Abstract Interpretation

(Galois, Collections, Widening)

What Are We Doing?

- **Sam Block** — **Variable Renaming for Decompilation and Program Readability**
- **William Burns** — **Surveying Malware's Relation to Programming Languages**
- **Tim Chaplin** — **Generalizing the Burrows-Wheeler Transform**
- **Kirti Chawla** — **Detection of Covert Channels in RFID Supply Chains**
- **Joel Coffman**
- **Derek Davis** — **Classification of and Confidence in Repairs to Software Bugs**
- **Daniel Dougherty** — **Branch Prediction in Dynamic Binary Translation Systems**
- **Zak Fry** — **A Large-Scale Code Readability Metric**
- **Andrew Jurik** — **Surveying The Use of Static Analyses to Verify Security Properties**
- **Dan Lepage** — **A Bayesian Approach to SVBRDF Decomposition**
- **Ming Mao** — **A Process Execution and Collaboration Policy Assertion Language**
- **Irwin Reyes** — **The Accuracy of Face-Recognition Systems**
- **Arkaitz Ruiz Alvarez** — **Verifying Programs that Use Intel's Threading Building Blocks Library**
- **Mona Sergi** — **Improving Automatic Program Repair with Template-based Mutations**
- **Blake Sheridan** — **Implementing Support for Hardware-based Profiling in Embedded Systems**
- **Michael Skalak** — **Implementing and Interpreting Visual Languages**
- **Elizabeth Soechting** — **Semantic Regression Testing for Tree-Structured Output**
- **Luther Tychonievich** — **A Unified Compiler Representation to Support Debugging Optimized Code**
- **Kristen Walcott** — **A Test Case Generation Technique for Multithreaded Programs**
- **Ren Xu** — **Surveying Refinement Types**

Tool Time

- How's Homework 5 going?
- Get started early
- Compilation problems?
  - See FAQ

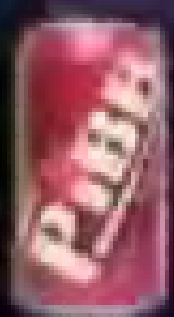 (trivia: what tool brand is this?)
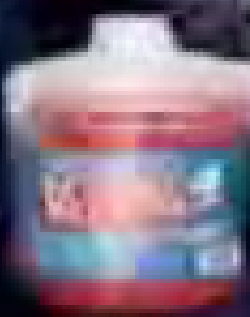
More Power!

- You can handle it!

Abstract Interpretation

- We have an abstract domain A
  - e.g., A = { positive, negative, zero }
  - An abstraction function $\beta : \mathbb{Z} \to A$

    - $\mathbb{Z}$ is our concrete domain

  - A concretization function $\gamma : A \to \mathcal{P}(\mathbb{Z})$

- Positive + Positive = ???

- Positive + Negative = ???

- Positive / Zero = ???
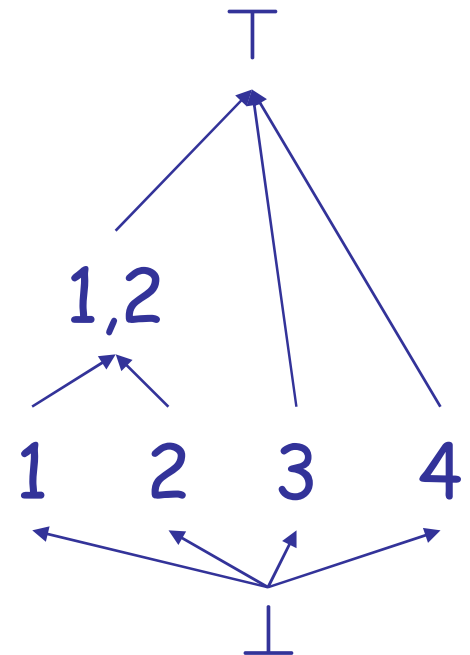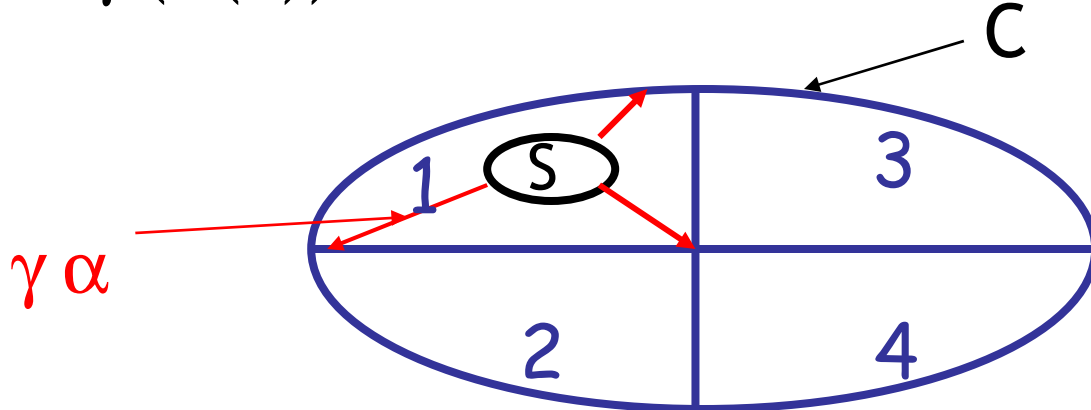
We don't want security to get suspicious ...

Review

- We introduced abstract interpretation
- An abstraction mapping from concrete to abstract values
  - Has a concretization mapping which forms a Galois connection

- We'll look a bit more at Galois connections
- We'll lift AI from expressions to programs
- … and we'll discuss the mythic "widening"

Why Galois Connections?

- We have an abstract domain A
  - An abstraction function $\beta : \mathbb{Z} \to A$
  - Induces $\alpha : \mathcal{P}(\mathbb{Z}) \to A$ and $\gamma : A \to \mathcal{P}(\mathbb{Z})$
- We argued that for correctness

$$\gamma(a_1 \; \underline{op} \; a_2) \supseteq \gamma(a_1) \; op \; \gamma(a_2)$$

  - We wish for the set on the left to be as small as possible
  - To reduce the loss of information through abstraction
- For each set $S \subseteq C$, define $\alpha(S)$ as follows:
  - Pick smallest S' that includes S and is in the image of γ
  - Define $\alpha(S) = \gamma^{-1}(S')$
  - Then we define: $a_1 \; \underline{op} \; a_2 = \alpha(\gamma(a_1) \; op \; \gamma(a_2))$
- Then α and γ form a Galois connection

Galois Connections

- A <u>Galois connection</u> between complete lattices A and $\mathcal{P}$(C) is a pair of functions α and γ such that:

  - γ and α are monotonic

    - (with the $\subseteq$ ordering on $\mathcal{P}$(C))

  - $\alpha\,(\gamma\,(a)) = a$ for all a $\in$ A
  - $\gamma\,(\alpha(S)) \supseteq S$ for all S $\in \mathcal{P}$(C)

C

$\gamma\,\alpha$

S

1

2

3

4

$\top$

1,2

1   2   3   4

$\bot$

More on Galois Connections

- All Galois connections are monotonic
- In a Galois connection one function uniquely and absolutely determines the other

Abstract Interpretation for Imperative Programs
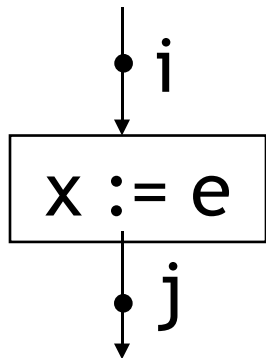
- So far we abstracted the value of expressions

- Now we want to abstract the state at each point in the program

- First we define the concrete semantics that we are abstracting
  - We'll use a collecting semantics

Collecting Semantics

- Recall
  - A <u>state σ</u> $\in \Sigma$. Any state σ has type Var $\rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$
  - States vary from program point to program point
- We introduce a set of program points: <u>labels</u>
- We want to answer questions like:
  - Is x always positive at label i?
  - Is x always greater or equal to y at label j?
- To answer these questions we'll construct

  $C \in$ **Contexts**. C has type Labels $\rightarrow \mathcal{P}(\Sigma)$
  - For each label i, C(i) = all possible states at label i
  - This is called the <u>collecting semantics</u> of the program
  - This is basically what SLAM (and BLAST, ESP, …) approximate (using BDDs to store $\mathcal{P}(\Sigma)$ efficiently)
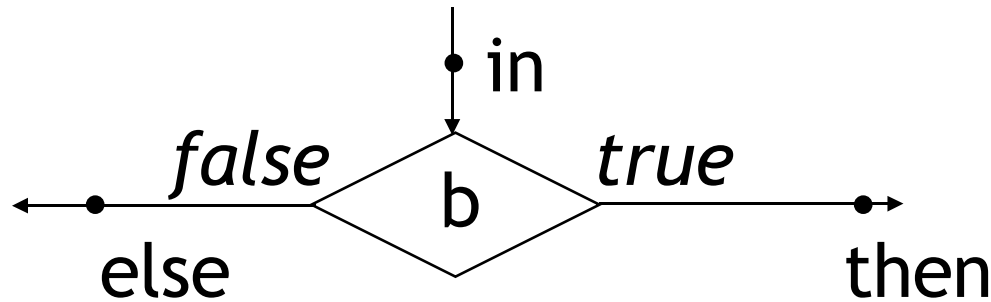
Defining the Collecting Semantics

- We first define relations between the collecting semantics at different labels
  - We do it for unstructured CFGs (cf. HW5!)
  - Can do it for IMP with careful notion of program points
- Define a label on each edge in the CFG
- For assignment

$$C_j = \{\sigma[x := n] \mid \sigma \in C_i \wedge [\![e]\!]\sigma = n\}$$

i

$$x := e$$

j

Defining the Collecting Semantics
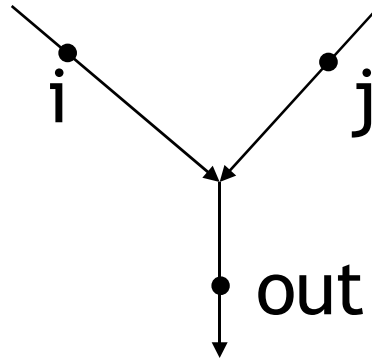
• For conditionals

$$C_{else} = \{ \, \sigma \mid \sigma \in C_{in} \land [\![b]\!]\sigma = false\}$$

$$C_{then} = \{ \, \sigma \mid \sigma \in C_{in} \land [\![b]\!]\sigma = true\}$$

• Assumes b has no side effects (as in IMP or HW5)

Defining the Collecting Semantics

- For a join

$$C_{out} = C_i \cup C_j$$

- Verify that these relations are monotonic
  - If we increase a C_x all other C_y can only increase

Collecting Semantics: Example

- Assume $x \geq 0$ initially *(explain this?)*

$C_1 = \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \geq 0\}$

Collecting Semantics: Example

- Assume $x \geq 0$ initially

$$C_1 = \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \geq 0\}$$
$$C_2 = \{\sigma[y:=1] \mid \sigma \in C_1\}$$

Collecting Semantics: Example

- Assume $x \geq 0$ initially

$$C_1 = \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \geq 0\}$$

$$C_2 = \{ \sigma[y := 1] \mid \sigma \in C_1\}$$

$$C_3 = C_2 \cap \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \neq 0\}$$

Collecting Semantics: Example

- Assume $x \geq 0$ initially

$C_1 = \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \geq 0\}$

$C_2 = \{ \sigma[y:=1] \mid \sigma \in C_1\}$

$C_3 = C_2 \cap \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \neq 0\}$

$C_4 = \{\sigma[y:=\sigma(y)*\sigma(x)] \mid \sigma \in C_3\}$

Collecting Semantics: Example

- Assume $x \geq 0$ initially

$C_1 = \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \geq 0\}$

$C_2 = \{\sigma[y:=1] \mid \sigma \in C_1\}$
$\cup \{\sigma[x:=\sigma(x)-1] \mid \sigma \in C_4\}$

$C_3 = C_2 \cap \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \neq 0\}$

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Collecting Semantics: Example

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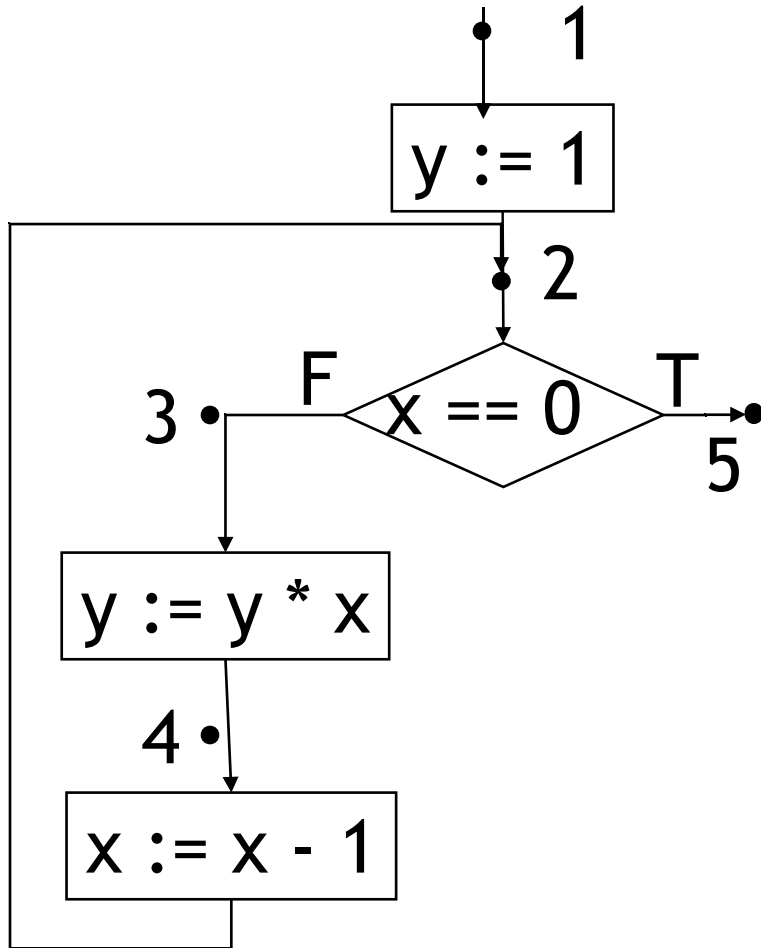
$C_2 = \{\sigma[y:=1] \mid \sigma \in C_1\}$
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$C_3 = C_2 \cap \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \neq 0\}$

$C_4 = \{\sigma[y:=\sigma(y)*\sigma(x)] \mid$
$\sigma \in C_3\}$

$C_5 = C_2 \cap \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) = 0\}$

Why Does This Work?

- We just made a system of recursive equations that are defined largely in terms of themselves

  – e.g., $C_2 = F(C_4)$, $C_4 = G(C_3)$, $C_3 = H(C_2)$

- Why do we have any reason to believe that this will get us what we want?

The Collecting Semantics

- We have an equation with the unknown C
  - The equation is defined by a monotonic and continuous function on domain Labels $\rightarrow \mathcal{P}(\Sigma)$

- We can use the least fixed-point theorem
  - Start with $C^0(L) = \emptyset$ (aka $C^0 = \lambda L.\emptyset$)
  - Apply the relations between C_i and C_j to get C^1_i from C^0_j
  - Stop when all $C^k = C^{k-1}$
  - Problem: we'll go on forever for most programs
  - But we know the fixed point exists

Collecting Semantics: Example

- (assume x $\geq$ 0 initially)

$\emptyset$ 1

$\emptyset$

y := 1

$\emptyset$ 2

$\emptyset$

F   3   x == 0   T

5

$\emptyset$

y := y * x

4    $\emptyset$

x := x – 1

$C_1 = \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \geq 0\}$
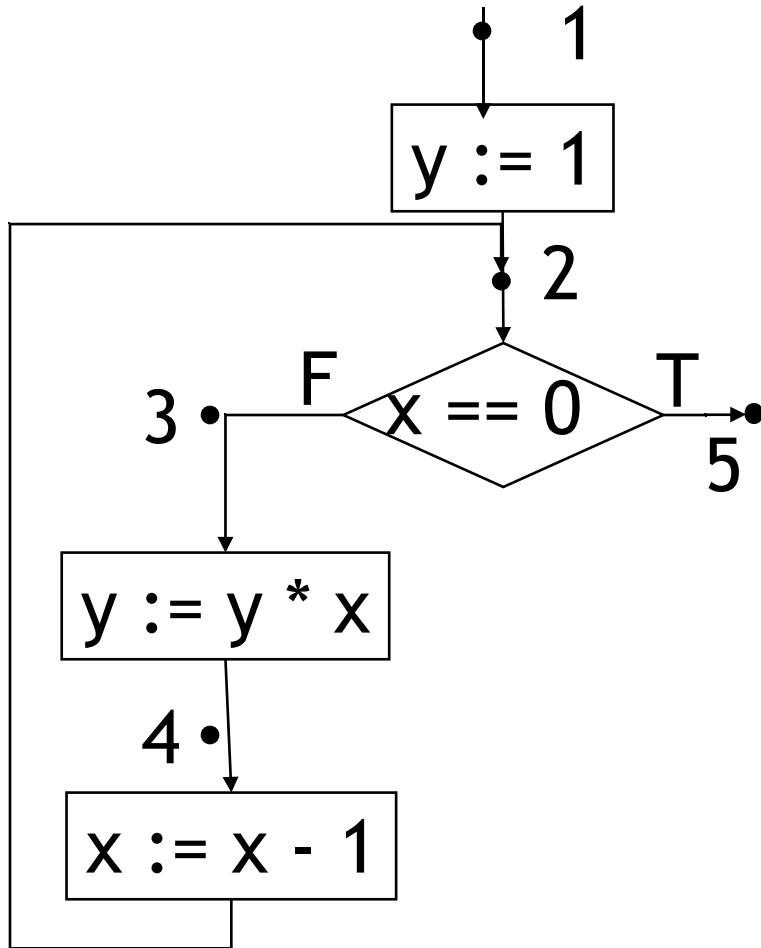
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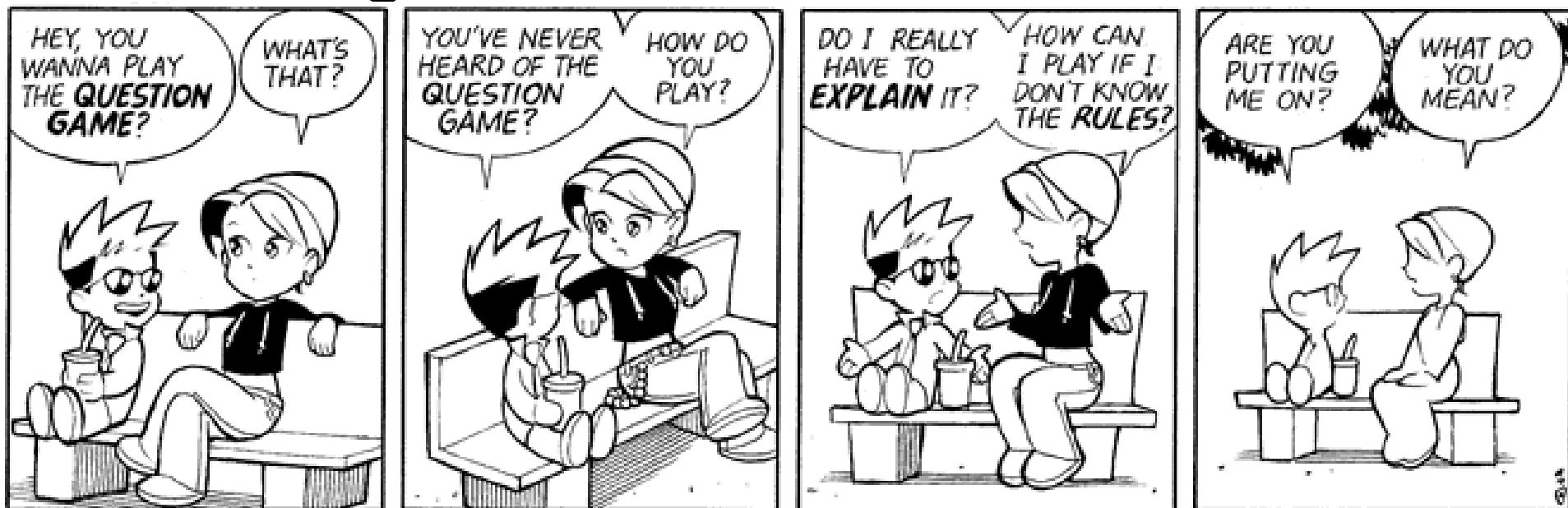$\cup \{\sigma[x:=\sigma(x)-1] \mid \sigma \in C_4\}$

$C_3 = C_2 \cap \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \neq 0\}$

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$C_4 = \{\sigma[y:=\sigma(y)*\sigma(x) \mid \sigma \in C_3\}$

Collecting Semantics: Example

- (assume x $\geq$ 0 initially)

1 $\{ x \geq 0 \}$

y := 1

$\emptyset$

2 $\emptyset$

$\emptyset$

3 F   x == 0   T

5

$\emptyset$

y := y * x

4 $\emptyset$

x := x – 1

$C_1 = \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \geq 0\}$
$C_2 = \quad \{ \sigma[y:=1] \mid \sigma \in C_1\}$
$\qquad \cup \{\sigma[x:=\sigma(x)-1] \mid \sigma \in C_4\}$
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Collecting Semantics: Example

- (assume x ≥ 0 initially)

1   $\{\, x \geq 0 \,\}$

$y := 1$

∅

∅

2   $\{x \geq 0, y = 1\}$

F $x == 0$ T

3

5

∅

$y := y * x$

4   ∅

$x := x - 1$

$C_1 = \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \geq 0\}$

$C_2 = \{\, \sigma[y:=1] \mid \sigma \in C_1\}$
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Collecting Semantics: Example

- (assume $x \geq 0$ initially)

$$1 \quad \{ x \geq 0 \}$$

$$2 \quad \{x \geq 0, y = 1\}$$

$$\{x>0, y=1\}$$

$$\{x=0, y=1\}$$

$$C_1 = \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \geq 0\}$$
$$C_2 = \quad \{ \sigma[y:=1] \mid \sigma \in C_1\}$$
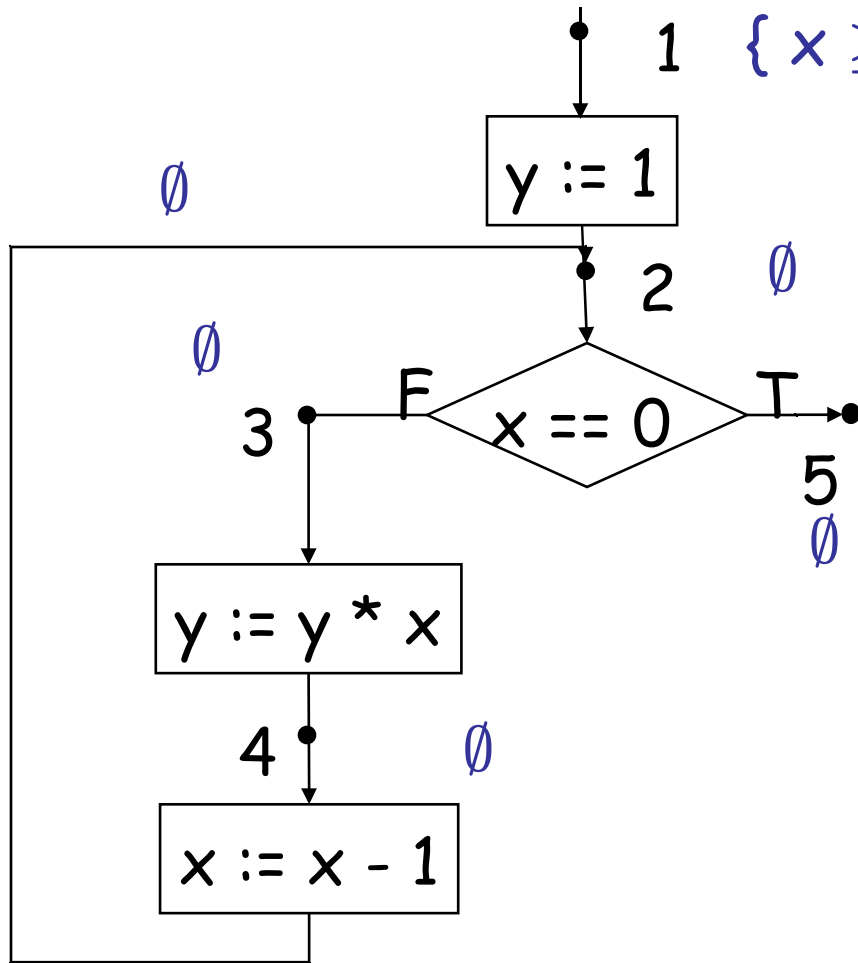$$\qquad \cup \{\sigma[x:=\sigma(x)-1] \mid \sigma \in C_4\}$$
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Collecting Semantics: Example

- (assume $x \geq 0$ initially)

1   $\{ x \geq 0 \}$

y := 1

$\emptyset$

2   $\{x \geq 0, y = 1\}$

$\{x>0,y=1\}$ F

3   x == 0   T

5

$\{x=0,y=1\}$

y := y * x

4

$\{x>0,y=x\}$

x := x – 1

$C_1 = \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \geq 0\}$

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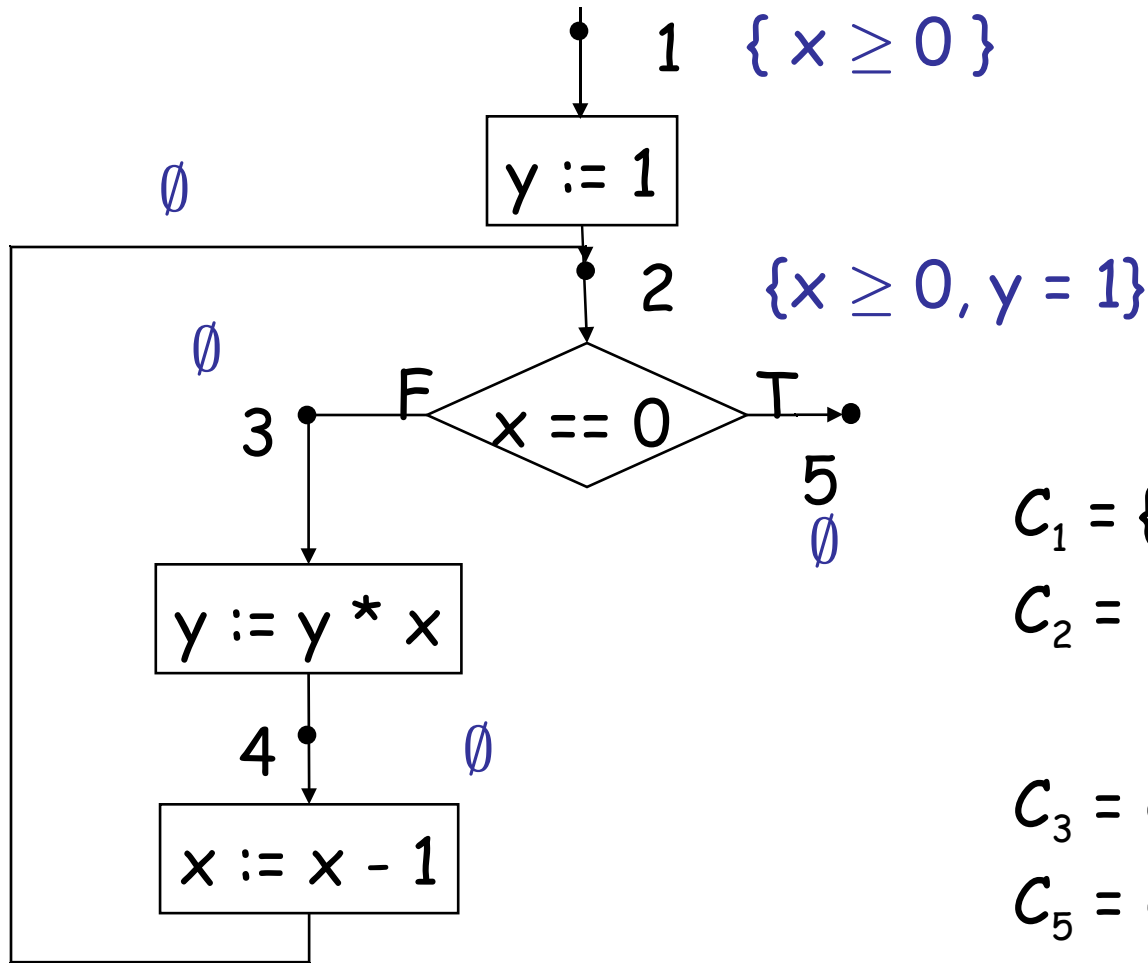
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$C_5 = C_2 \cap \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) = 0\}$

$C_4 = \{\sigma[y:=\sigma(y)*\sigma(x) \mid \sigma \in C_3\}$

Collecting Semantics: Example

- (assume $x \geq 0$ initially)

1   $\{ x \geq 0 \}$

y := 1

$\{x \geq 0, y = x+1\}$

2   $\{x \geq 0, y = 1\}$

$\{x > 0, y = 1\}$ F   3   x == 0   T

5

$\{x = 0, y = 1\}$

y := y * x

4   $\{x > 0, y = x\}$

x := x – 1

$C_1 = \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \geq 0\}$

$C_2 = \{\sigma[y:=1] \mid \sigma \in C_1\}$
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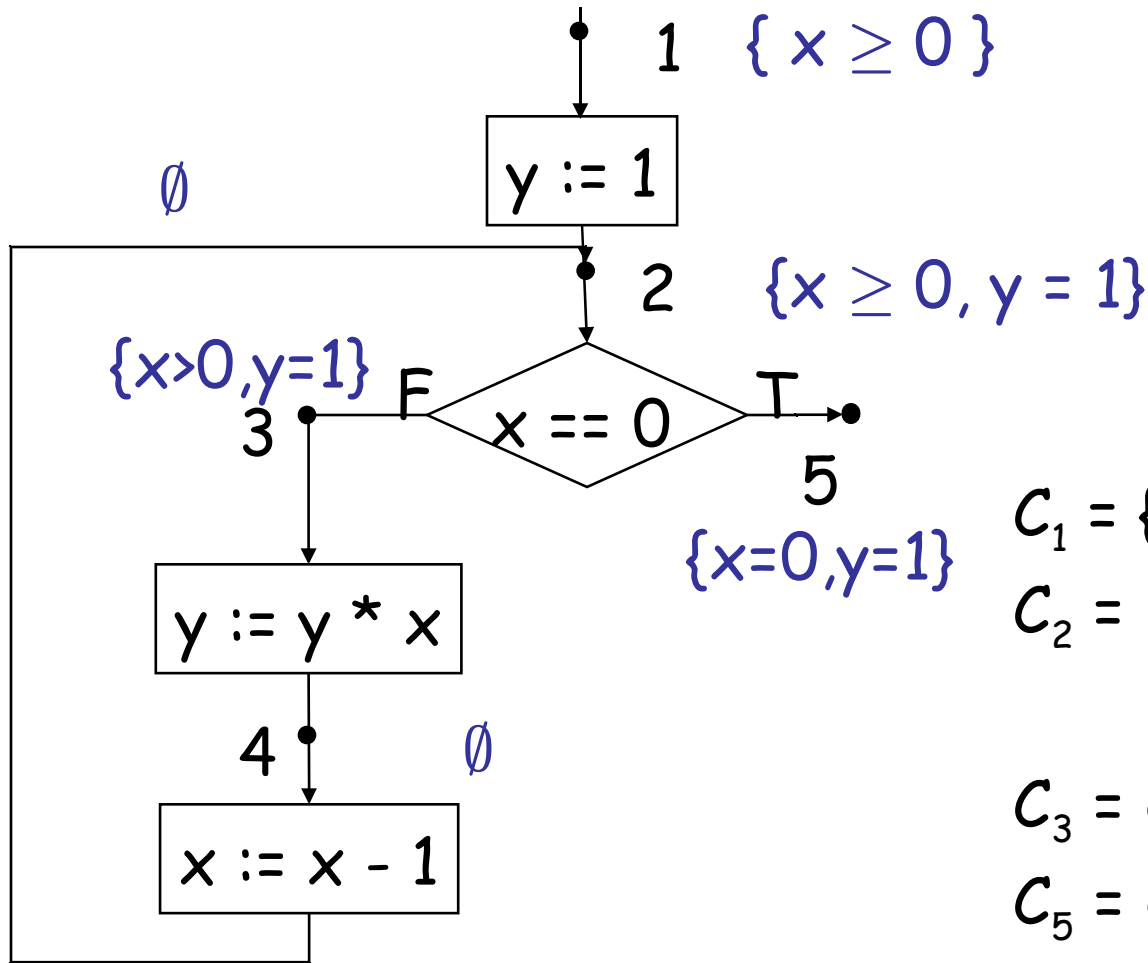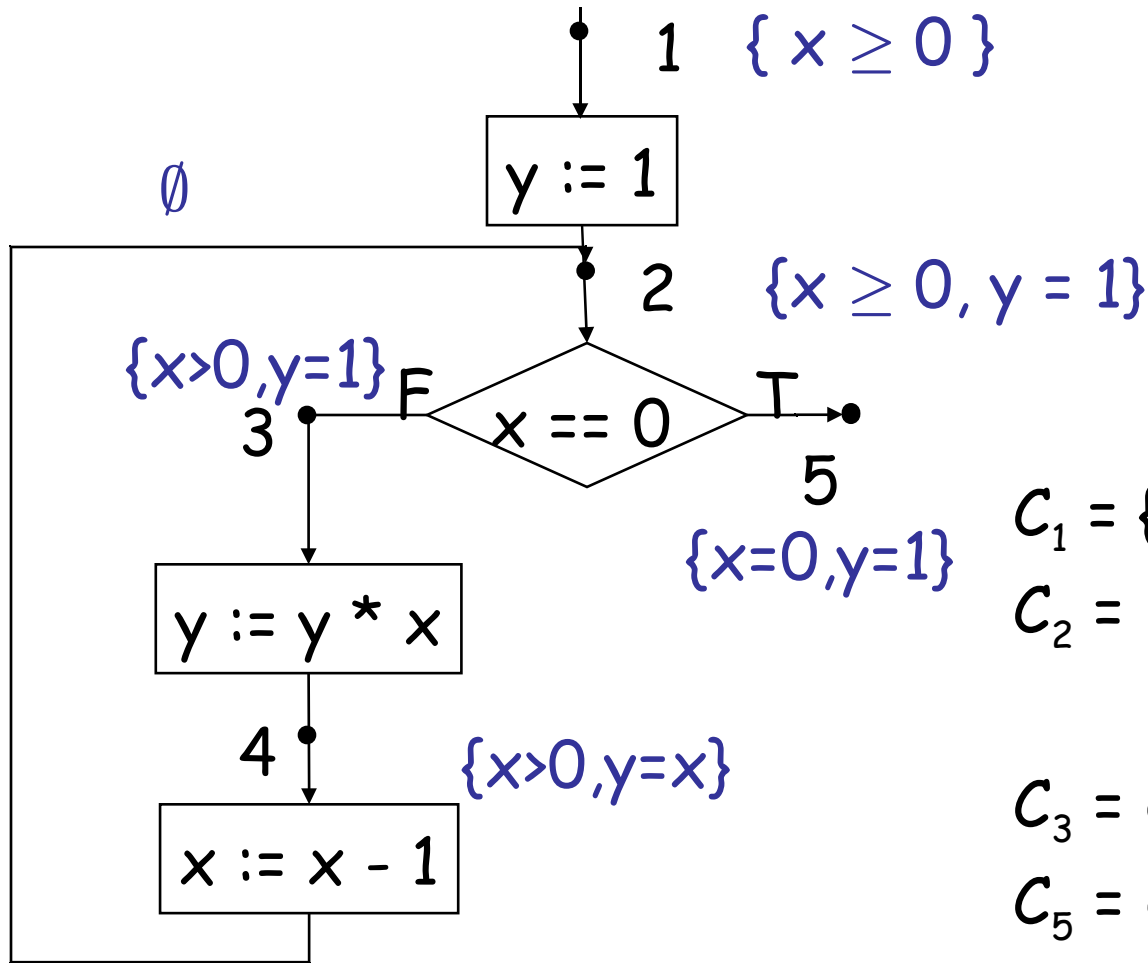
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$C_4 = \{\sigma[y:=\sigma(y)*\sigma(x) \mid \sigma \in C_3\}$

Collecting Semantics: Example

- (assume x $\geq$ 0 initially)

$$1 \quad \{ x \geq 0 \}$$

y := 1

$\{x \geq 0, y=x+1\}$

$$2 \quad \{x \geq 0, y = 1 \lor y = x + 1\}$$

$\{x>0,y=1\}$ F
3   x == 0   T

5

$\{x=0,y=1\}$

y := y * x

4

$\{x>0,y=x\}$

x := x – 1

$C_1 = \{\sigma \mid \sigma(x) \geq 0\}$

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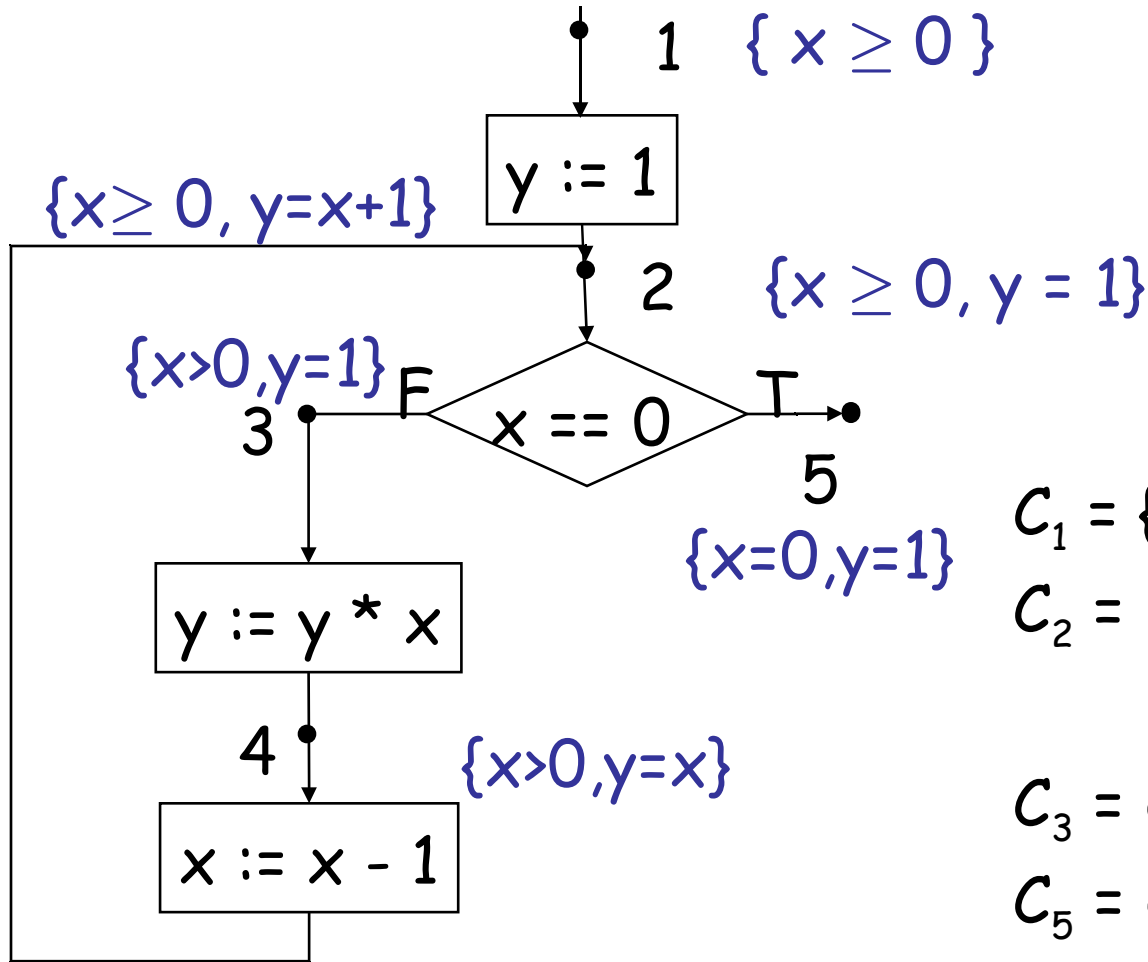
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Q: Theatre (006 / 842)

- Name the 1879 Gilbert & Sullivan operetta parodied by the following quote:
  - *I am the very model of a Newsgroup personality.*
  - *I intersperse obscenity with tedious banality.*
  - *Addresses I have plenty of, both genuine and ghosted too,*
  - *On all the countless newsgroups that my drivel is cross-posted to.*

- Name the movie quoted below and also name either character or either character's actor. In this 1987 Mel Brooks spoof, one character is revealed to be another character's *"father's brother's nephew's cousin's former roommate."*

Q: TV Music (040 / 842)

- Fill in the three blanks in this **Flintstones** theme song snippet:
  - *Let's ride with the family down the street*
  - *Through the courtesy of <u>blank blank</u> <u>blank</u>*
  - *When you're with the Flintstones*
  - *Have a yabba dabba doo time*

Abstract Interpretation

- Pick a complete lattice A (abstractions for $\mathcal{P}(\Sigma)$)
  - Along with a monotonic abstraction $\alpha : \mathcal{P}(\Sigma) \to A$
  - Alternatively, pick $\beta : \Sigma \to A$
  - This uniquely defines its Galois connection γ
- Take the relations between C_i and move them to the abstract domain:

$$a : \text{Label} \to A$$

- Assignment

  Concrete: $C_j = \{\sigma[x := n] \mid \sigma \in C_i \wedge [\![e]\!]\sigma = n\}$

  Abstract: $a_j = \alpha \{\sigma[x := n] \mid \sigma \in \gamma(a_i) \wedge [\![e]\!]\sigma = n\}$

Abstract Interpretation

- Conditional

Concrete: $C_j = \{ \sigma \mid \sigma \in C_i \wedge [\![b]\!]\sigma = \text{false}\}$ and

$$C_k = \{ \sigma \mid \sigma \in C_i \wedge [\![b]\!]\sigma = \text{true}\}$$

Abstract: $a_j = \alpha \{ \sigma \mid \sigma \in \gamma(a_i) \wedge [\![b]\!]\sigma = \text{false}\}$ and

$$a_k = \alpha \{ \sigma \mid \sigma \in \gamma(a_i) \wedge [\![b]\!]\sigma = \text{true}\}$$

- Join

Concrete: $C_k = C_i \cup C_j$

Abstract: $a_k = \alpha (\gamma(a_i) \cup \gamma(a_j)) = \text{lub } \{a_i, a_j\}$

Least Fixed Points In The Abstract Domain

- We have a recursive equation with unknown "a"
  - Defined by a monotonic and continuous function on the domain Labels $\rightarrow$ A

- We can use the least fixed-point theorem:
  - Start with $a^0 = \lambda L.\bot$ (aka: $a^0(L) = \bot$)
  - Apply the monotonic function to compute a^{k+1} from a^k
  - Stop when $a^{k+1} = a^k$

- Exactly the same computation as for the collecting semantics
  - What is new?
  - *"There is nothing new under the sun but there are lots of old things we don't know."* – Ambrose Bierce

Least Fixed Points
In The Abstract Domain

- We have a hope of termination!
- Classic setup: A has only uninteresting chains (finite number of elements in each chain)
  - A has finite height h (= "finite-height lattice")
- The computation takes $O(h \times |Labels|^2)$ steps
  - At each step "a" makes progress on at least one label
  - We can only make progress h times
  - And each time we must compute |Labels| elements
- This is a quadratic analysis: good news
  - This is exactly the same as Kildall's 1973 analysis of dataflow's polynomial termination given a finite-height lattice and monotonic transfer functions.

Abstract Interpretation: Example

- Consider the following program, x>0

We want to do the
sign analysis on it.

Abstract Domain for Sign Analysis

- Invent the complete sign lattice

$$\textcolor{red}{S = \{ \perp, -, 0, +, \top \}}$$

- Construct the complete lattice

$$\textcolor{blue}{A = \{x, y\} \rightarrow S}$$

  – With the usual point-wise ordering

  – Abstract state gives the sign for x and y

- We start with $a^0 = \lambda L.\lambda v \in \{x,y\}.\perp$

  – aka: $a^0(L,v) = \perp$

Let's Do It!

Label		Iterations →									
1	x	+									**+**
	y	⊤									⊤
2	x	⊥	+			⊤					⊤
	y	⊥	+						⊤		⊤
3	x	⊥		+			⊤				⊤
	y	⊥		+						⊤	⊤
4	x	⊥			+			⊤			⊤
	y	⊥			+			⊤			⊤
5	x	⊥					0				**0**
	y	⊥					+			⊤	⊤

Notes, Weaknesses, Solutions

- We abstracted the state of each variable independently

$$A = \{x, y\} \rightarrow \{\bot, -, 0, +, \top\}$$

- We lost relationships between variables

  – e.g., at a point x and y may always have the same sign

  – In the previous abstraction we get $\{x := \top, y := \top\}$ at label 2 (when in fact y is always positive!)
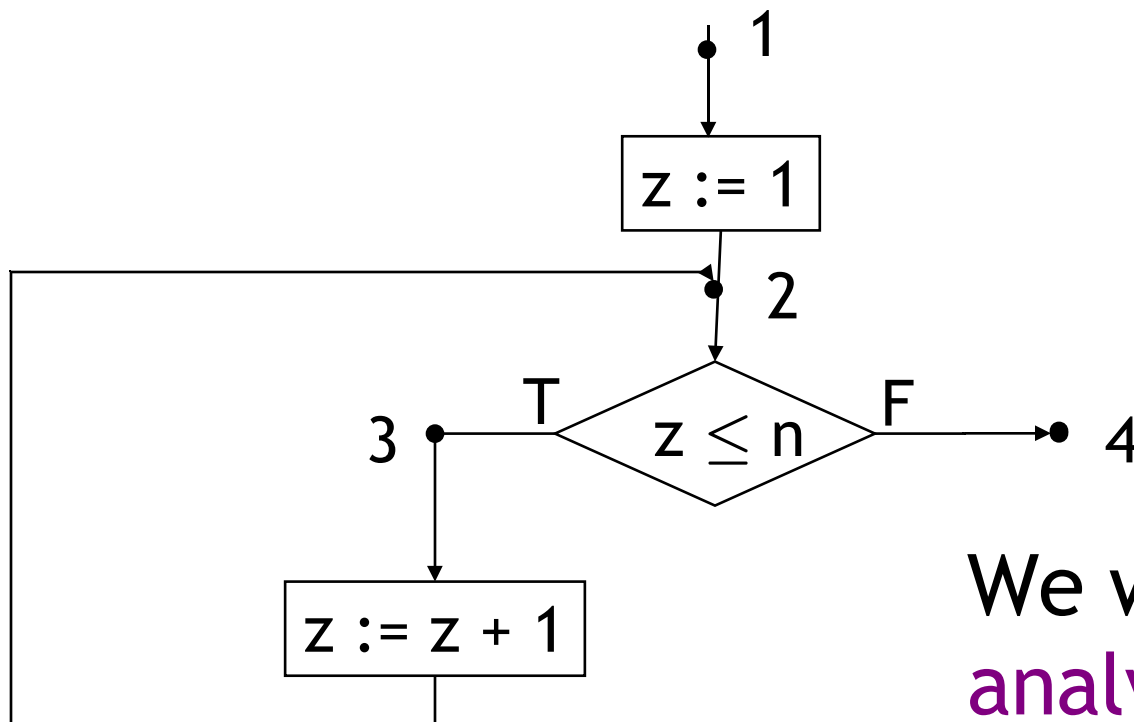
- We can also abstract the state as a whole

$$A = \mathcal{P}(\{\bot, -, 0, +, \top\} \times \{\bot, -, 0, +, \top\})$$

Other Abstract Domains

- Range analysis
  - Lattice of ranges: R ={ $\perp$, [n..m], (-∞, m], [n, +∞), $\top$ }
  - It is a complete lattice
    - [n..m] $\sqcup$ [n'..m'] = [min(n, n')..max(m,m')]
    - [n..m] $\sqcap$ [n'..m'] = [max(n, n')..min(m, m')]
    - With appropriate care in dealing with ∞
  - β : $\mathbb{Z} \rightarrow$ R such that β(n) = [n..n]
  - α : $\mathcal{P}(\mathbb{Z}) \rightarrow$ R such that α(S) = lub {β(n) | n $\in$ S} = [min(S)..max(S)]
  - γ : R $\rightarrow \mathcal{P}$(Z) such that γ(r) = { n | n $\in$ r }
- This lattice has infinite-height chains
  - So the abstract interpretation might not terminate!

Example of Non-Termination

• Consider this (common) program fragment

1

z := 1

2

T   F
3   z ≤ n   4

z := z + 1

We want to do range analysis on it.

Example of Non-Termination

- Consider the sequence of abstract states at point 2
  - [1..1], [1..2], [1..3], …
  - The analysis never terminates
  - Or terminates very late if the loop bound is known statically
- It is time to approximate even more: widening
- We redefine the join (lub) operator of the lattice to ensure that from [1..1] upon union with [2..2] the result is [1..+∞) and not [1..2]
- Now the sequence of states is
  - [1..1], [1, +∞), [1, +∞) Done (no more infinite chains)

Formal Definition of Widening
(Cousot 16.399 "Abstract Interpretation", 2005)

- A widening $\triangledown : (P \times P) \rightarrow P$ on a poset $\langle P, \sqsubseteq \rangle$ satisfies:
  - $\forall\, x, y \in P\,.\quad x \sqsubseteq (x \triangledown y) \quad \wedge \quad y \sqsubseteq (x \triangledown y)$
  - For all increasing chains $x^0 \sqsubseteq x^1 \sqsubseteq \ldots$ the increasing chain $y^0 =^{def} x^0, \ldots, y^{n+1} =^{def} y^n \triangledown x^{n+1}, \ldots$ is <u>not</u> strictly increasing.
- Two different main uses:
  - Approximate missing lubs. *(Not for us.)*
  - Convergence acceleration. *(This is the real use.)*
    - A widening operator can be used to effectively compute an upper approximation of the least fixpoint of $F \in L \triangledown L$ starting from below when L is computer-representable but does not satisfy the ascending chain condition.

Formal Widening Example
$[1,1]\triangledown[1,2] = [1,+\infty)$

- Range Analysis on z:

L0:   z := 1 ;

L1:   while z<99 do

L2:   z := z+1

L3:   done /* z $\geq$ 99 */

L4:

$x^{Li}_j =^{def}$ the jth iterative attempt to compute an abstract value for z at label Li

Recall lub S = [min(S)..max(S)]
lub $\{[2,+\infty),[1,+\infty)\} = \{[1,+\infty)\}$

Original x^i	Widened y^i
$x^{L0}_0 = \perp$	$y^{L0}_0 = \perp$
$x^{L1}_0 = [1,1]$	$y^{L1}_0 = [1,1]$
$x^{L2}_0 = [1,1]$	$y^{L2}_0 = [1,1]$
$x^{L3}_0 = [2,2]$	$y^{L3}_0 = [2,2]$
$x^{L2}_1 = [1,2]$	$y^{L2}_1 = [1,+\infty)$
$x^{L3}_1 = [2,+\infty)$	$y^{L3}_1 = [2,+\infty)$
$x^{L4}_0 = [99,+\infty)$	$y^{L4}_0 = [99,+\infty)$
stable (fewer than 99 iterations!)	

Other Abstract Domains

- Linear relationships between variables
  - A convex [polyhedron](#) is a subset of $\mathbb{Z}^k$ whose elements satisfy a number of inequalities:

    $$a_1x_1 + a_2x_2 + ... + a_kx_k \geq c_i$$

  - This is a complete lattice; linear programming methods compute lubs
- Linear relationships with at most two variables
  - Convex polyhedra but with ≤ 2 variables per constraint
  - Octagons ($x \pm y \geq c$) have efficient algorithms
- Modulus constraints (e.g. even and odd)

Abstract Chatter

- AI, Dataflow and Software Model Checking
  - The big three (aside from flow-insensitive type systems) for program analyses
- Are in fact quite related:
  - David Schmidt. *Data flow analysis is model checking of abstract interpretation*. POPL '98.
- AI is usually flow-sensitive (per-label answer)
- AI can be path-sensitive (if your abstract domain includes ∨, for example), which is just where model checking uses BDD's
- Metal, SLAM, ESP, … can all be viewed as AI

Abstract Interpretation Conclusions

- AI is a very powerful technique that underlies a large number of program analyses
- AI can also be applied to functional and logic programming languages
- There are a few success stories
  - Strictness analysis for lazy functional languages
  - PolySpace for linear constraints
- In most other cases however AI is still slow
- When the lattices have infinite height and widening heuristics are used the result becomes unpredictable