

Programming language
developed at Carnegie Mellon

Nomos: Resource-Aware Session Types for Programming Digital Contracts

Stephanie Balzer, Ankush Das, Jan Hoffmann, and Frank Pfenning

With some slides
from Ankush.

Digital Contracts (or Smart Contracts)

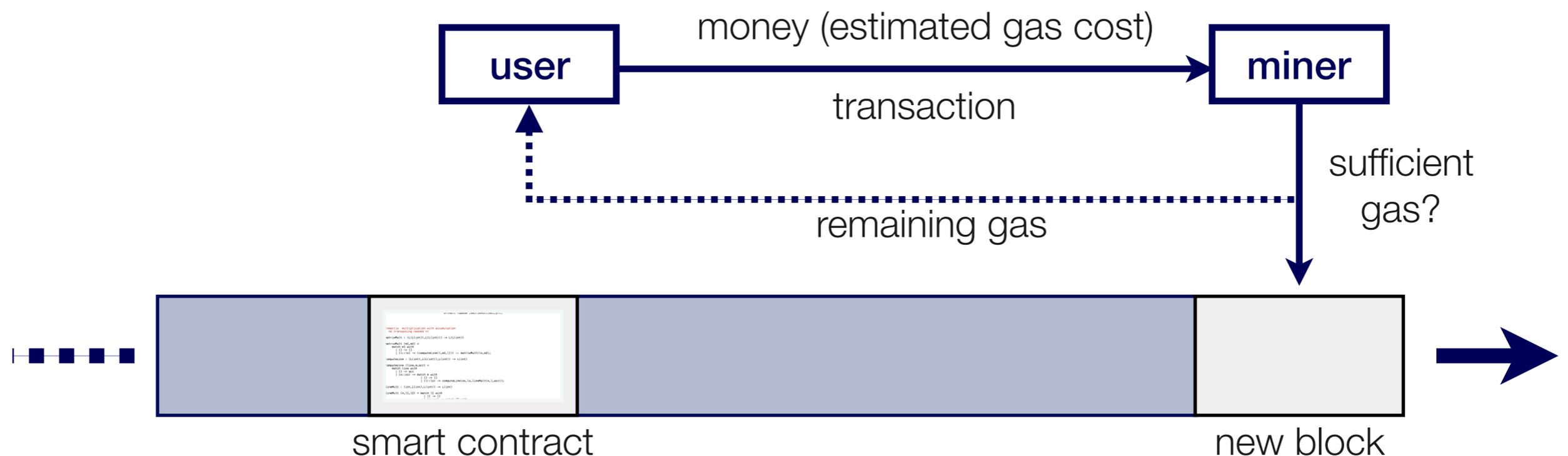
Smart contracts (Ethereum): programs stored on a blockchain

- Carry out (financial) transactions between (untrusted) agents
- Cannot be modified but have state
- Community needs to reach consensus on the result of execution
- *Users need to pay for the execution cost upfront*

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Bugs in Digital Contracts are Expensive

- Bugs result in financial disasters (DAO, Parity Wallet, King of Ether, ...)
- Bugs are difficult to fix because they alter the contract

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CRYPTO ENTOMOLOGY

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Languages for Digital Contracts

- Great opportunity to start from a clean slate
- Correctness and readability of contracts are priorities

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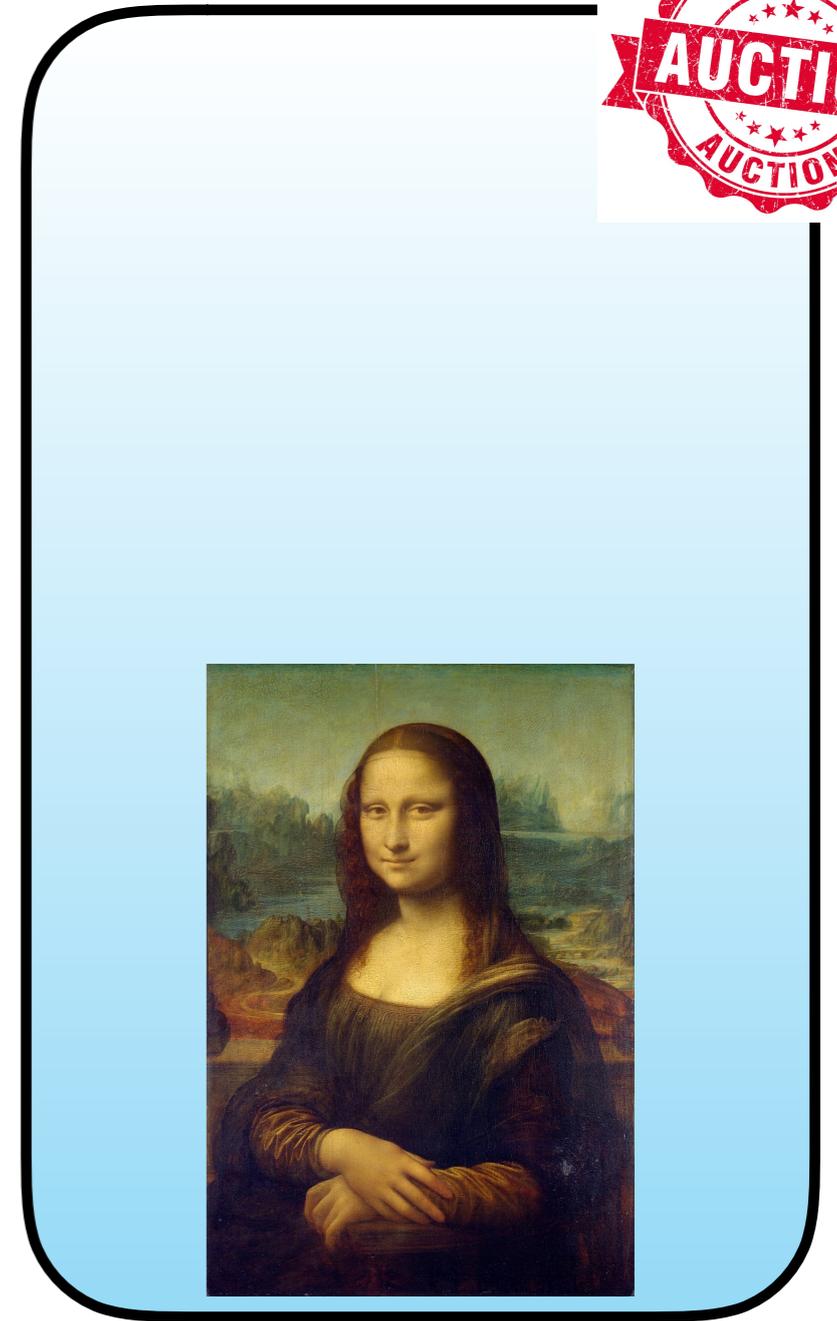
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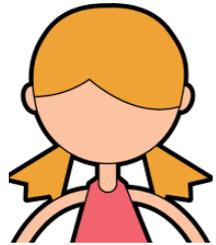
- Build on state-of-the art: statically-typed, strict, functional language
- Address domain-specific issues

Domain Specific Bugs: Auction Contract



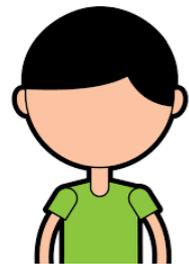
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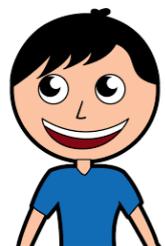
Bidder 1

Bid 1



Bidder 2

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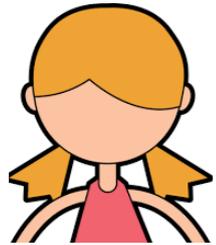
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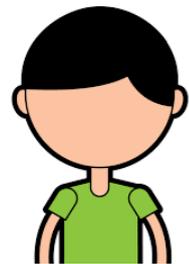


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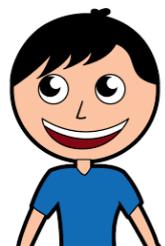
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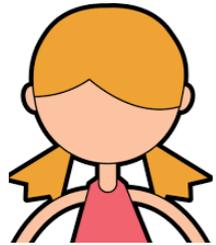
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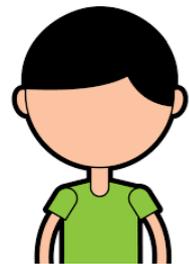


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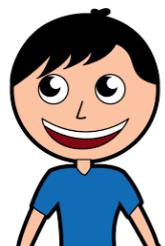
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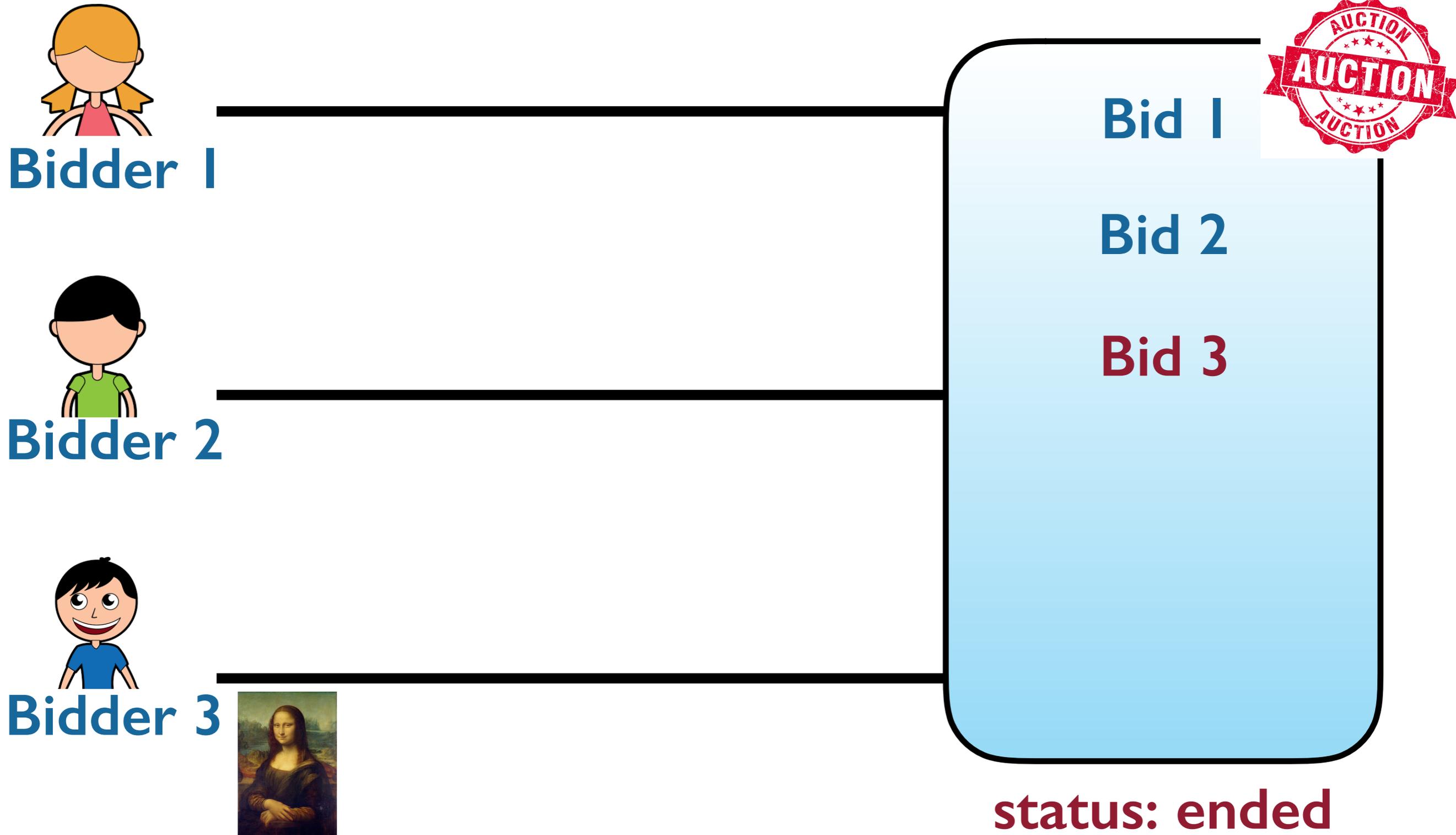
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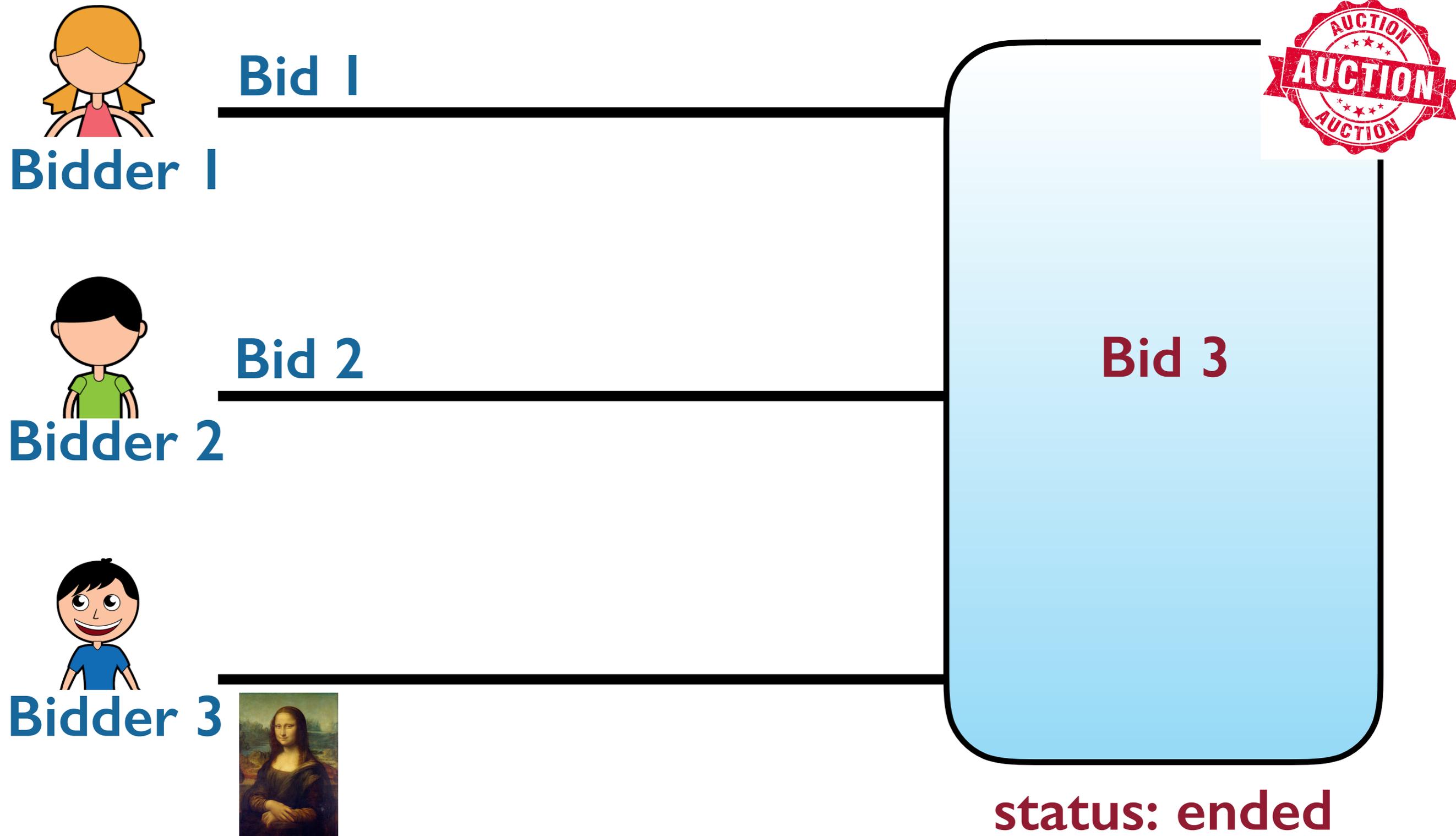


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Domain Specific Bugs: Auction Contract



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Auction Contract in Solidity

```
function bid() public payable {  
    bid = msg.value;  
    bidder = msg.sender;  
    pendingReturns[bidder] = bid;  
    if (bid > highestBid) {  
        highestBidder = bidder;  
        highestBid = bid;  
    }  
}
```

```
function collect() public returns (bool) {  
    require (msg.sender != highestBidder);  
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    msg.sender.send(amount);  
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Protocol is not statically enforced!



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Linearity is not
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Re-entrancy attack

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Out-of-gas exception.

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Parity Wallet: Unintended Interaction

Bug: Initialization function could be called by unauthorized user

- Ownership of the wallet could be changed after initialization
- Funds can be extracted by owner
- Damage: ~\$280 million

Problem: Interaction protocol with contracts

- Protocols of interaction not explicit in the language
- Protocols of interaction not enforced

The DAO: Reentrancy

Bug: Function can be called again during its ongoing execution

- A money transfer to a contract triggers a function call
 - The called function can call the function that initiated the transfer
- ➔ DAO: money gets transferred without updating the balance

Problem 1: Unnecessary permissiveness in communication

- Violation of function invariants

Problem 2: Failure to keep track of assets

- Incorrect book-keeping of stored funds (returned payment)

Domain-Specific Issues with Digital Contracts

1. Resource consumption (gas cost)

- Participants have to agree on the result of a computation
- ➔ Denial of service attacks
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3. Keeping track of assets (crypto coins)

- Assets should not be duplicated
- Assets should not be lost

Nomos: A Type-Based Approach

Lead developer:
Ankush Das

A statically-typed, strict, functional language

- Functional fragment of ML

Additional features for domain-specific requirements

	Language feature	Expertise
Gas bounds	Automatic amortized resource analysis	Jan Hoffmann
Tracking assets	Linear type system	Frank Pfenning
Contract interfaces	Shared binary session types	Stephanie Balzer Frank Pfenning

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Based on a linear type system

1. Automatic amortized resource analysis (AARA)

Resource Bound Analysis

Given: A (functional) program P

Question: What is the (worst-case) resource consumption of P as a function of the size of its inputs?

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Clock cycles, heap
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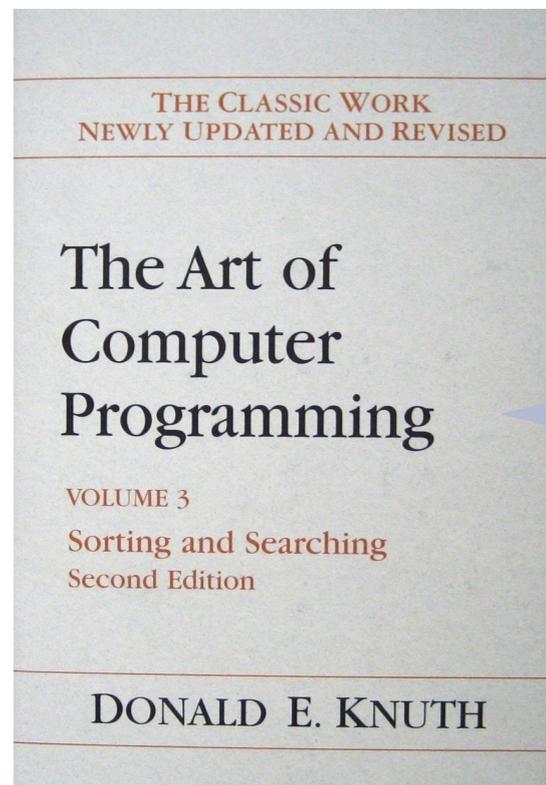
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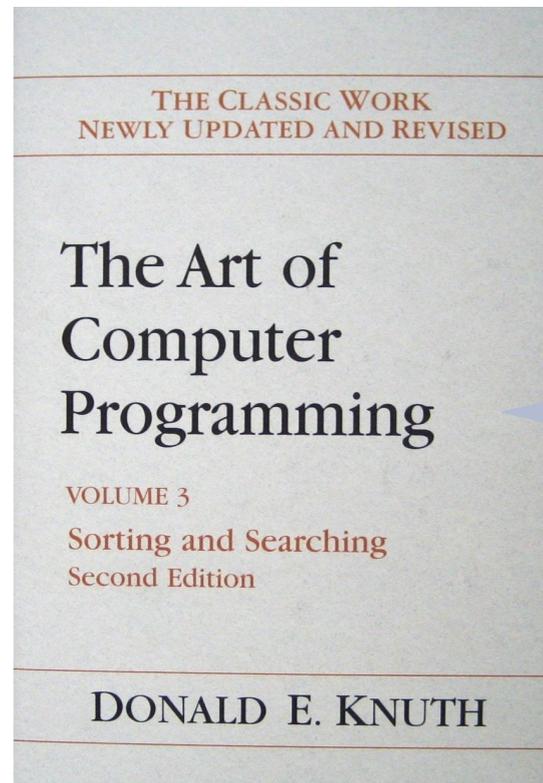
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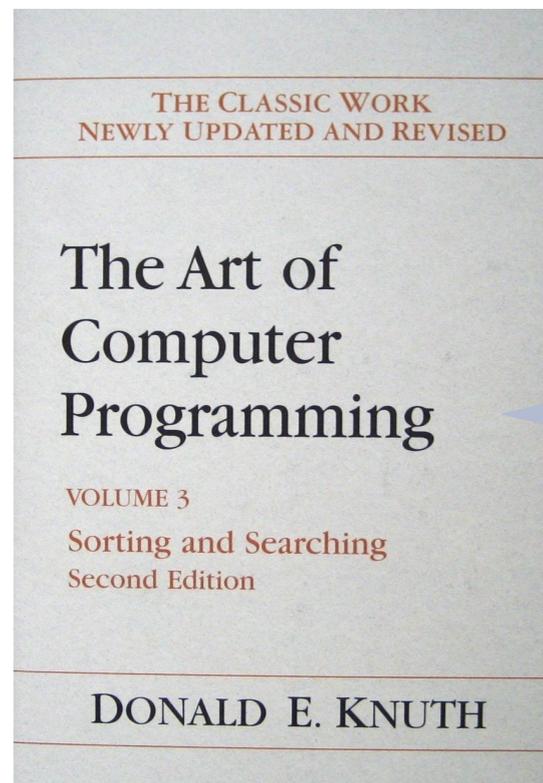
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Goal: produce proofs (easily checkable)

AARA: Use Potential Method

- Assign potential functions to data structures
 - ➔ States are mapped to non-negative numbers

$$\Phi(\textit{state}) \geq 0$$

- Potential pays the resource consumption and the potential at the following program point

$$\Phi(\textit{before}) \geq \Phi(\textit{after}) + \textit{cost}$$

↓ telescoping ↓

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Type systems for automatic analysis

Clear soundness theorem.
Compositional. Efficient inference.

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Example: Append for Persistent Lists

```
append(x, y)
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Heap-space usage is $2n$ if

- n is the length of list x
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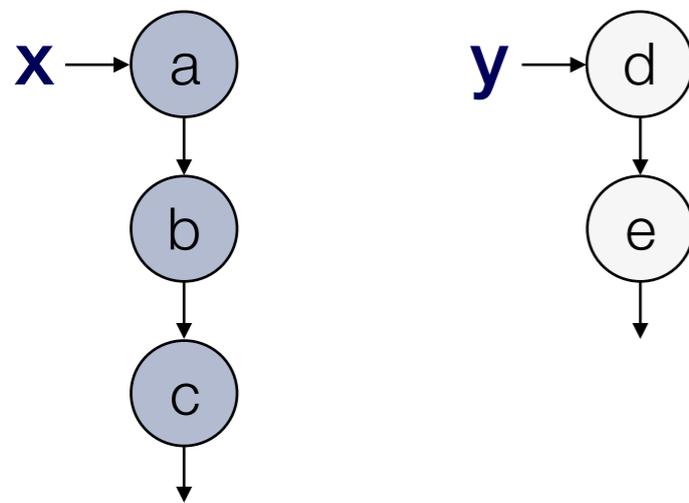
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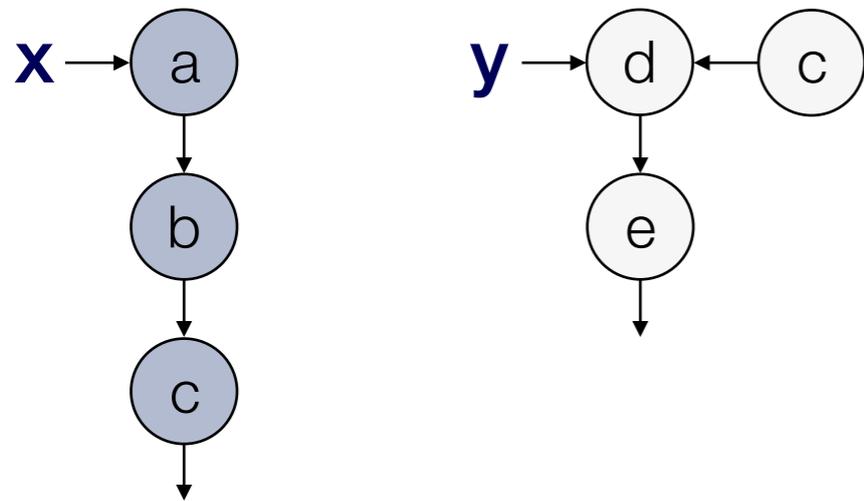
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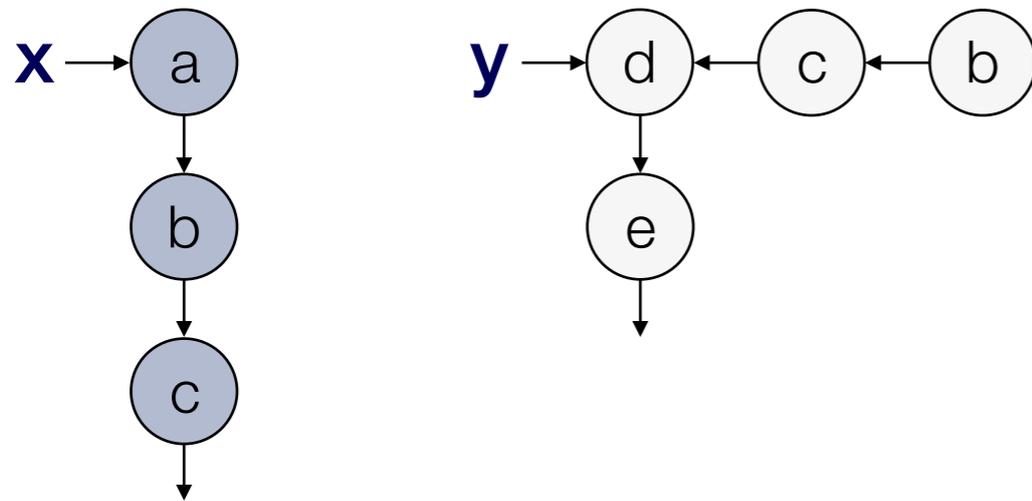
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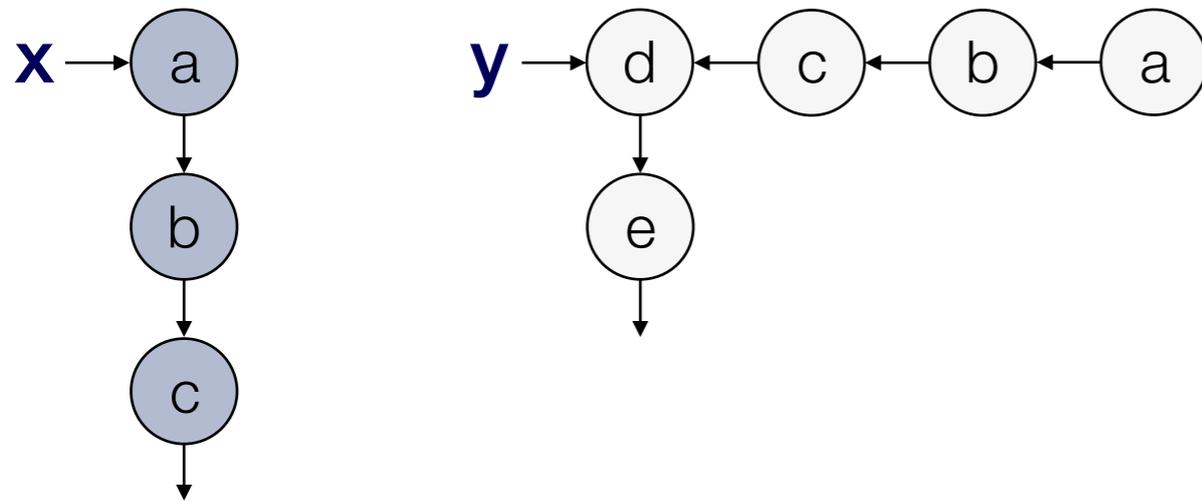
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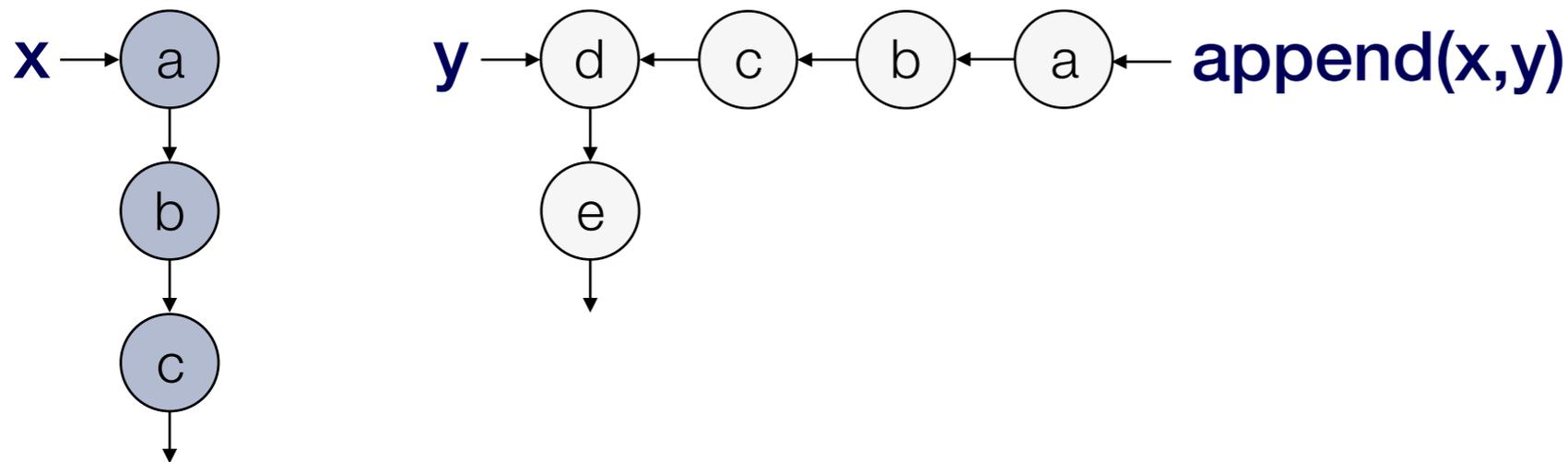
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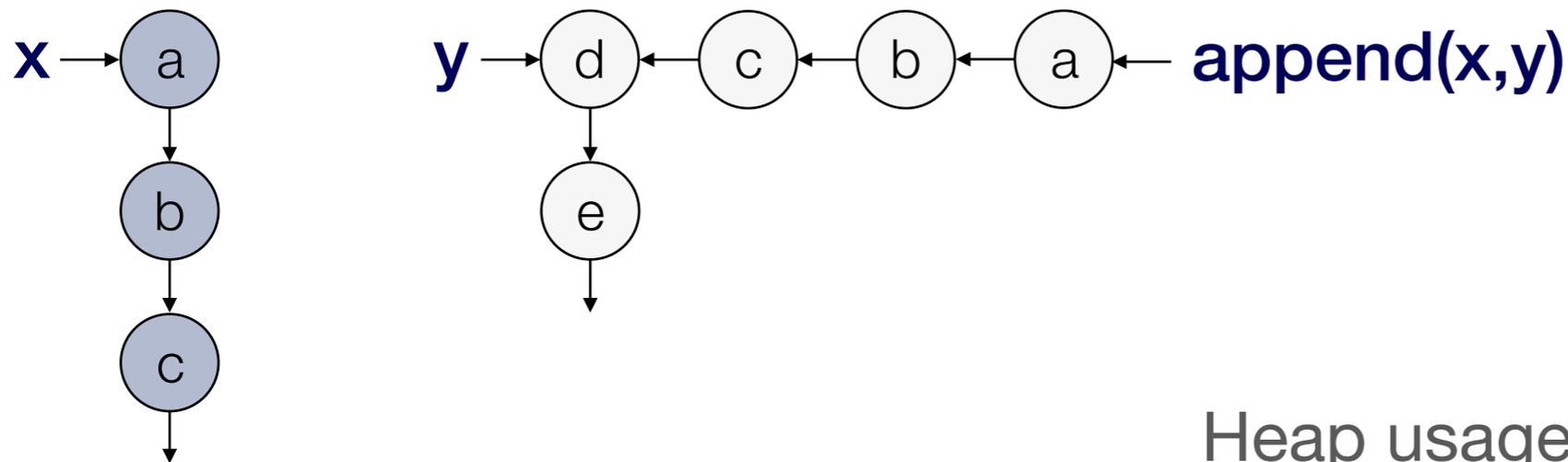
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Heap usage: $2 * n = 2 * 3 = 6$

Example: Composing Calls of Append

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f(x,y,z) =  
  let t = append(x,y) in  
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Heap usage of $f(x,y,z)$ is $2n + 2(n+m)$ if

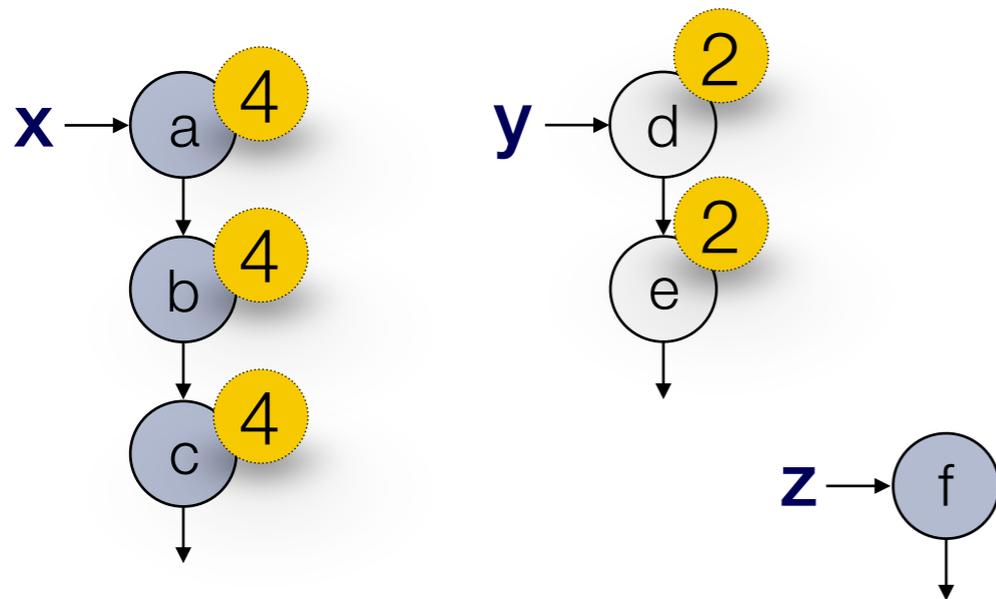
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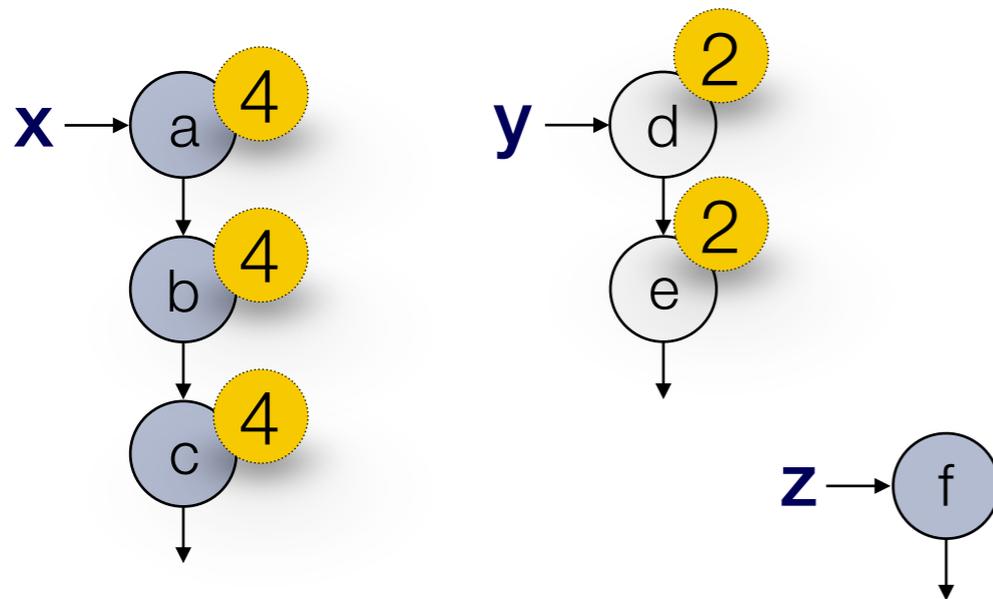
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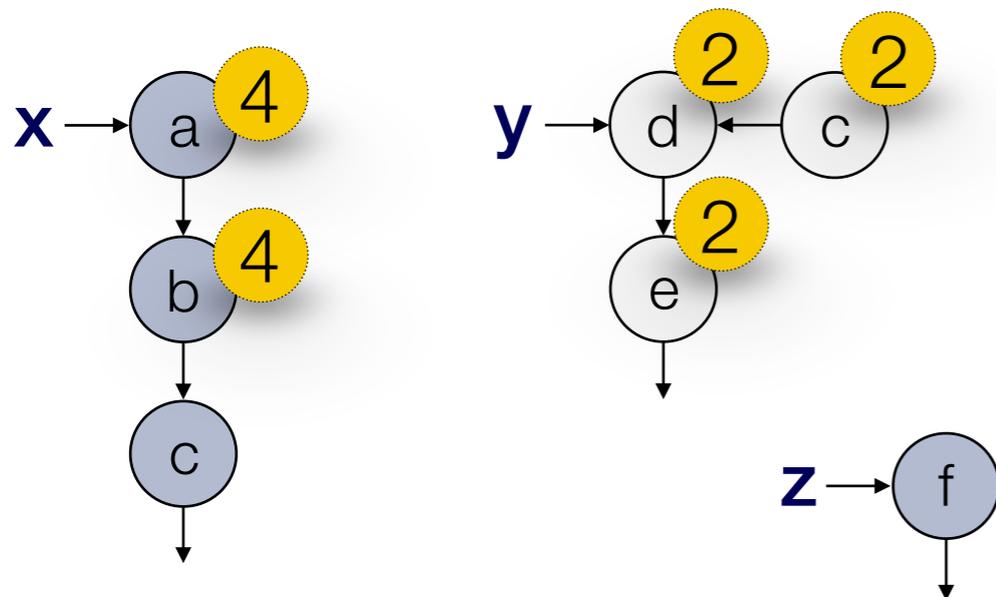
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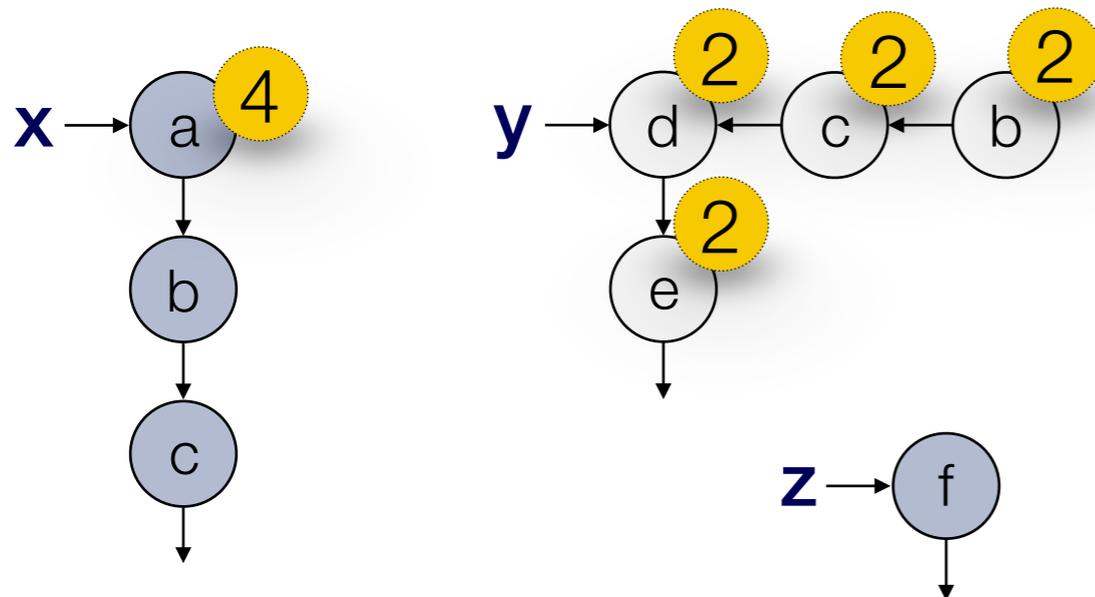
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Example: Composing Calls of Append

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Heap usage of $f(x,y,z)$ is $2n + 2(n+m)$ if

- n is the length of list x
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append(x,y)

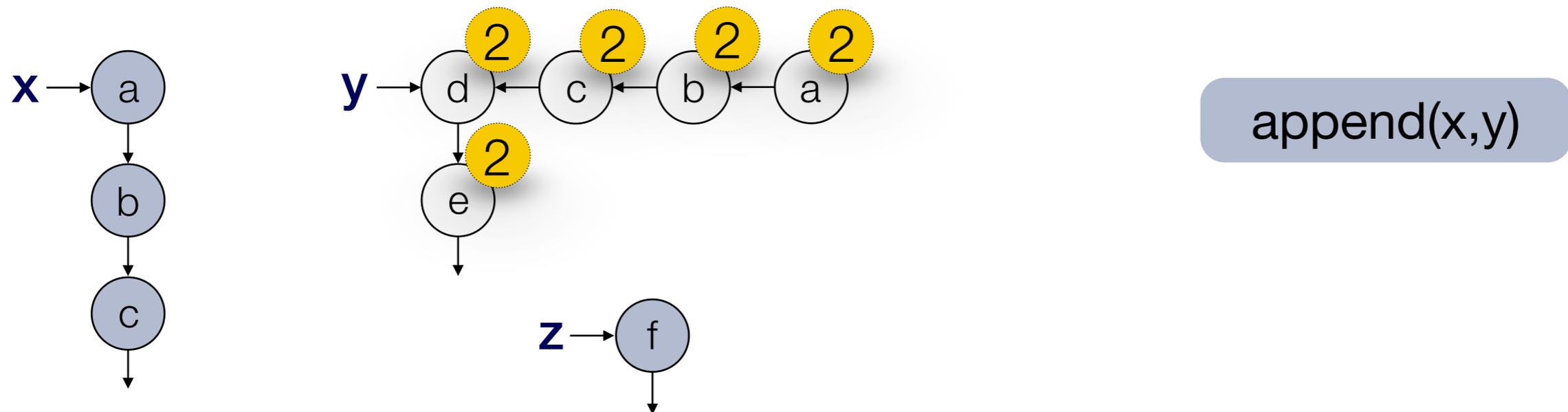
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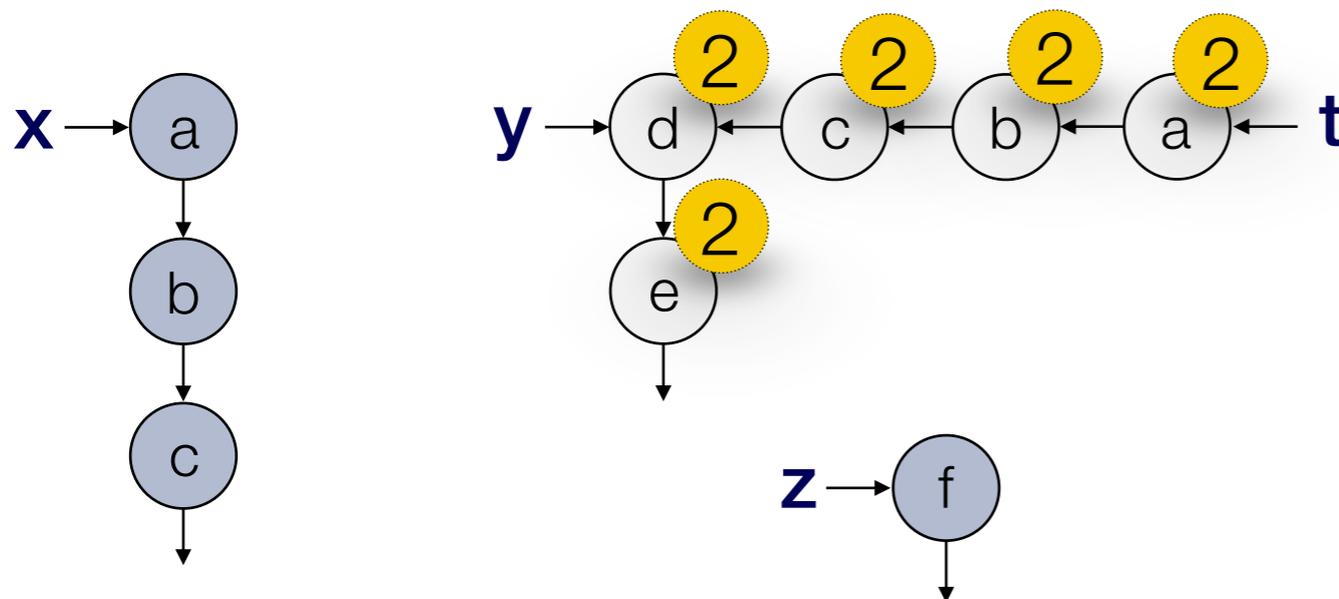
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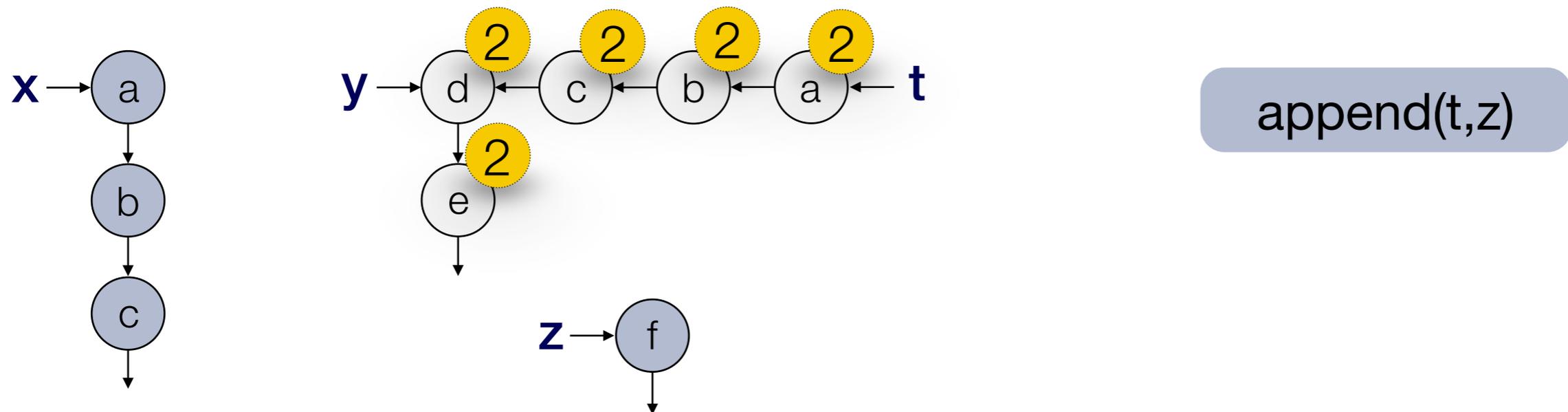
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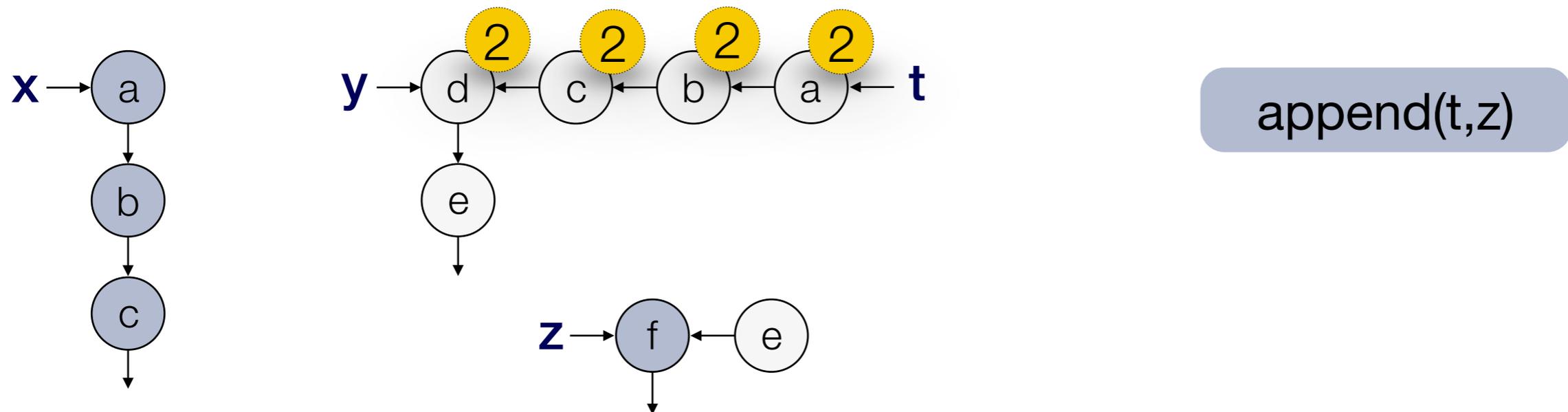
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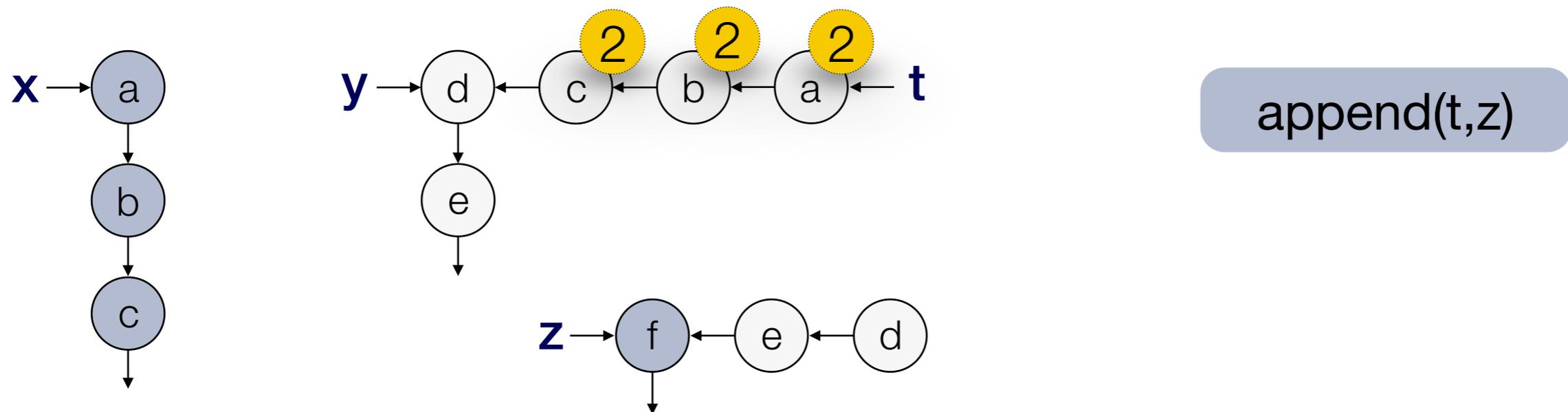
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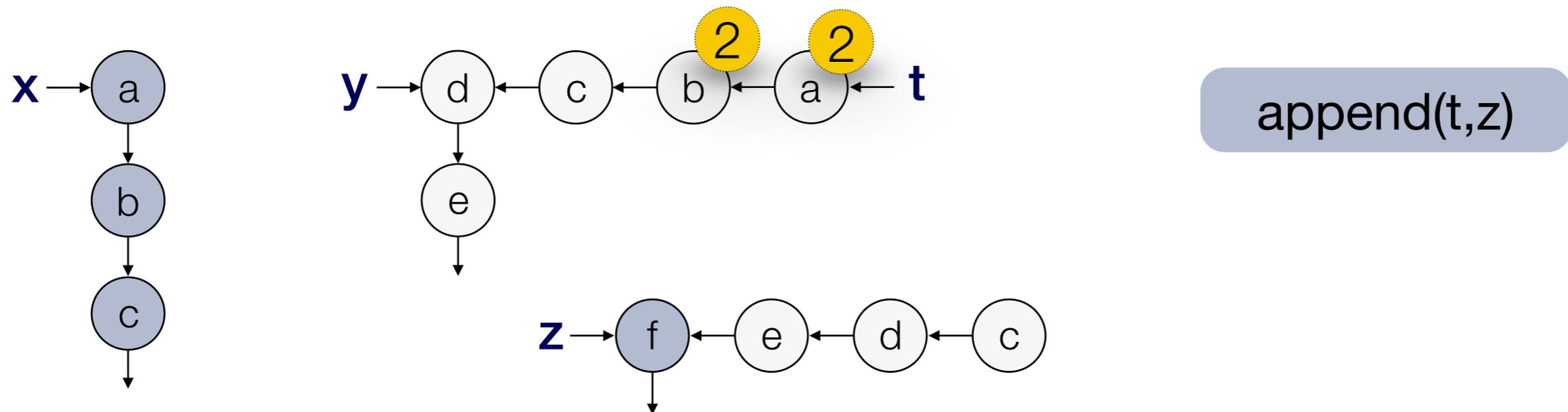
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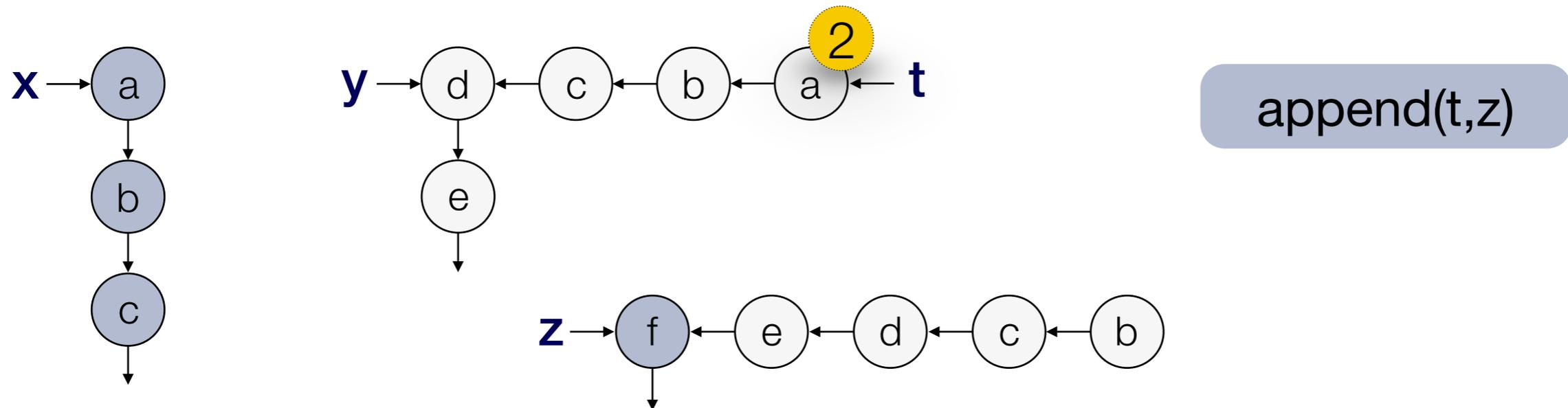
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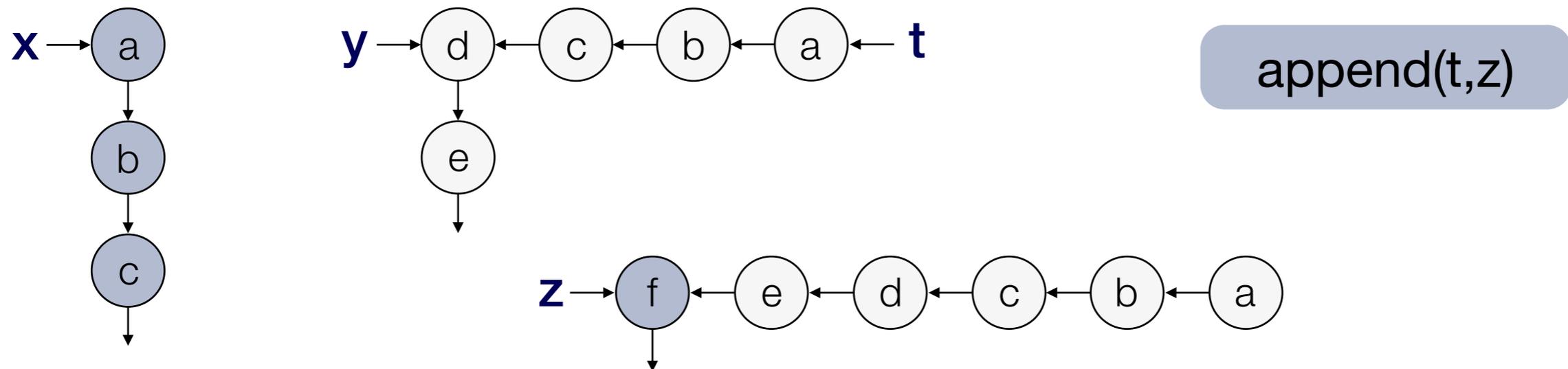
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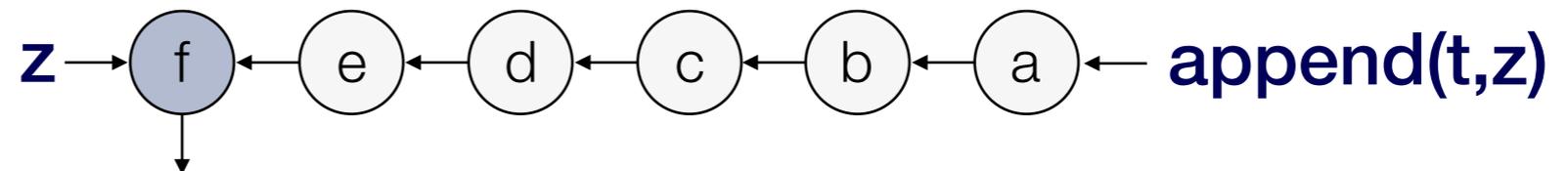
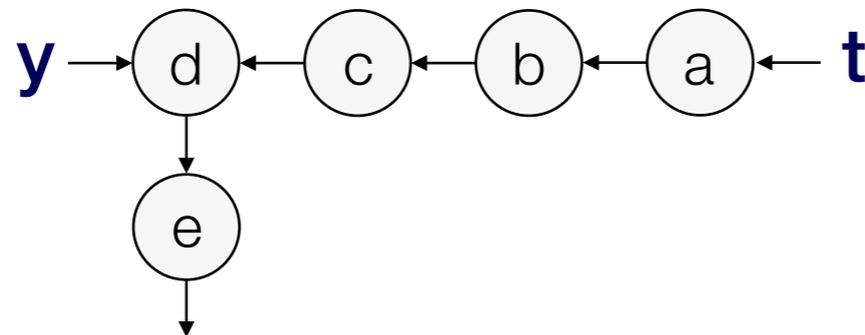
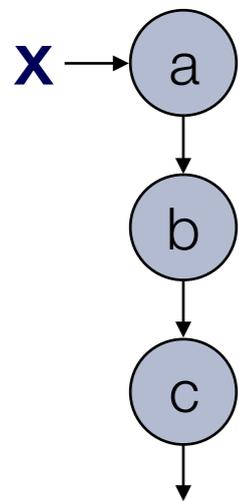
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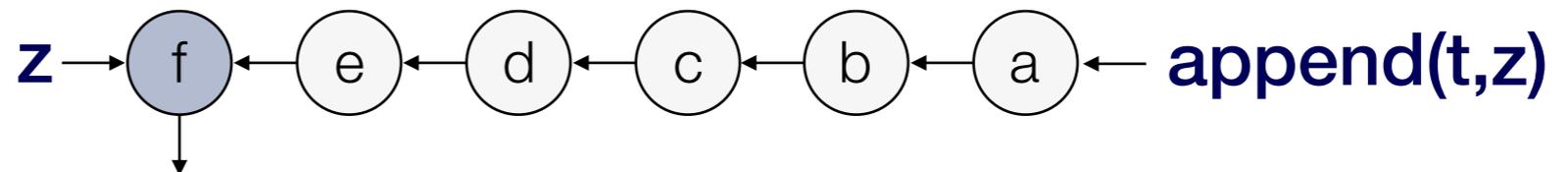
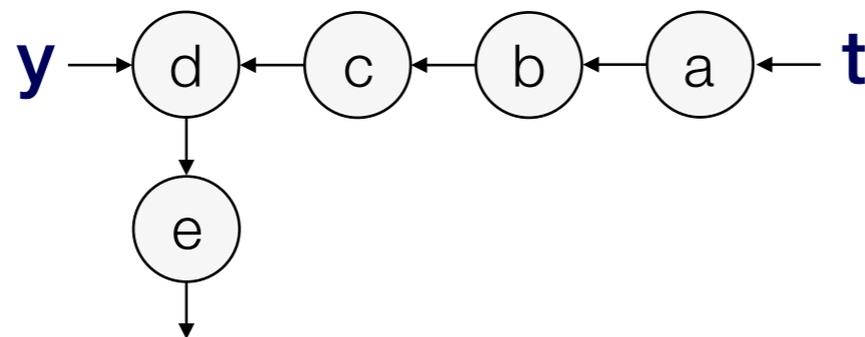
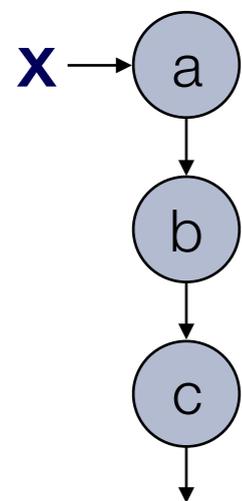
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Implicit reasoning
about size-changes.

Initial potential: $4*n + 2*m = 4*3 + 2*2 = 16$

Example: Composing Calls of Append

$f(x, y, z) = \{$ $\text{append}: (L^4(\text{int}), L^2(\text{int})) \xrightarrow{0/0} L^2(\text{int})$

let $t = \text{append}(x, y)$ in

$\text{append}(t, z)$

$\}$ $\text{append}: (L^2(\text{int}), L^0(\text{int})) \xrightarrow{0/0} L^0(\text{int})$

The most general type of append is specialized at call-sites:

$\text{append}: (L^q(\text{int}), L^p(\text{int})) \xrightarrow{s/t} L^r(\text{int}) \mid \phi$

Linear constraints.

Linear Potential Functions

User-defined **resource metrics**
(i.e., by `tick(q)` in the code)



Naturally **compositional**: tracks size changes, types are specifications



Bound inference by reduction to efficient **LP solving**



Type derivations prove bounds
with respect to the cost semantics



Polynomial Potential Functions

Linear Potential Functions

User-defined **resource metrics**
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Strong soundness theorem.

Polynomial Potential Functions

	Linear Potential Functions	Multivariate Polynomial Potential Functions
User-defined resource metrics (i.e., by tick(q) in the code)	✓	✓
Naturally compositional : tracks size changes, types are specifications	✓	✓
Bound inference by reduction to efficient LP solving	✓	✓
Type derivations prove bounds with respect to the cost semantics	✓	✓

Strong soundness theorem.

Polynomial Potential Functions

For example $m \cdot n^2$.

Linear Potential
Functions

Multivariate Polynomial
Potential Functions

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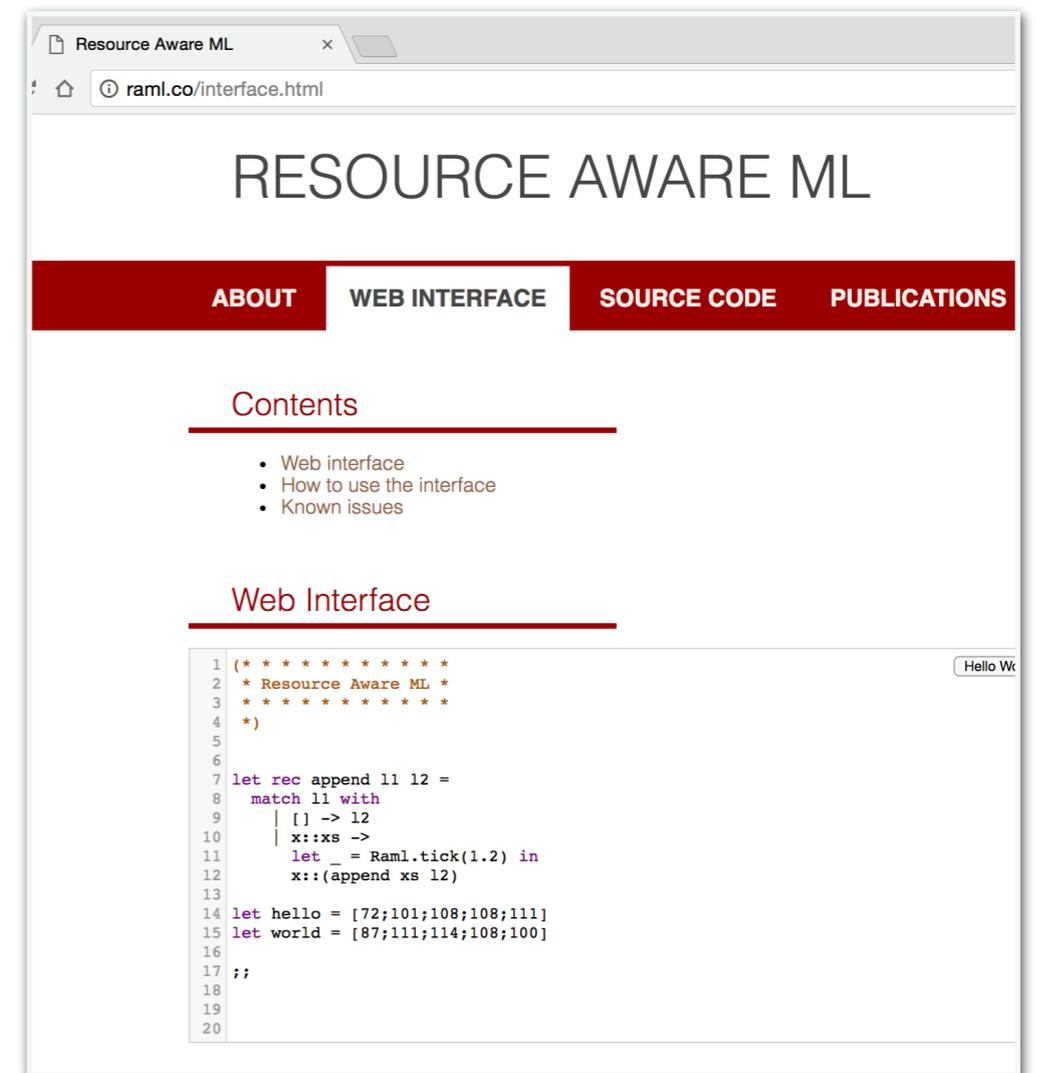
Implementations: RaML and Absynth

Resource Aware ML (RaML)

- ▶ Based on Inria's OCaml compiler
- ▶ Polymorphic and higher-order functions
- ▶ User-defined data types
- ▶ Side effects (arrays and references)

Absynth

- ▶ Based on control-flow graph IR
- ▶ Different front ends
- ▶ Bounds are integer expressions
- ▶ Supports probabilistic programs

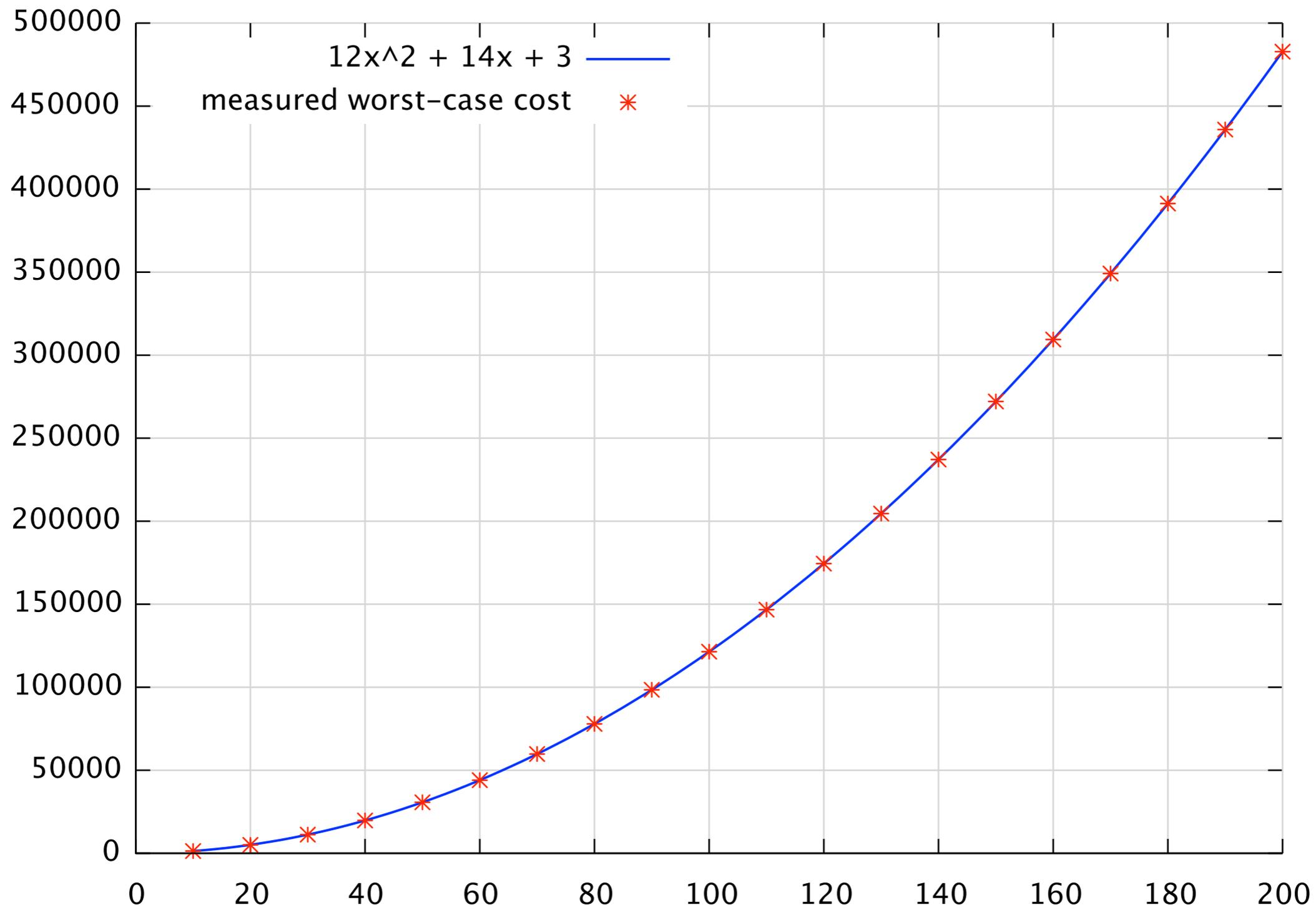


<http://raml.co>

	Computed Bound	Actual Behavior	Analysis Runtime	Constraints
Sorting A-nodes (asort)	$11+22kn +13k^2nv+13m +15n$	$O(k^2n+m)$	0.14 s	5656
Quick sort (lists of lists)	$3 -7.5nm +7.5nm^2 +19.5m +16.5m^2$	$O(nm^2)$	0.27 s	8712
Merge sort (list.ml)	$43 + 30.5n + 8.5n^2$	$O(n \log n)$	0.11 s	3066
Split and sort	$11 + 47n + 29n^2$	$O(n^2)$	0.69 s	3793
Longest common subsequence	$23 + 10n + 52nm + 25m$	$O(nm)$	0.16 s	901
Matrix multiplication	$3 + 2nm +18m + 22mxy +16my$	$O(mxy)$	1.11 s	3901
Evaluator for boolean expressions (tutorial)	$10+11n+16m+16mx+16my+20x+20y$	$O(mx+my)$	0.33 s	1864
Dijkstra's shortest-path algorithm	$46 + 33n +111n^2$	$O(n^2)$	0.11 s	2808
Echelon form	$8 + 43m^2n + 59m + 63m^2$	$O(nm^2)$	1.81 s	8838
Binary multiplication (CompCert)	$2+17kr+10ks+25k +8l+2+7r+8$	$O(kr+ks)$	14.04 s	89,507
Square root (CompCert)	$13+66m+16mn +4m^2 +59n +4n^2$	$O(n^2)$	18.25 s	135,529

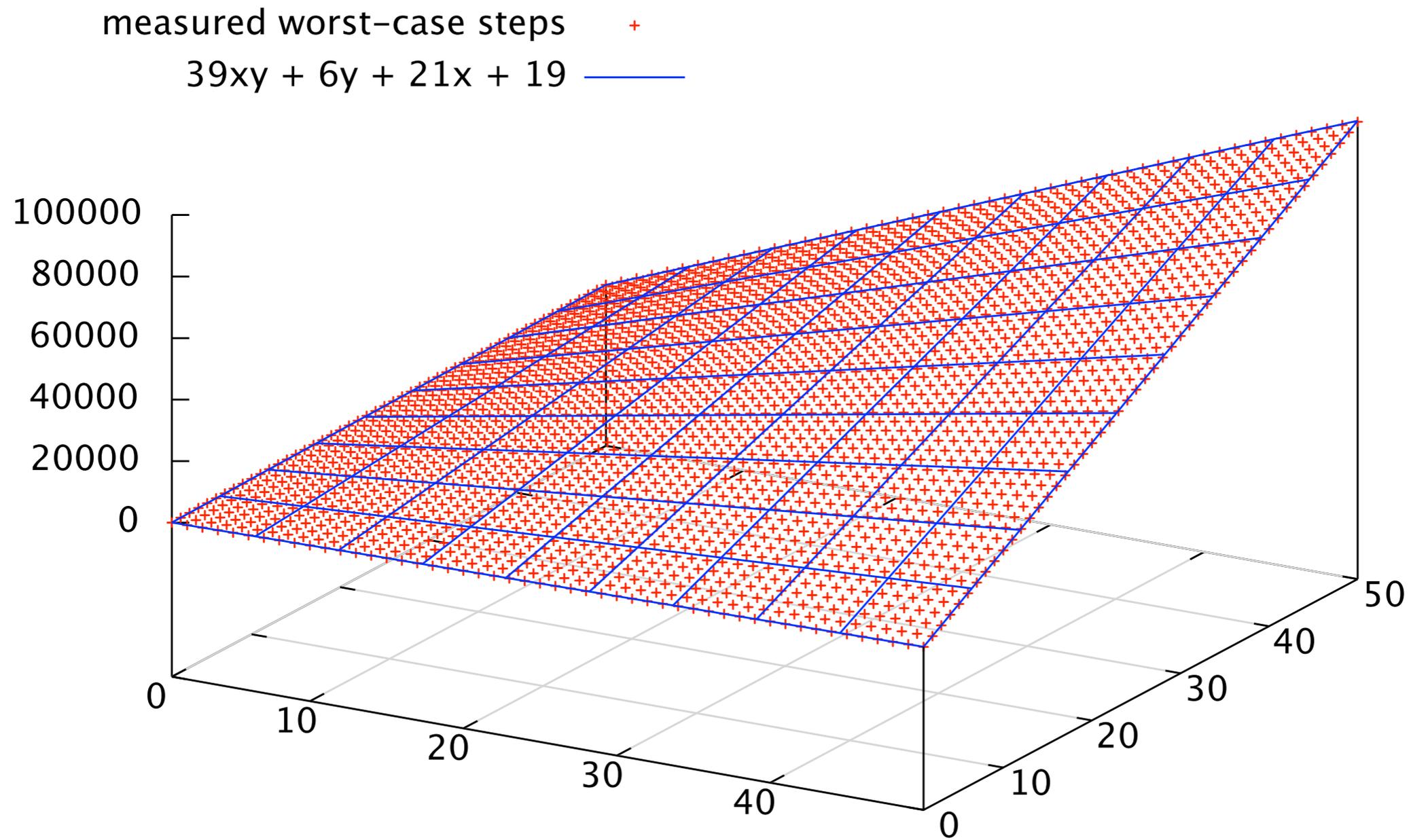
Micro Benchmarks

Evaluation-Step Bounds



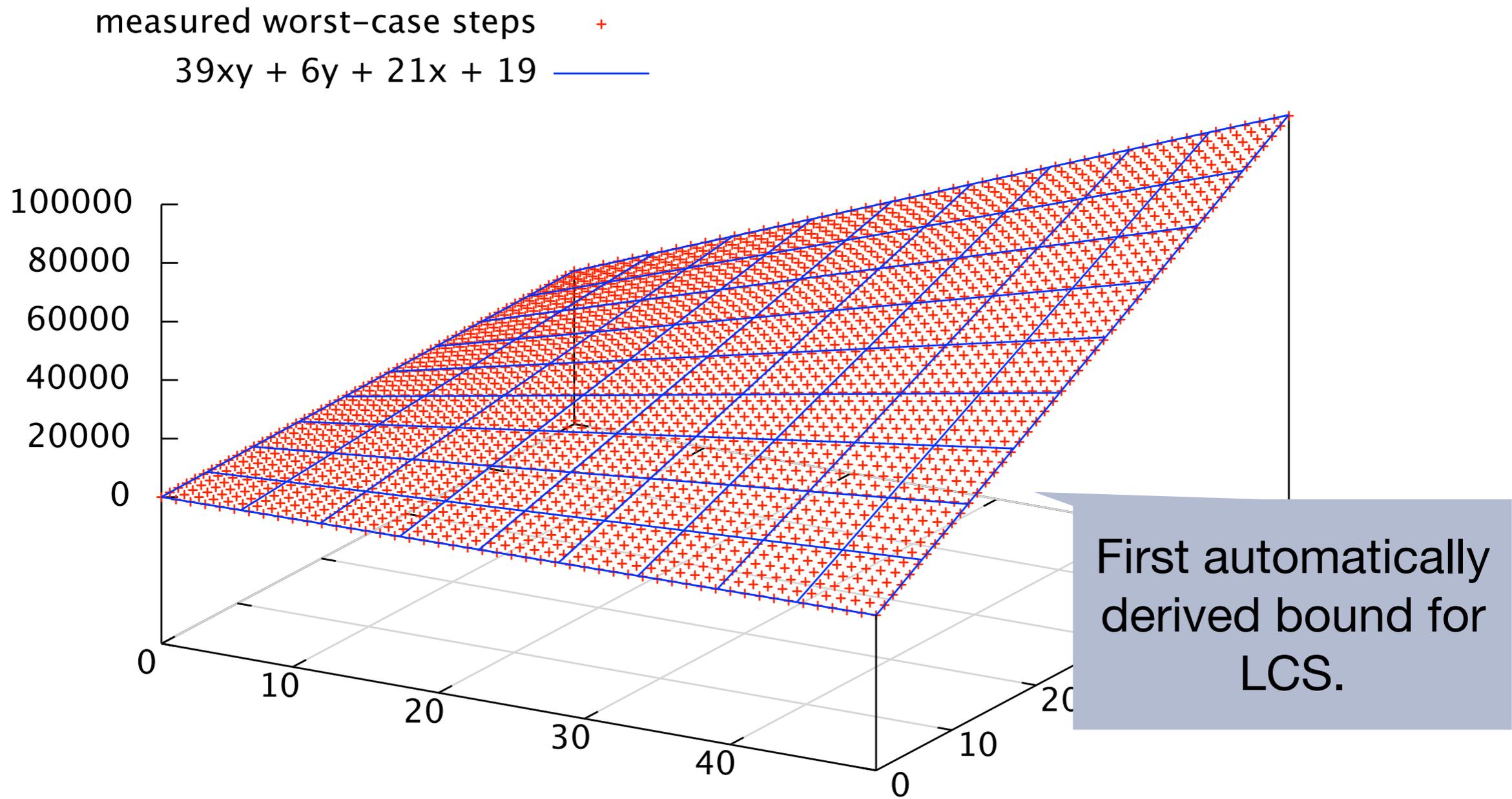
Quick Sort for Integers

Evaluation-step bound vs.
measured behavior



Longest Common
Subsequence

Evaluation-step bound vs.
measured behavior



Longest Common Subsequence

Evaluation-step bound vs. measured behavior

Automatic Amortized Resource Analysis (AARA)

Type system for deriving symbolic resource bounds

- **Compositional:** Integrated with type systems or program logics
- **Expressive:** Bounds are multivariate resource polynomials
- **Reliable:** Formal soundness proof wrt. cost semantics
- **Verifiable:** Produces easily-checkable certificates
- **Automatic:** No user interaction required

Applicable in practice

- **Implemented:** Resource Aware ML and Absynth
- **Effective:** Works for many typical programs
- **Efficient:** Inference via linear programming

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Type checking in
linear time!

2. Shared (resource-aware) binary session types

Binary Session Types

- Implement message-passing concurrent programs
- Communication via typed bidirectional channels
- Curry-Howard correspondence with intuitionistic linear logic
- Client and provider have dual types

Example type: $\text{queue}_{\mathbf{A}} = \&\{\text{ins} : \mathbf{A} \multimap \text{queue}_{\mathbf{A}},$
 $\text{del} : \oplus\{\text{none} : \mathbf{1},$
 $\text{some} : \mathbf{A} \otimes \text{queue}_{\mathbf{A}}\}\}$

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External choice

Internal choice

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Receive msg of type A

Send msg of type A

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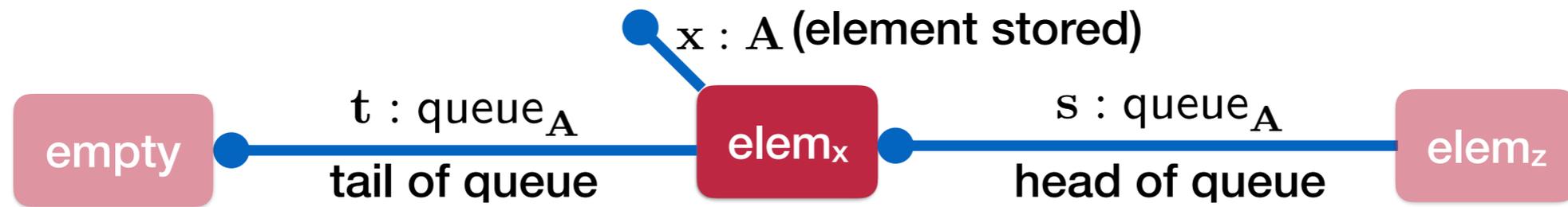
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Receive msg of type A

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Type soundness (progress and preservation) implies deadlock freedom

Example: Queue

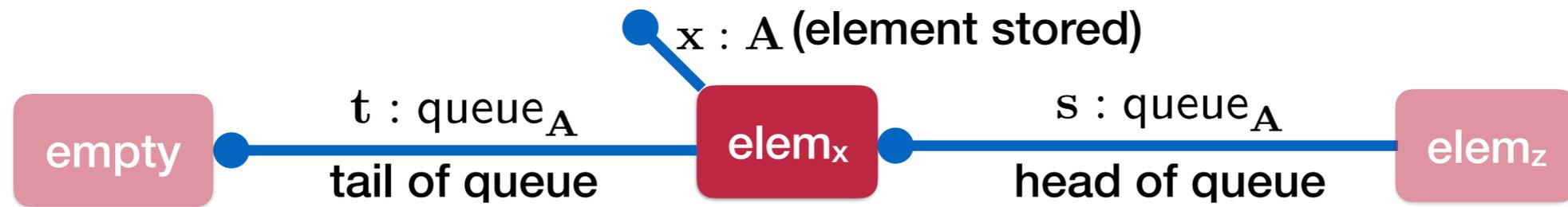


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(x : A) (t : queueA) ⊢ elem :: (s : queueA)
s ← elem ← x t =
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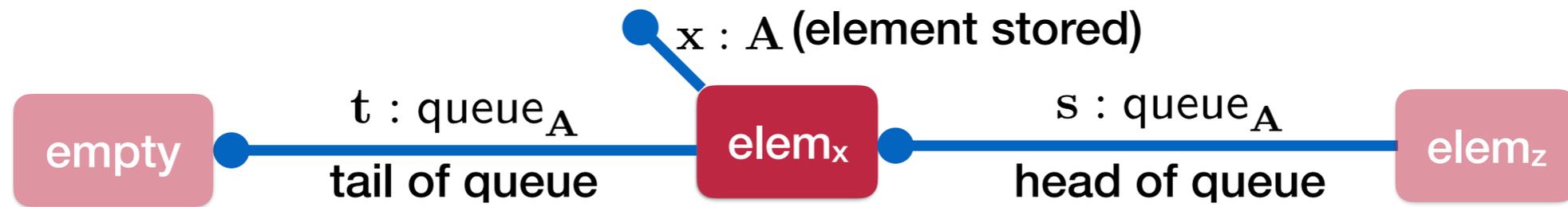
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recv 'ins' and y

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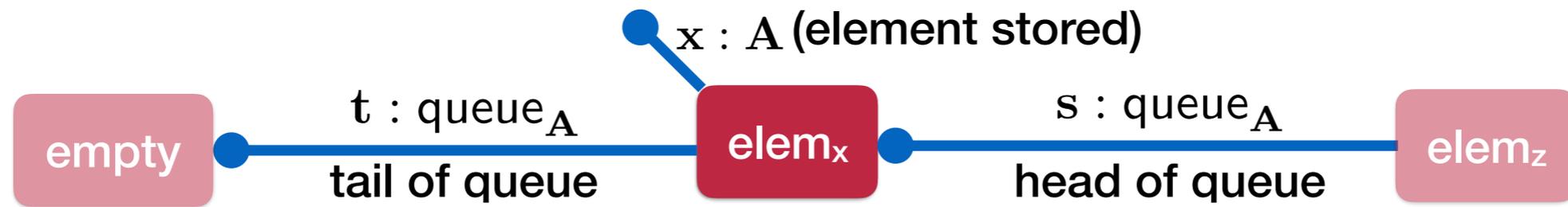
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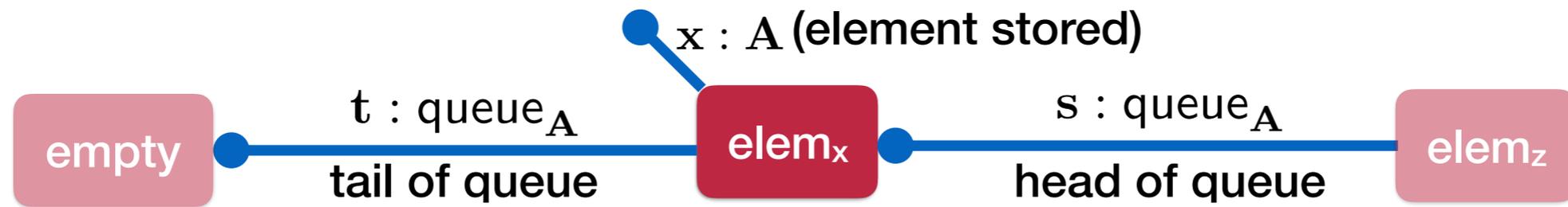
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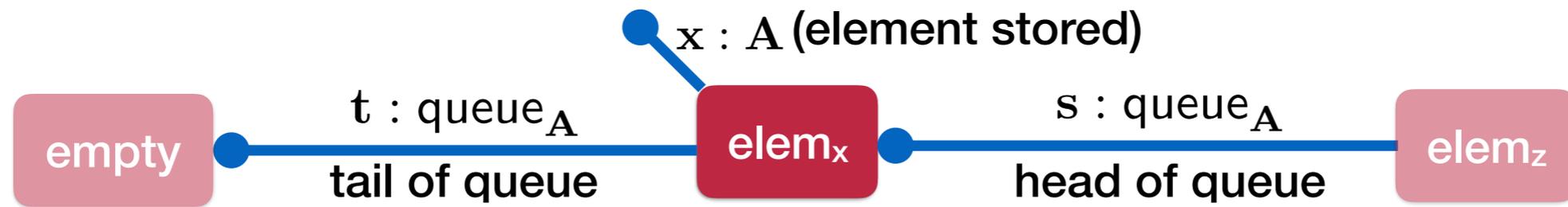
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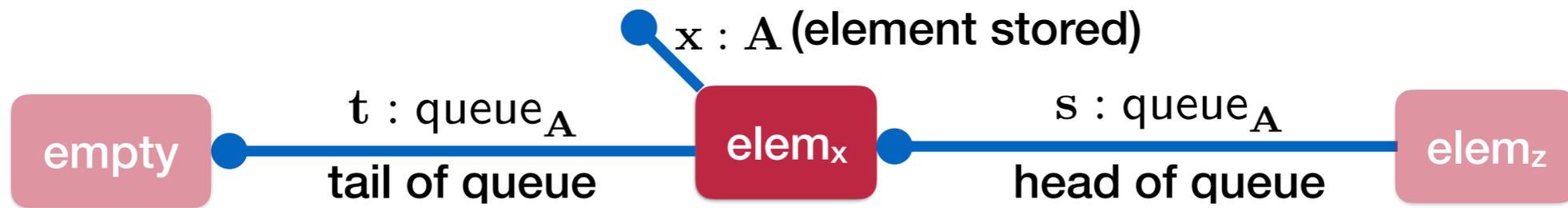
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send 'some', x

terminate

Example: Queue

Type checking in linear time!



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Example: Auction

$$\begin{aligned} \text{auction} = & \oplus \{ \text{running} : \&\{ \text{bid} : \text{id} \supset \text{money} \multimap \text{auction} \}, \\ & \text{ended} : \&\{ \text{collect} : \text{id} \supset \oplus \{ \text{won} : \text{monalisa} \otimes \text{auction}, \\ & \text{lost} : \text{money} \otimes \text{auction} \} \} \} \end{aligned}$$

Example: Auction

**sends status
of auction**

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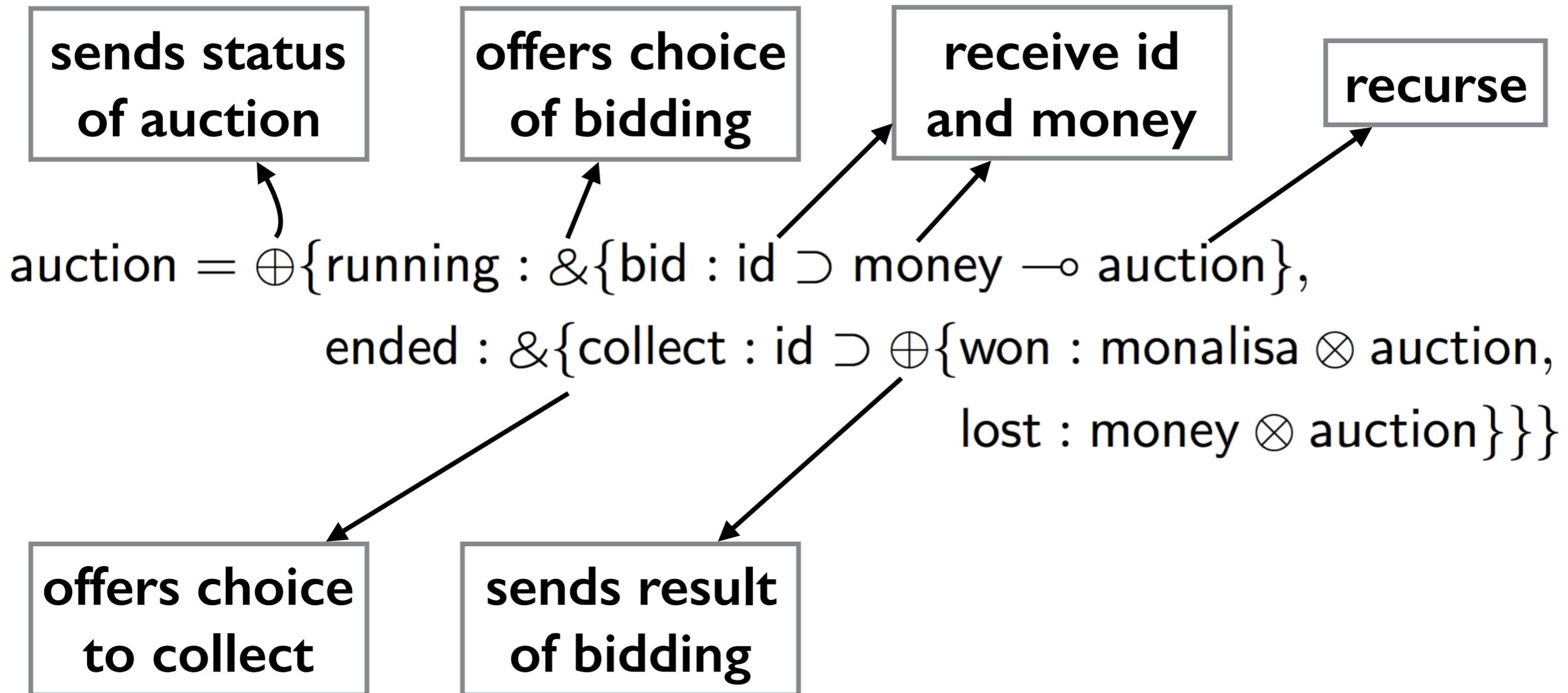
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recurse

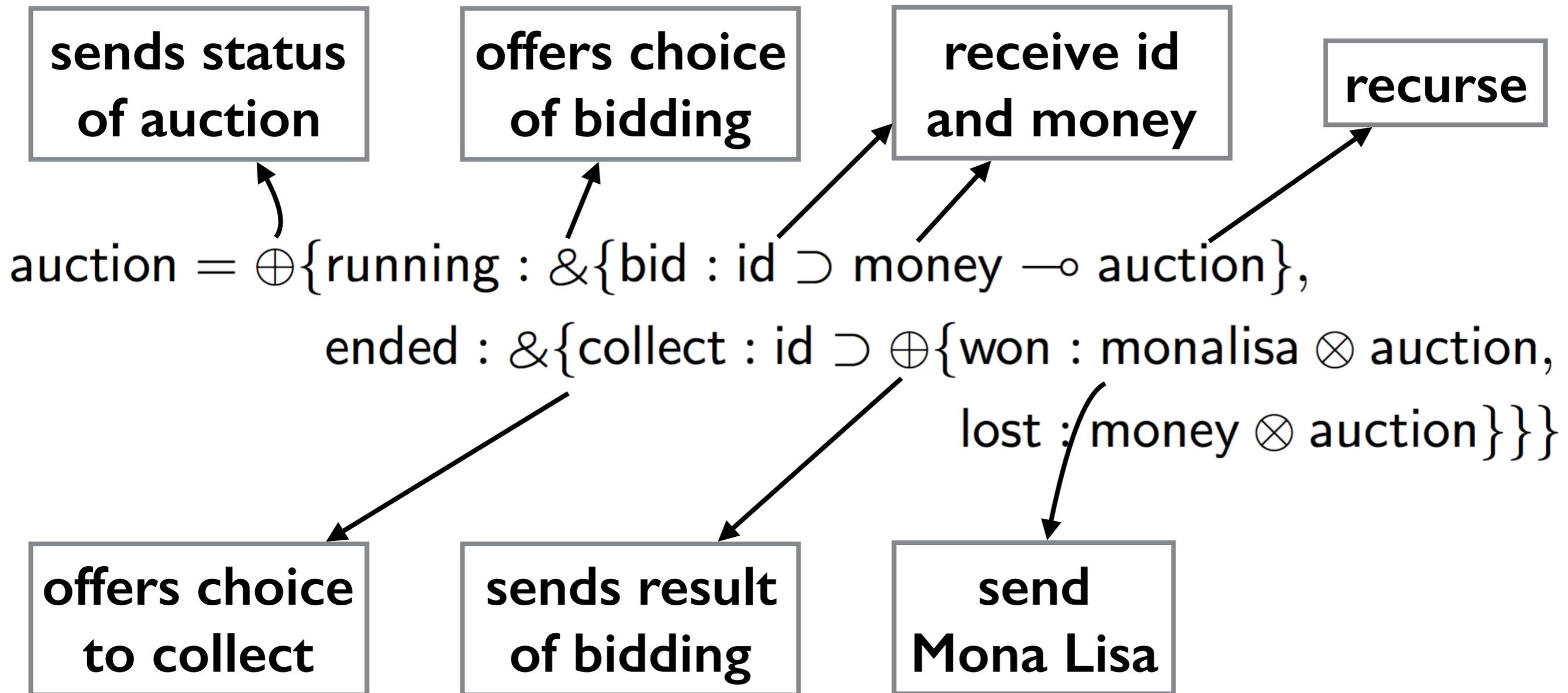
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**offers choice
to collect**

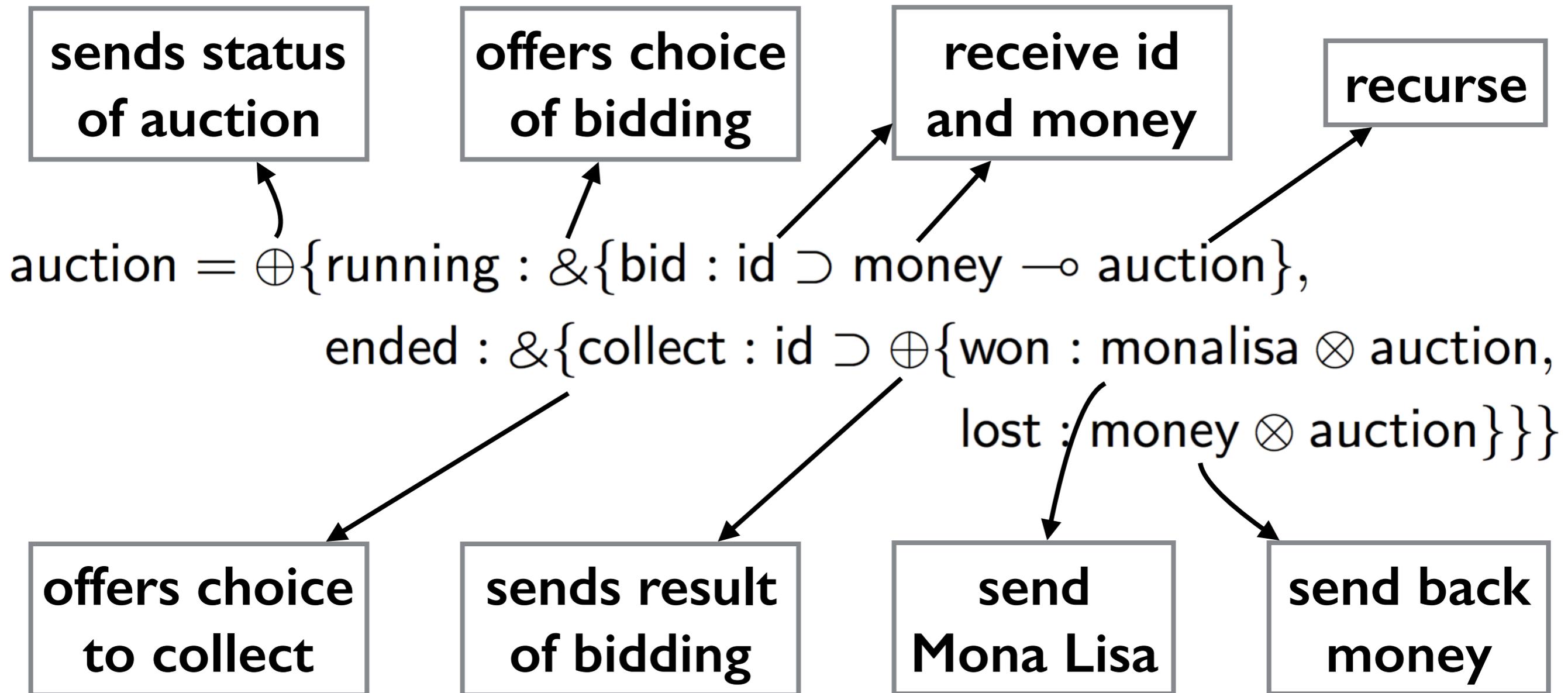
Example: Auction



Example: Auction



Example: Auction



Type Rules

$$\frac{(k \in L) \quad \Omega \vdash P :: (x : A_k)}{\Omega \vdash (x.k ; P) :: (x : \oplus\{\ell : A_\ell\}_{\ell \in L})} \oplus R$$

$$\frac{(\forall \ell \in L) \quad \Omega, x:A_\ell \vdash Q_\ell :: (z : C)}{\Omega, x:\oplus\{\ell : A_\ell\}_{\ell \in L} \vdash \text{case } x (\ell \Rightarrow Q_\ell)_{\ell \in L} :: (z : C)} \oplus L$$

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Resource-Aware Session Types

- Each *process stores potential* in functional data
- Potential can be *transferred via messages*
- Potential is used to *pay for performed work*

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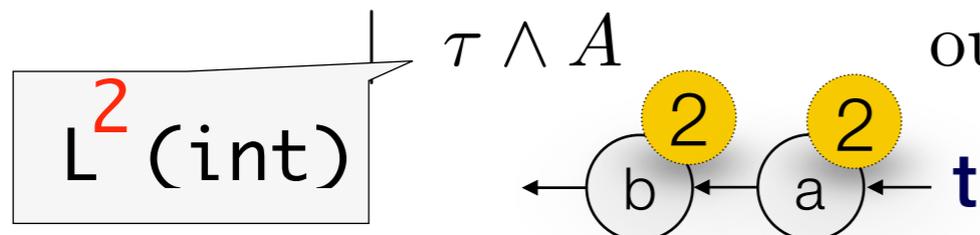
User-defined cost metric.

$A, B, C ::= \tau \supset A$

input value of type τ and continue as A

$\tau \wedge A$

output value of type τ and continue as A

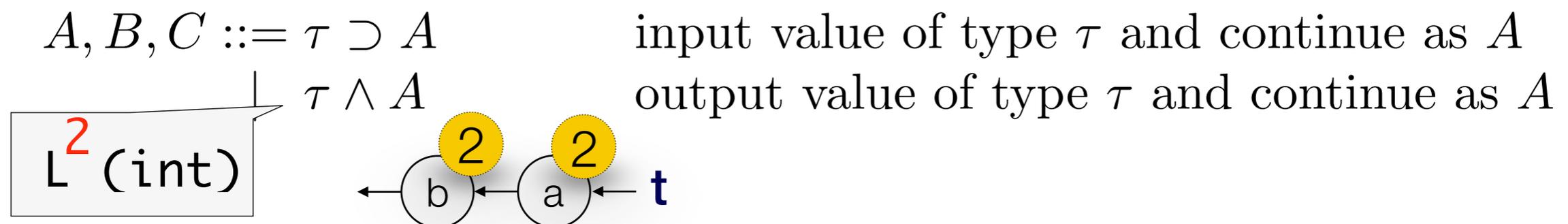


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- Syntactic sugar (no payload)

$$A ::= \dots \mid \triangleright^r A \mid \triangleleft^r A$$

- Only in intermediate language:

$\text{get } x_m \{r\} ; P$
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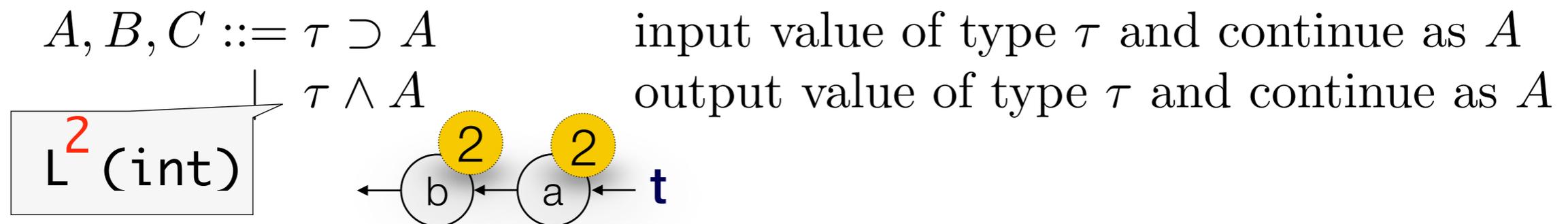
Resource-Aware Session Types

Efficient type inference
via LP solving

- Each *process stores potential* in functional data
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Example: Type of an Auction Contract

Sharing: Need to acquire contract before use.

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Equi-synchronizing:
Release contract at the same type.

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Action can be open (running) or closed (ended).

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Sending a functional value.

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Sending a linear value.

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Can collect lot or reclaim your bid.

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Example: Type of an Auction Contract

Implementation of a Running Auction

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$la.\text{running} ;$

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$v \leftarrow \text{recv } m ;$

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accept 'acquire' (\uparrow_L^S)

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detach from client (\downarrow_L^S)

add bid and money

Implementation of a Running Auction

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no work constructs!

How to Use the Potential

Payment schemes (amortized cost)

- Ensure constant gas cost in the presence of costly operations
- Overcharge for cheap operations and store gas in contract
- Similar to storing ether in memory in EVM but part of contract

Explicit gas bounds

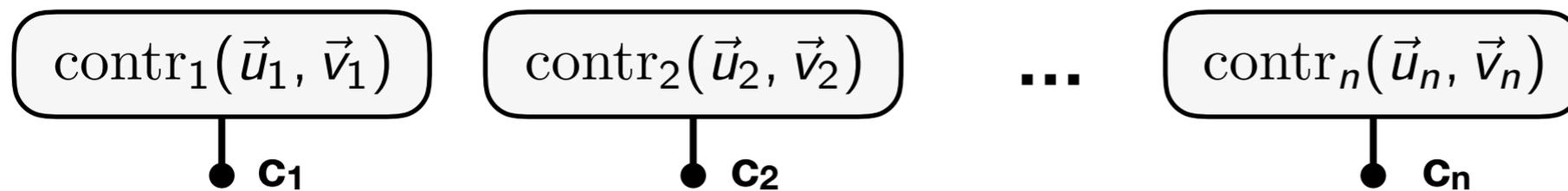
- Add an additional argument that carries potential
- User arg N ~ maximal number of players => gas bound is $81*N + 28$

Enforce constant gas cost

- Simply disable potential in contract state
- Require messages to only carry constant potential

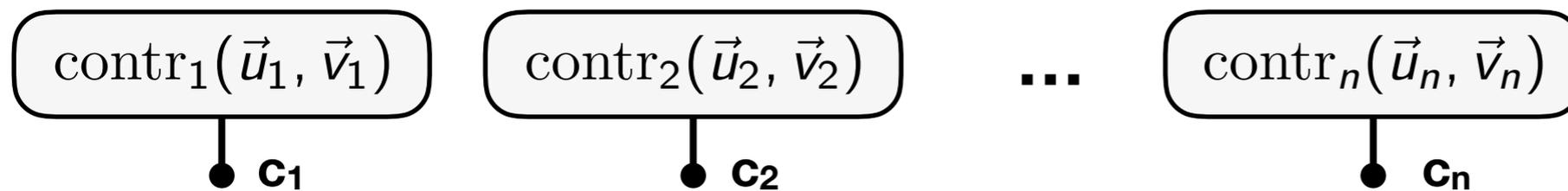
Computation on a Blockchain

Blockchain state: shared processes waiting to be acquired



Computation on a Blockchain

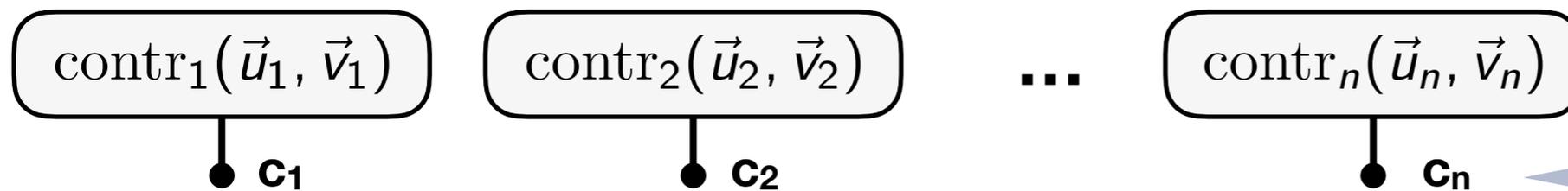
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Contracts store functional and linear data.

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Contracts store functional and linear data.

Channel name = address

Computation on a Blockchain

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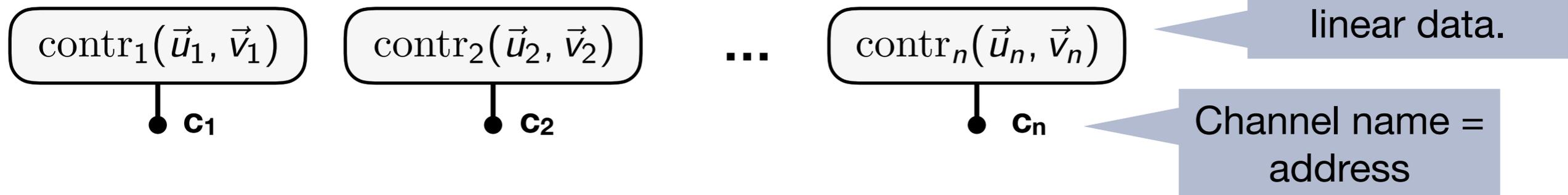


Transaction: client submits code of a linear process



Computation on a Blockchain

Blockchain state: shared processes waiting to be acquired



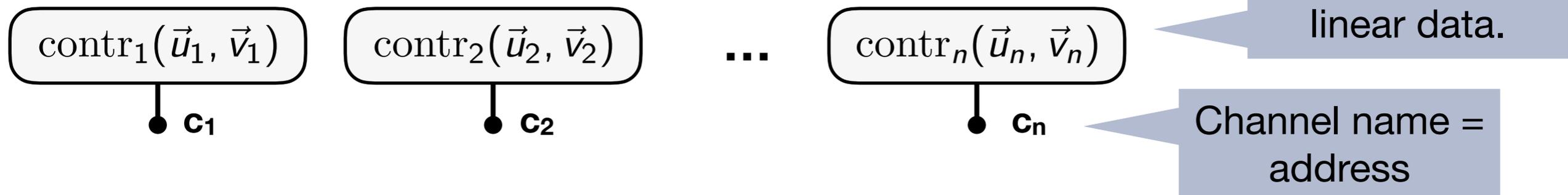
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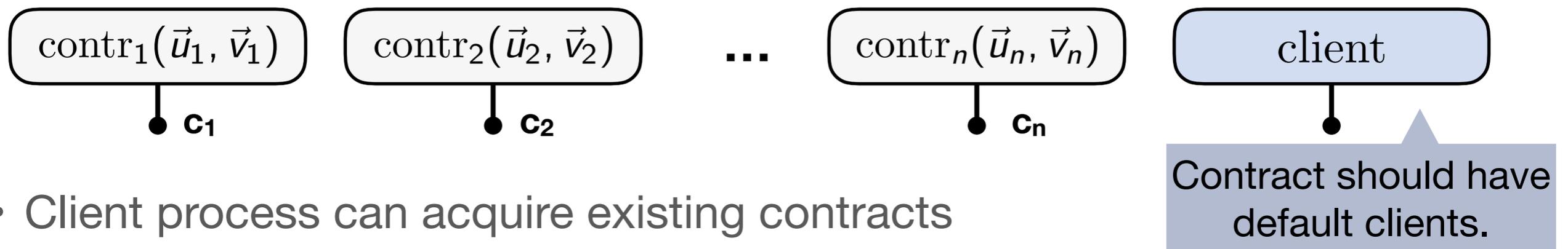
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- Client process can spawn new (shared) processes -> new contracts
- Client process needs to terminate in a new valid state

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Blockchain state: shared processes waiting to be acquired



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- Client process needs to terminate in a new valid state

Blockchain, Type Checking, and Verification

Type checking is part of the attack surface

- Contract code can be checked at publication time
- User code needs to be checked for each transaction
- Denial of service attacks are possible
- *Nomos type checking is linear in the size of the program*

Verification of Nomos program is possible

- Dynamic semantics specifies runtime behavior
- Directly applicable to verification in Coq
- Nomos' type system guarantees some important properties

Nomos

A statically-typed, strict, functional language for digital contracts

- Automatic amortized resource analysis for **static gas bounds**
- Shared binary session types for **transparent & safe contract interfaces**
- Linear type system for **accurately reflecting assets**

References

- POPL '17: AARA for OCaml (RaML)
- LICS '18: Resource-Aware Session Types
- arXiv '19: Nomos

Ongoing work: implementation

- Parser ✓
- Type checker ✓
- Interpreter
- Compiler

Nomos

Collaborators: Stephanie Balzer, Ankush Das, and Frank Pfenning

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