

Explaining Concepts in Compositional Type-Based Program Analysis: Principality, Intersection Types, Expansion, etc.

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Sébastien Carlier and Christian Haack helped with these overheads.

Overview.

- **Basic concepts of types.**
- Type polymorphism.
- Compositionality and principality.
- Case study: Type error slicing made possible by compositionality.
- Case study: Getting principal typings in the λ -calculus with polymorphism.
- Conclusion.

What are types?

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- For programming flexibility, it is best to automatically calculate optimal types, because programmers might write type information that is not “most general”, preventing typable programs from being accepted and/or making modules reusable in fewer combinations.
- Programming language type systems are getting more and more complex (e.g., Cyclone, a “safe C”) and it is getting harder for programmers to supply the types.

An example program.

This Standard ML (SML) program:

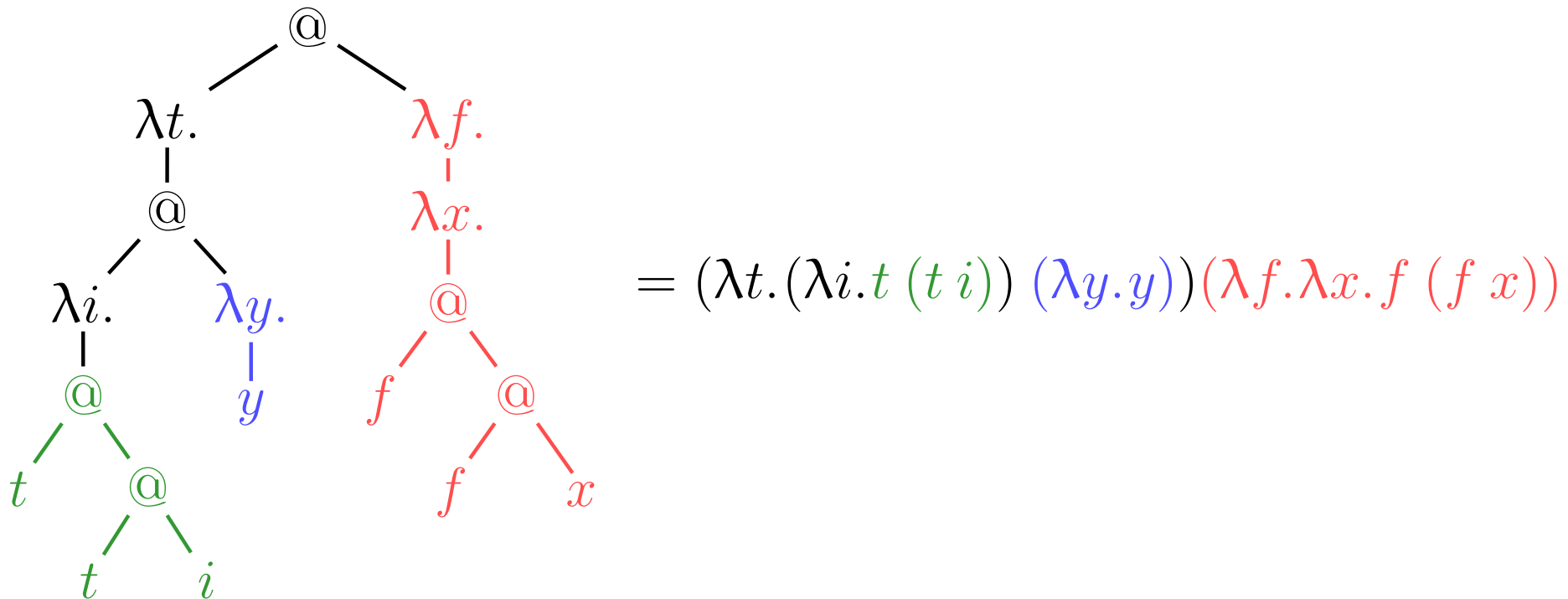
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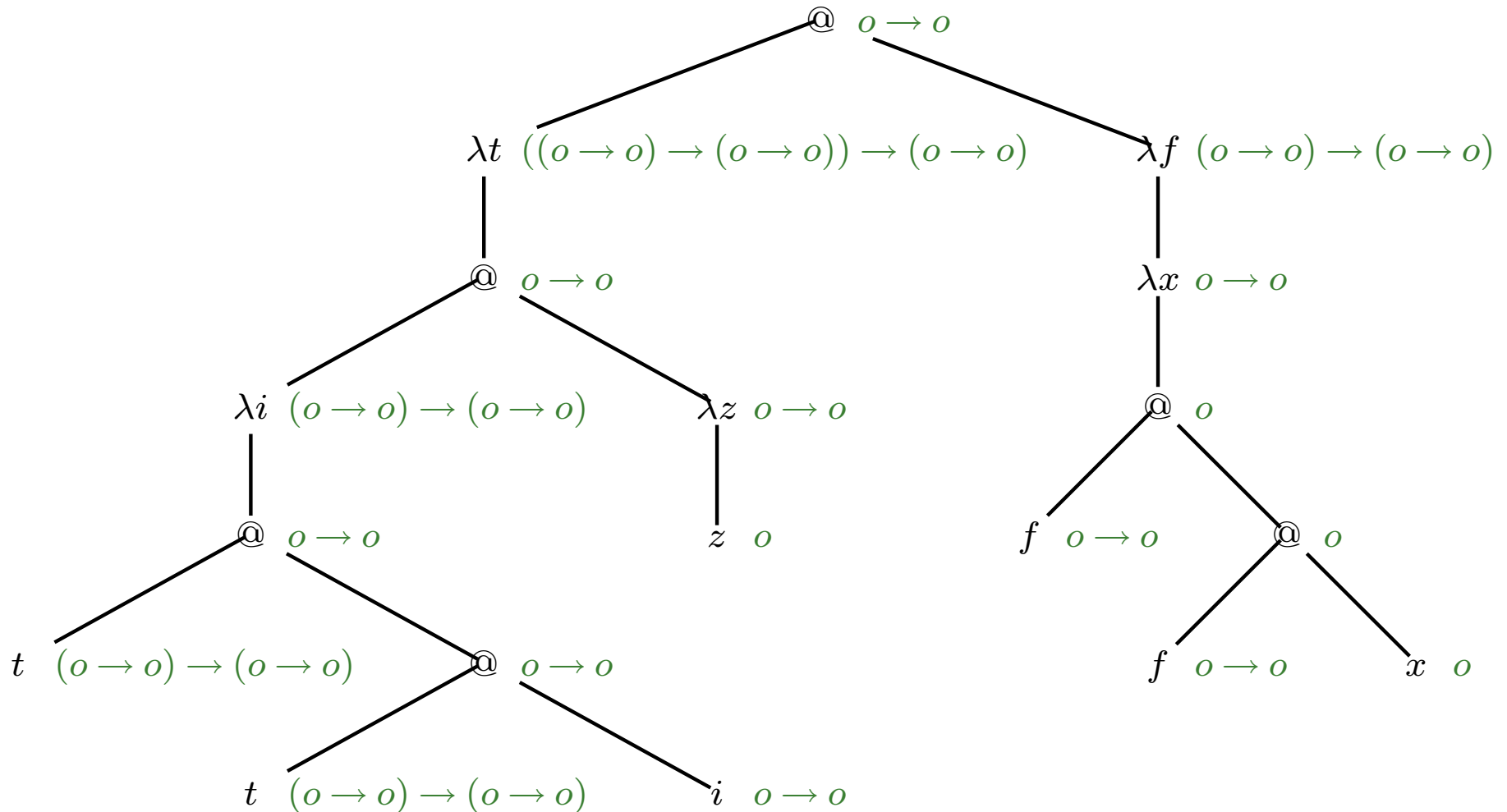
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is the same as this λ -term:



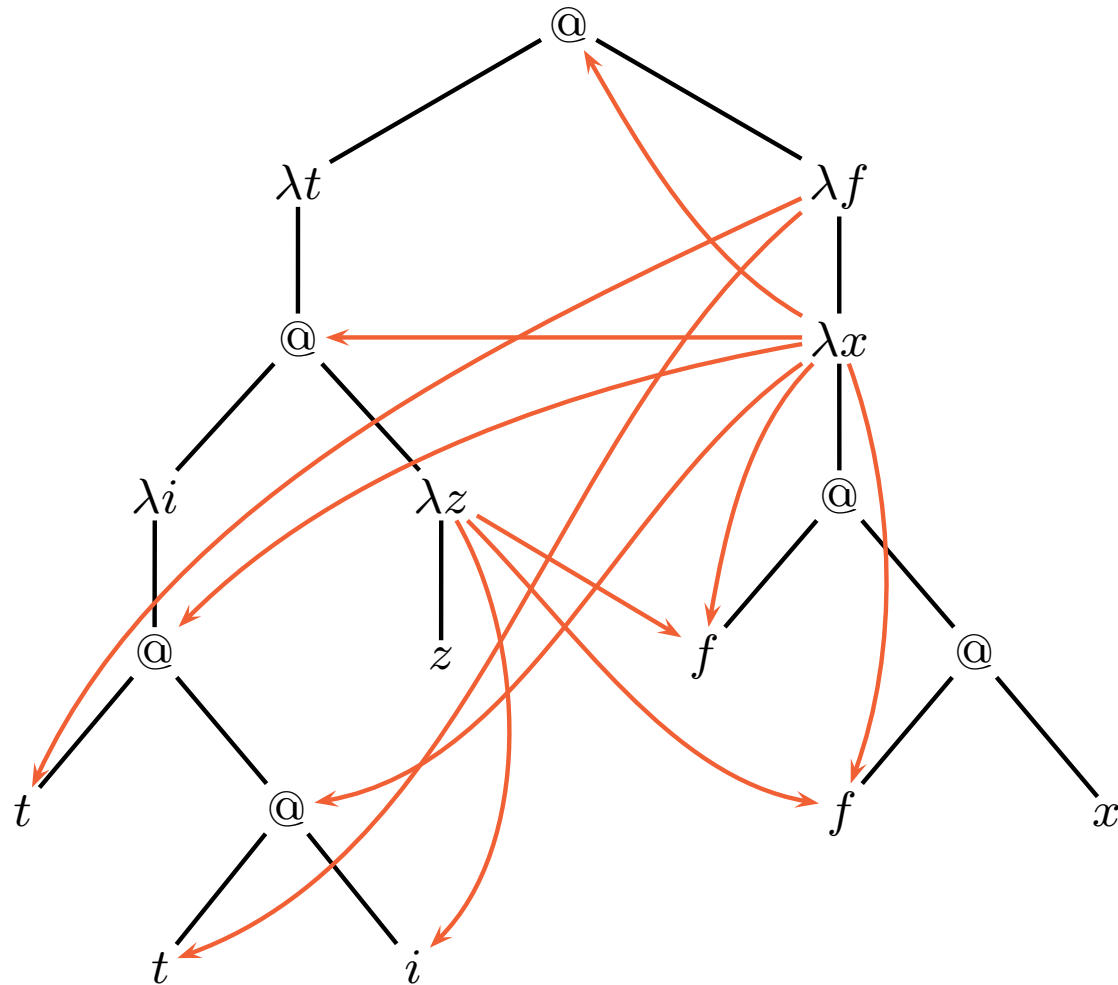
Example: Types.

Our example analyzed using the simply typed λ -calculus:



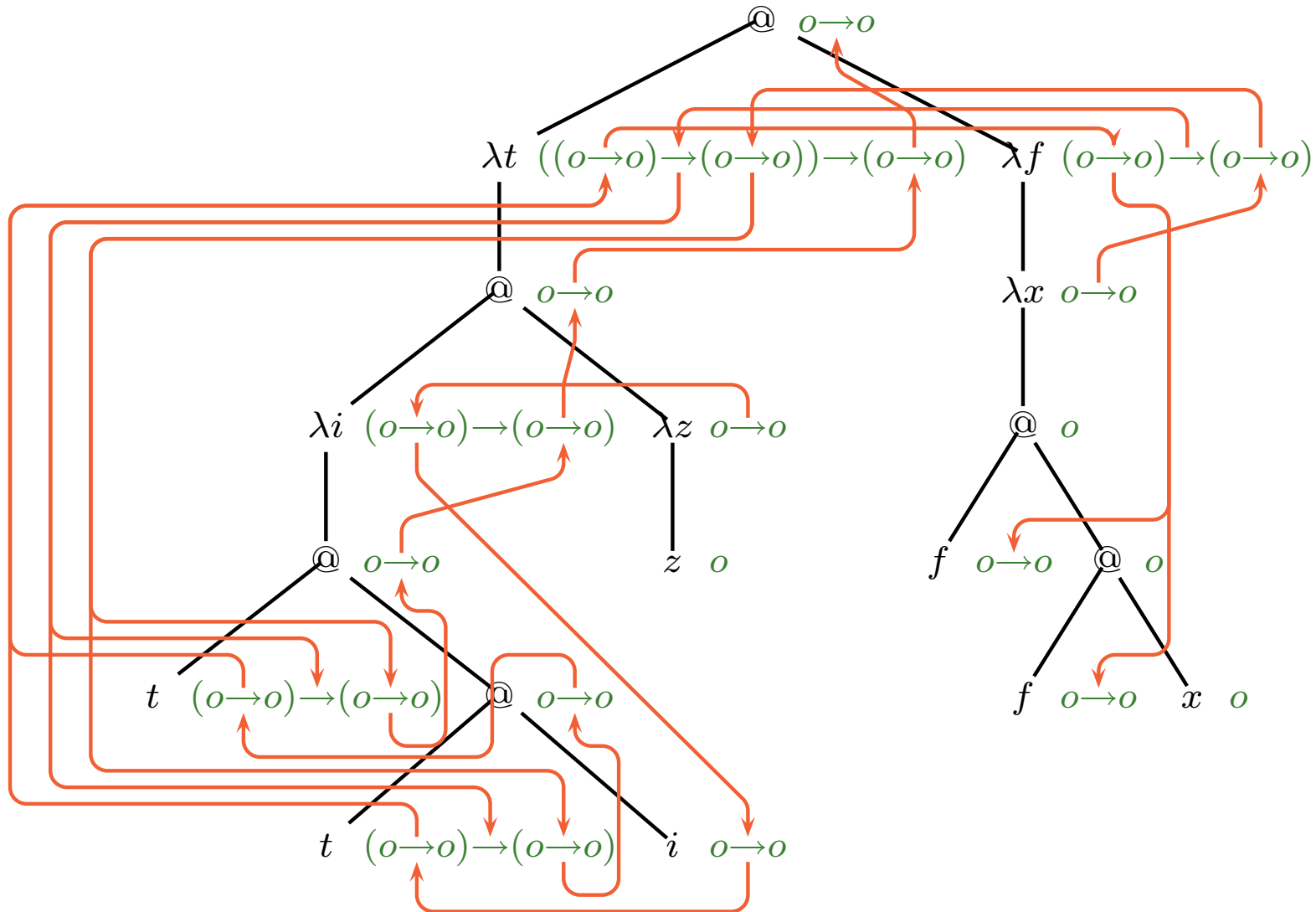
Example: Flow.

Our example analyzed using 0CFA [Shivers, 1991]:



Type analysis *is* flow analysis.

Illustrating how the type and flow analyses are intertwined:



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- Allows a program fragment to be viewed in different ways, depending on where its output is used or where its inputs come from.
- Is *essential* for code reuse [Reynolds, 1974] and abstract data types [Mitchell and Plotkin, 1988].
- Is traditionally treated formally using “for all” (\forall) quantifiers [Girard, 1972] or “there exists” (\exists) quantifiers and/or by a notion of subtyping ($T_1 \leq T_2$).

Example: “for all” quantifiers.

```
val swap $\forall a,b.(a \times b) \rightarrow (b \times a)$  = (fn (xa, yb)  $\Rightarrow$  (yb, xa));
```

```
val pair1int  $\times$  bool = (1, true);
```

```
val pair2real  $\times$  real = (2.7, 9.9);
```

```
(swap(int  $\times$  bool)  $\rightarrow$  (bool  $\times$  int) pair1,  
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- In body of polymorphic function, the usage types are hidden behind type variables.

Example: “there exists” quantifiers.

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val closure = if b then closure1∃a. a × (a → bool)  
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- Usage site does not know source types.

Polymorphism via intersection types.

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- Example comparing \forall -quantified and intersection types:

\forall -quantified types: $(\text{fn } x \Rightarrow x)^{\forall a. (a \rightarrow a)}$

intersection types: $(\text{fn } x \Rightarrow x)^{(\text{int} \rightarrow \text{int}) \cap (\text{real} \rightarrow \text{real})}$

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- Named “intersection types” because in traditional model theory, semantic denotations $\llbracket T_1 \rrbracket$ and $\llbracket T_2 \rrbracket$ are program fragment sets and $\llbracket T_1 \cap T_2 \rrbracket = \llbracket T_1 \rrbracket \cap \llbracket T_2 \rrbracket$ (usually).

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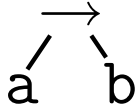
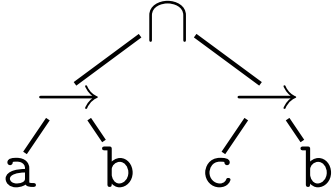
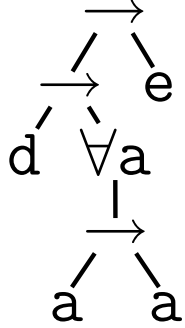
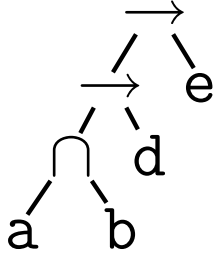
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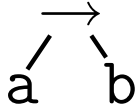
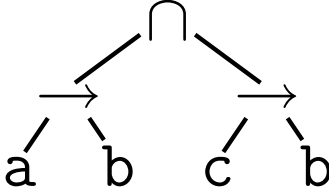
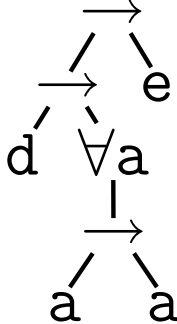
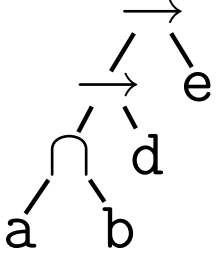
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- Rank- k bounds how far into the future evaluation a type system can look in making distinctions when predicting behavior. The rank- k restrictions of intersection types are decidable.

Typing power of intersection types.

F: System F.

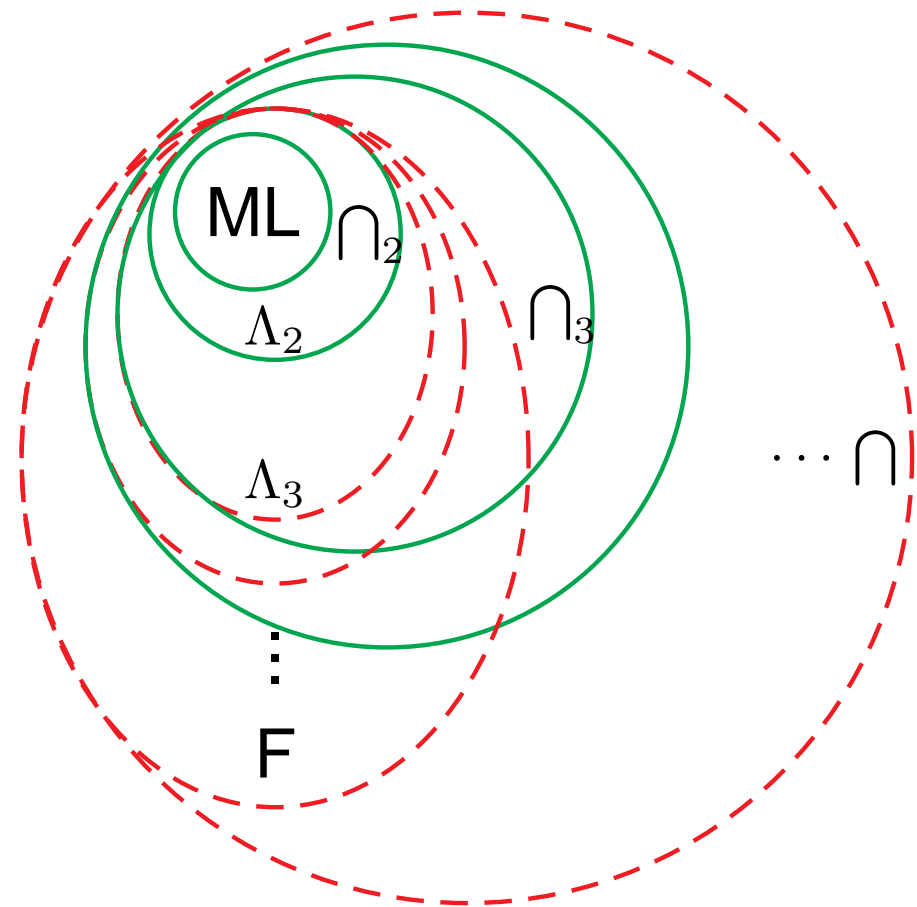
Λ_k : rank- k System F.

\cap : intersection types.

\cap_k : rank- k of \cap .

Decidable.

Undecidable.



(Decision procedure complexity now known [Kfoury, Mairson, Turbak, and Wells, 1999].)

Flexibility of intersection types.

$$M = \left(\begin{array}{l} \text{fun self_apply2 } z \Rightarrow (z \ z) \ z; \\ \text{fun apply } f \ x \Rightarrow f \ x; \\ \text{fun reverse_apply } y \ g \Rightarrow g \ y; \\ \text{fun id } w \Rightarrow w; \\ (\text{self_apply2 } \text{apply} \ \text{not } \text{true}, \\ \text{self_apply2 } \text{reverse_apply} \ \text{id} \ \text{false} \ \text{not}); \end{array} \right)$$

- Program fragment M *safely* computes $(\text{false}, \text{true})$.
- Urzyczyn [1997] proved that M is not typable in F_ω , and F_ω is the most powerful type system with “for all” quantifiers [Giannini, Honsell, and Ronchi Della Rocca, 1993].
- M needs only rank-3 intersection types.

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Intersection types seem to have the potential to be a general, flexible framework for many program analyses.

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- Compositional analysis results are always the best information for any possible usage context. If a part is unchanged and its analysis result is available, reanalyzing it can not help. Only new combinations need to be checked.
- Compositional analysis is better for *dynamic*, *incremental*, and *modular* software assembly, but many type systems do not support compositional analysis.

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- Modern systems like Java and C# have broken the link needed by separate compilation between the compile-time and link-time environments, so it is better not to use *any* compile-time environment.
- A network node without global knowledge can gradually learn more about other entities and predict possible failures as soon as sufficient information is available.

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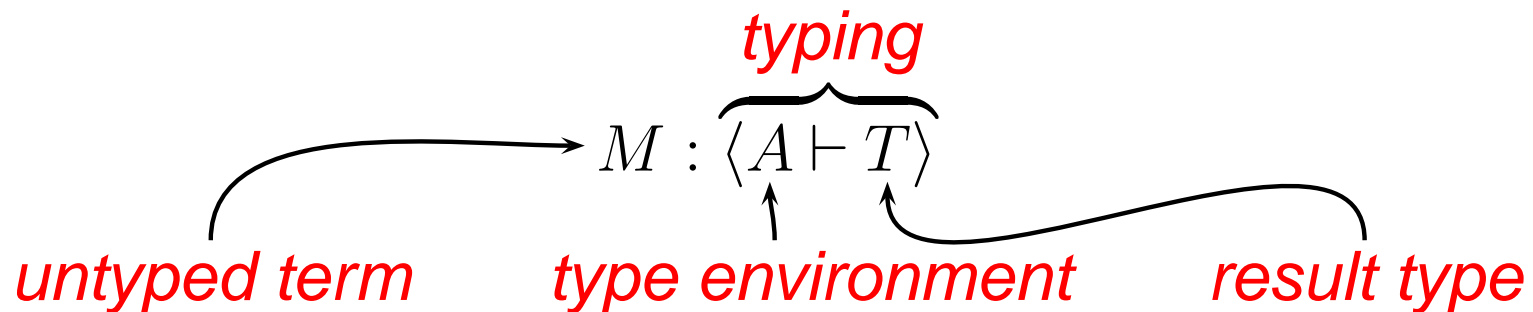
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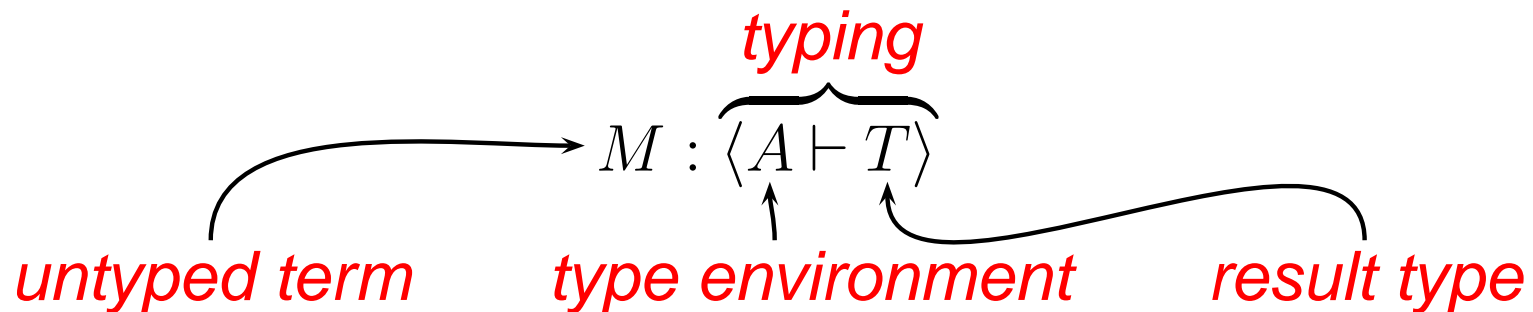
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A type system can thus be seen as a set of pairs of the form $(M : \Theta)$ where Θ is usually of the form $\langle A \vdash T \rangle$.

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- Do not confuse this with the *weaker* notion of “principal type” with fixed free variable type assumptions often mentioned for the Hindley/Milner (HM) type system (Haskell, OCaml, SML, etc.).

What is a principal typing?

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- Principal typings (PTs) allow *compositional* analysis.
- Until Wells [2002], each system with PTs had its own definition via syntactic operations like *substitution*, *subtyping*, *weakening*, etc.

Which systems have principal typings?

- Many type systems with \forall -quantifiers (e.g., HM and System F) do *not* have PTs [Wells, 2002].

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- The popular W algorithm [Damas and Milner, 1982] for HM is not compositional and compositional analysis for HM can not use HM typings for intermediate results.
Fortunately, a restricted rank-2 intersection type system [Damas, 1985] types the same terms and has PTs.
- Getting PTs usually needs types or type constraints that closely follow the language semantics. For the λ -calculus, adding intersection types can generally gain PTs (e.g., [Margaria and Zacchi, 1995]).

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For example, HM's lack of principal typings means an HM analysis algorithm must do one of these:

- Be incomplete (failing on some typable terms).
- Be noncompositional (not strictly bottom-up). For example, the W algorithm [Damas and Milner, 1982] is noncompositional because for $(\text{let } x = M \text{ in } N)$ it first analyzes M and then uses the result in analyzing N .
- Not use HM typings for intermediate results. E.g., the typing of (xx) in the Chap. 1 system of Damas [1985]:

$$\langle (x : a, x : a \rightarrow b) \vdash b \rangle$$

This is essentially intersection types, i.e.:

$$\langle (x : a \cap (a \rightarrow b)) \vdash b \rangle$$

Essentially the same was done by Shao and Appel [1993] and Bernstein and Stark [1995].

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Case study: Type error slicing.

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The system I will describe uses a type system that types the same terms as HM, but uses intersection types instead of “for all” quantifiers internally, so it is compositional. This made it much easier to generate and solve constraints.

Type error example.

```
val average = fn weight => fn list =>
  let val iterator = fn (x,(sum,length)) =>
    (sum + weight x, length + 1)
    val (sum,length) = foldl iterator (0,0) list
  in sum div length end
```

```
val find_best = fn weight => fn lists =>
  let val average = average weight
    val iterator = fn (list,(best,max)) =>
      let val avg_list = average list
      in if avg_list > max then
        (list,avg_list)
      else
        (best,max)
      end
    val (best,_) = foldl iterator (nil,0) lists
  in best end
```

```
val find_best_simple = find_best 1
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Wrong type error location.

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Another wrong type error location.

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Correct type error location.

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val average = fn weight => fn list =>
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Type error slice.

type constructor clash,
endpoints: **function** vs. **int**

```
(.. val average = fn weight =>  
  (.. weight █ (..) ..)  
  
.. val find_best = fn weight =>  
  (.. average weight ..)  
  
.. find_best 1 ..)
```

A possible fix.

type constructor clash,
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(.. val average = fn weight =>  
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.. val find_best = fn weight =>  
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.. find_best 1 ..)
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A possible fix.

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```
(.. val average = fn weight =>  
  (.. weight * (..) ..)  
  
.. val find_best = fn weight =>  
  (.. average weight ..)  
  
.. find_best 1 ..)
```

Another possible fix.

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```
(.. val average = fn weight =>  
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```
(.. val average = fn weight =>  
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.. val find_best = fn weight =>  
  (.. average weight ..)  
  
.. find_best (fn x => x) ..)
```

Yet another possible fix.

type constructor clash,
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The key mechanism to understand is expansion, which is presented here via a well chosen example.

A problematic type inference example.

Consider typing this example λ -term:

$$M = \underbrace{(\lambda x.x (\lambda y.y z))}_N \underbrace{(\lambda f.\lambda x.f (f x))}_P$$

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In an intersection type system, the usual *principal typings* of N and P are:

$$N : \langle (z : a) \vdash T_1 \rightarrow c \rangle \text{ where } T_1 = ((a \rightarrow b) \rightarrow b) \rightarrow c$$

$$P : \langle () \vdash T_2 \rangle \quad \text{where } T_2 = ((e \rightarrow f) \cap (d \rightarrow e)) \rightarrow (d \rightarrow f)$$

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To type M , we must find derivable judgements such that:

$$N : \langle (z : T'') \vdash T \rightarrow T' \rangle \quad P : \langle () \vdash T \rangle$$

They ought to be obtainable from the principal typings.

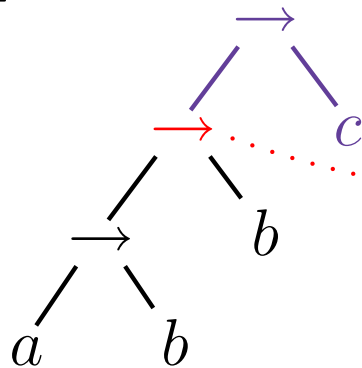
Can we unify the example types? (1)

Can we unify T_1 and T_2 merely by substitution?

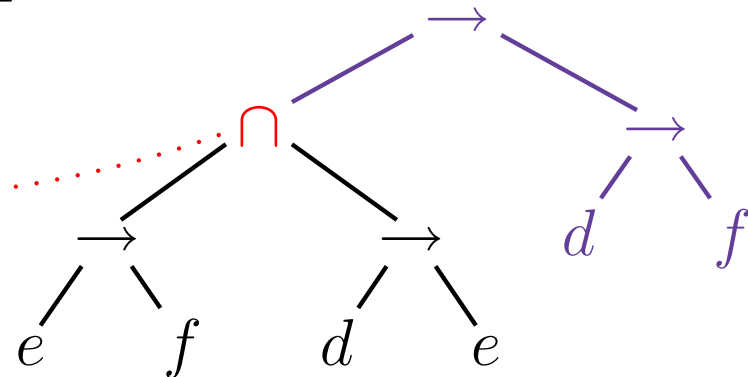
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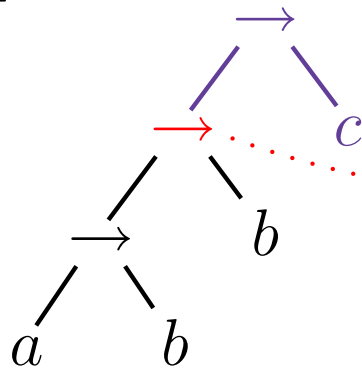
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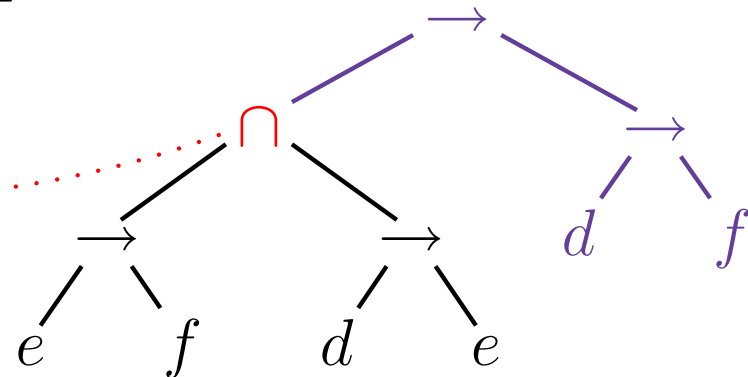
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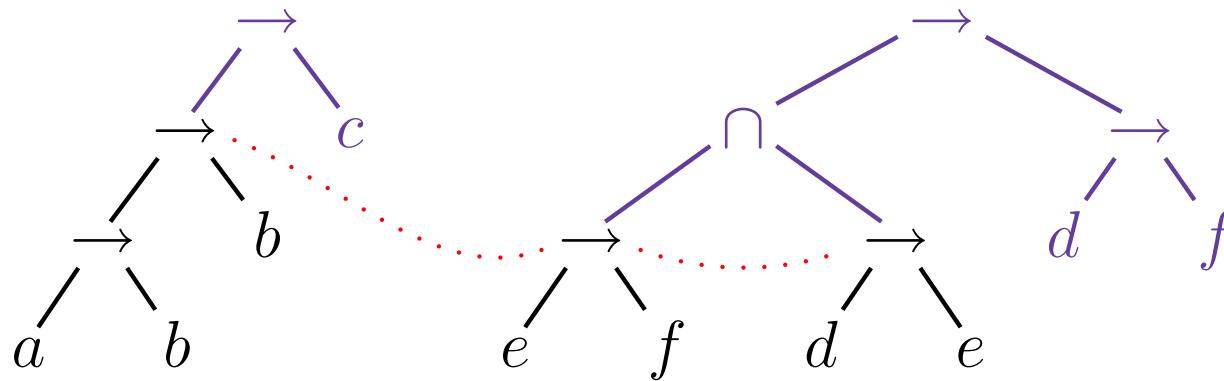


Problem: clash between \rightarrow and \cap .

Could we use $T \cap T = T$ to make the intersection go away?

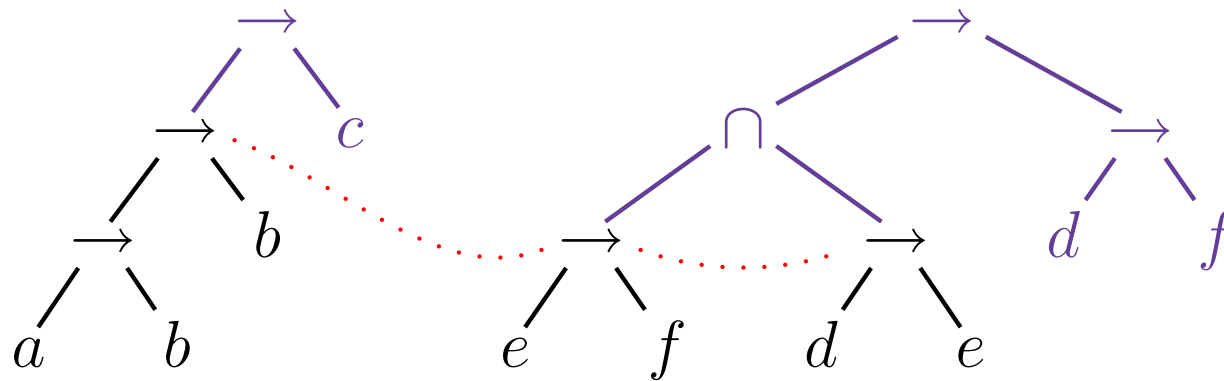
Can we unify the example types? (2)

If using $T \cap T = T$, we now have 3 types to unify together:

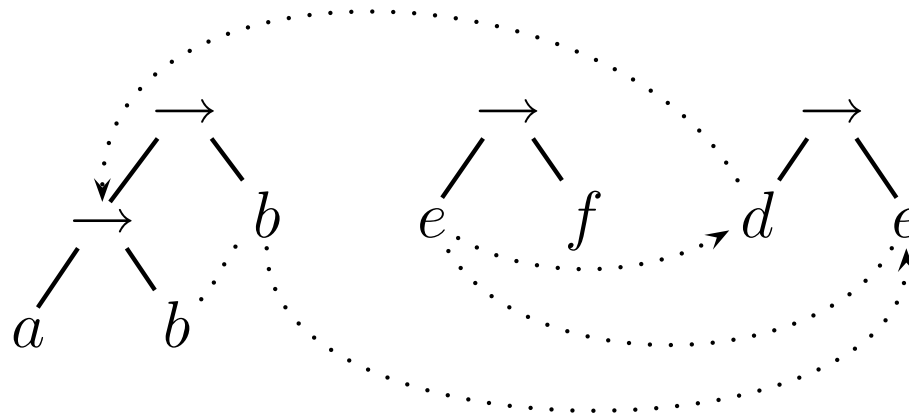


Can we unify the example types? (2)

If using $T \cap T = T$, we now have 3 types to unify together:



Oh, no! We cannot solve $a \rightarrow b = b$ (without recursive types).



Solving the example with expansion.

Instead, we do *expansion* [Coppo, Dezani-Ciancaglini, and Venneri, 1980] on the typing of N to solve the problem:

$$N : \langle (z : a) \vdash ((a \rightarrow b) \rightarrow b) \rightarrow c \rangle$$

↓

$$N : \langle (z : a_1 \cap a_2) \vdash ((a_1 \rightarrow b_1) \rightarrow b_1) \cap ((a_2 \rightarrow b_2) \rightarrow b_2) \rightarrow c \rangle$$

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$$\begin{array}{c} N : \langle (z : a) \vdash (\underbrace{((a \rightarrow b) \rightarrow b)}_{\text{green}} \rightarrow c) \rightarrow c \rangle \\ \downarrow \\ N : \langle (z : \underbrace{a_1}_{\text{red}} \cap \underbrace{a_2}_{\text{purple}}) \vdash (\underbrace{((a_1 \rightarrow b_1) \rightarrow b_1)}_{\text{red}} \cap \underbrace{((a_2 \rightarrow b_2) \rightarrow b_2)}_{\text{purple}} \rightarrow c) \rightarrow c \rangle \end{array}$$

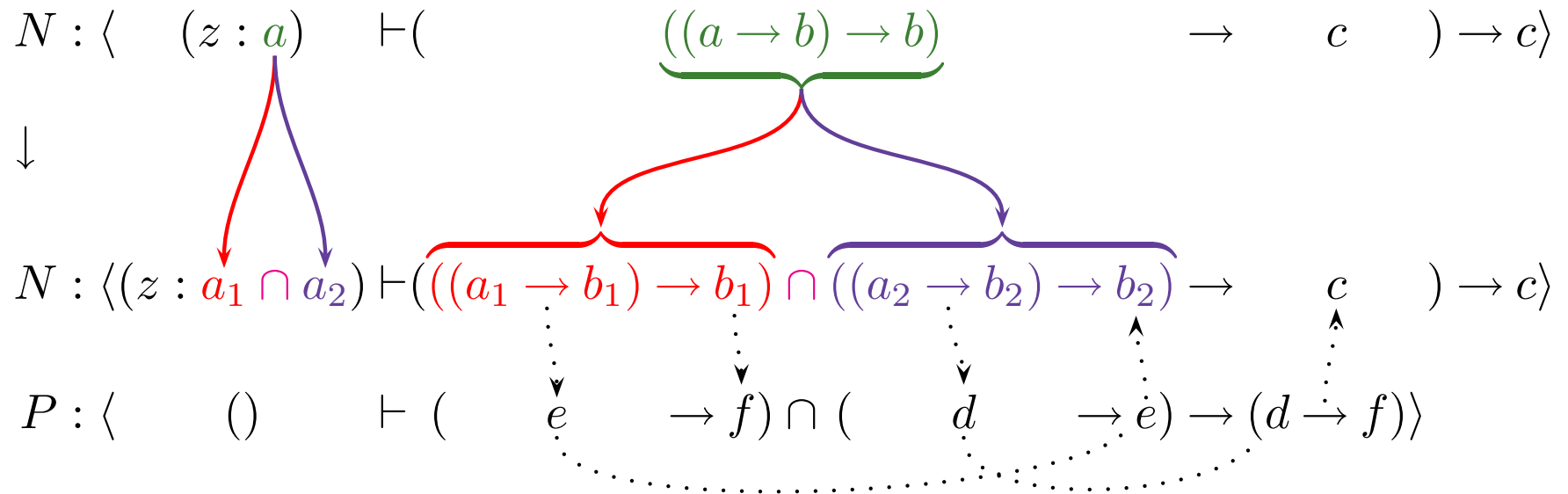
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Then we apply this substitution (dotted lines above):

$$S_f = (e := a_1 \rightarrow b_1, f := b_1, d := a_2 \rightarrow a_1 \rightarrow b_1, \\
 b_2 := a_1 \rightarrow b_1, c := (a_2 \rightarrow a_1 \rightarrow b_1) \rightarrow b_1)$$

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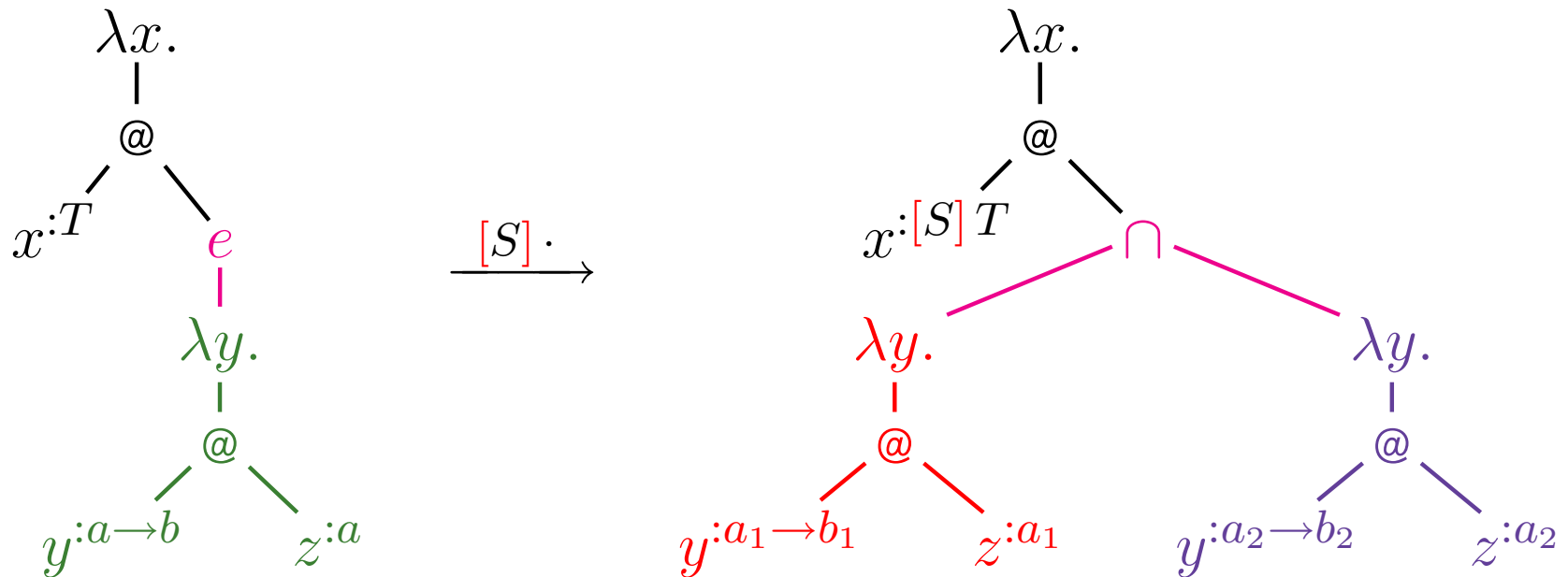
But how precisely did expansion go from the 1st to the 2nd typing for N ?

Expansion simulated *in types* a transformation on the typing derivation for N that inserted a use of the intersection-introduction typing rule at a deeply nested position.

Recently this has become much easier to understand due to a new definition using *expansion variables* (E-variables) [Kfoury and Wells, 1999; Carlier et al., 2004], which I will now show you.

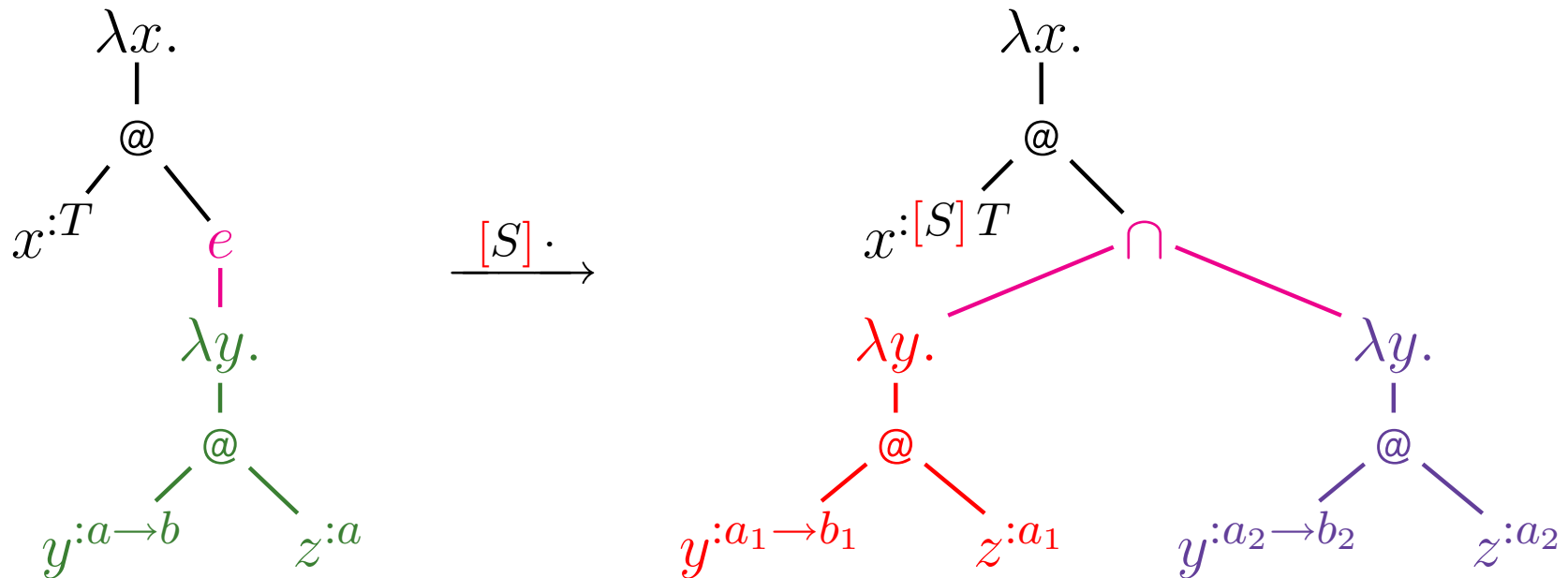
How to do expansion with E-variables.

Applying $S = (e := (((a := a_1), b := b_1) \cap ((a := a_2), b := b_2)))$:



How to do expansion with E-variables.

Applying $S = (e := (((a := a_1), b := b_1) \cap ((a := a_2), b := b_2)))$:



Effect on typings:

$$\langle (z : e a) \vdash (e ((a \rightarrow b) \rightarrow b) \rightarrow c) \rightarrow c \rangle$$

$$\xrightarrow{[S] \cdot} \langle (z : a_1 \cap a_2) \vdash (((a_1 \rightarrow b_1) \rightarrow b_1) \cap ((a_2 \rightarrow b_2) \rightarrow b_2) \rightarrow c) \rightarrow c \rangle$$

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- Getting compositionality is hard with “for all” quantifiers, so there may be motivation to learn *intersection types* and similar technologies.
- Doing compositional analysis with intersection types requires *expansion*. This is now much better understood and can be done with *E-variables*.

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