

# Formalization and Implementation of Safe Destination Passing in Pure Functional Programming Settings

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Thomas BAGREL

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- ▶ Imperative languages: instructions step-by-step  
**how?** | mutability | untracked side-effects
- ▶ Functional languages: compose expressions  
**what?** | immutability | purity | first-class functions

## Functional languages – why?

Modeled after mathematical principles

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Memory managed automatically: unpredictable overhead / hard to tune

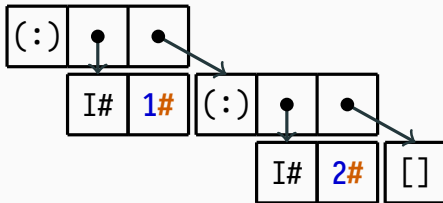
# Functional data structures

Data structures are heap-allocated; made of **linked** heap objects:

- ▶ a pointer to the **info table** (static struct describing the constructor)
- ▶ for each field, a pointer to this field's value (except for primitive types)

`[1, 2]`  
a.k.a.  
`(:) 1 ((:) 2 [])`

~>



`(:)` is list “cons” constructor

`[]` is list “nil” constructor

`I#` is constructor for boxed integers

`1#` is the primitive/unboxed integer “one”

## Building order in functional languages – current

Data structures: immutable, thus built from the leaves up to the root.

- ▶ The value of a field must be an existing, fully constructed structure



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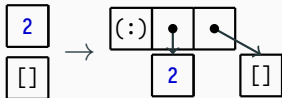
2

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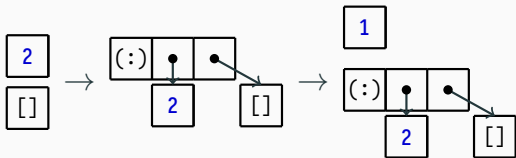
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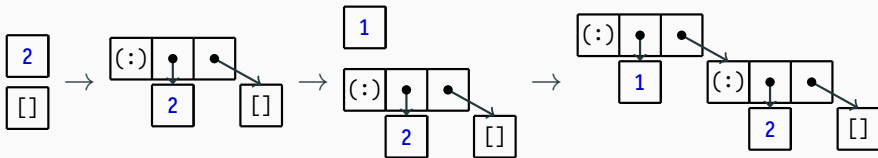
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## Building order in functional languages – current

Data structures: immutable, thus built from the leaves up to the root.

- The value of a field must be an existing, fully constructed structure



- Forces us to build structures in an order that might not be the most natural one.

## Building order in functional languages – goal

What about lifting this limitation?

- ▶ Allowing pieces of data structures to be connected like Lego bricks in **any order**  
*pioneered by “A Functional Representation of Data Structures with a Hole”, Minamide (1998)*

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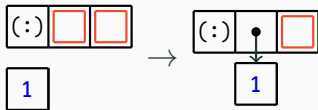


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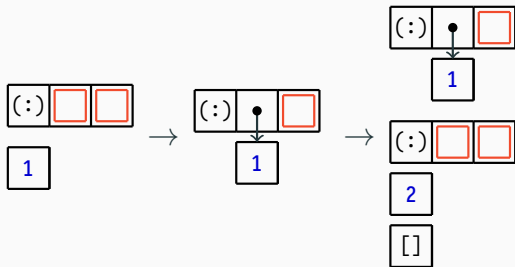


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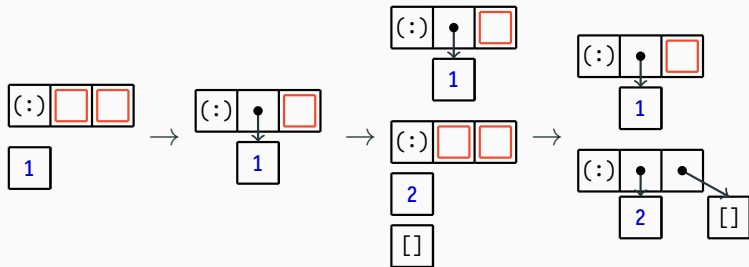
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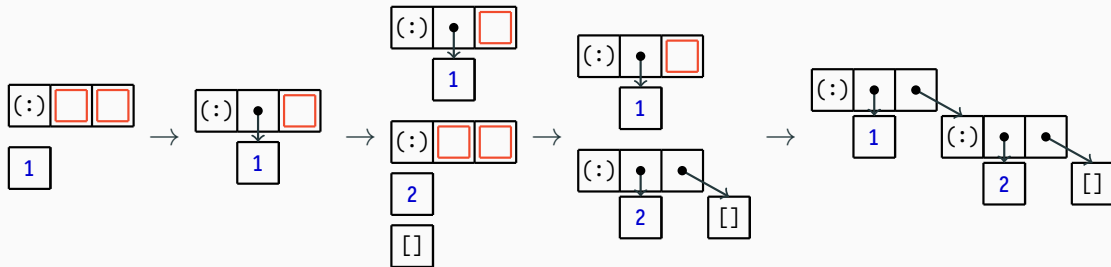


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Uninitialized memory/**holes**:

- ▶ implies future **mutability**
- ▶ no read safety (risk of segfault)

Need proper functional abstraction to manipulate incomplete structures.

## Destination passing

(1<sup>st</sup> article)

Safety concerns for functional DPS

(1<sup>st</sup> article)

Linear types

(1<sup>st</sup> article)

Safe yet?

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Avoiding scope escape in Haskell

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A more general solution: age control

(2<sup>nd</sup> article)

Formalization and proofs in Rocq

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## Here comes destination passing style (DPS)

Coming from old C days:

### Traditional style

```
1  MyStruct * fooTrad() {  
2      MyStruct *res = malloc(sizeof(MyStruct));  
3      res->f1 = 1; res->f2 = 2;  
4      return res;  
5  }
```

### DPS style

```
1  void fooDps(MyStruct *dest) {  
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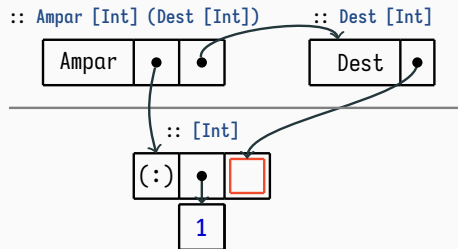
Caller is responsible for allocation in destination-passing-style function `fooDps`. More flexible:

- ▶ can allocate several slots at once
- ▶ can allocate on the stack (no `malloc`)

## Functional DPS API – Types (1/2)

**Dest**ination: first-class typed wrapper for a raw pointer to a **hole**

- ▶ *breaks from Minamide's approach*
- ▶ only way to refer to and act on a hole (of an incomplete structure)



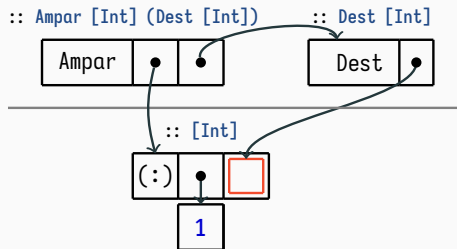
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**Ampar**: first-class opaque wrapper for an **incomplete structure** and its destinations

- ▶ prevents reading incomplete structure and its holes
- ▶ only way to refer to and act on an incomplete structure





## Functional DPS API – Types (2/2)

Every operation is done through **Ampar** and **Dest** types.

```
data Ampar s t = Ampar s t  (opaque)
```

- ▶ **s** is the type of the incomplete structure
- ▶ **t** is arbitrary structure carrying all the destinations to holes of **s**

E.g. **Ampar [Int] (Dest Int, Dest Int)**: list of ints with two missing values

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data Dest t = Dest Addr#  (opaque)
```

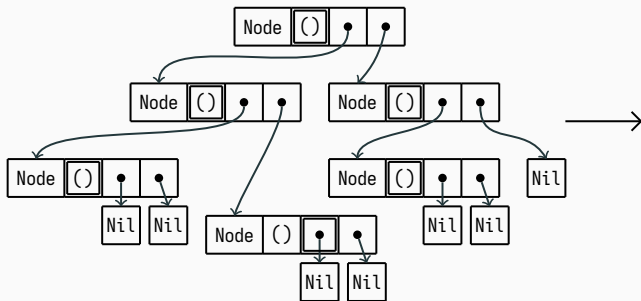
- ▶ **t** is the type of the hole that the destination references

## Example: Breadth-first tree relabeling in DPS (1/2)

```
data Tree t = Nil | Node t (Tree t) (Tree t)
```

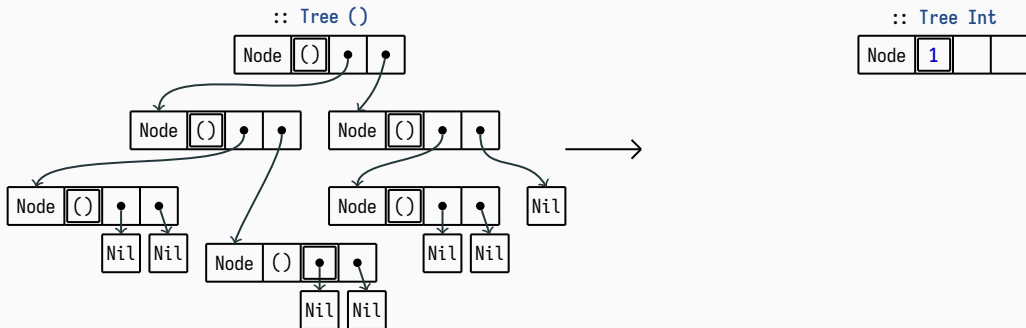
`:: Tree ()`

`:: Tree Int`



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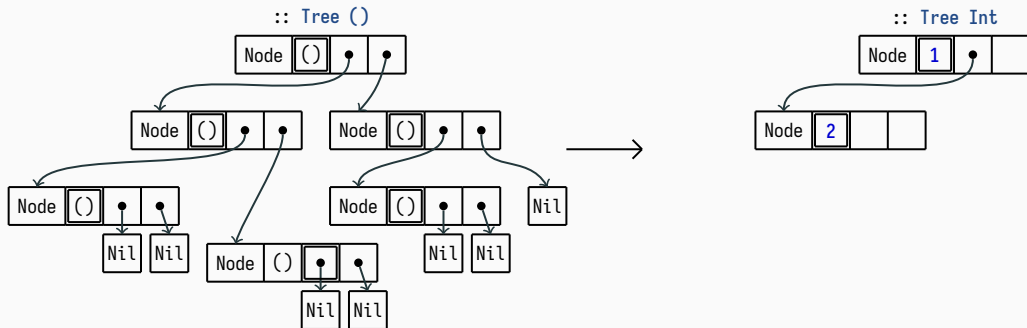
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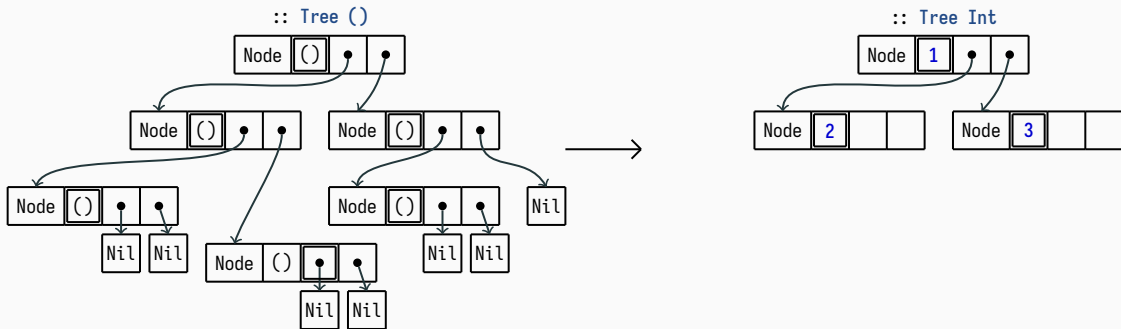
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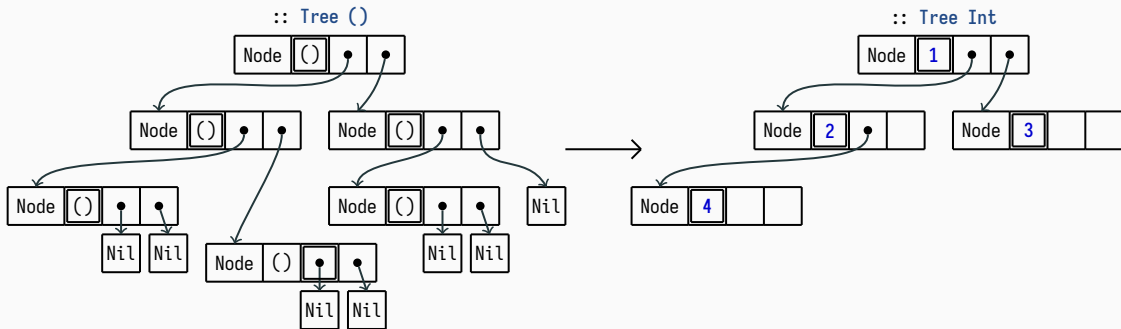
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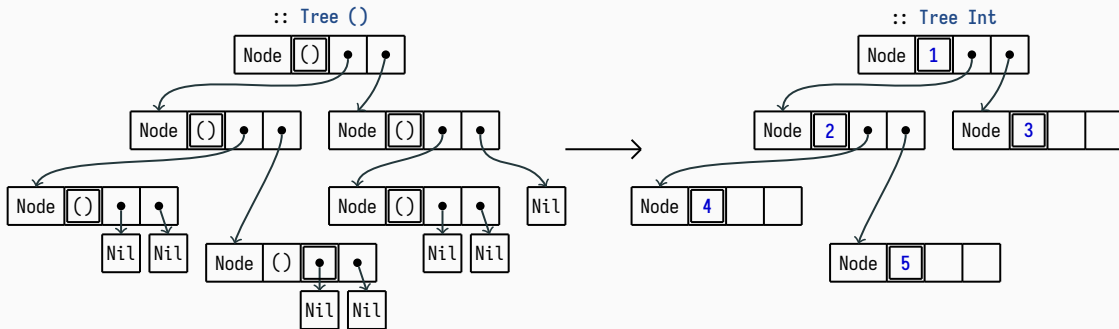
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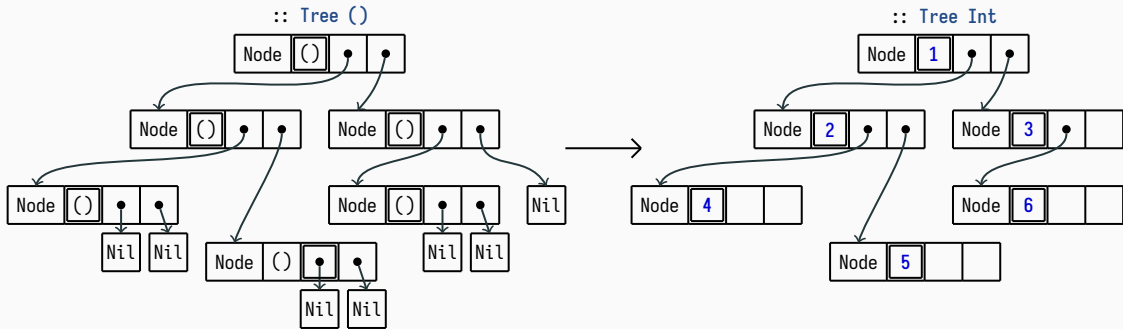


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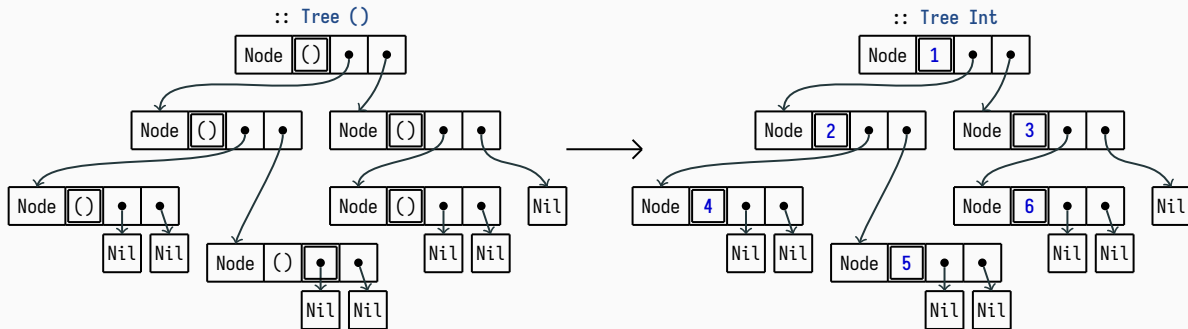
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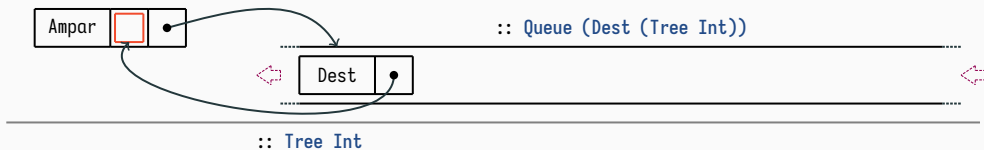
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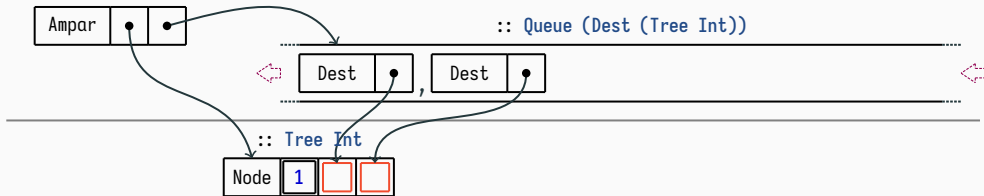
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`:: Ampar (Tree Int) (Queue (Dest (Tree Int)))`



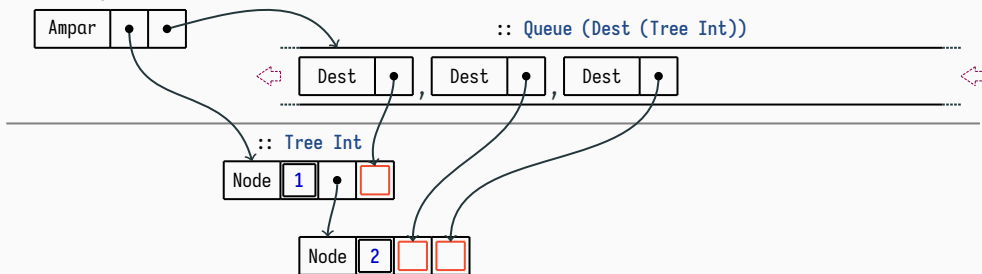
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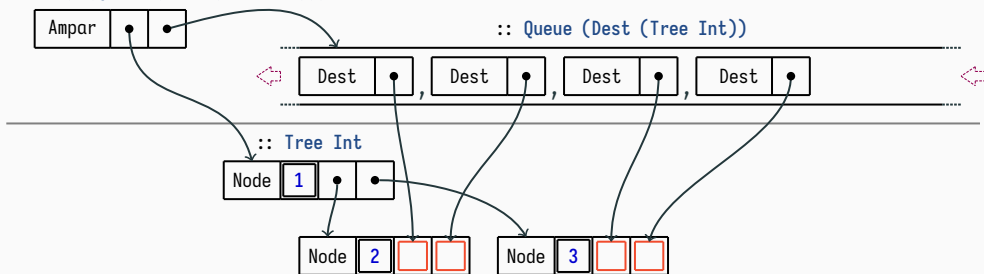
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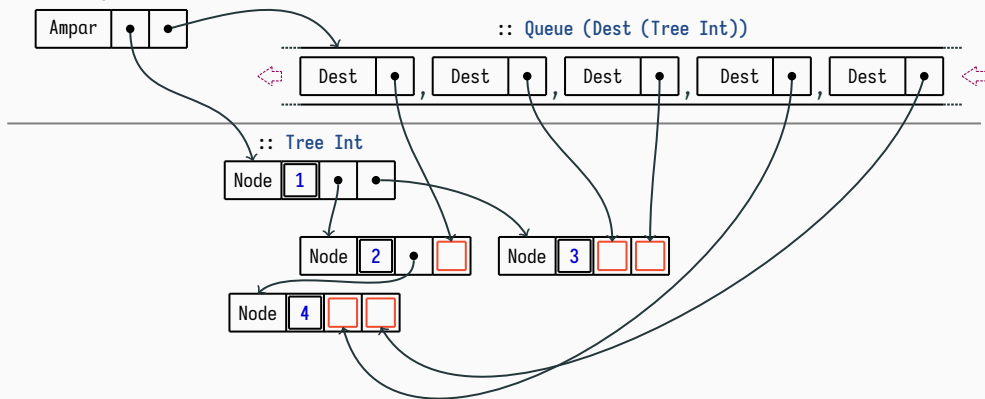
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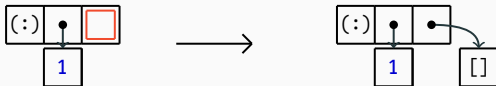
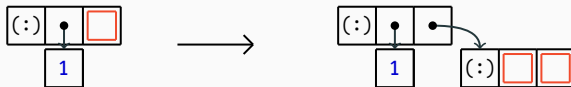
## Functional DPS API – First attempt

```
1 data Ampar s t
2 data Dest t
3 type family DestsOf 'Ctor t -- returns dests corresponding to fields of Ctor
4
5 -- Functions on destinations (infix)
6 &fill @'Ctor :: Dest t          → DestsOf 'Ctor t
7 &fillComp    :: Dest s → Ampar s t → t
8 &fillLeaf    :: Dest t → t        → ()
9
10 -- Functions on Ampar
11 newAmpar    :: Ampar s (Dest s)
12 fromAmpar'  :: Ampar s () → s
13 `updWith`   :: Ampar s t → (t → u) → Ampar s u -- (infix)
```



## Functional DPS API – Functions (1/6)

- Allocate a hollow data constructor and plug it into a hole?



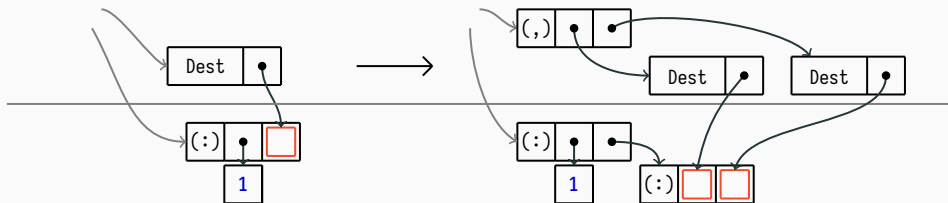
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**&fill** @'(:) :: Dest [t]

→

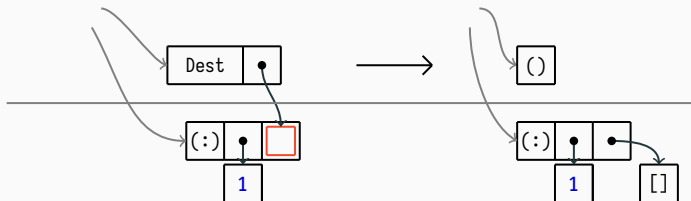
(Dest t, Dest [t])



**&fill** @'[] :: Dest [t]

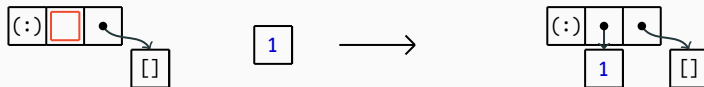
→

()



## Functional DPS API – Functions (2/6)

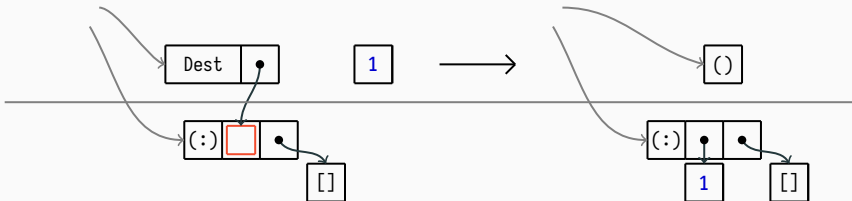
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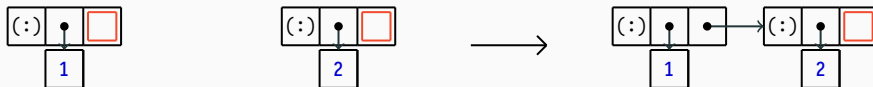
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`&fillLeaf :: Dest t → t → ()`



## Functional DPS API – Functions (3/6)

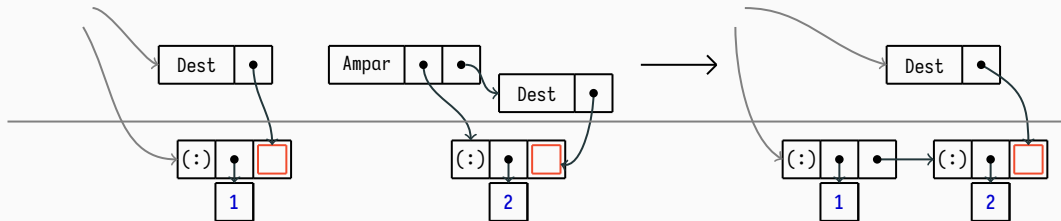
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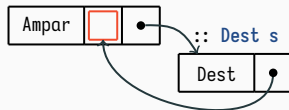
`&fillComp :: Dest s → Ampar s t → t`



## Functional DPS API – Functions (4/6)

- Spawn new incomplete structure?

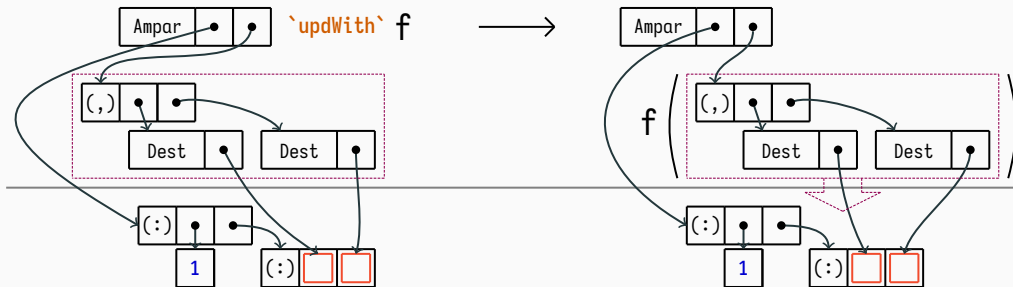
`newAmpar :: Ampar s (Dest s)`



## Functional DPS API – Functions (5/6)

- Access destinations of an Ampar?

``updWith`` :: Ampar s t → (t → u) → Ampar s u





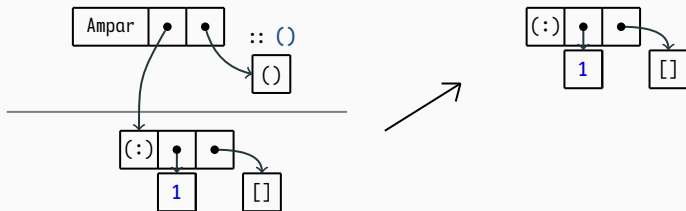
## Functional DPS API – Functions (6/6)

- Extract a completed structure?

fromAmpar' :: Ampar s ()

→

s



Destination passing

(1<sup>st</sup> article)

## **Safety concerns for functional DPS**

**(1<sup>st</sup> article)**

Linear types

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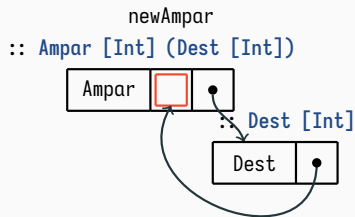
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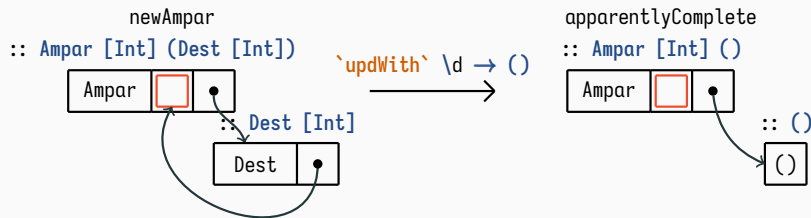
## Unrestricted use of destinations

```
1  fromAmpar' :: Ampar s () → s  -- I recall the signature
2
3  let apparentlyComplete :: Ampar [Int] () = newAmpar `updWith` \d → ()
4  in fromAmpar' apparentlyComplete
```



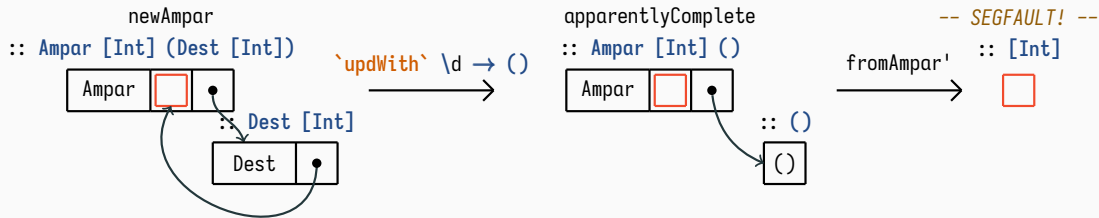
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Linear types and linearity let us control resource consumption of functions.

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Idea : **destinations are linear resources** i.e. must be consumed **exactly once**:

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Unconsumed destination = witnesses a remaining hole

## Linear Haskell overview (1/2)

Haskell supports linear types since GHC 9.0.1

*follows from “Linear Haskell: practical linearity in a higher-order polymorphic language”,*

*Bernardy et al. (2018)*

$s \multimap t$  = Linear function from  $s$  to  $t$

means that if the result of type  $t$  is consumed exactly once, then the argument of type  $s$  is consumed exactly once too.

## Linear Haskell overview (2/2)

A value is **consumed once** when:

- ▶ **pattern-matched on**, and all its fields are consumed once
- ▶ **used as an argument** of a linear function whose results is consumed once
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→ **YES**

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|---|-----------|---|---|-------|
| x | linear in | <code>(x, y)</code>                                       | ? | → YES |
| x | linear in | <code>(x, x)</code>                                       | ? | → NO  |
| x | linear in | <code>case y of {Nothing -&gt; x ; Just v -&gt; v}</code> | ? | → NO  |

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| x | linear in | <code>case y of {Nothing -&gt; (x, 0) ; Just v -&gt; (x, v)}</code> | ? | → YES |



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x	linear in	<code>(x, x)</code>	?	→ NO	
x	linear in	<code>case y of {Nothing -&gt; x ; Just v -&gt; v}</code>	?	→ NO	
x	linear in	<code>case y of {Nothing -&gt; (x, 0) ; Just v -&gt; (x, v)}</code>	?	→ YES	
x	linear in	<code>f x</code>	where <code>f :: t → u</code>	?	→ NO

## Linear Haskell overview (2/2)

A value is **consumed once** when:

- ▶ **pattern-matched on**, and all its fields are consumed once
- ▶ **used as an argument** of a linear function whose results is consumed once
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x	linear in	<code>fLin x</code>	where <code>fLin :: t <math>\multimap</math> u</code>	?	→ YES

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**Examples** (assuming the value on the right is consumed):

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x	linear in	<code>case y of {Nothing -&gt; x ; Just v -&gt; v} ?</code>	→ NO
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x	linear in	<code>fLin x</code> where <code>fLin :: t <math>\multimap</math> u</code> ?	→ YES
x	linear in	<code>Ur x</code> ?	→ NO

## Linear scopes and resources

Linearity chains consumption requirements, but it needs to be bootstrapped.

Trick: scoping function

`withResource :: (Resource  $\multimap$  Ur t)  $\multimap$  Ur t`

which is the only **producer** of **Resource** values

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which is the only **producer** of **Resource** values

User must pass a **linear function** consuming the resource in this scope

► `withResource (\res -> linearConsume res ; Ur ())` is **OK**

► `withResource (\res -> res)` or  
`withResource (\res -> Ur res)` are **REJECTED** (cannot leak)

## Updating the API with linearity

Trick to easier manage linear resources and their scopes: linearity-infectious **Token**:

```
1 data Token
2 dup  :: Token  $\multimap$  (Token, Token)
3 drop :: Token  $\multimap$  ()
4 withToken :: (Token  $\multimap$  Ur t)  $\multimap$  Ur t
```

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```

Making sure **Ampars** are used linearly, e.g.:

**Old:** newAmpar :: Ampar s (Dest s)

**New:** newAmpar :: Token  $\multimap$  Ampar s (Dest s)



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**Old:** updWith :: Ampar s t  $\rightarrow$  (t  $\rightarrow$  u)  $\rightarrow$  Ampar s u

**New:** updWith :: Ampar s t  $\multimap$  (t  $\multimap$  u)  $\multimap$  Ampar s u

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**New:** updWith :: Ampar s t  $\multimap$  (t  $\multimap$  u)  $\multimap$  Ampar s u

**Dest**s can only ever be accessed through **updWith**, which takes a linear function **t**  $\multimap$  **u** now

## Functional DPS API – Second attempt, with linearity

```
1  data Ampar s t
2  data Dest t
3  type family DestsOf 'Ctor t  -- returns dests corresponding to fields of Ctor
4
5  &fill @'Ctor :: Dest t          → DestsOf 'Ctor t
6  &fillComp    :: Dest s → Ampar s t → t
7  &fillLeaf    :: Dest t → t      → ()
8
9  newAmpar     :: Token          → Ampar s (Dest s)
10 toAmpar      :: Token  → s      → Ampar s ()
11 tokenBesides :: Ampar s t      → (Ampar s t, Token)
12 fromAmpar    :: Ampar s (Ur t) → (s, Ur t)
13 fromAmpar'   :: Ampar s ()      → s
14 `updWith`    :: Ampar s t       → (t → u) → Ampar s u
```

Destination passing (1<sup>st</sup> article)

Safety concerns for functional DPS (1<sup>st</sup> article)

Linear types (1<sup>st</sup> article)

**Safe yet? (1<sup>st</sup> article)**

Avoiding scope escape in Haskell (1<sup>st</sup> article)

A more general solution: age control (2<sup>nd</sup> article)

Formalization and proofs in Rocq (2<sup>nd</sup> article)

## Scope escape – Example

```
1  let outer :: Ampar (Dest ()) ()
2      outer = (newAmpar tok1) `updWith` \(dOuter :: Dest (Dest ())) →
3          let inner :: Ampar () ()
4              inner = (newAmpar tok2) `updWith` \(dInner :: Dest ()) →
5                  dOuter &fillLeaf dInner
6          in fromAmpar' inner
7  in fromAmpar' outer
```

*Minimal example of type-checked code that produce scope-escape/segfault*

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*Minimal example of type-checked code that produce scope-escape/segfault*

## Scope escape – Bigger picture

Not *just* an artificial edge-case

- ▶ Linear API are often based on scope-delimited resource consumption
- ▶ Any form of (linear) storage for linear resources breaks that  
`storeAway :: t  $\multimap$  ()` -- *resource goes away magically*

Destination passing (1<sup>st</sup> article)

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### Solution 1: destinations can only store non-linear data

**Old:** `fillLeaf :: t  $\multimap$  Dest t  $\multimap$  ()`

**New:** `fillLeaf :: t  $\rightarrow$  UDest t  $\multimap$  ()`

**Old:** `fromAmpar' :: Ampar s ()  $\multimap$  s`

**New:** `fromUAmpar' :: UAmpar s ()  $\multimap$  Ur s`

In other words, `UAmpar s t` builds an unrestricted `s`

*Used in my library `linear-dest` from article “DPS: a Haskell implementation”, Bagrel, JFLA 2024*

### **Solution 2: destinations for linear data needs new primitives instead of fillLeaf / fillComp**

Back to Minamide-like system where one operate on **Ampars** directly instead of **Dests** (to prevent scope escape)

- ▶ With some complications, can work with multiple holes
- ▶ Still allows for efficient queue of **Dests** in BF-traversal

*Developed in Chapter 4 of the PhD manuscript (unpublished)*

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**A more general solution: age control (2<sup>nd</sup> article)**

Formalization and proofs in Rocq (2<sup>nd</sup> article)

Principle: track the age of resources.


- ▶ Age  $\uparrow^0$  says the resource (variable) comes from the innermost ``updWith`` scope.
- ▶ When entering a new ``updWith`` scope, all existing resources ages are multiplied by  $\uparrow$  (scope number increased by 1)

*Developed in “Destination Calculus: A Linear  $\lambda$ -Calculus for Purely Functional Memory Writes”,  
Bagrel & Spiwack, OOPSLA1 2025*

## Age system – Example

Colors indicate the scope in which each object lives.

```
let x0 = 1  
in (Ampar (□ : □) (Dest •, Dest •))
```

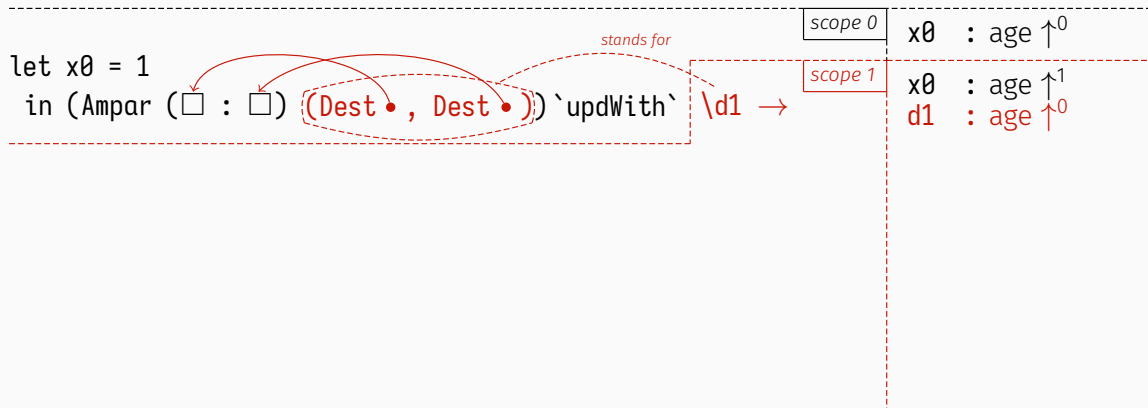


scope 0

x0 : age ↑<sup>0</sup>

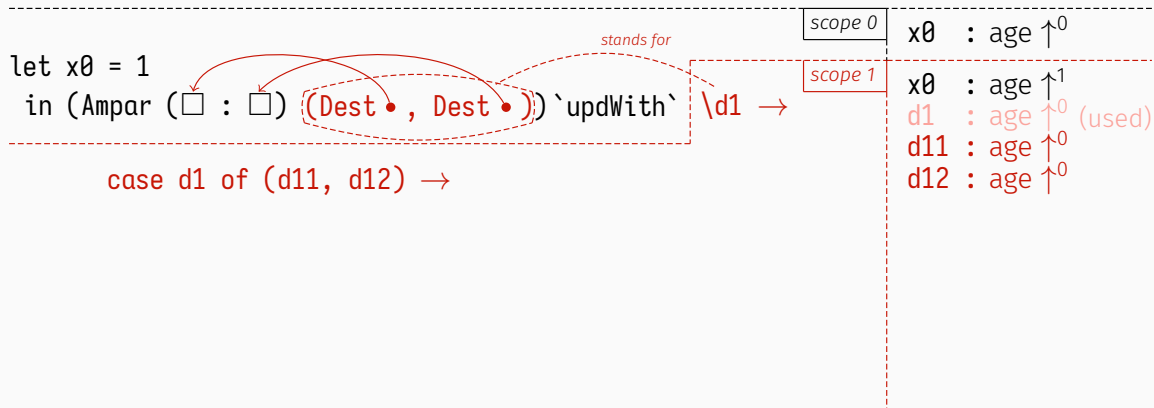
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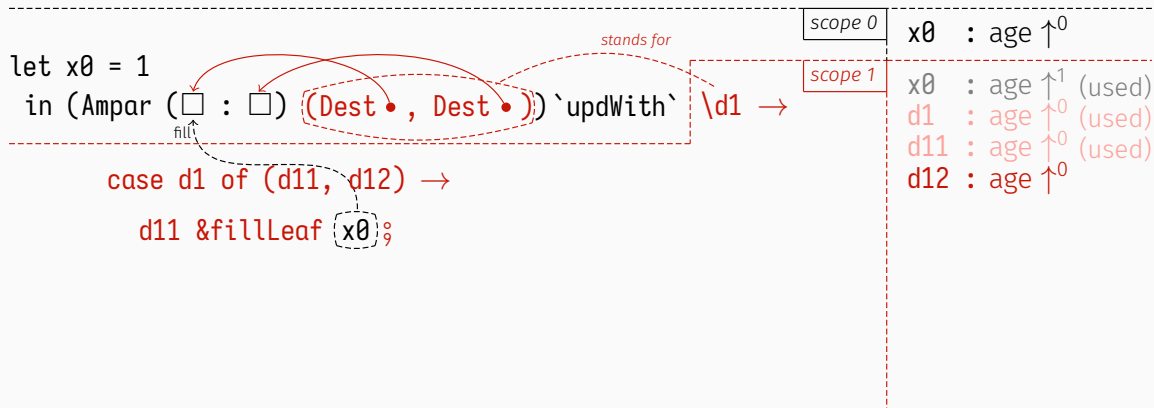
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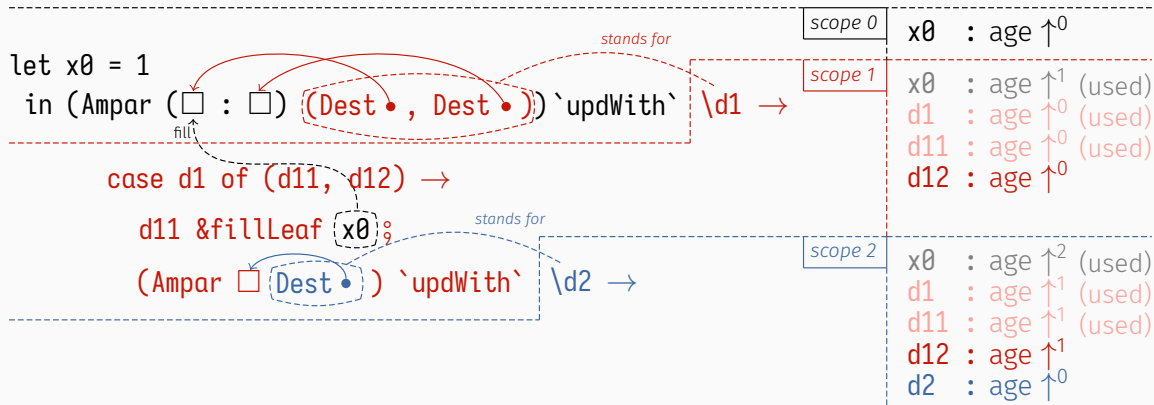
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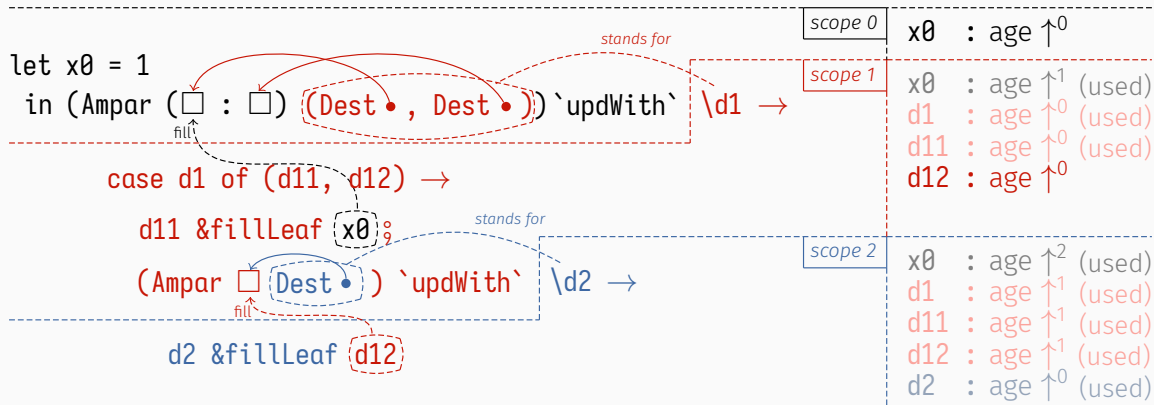
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## Age control prevents scope escape

New rule: The LHS of **&fillLeaf** (destination being filled) must be exactly one scope **younger** than the RHS (content being stored away)

```
1  let outer :: Ampar (Dest ()) ()
2      outer = (newAmpar tok1) `updWith` \(dOuter :: ↑0 Dest (Dest ())) →
3          let inner :: Ampar () ()
4              inner = (newAmpar tok2) `updWith` \(dInner :: ↑0 Dest ()) →
5                  (dOuter :: ↑1) &fillLeaf (dInner :: ↑0) -- REJECTED
6              in fromAmpar' inner
7  in fromAmpar' outer
```

Destination passing (1<sup>st</sup> article)

Safety concerns for functional DPS (1<sup>st</sup> article)

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A more general solution: age control (2<sup>nd</sup> article)

**Formalization and proofs in Rocq** (2<sup>nd</sup> article)

Essence of “*Destination Calculus: A Linear  $\lambda$ -Calculus for Purely Functional Memory Writes*”,  
Bagrel & Spiwack, OOPSLA1 2025:

- ▶ Formal language  $\lambda_d$
  - ▶ Built from the ground up with destination-passing in mind
  - ▶ Equipped with linear types and age control
  - ▶ Mechanical proof of type safety (progress + preservation) in Rocq
- Prove definitively that it is possible to safely program with destinations in a purely functional language!

## Modal type system to track linearity and ages

Many similarities with type system and rules of “*Linear Haskell [...]*”, Bernardy et al., 2018:

- ▶ Every variable is annotated with a **mode**
- ▶ Modes indicates how variables can be used
- ▶ Following insight from “*Bounded Linear Types in a Resource Semiring*”, Ghica & al., 2014 and “*Coeffects: a calculus of context-dependent computation*”, Petricek & al., 2014, modes as a **semiring** and operations on modes are lifted to typing contexts

→ Easy to add age control without changing much to linear type system rules!

## Combining linearity and ages in a same semiring

Modes are elements of a semiring  $(M, +, \cdot, 1)$

- ▶  $+$  is used to combine modes when a same variable is used in multiple sub-expressions
- ▶  $\cdot$  is used to combine modes when a substitution/function composition happens

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Linearity is represented as semiring

$(\{l, \omega\}, +, \cdot, l)$



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Ages are represented as semiring

$(\{\uparrow^n \mid n \in \mathbb{N}, \infty\}, \equiv, \cdot, \uparrow^0)$

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Ages are represented as semiring

$(\{\uparrow^n \mid n \in \mathbb{N}, \infty\}, \equiv, \cdot, \uparrow^0)$

→ Product of semirings is a semiring!

## Type system – balancing destinations and holes

I ensure holes and destinations are balanced using a “subtractive” typing technique:

- ▶ The presence of a hole **provides** a special binding in the typing context

$$\{\rightarrow h :_{\mathfrak{m}} \text{Dest}_n t\} \vdash \text{OpAmpar } \boxed{h} [] :: u_1 \multimap u_2$$

- ▶ The use of a destination **requires** a special binding in the typing context (same as a variable use)

$$\{\rightarrow h :_{\mathfrak{m}} \text{Dest}_n t\} \vdash \rightarrow h \ \&\text{fillLeaf } () :: ()$$

→ A closed term/program is necessarily well-balanced wrt. destinations and holes.

Theoretical language  $\lambda_d$  is equipped with small-step semantics.

- ▶ Controlled mutations resulting from destination filling are implemented as substitutions on the evaluation context  $E$

*Syntactic manipulation of the evaluation context as a stack*

- ▶ No need for full-blown memory model

Named hole substitution lemma is the most technical part of the proofs

Proved using fairly standard techniques (progress + preservation).

Most of the heavy lifting is done through lemmas and theorems about typing contexts due to the algebraic structure of the type system.

## Theorem (Type preservation)

*If  $\vdash E[e] :: t$  and  $E[e] \longrightarrow E'[e']$  then  $\vdash E'[e'] :: t$*

## Theorem (Progress)

*If  $\vdash E[e] :: t$  and  $\forall v, E[e] \neq [][v]$  then  $\exists E', e'. E[e] \longrightarrow E'[e']$*

## Conclusion (1/3) – Goal reached!

→ Safe functional destination-passing is definitely doable!

- ▶ Build immutable structures in a more flexible order
- ▶ Incomplete structures as first-class citizens

Direct applications:

- ▶ Enable new algorithms with less copying (difference lists, BF tree traversal)
- ▶ Prototype already available in Haskell (`linear-dest` library)
- ▶ Zero-copy interface to compact regions in GHC (**proposal submitted!**)

## Conclusion (3/3) – Trade-offs of the different approaches

Trade-offs to be found between complexity of the type system and expressivity of the destination-passing interface:

- ▶ Lower end: Haskell type system only, simple interface, destinations can't store linear data – still very useful!
- ▶ Higher end: safe-proven theoretical language with no limit on destination use (but needs a bespoke type system)

Further work: Use the theoretical language as a framework to prove safety of less expressive destination-passing systems



- ▶ “Destination-passing style programming: a Haskell implementation” (Article + Impl)  
JFLA 2024, [inria.hal.science/hal-04406360](https://inria.hal.science/hal-04406360)
- ▶ “A zero-copy interface to compact regions powered by destinations” (Talk)  
HIW 2024, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIw0s-yEkfw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIw0s-yEkfw)
- ▶ “Destination Calculus: A Linear  $\lambda$ -Calculus for Purely Functional Memory Writes” (Article)  
Co-authored with A. Spiwack, OOPSLA1 2025, [dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3720423](https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3720423)
- ▶ “Primitives for zero-copy compact regions” (GHC Proposal)  
Work in progress, [github.com/ghc-proposals/ghc-proposals/pull/683](https://github.com/ghc-proposals/ghc-proposals/pull/683)

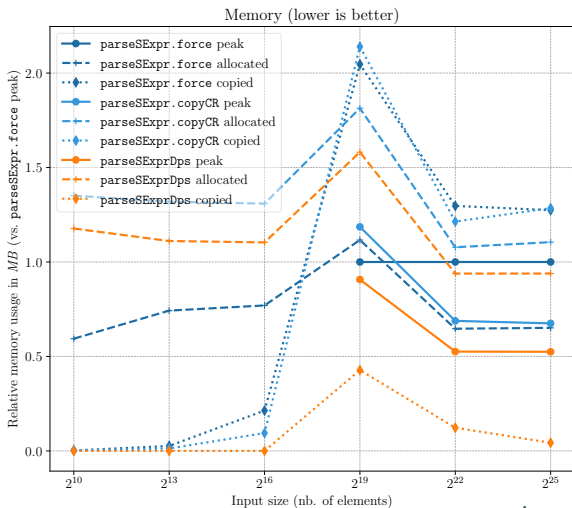
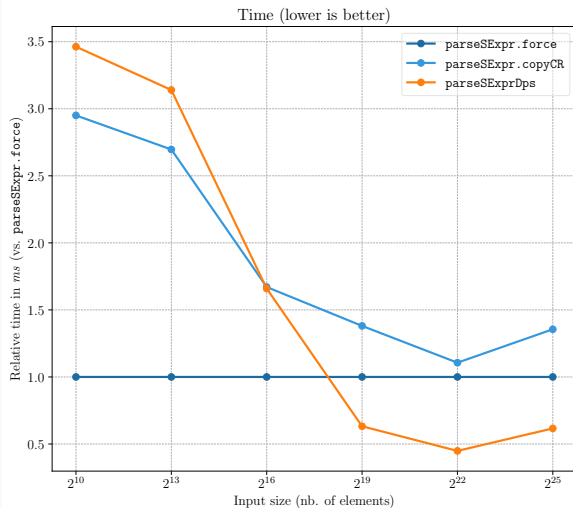
Thank you for your attention! I'll be happy to answer your questions.

## Functional DPS API – scope-escape free

```
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2  data UDest t
3  type family UDestsOf 'Ctor t  -- returns dests corresponding to fields of Ctor
4
5  &fill @'Ctor :: UDest t          → UDestsOf 'Ctor t
6  &fillComp    :: UDest s → UAmpar s t → t
7  &fillLeaf    :: UDest t → t        → ()
8
9  newUAmpar    :: Token           → UAmpar s (Dest s)
10 toUAmpar     :: Token  → s       → UAmpar s ()
11 tokenBesides :: UAmpar s t      → (UAmpar s t, Token)
12 fromUAmpar   :: UAmpar s (Ur t) → Ur (s, t)
13 fromUAmpar'  :: UAmpar s ()     → Ur s
14 `updWith`    :: UAmpar s t      → (t → u) → UAmpar s u
```

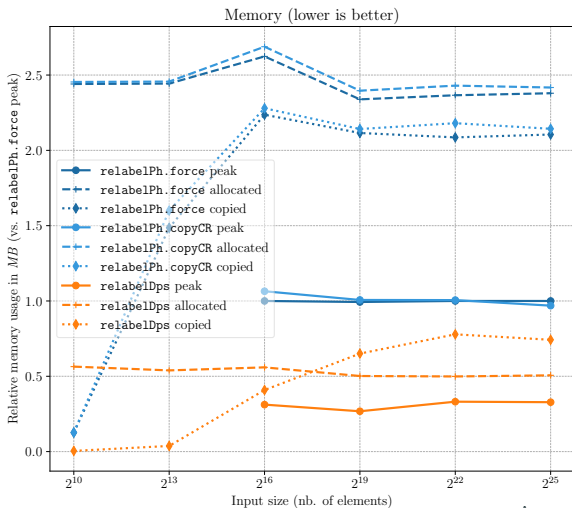
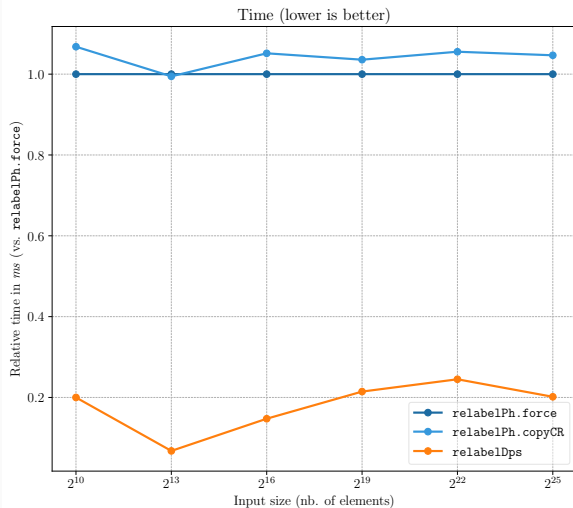
# Benchmarks of zero-copy compact region implementation

## S-expression parser



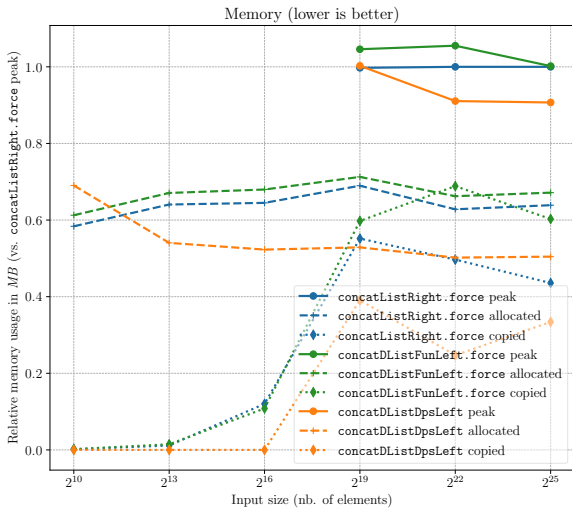
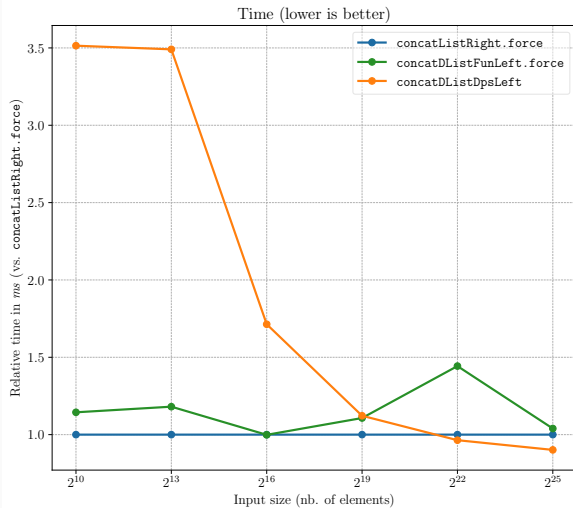
# Benchmarks of zero-copy compact region implementation

## Tree relabeling



# Benchmarks of zero-copy compact region implementation

## Iterated list concatenation



## Ampar: origin of the name

In classical linear logic, the linear implication  $\multimap$  can be decomposed into  $\cdot^\perp$  and  $\wp$ :

$$t \multimap u \equiv t^\perp \wp u \equiv u \wp t^\perp$$

Minamide shows that a structure of type  $u$  with a hole of type  $t$  can be represented as a form of linear function  $t \xrightarrow{\text{mem}} u$

So we decompose it into  $u \xrightarrow{\text{mem}} t^\perp$ .

Actually,

- ▶  $t^\perp$  is **Dest**  $t$
- ▶  $\xrightarrow{\text{mem}} \wp$  is **Ampar** type constructor (*asymmetrical memory par*)

The *asymmetrical* aspect comes from the fact that we lose some nice properties of the original  $\wp$  connective because we are not in a classical setting.

# Age system VS Rust lifetimes

**Ages** in  $\lambda_d$  are:

- ▶ relative (relative offsets through modality  $\text{Mod}_m$ )
- ▶ locally exact
- ▶ equalities and strict inequalities

**Rust lifetimes** are:

- ▶ global/absolute
- ▶ lifetime subtyping = (local) loss of information
- ▶ supports only large inequalities

To avoid scope escape, we want to know that **something will die strictly before another** instead of that **something will live at least as long as another**.

## Existentials for scope escape (idea)

Add an extra type parameter on destinations: `Dest t r`

`Ampar` right side is now a type constructor: `Ampar s tc` where `tc :: Type -> Type`.

``updWith`` now has signature `Ampar s tc  $\rightarrow$  ( $\forall r. tc r \rightarrow uc r$ )  $\rightarrow$  Ampar s uc`.

→ Destinations only have a concrete type when their `Ampar` is operated upon with ``updWith``.

We shouldn't be able to create a container for them if we don't know their full type yet...

Good start, but:

- ▶ We can use a wrapper `data Any where Any ::  $\forall t. t \rightarrow Any$`  and an outer `Dest Any rOuter` to leak a destination `Dest t rInner` even though we don't know `rInner` in the outer scope

(Equivalent to storing a dest into a `Dest ( $\exists r. Dest t r$ )` with primitive support for existentials)

- ▶ Might prevent scope escape of dests, but still breaks other linear APIs