

# Cosmic Security

Benjamin Chan

Joint work with Cody Freitag & Rafael Pass

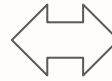
*Cornell Tech*

*Reading Group, TAU. 12/16/2021*

# The Duality of Progress

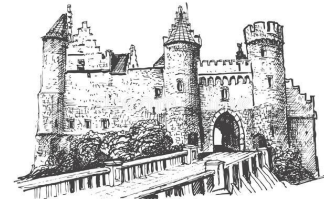
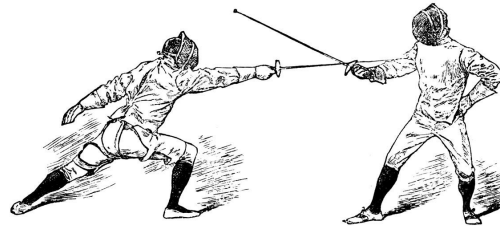
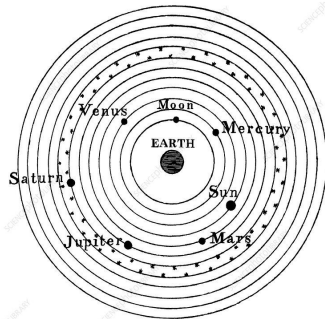
## To Know the Unknown

The desire to model the world, to build a *Theory of Everything*, so that we can know everything.



## A World of Uncertainty

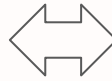
Acknowledgement of the *Unknown*, so that we can prepare for (and survive) the unknown tribulations of the cosmos.



# Cryptography Embraces the Unknown

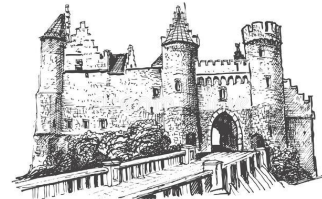
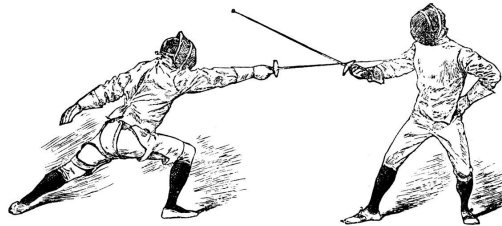
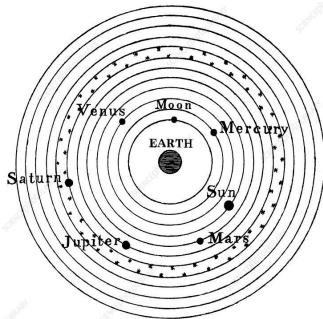
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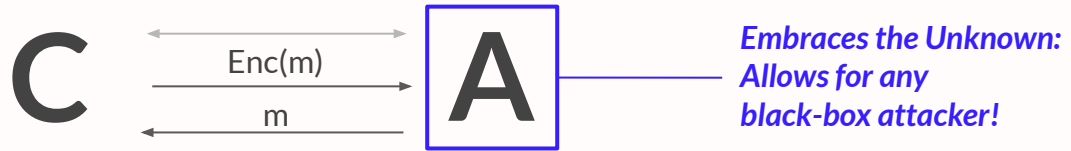
## A World of Uncertainty

We want to build protocols that are secure against *any real-life attacker*, no matter when, where, or how (assuming computational hardness.)



# Reduction-Based Computational Security

Suppose **A** wins a *security game C* (e.g. breaking an encryption scheme):



Then  $R^A$  breaks **C'** (e.g. inverting a OWF)

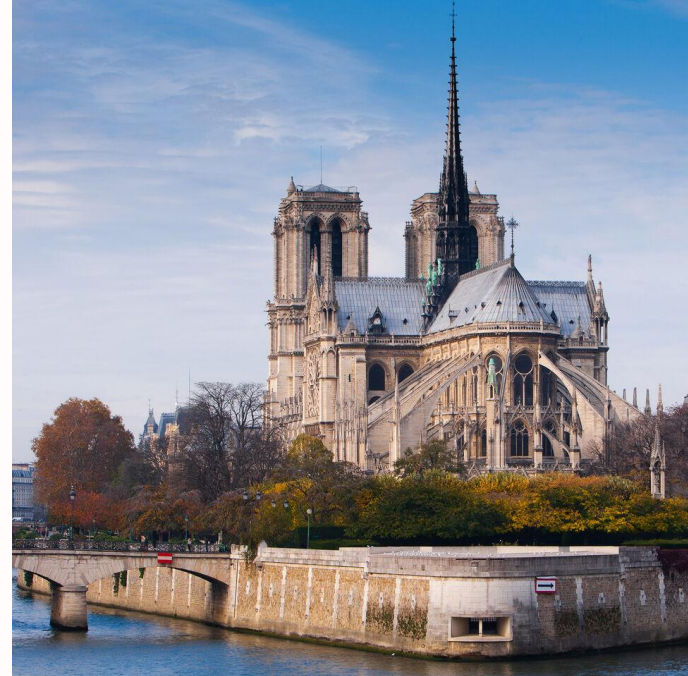


Contradiction! (assuming security of the OWF for  $R^A$ .)

# Embracing Uncertainty has done us remarkably well.

From OWFs, we can build,

- Hardcore Bits [GL89]
- Pseudorandom Generators [HILL99]
- Private-Key Encryption [GGM85+86]
- Commitment Schemes [Nao91]
- Digital Signatures [Lam79, Rom90, Mer90]
- Zero-Knowledge Proofs for all of NP [GMW86]

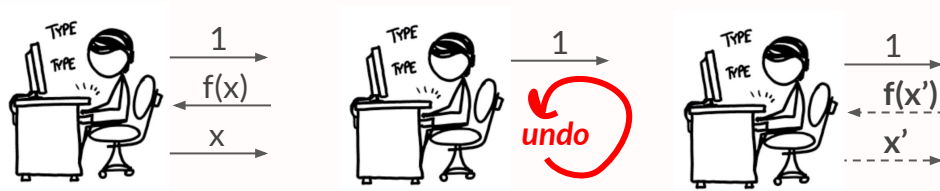


# 1980s: The Bizarre Nature of Quantum Computing

*No-Cloning Theorem*: can't copy qubits without collapsing superposition.

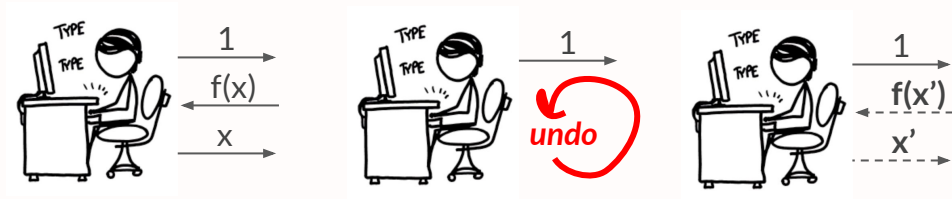
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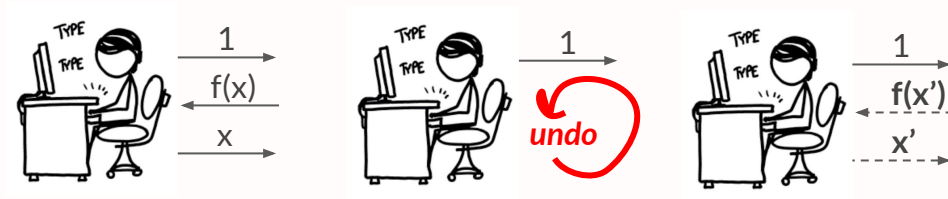
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It is **bizarrely stateful** (Behavior changes on repeated invocations).



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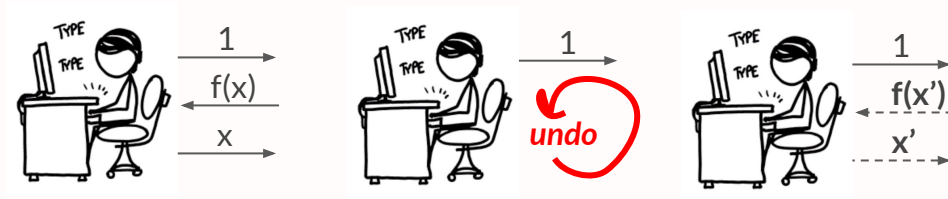
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*It isn't a stretch to imagine a fully stateful real world attacker...*



# Questioning Our Faith

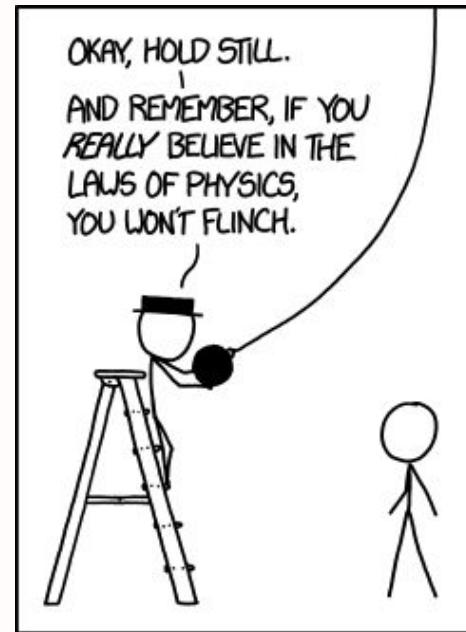
Our world view is built on two implicit assumptions:

*Extended Church Turing Hypothesis:*

Real-life attackers are stateless, and (nu)PPT.

*Quantum Extended Church Turing Hypothesis:*

Real-life attackers are stateless, and (nu)QPT.



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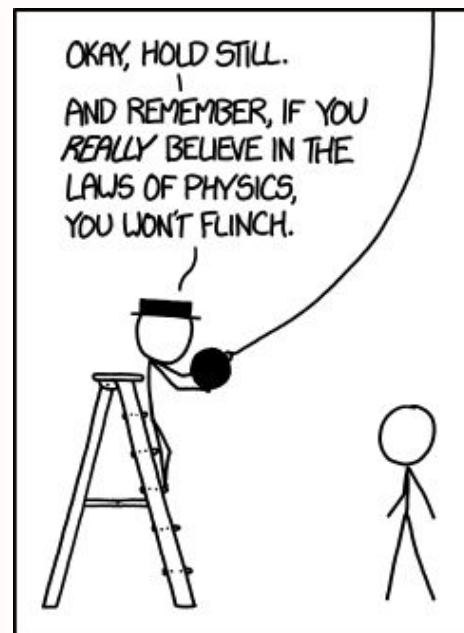
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***These are religious, not scientific assumptions.***

# Popper's Falsifiability Test [Pop05]

*"It must be possible for a scientific theory to be refuted by experience."*

"It is easy to obtain confirmations for nearly every theory – if we look for confirmations."

**"ALL MEN ARE MORTAL"**

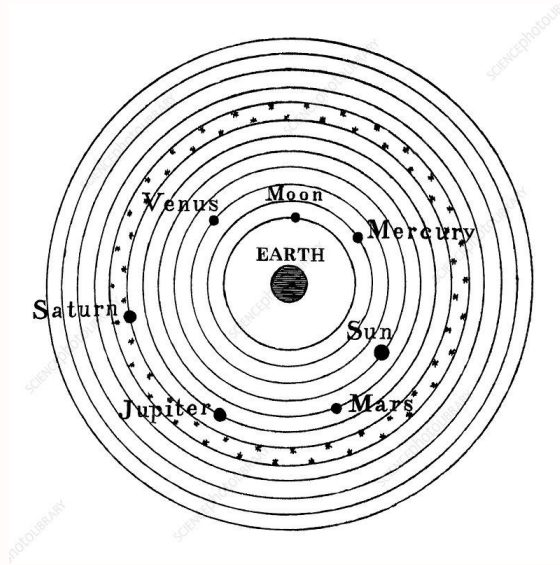
**"Real Life Attackers  
Are Efficient Algorithms"**

Thus, a scientific theory must be systematically falsifiable.

**"ALL MEN ARE IMMORTAL"**

**The Extended Church  
Turing Hypothesis doesn't  
pass the test!**

# If Our Faith is Wrong... If Nature is Stateful...



*It took 1400 years for humankind to develop the tools necessary to falsify geocentrism.*

# This talk:

Can we build a **reduction-based**  
theory of cryptography  
**without making a *religious* assumption**  
on the properties of real-world attackers?

(acknowledging that unknown, that the world is vaster than we previously thought it to be,  
and not just modeled by stateless algorithms?)

# This talk:

Can we build a **reduction-based**  
theory of cryptography  
in the face of *newfound uncertainty*  
about the Nature of real-world attackers?

(What if real-world attackers can change the way they play security games over time?)

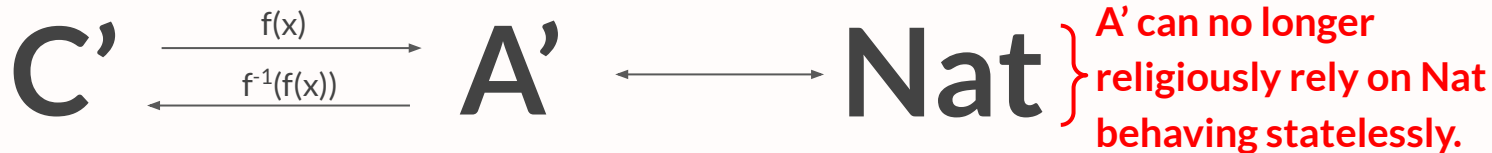


# Our work: Cosmic Security (Informal)

Suppose PPT **A** uses **Nat** to 'break' **C** (e.g. breaking an encryption scheme):



Then  $\exists$  PPT **A'** that uses **Nat** to 'break' **C'** (e.g. inverting a OWF)



Contradiction! (assuming security of the OWF vs PPT+Nat)

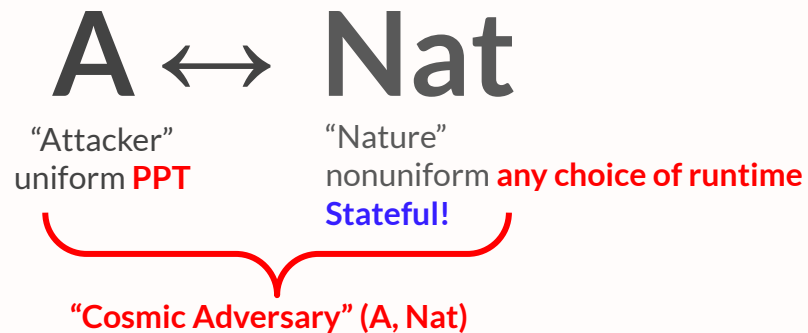
# Roadmap

- ~~1. Motivation~~ (10min)
2. Defining Cosmic Security (15min)
3. Properties of Cosmic Security: a Sanity Check
  - a. Composition, Black-box reductions (5min)
4. Summary of Key Results
  - a. Feasibilities and Impossibilities (20min)
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# Defining Cosmic Security



# Cosmic Adversaries



A classic attacker  
that uses Nature  
to break some scheme

**A**  $\leftrightarrow$   
"Attacker"  
uniform **PPT**

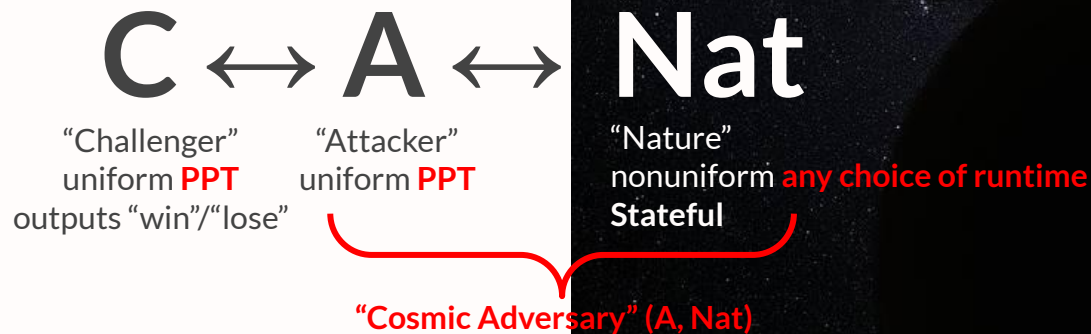
**Nat**

"Nature"  
nonuniform **any choice of runtime**  
Stateful

"Cosmic Adversary" (A, Nat)

to capture our uncertainty  
regarding the  
"Power of Nature"

# Cosmic Security Game



*Observe:* the attacker can alter the state of Nature during the interaction. This is intentional and a key property of our definition.

Nature can be invoked  
many times, “*statefully*”

time

WIN. C ↔ A ↔

LOSE. C ↔ A ↔

LOSE. C ↔ A ↔

LOSE. C ↔ A ↔

LOSE. C ↔ A ↔

Nat

```
4120234369866595438555313653325759481798116998443  
7982845455626433876445565248426198098870423161841  
792614202471888694925609317763750374211308323974  
1509449091069102698610318627041148807669705649029  
365365886743373172081310410519086104793282601391  
57624033946373269391
```

Nat refuses to play more than once.

Maybe Nat measured a qubit.

The cat was let out of the box.

Nat simply isn't useful!

# Useful adversaries win repeatedly.

No point in inverting a OWF only once.

WIN.  $C \leftrightarrow A$

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WIN.  $C \leftrightarrow A$

time



*Classically, we always have the option of re-running A from scratch, with independent coins.*



We consider only (A, Nat) that  
“wins repeatedly” over time.



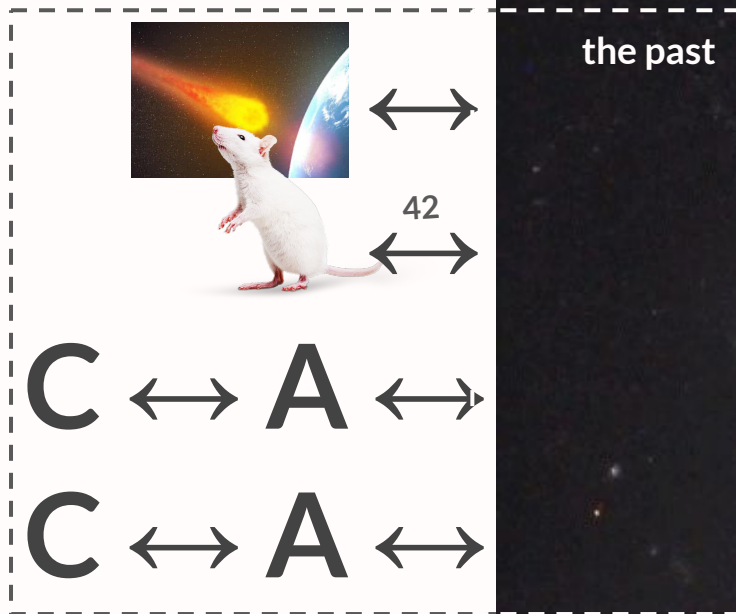
**Nat**

It doesn't matter that Nat is “stateful” if it only wins once.



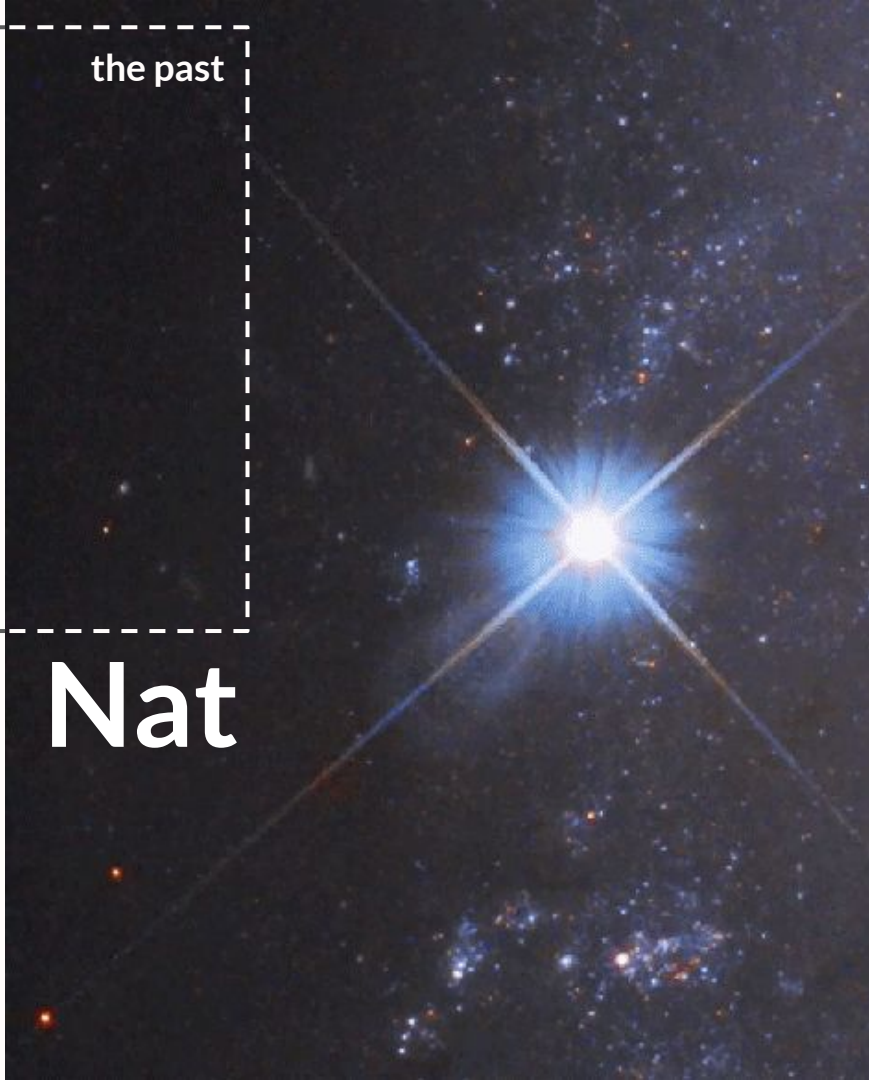
robust winning

time

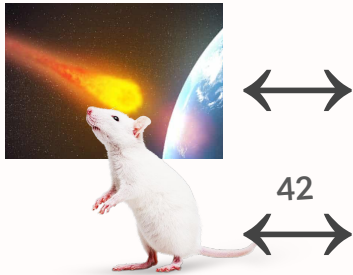


WIN. **C** ↔ **A** ↔ **Nat**

(A, Nat) wins for C regardless of any interactions that Nat had in the past!



robust winning



C ↔ A ↔

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WIN. C ↔ A ↔

the past

$\rho$

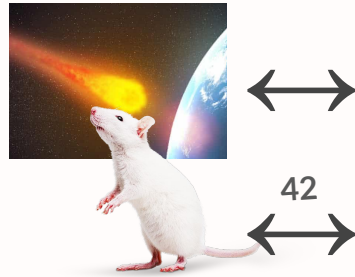
Interaction prefix  $\rho$ :  
 a transcript of messages  
 previously sent to Nat  
 before the beginning of  
 execution,  
 including coins flipped  
 by Nat.



Nat( $\rho$ )

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robust winning



**C**  $\leftrightarrow$  **A**  $\leftrightarrow$

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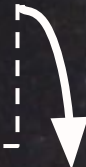
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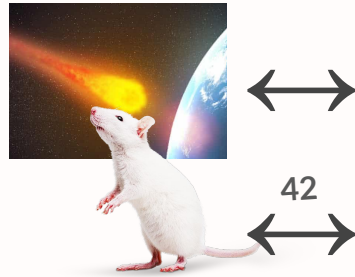
**Nat( $\rho$ )**

Definition: (A, Nat) has **robust advantage**

**a(.)** for C, if  $\forall$  interaction prefixes  $\rho$ ,  $\forall \lambda$ :

$\Pr[(A, \text{Nat}(\rho)) \text{ wins } C] \geq a(\lambda)$

robust winning



**C**  $\leftrightarrow$  **A**  $\leftrightarrow$

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**A weak notion!**  
**Can win in a different way**  
**for each prefix.**

# Cosmic Security (Final)

$\exists$  an  $\epsilon$ -cosmic reduction from  $\mathbf{C}$  to  $\mathbf{C}'$  if  $\forall$  PPT  $\mathbf{A}$ ,  $\exists$  PPT  $\mathbf{A}'$  s.t.  $\forall \text{Nat}$ :

Suppose  $(\mathbf{A}, \text{Nat})$  has robust advantage  $a(\cdot)$  for  $\mathbf{C}$



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Then  $(\mathbf{A}', \text{Nat})$  has robust advantage  $\epsilon(\cdot, a(\cdot))$  for  $\mathbf{C}'$ .



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Equivalent definition!



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$\mathbf{A}'$  can now use the fact that  $(\mathbf{A}, \text{Nat})$  wins repeatedly.

Rest of this talk:  
this is the right definition to work on!

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# Two Nice Properties

*What makes us think that cosmic security is a good definition?*

1. Composability: Cosmic reductions are composable; that is, if  $\mathbf{C}$  reduces to  $\mathbf{C}'$  and  $\mathbf{C}'$  reduces to  $\mathbf{C}''$ , then  $\mathbf{C}$  reduces to  $\mathbf{C}''$ .

Def:  $\epsilon$ -cosmic reduction from  $\mathbf{C}$  to  $\mathbf{C}'$ :

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} follows nicely from definition!

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2. Dummy Lemma: Regular cosmic reductions are *equivalent* to *black-box* cosmic reductions.

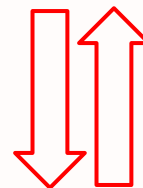
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Def:  $\epsilon$ -cosmic *black-box* reduction

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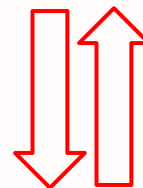
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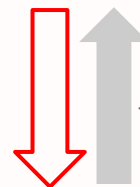
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Easy direction

Def:  $\epsilon$ -cosmic **black-box** reduction

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Def:  $\epsilon$ -cosmic black-box reduction

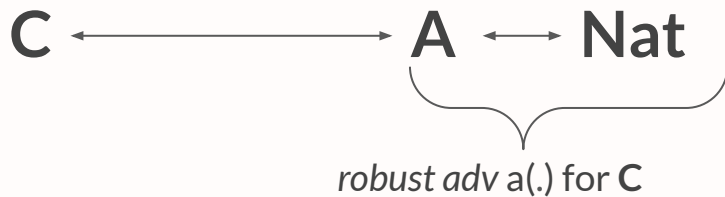
from  $\mathbf{C}$  to  $\mathbf{C}'$  if  $\exists$  PPT  $\mathbf{R}$  s.t.  $\forall (\mathbf{A}, \text{Nat})$ :

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# From Existential to Constructive Reductions



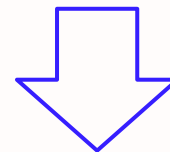
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want to  
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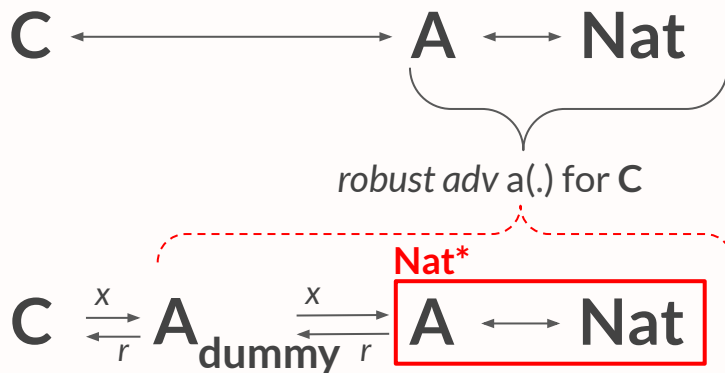
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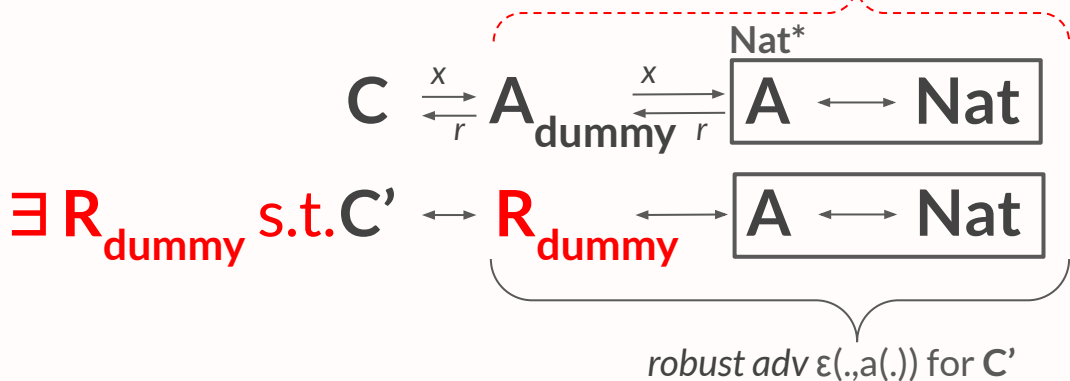
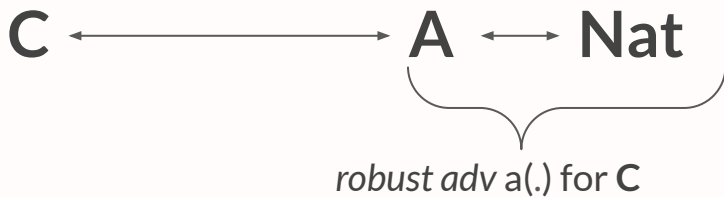
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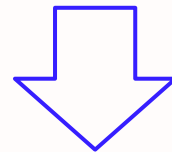
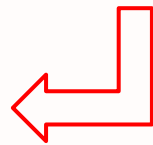
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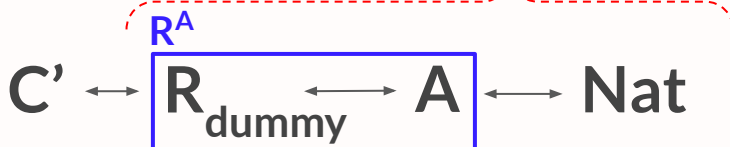
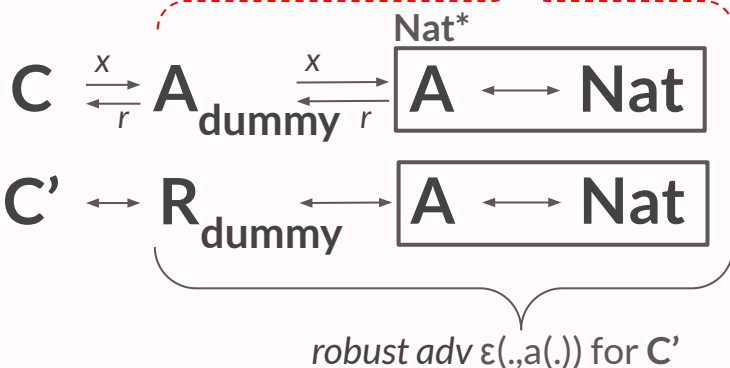
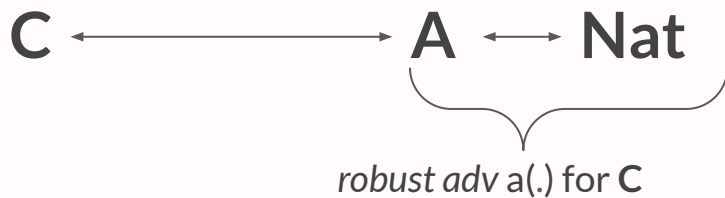
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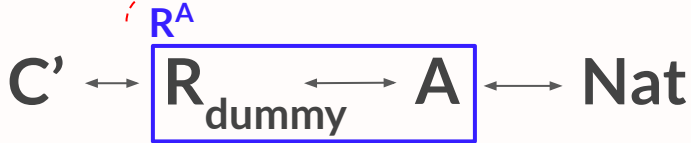
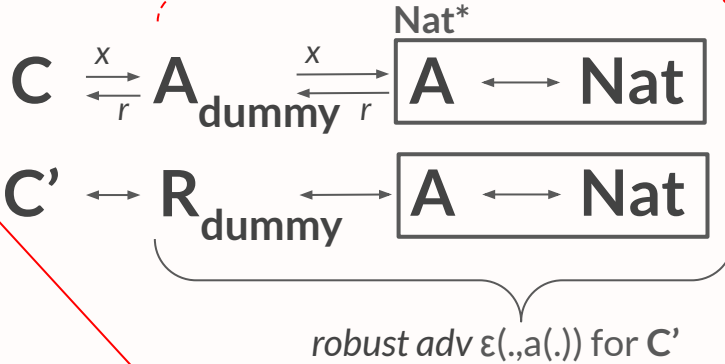
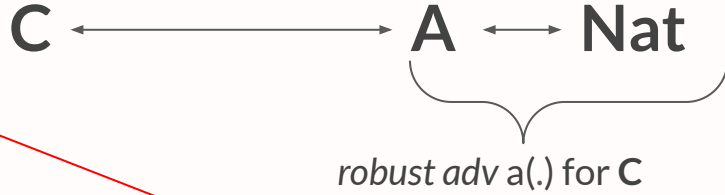
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# From Existential to Constructive Reductions

Now,  
need to argue  
**robustness.**  
**Nontrivial;**  
argued in paper!



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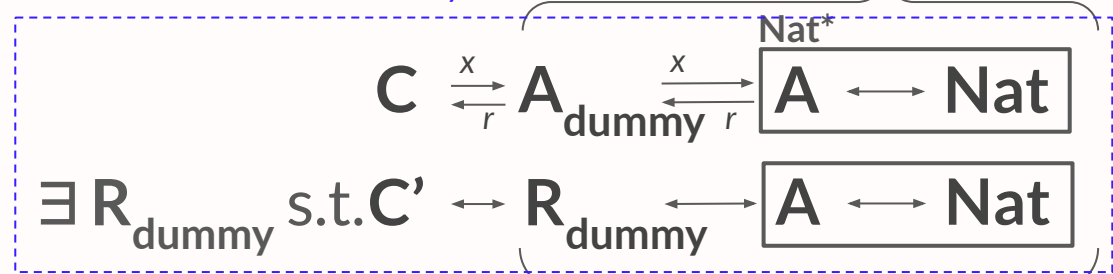
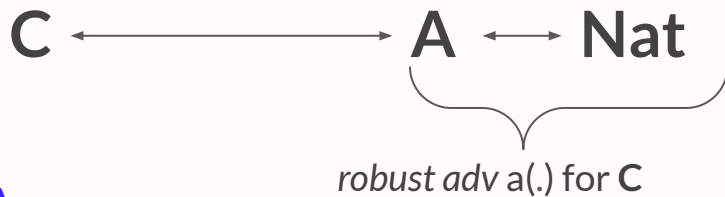


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# From Existential to Constructive Reductions

## Dummy Lemma:

Suffices to show a cosmic reduction for  $A_{\text{dummy}}$



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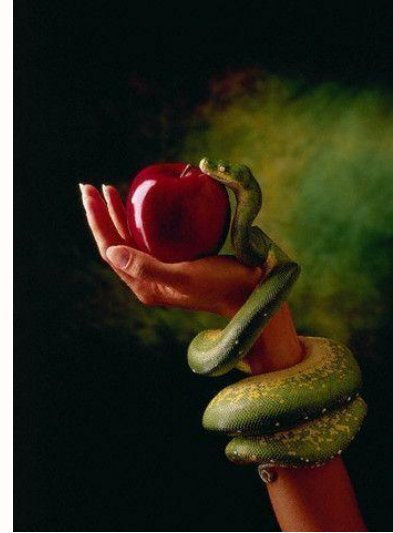
# Recap So Far: A Necessary, Natural Definition

*Why do we like Cosmic Security?*

1. Acknowledges the Unknown: allows Nature to be *stateful* in a way previously not considered, but that we are now compelled to acknowledge.

*Moreover, the definition is Well-Behaved.*

2. Composability: Cosmic reductions are composable; that is, if  $\mathbf{C}$  reduces to  $\mathbf{C}'$  and  $\mathbf{C}'$  reduces to  $\mathbf{C}''$ , then  $\mathbf{C}$  reduces to  $\mathbf{C}''$ .
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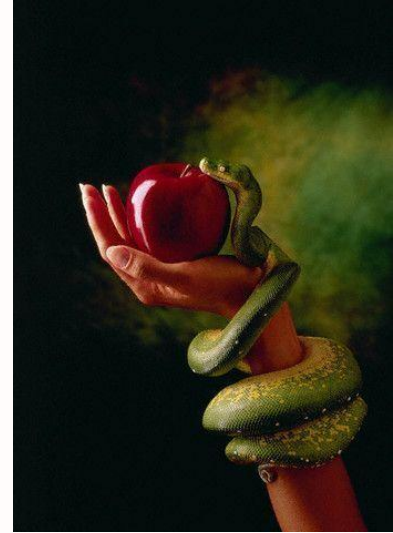
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NEXT UP, The Real Test:  
What Can We Build?

# Roadmap

- ~~1. Motivation (10min)~~
- ~~2. Defining Cosmic Security (15min)~~
- ~~3. Properties of Cosmic Security: a Sanity Check~~
  - ~~a. Composition, Black box reductions (5min)~~
- 4. Summary of Key Results**
  - a. Feasibilities and Impossibilities (20min)**
5. Other Notions of Cosmic Security (10min)
6. Conclusion (5min)

# Key Results: Feasibilities and Impossibilities

**Thm 1** (*Feasibility*): classical 1-shot straight-line black-box reductions imply cosmic reductions.

**Corollaries**: PRFs/SKE/Commitments/[Witness Indistinguishability](#)/PRG Length Extension

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[New 1-shot straight-line black-box proof for WI! \(See Paper\)](#)

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*What about reductions that use the attacker multiple times?*

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*Claim: we need new techniques to build advanced cosmic cryptography!*



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“A First Stab” at feasibility in the cosmic setting

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Table this for now.



# Intermission

*Next Up:*

Walkthrough of our results

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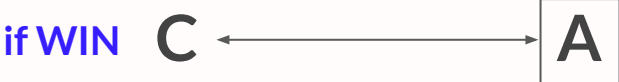
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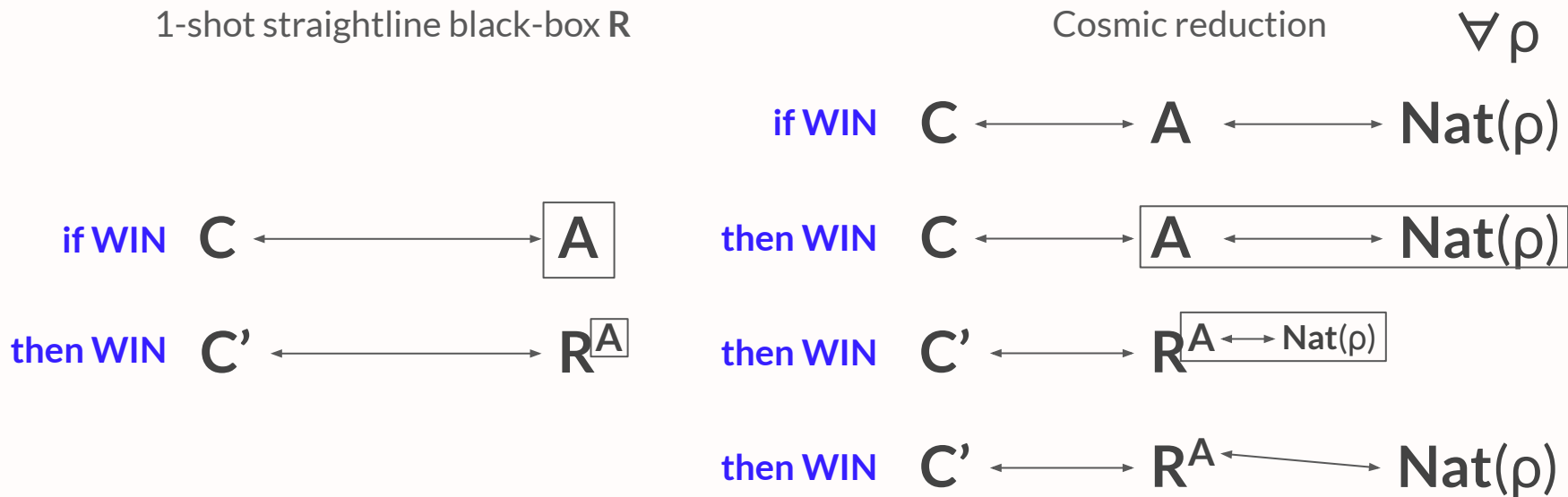
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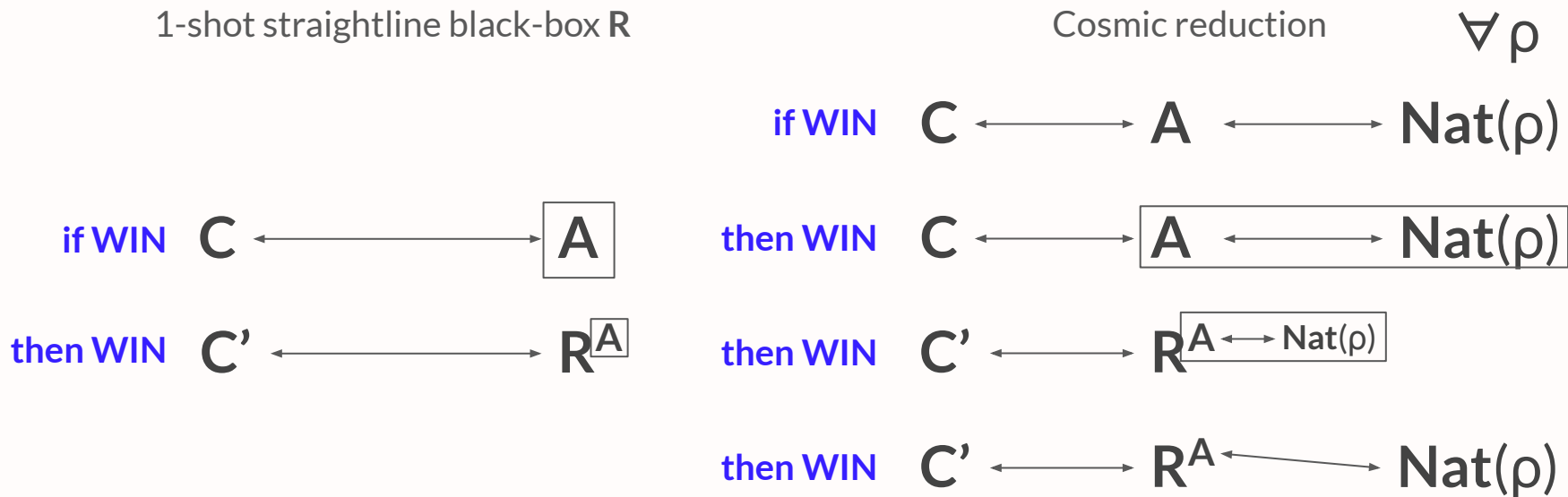
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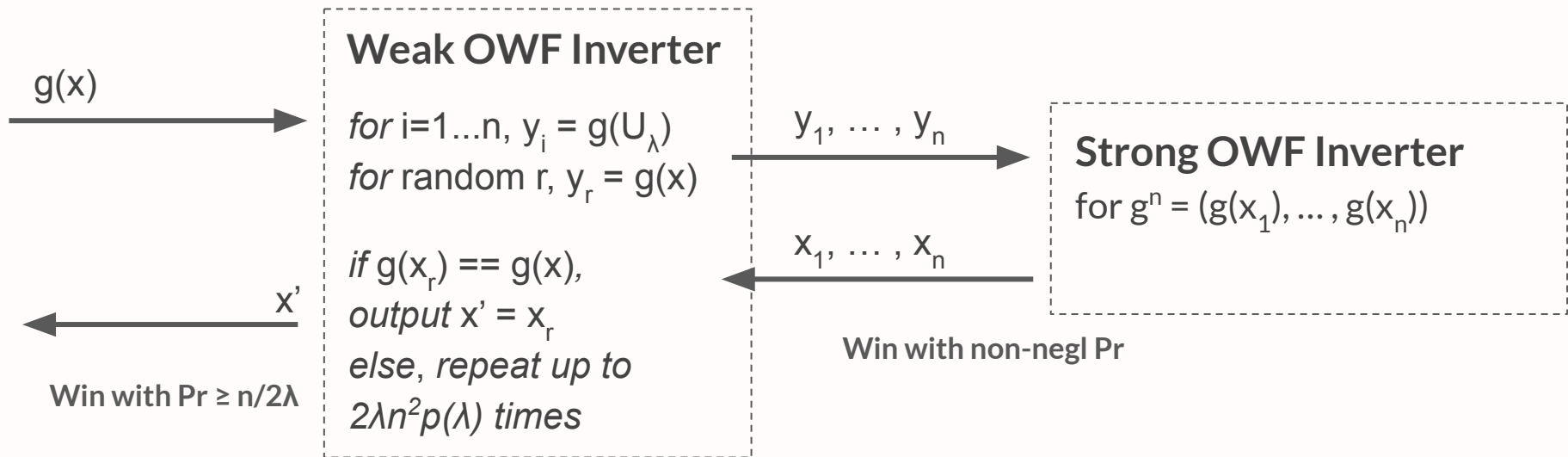
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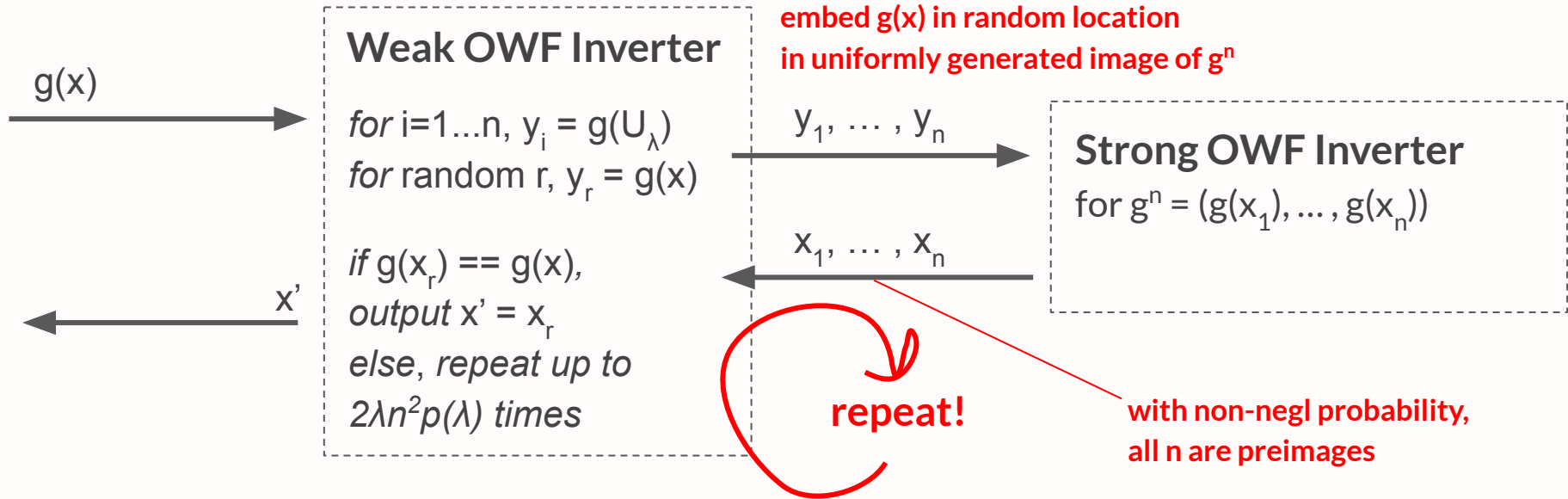
**Thm 2 (*Impossibility of Hardness Amplification*):**

Suppose there is an  $\epsilon$ -cosmic black reduction from the OWF security of  $g^n(x_1 \dots x_n) = (g(x_1), \dots, g(x_n))$  to the OWF security of  $g(x)$  that uses only black-box access to  $g$ , and that works for any function  $g$ . Then, there exists a negligible function  $\mu$  such that  $\epsilon(\lambda, a) \leq a + \mu(\lambda)$ .

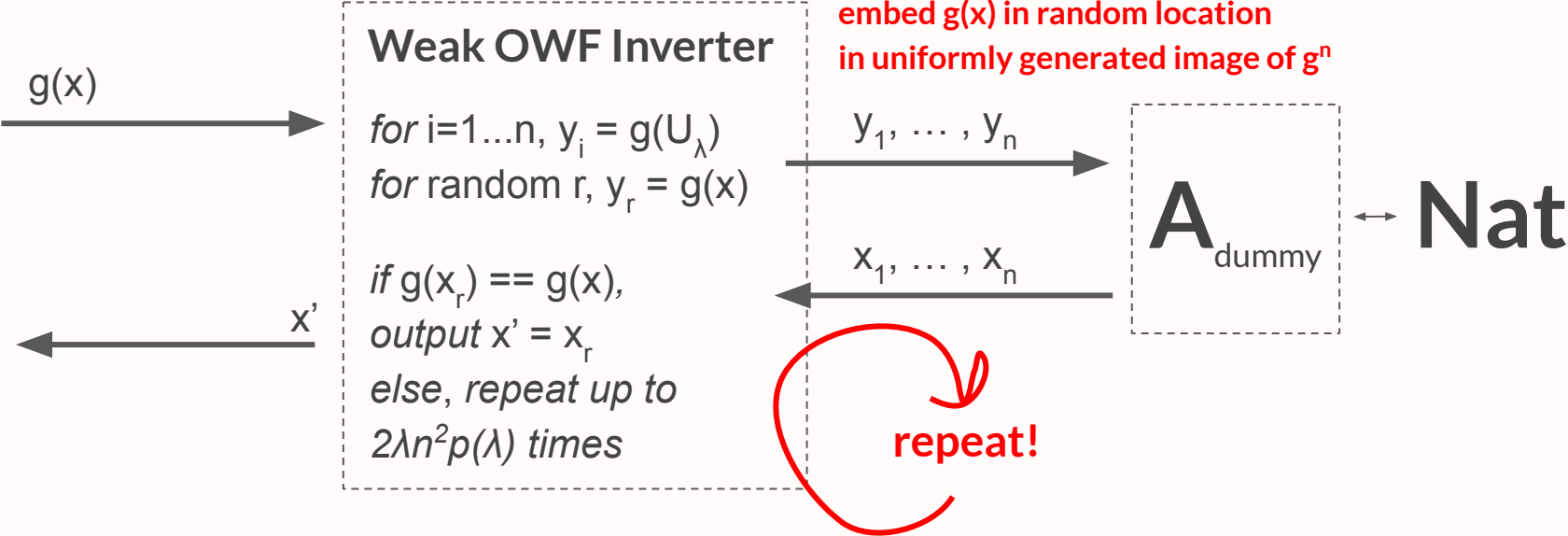
# Recall: Classical Hardness Amplification



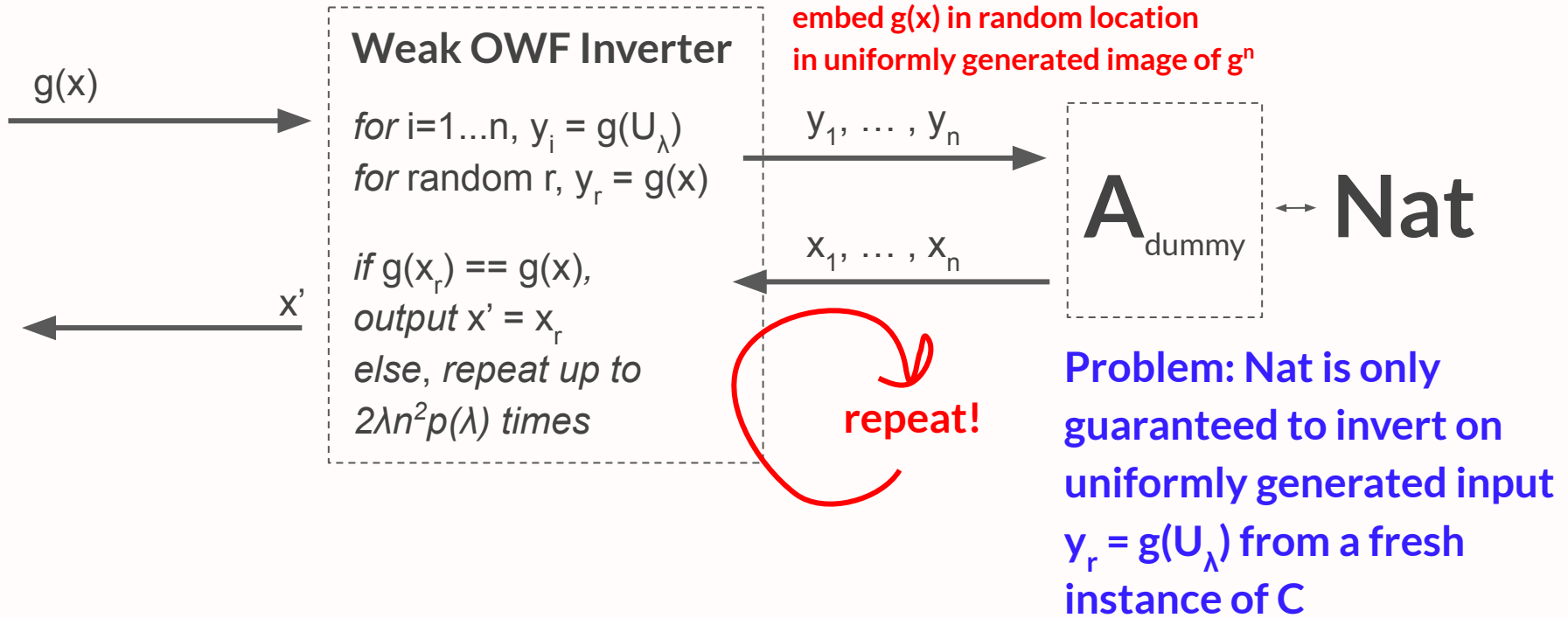
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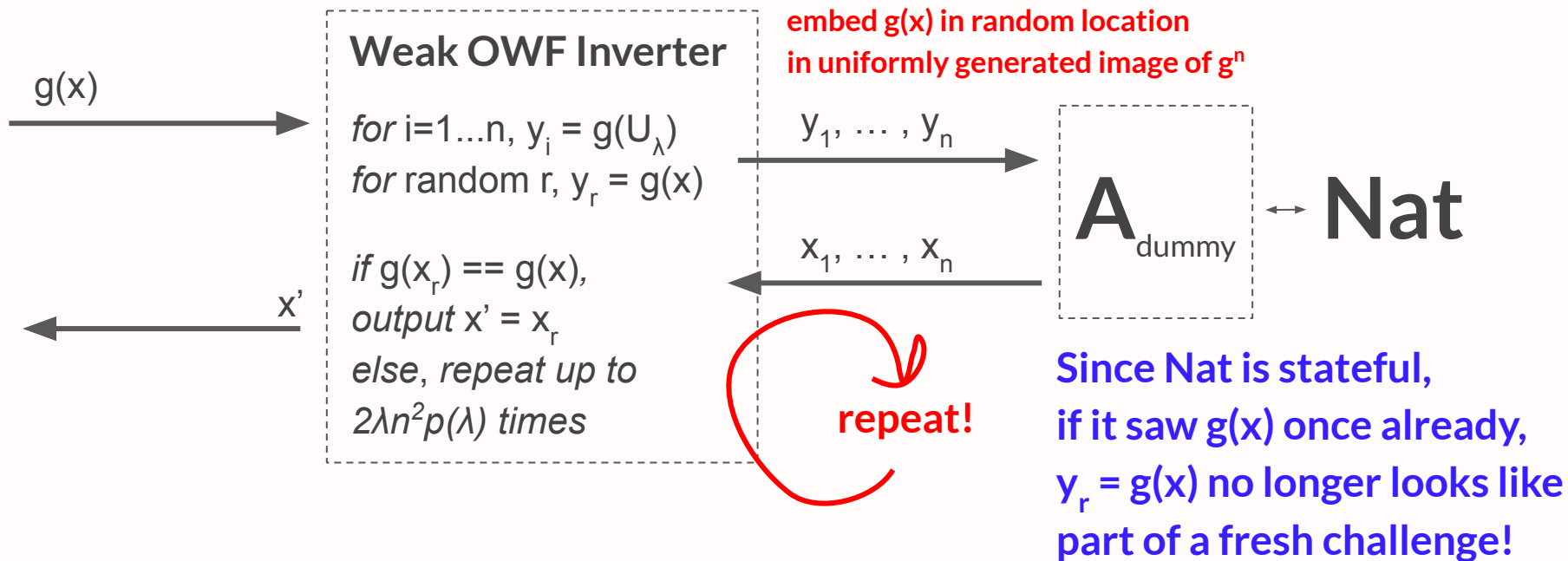
# High Level Idea: Cosmic Hardness Amplification



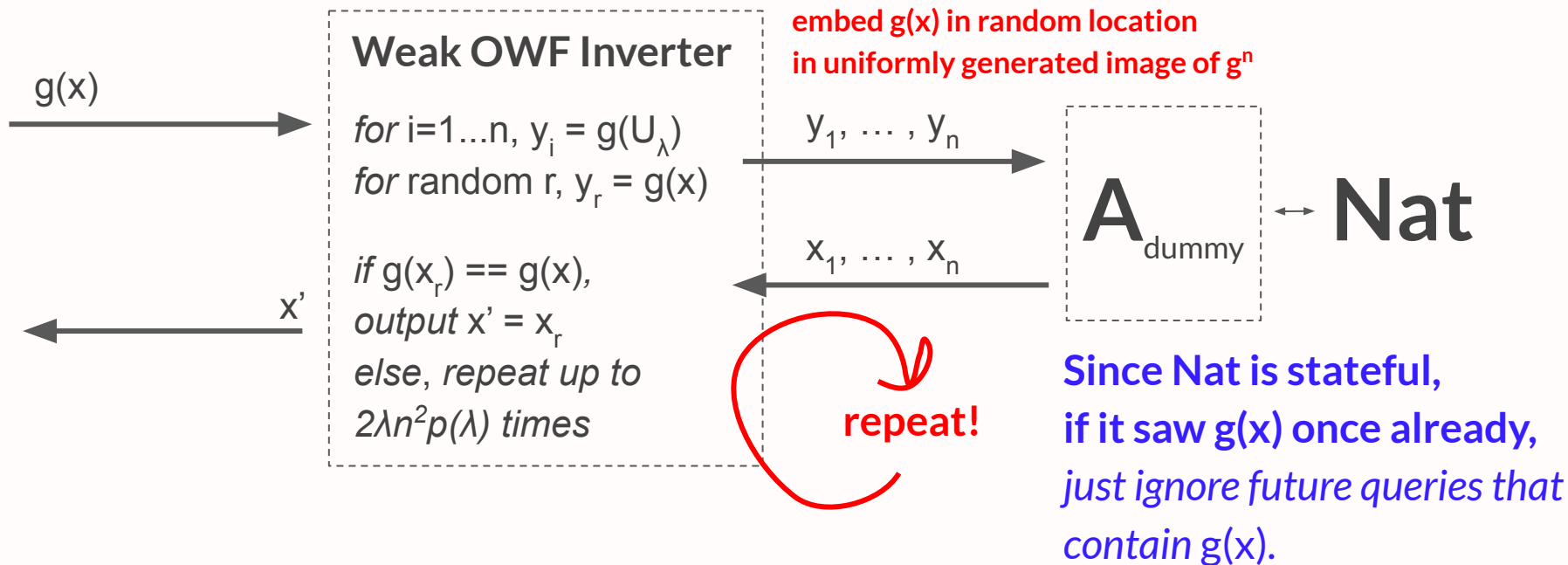
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## Thus, Black-Box Cosmic Hardness Amplification is *Impossible*.

Classical reductions that use an attacker repeatedly on **correlated** inputs may fail, if the attacker notices the correlation and halts.

*We may need to hide the correlation.*



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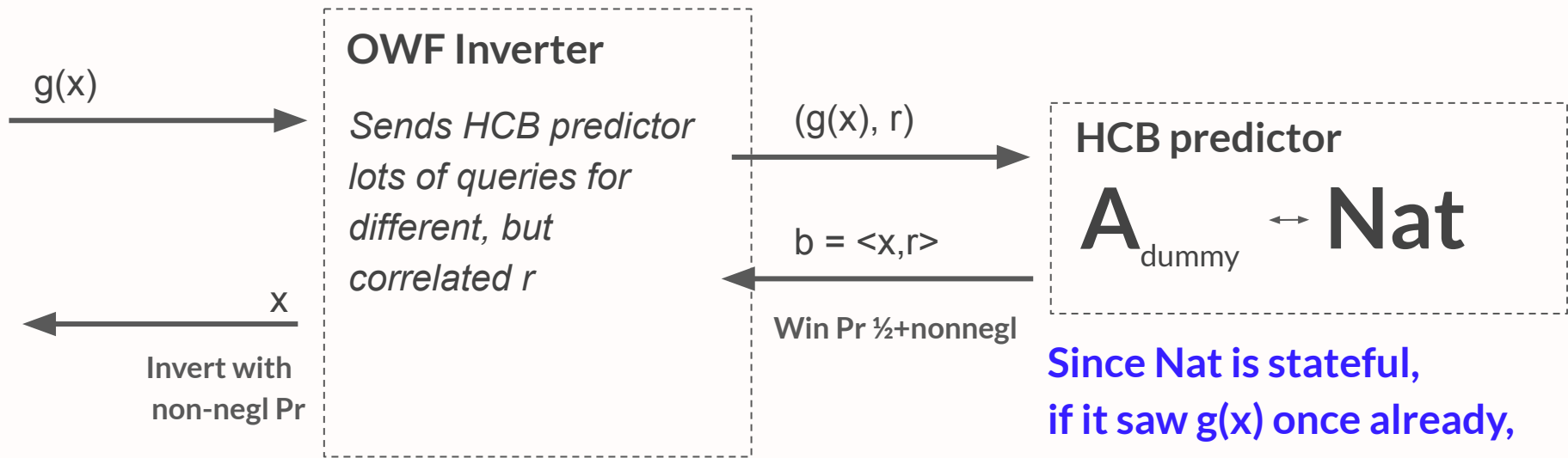
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# Key Results: Feasibilities and Impossibilities

**Thm 3 (*Impossibility of a Goldreich Levin Theorem*):**

Suppose there is an  $\epsilon$ -cosmic black-box reduction from the security of the hardcore predicate  $h(x,r) = \langle x,r \rangle$  w.r.t.  $f(x,r) = (g(x), r)$  to the OWF security of  $g$  that uses only black-box access to  $g$  and that works for any function  $g$ . Then, there is a negligible function  $\mu$  such that  $\epsilon(\lambda, a) \leq \mu(\lambda)$  for all  $a$ .

# Recall: Goldreich Levin Theorem



Since  $\text{Nat}$  is stateful, if it saw  $g(x)$  once already, just ignore future queries that contain  $g(x)$ .

Thus, a Goldreich Levin Theorem  
is *Impossible*.

*Takeaway:* classical techniques fail.

To get around it, need techniques that are non-black-box in the OWF.

# Key Results: Feasibilities and Impossibilities

**Thm 1 (Feasibility):** classical 1-shot straight-line black-box reductions imply cosmic reductions.

**Corollaries:** PRFs/SKE/Commitments/Witness Indistinguishability/PRG Length Extension

> Not surprising, since it doesn't matter that Nature is stateful: a 1-shot reduction only uses Nature once.

**Thm 2 (Impossibility):** Hardness amplification of arbitrary weak OWFs via direct product, using only black-box access to the OWF, is impossible.

**Thm 3 (Impossibility):** A Goldreich Levin Theorem, where the adversary has access to the OWF, is impossible.

“A First Stab” at feasibility in the cosmic setting

> Teaser: the cosmic adversary can notice when it is sent correlated inputs.

**Thm 4 (Feasibility):** Hardness amplification is possible for “re-randomizable” OWFs.

# Feasibility: Hardness Amplification

Suppose  $g(x)$  is re-randomizable.

**Def:** A one-way function  $g$  is **re-randomizable** if  $\exists$  PPT  $rand(\cdot), recover(\cdot)$  s.t.

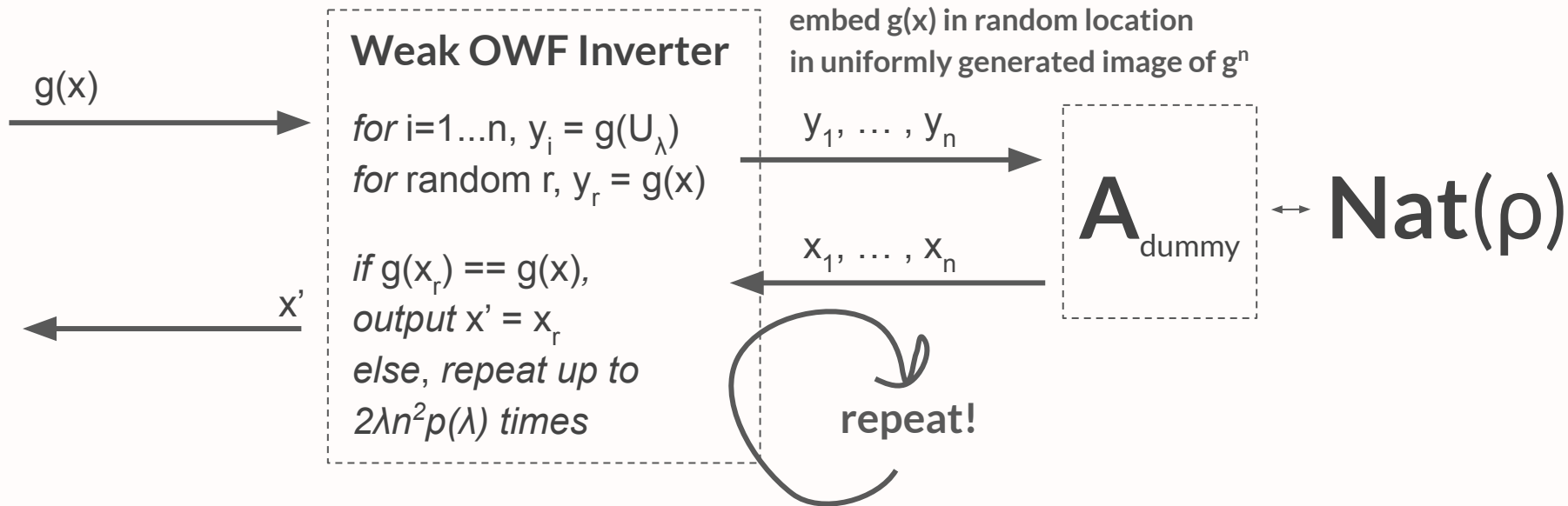
$$\forall x, \{r \leftarrow \{0,1\}^\lambda : rand(g(x), r)\} \equiv \{x' \leftarrow \{0,1\}^\lambda : g(x')\}$$

$$\forall x, r, \text{ let } y \leftarrow rand(g(x), r), x' \leftarrow recover(g^{-1}(y), r), \text{ then } g(x) = g(x').$$

Denote  $\mathbf{g(x)}$  =  $rand(g(x), U_\lambda)$  and  $\mathbf{x'}$  =  $recover(x', r)$ , where  $r$  is the previous seed used.

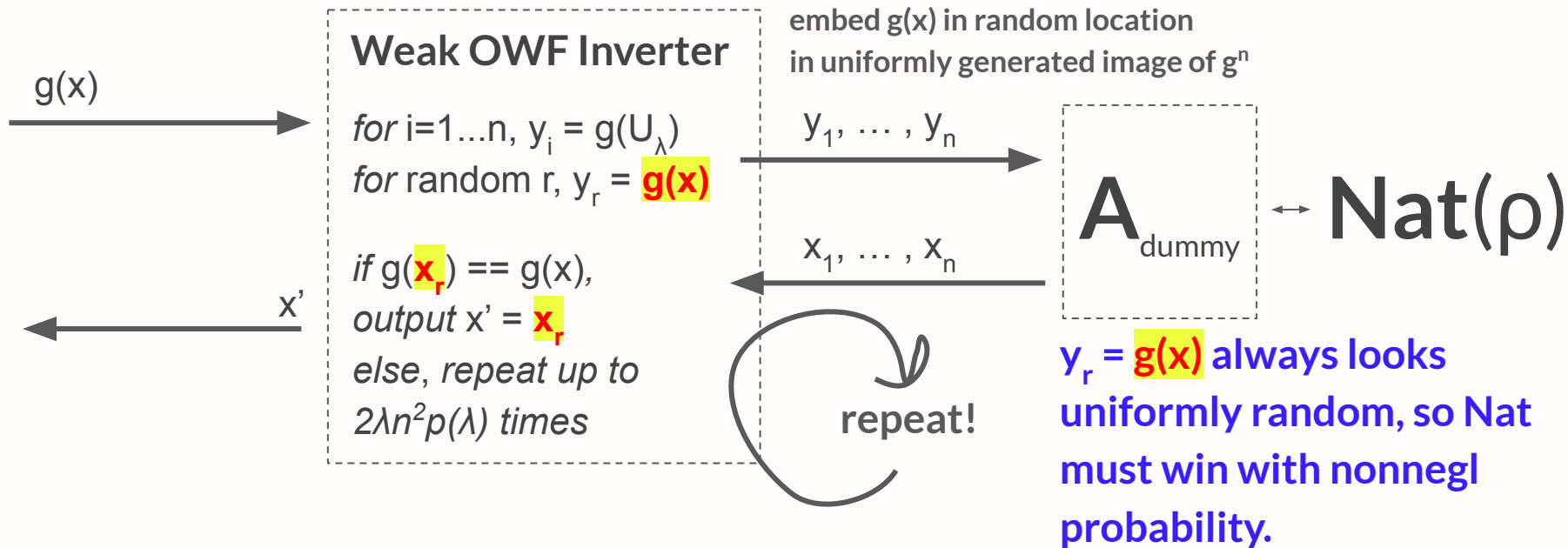
# Feasibility: Hardness Amplification

Suppose  $g(x)$  is re-randomizable.



# Feasibility: Hardness Amplification

Suppose  $g(x)$  is re-randomizable.





# We Can Go Beyond Single-Shot Straight-Line Reductions!

*Key Point:* We need to hide any correlation between queries in the view of the adversary. For example, by re-randomizing  $g(x)$ .



# How Far Can We Go?

*Open Problem:*

Even though a Goldreich-Levin Theorem (that is black-box in the OWF) is impossible, can we build cosmic PRGs from OWFs?

For now...

...let's climb a different mountain.

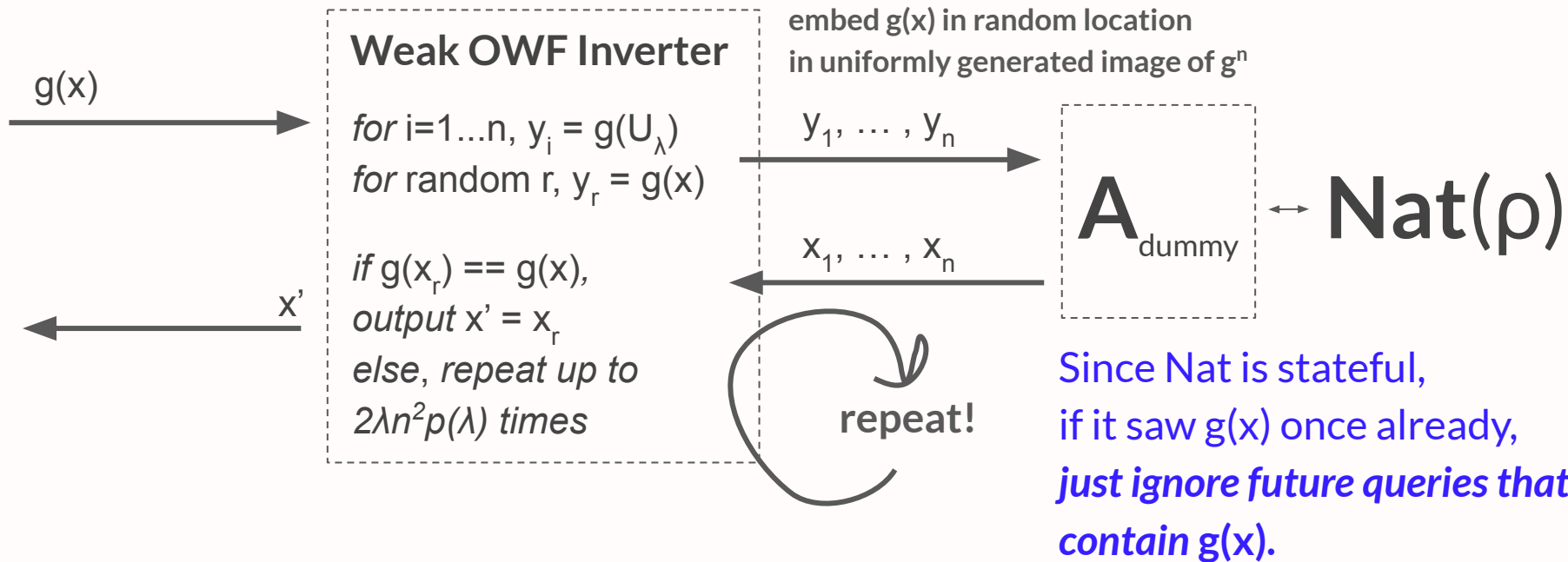


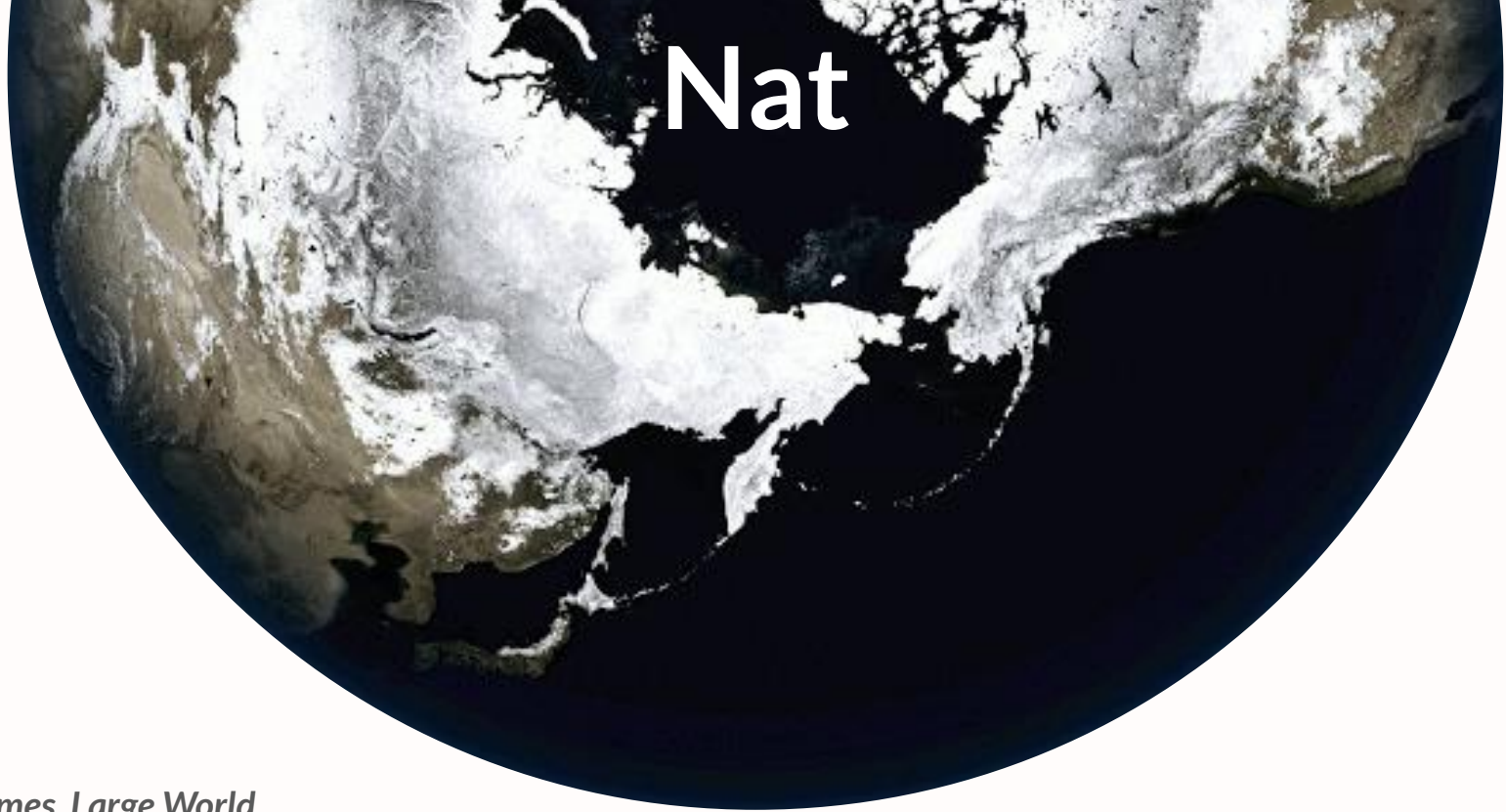
# Roadmap

- ~~1. Motivation (10min)~~
- ~~2. Defining Cosmic Security (15min)~~
- ~~3. Properties of Cosmic Security: a Sanity Check~~
  - ~~a. Composition, Black box reductions (5min)~~
- ~~4. Summary of Key Results~~
  - ~~a. Feasibilities and Impossibilities (20min)~~
- 5. Other Notions of Cosmic Security (10min)**
6. Conclusion (5min)

# Recall: Why did this fail?

Because Nat can adjust future behavior based on prior game outcomes.



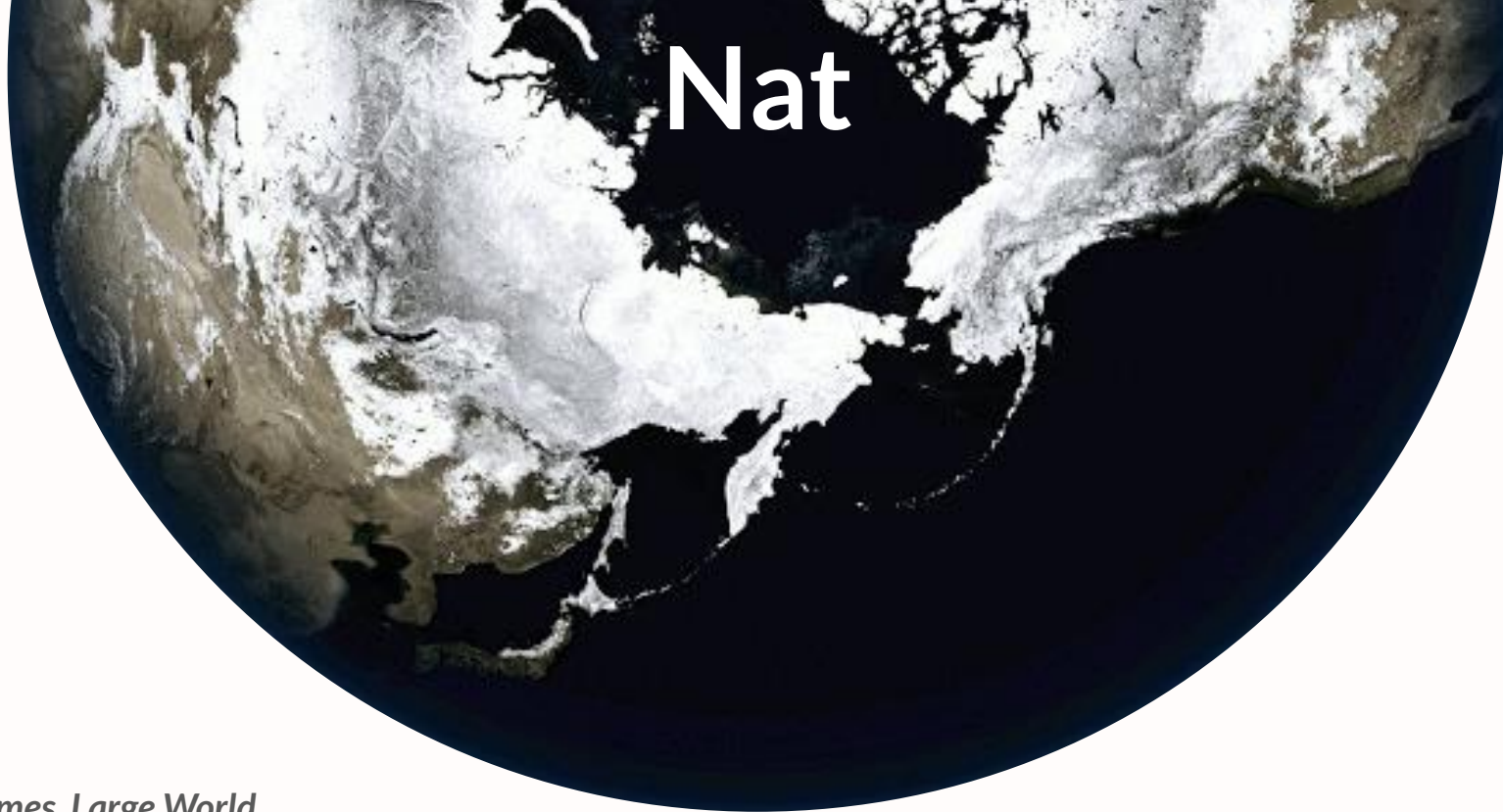


Nat

*Small Games, Large World*

It may be presumptuous to think that **C** or **A** can *influence* the future behavior of **Nat**.





Nat

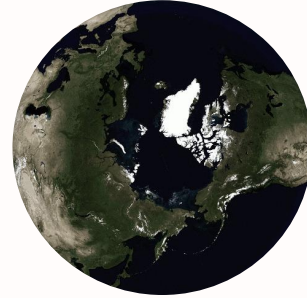
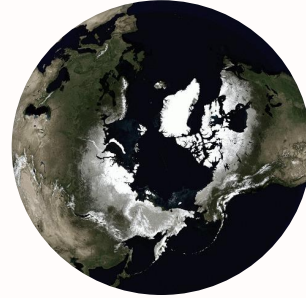
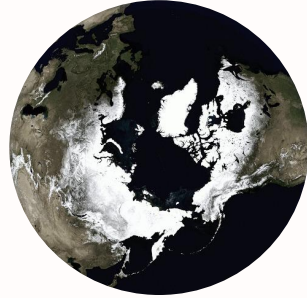
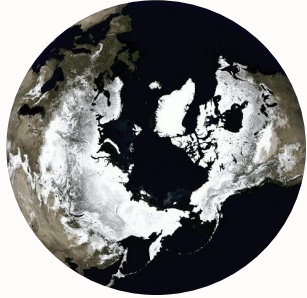
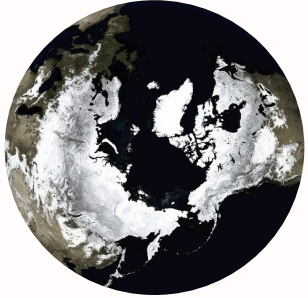
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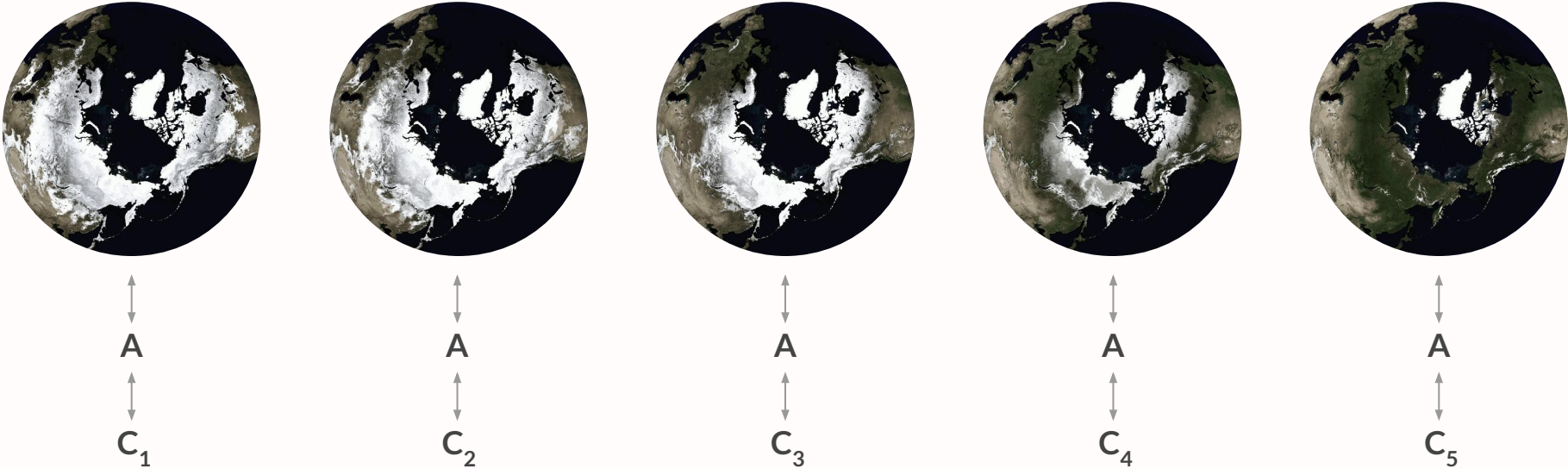
What if Nat plays every game independently, the same way? “Restartable”, and *classic*.

maybe Nat evolves over time...





maybe Nat evolves over time...



...the same way regardless of any interaction we have with it.

Let's formalize it.

**Def:**  $(A, \text{Nat})$  is  $\mu$ -weakly restartable if  $\exists \text{ Sim}$  s.t.  $\forall \lambda, \forall C, \forall$  interaction prefixes  $\rho$ ,

$$C \leftrightarrow A \leftrightarrow \text{Nat}(\rho) \stackrel{\mu(\lambda)}{\approx} C \leftrightarrow \text{Sim}(|\rho|)$$

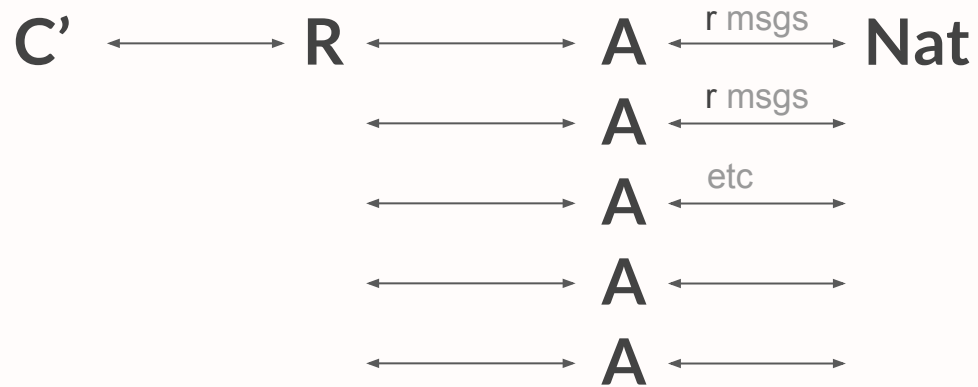
↑  
statistical distance

Number of messages in  $\rho$

"Simulator"  
any distribution

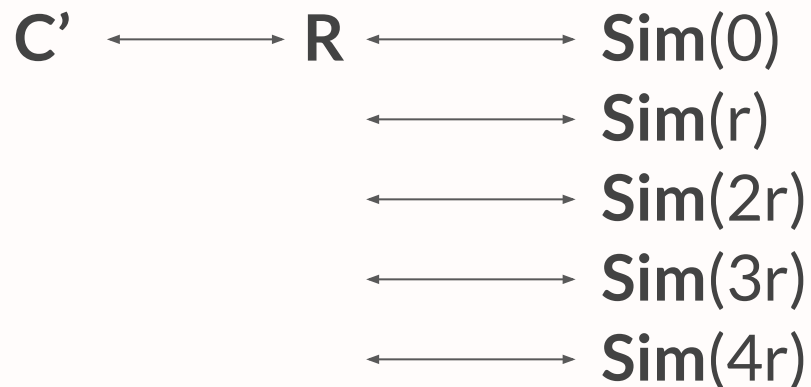
*In other words, the behavior of  $(A, \text{Nat})$  in the view of any  $C$  is pre-programmed and depends only on  $|\rho|$ .*

# Regular Cosmic Adversaries



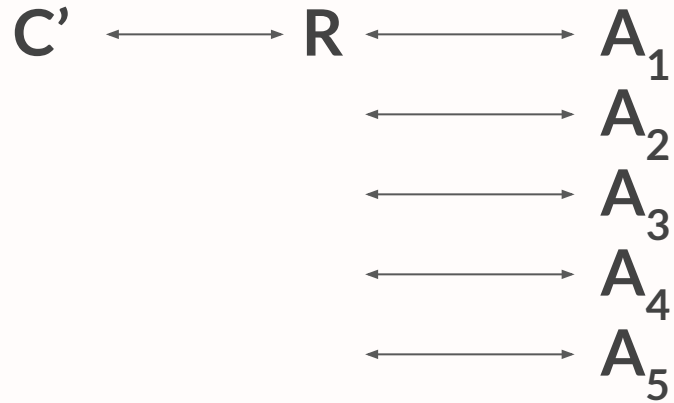
# Weakly-Restartable Cosmic Adversaries

$(A, \text{Nat})$  is now a sequence of attackers  $\text{Sim}(0), \text{Sim}(1), \text{Sim}(2), \dots$



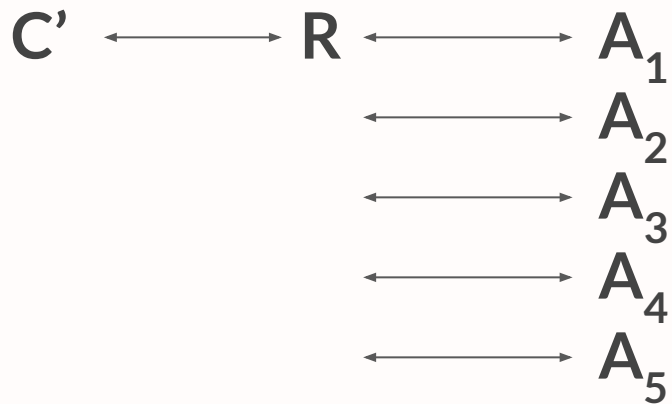
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# Weakly-Restartable Cosmic Adversaries

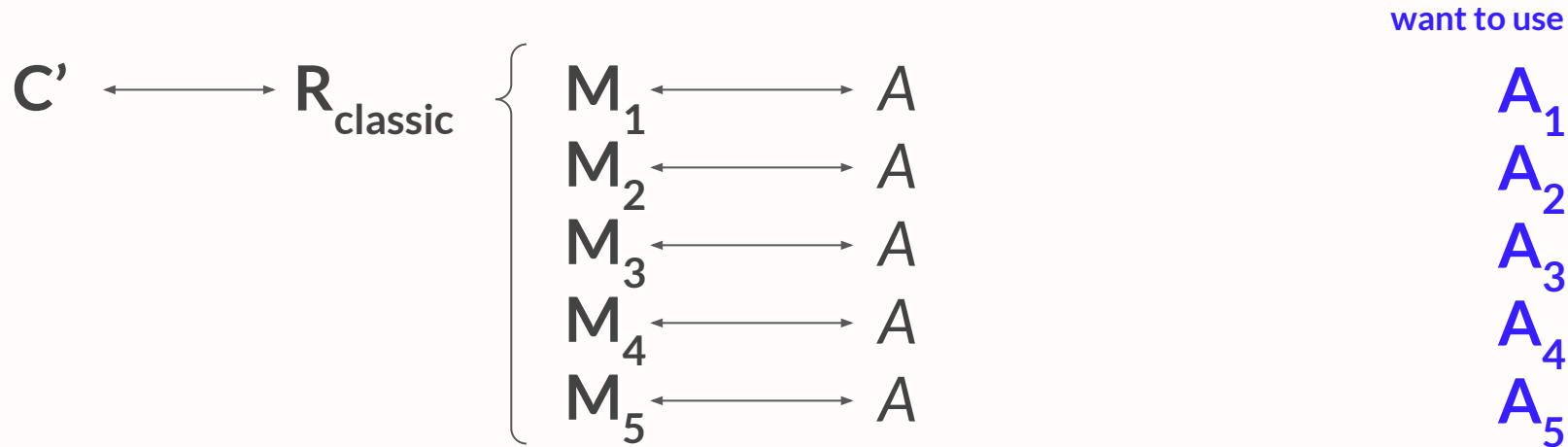
(A, Nat) is now a sequence of attackers  $A_1 A_2 A_3 \dots$  (informal)



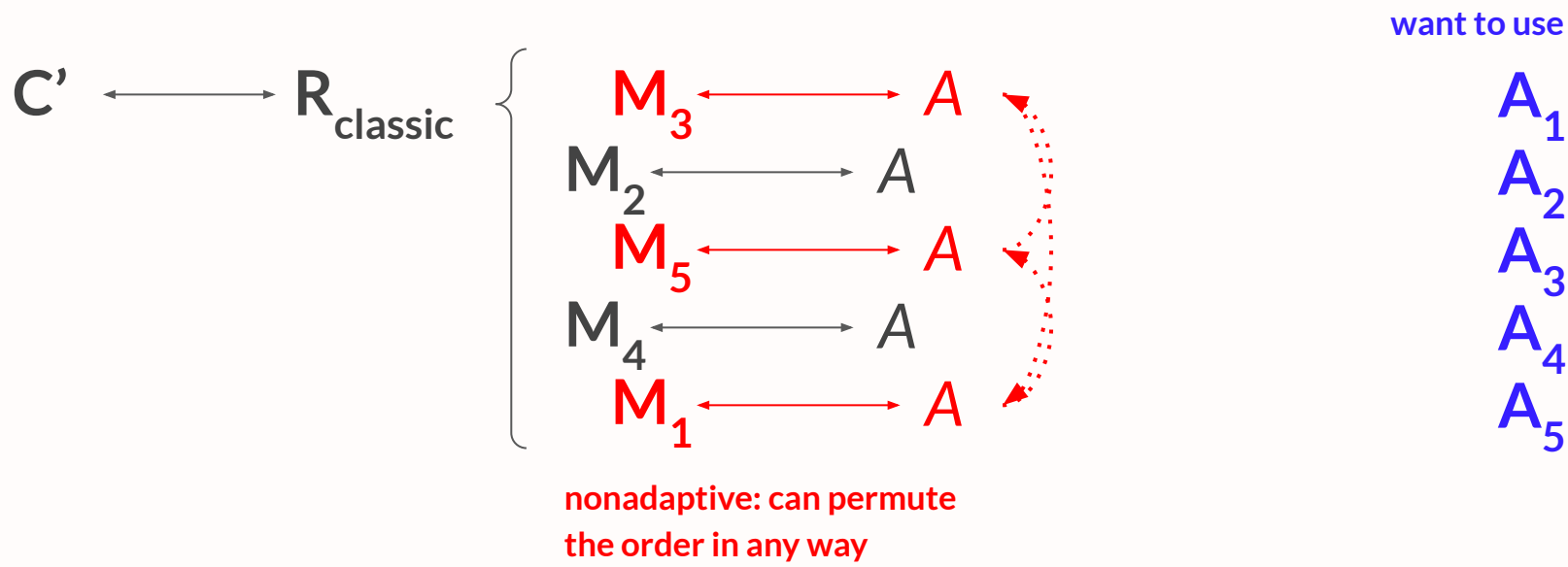
**Theorem:** Suppose there is a **non-adaptive** (straight-line black-box) reduction  $R_{\text{classic}}$  from  $C$  to  $C'$ . Then there is a cosmic reduction from  $C$  to  $C'$ , assuming (A, Nat) is weakly restartable.

**Corollaries:** Hardcore Bits from OWFs, Hardness Amplification.

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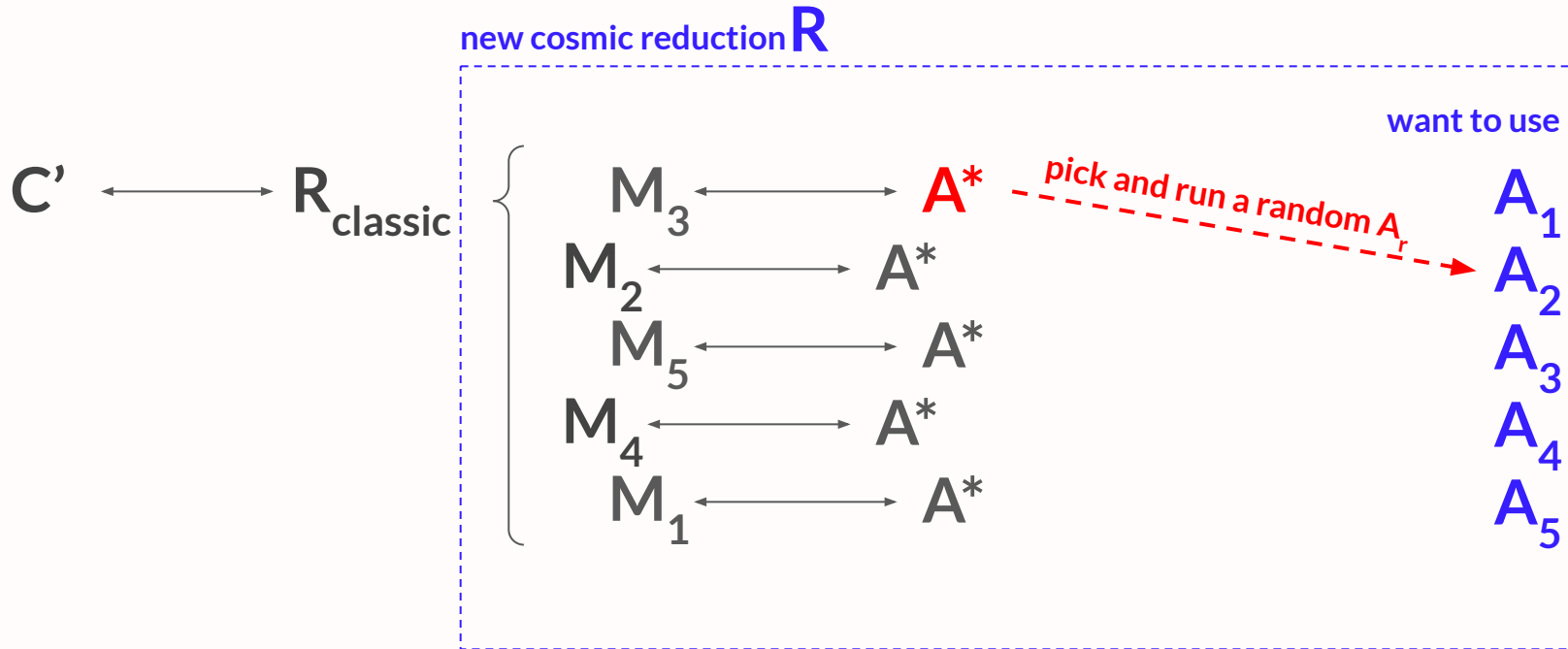


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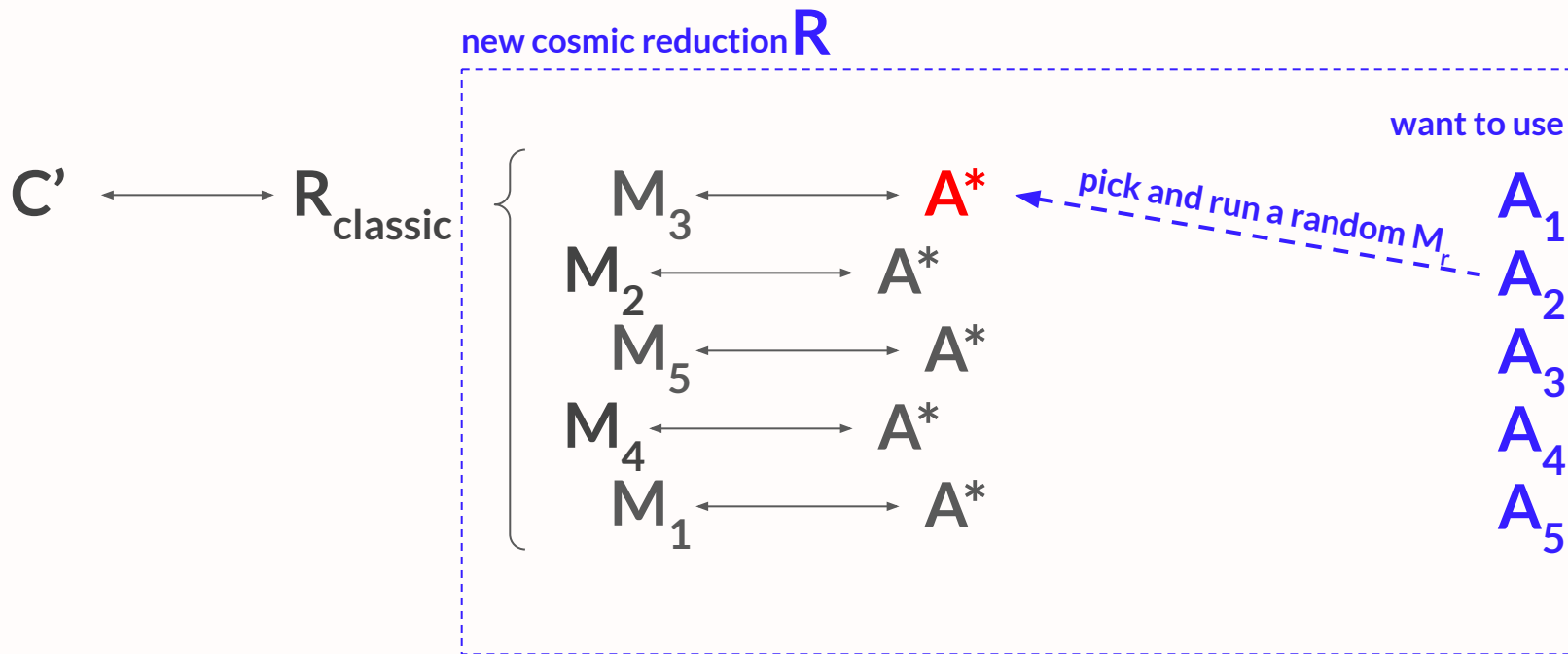




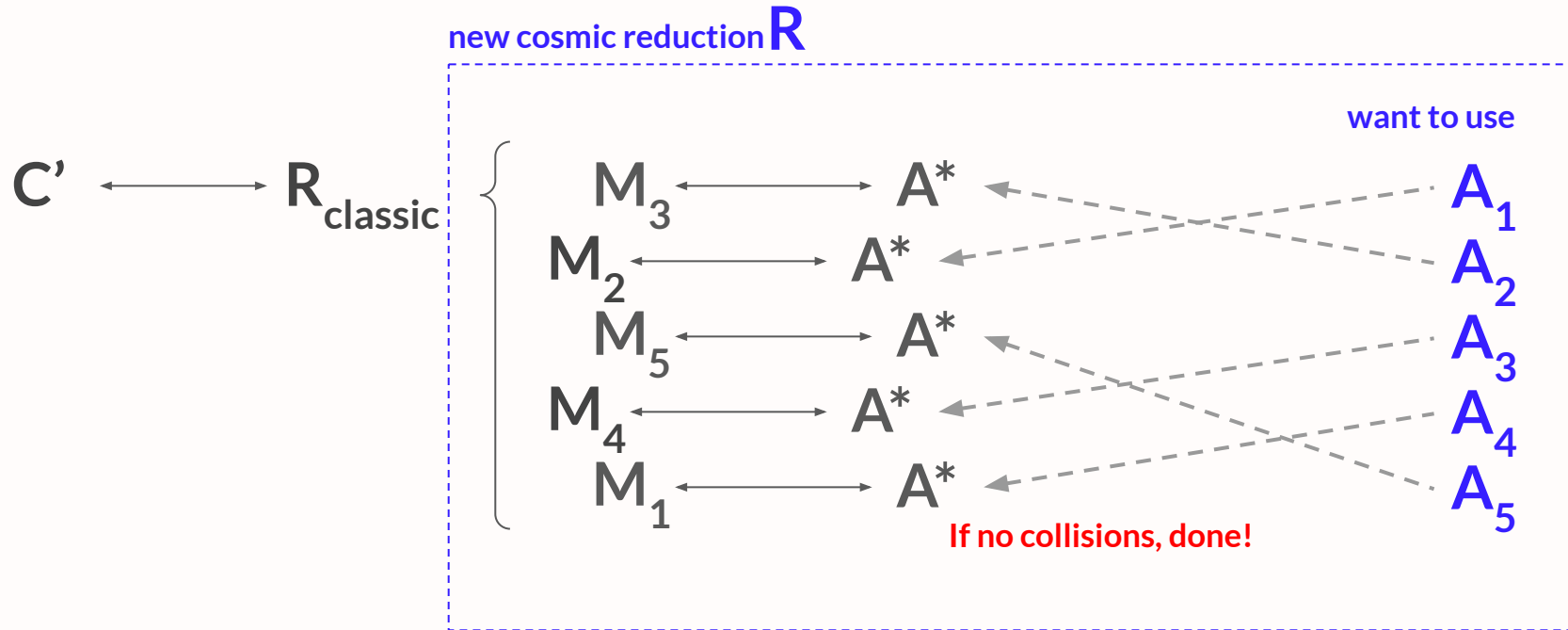
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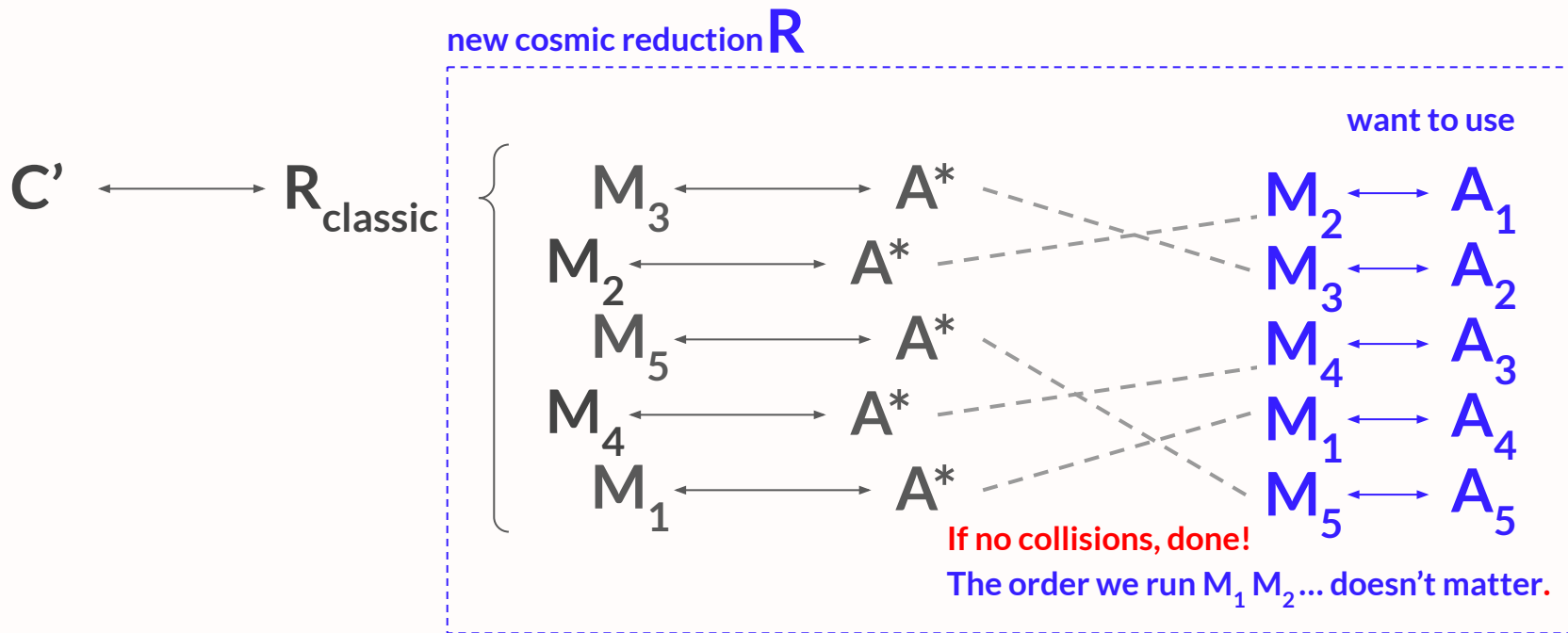
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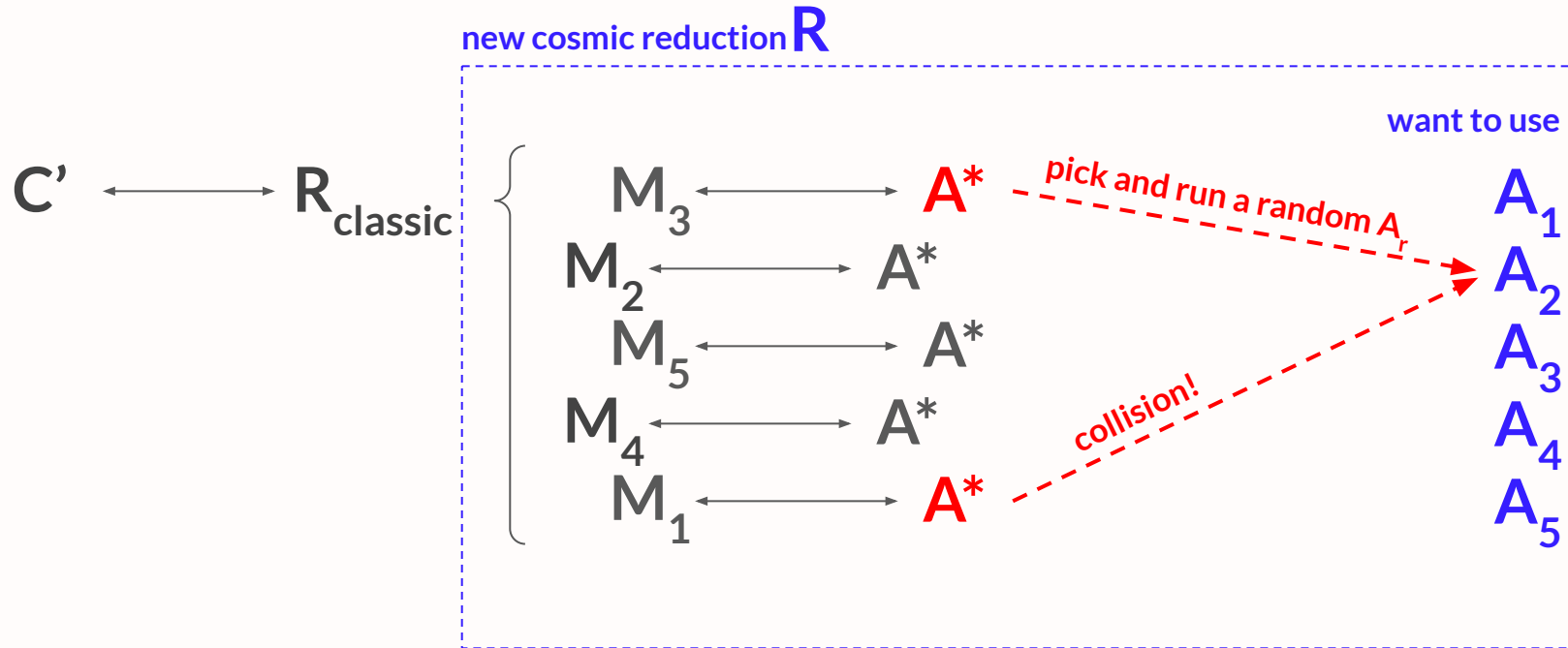
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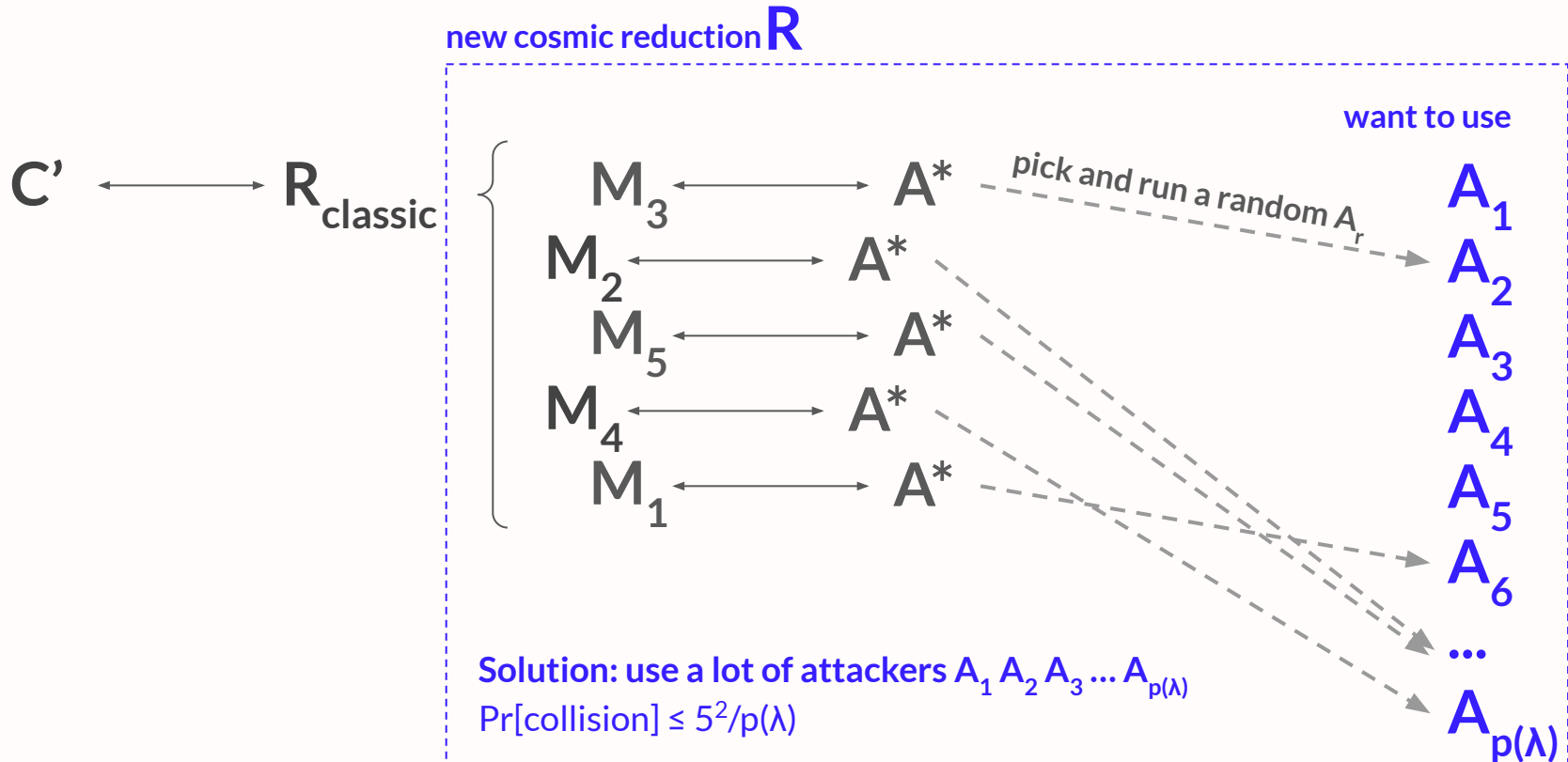
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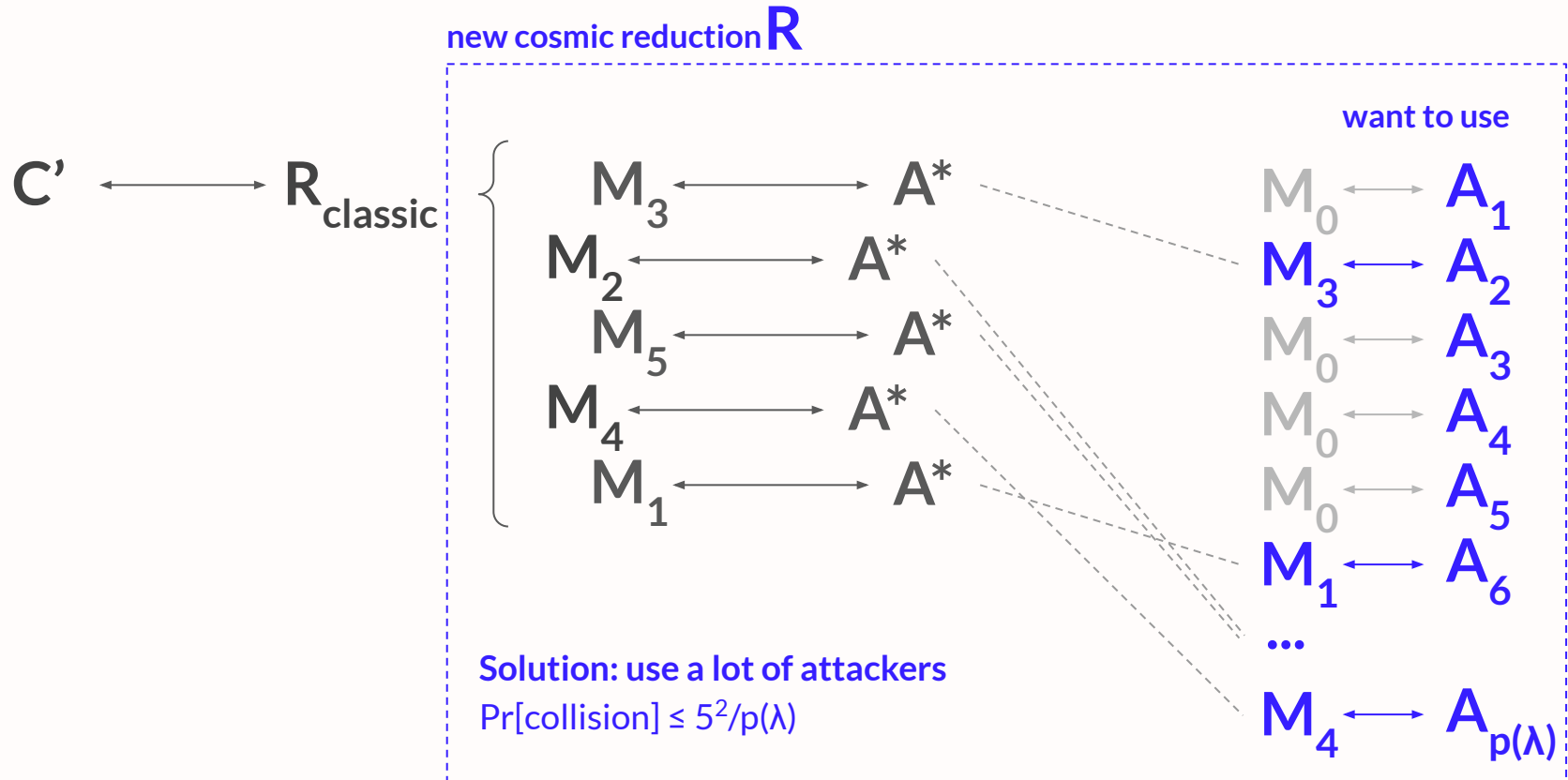
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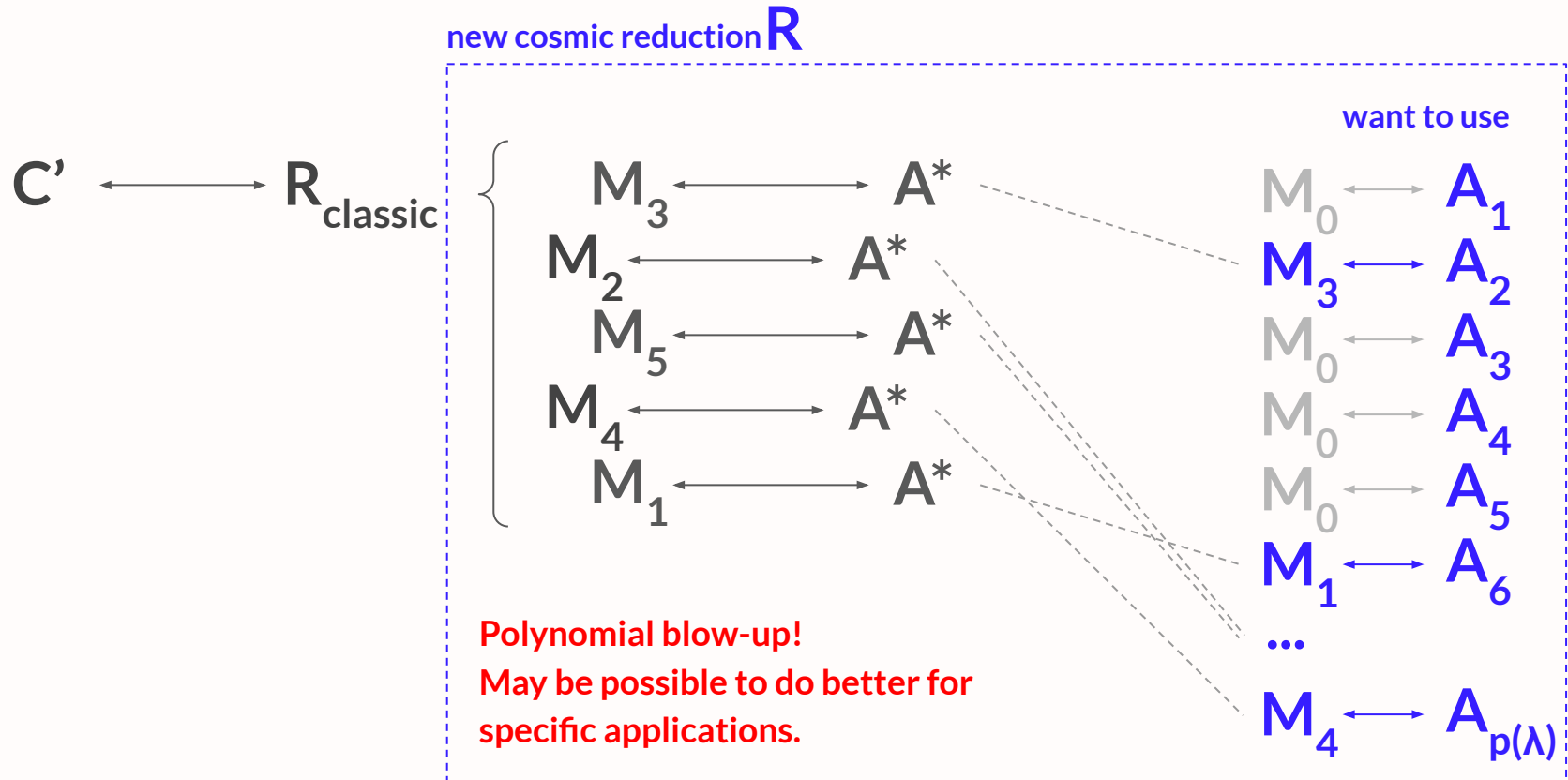
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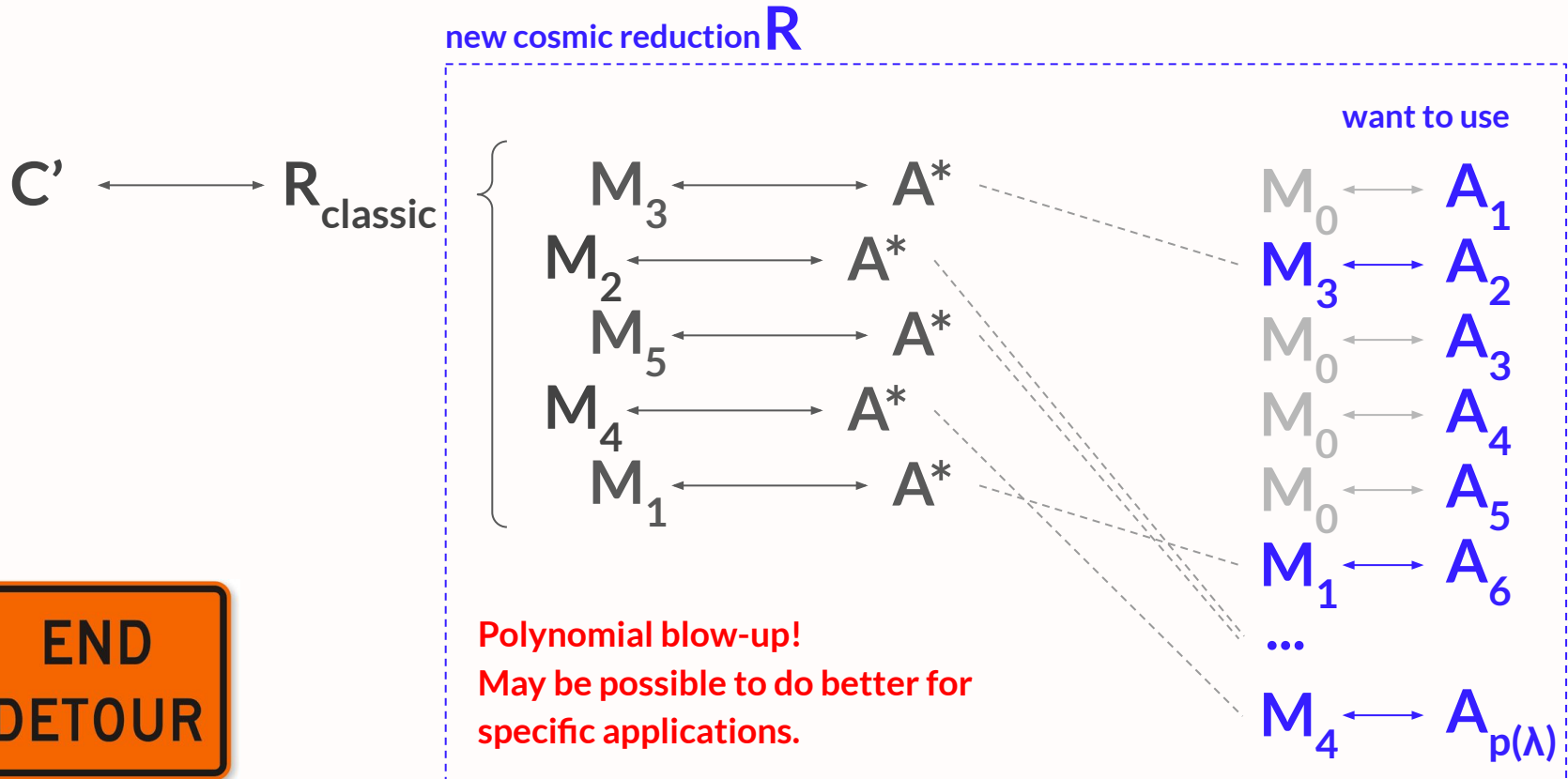


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A photograph of a starry night sky with a grid overlay. The stars are of various colors, including yellow, white, and blue. The background is a dark, deep blue with some lighter, wispy clouds or nebulae. The text "Let's wrap it up." is written in white, sans-serif font in the upper left quadrant.

Let's wrap it up.

# In Sum

It is perhaps surprising that classical **non-adaptive** reductions “work” for the cosmic weakly-restartable “ $A_1 A_2 A_3$ ” model.

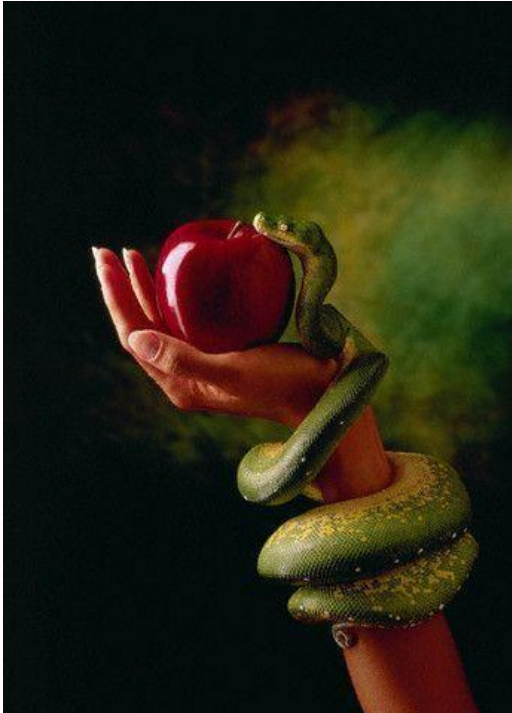
**Implication:** we can treat slightly stateful Natures (that keep only time as state) as stateless!  
(if we don't make adaptive queries)

# In Greater Sum

For fully stateful Natures,

- Several black-box classical reductions that run the adversary repeatedly on **correlated inputs** cannot have cosmic equivalents.
- So far, feasibility for cosmic reductions is limited to either **re-randomizing** correlated queries, or sticking to **one-shot** reductions.

# In Greater, Greater Sum



*Biggest Takeaway:* we should consider **stateful** adversaries that may behave differently each time its run.



# What's Next? An Unexplored Universe.

- PRGs from OWFs?
- MPC?
- New techniques to deal with a stateful Cosmos?



# What's Next? An Unexplored Universe.

- PRGs from OWFs?
- MPC?
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Thank You!



A composite image of the Helix and Ring nebulae in space. The Helix nebula is on the left, and the Ring nebula is on the right. The text "Extra Slides" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Extra Slides