} \hat{v}) \hat{\ll} integral \multimap v$$
$$return A \multimap livingObject \$ Object \{ \dots \}$$

Ball, Take 1

objBall :: *ObjectSF*

objBall =

switch followPaddleDetectLaunch \$ $\lambda p \rightarrow$
objBall

followPaddleDetectLaunch = **proc** *oi* \rightarrow **do**

o \leftarrow *followPaddle* \multimap *oi*

click \leftarrow *edge* \multimap *controllerClick*
(userInput oi)

returnA \multimap (*o*, *click* 'tag' (*objectPos*
(outputObject o)))

Ball, Take 2

objBall :: *ObjectSF*

objBall =

switch followPaddleDetectLaunch \$ $\lambda p \rightarrow$

switch (*freeBall* *p* *initBallVel* & *never*) \$ $\lambda_ \rightarrow$

objBall

freeBall *p0* *v0* = **proc** (*ObjectInput* *ci cs os*) \rightarrow **do**

$p \leftarrow (p0 \hat{+} \hat{~})^{\hat{\ll}} \text{integral} \multimap v0'$

returnA $\multimap \text{livingObject}$ \$ { ... }

where

$v0' = \text{limitNorm } v0 \text{ maxVNorm}$

Ball, Take 3

objBall :: *ObjectSF*

objBall =

switch followPaddleDetectLaunch \$ $\lambda p \rightarrow$

switch (bounceAroundDetectMiss p) \$ $\lambda_ \rightarrow$

objBall

bounceAroundDetectMiss p = **proc** *oi* \rightarrow **do**

o \leftarrow *bouncingBall p initBallVel* \multimap *oi*

miss \leftarrow *collisionWithBottom* \multimap *collisions oi*

returnA \multimap (*o*, *miss*)

Making the Ball Bounce

bouncingBall p0 v0 =
switch (moveFreelyDetBounce p0 v0) \$ λ(p', v') →
bouncingBall p' v'

moveFreelyDetBounce p0 v0 =
proc *oi@ (ObjectInput _ cs _) → do*
o ← freeBall p0 v0 ↯ oi
ev ← edgeJust <<< initially Nothing
↯ changedVelocity "ball" cs
returnA ↯ (o, fmap (λv → (objectPos (... o), v))
ev)

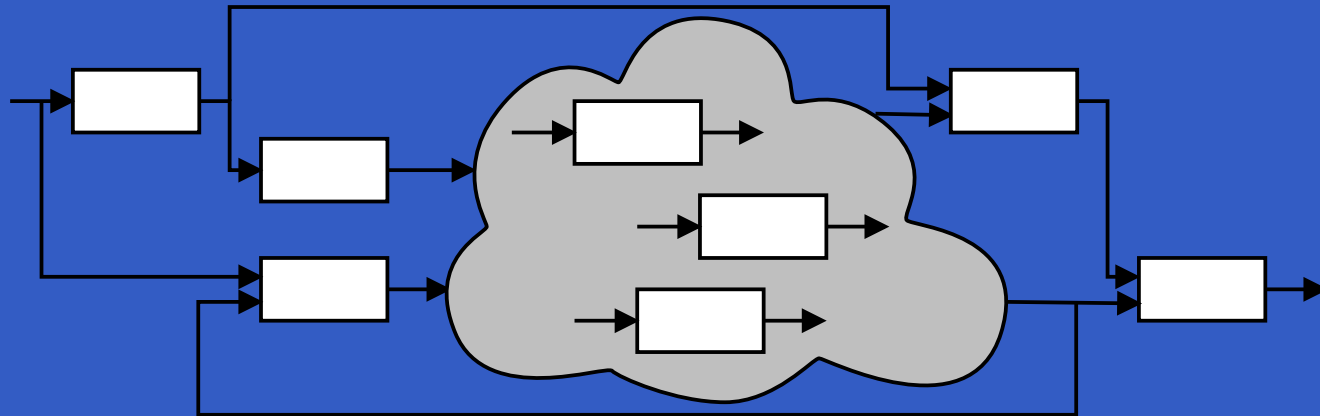
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- What about more general structural changes?

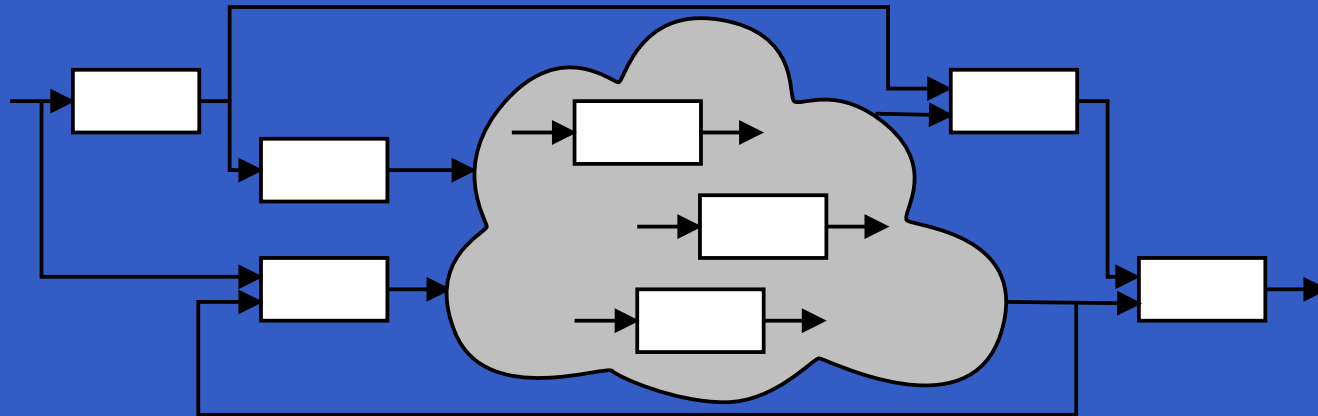


We want blocks to disappear!

Highly dynamic system structure?

The basic switch allows one signal function to be replaced by another.

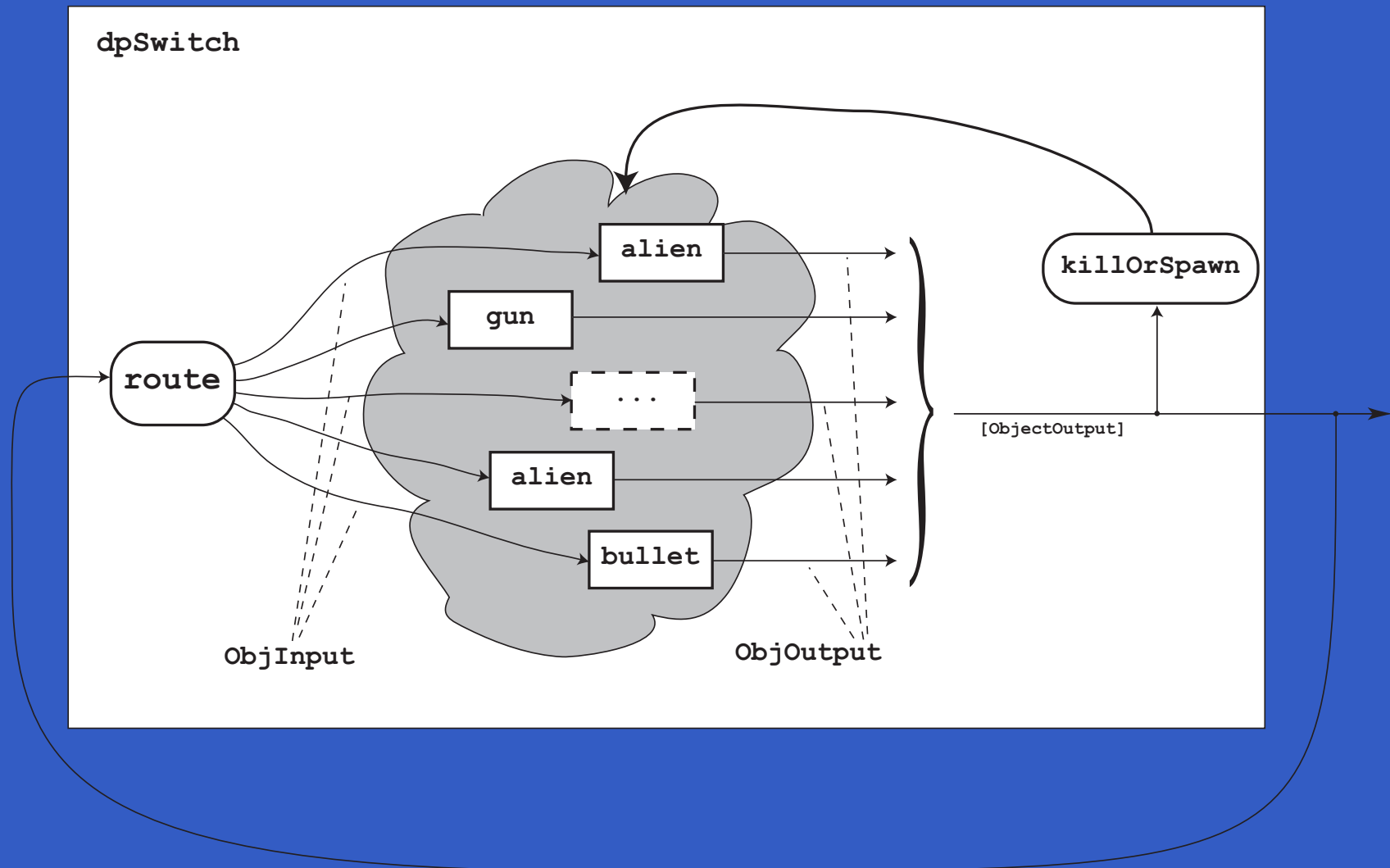
- What about more general structural changes?



We want blocks to disappear!

- What about state?

Typical Overall Game Structure



-
-
-

Dynamic Signal Function Collections

Idea:

Dynamic Signal Function Collections

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- Switch over *collections* of signal functions.

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- Switch over ***collections*** of signal functions.
- On event, “freeze” running signal functions into collection of signal function ***continuations***, preserving encapsulated ***state***.

Dynamic Signal Function Collections

Idea:

- Switch over ***collections*** of signal functions.
- On event, “freeze” running signal functions into collection of signal function ***continuations***, preserving encapsulated ***state***.
- Modify collection as needed and switch back in.

dpSwitch

Need ability to express:

- How input routed to each signal function.
- When collection changes shape.
- How collection changes shape.

```
dpSwitch :: Functor col =>
  (forall sf . (a -> col sf -> col (b, sf)))
-> col (SF b c)
-> SF (a, col c) (Event d)
-> (col (SF b c) -> d -> SF a (col c))
-> SF a (col c)
```

dpSwitch

Need ability to express:

- How input routed to each signal function.
- When collection changes shape.
- How collection changes shape.

```
dpSwitch :: Functor col =>
```

```
(forall sf . (a -> col sf -> col (b, sf)))
```

```
-> col (SF b c)
```

```
-> SF (a, col c) (Event d)
```

```
-> (col (SF b c) -> d -> SF a (col c))
```

```
-> SF a (col c)
```

Routing function

dpSwitch

Need ability to express:

- How input routed to each signal function.
- When collection changes shape.
- How collection changes shape.


```
dpSwitch :: Functor col =>
  (forall sf . (a -> col sf -> col (b, sf)))
-> col (SF b c) ← Initial collection
-> SF (a, col c) (Event d)
-> (col (SF b c) -> d -> SF a (col c))
-> SF a (col c)
```

dpSwitch

Need ability to express:

- How input routed to each signal function.
- When collection changes shape.
- How collection changes shape.

```
dpSwitch :: Functor col =>
  (forall sf . (a -> col sf -> col (b, sf)))
-> col (SF b c)
-> SF (a, col c) (Event d)
-> (col (SF b c) -> d -> SF a (col c))
-> SF a (col c)
```



Event source

dpSwitch

Need ability to express:

- How input routed to each signal function.
- When collection changes shape.
- How collection changes shape.

```
dpSwitch :: Functor col =>
  (forall sf . (a -> col sf -> col (b, sf)))
-> col (SF b c)
-> SF (a, col c) (Event d)
-> (col (SF b c) -> d -> SF a (col c))
-> SF a (col c)
```

Function yielding SF to switch into

Routing

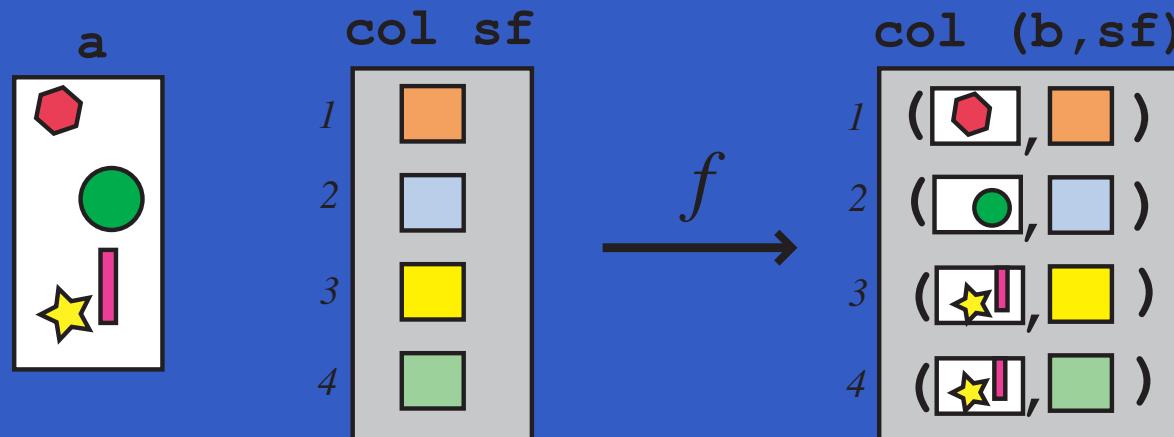
Idea:

- The routing function decides which parts of the input to pass to each running signal function instance.

Routing

Idea:

- The routing function decides which parts of the input to pass to each running signal function instance.
- It achieves this by pairing a projection of the input with each running instance:



The Routing Function Type

Universal quantification over the collection members:

$$\text{Functor } col \Rightarrow \\ (forall\ sf \circ (a \rightarrow col\ sf \rightarrow col\ (b, sf)))$$

Collection members thus **opaque**:

- Ensures only signal function instances from argument can be returned.
- Unfortunately, does not prevent duplication or discarding of signal function instances.

Blocks

```
objBlockAt (x, y) (w, h) =  
  proc (ObjectInput ci cs os)  $\rightarrow$  do  
    let name = "blockat"  $\uparrow$  show (x, y)  
        isHit = inCollision name cs  
        hit  $\leftarrow$  edge  $\prec$  isHit  
        lives  $\leftarrow$  accumHoldBy (+) 3  $\prec$  (hit 'tag' (-1))  
        let isDead = lives  $\leq$  0  
        dead  $\leftarrow$  edge  $\prec$  isDead  
        return  $\prec$  ObjectOutput  
          (Object {...})  
        dead
```

The Game Core

processMovement ::

[ObjectSF] \rightarrow SF ObjectInput (IL ObjectOutput)

processMovement objs =

dpSwitchB objs

(noEvent \longrightarrow arr suicidalSect)

($\lambda sfs' f \rightarrow processMovement' (f sfs')$)

loopPre ([], [], 0) \$

adaptInput

>>> processMovement objs

>>> (arr elemsIL && detectCollisions)

Recovering Blocks

```
objBlockAt (x, y) (w, h) =  
  proc (ObjectInput ci cs os)  $\rightarrow$  do  
    let name = "blockat"  $\#$  show (x, y)  
        isHit = inCollision name cs  
        hit  $\leftarrow$  edge  $\prec$  isHit  
        recover  $\leftarrow$  delayEvent 5.0  $\prec$  hit  
        lives  $\leftarrow$  accumHoldBy (+) 3  
             $\prec$  (hit 'tag' (-1)  
                'lMerge' recover 'tag' 1)  
    . . .
```

Reading (1)

- John Hughes. Generalising monads to arrows. *Science of Computer Programming*, 37:67–111, May 2000
- John Hughes. Programming with arrows. In *Advanced Functional Programming*, 2004. To be published by Springer Verlag.
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Reading (2)

- Antony Courtney and Henrik Nilsson and John Peterson. The Yampa Arcade. In *Proceedings of the 2003 Haskell Workshop*, pp. 7–18, August 2003.
- Ivan Perez and Henrik Nilsson. Bridging the GUI gap with reactive values and relations. In *Proceedings of the 8th ACM SIGPLAN Symposium on Haskell (Haskell'15)*, pages 47–58, 2015.