

GHC(STG,Cmm,asm) illustrated

for hardware persons

exploring some mental models and implementations

Takenobu T.

"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from **magic**."

Arthur C. Clarke

NOTE

- This is not an official document by the ghc development team.
- Please don't forget "semantics". It's very important.
- This is written for ghc 9.0.

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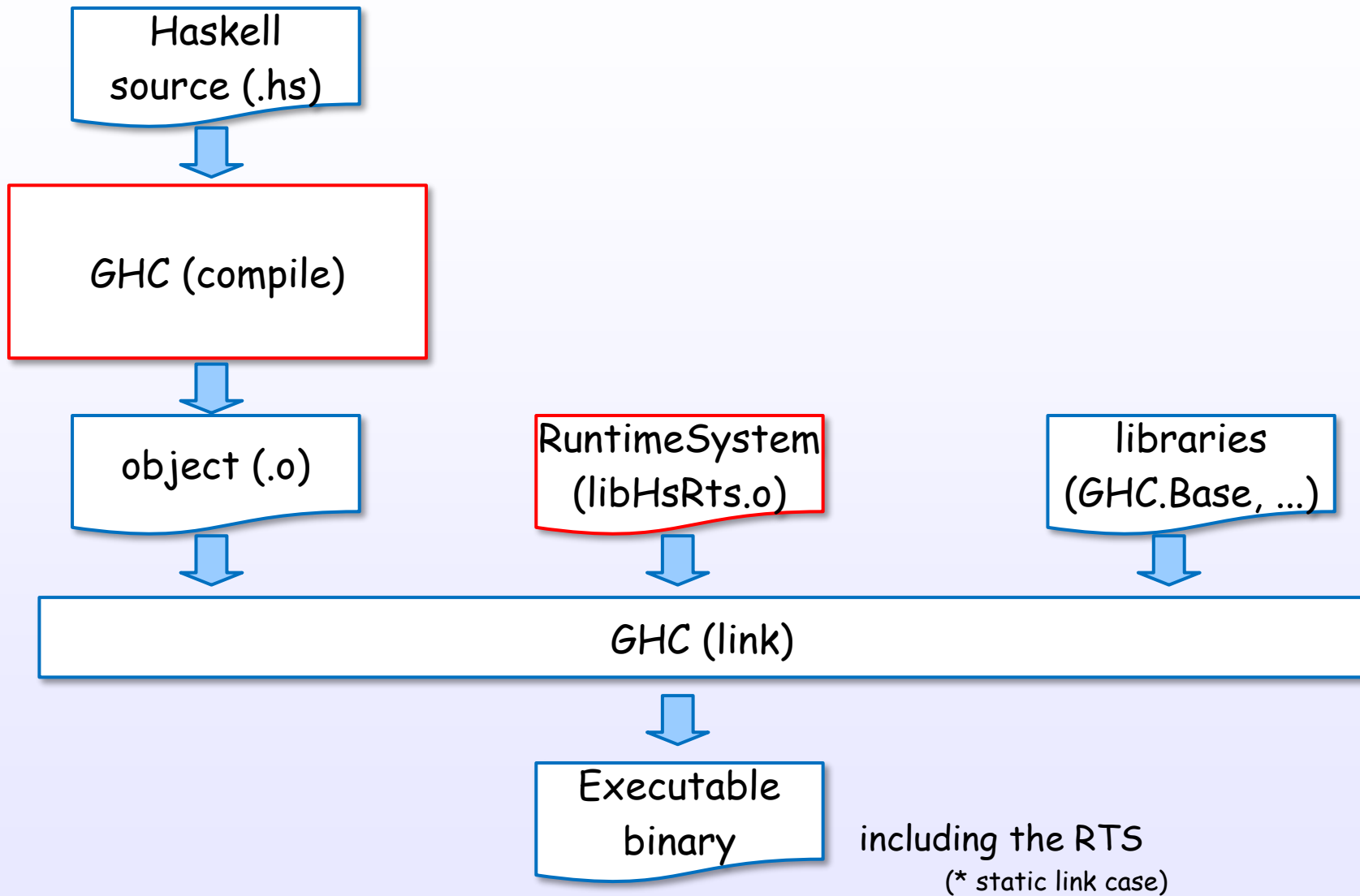
- FFI
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Executable binary

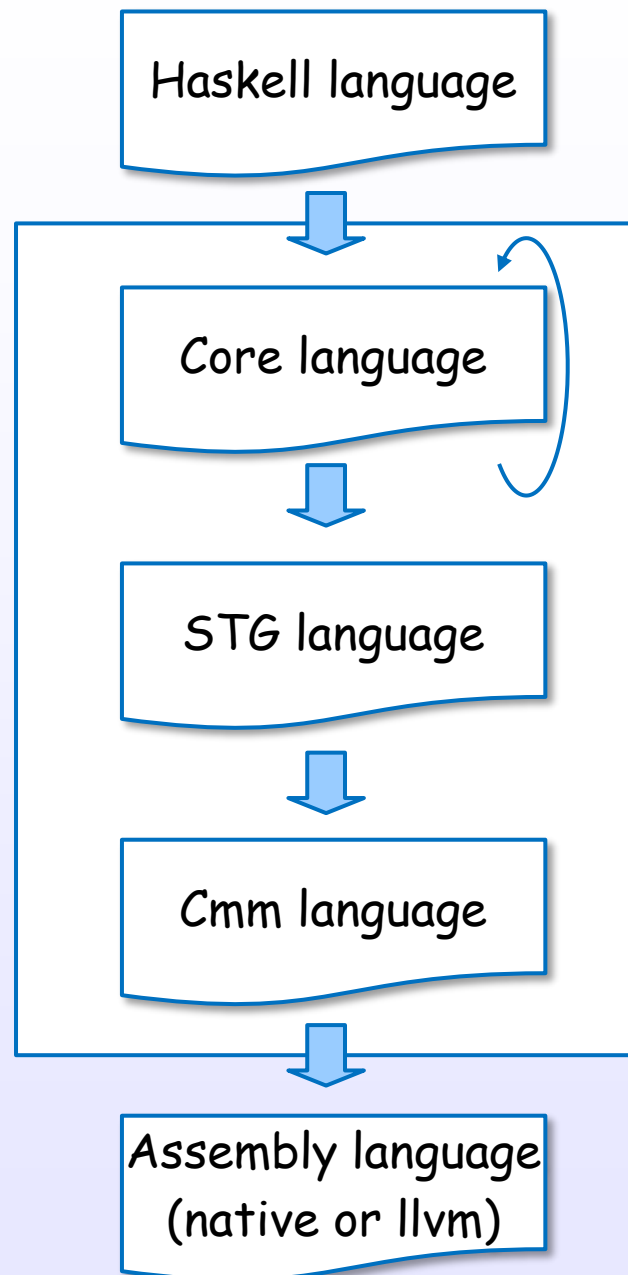
The GHC = Compiler + Runtime System (RTS)



Compile steps

GHC transitions between five representations

GHC
compile
steps



*each intermediate code can
be dumped by :*

```
$ ghc -ddump-parsed  
$ ghc -ddump-rn
```

```
$ ghc -ddump-ds  
$ ghc -ddump-simpl  
$ ghc -ddump-prep
```

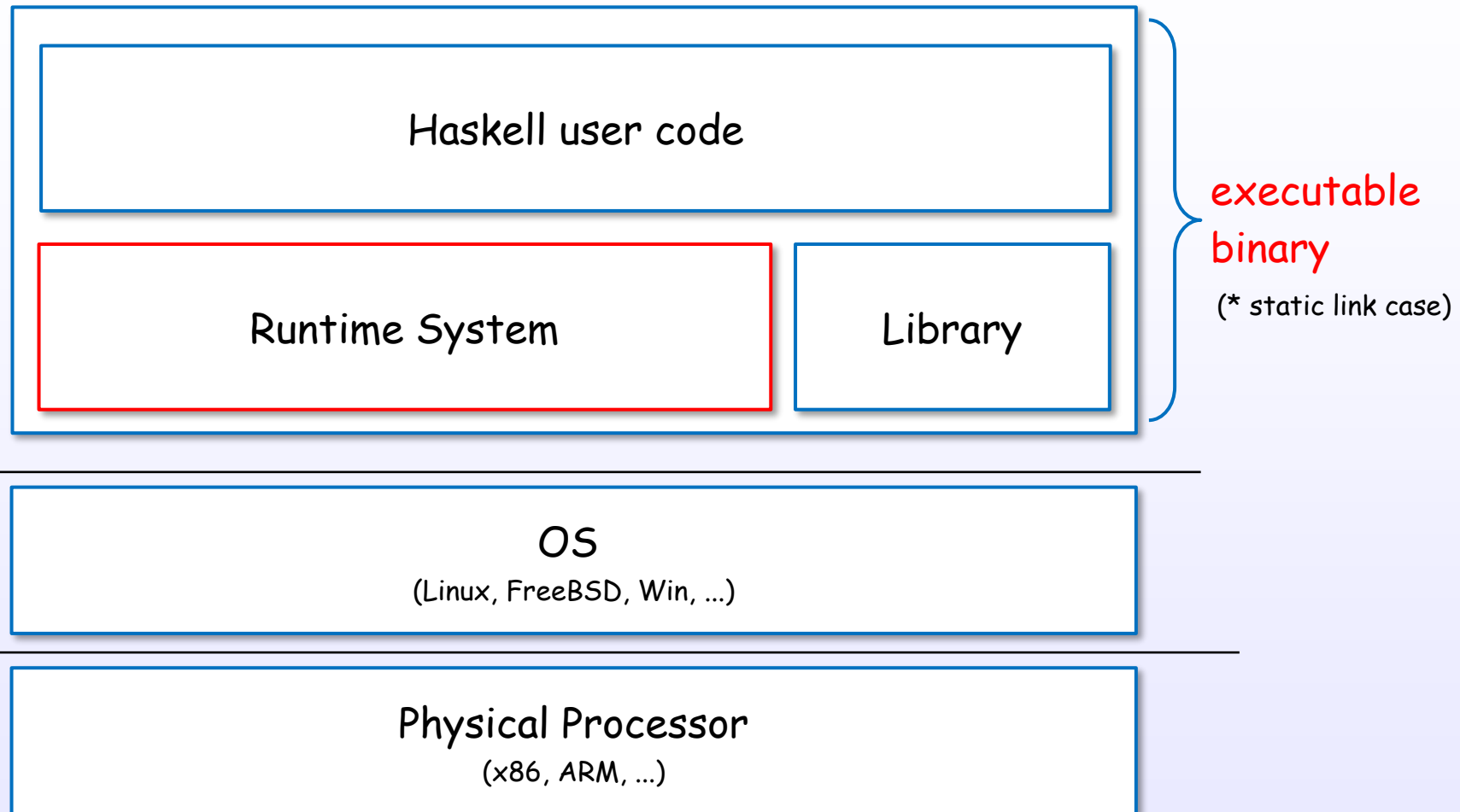
```
$ ghc -ddump-stg
```

```
$ ghc -ddump-cmm  
$ ghc -ddump-opt-cmm
```

```
$ ghc -ddump-llvm  
$ ghc -ddump-asm
```

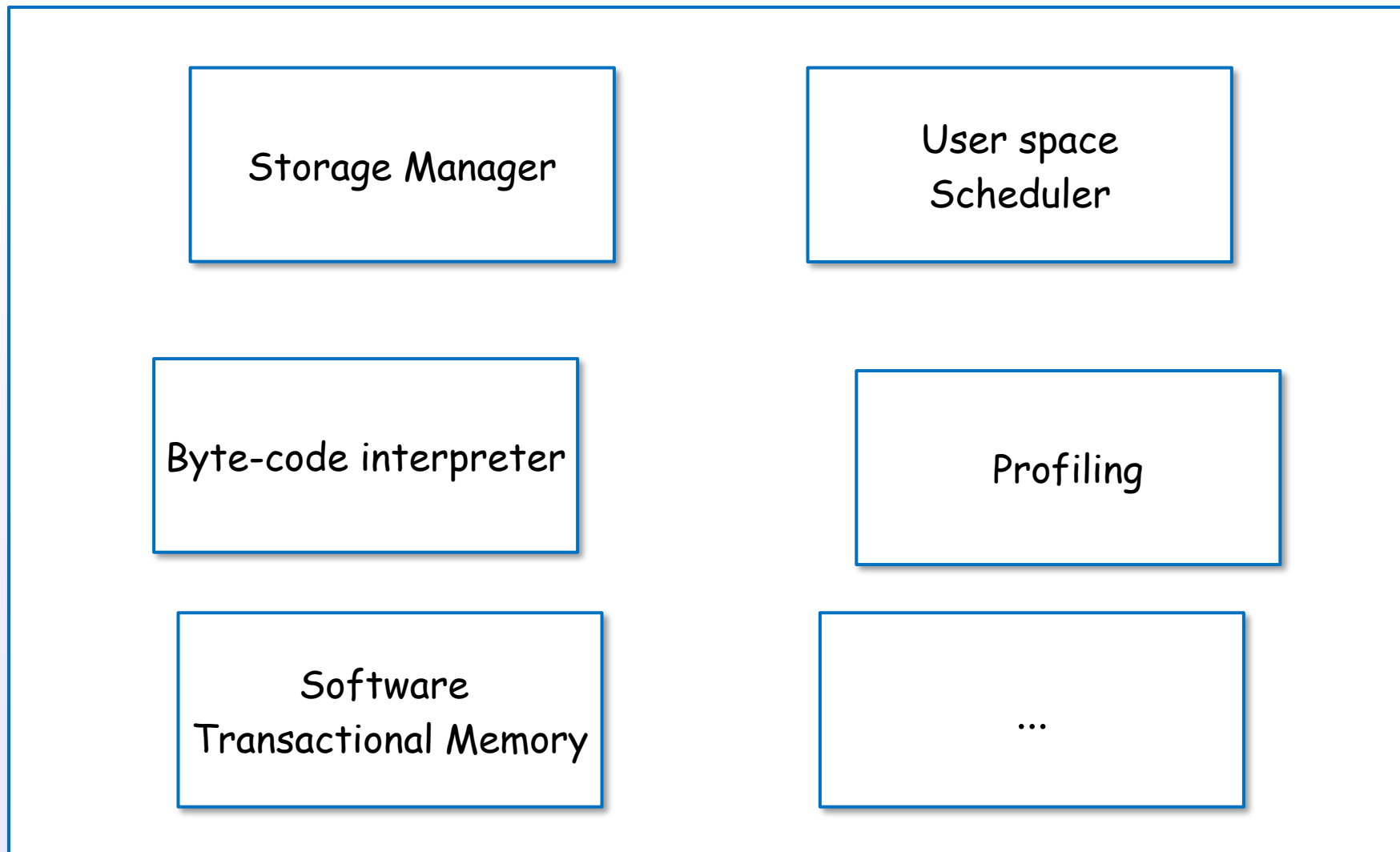

Runtime System

Generated binary includes the RTS



Runtime System includes ...

Runtime System



Development languages

The GHC is developed by some languages

compiler

(\$(TOP)/**compiler**/*)

Haskell
+
Alex (lex)
Happy (yacc)
Cmm (C--)
Assembly

runtime system

(\$(TOP)/**rts**/*)

C
+
Cmm
Assembly

library

(\$(TOP)/**libraries**/*)

Haskell
+
C

Machine layer/models

Machine layer

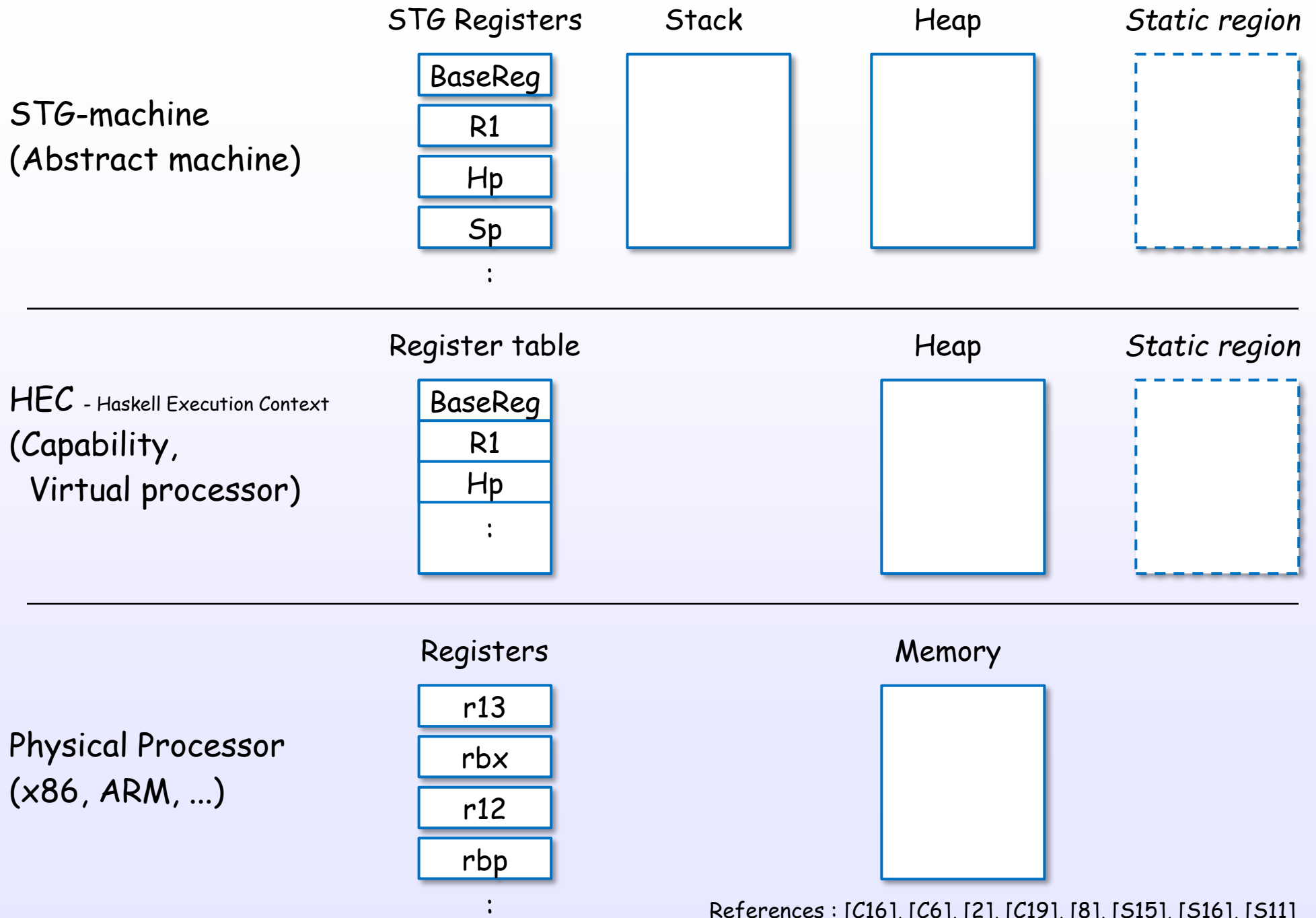
STG-machine
(Abstract machine)

HEC - Haskell Execution Context
(Capability, Virtual processor)

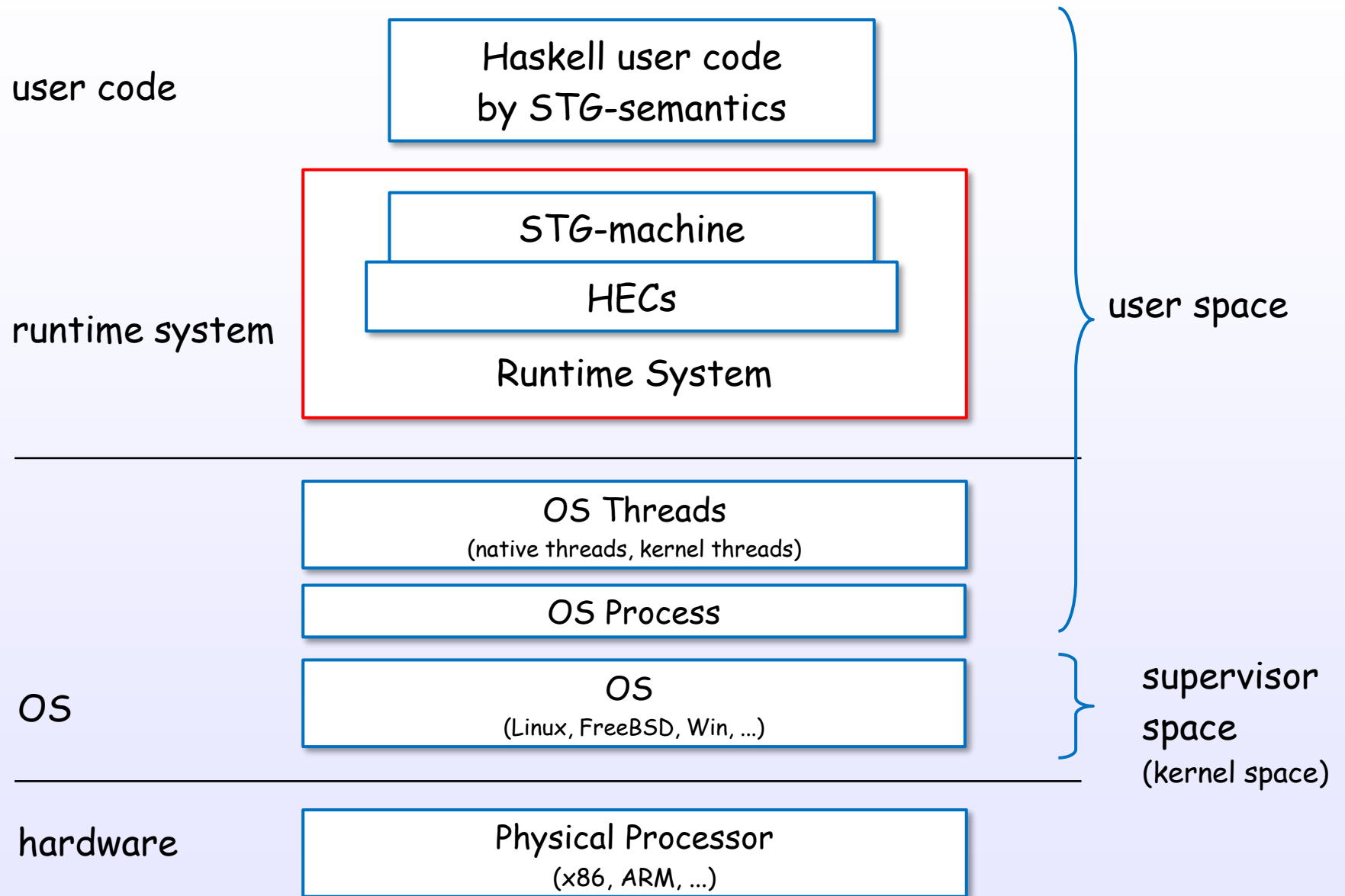
Physical Processor
(x86, ARM, ...)

Each Haskell code is executed in STG semantics.

Machine layer



Runtime system and HEC

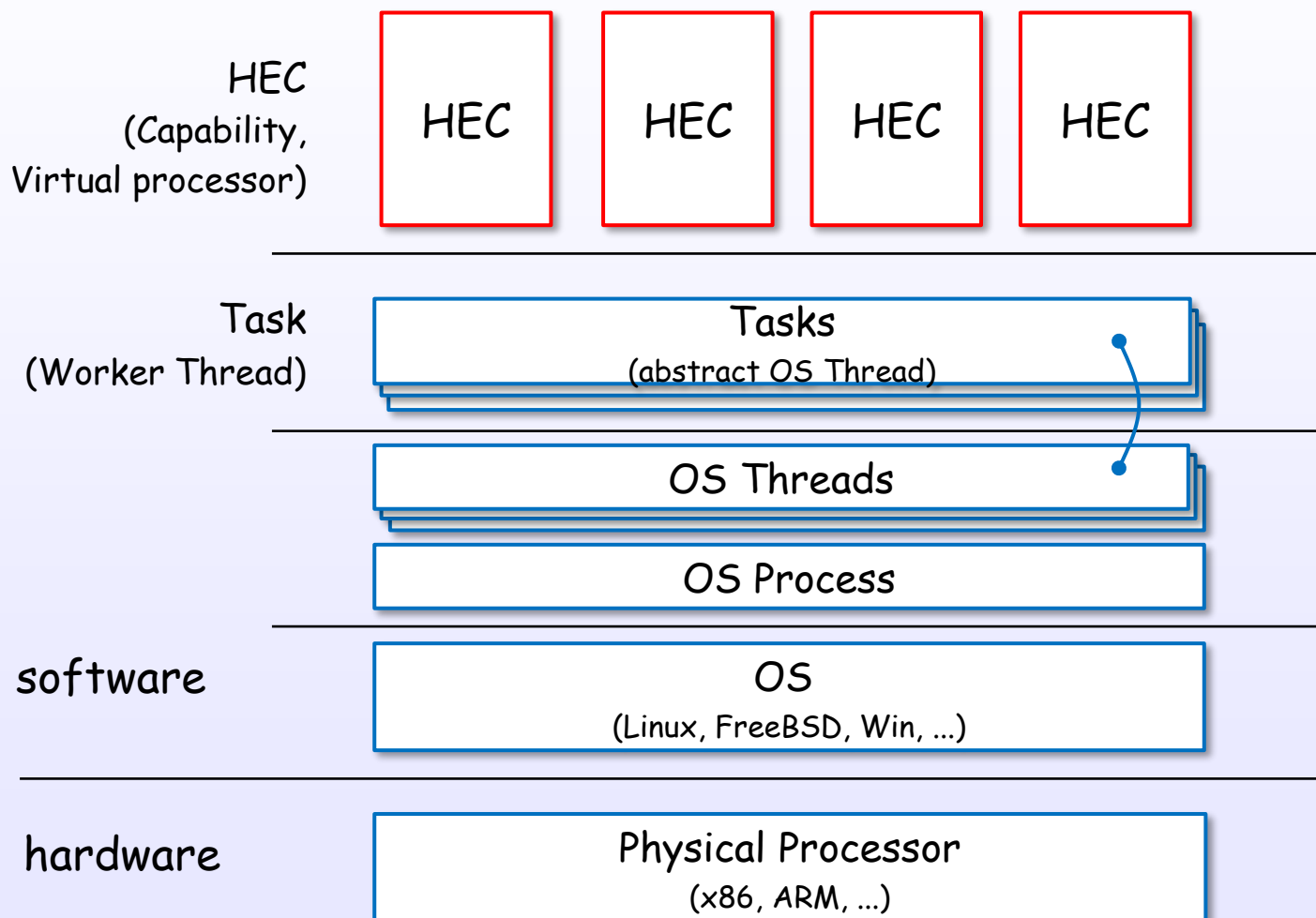


many HECs

Multi HECs can be generated by compile and runtime options :

```
$ ghc -rtsops -threaded
```

```
$ ./xxx +RTS -N4
```



HEC (Capability) data structure

[rts/Capability.h] (ghc 9.0)

```
struct Capability_ {
    StgFunTable f;
    StgRegTable r;
    uint32_t no;
    uint32_t node;
    Task *running_task;
    bool in_haskell;
    uint32_t idle;
    bool disabled;
    StgTSO *run_queue_hd;
    StgTSO *run_queue_tl;
    uint32_t n_run_queue;
    InCall *suspended_ccalls;
    uint32_t n_suspended_ccalls;
    bdescr **mut_lists;
    bdescr **saved_mut_lists;
    bdescr *pinned_object_block;
    bdescr *pinned_object_blocks;
    StgWeak *weak_ptr_list_hd;
    StgWeak *weak_ptr_list_tl;
    int context_switch;
    int interrupt;
    W_ total_allocated;
#ifdef THREADED_RTS
    Task *spare_workers;
    uint32_t n_spare_workers;
    Mutex lock;
    Task *returning_tasks_hd;
    Task *returning_tasks_tl;
    uint32_t n_returning_tasks;
    Message *inbox;
    struct PutMVar_ *putMVars;
    SparkPool *sparks;
    SparkCounters spark_stats;
#endif
    StgTVarWatchQueue *free_tvar_watch_queues;
    StgTRecChunk *free_trec_chunks;
    StgTRecHeader *free_trec_headers;
    uint32_t transaction_tokens;
}
```

register table

run queue

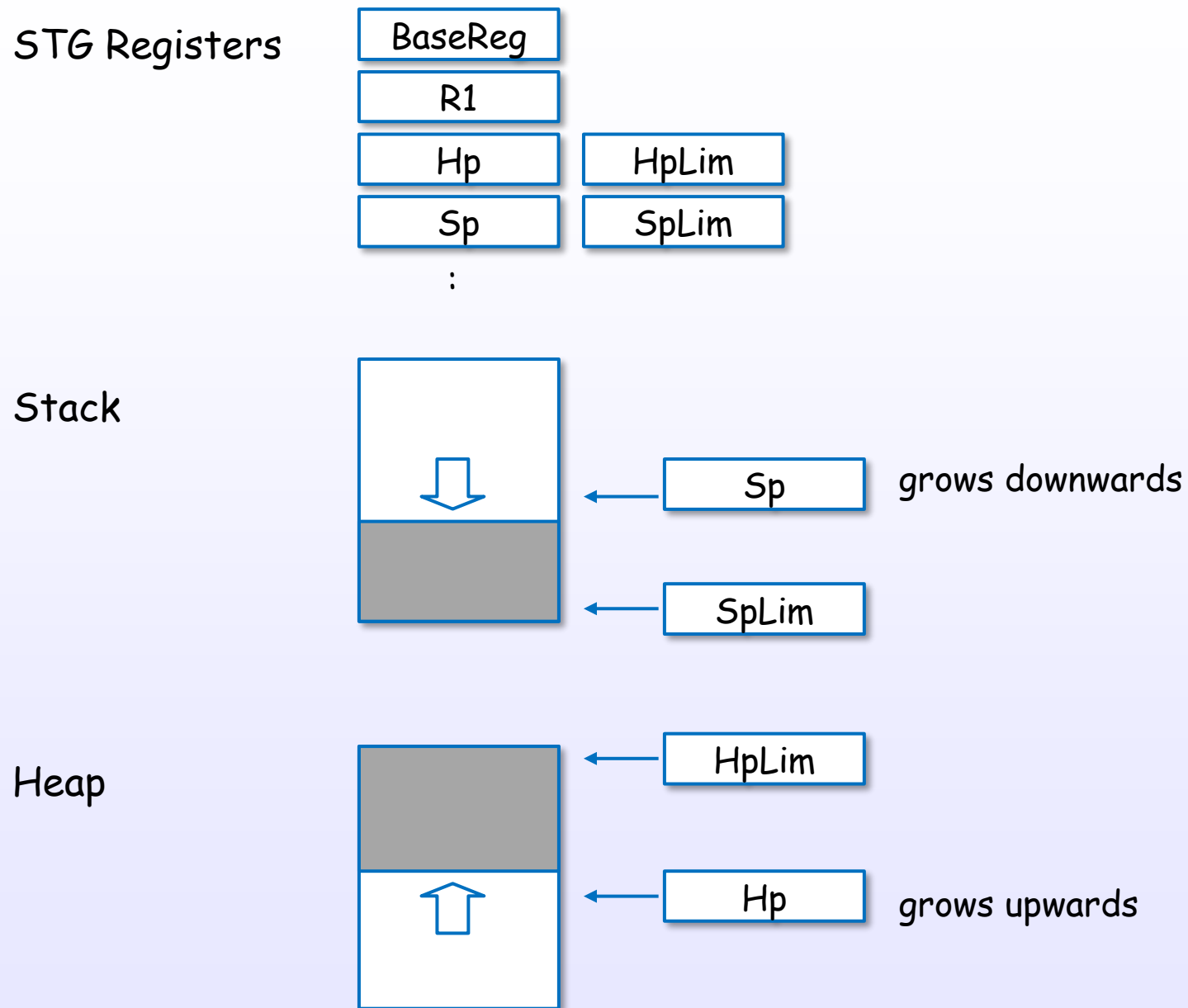
Each HEC (Capability) has a register table and a run queue and ...

Each HEC (Capability) is initialized at `initCapabilities` [rts/Capability.c]

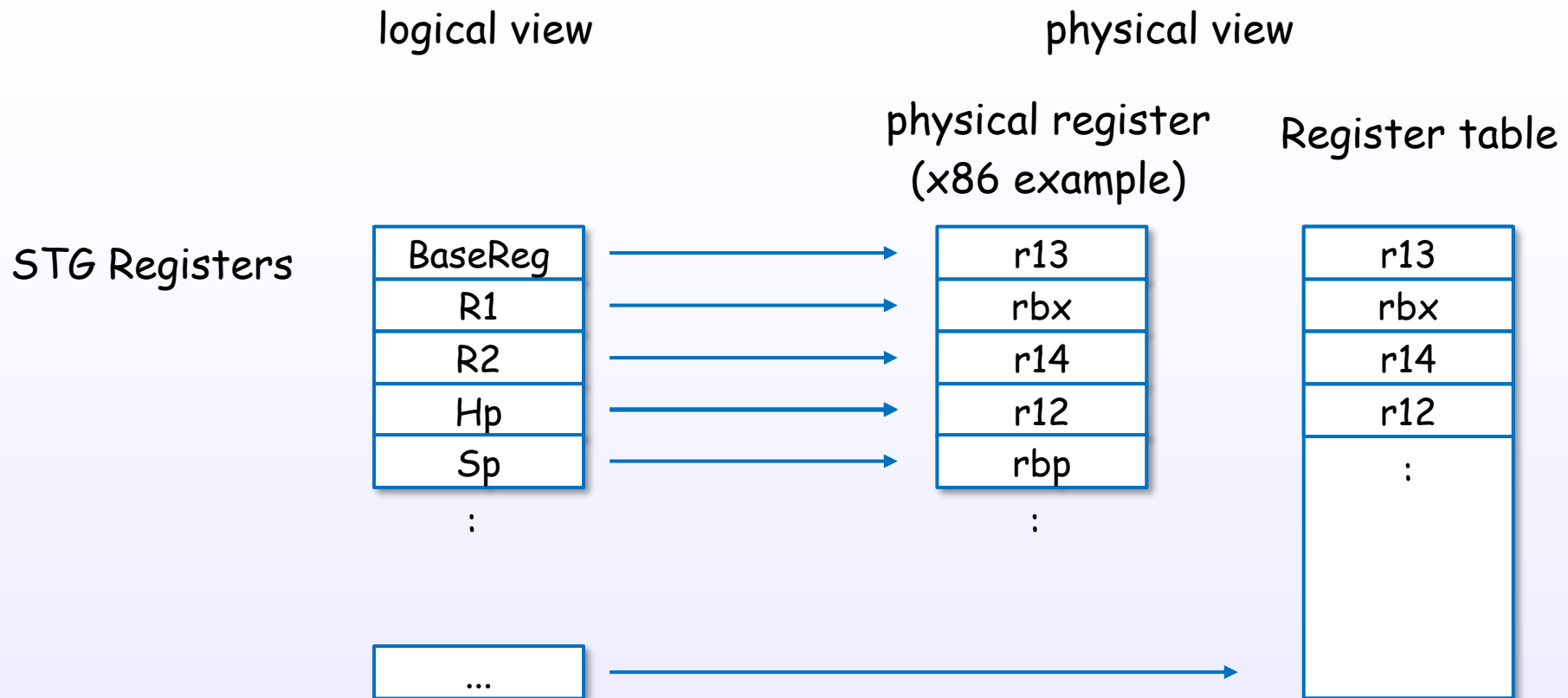
References : [S15], [S16], [C13], [C19]

STG-machine

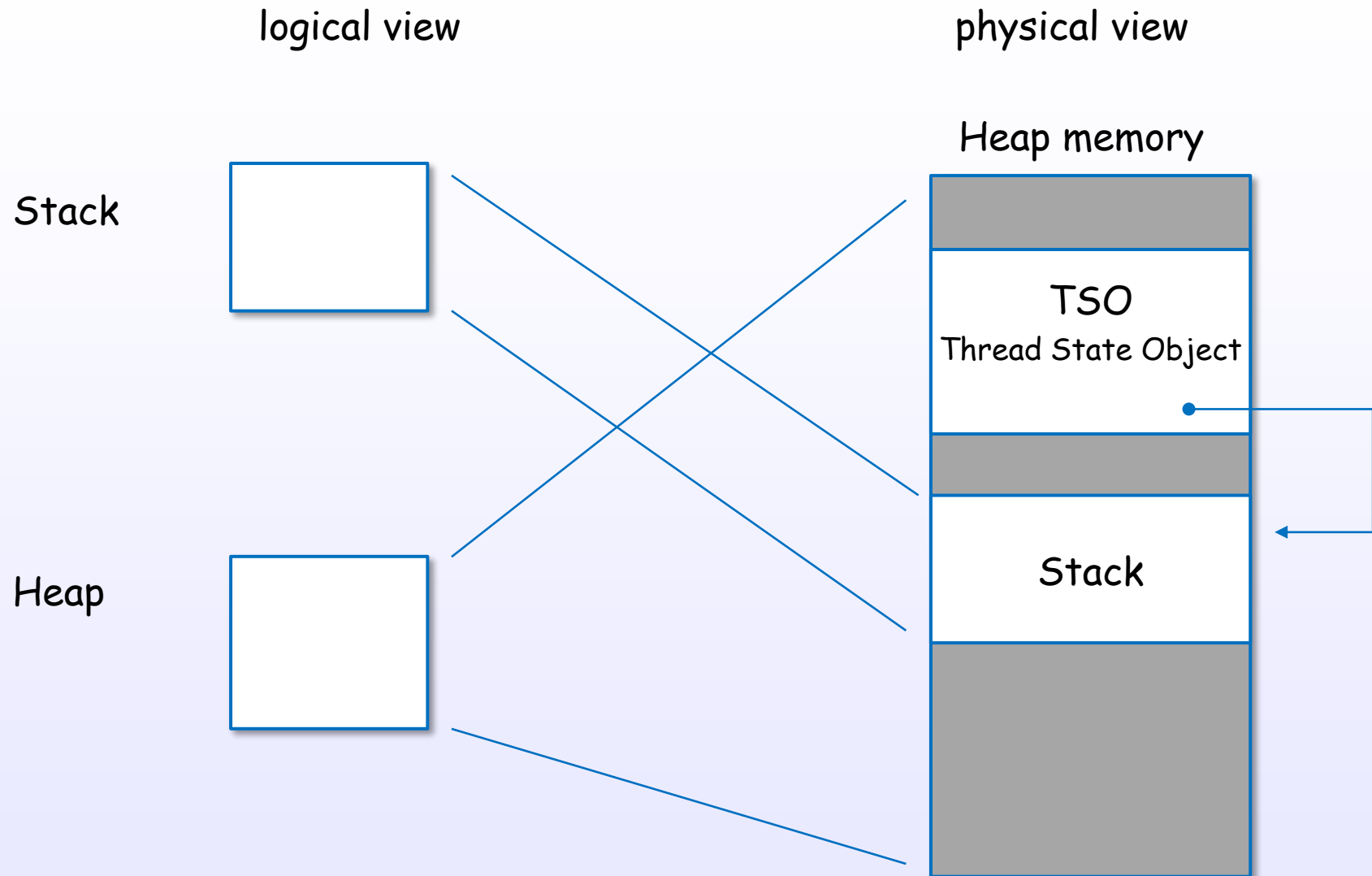
The STG-machine consists of three parts



STG-machine is mapped to physical processor



STG-machine is mapped to physical processor



A stack and a TSO object are in the heap.
The stack is stored separately from the TSO for size extension and GC.

TSO data structure

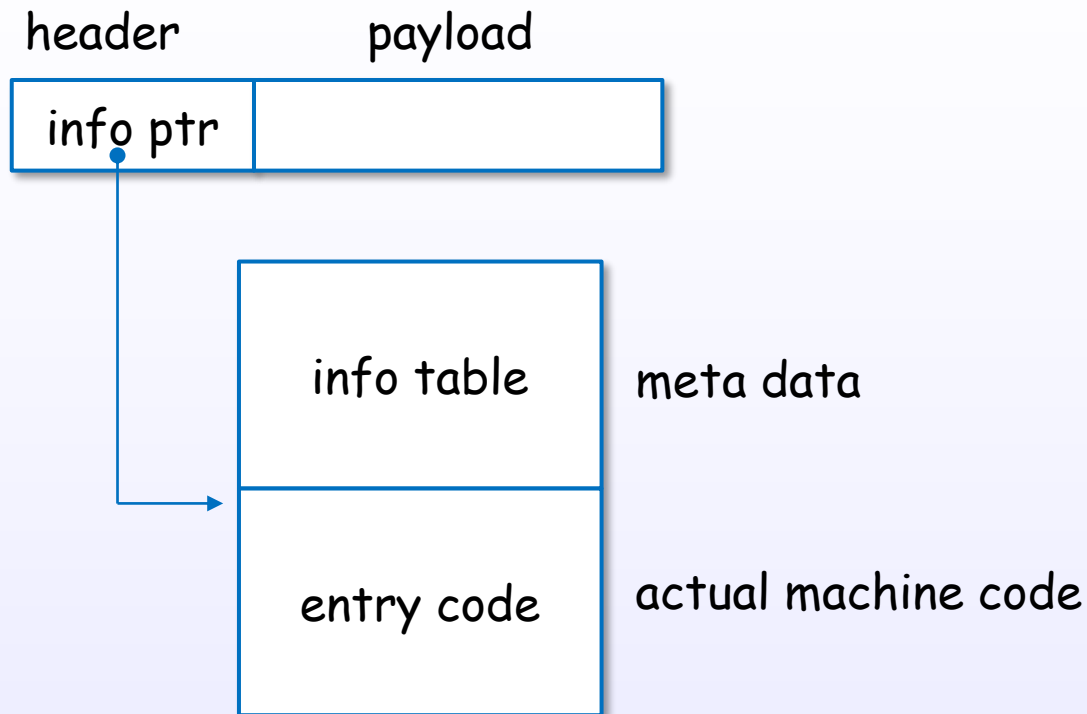
[includes/rts/storage/TSO.h] (ghc 9.0)

```
typedef struct StgTSO_ {
    StgHeader      header;
    struct StgTSO_*  _link;
    struct StgTSO_*  global_link;
    struct StgStack_* *stackobj; ← link to stack object
    StgWord16      what_next;
    StgWord16      why_blocked;
    StgWord32      flags;
    StgTSOBlockInfo block_info;
    StgThreadID    id;
    StgWord32      saved_errno;
    StgWord32      dirty;
    struct InCall_* bound;
    struct Capability_* cap;
    struct StgTRecHeader_* trec;
    struct MessageThrowTo_* blocked_exceptions;
    struct StgBlockingQueue_* bq;
    StgInt64      alloc_limit;
    StgWord32      tot_stack_size;
} *StgTSOPtr;
```

A TSO object is **only ~18words + stack**. Lightweight!

Heap objects in STG-machine

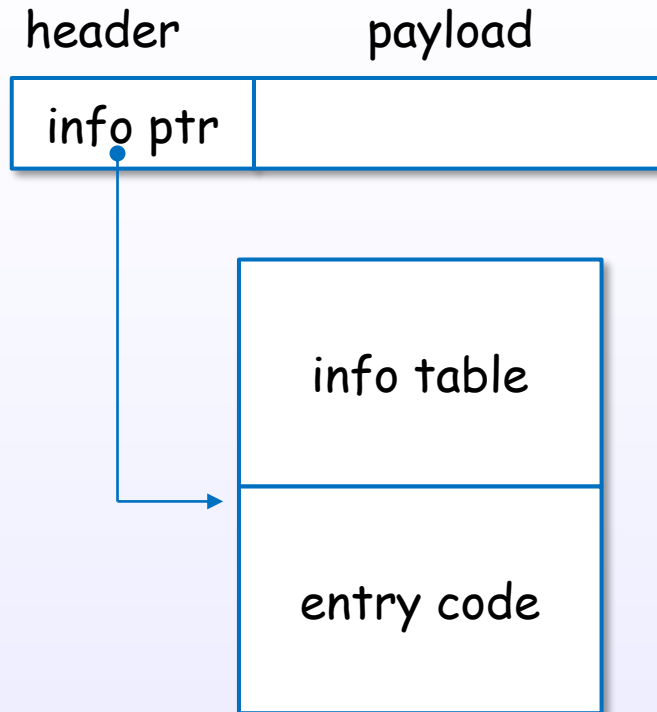
Every heap object is represented uniformly



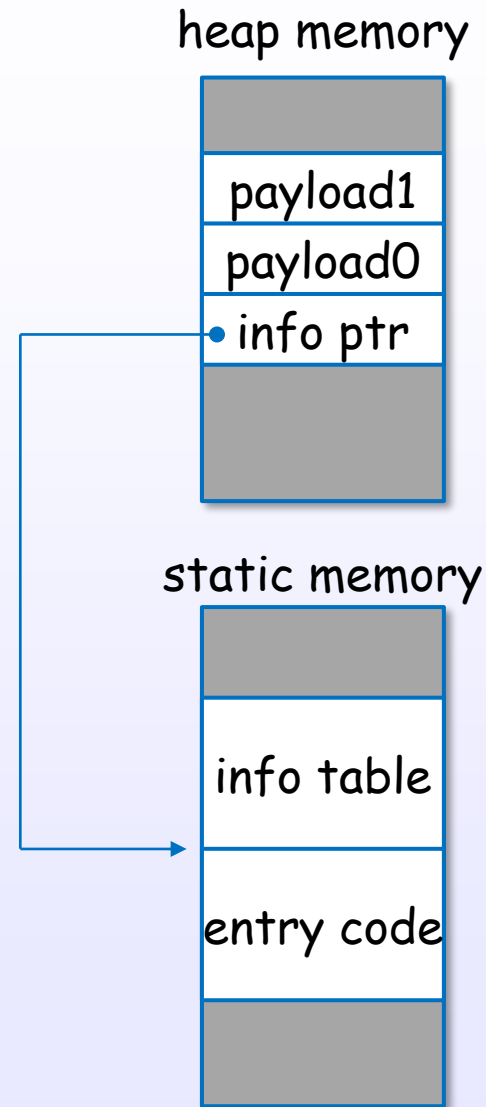
Closure (header + payload) + Info Table + Entry Code

Heap object (closure)

logical view

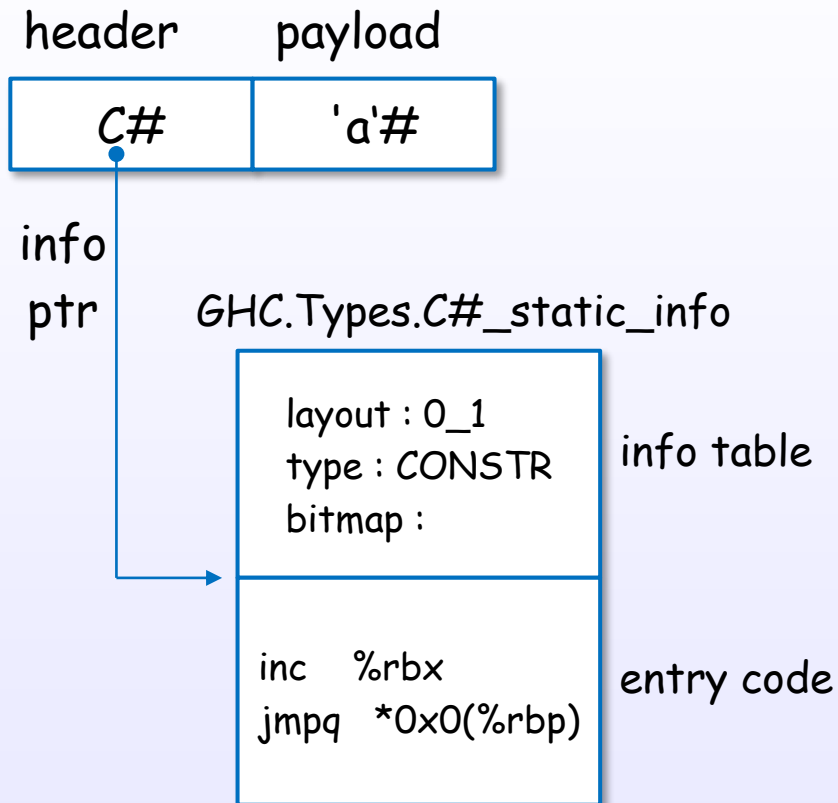


physical view

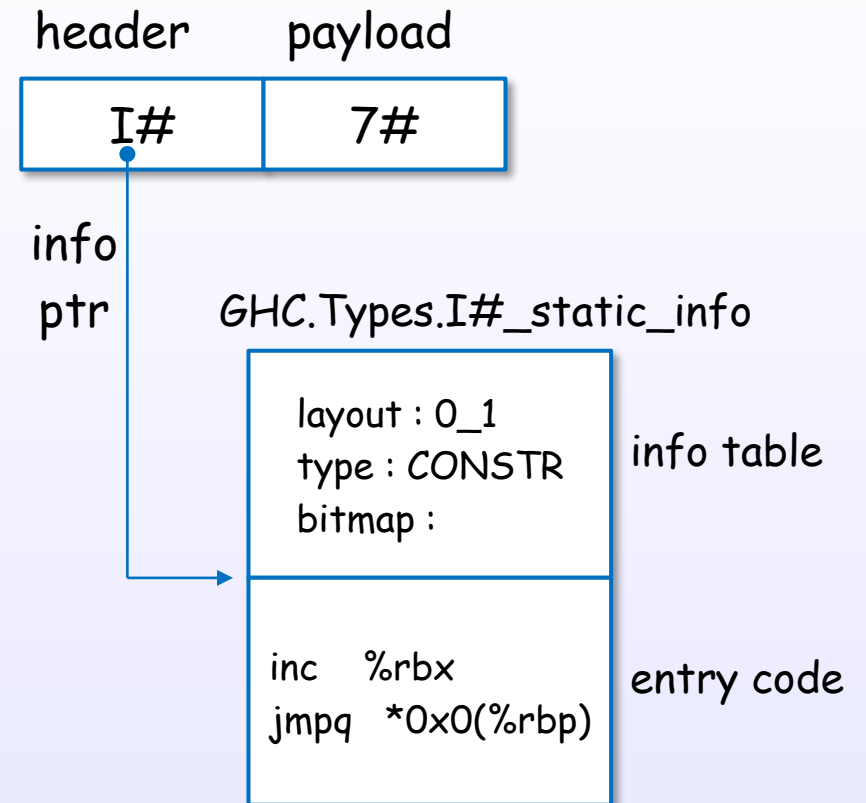


Closure examples : Char, Int

'a' :: Char



7 :: Int



Closure example (code)

[Example.hs]

```
module Example where
value1 :: Int
value1 = 7
```

STG

[ghc -O -ddump-stg Example.hs]

```
Example.value1 :: GHC.Types.Int
[GblId, Caf=NoCafRefs, Str=m. Unf=OtherCon []] =
  CCS_DONT_CARE GHC.Types.I#! [7#];
```

Cmm

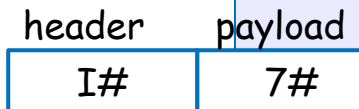
[ghc -O -ddump-opt-cmm Example.hs]

```
section ""data" . Example.value1_closure" {
  Example.value1_closure:
  const GHC.Types.I#_con_info;
  const 7;
}
```

asm

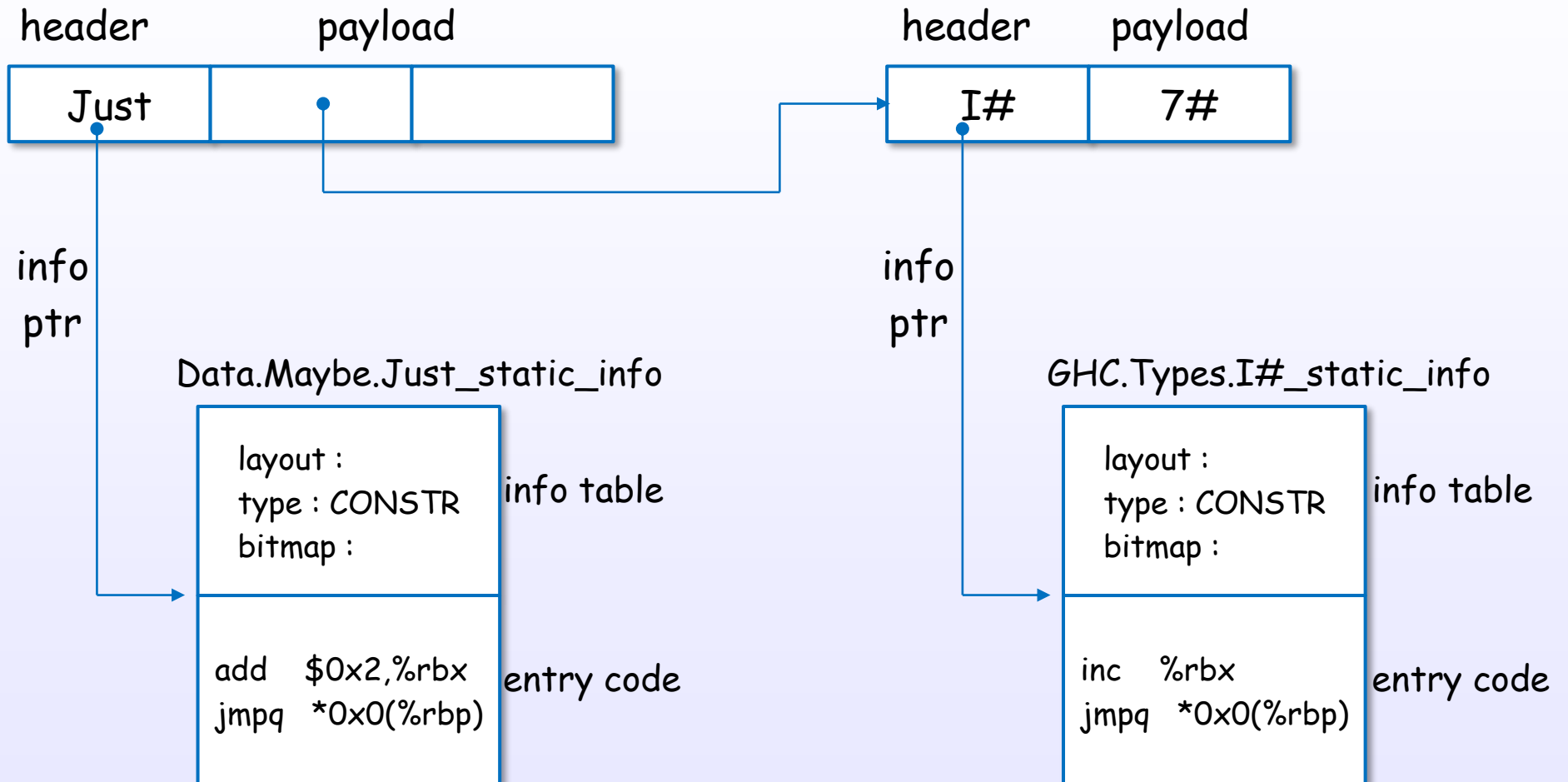
[ghc -O -ddump-asm Example.hs]

```
.section .data
.align 8
.align 1
.globl Example.value1_closure
.type Example.value1_closure, @object
Example.value1_closure:
  .quad GHC.Types.I#_con_info
  .quad 7
```

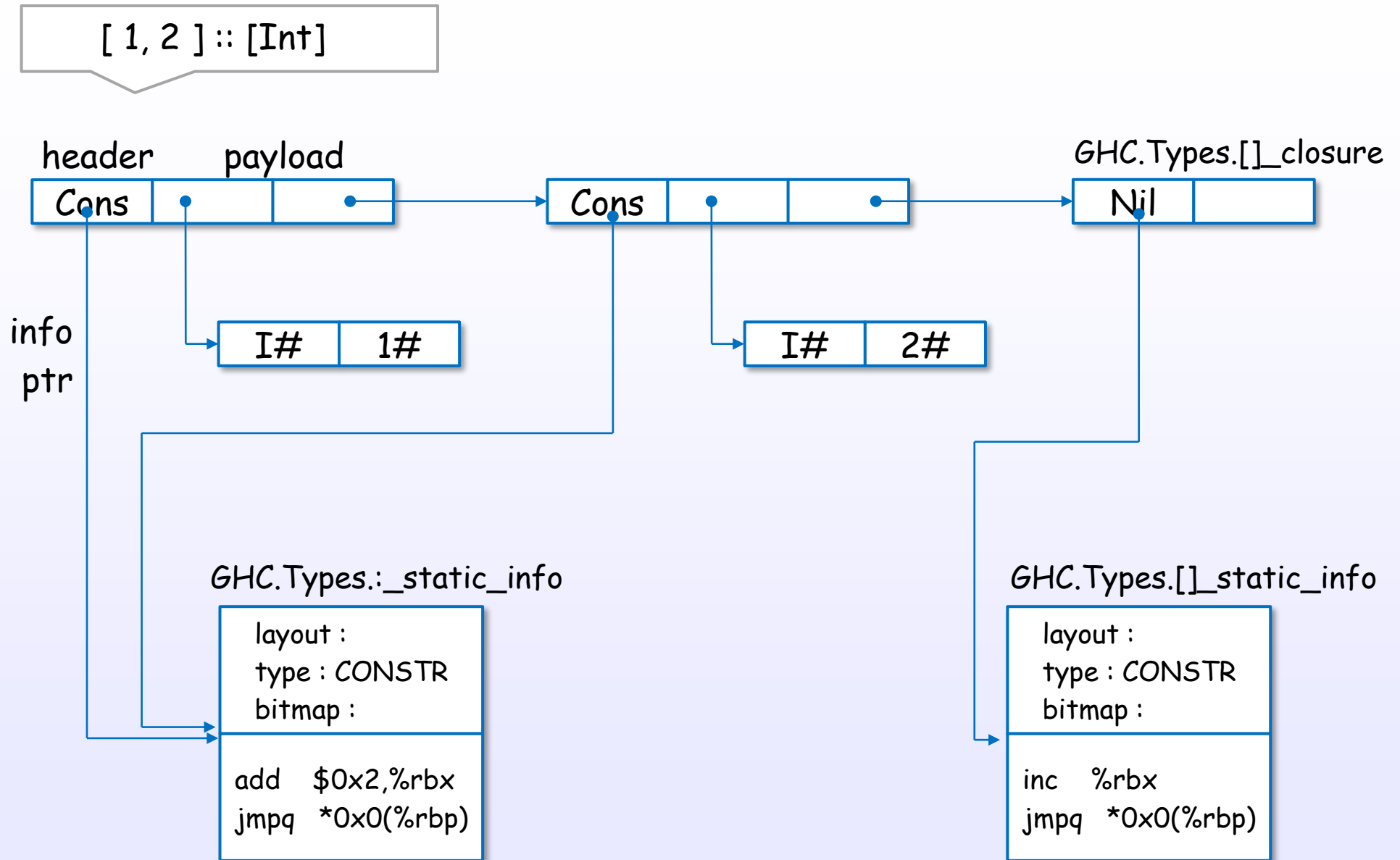


Closure examples : Maybe

Just 7 :: Maybe Int

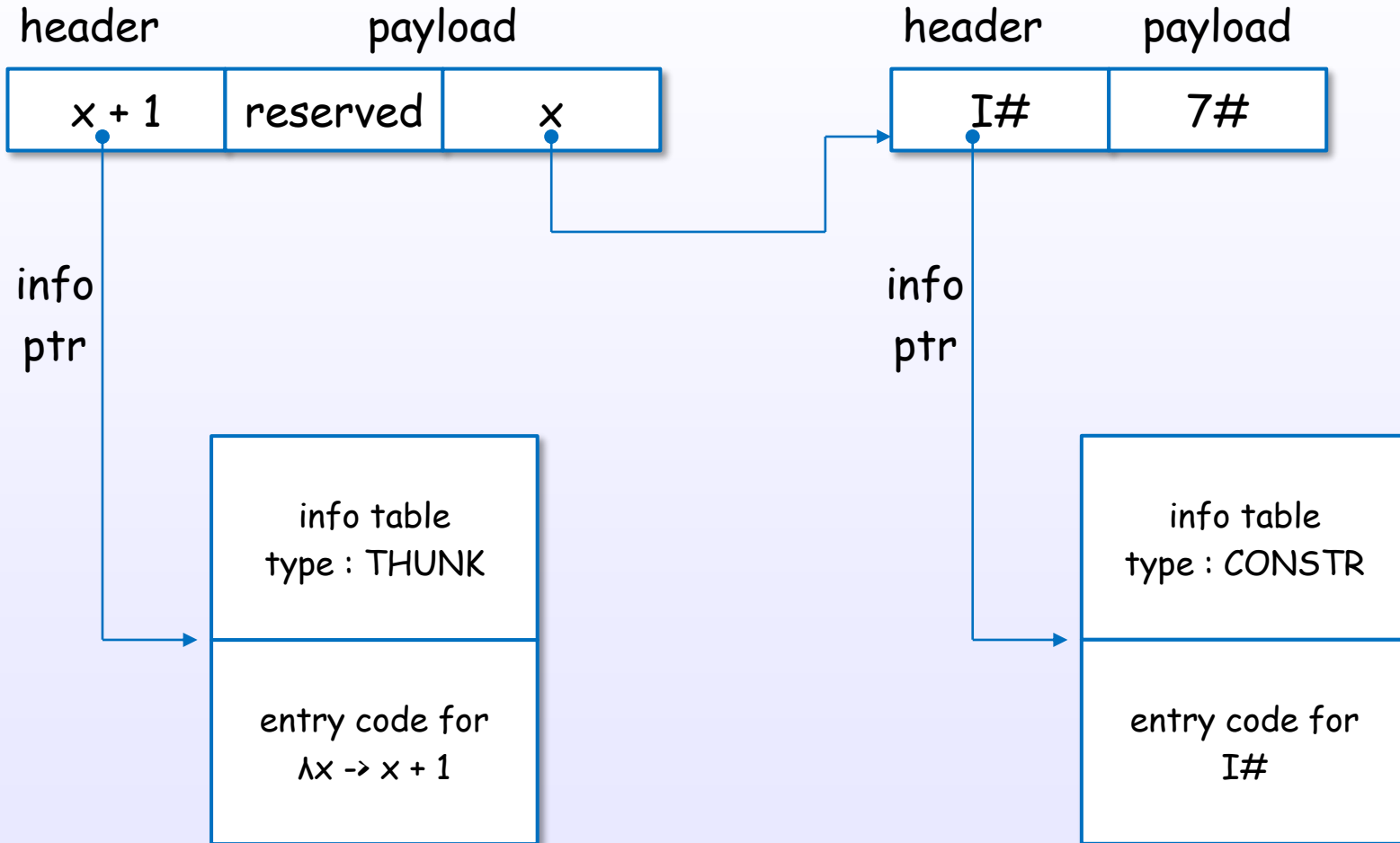


Closure examples : List



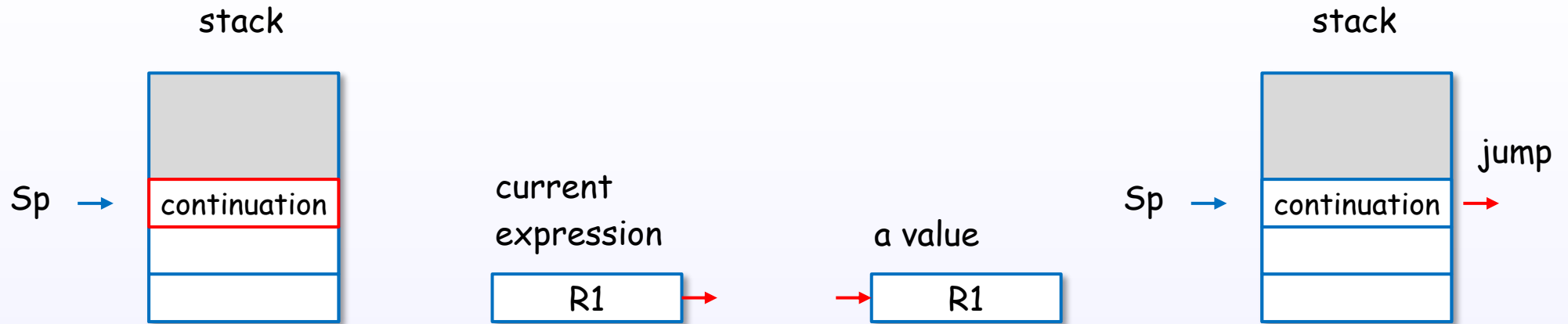
Closure examples : Think

"think"
 $x + 1 :: \text{Int}$
(free variable : $x = 7$)



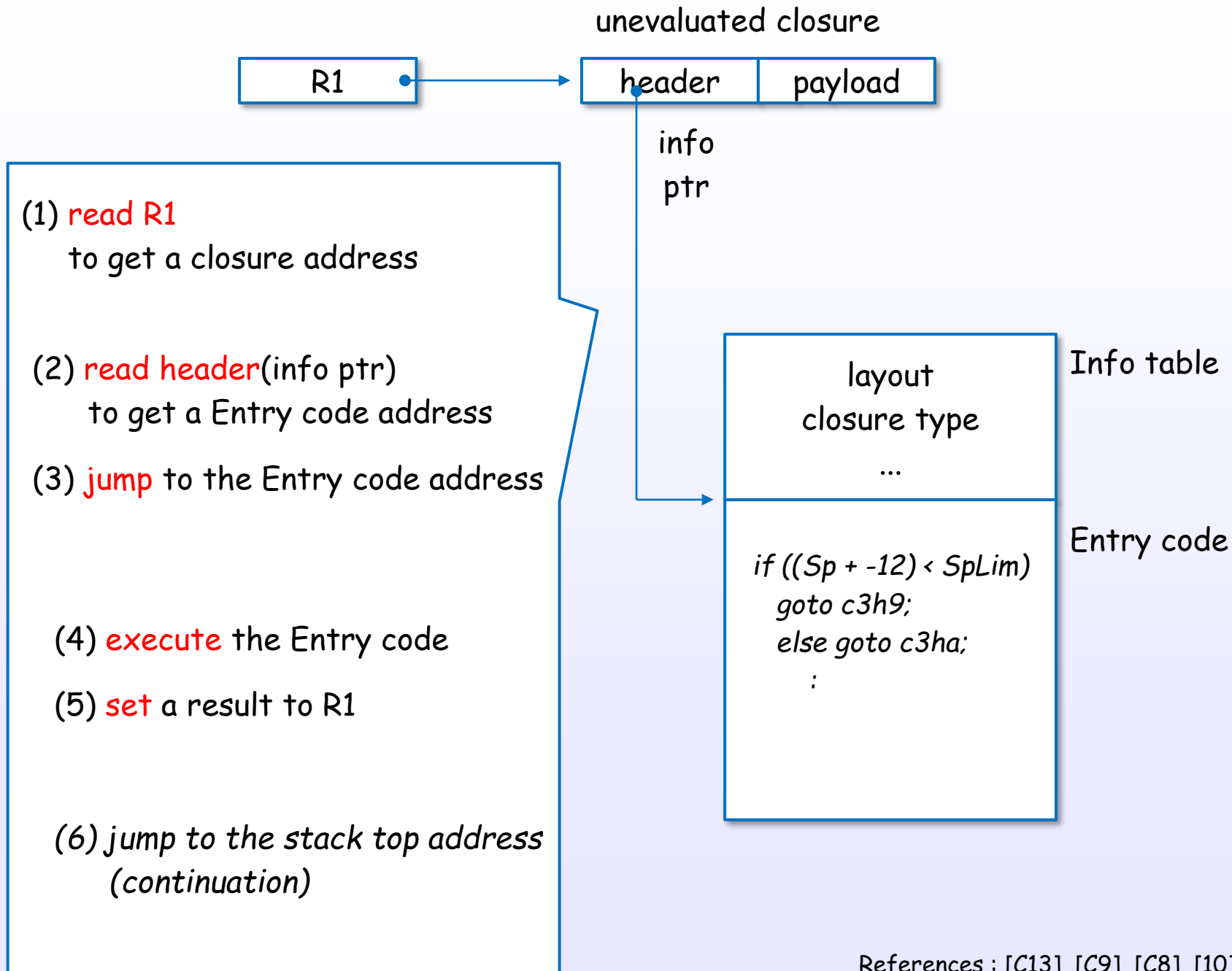
STG-machine evaluation

STG evaluation flow



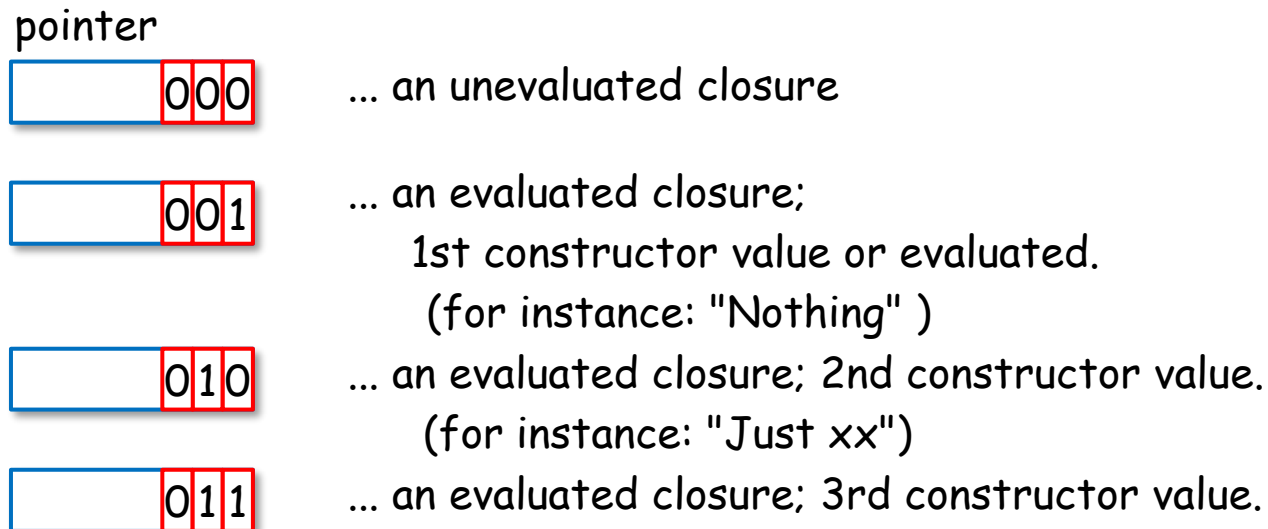
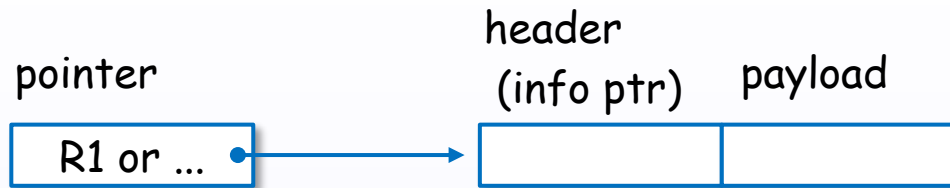
- (1) push a continuation code (next code) to the stack top
- (2) enter to R1 closure
- (3) set a result to R1
- (4) jump (return) to the stack top code
- (5) repeat from (1)

Enter to a closure



Pointer tagging

Pointer tagging



* 64bit machine case

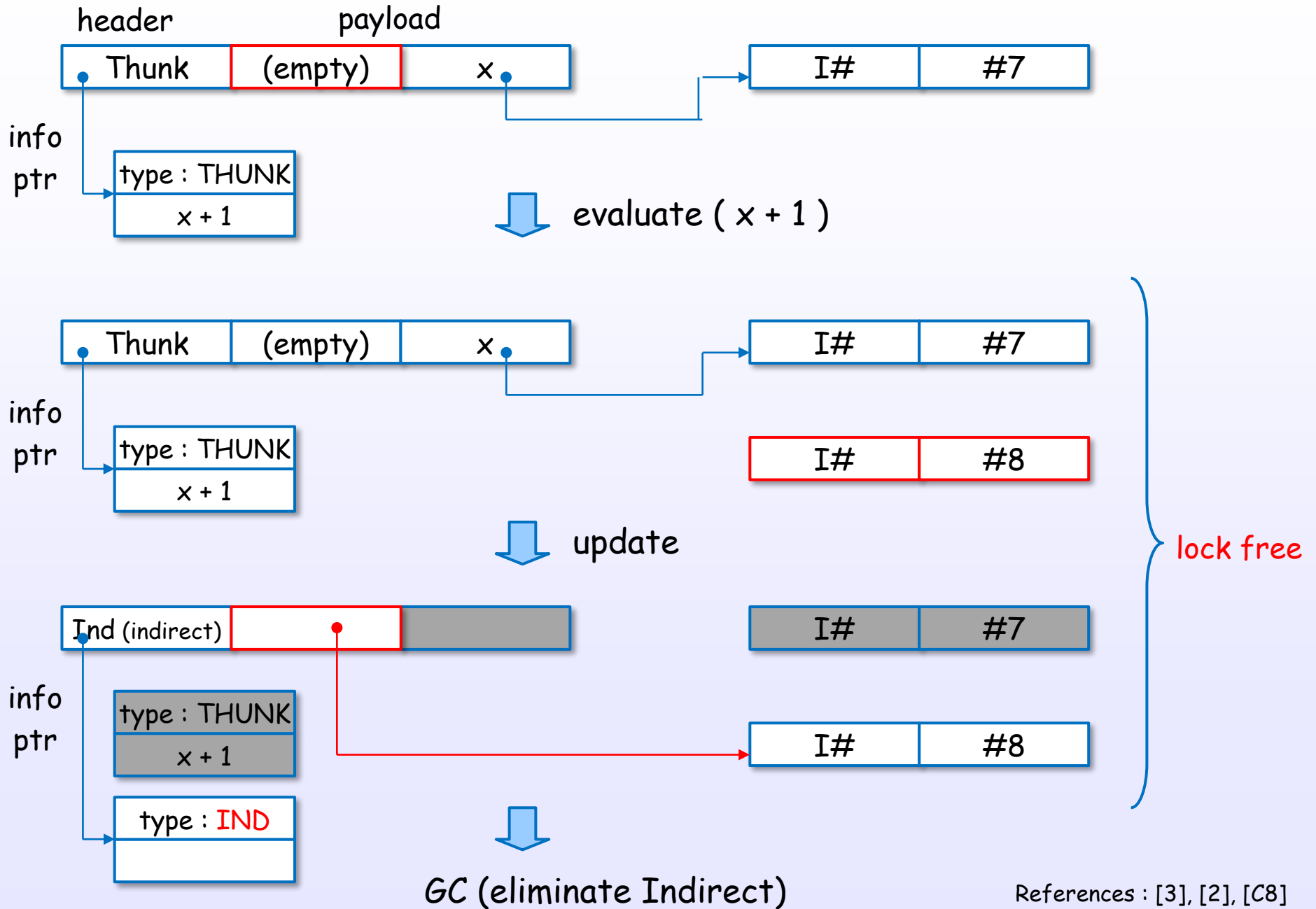
fast judgment!

check only pointer's lower bits without evaluating the closure.

Think and update

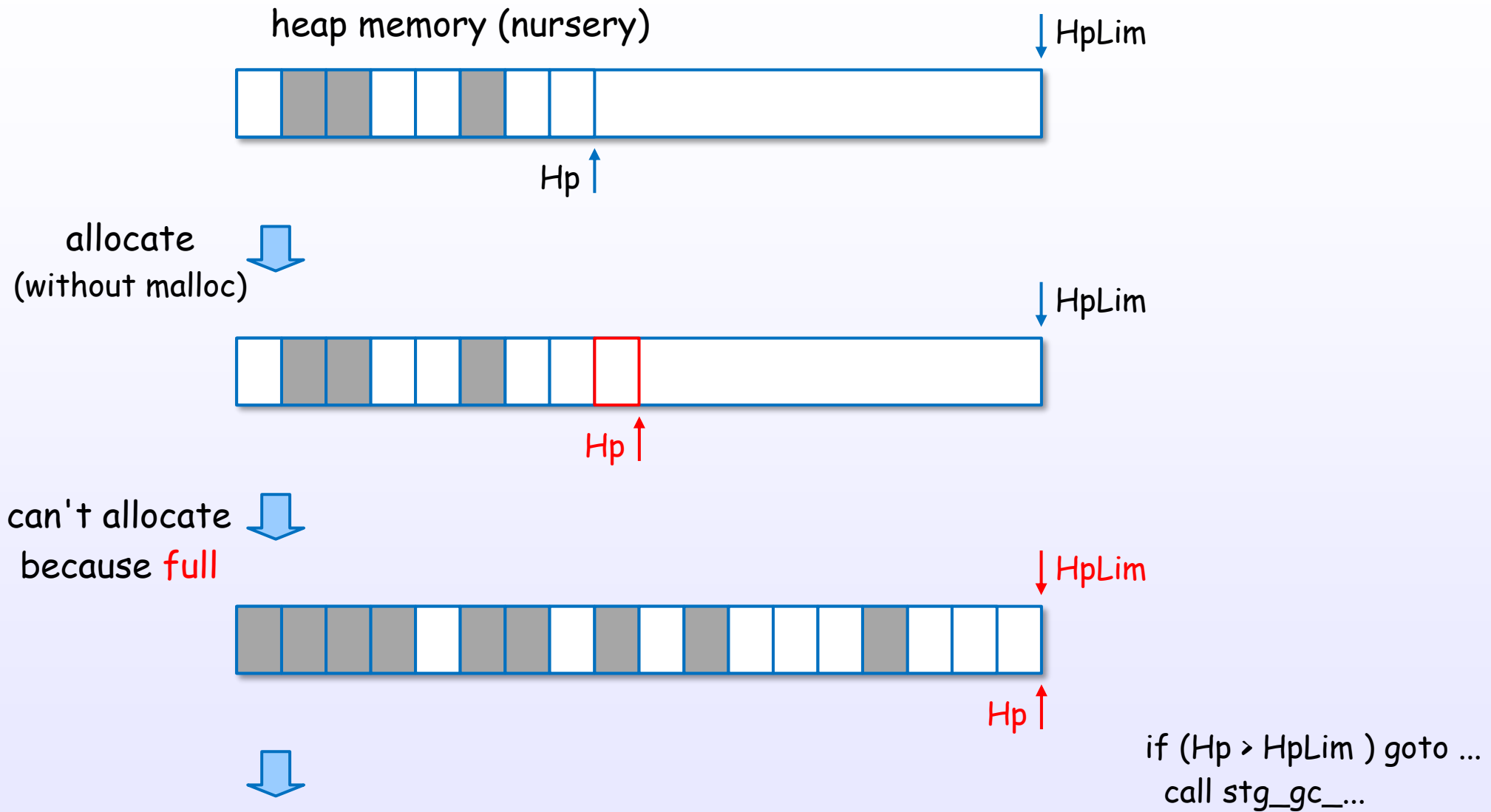
Thunk and update

"think" $x + 1 :: \text{Int}$ (free variable : $x = 7$)

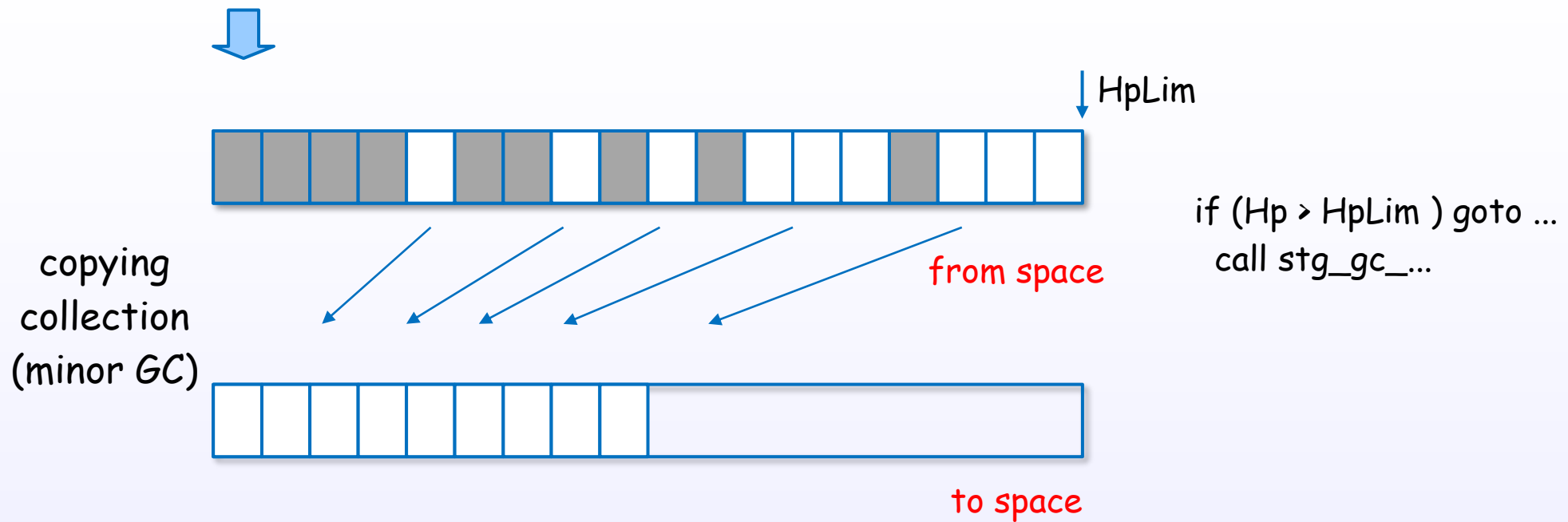


Allocate and free heap objects

Allocate heap objects

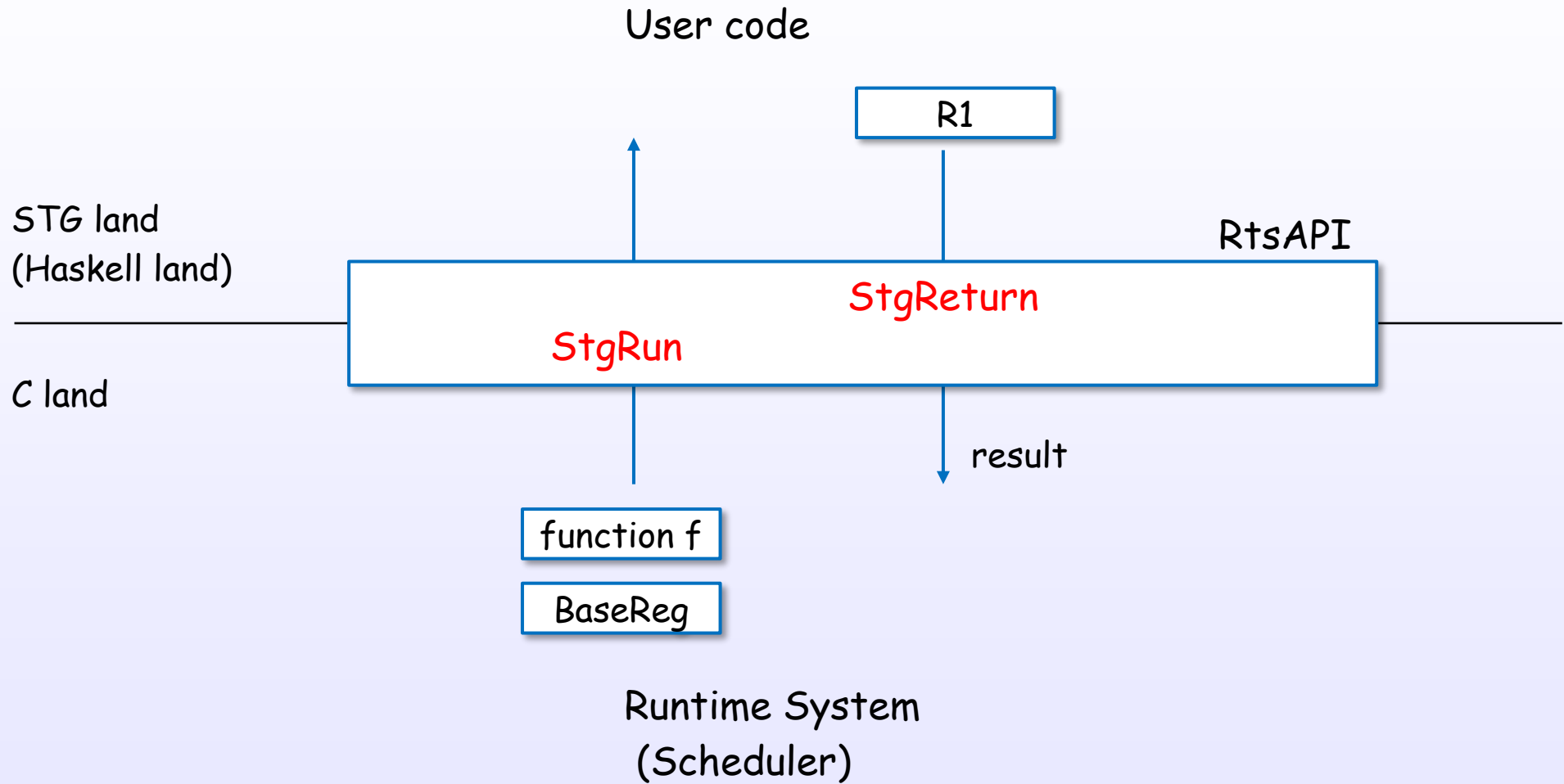


free and collect heap objects



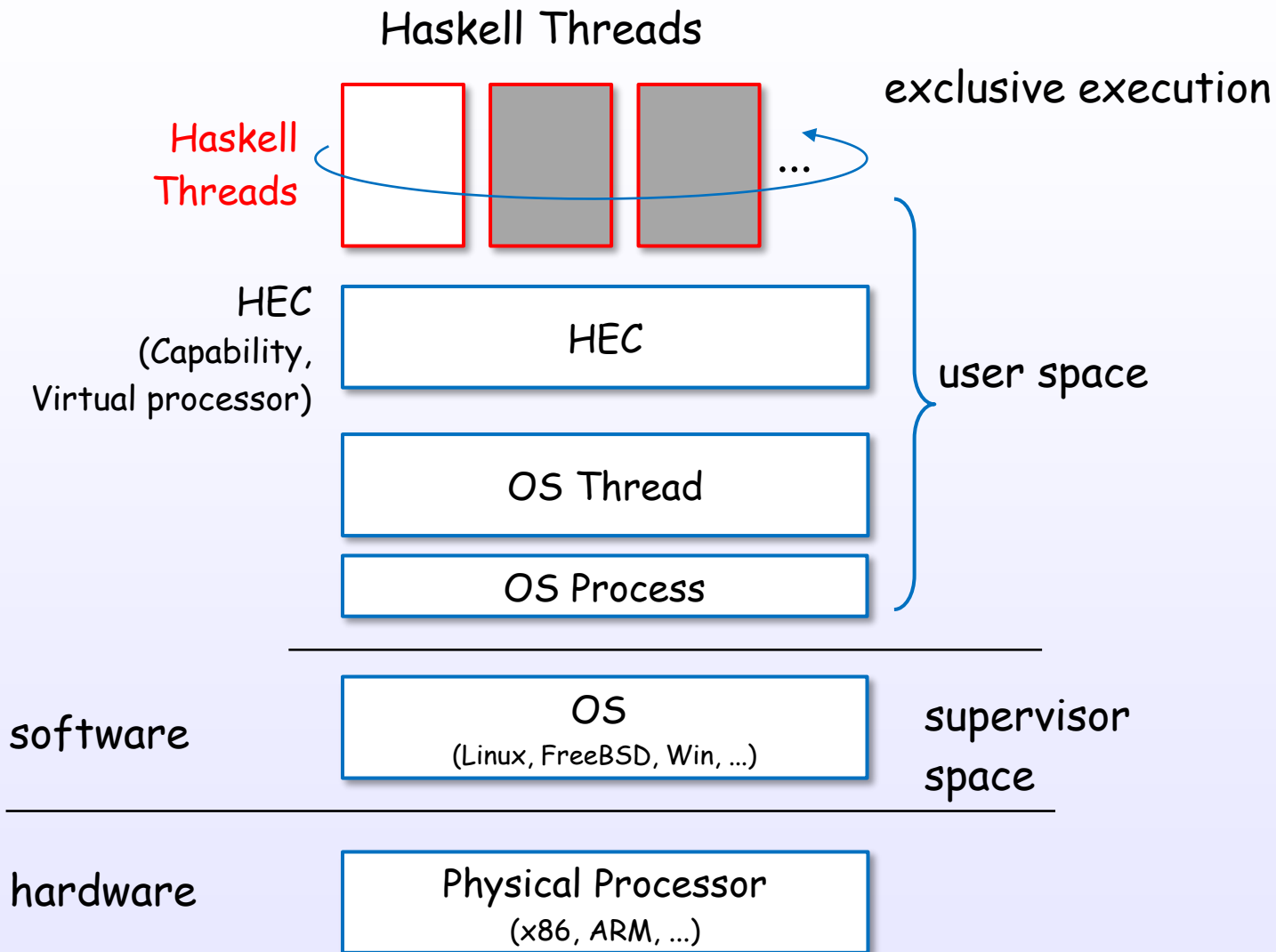
STG - C land interface

STG (Haskell) land - C land interface

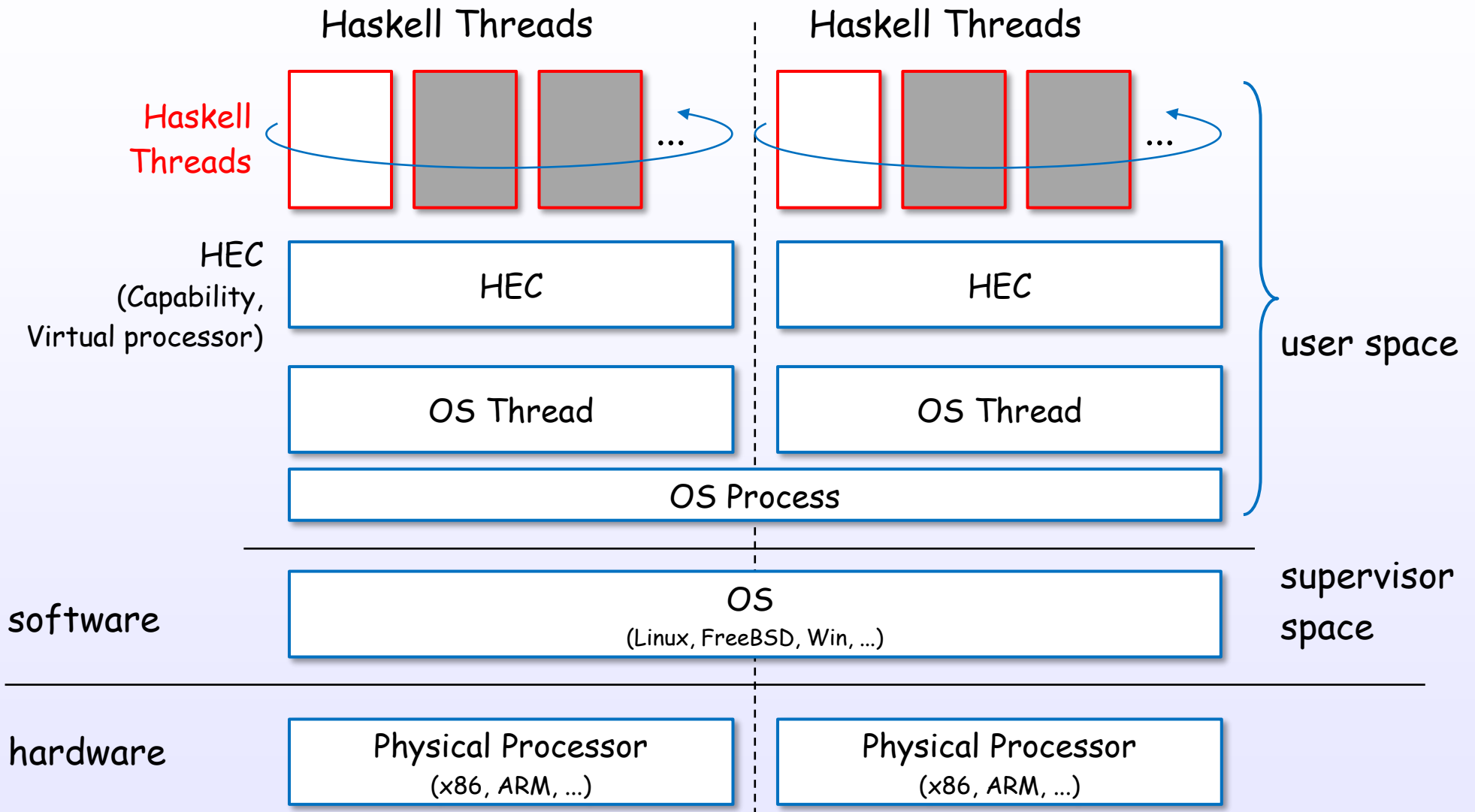


Thread

Thread layer (single core)



Thread layer (multi core)



*Threaded option case (ghc -threaded)

References : [5], [8], [9], [14], [C19], [C13], [19], [S17], [S16], [S23], [S22], [S14]

Thread context switch

Threads and context switch

logical view

Thread #0

Thread #1

Thread #2

Thread states

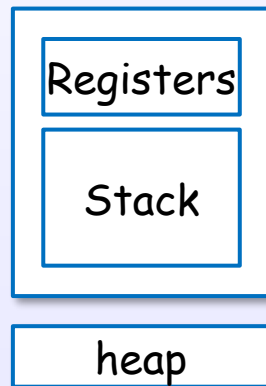


interleaved
exclusive execution

load
state

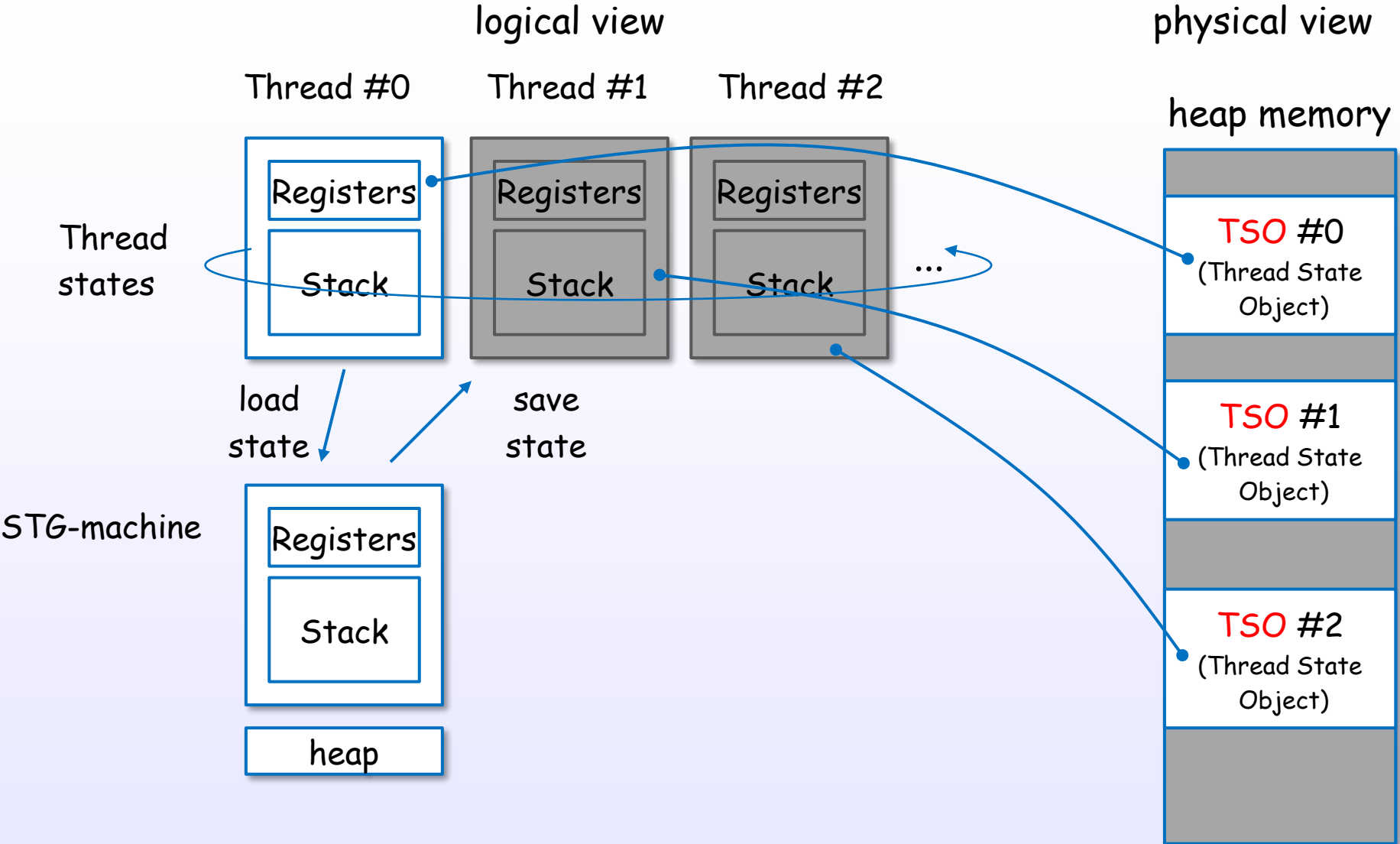
save
state

STG-machine



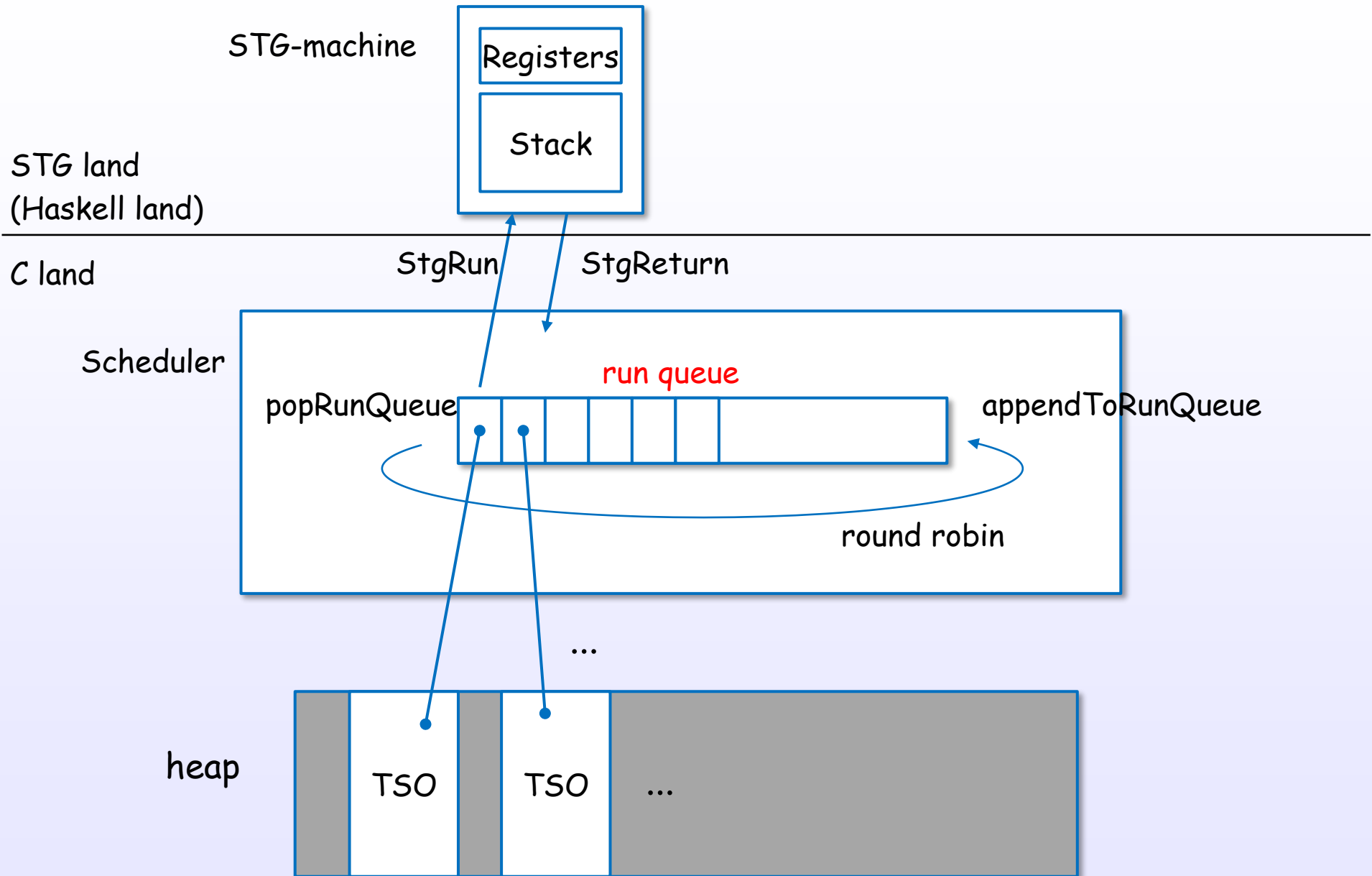
execution and
pre-empted via the context switch

Threads and TSOs

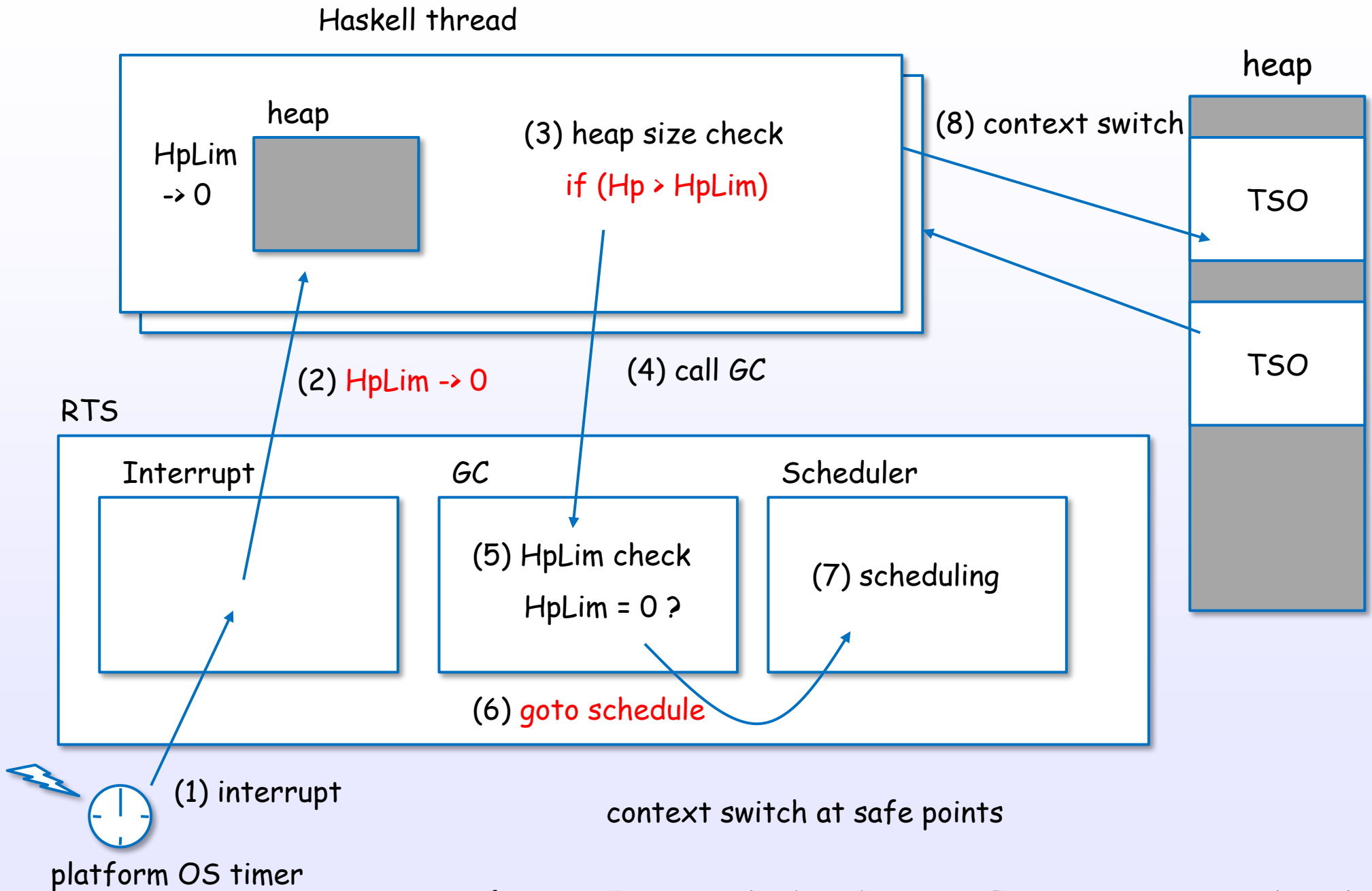


References : [5], [8], [9], [14], [C19], [C13], [19], [S17], [S16], [S23], [S22], [S14]

Scheduling by run queue



Context switch flow



Context switch flow (code)

stg_gc_noregs

```
if (HpLim == 0) {
```

```
  jump stg_returnToSched [R1];
```

stg_returnToSched

```
W_ r1;  
r1 = R1; // foreign calls may clobber R1  
SAVE_THREAD_STATE();  
foreign "C" threadPaused(MyCapability()  
  "ptr", CurrentTSO);  
R1 = r1;  
jump StgReturn [R1];
```

STG land
(Haskell land)

C land

```
cap->r.rHpLim = NULL;
```

schedule

stopCapability
contextSwitchCapability
contextSwitchAllCapabilities
handle_tick

CreateTimerQueue

initTicker

initTimer

startTimer

hs_init_ghc

hs_main

next
handle_tick ..

OS

*Windows case

References : [5], [8], [9], [14], [C19], [C13], [19], [S17], [S16], [S21], [S23], [S22], [S14], [S24]

Creating main and sub threads

Create a main thread

Runtime
System

Runtime system bootstrap code [rts/RtsAPI.c]

```
rts_evalLazyIO
  createIOThread
    createThread ... (1), (2), (3)
    pushClosure ... (4)
  scheduleWaitThread
    appendToRunQueue ... (5)
```

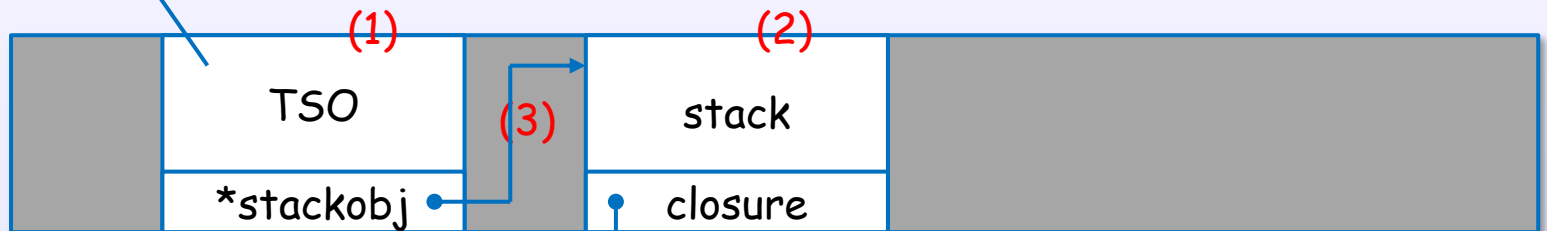
scheduler

run queue

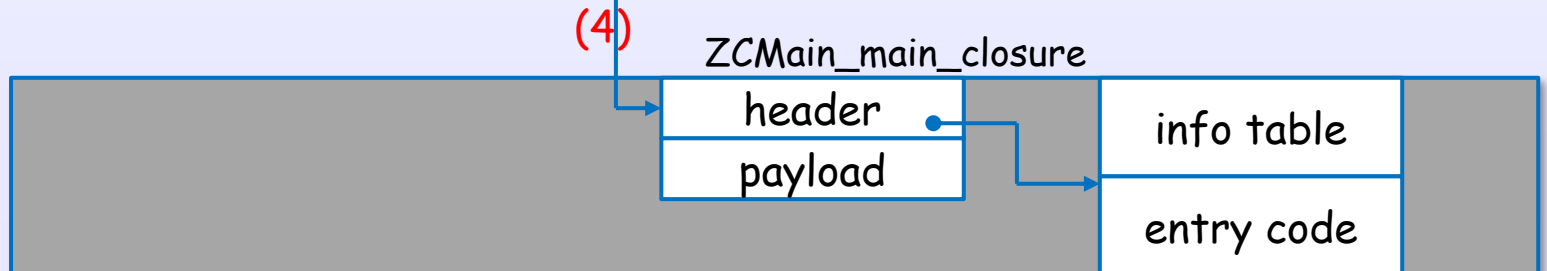


(5)

heap memory



static memory



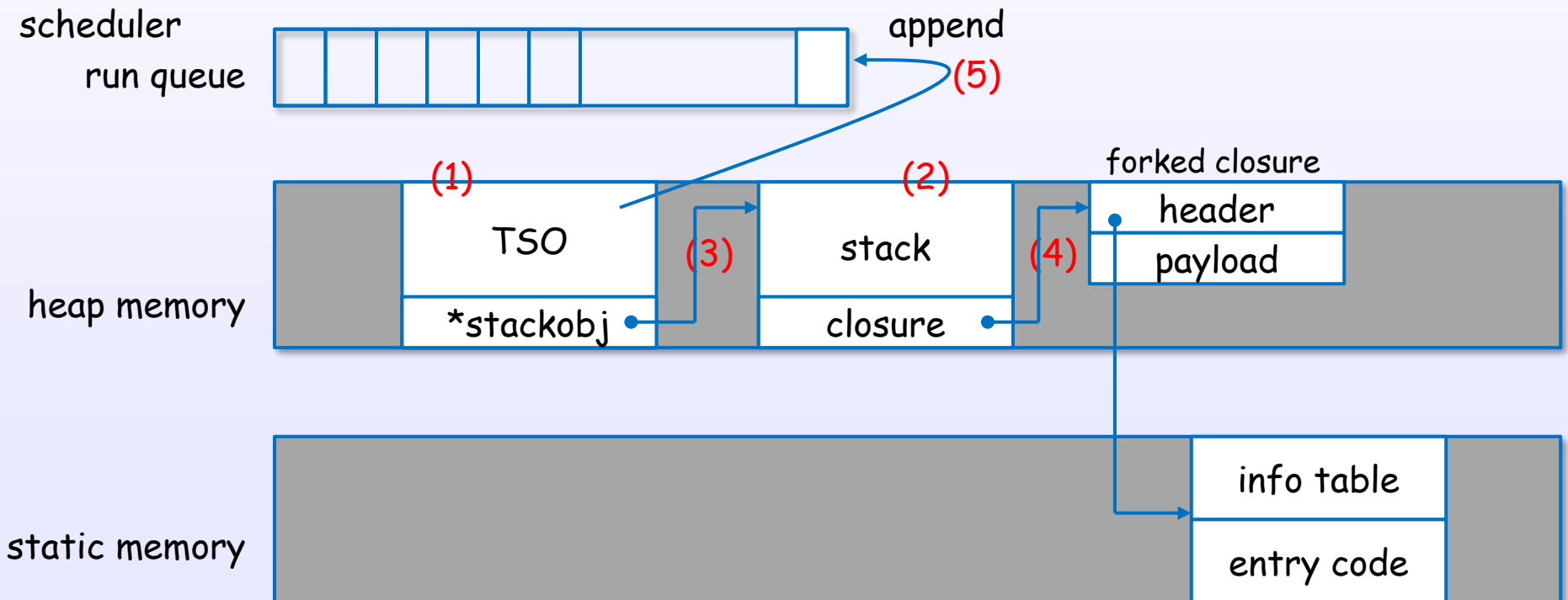
Create a sub thread using forkIO

Haskell Threads

```
forkIO
  stg_forkzh
    ccall createIOThread ... (1), (2), (3), (4)
    ccall scheduleThread ... (5)
```

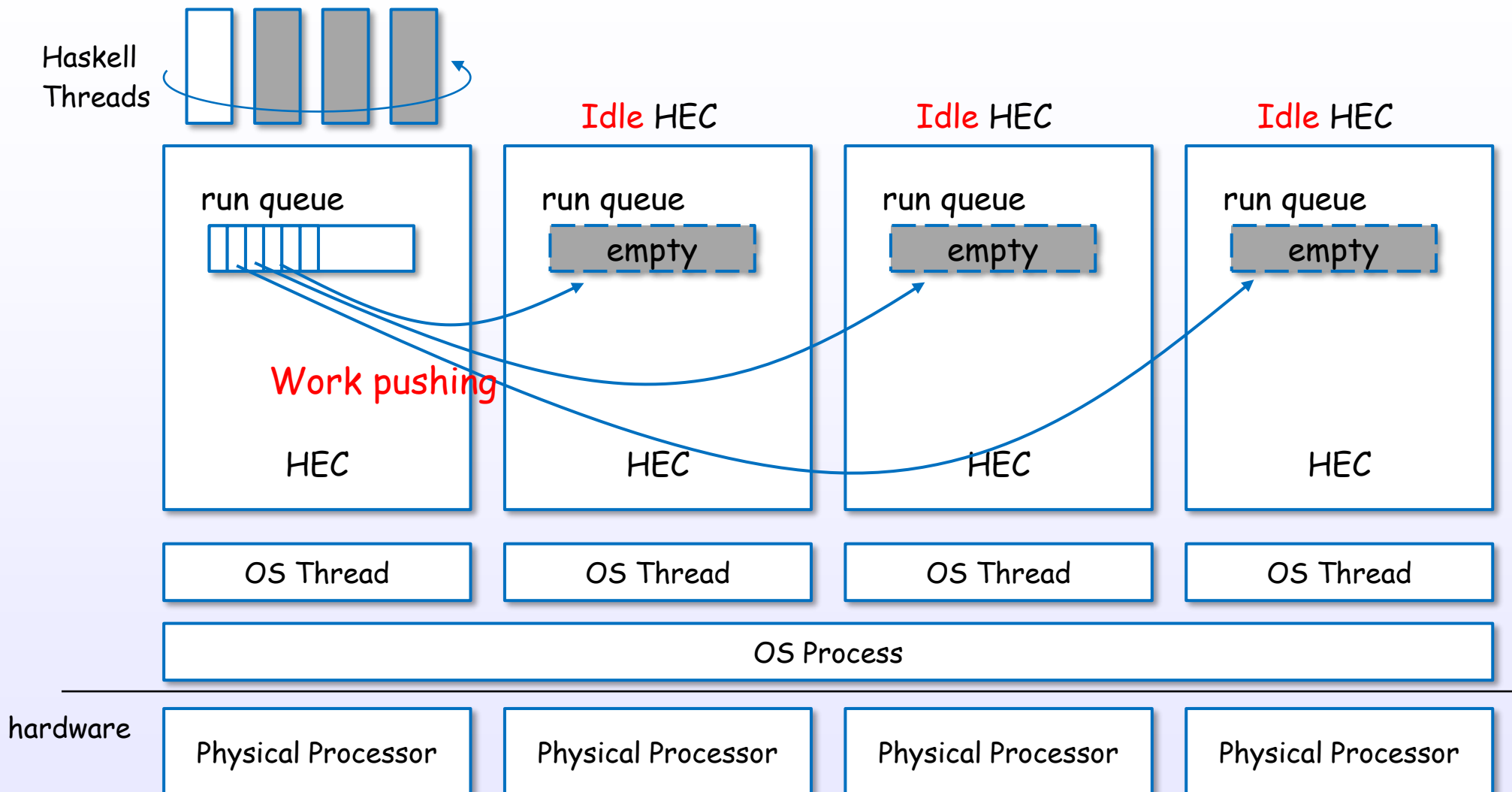
User code

Runtime System



Thread migration

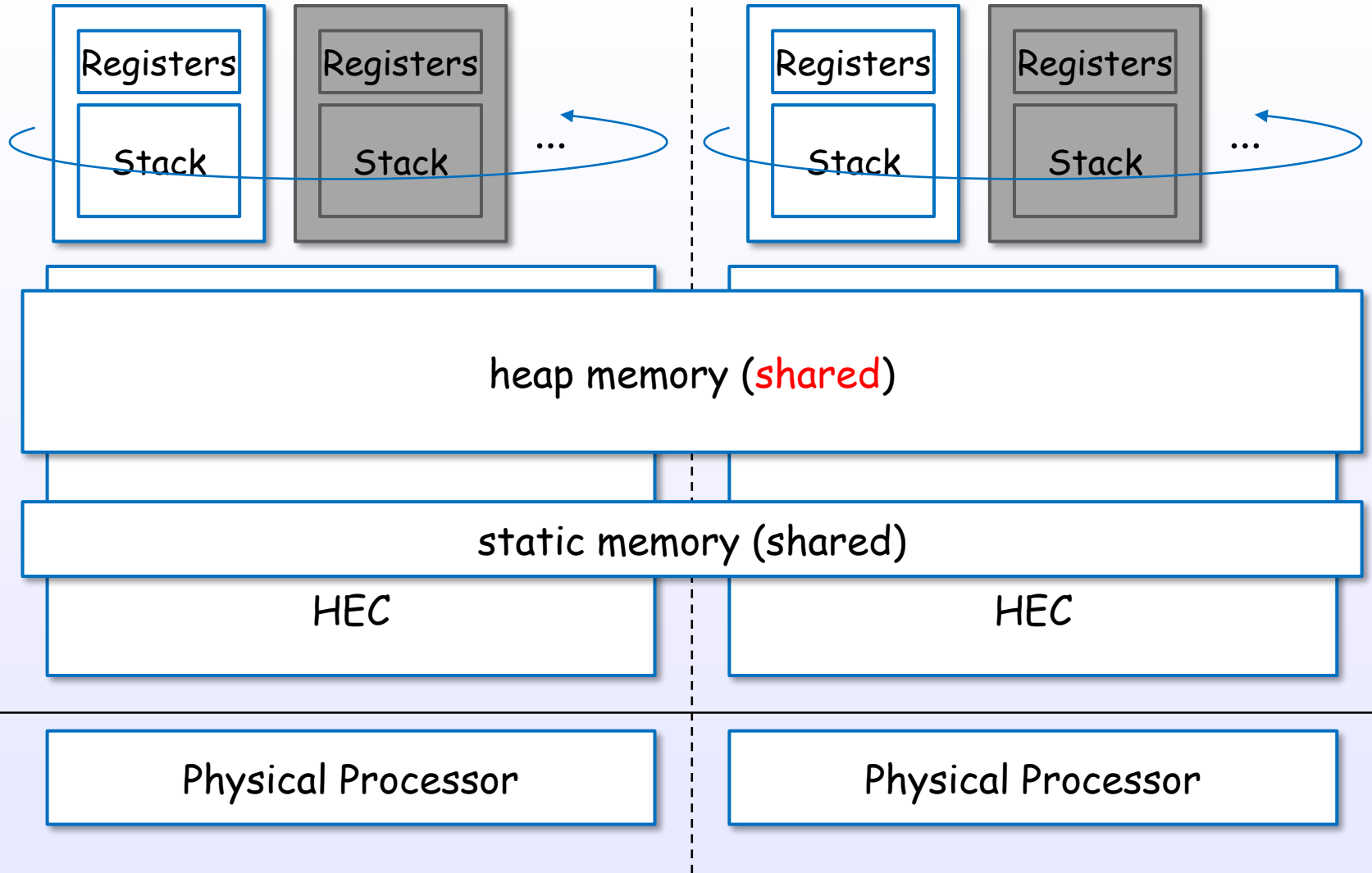
Threads are migrated to idle HECs



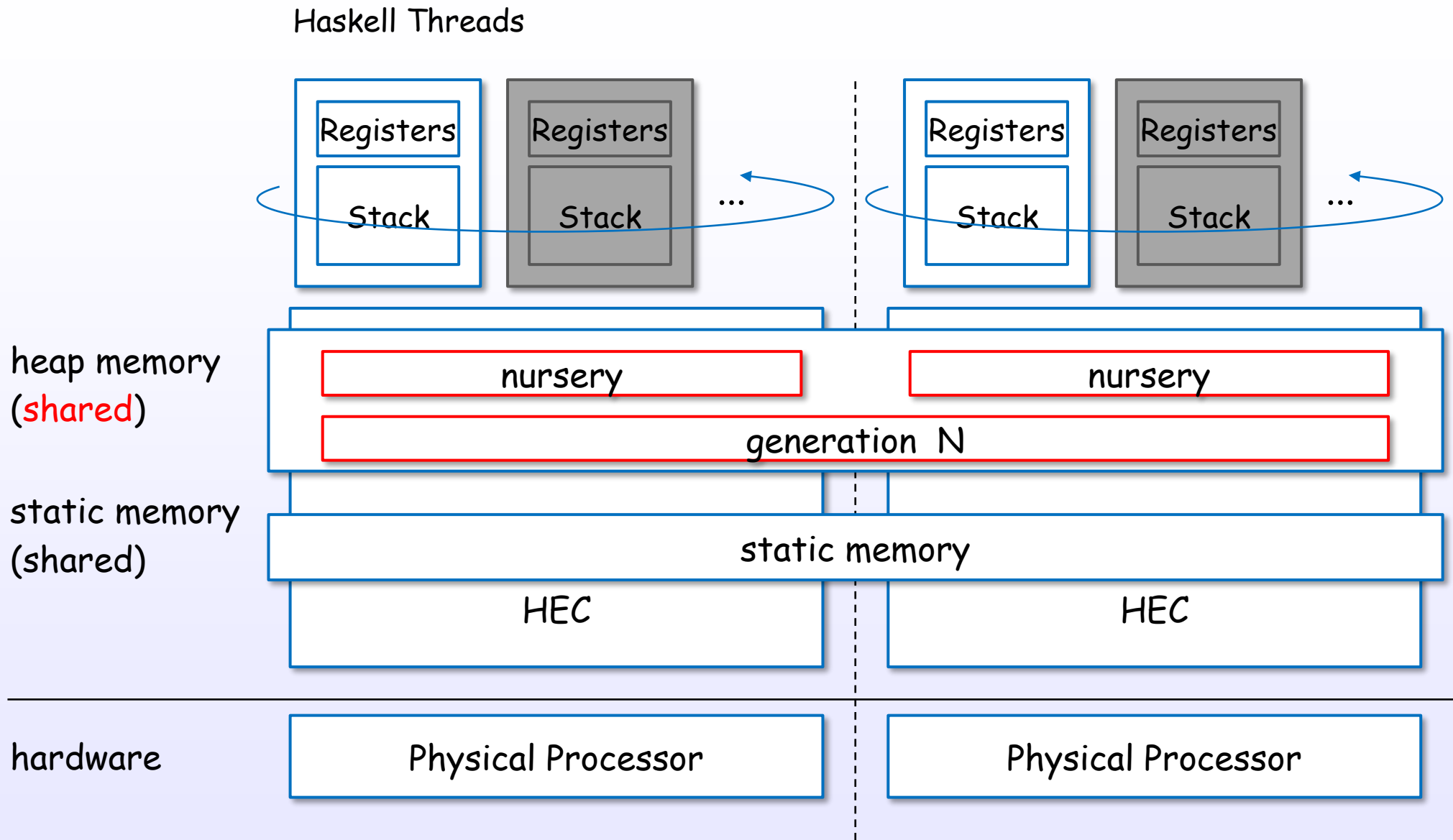
Heap and Threads

Threads share a heap

Haskell Threads



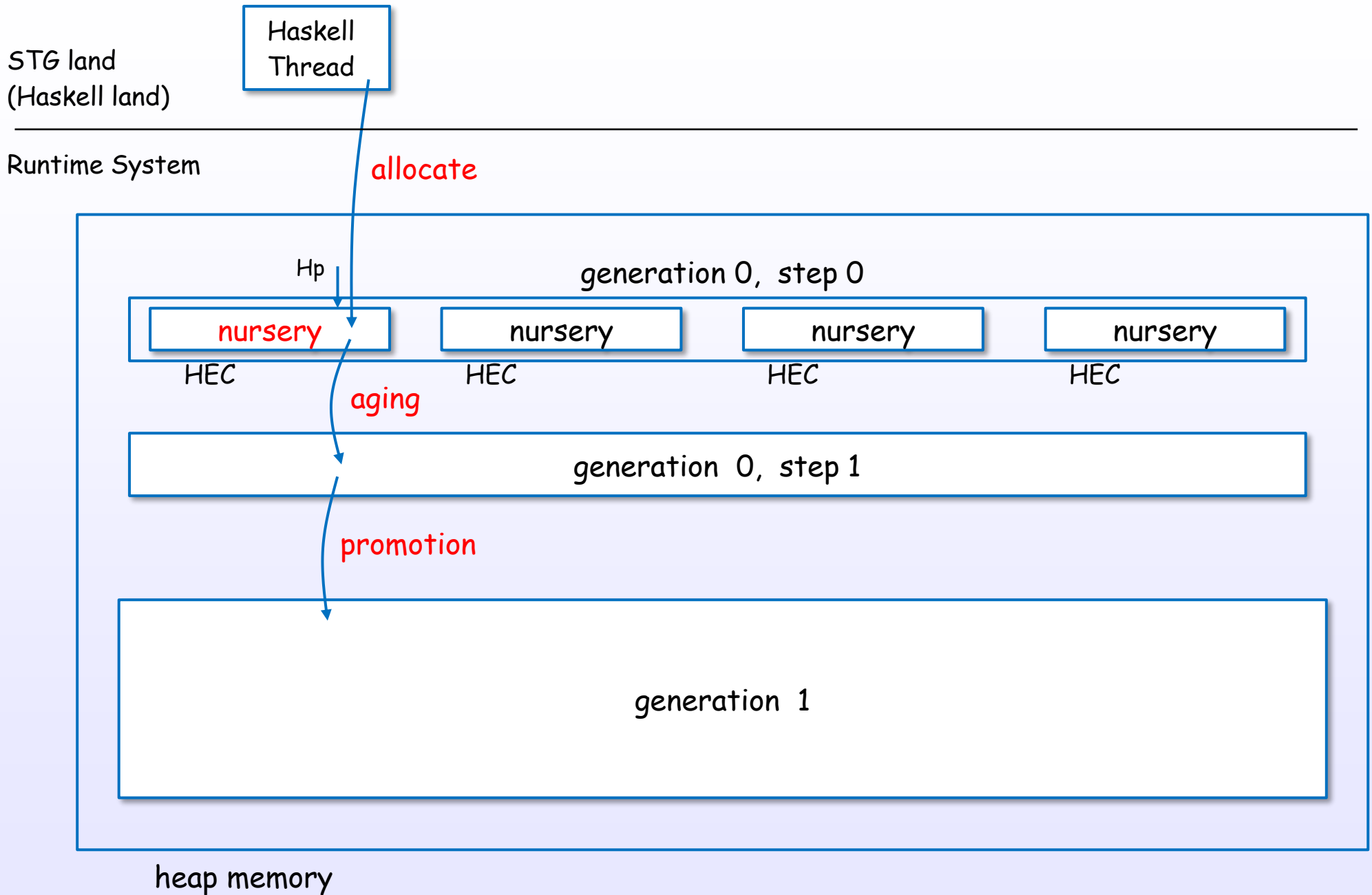
Local allocation area (nursery)



fast access using nursery for each processors

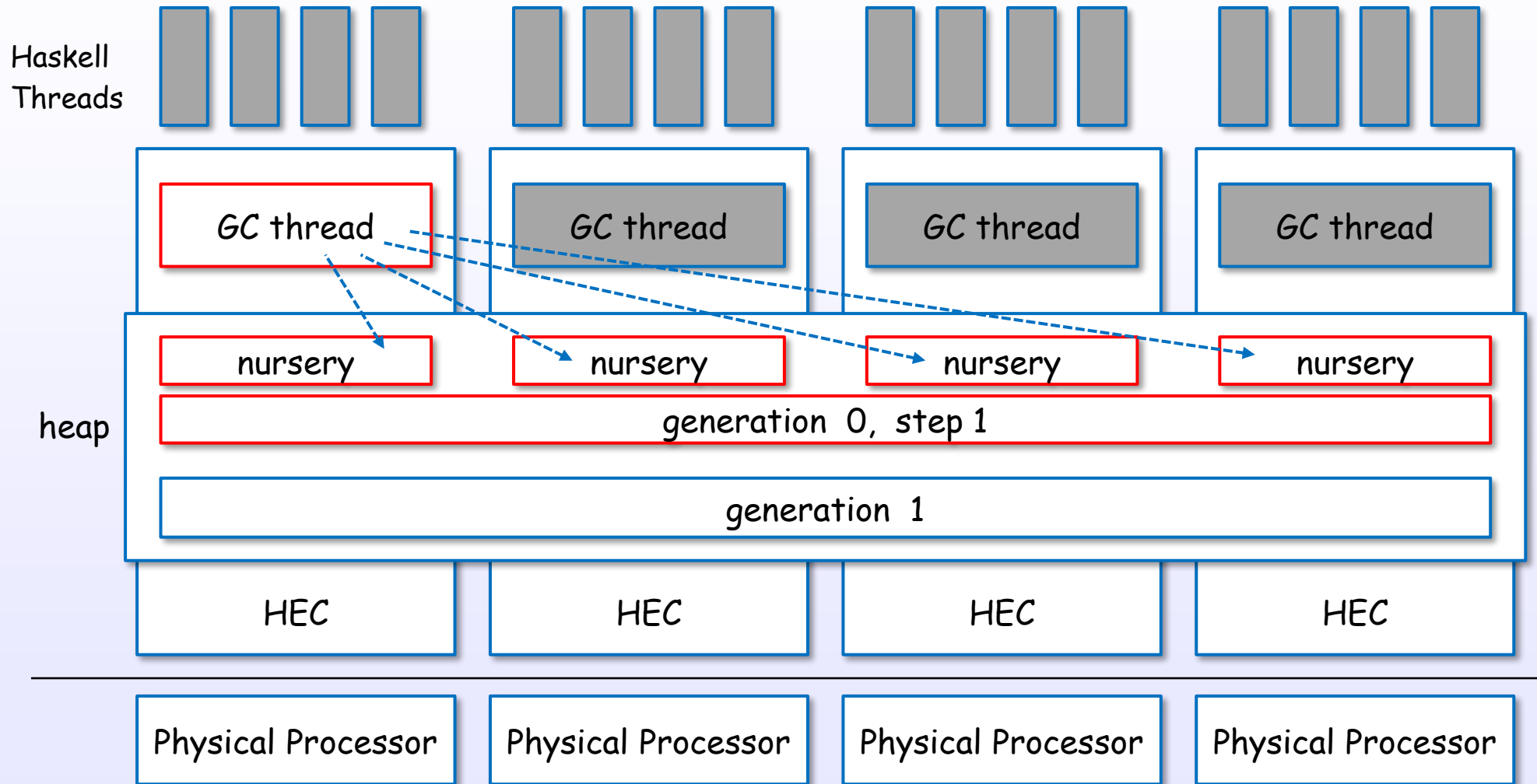
Threads and GC

GC, nursery, generation, aging, promotion



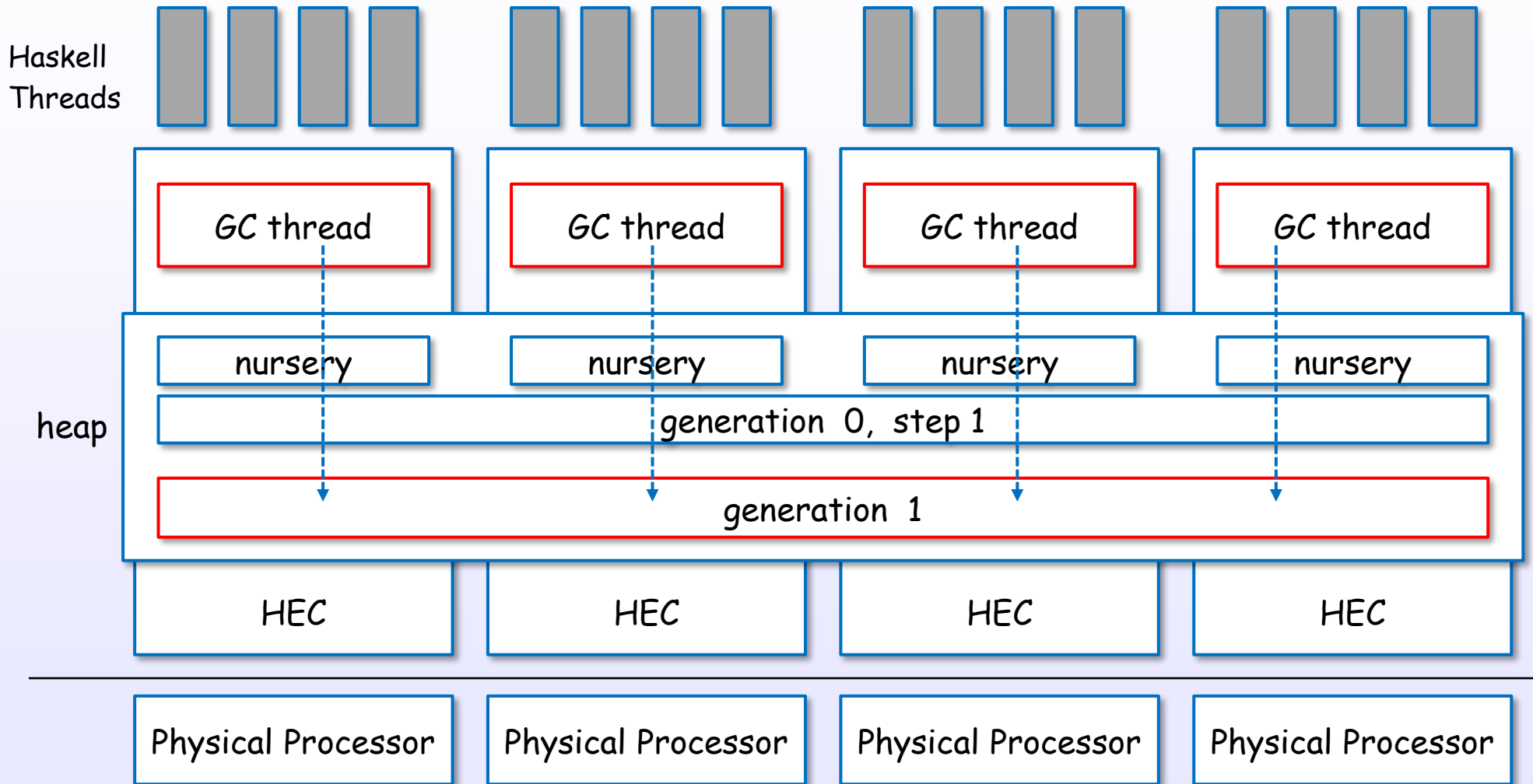
Threads and minor GC

sequential GC for young generation (minor GC)
"stop-the-world" GC



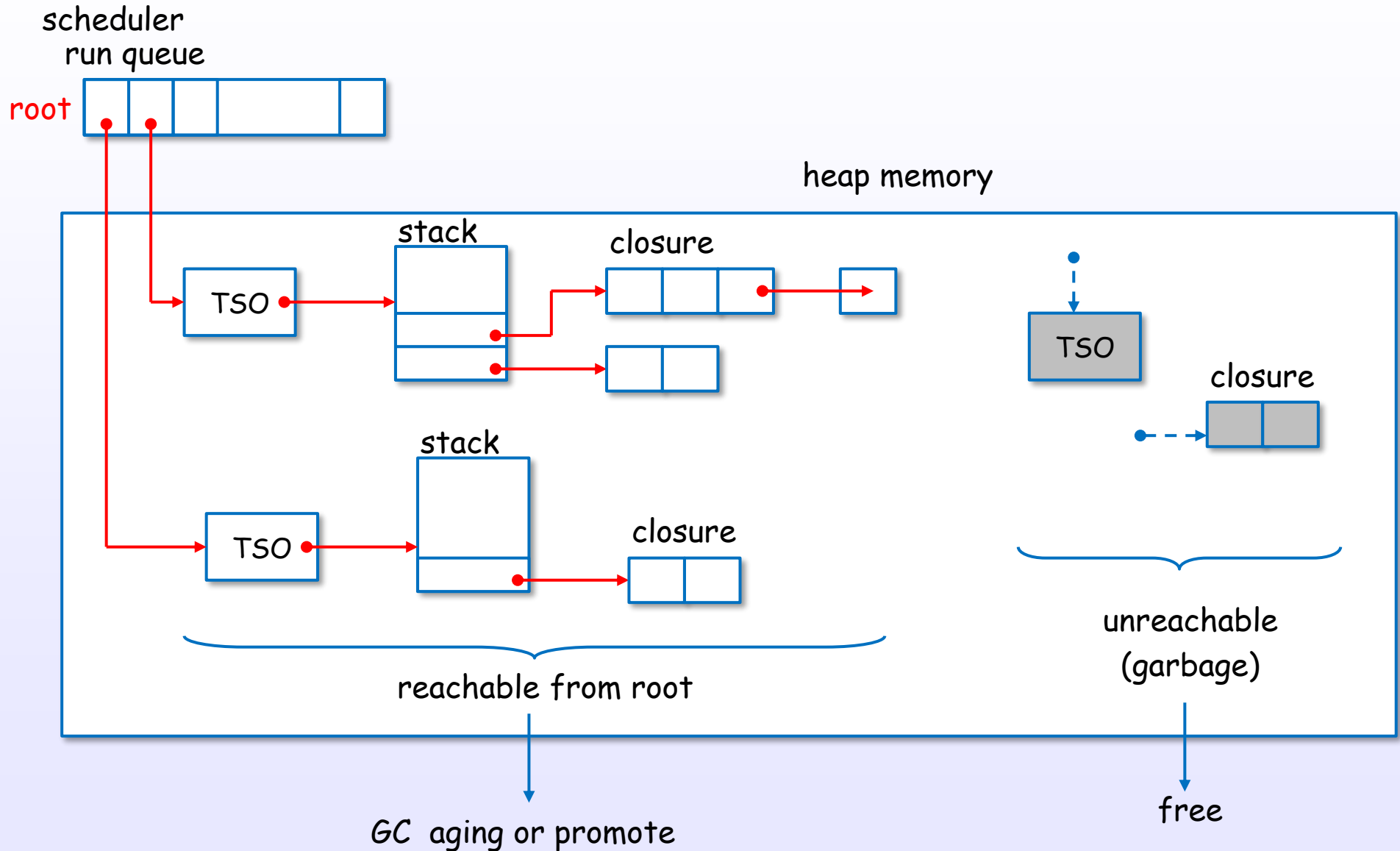
Threads and major GC

parallel GC for oldest generation (major GC)
"stop-the-world" GC



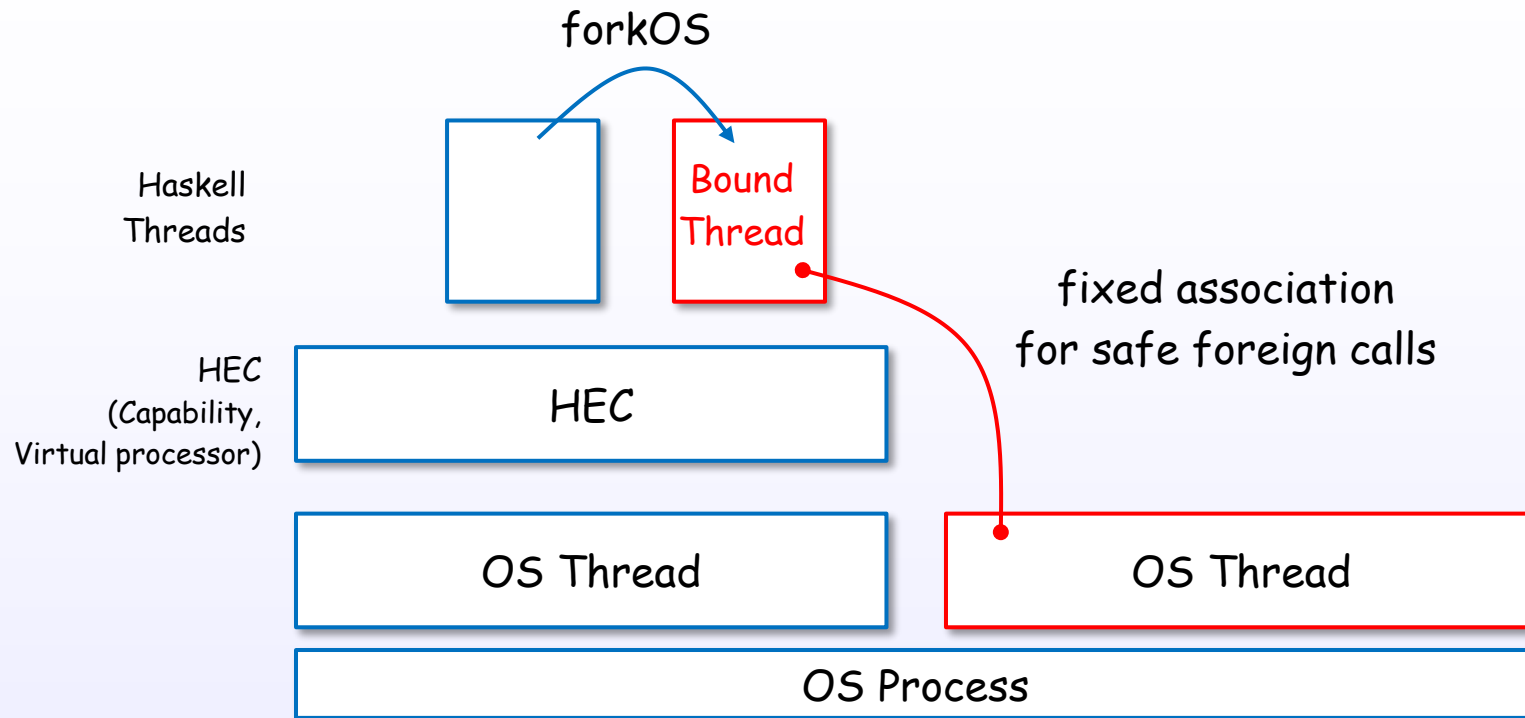
GC discovers live objects from the root

Runtime System



Bound thread

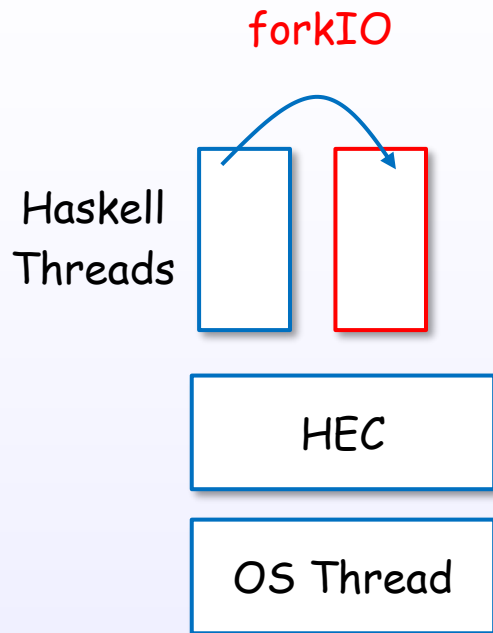
A bound thread has a fixed associated OS Thread



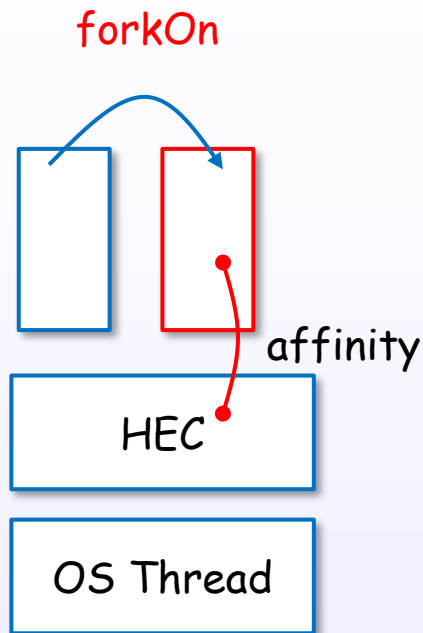
Foreign calls from a bound thread are all made by the same OS thread.
A bound thread is created using `forkOS`.

The main thread is bound thread.

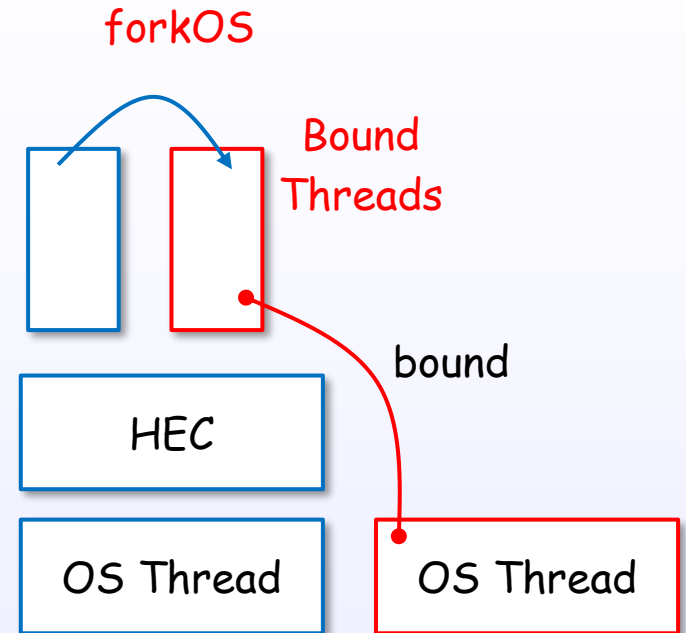
forkIO, forkOn, forkOS



create a haskell unbound thread



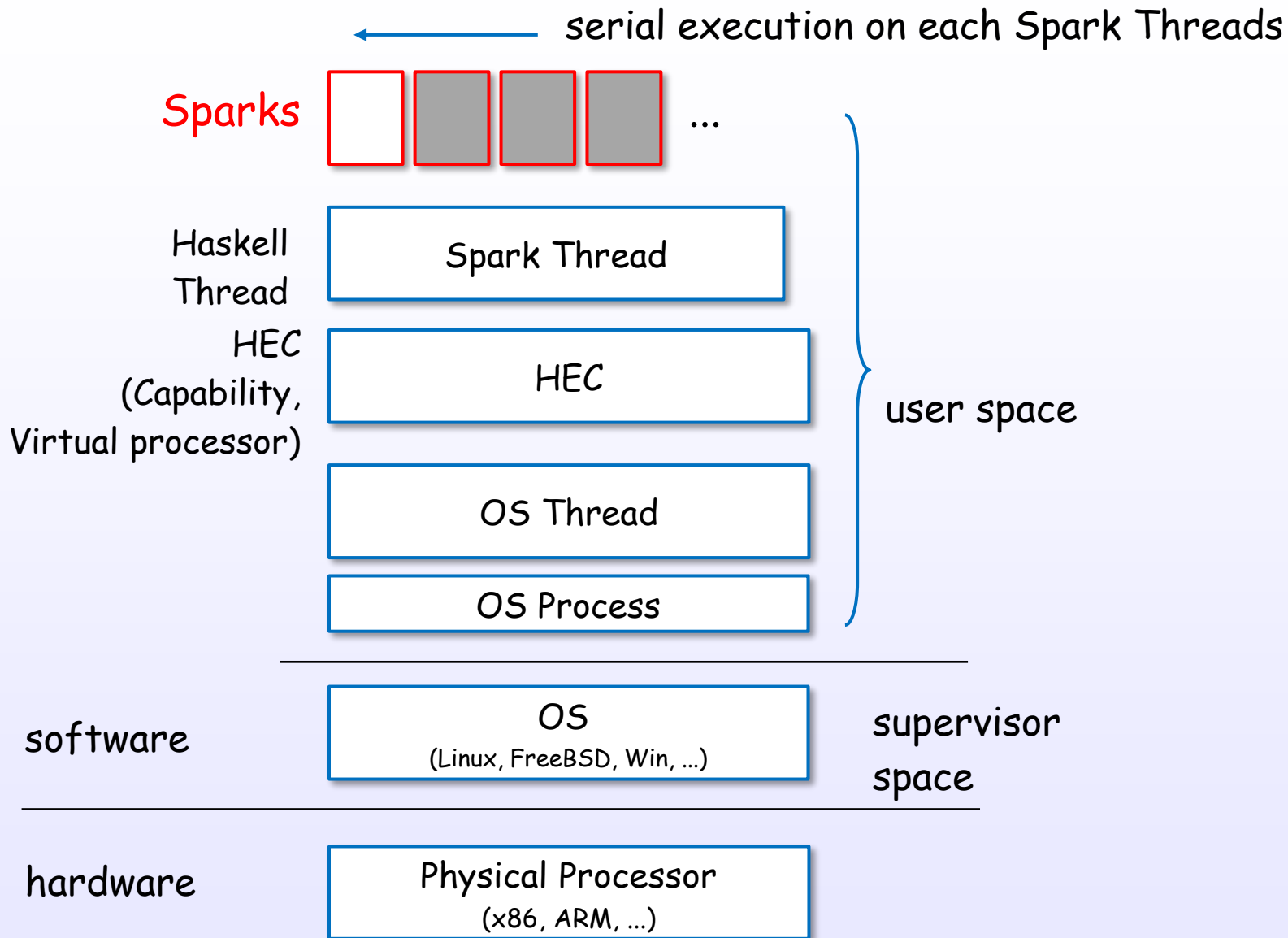
create a haskell unbound thread on the specified HEC



create a haskell **bound** thread and an OS thread

Spark

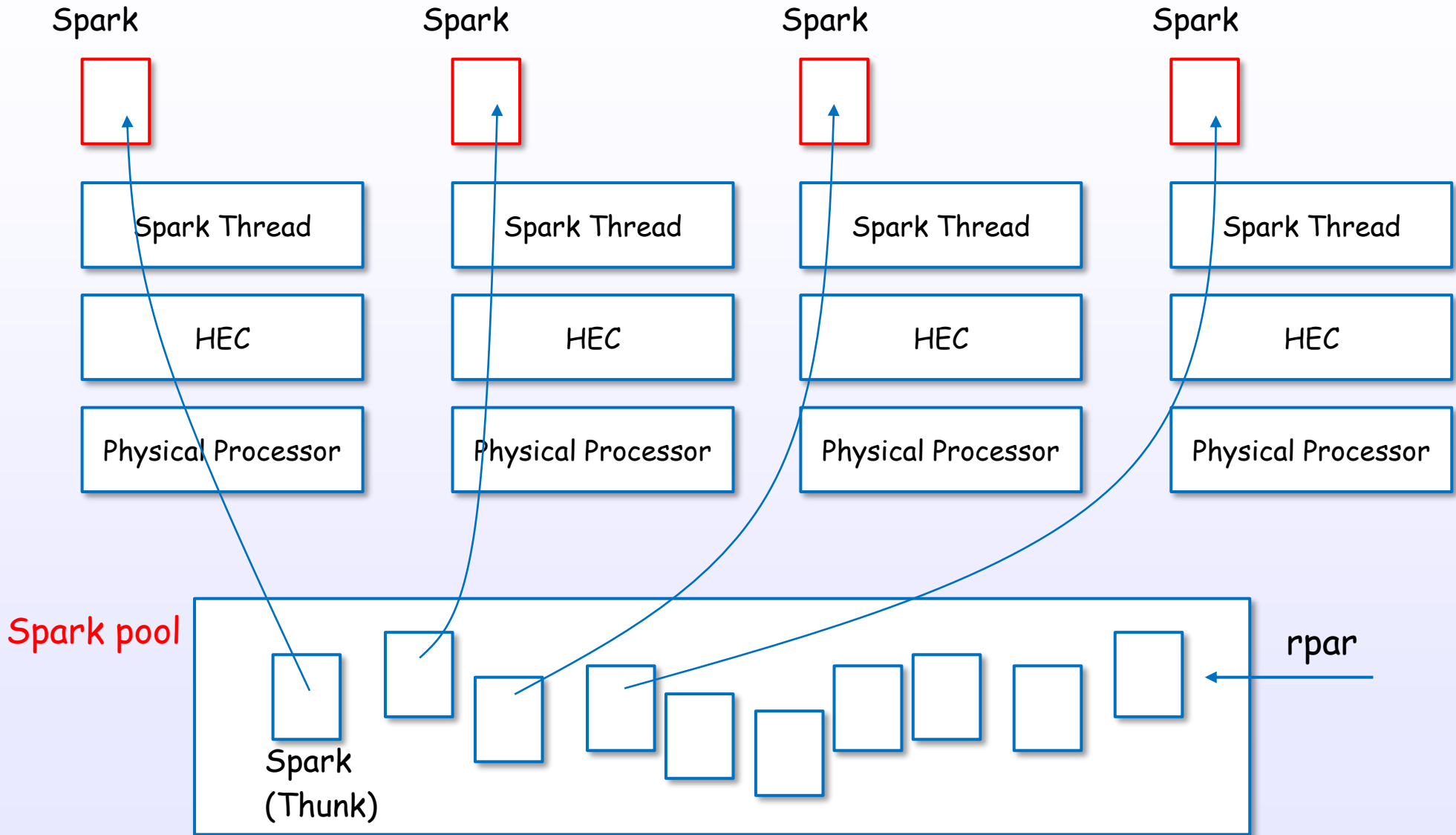
Spark layer



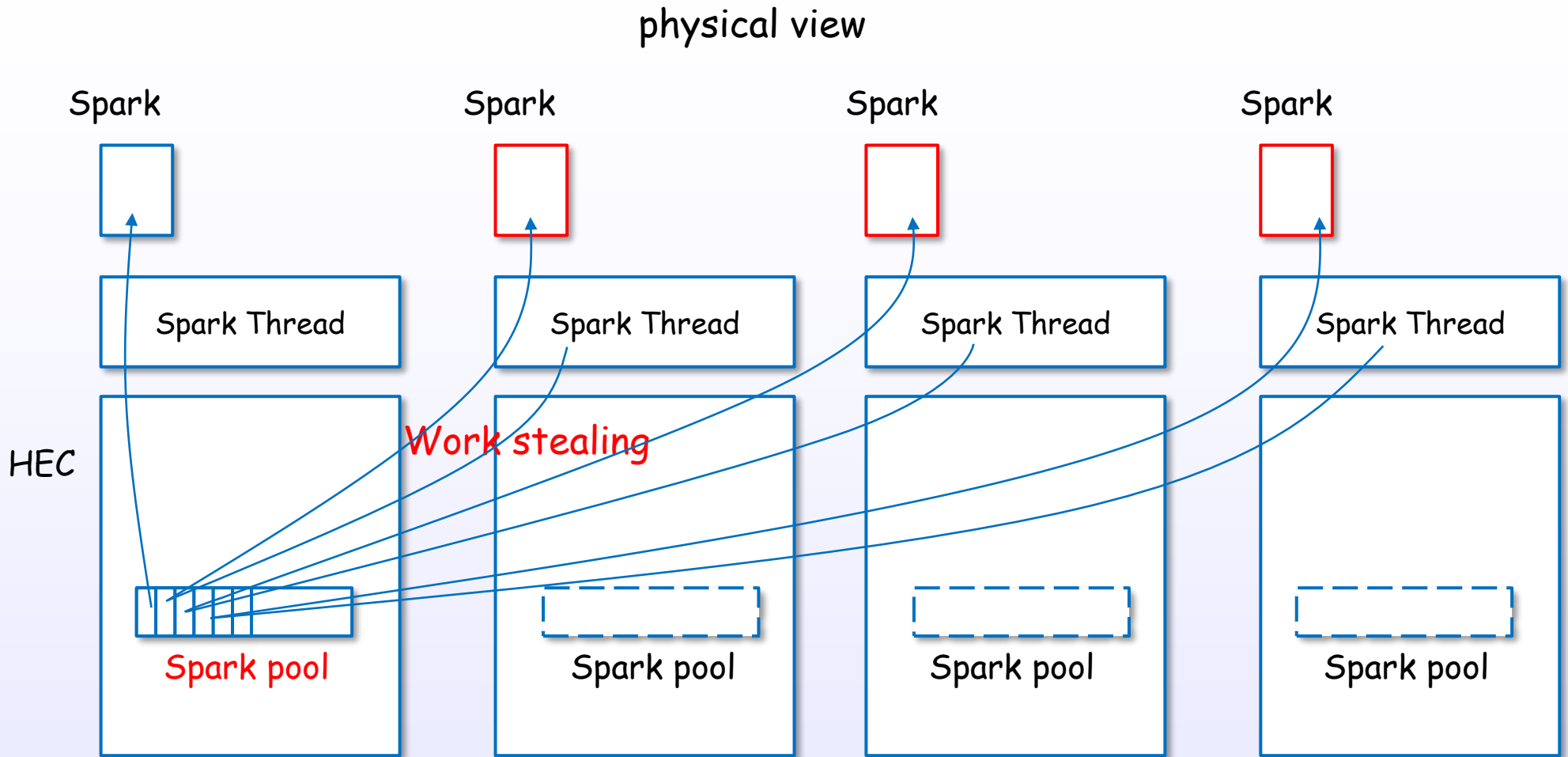
Spark Threads are generated on idle HECs.

Sparks and Spark pool

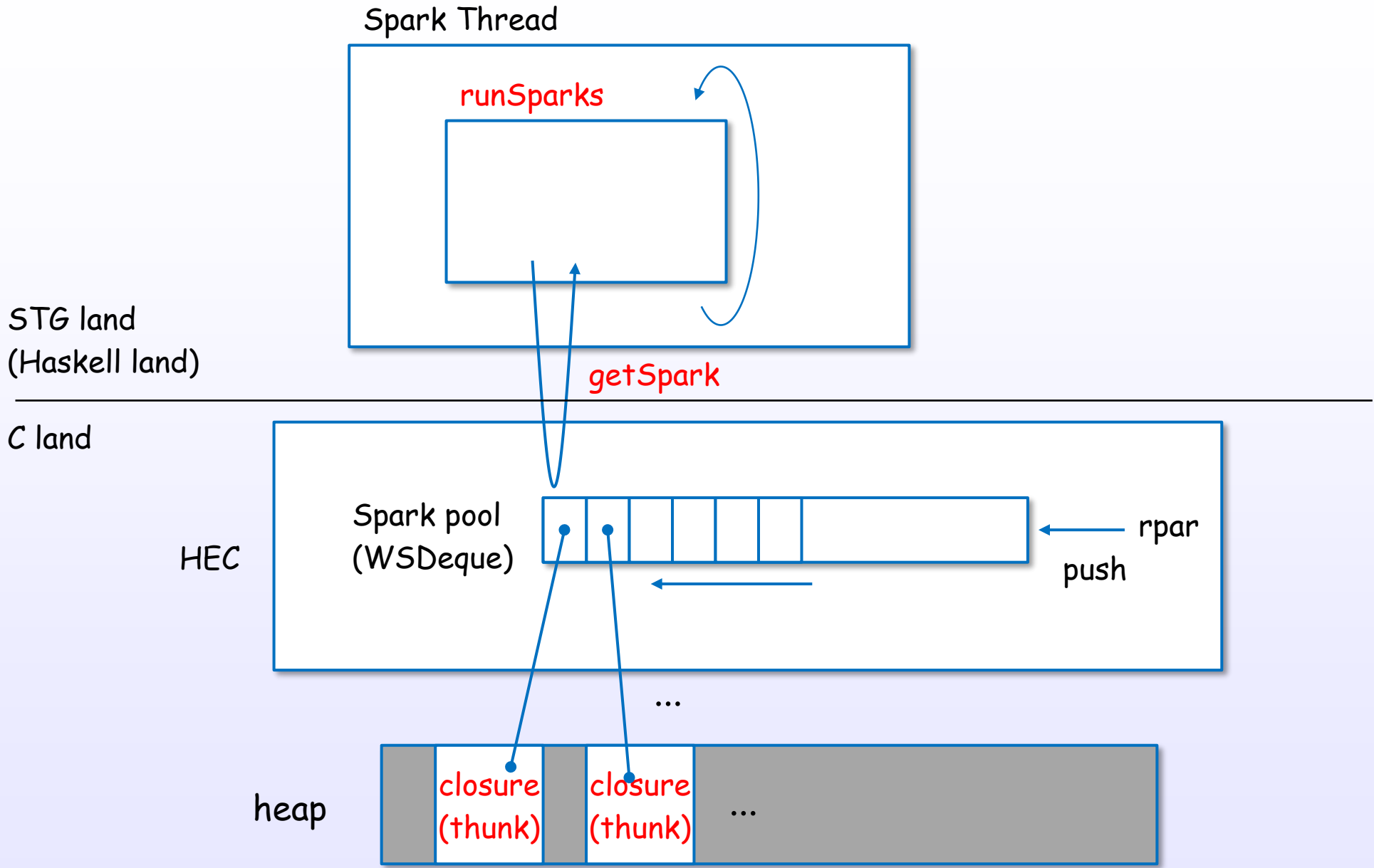
logical view



Spark pool and work stealing



Sparks and closures



(not TSO objects, but closures. therefore very lightweight)

MVar

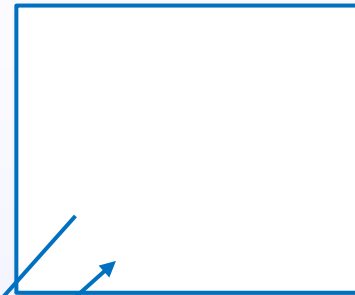
MVar

Haskell Thread #0

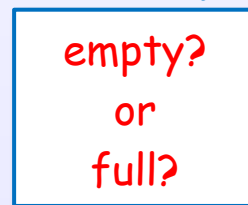


putMVar

Haskell Thread #1



takeMVar



MVar

MVar and blocking

Haskell Thread



putMVar



BLOCKED
if full



MVar

Haskell Thread



takeMVar

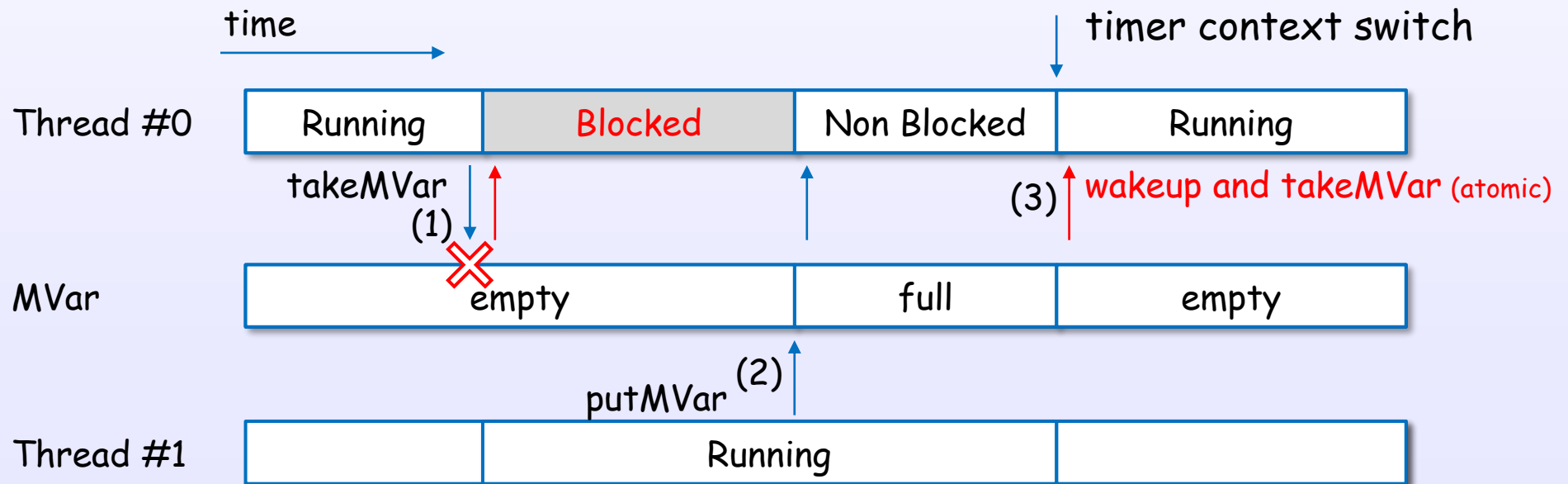
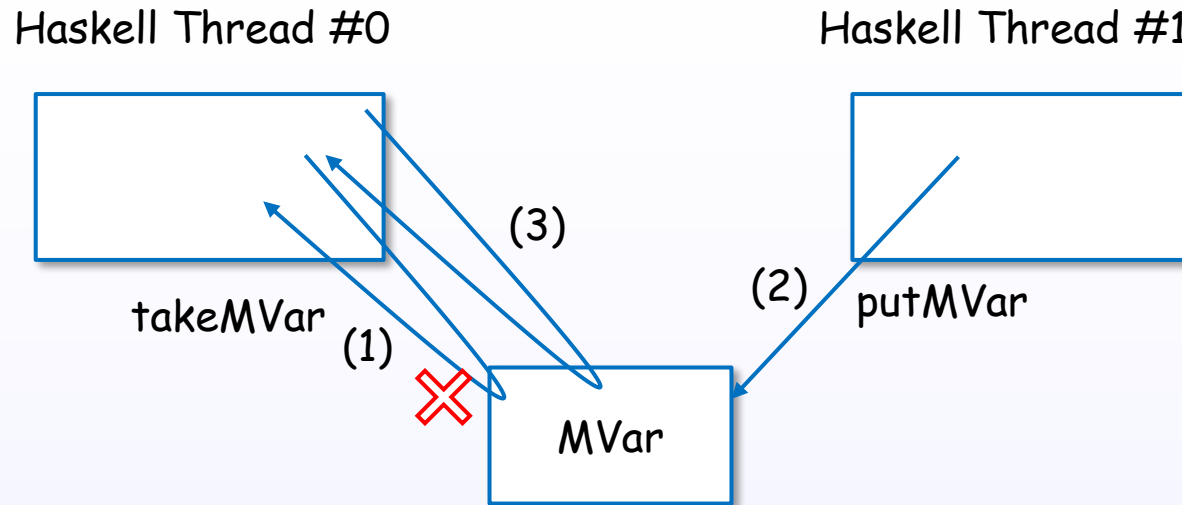


BLOCKED
if empty



MVar

MVar example



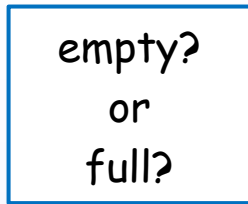
* single core case

References : [16], [18], [19], [S32], [S12]

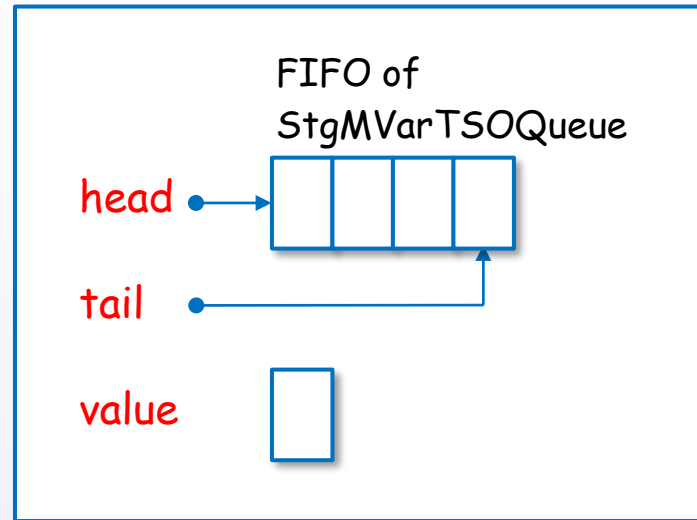
MVar object view

User view

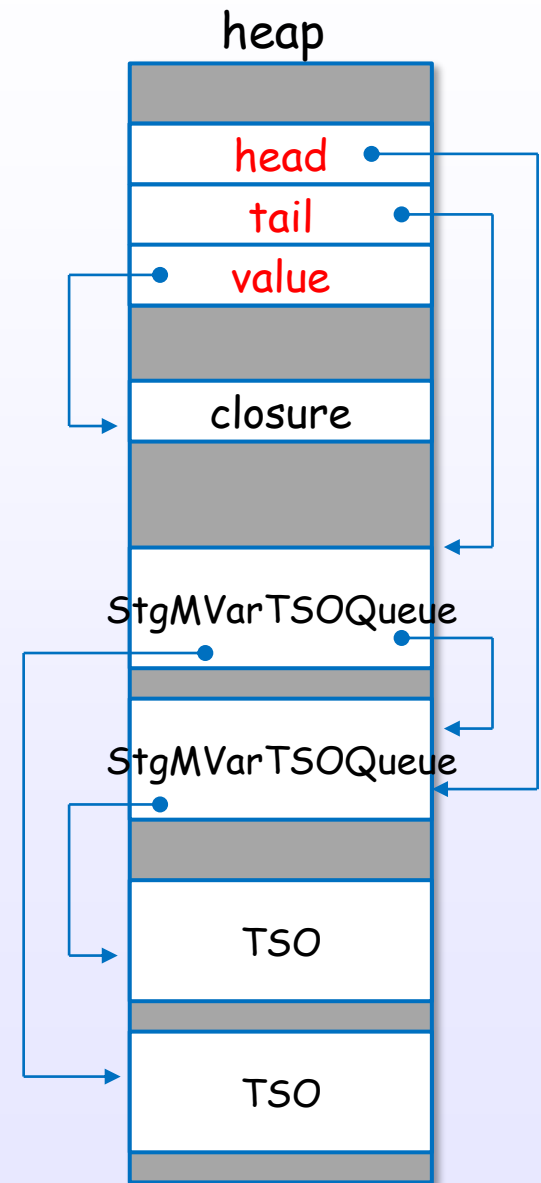
MVar



logical MVar object



physical MVar object



newEmptyMVar

Haskell Threads

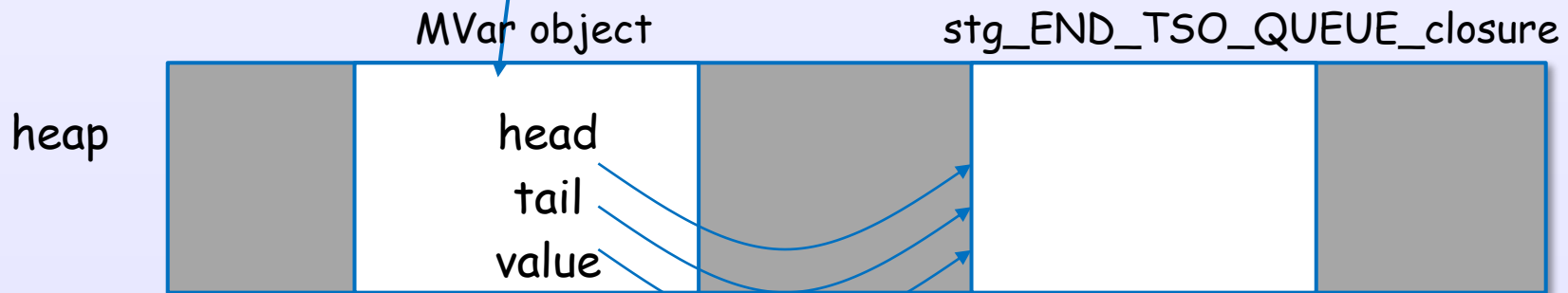
```
newEmptyMVar  
newMVar#
```

(1) **call** the Runtime primitive

Runtime System

```
stg_newMVarzh  
  ALLOC_PRIM_  
  SET_HDR  
  StgMVar_head  
  StgMVar_tail  
  StgMVar_value
```

(2) **create a MVar** object in the heap



(3) **link** each fields

References : [16], [18], [19], [S32], [S12]

takeMVar (empty case)

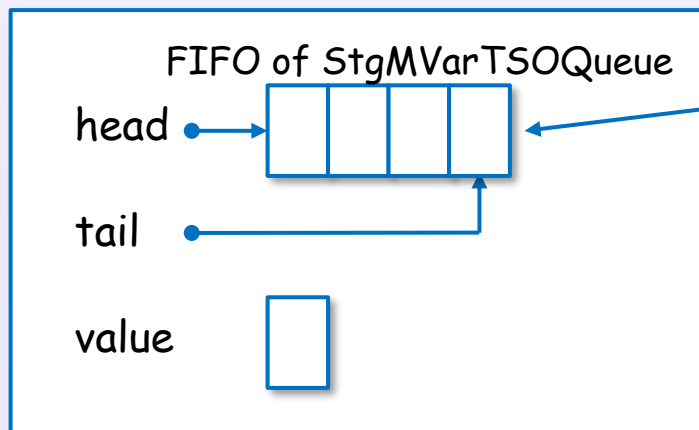
Haskell Threads

```
takeMVar  
takeMVar#
```

Runtime System

```
stg_takeMVarzh  
create StgMVarTSOQueue ... (1)  
append ... (2)  
StgReturn ... (3)
```

(3) return to the scheduler



MVar object

(1) create

StgMVarTSOQueue

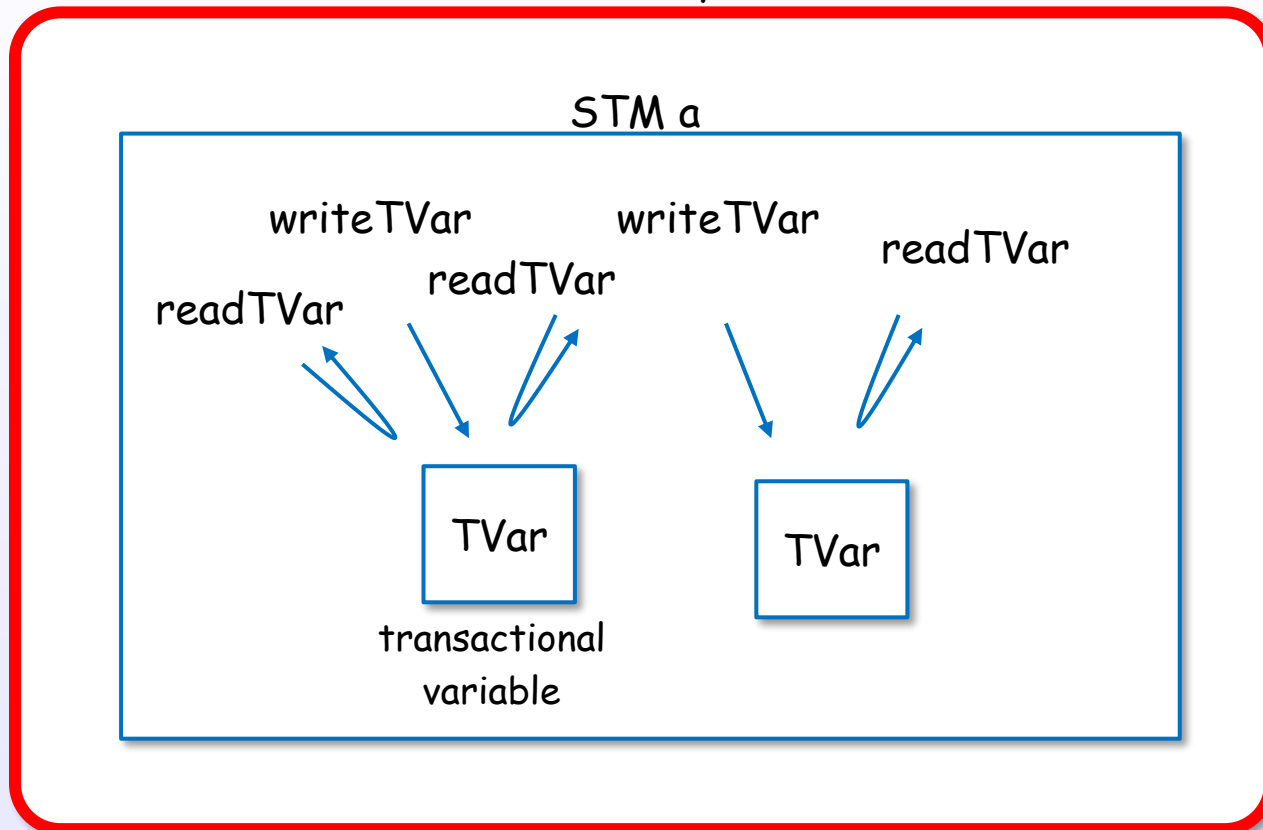
(2) append

Software transactional memory

Create a atomic block using atomically

`atomically :: STM a -> IO a`

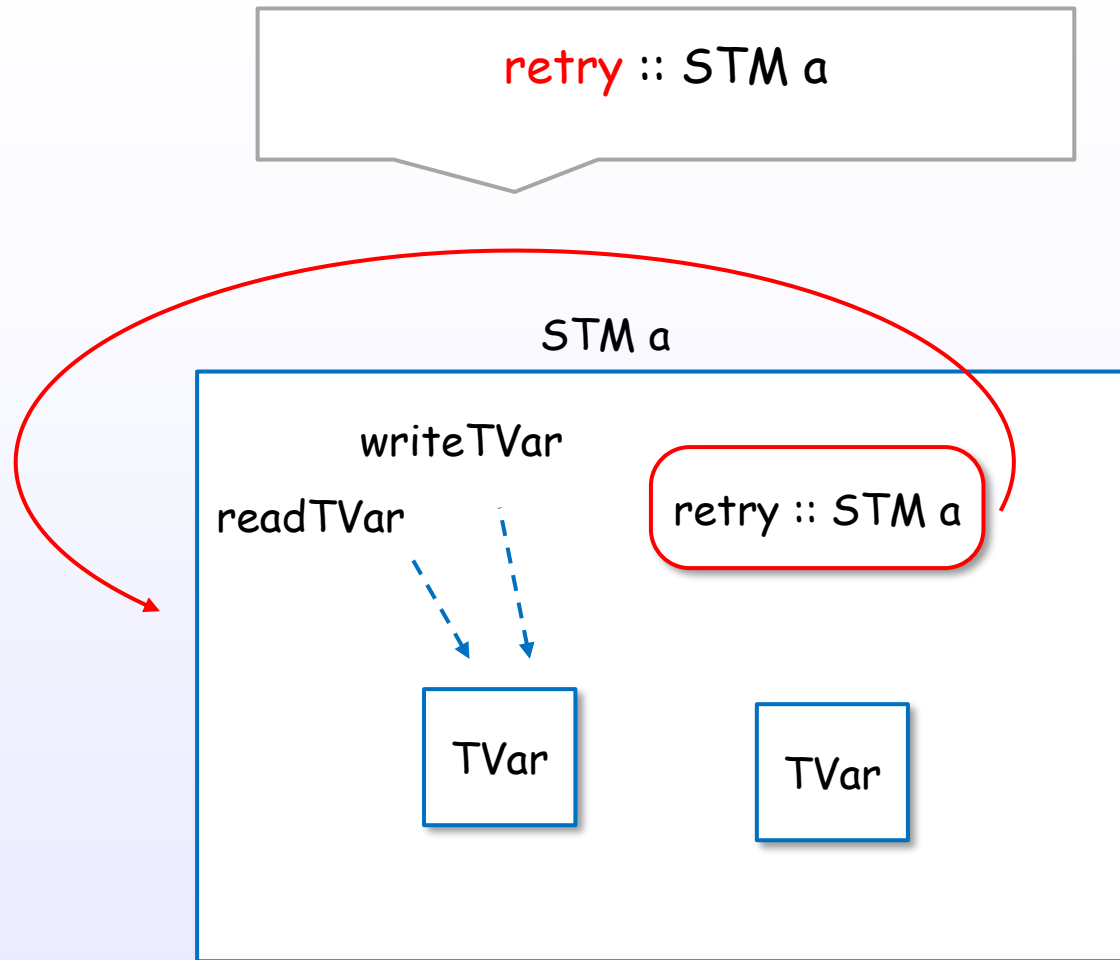
atomically



Create and evaluate a **composable "atomic block"**

Atomic block = All or Nothing

Rollback and blocking control using retry

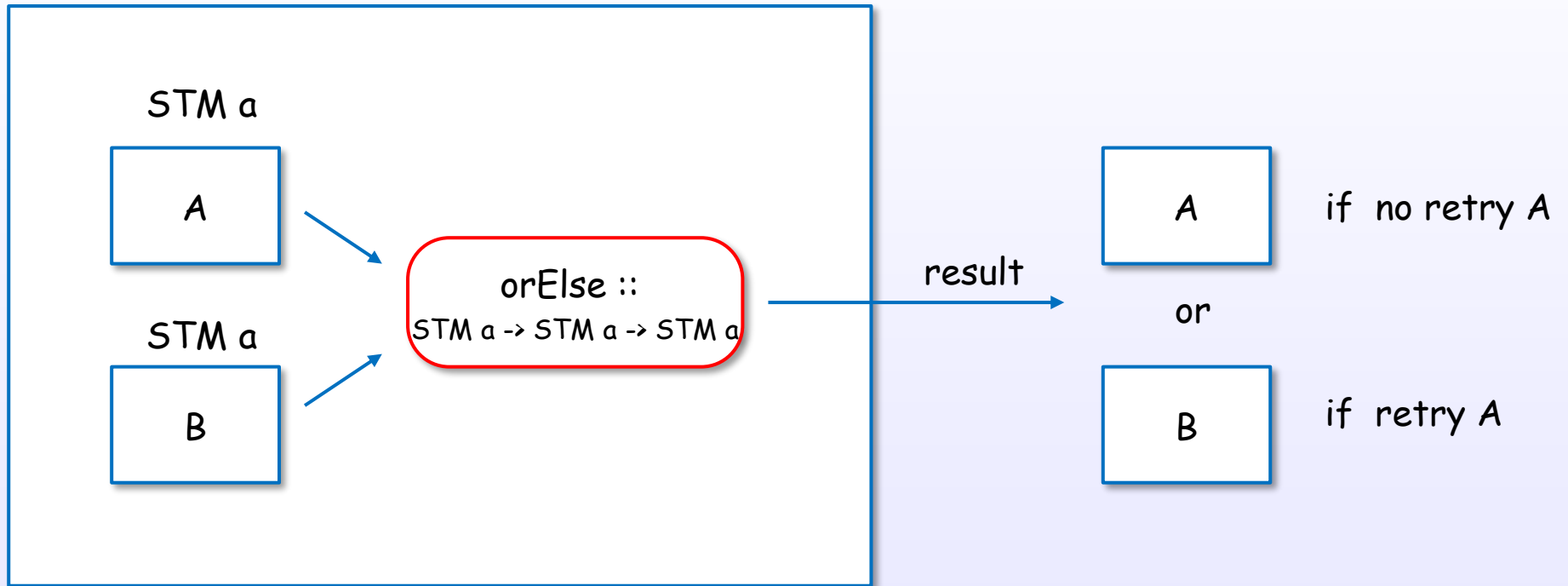


Discard, blocking and try again

Compose OR case using orElse

`orElse :: STM a -> STM a -> STM a`

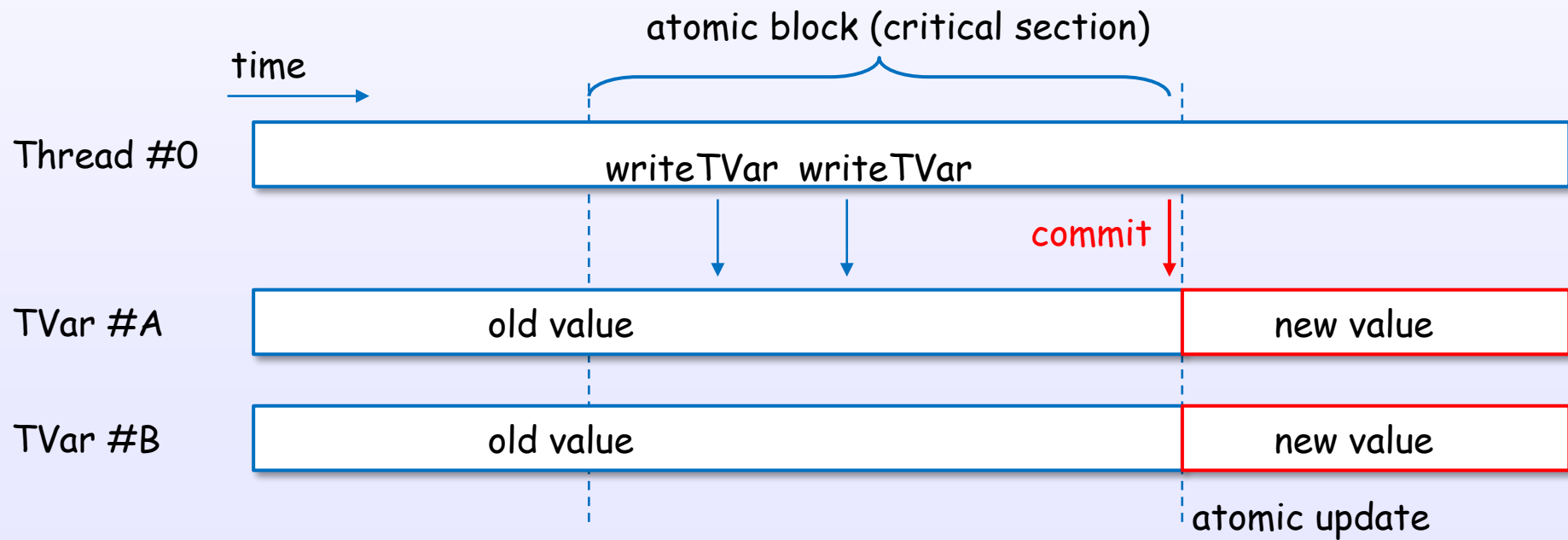
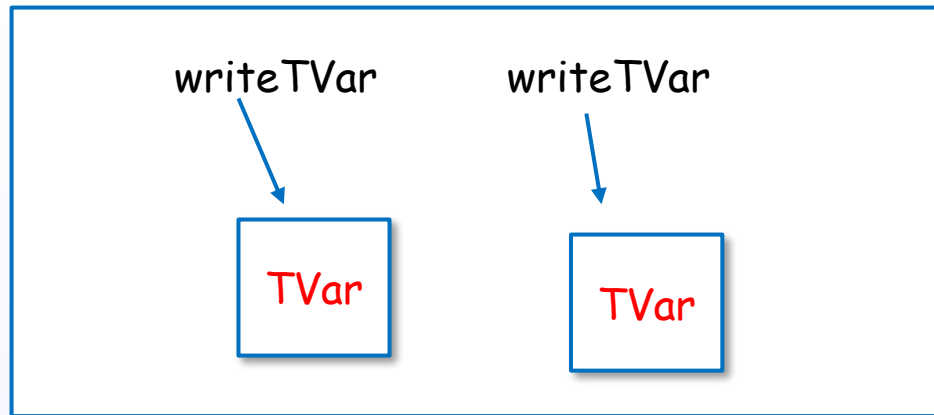
STM a



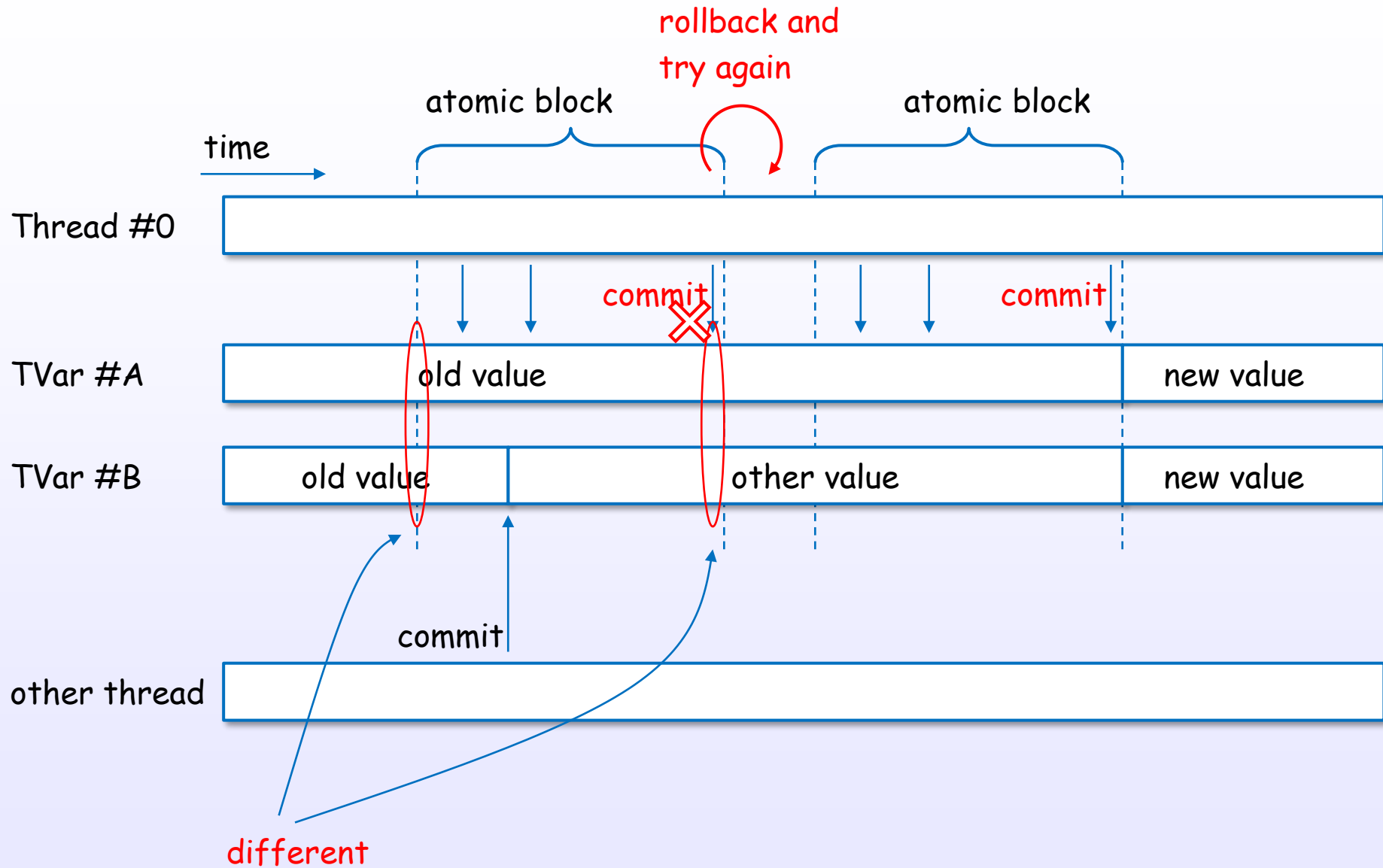
A **or** B or Nothing

STM, TVar example (normal case)

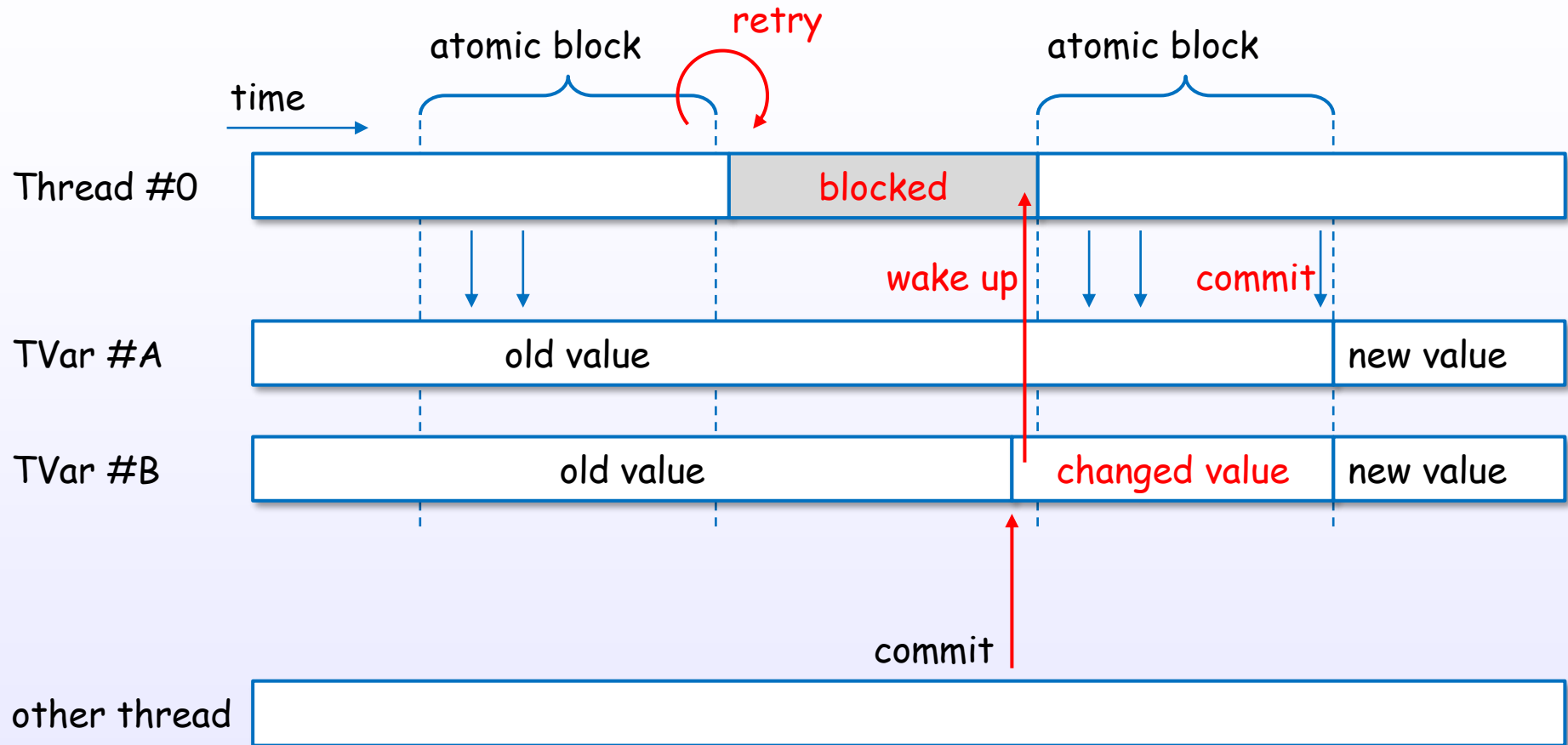
STM a



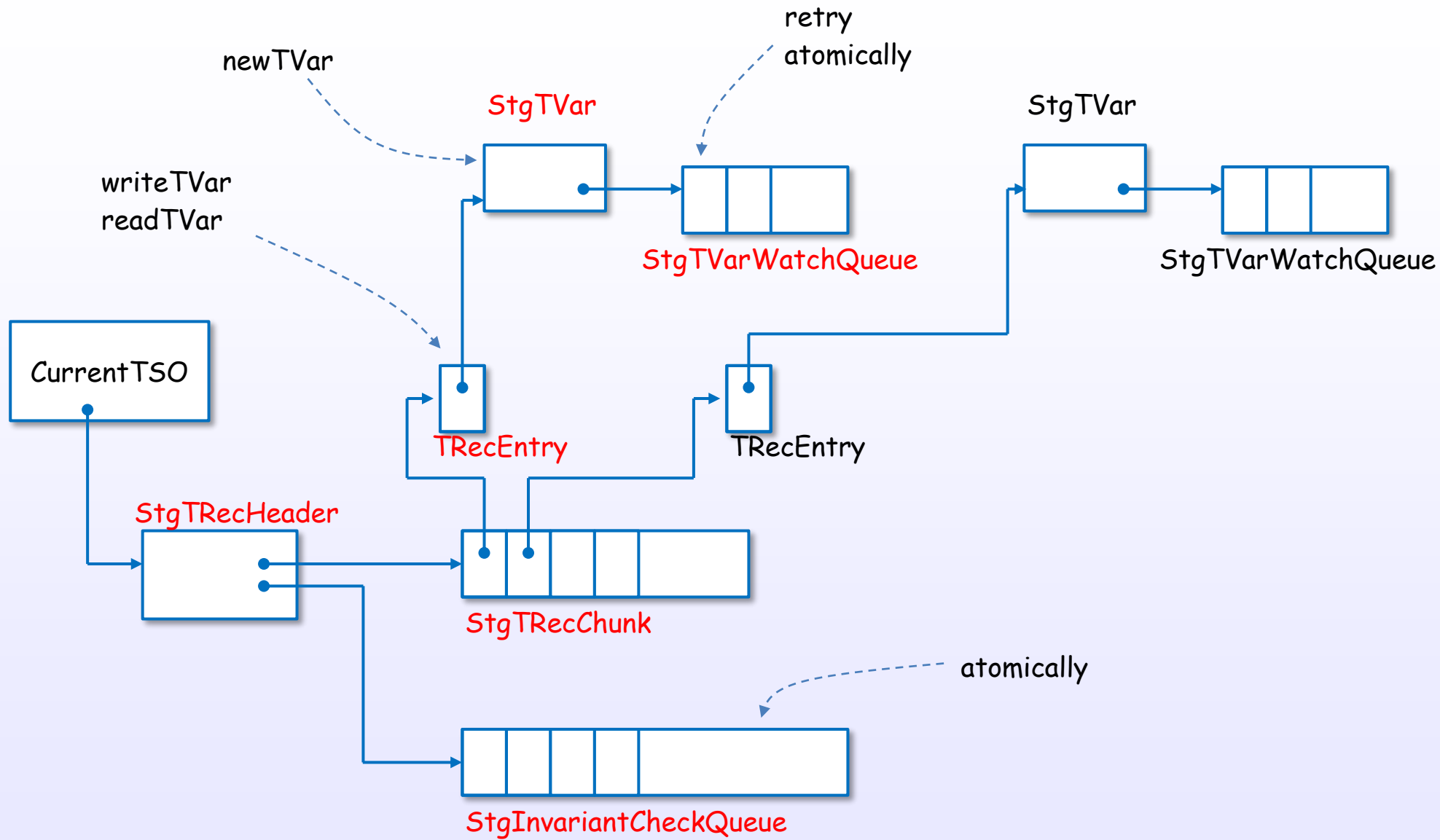
STM, TVar example (conflict case)



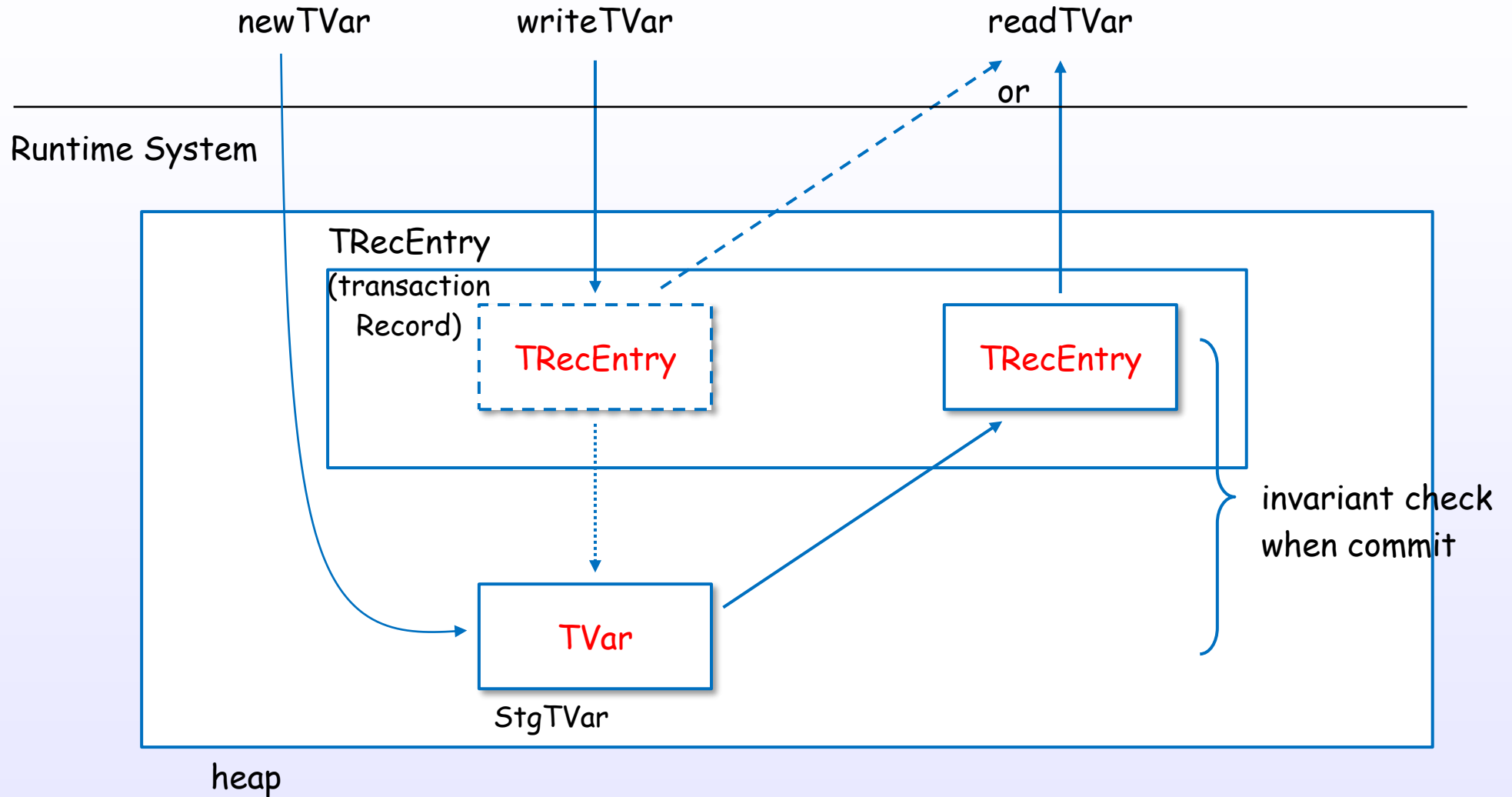
retry example



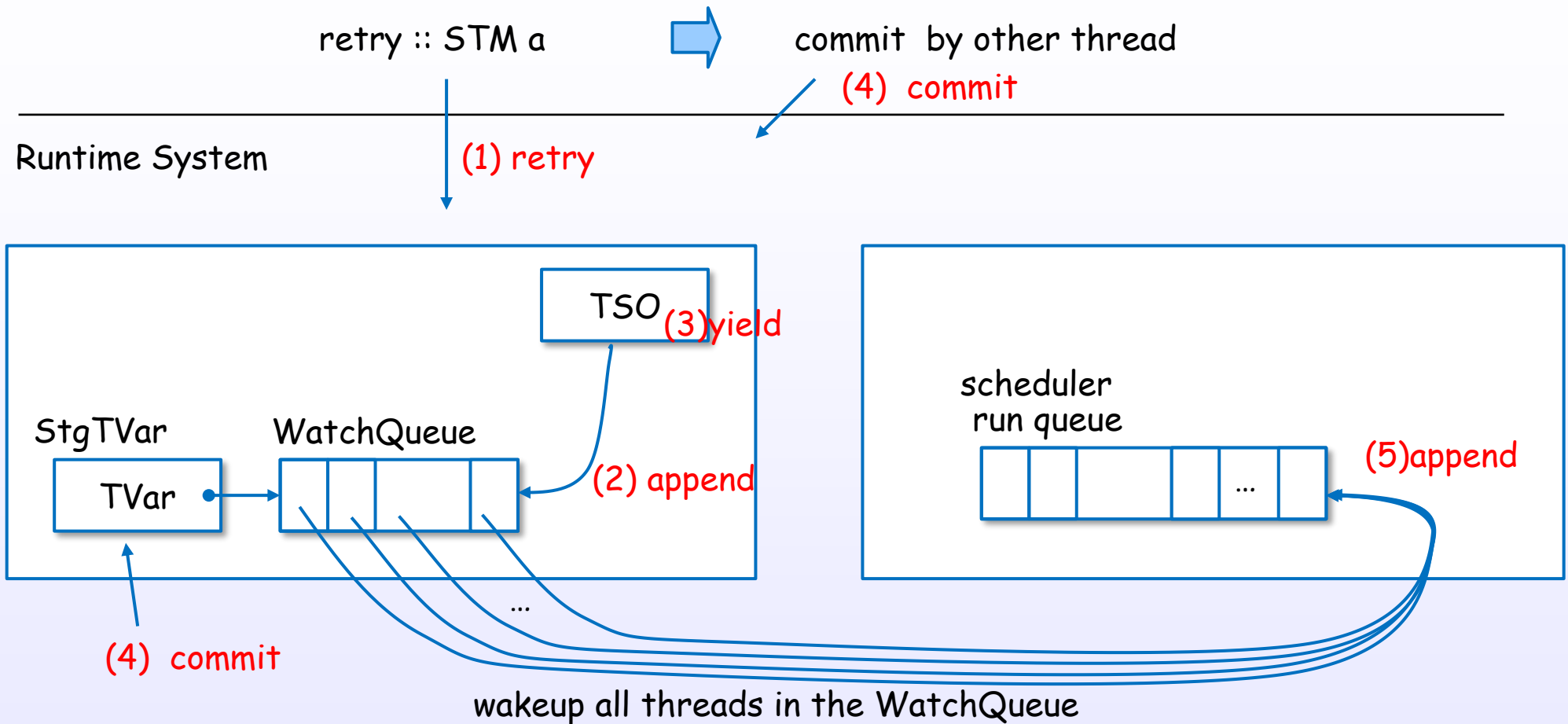
STM, TVar data structure



newTVar, writeTVar, readTVar



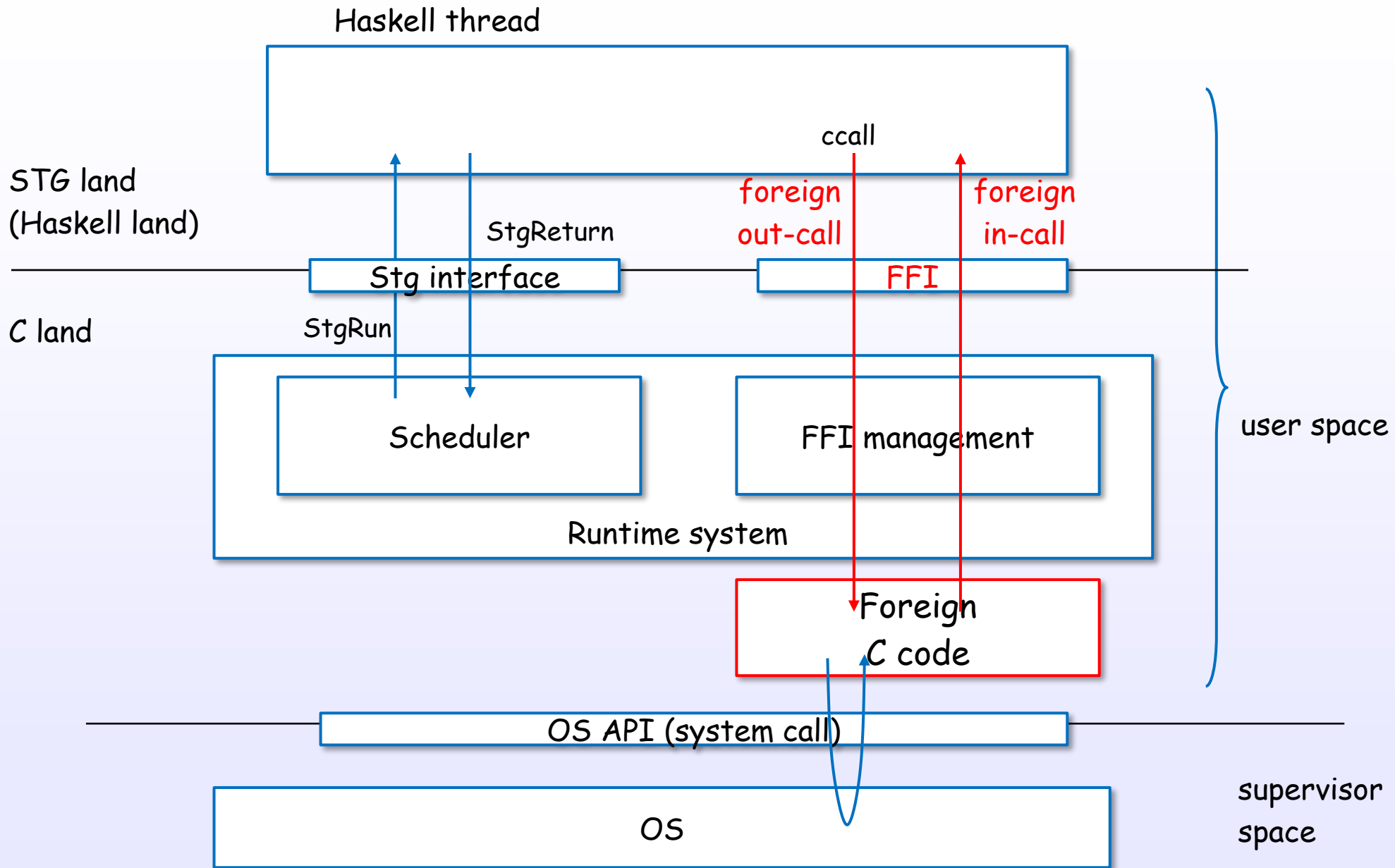
block by retry, wake up by commit



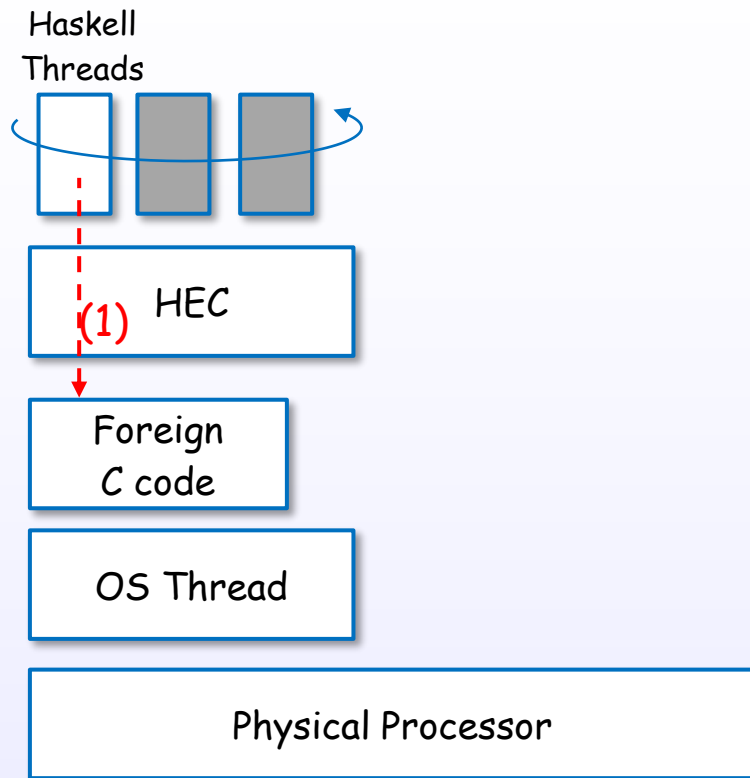
no guarantee of fairness,
because the RTS has to run all the blocked transaction.

FFI

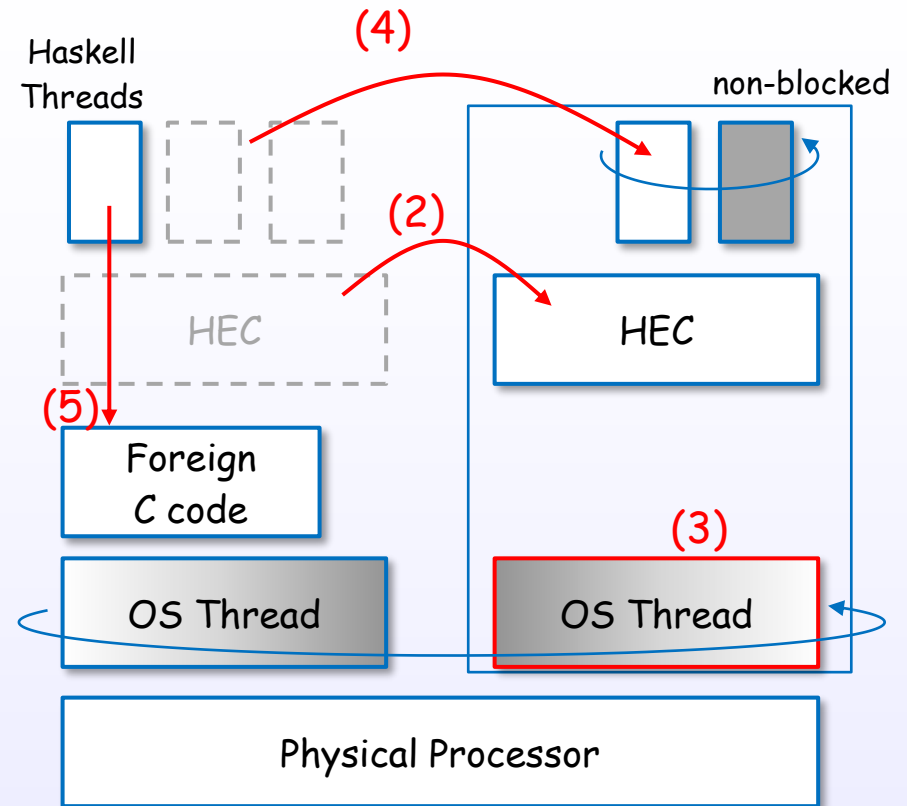
FFI (Foreign Function Interface)



FFI and OS Threads



(1) a safe foreign call (FFI)



(2) move the HEC to other OS thread

(3) spawn or draw an OS thread

(4) move Haskell threads

(5) call the foreign C code

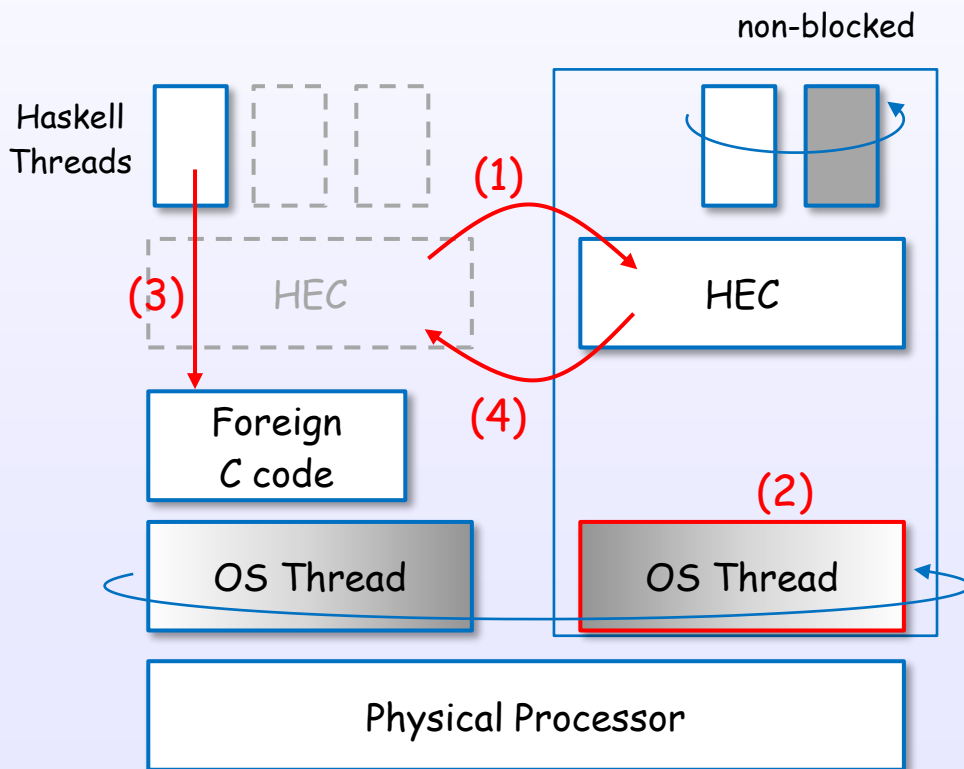
A safe foreign call (code)

Haskell Threads

```
ccall suspendThread  
ccall FOREIGN_C_CODE ... (3)  
ccall resumeThread
```

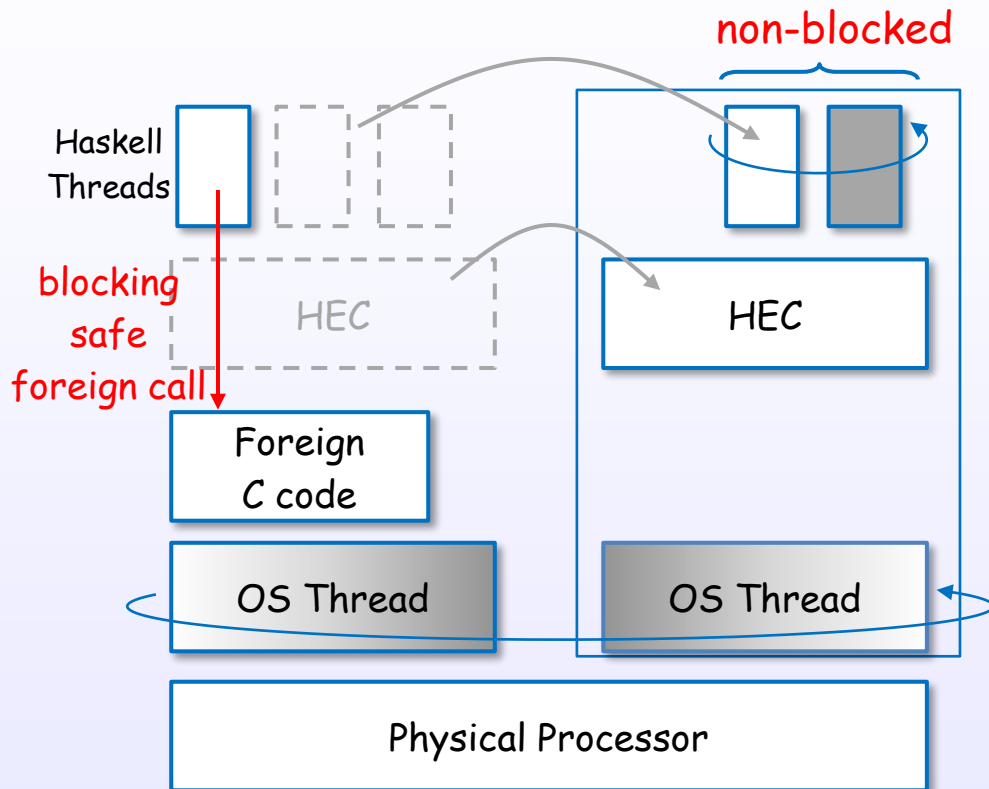
```
releaseCapability_  
giveCapabilityToTask ... (1)  
startWorkerTask  
createOSThread ... (2)
```

```
waitForReturnCapability ... (4)
```

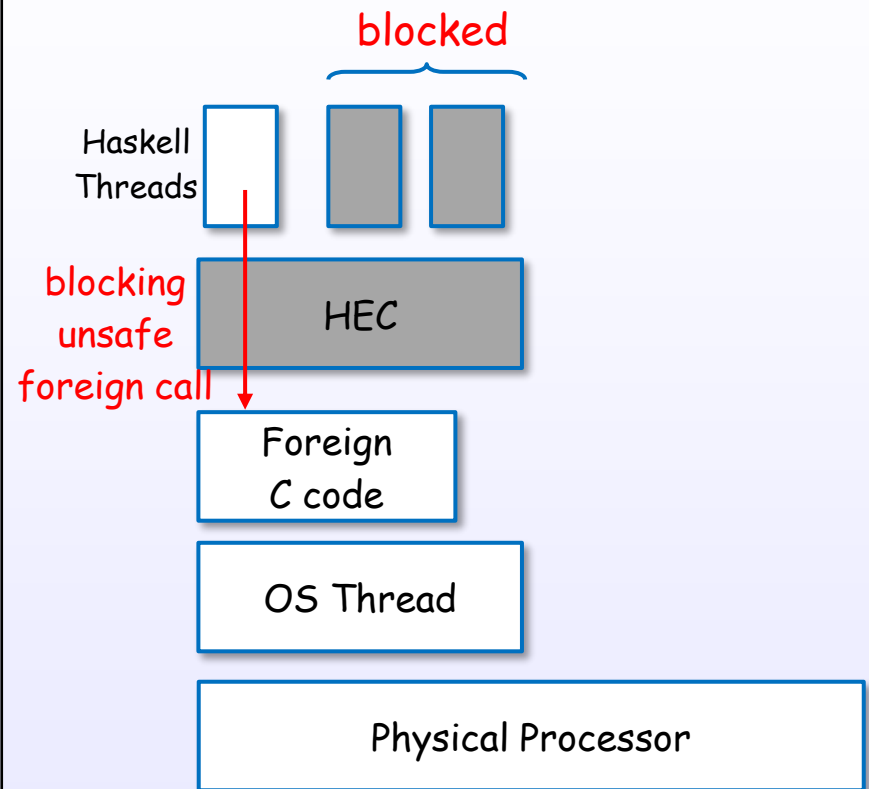


a safe and an unsafe foreign call

a **safe** foreign call

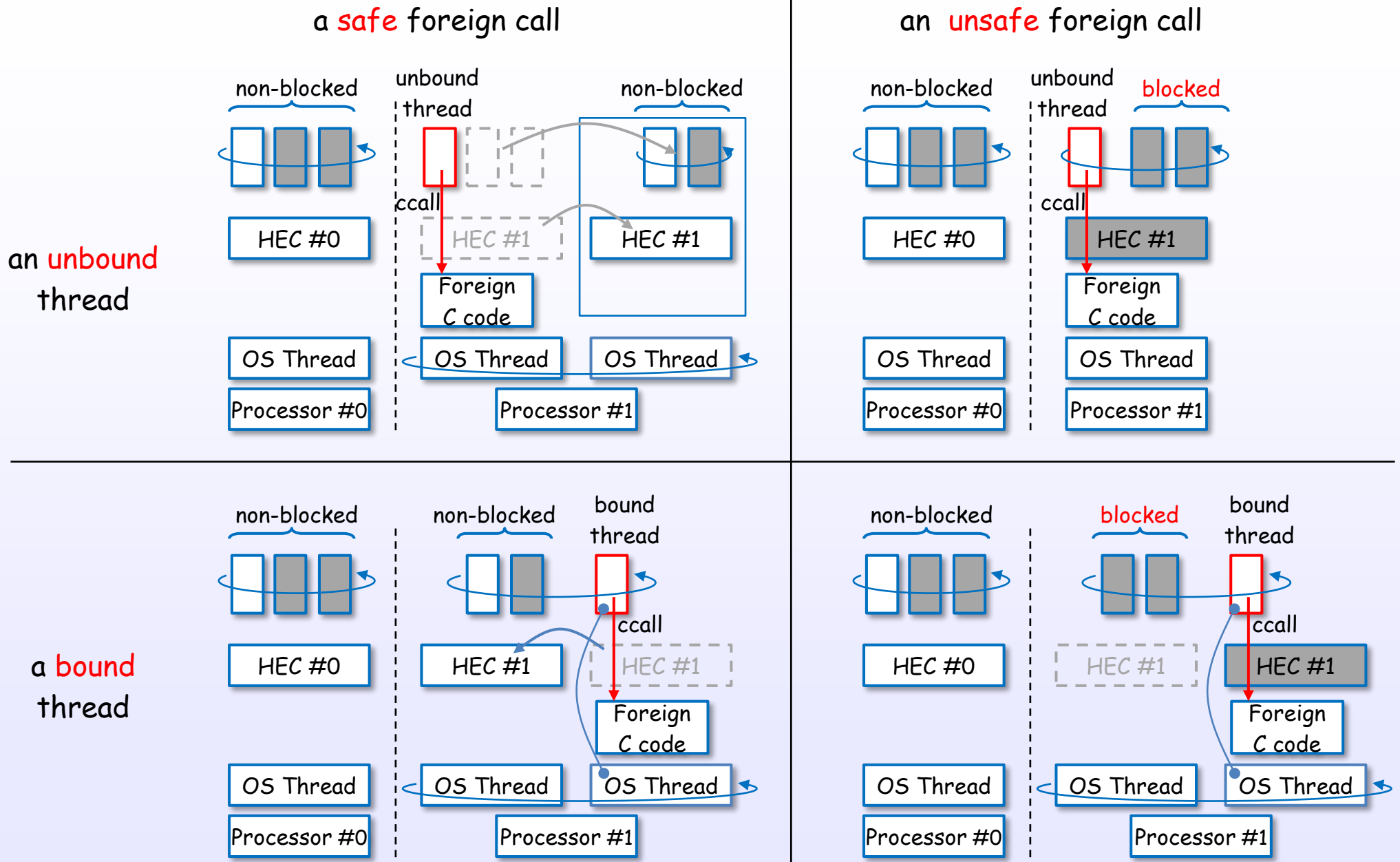


an **unsafe** foreign call



faster,
but blocking to the other Haskell threads

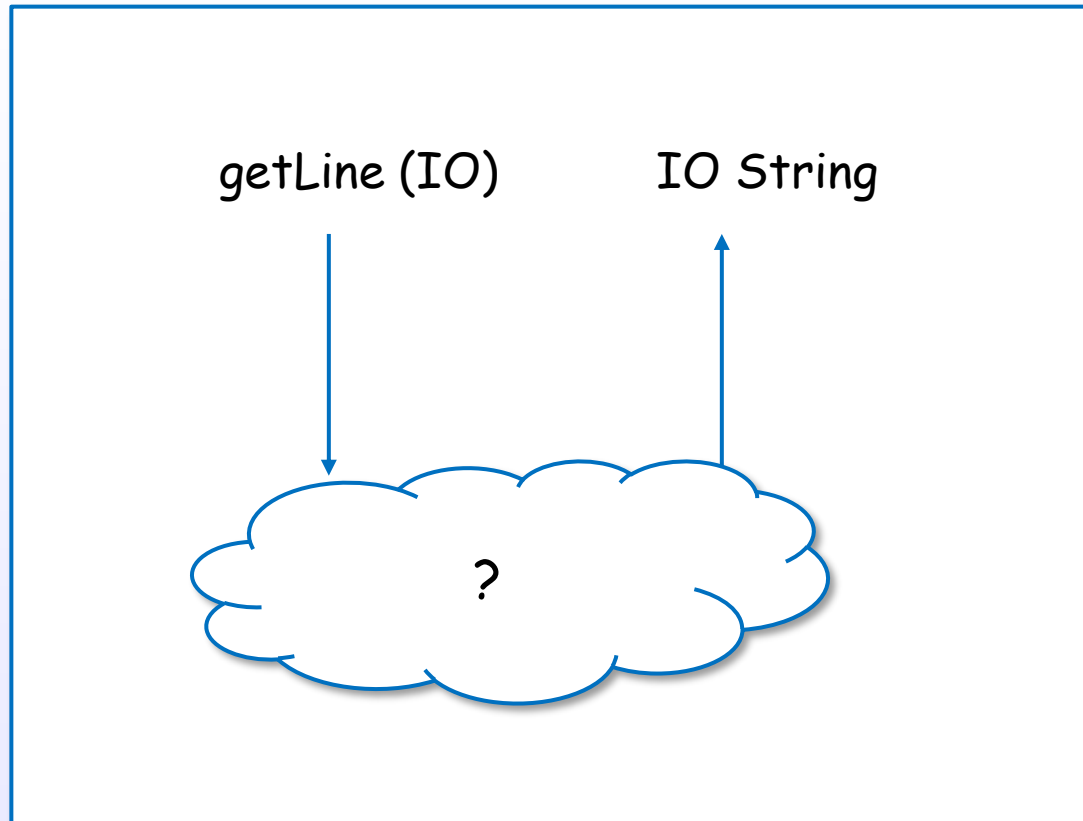
Safe/unsafe foreign call and bound/unbound thread



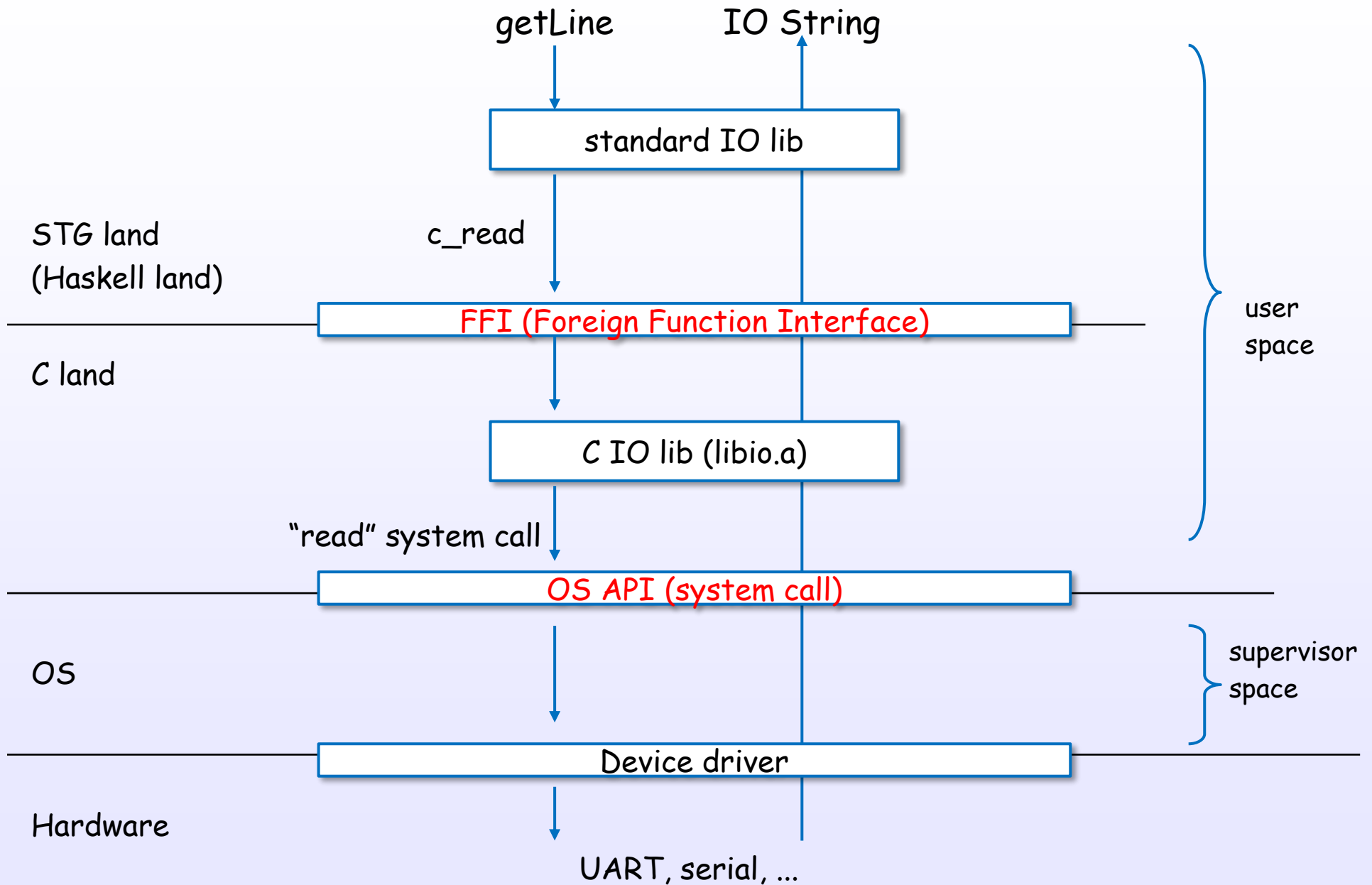
IO and FFI

IO

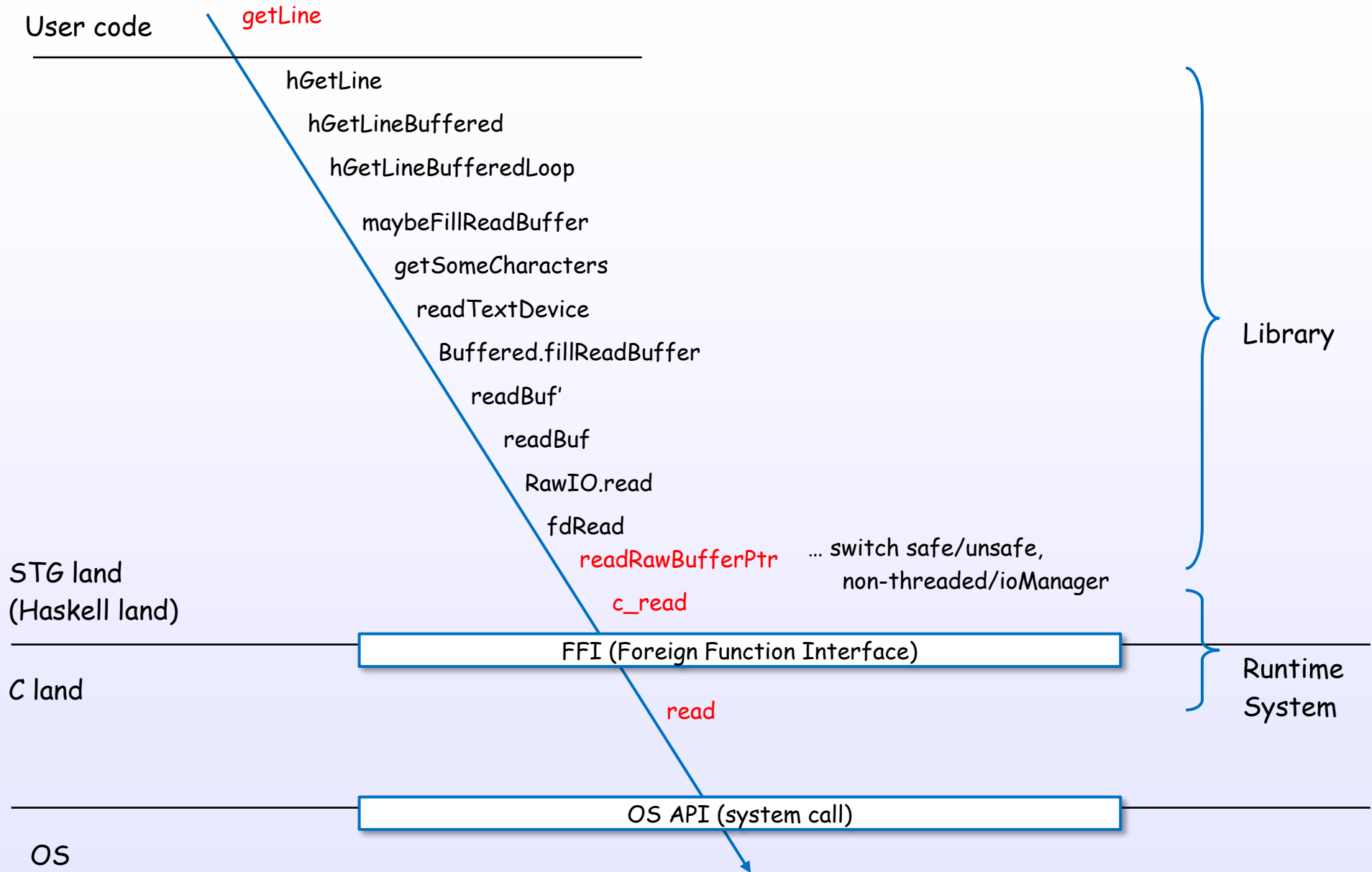
Haskell Thread



IO example: getLine

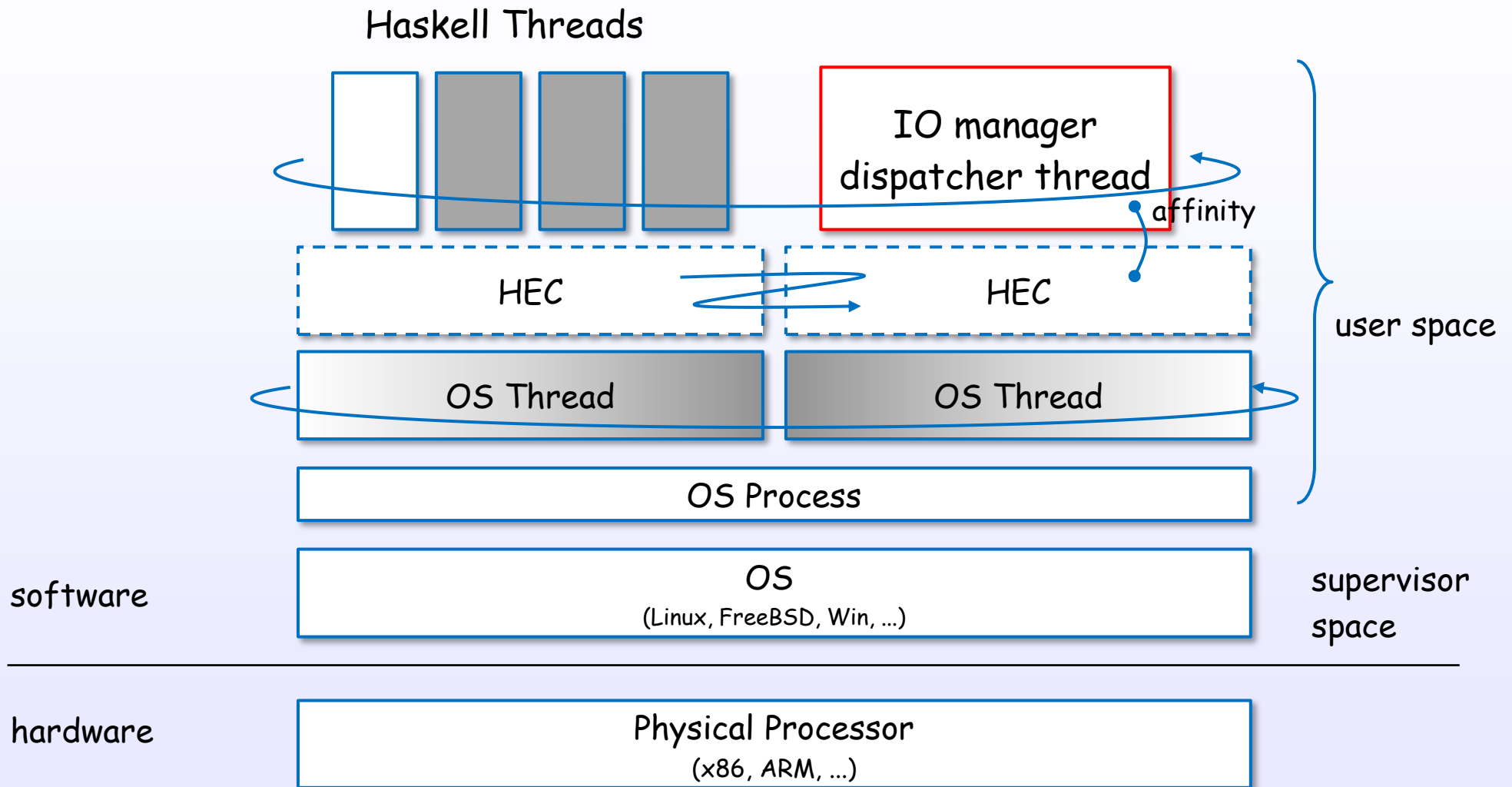


IO example: getLine (code)



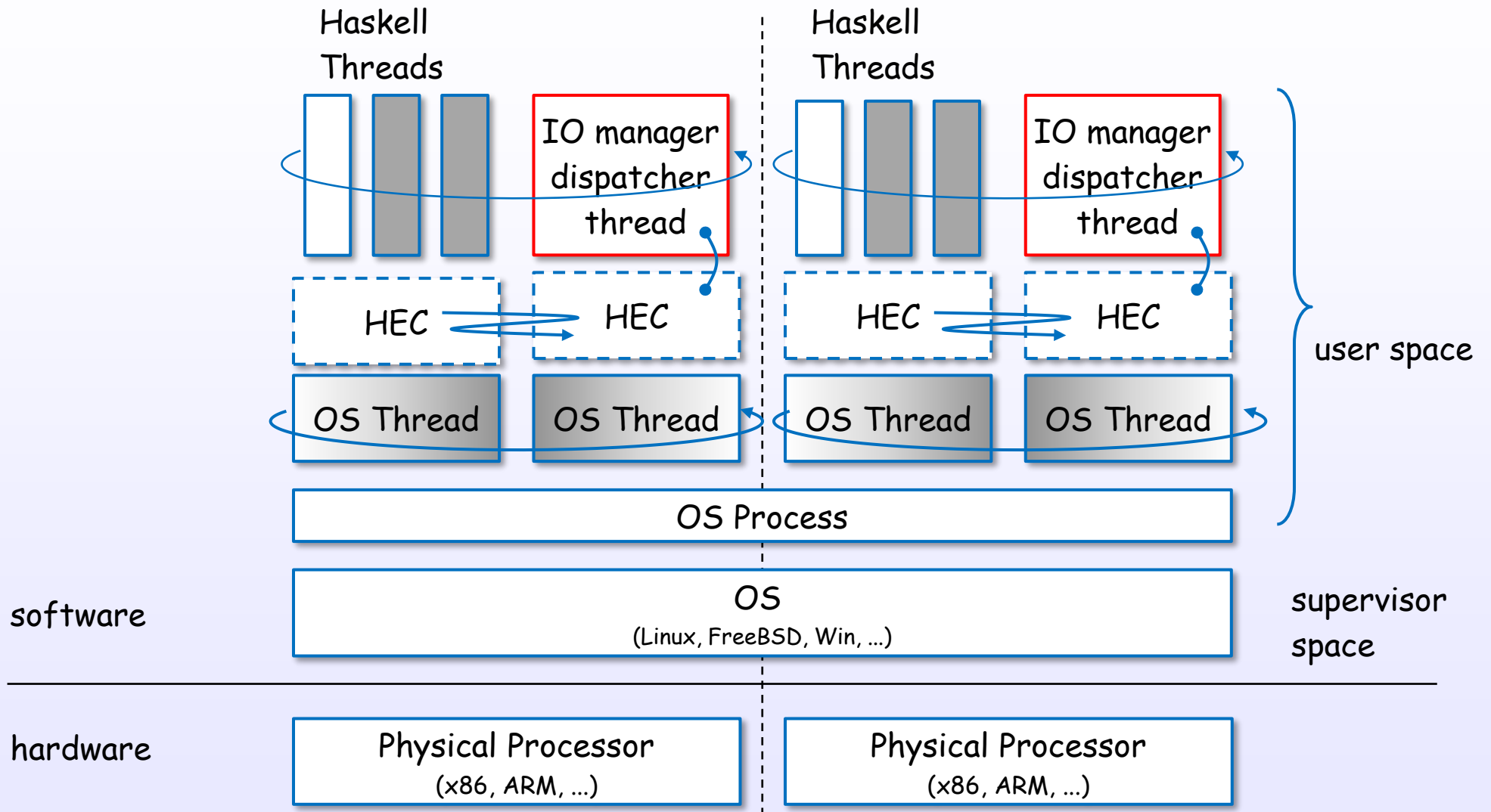
IO manager

IO manager (single core)



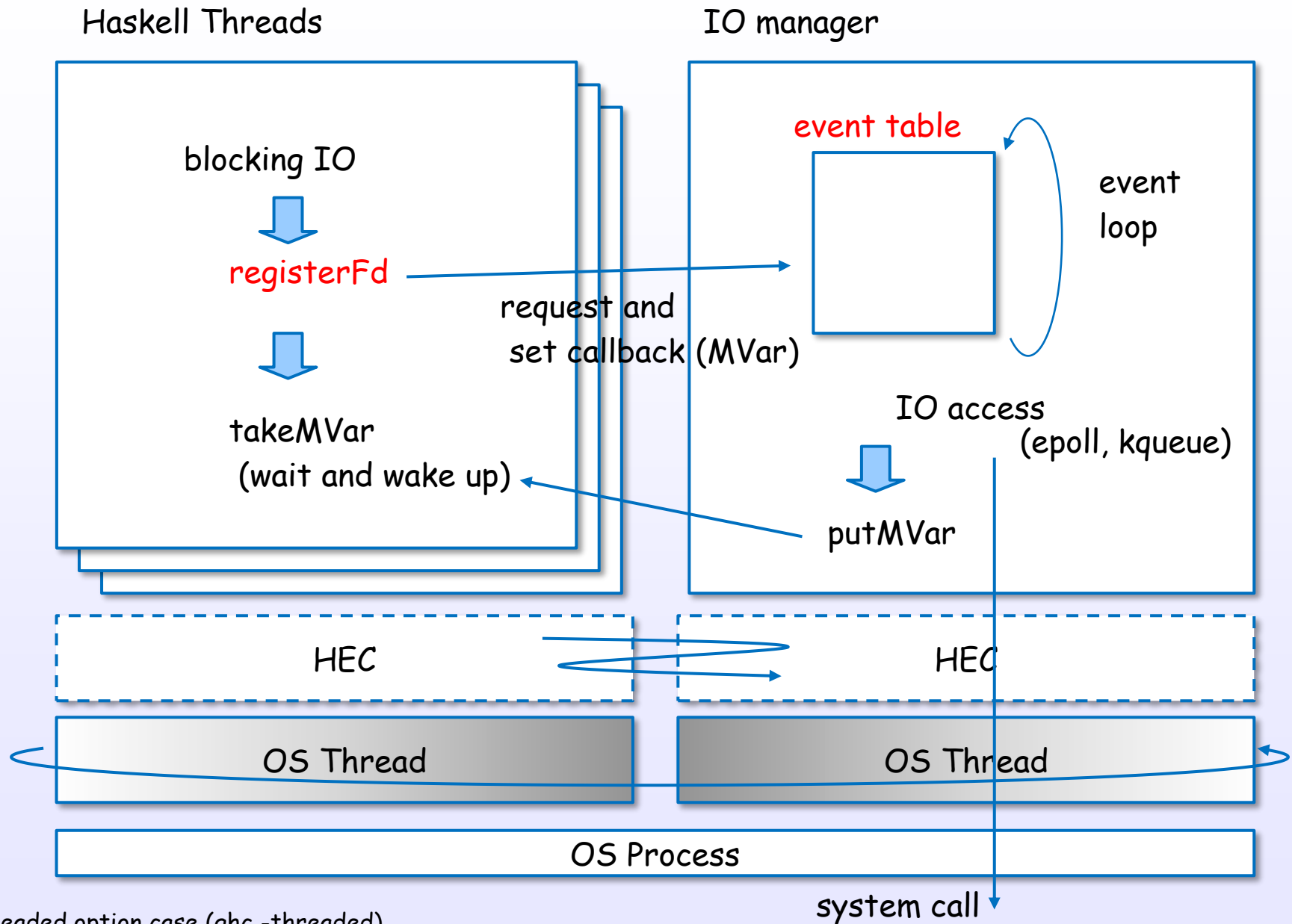
*Threaded option case (ghc -threaded)

IO manager (multi core)



*Threaded option case (ghc -threaded)

IO manager

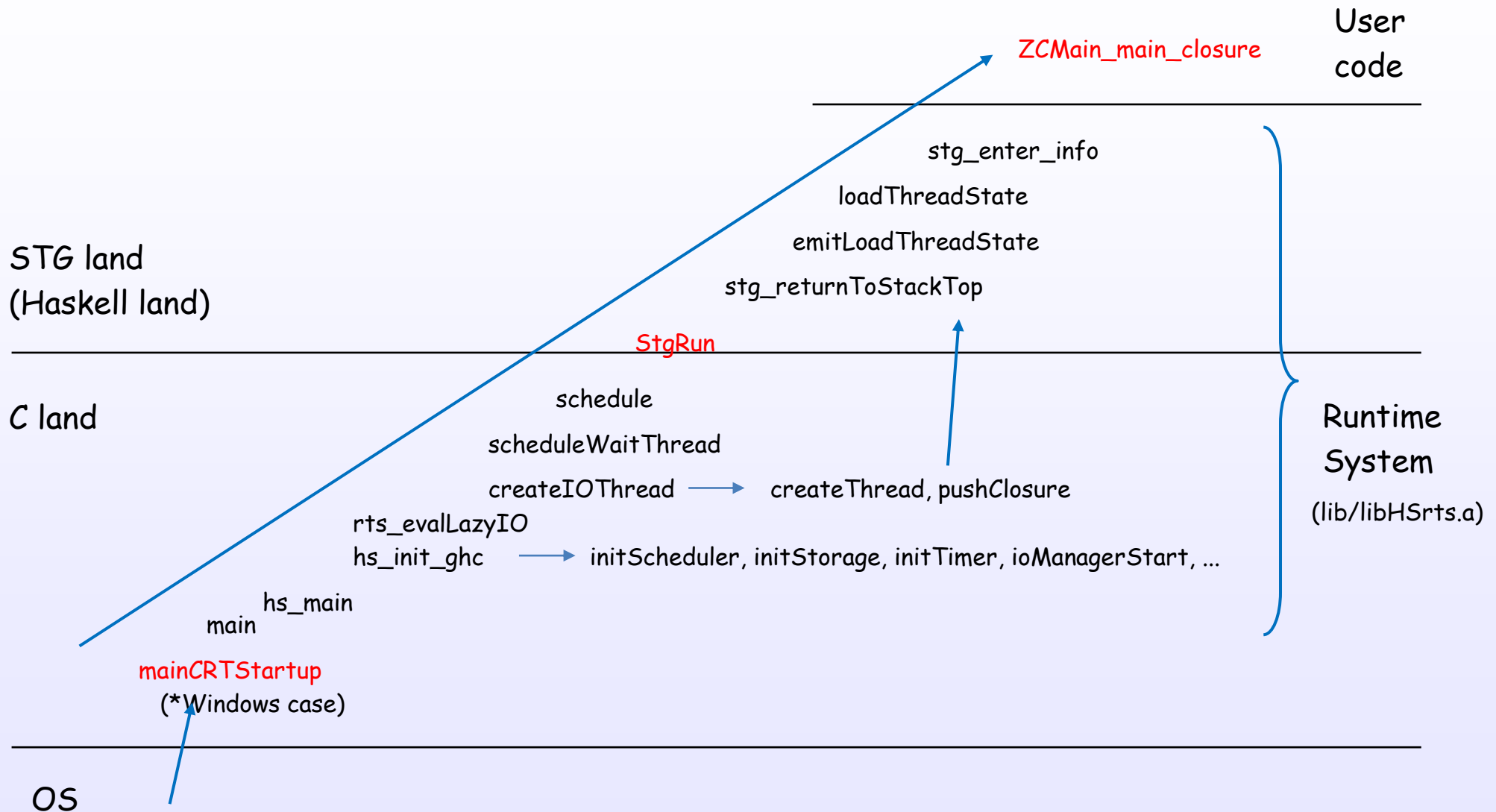


*Threaded option case (ghc -threaded)

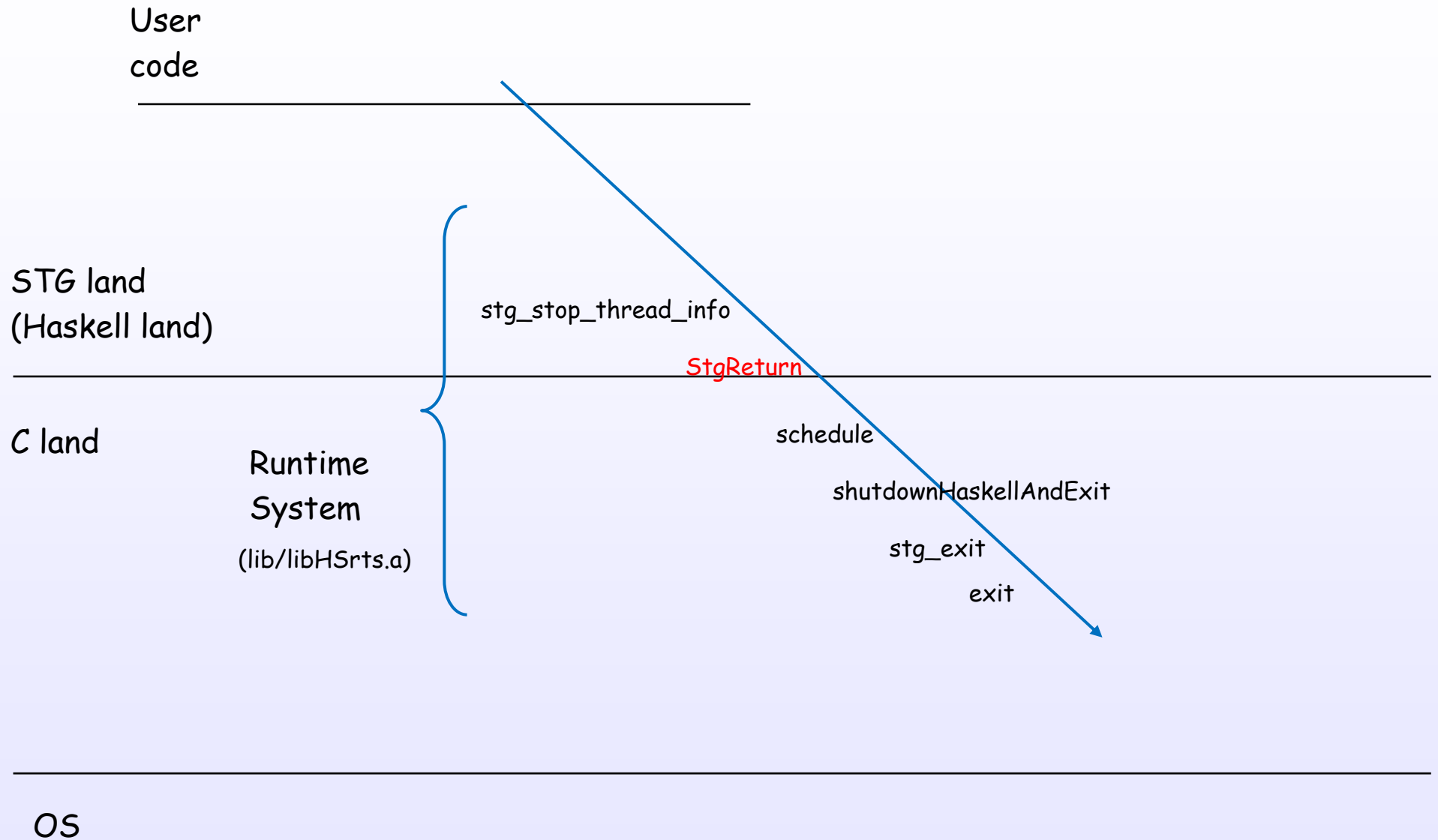
References : [7], [5], [8], [S29], [S30], [S33], [S38], [S36], [S3]

Bootstrap

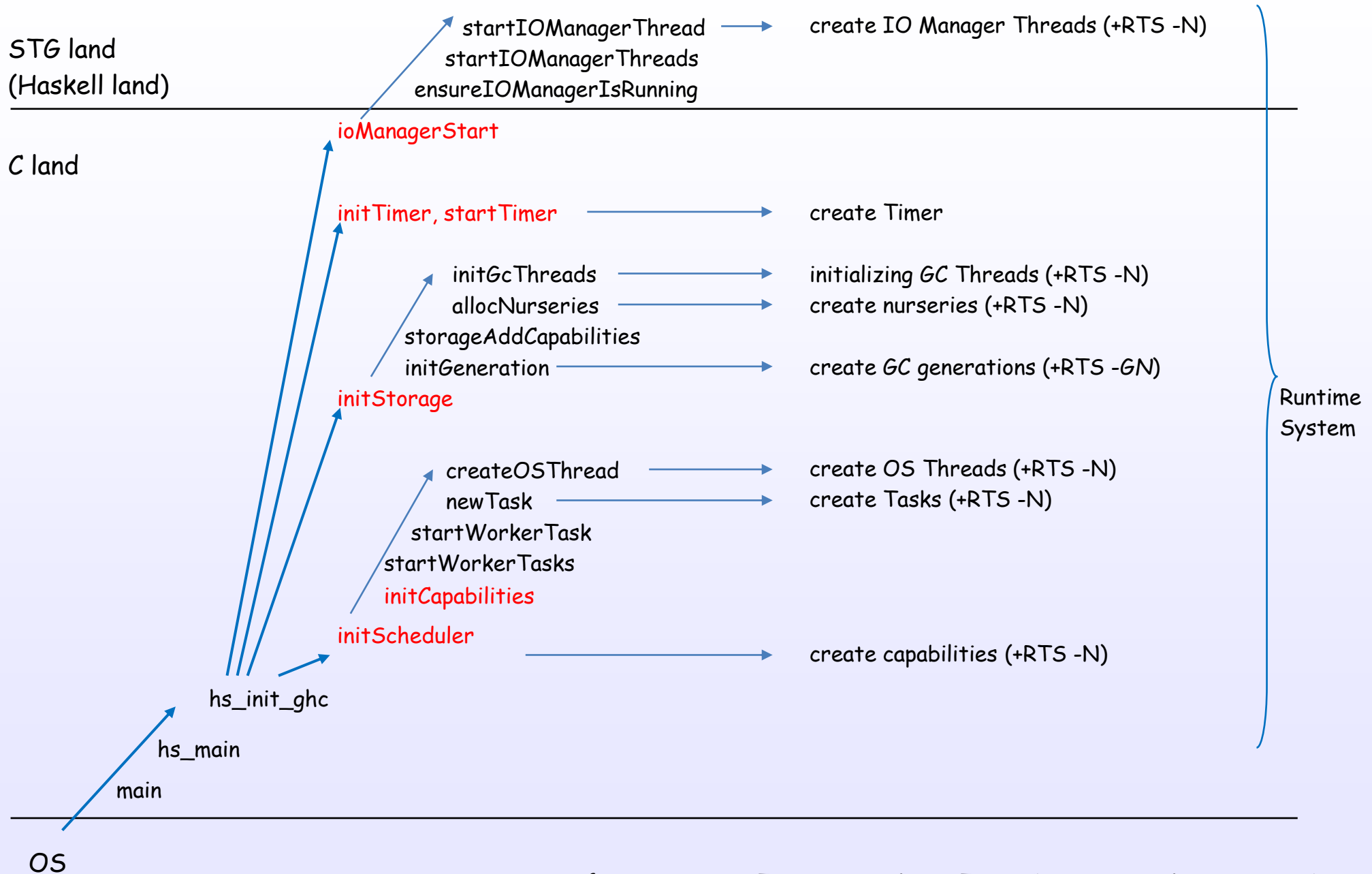
Bootstrap sequence



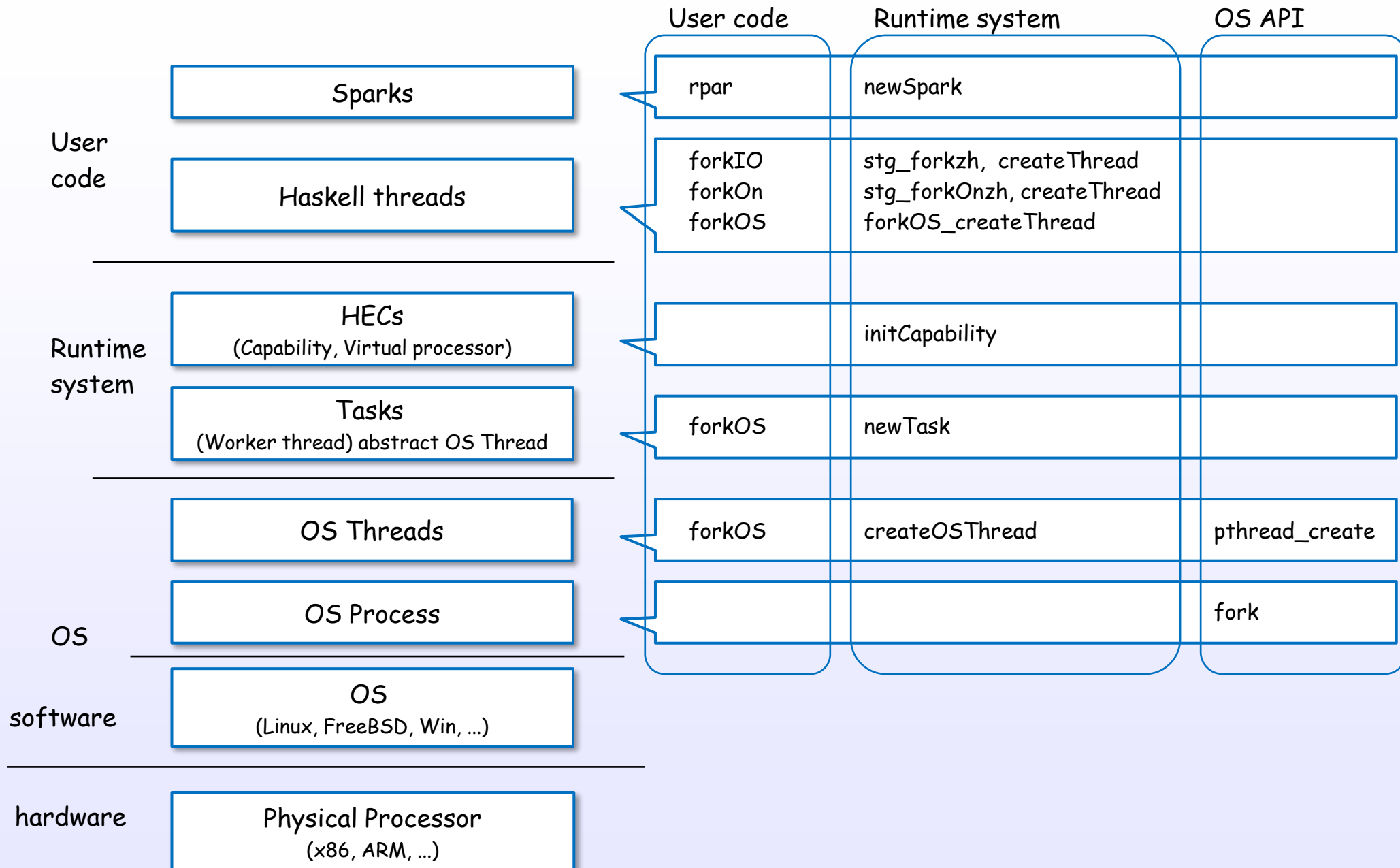
Exit sequence



Initializing



Create each layers

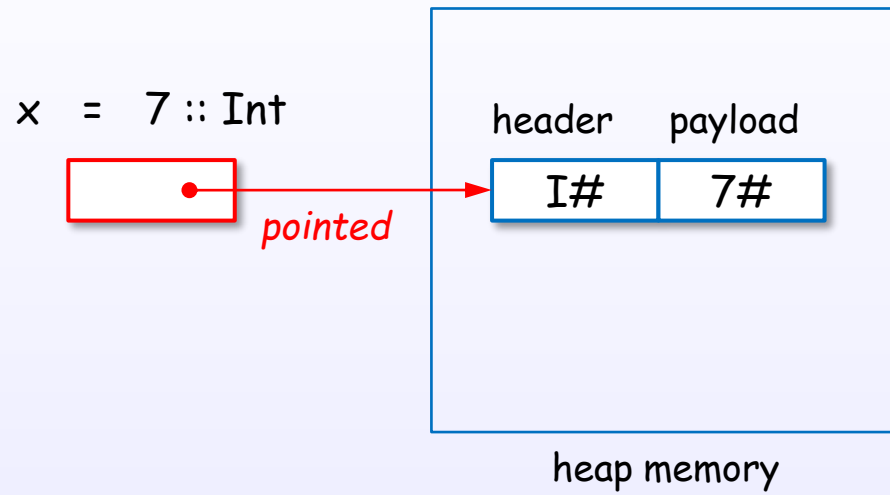


Appendix

Boxity : boxed and unboxed

Boxed and unboxed types

A boxed type



A boxed type is represented by a pointer to a heap-allocated object.

An unboxed type



An unboxed type is represented by the value itself.

Boxity examples

Boxed types

`x :: Int`



`x :: Float`



`x :: Double`



`x :: ByteArray#`

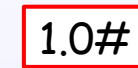


Unboxed types

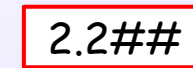
`x :: Int#`



`x :: Float#`



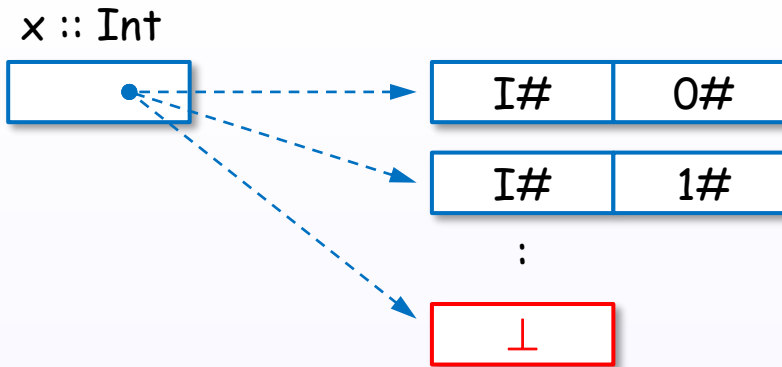
`x :: Double#`



Levity : lifted and unlifted

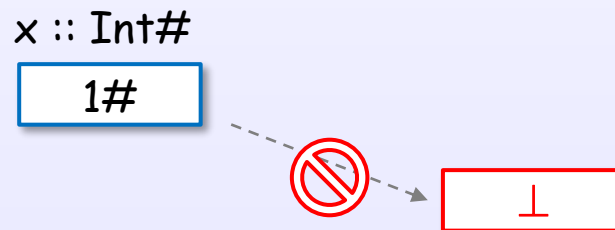
Lifted and unlifted types

A **lifted** type



A lifted type has one extra element representing a non-terminating computation (bottom, \perp).

An **unlifted** type

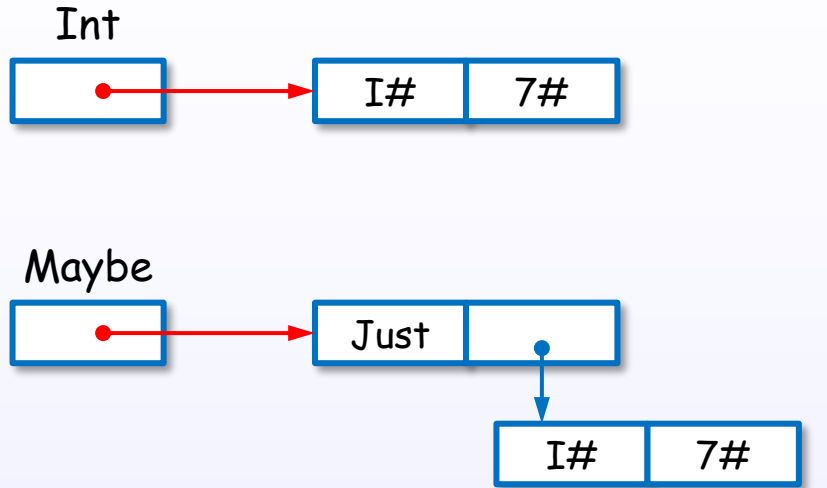


An unlifted type has no bottom.

Boxity and levity

Boxity and levity examples

Boxed types represented by a pointer



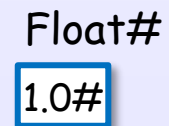
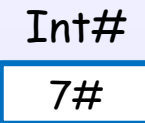
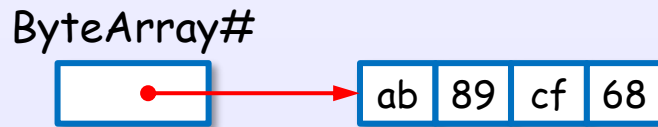
Lifted types

include bottom

Unboxed types

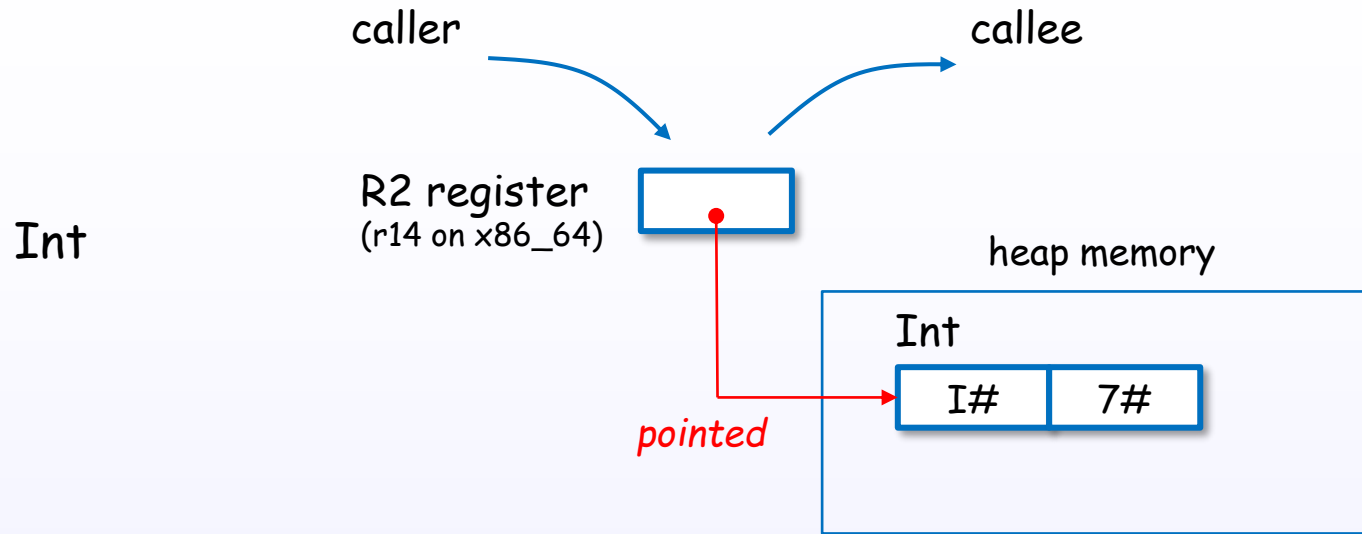


Unlifted types

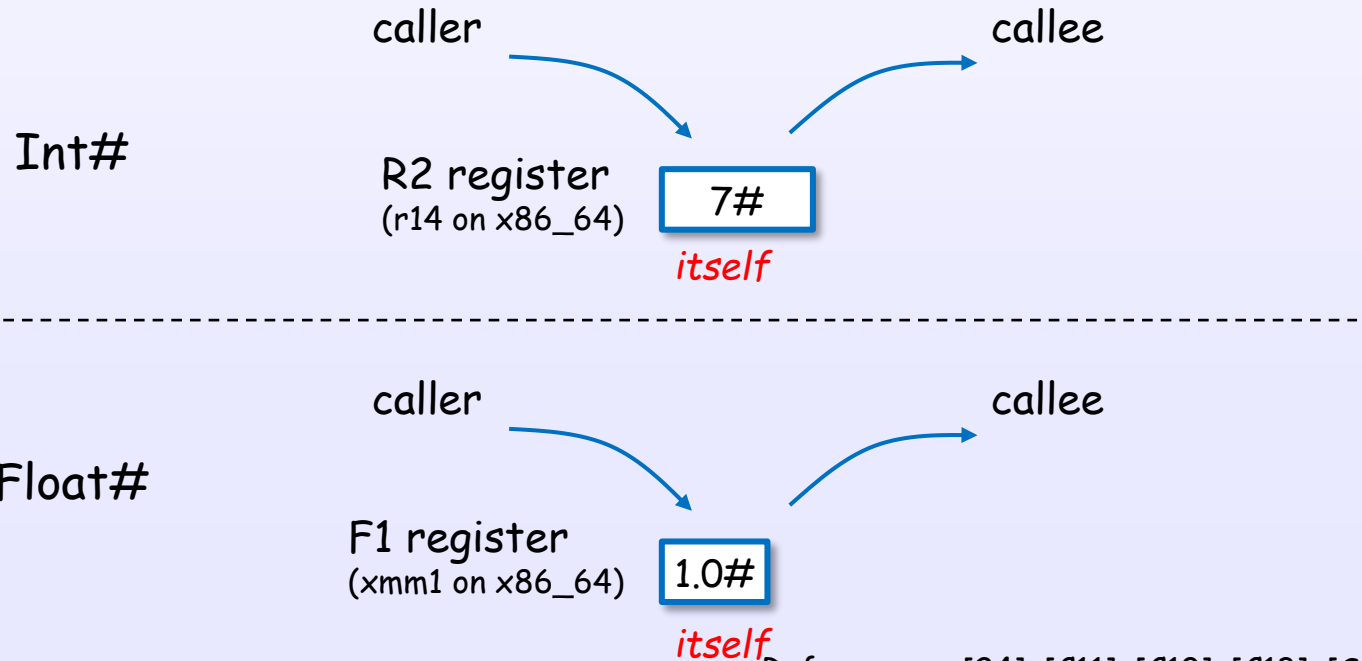


Calling convention examples

Lifted types
(non-strict,
call-by-need)



Unlifted types
(strict,
call-by-value)



References

References

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https://downloads.haskell.org/~ghc/latest/docs/html/users_guide/index.html
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<https://research.microsoft.com/en-us/um/people/simonpj/papers/ptr-tag/ptr-tagging.pdf>
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<https://research.microsoft.com/en-us/um/people/simonpj/papers/parallel/multicore-ghc.pdf>
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<https://cs.brynmawr.edu/~rae/papers/2017/levity/levity.pdf>
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- [C2] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/source-tree>
- [C3] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/compiler>
- [C4] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/compiler/hsc-main>
- [C5] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/compiler/core-syn-type>
- [C6] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/compiler/stg-syn-type>
- [C7] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/compiler/cmm-type>
- [C8] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/compiler/generated-code>
- [C9] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/compiler/symbol-names>
- [C10] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/compiler/type-type>
- [C11] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/levity-polymorphism>
- [C12] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/rts>
- [C13] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/rts/storage/heap-objects>
- [C14] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/rts/storage/stack>
- [C15] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/rts/storage/gc>
- [C16] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/rts/haskell-execution>
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- [C19] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/rts/scheduler>
- [C20] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/rts/stm>
- [C21] <https://gitlab.haskell.org/ghc/ghc/-/wikis/commentary/libraries>

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Source code

- [S1] `includes/stg/Regs.h`
- [S2] `includes/stg/MachRegs.h`
- [S3] `includes/rts/storage/ClosureTypes.h`
- [S4] `includes/rts/storage/Closures.h`
- [S5] `includes/rts/storage/TSO.h`
- [S6] `includes/rts/storage/InfoTables.h`
- [S7] `compiler/GHC/Driver/Pipeline.hs`
- [S8] `compiler/GHC/Driver/Main.hs`
- [S9] `compiler/GHC/Parser.y`
- [S10] `compiler/GHC/StgToCmm/Foreign.hs`
- [S11] `compiler/GHC/StgToCmm/*.hs`
- [S12] `rts/PrimOps.cmm`
- [S13] `rts/RtsMain.c`
- [S14] `rts/RtsAPI.c`
- [S15] `rts/Capability.h`
- [S16] `rts/Capability.c`
- [S17] `rts/Schedule.c`
- [S18] `rts/StgCRun.c`
- [S19] `rts/StgStartup.cmm`
- [S20] `rts/StgMiscClosures.cmm`
- [S21] `rts/HeapStackCheck.cmm`
- [S22] `rts/Threads.c`
- [S23] `rts/Task.c`
- [S24] `rts/Timer.c`
- [S25] `rts/sm/GC.c`
- [S26] `rts/Sparks.c`
- [S27] `rts/WSDeque.c`
- [S28] `rts/STM.h`
- [S29] `rts/posix/Signals.c`
- [S30] `rts/win32/ThrIOManager.c`
- [S31] `libraries/ghc-prim/GHC/Types.hs`
- [S32] `libraries/base/GHC/MVar.hs`
- [S33] `libraries/base/GHC/Conc/IO.hs`
- [S34] `libraries/base/GHC/Conc/Sync.hs`
- [S35] `libraries/base/GHC/Event/Manager.hs`
- [S36] `libraries/base/GHC/Event/Thread.hs`
- [S37] `libraries/base/GHC/IO/BufferedIO.hs`
- [S38] `libraries/base/GHC/IO/FD.hs`
- [S39] `libraries/base/GHC/IO/Handle/Text.hs`
- [S40] `libraries/base/System/IO.hs`
- [S41] `libraries/base/System/Posix/Internals.hs`
- [S42] `AutoApply.o (utils/genapply/Main.hs)`

Connect the algorithm and transistor