

# Modular abstract syntax trees (MAST): substitution tensors with second-class sorts

Marcelo Fiore, Ohad Kammar, Georg Moser, and Sam Staton



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# Call-by-Value $\lambda$ -calculus

$A, B, C ::=$	type	$V, W ::=$	value
$\beta$	base	$x$	variable
$  A \rightarrow B$	function	$  \lambda x : A. M$	function abst.
$  \langle C_i : A_i   i \in I \rangle$	record ( $I$ finite)	$  (C_i : V_i   i \in I)$	record c'tor
$  \{C_i : A_i   i \in I\}$	variant ( $I$ finite)	$  A.C_i V$	variant c'tor
$\vdots$		$\vdots$	
$M, N, K, L ::=$		term	
	$\text{val } V$	value	
$  \text{let } x_1 = M_1; \dots; x_n = M_n \text{ in } N$		sequencing	
$  M @ N$		function application	
$  (C_1 : M_1, \dots, C_n : M_n)$		record constructor	
$  \text{case } M \text{ of } (C_1 x_1, \dots, C_n x_n) \Rightarrow N$		record pattern match	
$  A.C_i M$		variant constructor	
$  \text{case } M \text{ of } \{C_i x_i \Rightarrow M_i   i \in I\} N$		variant pattern match	
$\vdots$			

- ▶ Initial algebra characterisation for abstract syntax with binding-aware substitution
- ▶ Robust to extensions:
  - ▶ polymorphism [Fiore and Hamana '13]
  - ▶ mechanisation [Crole'11, Allais et al.'18, Fiore and Szamosvancev'22]
  - ▶ substructurality [Fiore and Ranchod'25]
- ▶ CBN works smoothly. Doesn't cover CBV.  
Technical reasons later:
  - ▶ Substitute **in**: values and terms
  - ▶ Substitute for variables: values only

## Slogan

for substitution:      values are 1<sup>st</sup>-class      but      terms are 2<sup>nd</sup>-class  
[cf. Levy's CBPV, '04]

# Goal: abstract syntax with heterogeneous sorting

## Sorting signature $\mathbf{R}$

- ▶ set sort  
partitioned into

- ▶ bindable/1<sup>st</sup>-class sorts  
 $s \in \text{Bind}$
- ▶ non-bindable/2<sup>nd</sup>-class sorts

## Example (CBV sorting signature)

- ▶  $\text{sort} := \{A, \text{comp } A | A \in \text{Type}\}$
- ▶  $\text{Bind} := \text{Type}_{\text{CBV}}$

## Example (CBPV sorting signature)

- ▶  $\text{Bind} := \{A | A \text{ value type}\}$
- ▶  $\text{sort} := \text{Type}_{\text{CBPV}}$

# Core contribution

classical theory (SOAS)

**PSh**(sort  $\times$  sort $_{\vdash}$ ),  $\otimes$   
monoidal product

generalise  
 $\rightsquigarrow$

this work (MAST)

**PSh**(sort  $\times$  Bind $_{\vdash}$ ),  $\otimes$   
right-unital associative  
**skew** monoidal product

## Skew monoidal heterogeneous tensor

$$(P \otimes Q) \otimes L \cong P \otimes (Q \otimes L) \quad (\text{associative})$$

$$P \otimes \mathbb{I} \cong P \quad (\text{right-unital})$$

$$\mathbb{I} \otimes Q \xrightarrow{\ell} Q \quad (\text{non-invertible!}) \quad (\mathbb{I} \otimes \mathbb{1})_s = \emptyset \not\cong \mathbb{1}_s (s \notin \text{Bind})$$

# Contribution

## Modular Abstract Syntax Trees (MAST)

- ▶ SOAS  $\xrightarrow{\text{generalise}}$  2<sup>nd</sup>-class sorts
- Using **skew** bicategories/monoidal categories, and:
  - ▶ Kleisli bicategories [Gambino, Fiore, Hyland, and Winskel'19]
  - ▶ Familial theory of SOAS [Fiore and Szamosvancev'25]
- ▶ MAST tutorial
- ▶ Case-study: CBV semantics á la carte (128 substitution lemmata)

## WIP

- ▶ Idris 2 implementation of computational fragment  
[cf. Fiore and Szamosvancev'22]
- ▶ Replace skew monoidal structure and monoids with  
monoidal structure and actions  
[cf. Fiore and Turi'01]

# Talk structure

- ▶ Contribution
- ▶ High-level motivation
- ▶ MAST taster

# High-level motivation

Initial Algebra Semantics Programme

[Goguen and Thatcher'74]

Denotational semantics á la carte

[homage to Swierstra'08, Forster and Stark'20]

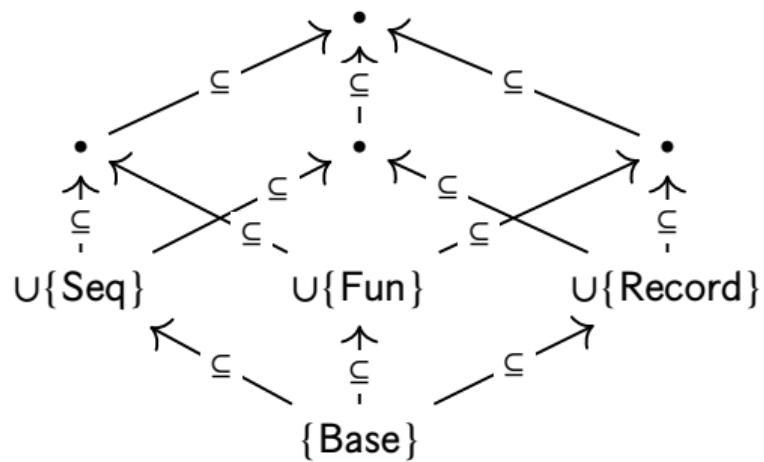
## CBV customisation menu

fragment	syntactic constructs	types	semantics
base	returning a value: <b>val</b>		strong monad over a Cartesian category
sequential	sequencing: <b>let</b>		
functions	abst., app. $(\lambda x. : A), (@)$	function $(\rightarrow)$	Kleisli exponentials
variants	c'tors, pattern match $A.C_i-, \text{case - of}$ $\{C_i x_i \Rightarrow -   i \in I\}$	variant $\{C_i : -   i \in I\}$	distributive category
:			

## Iterative semantic development

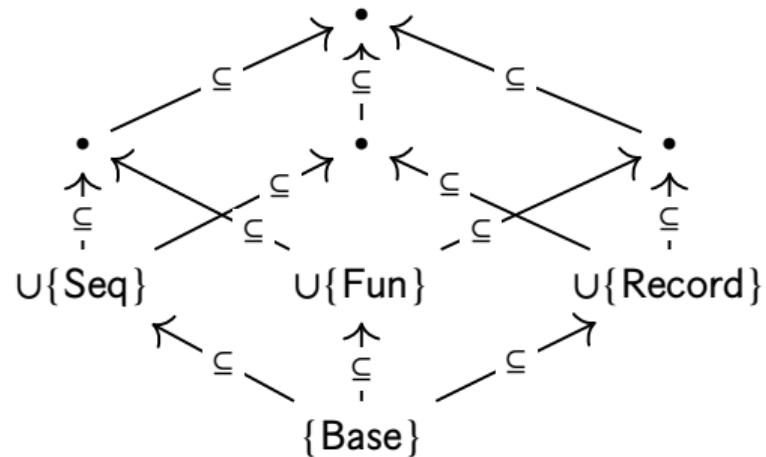
- ▶ Add syntax
- ▶ Add semantics

- ▶ Profit!



### Iterative semantic development

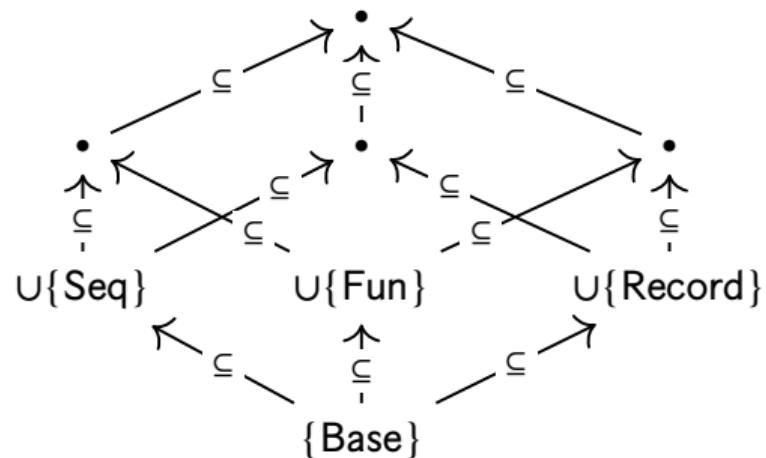
- ▶ Add syntax
- ▶ Add semantics
- ▶ Develop meta-theory:
  - ▶ Substitution lemma
  - ▶ Compositionality
  - ▶ Soundness
  - ▶ Adequacy
- ▶ Profit!



# Dream vs. Bleak Reality

## Iterative semantic development

- ▶ Add syntax
- ▶ Add semantics
- ▶ Develop meta-theory:
  - ▶ Substitution lemma  
**Tedious and boring**
  - ▶ Compositionality  
**Tedious and boring**
  - ▶ Soundness
  - ▶ Adequacy
- ▶ Profit!



# Meta-theory: the tedious parts

## Lemma (substitution)

*Syntactic substitution corresponds to semantic composition:*

$$\llbracket M[\theta] \rrbracket = \llbracket M \rrbracket \circ \llbracket \theta \rrbracket$$

## Lemma (compositionality)

*Composite semantics is independent of component syntax:*

$$\llbracket C[M] \rrbracket = \text{plug}(\llbracket C[-] \rrbracket, \llbracket M \rrbracket)$$

# Meta-theory: the tedious parts

## Lemma (substitution)

*Syntactic substitution corresponds to semantic composition:*

Proof.

$$\llbracket M[\theta] \rrbracket = \llbracket M \rrbracket \circ \llbracket \theta \rrbracket$$

Presupposes a syntactic substitution lemma. Typically several inductions over all constructs.



## Lemma (compositionality)

*Composite semantics is independent of component syntax:*

Proof.

$$\llbracket C[M] \rrbracket = \text{plug}(\llbracket C[-] \rrbracket, \llbracket M \rrbracket)$$

Tediously define terms with holes, plugging holes syntactically, carefully capturing some variables but not others. Then induction over semantics.



# Dream

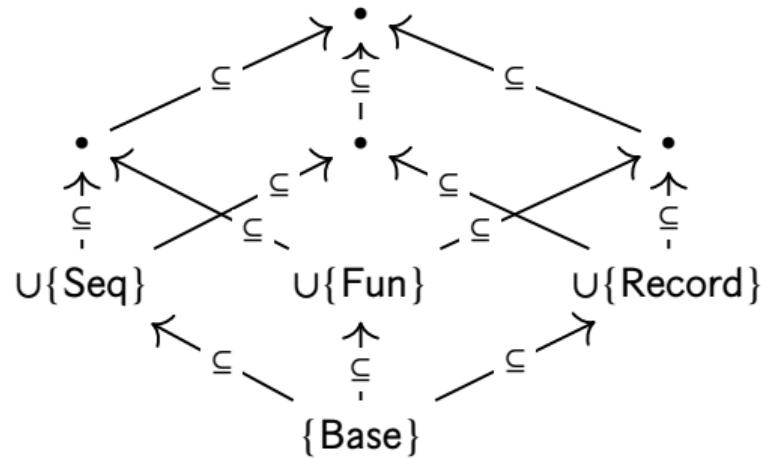
It would be nice if tedious bits were...  
... free

# Dream vs. Reality

It would be nice if tedious bits were...

... free

... syntactically scaleable: additive syntactic work per new feature



# Capstone: abstract syntax and substitution universality

Thm (representation)

*abstract syntax with operators in  $\mathbf{O}$  and holes in  $\mathbf{H}$   
amounts to  
free substitution  $\mathbf{O}$ -monoid over  $\mathbf{H}$ :*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & \mathbf{H} & \\ & \downarrow ?-[id] & \\ \$\mathbf{H} \otimes \$\mathbf{H} & \xrightarrow{-[-]} & \$\mathbf{H} & \xleftarrow[\text{var}]{} \mathbb{I} \\ & \llbracket - \rrbracket \uparrow & & \\ & \mathbf{O}(\$\mathbf{H}) & & \end{array}$$

Plugging holes/metavariable substitution  
Kleisli extension ( $\gg=$ ) for  $\mathbf{O}$ -monoid monad.

# Capstone: semantics

## Key propaganda

compositional, binding-respecting denotational semantics  
amounts to  
substitution **O**-monoid:

$$\mathbf{M} \otimes \mathbf{M} \xrightarrow{-[-]} \mathbf{M} \xleftarrow[\text{var}]{\llbracket - \rrbracket} \mathbf{I}$$
$$\llbracket - \rrbracket \uparrow$$
$$\mathbf{OM}$$

The denotational semantics for terms with holes in **H** is the unique substitution **O**-monoid homomorphism over **H**:

$$(\mathbb{S}\mathbf{H}, -[-], \text{var}, \llbracket - \rrbracket, ?-[id]) \xrightarrow{\llbracket - \rrbracket} (\mathbf{M}, -[-], \text{var}, \llbracket - \rrbracket, \text{menv}) \quad (\mathbf{H} \xrightarrow{\text{menv}} \mathbf{M})$$

# Meta-theory in one line

## Lemma (substitution)

*Syntactic substitution corresponds to semantic composition:*

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## Lemma (compositionality)

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$$\begin{aligned} \llbracket C[M] \rrbracket = \\ \text{plug}(\llbracket C[-] \rrbracket, \llbracket M \rrbracket) \end{aligned}$$

# Meta-theory in one line

## Lemma (substitution)

*Syntactic substitution corresponds to semantic composition:*

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{substitution monoid homomorphism} \\ \downarrow \\ \llbracket M[\theta] \rrbracket = \llbracket [-] [M, \theta] \rrbracket = -[-] [\llbracket M \rrbracket, \llbracket \theta \rrbracket] := \llbracket M \rrbracket \circ \llbracket \theta \rrbracket \end{array}$$

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## Lemma (compositionality)

*Composite semantics is independent of component syntax:*

$$\begin{aligned} \llbracket C[M] \rrbracket &= \llbracket (?m[M]) \succcurlyeq (m \mapsto C[-]) \rrbracket = \llbracket ?m[M] \rrbracket \succcurlyeq (m \mapsto \llbracket C[-] \rrbracket) \\ &=: \text{plug}(\llbracket C[-] \rrbracket, \llbracket M \rrbracket) \quad \begin{matrix} \uparrow \\ \succcurlyeq \text{ is} \\ \text{homomorphic} \\ \text{extension} \end{matrix} \end{aligned}$$

# Talk structure

- ▶ Contribution
- ▶ High-level motivation
- ▶ MAST **taster**

# MAST taster: semantic domain for syntax and semantics

MAST provides ( $\mathbf{R} = (\text{sort}, \text{Bind})$  sorting system)

- ▶ Contexts
- ▶ Renamings
- ▶  $\mathbf{R}$ -structures:

- ▶ Variables structure:
- ▶ substitution tensors:  
 $(P \otimes Q)_s \Gamma \ni [p, \theta]_\Delta :$

$$\text{sort}_\vdash \ni \Gamma ::= [x_1 : s_1, \dots, x_n : s_n]$$

$$\text{sort}_\vdash(\Gamma, \Delta) \ni \Gamma \vdash \rho : \Delta$$

$$\mathbf{PSh}(\text{sort} \times \text{Bind}_\vdash) \ni P : \text{sort} \times \text{Bind}_\vdash^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

$$P_s \Gamma \ni p : \text{sort } s \text{ element with variables in } \Gamma$$

$$\mathbf{R-Struct} \ni \mathbb{I}_s \Gamma ::= \{x | (x : s) \in \Gamma\}$$

$$\mathbf{R-Struct} \ni P \otimes Q, P \otimes_{\bullet} \left( \begin{smallmatrix} \mathbb{I} \\ \downarrow \\ A \end{smallmatrix} \right)$$

$$P\text{-element: } p \in P_s \Gamma$$

$$Q\text{-closure: } \theta \in \prod_{(y:r) \in \Delta} Q_r \Gamma$$

identifying, e.g.:

$$[p[\text{weaken}], \theta]_{\Delta_1 + \Delta_2} = [p, \theta \circ \rho]_{\Delta_1}$$

$$[p[x', x'' \mapsto x]_{x \in \Delta}, \theta]_\Delta = [p, \theta + \theta]_{\Delta + \Delta}$$

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$$(P \otimes Q)_s \Gamma \ni [p, \theta]_{\Delta} :$$

Scope-change as tensorial strength

$$\text{str}^{\mathbf{O}} : (\mathbf{O}P) \otimes_{\bullet} \left( \text{var} \downarrow_A^{\mathbb{I}} \right) \rightarrow \mathbf{O} \left( P \otimes_{\bullet} \left( \text{var} \downarrow_A^{\mathbb{I}} \right) \right)$$

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Substitution monoids

$$\mathbf{M} \otimes \mathbf{M} \xrightarrow{-[-]} \mathbf{M} \xleftarrow{\text{var}} \mathbb{I}$$

$$\text{sort}_{\vdash} \ni \Gamma ::= [x_1 : s_1, \dots, x_n : s_n]$$

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# What breaks the unitor?

## Substitution tensor

$$(P \otimes Q)_s \Gamma := \int^{\Delta} P_s \Delta \times \prod_{(y:r) \in \Delta} Q_r \Gamma$$

for  $s \notin \text{Bind}$ ,  $Q = \mathbb{1}$ ,  $\mathbb{I}_s \Delta = \emptyset$ :

$$(\mathbb{I} \otimes Q)_s \Gamma := \int^{\Delta} \overbrace{\emptyset}^{\mathbb{I}_s \Delta} \times \prod_{(y:r) \in \Delta} Q_r \Gamma = \int^{\Delta} \emptyset = \emptyset \neq \mathbb{1} = Q_s \Gamma$$

# MAST taster: semantic domain for syntax

Signature functors



Scope-change as tensorial strength

$$\text{str}^{\mathbf{O}} : (\mathbf{O}P) \otimes_{\bullet} \left( \text{var}_{A \downarrow}^{\mathbb{I}} \right) \rightarrow \mathbf{O} \left( P \otimes_{\bullet} \left( \text{var}_{A \downarrow}^{\mathbb{I}} \right) \right)$$

## Example

Sequential fragment signature functor:

$$(\text{Seq } X)_{\text{comp } B} \Gamma := \coprod_{A \in \text{Type}} \left( \begin{array}{l} (\text{let } x : A = \_ \text{ in } \_) : \\ (X_{\text{comp } A} \Gamma \times X_{\text{comp } B} (\Gamma, x : A)) \end{array} \right)$$

$$(\text{Seq } X)_A \Gamma := \emptyset$$

$$\text{str}^{\text{Seq}} [\text{let } x : A = (p \in P_{\text{comp } A} \Delta) \text{ in } (q \in P_{\text{comp } B} (\Delta, x : A)), \theta]_{\Delta}$$

$$\text{Takeaway (modularity)} \quad := (\text{let } x : A = [p, \theta]_{\Delta} \text{ in } [q, (\theta, x : \text{var } x)]_{\Delta, x : A})$$

Each syntactic construct defines its own binding, renaming, and substitution structure

# MAST taster: semantic domain for syntax

Abstract syntax: inductive representation

Every initial algebra:

$$\$^0\mathbf{H} := \mu X. (\mathbf{O}X) \amalg \mathbb{I} \amalg \mathbf{H} \otimes X$$

Supports standard definitions:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & \mathbf{H} & \\ & \downarrow ?-[ - ] & \\ \$\mathbf{H} \otimes \$\mathbf{H} & \xrightarrow{-[ - ]} & \$\mathbf{H} & \xleftarrow[\text{var}]{} \mathbb{I} \\ & \llbracket - \rrbracket \uparrow & & \\ & \mathbf{O}(\$H) & & \end{array}$$

Independently of concrete representation, e.g.,:

- ▶ De-Brujin
- ▶ Locally nameless
- ▶ Graphical
- ▶ Nominal
- ▶ Co-de Bruijn

### Example

$\mathbf{M} = (\mathcal{C}, \mathbf{T}, \text{return}, \gg, \llbracket - \rrbracket)$ :

- ▶  $\mathcal{C}$ : Cartesian category with chosen finite products
- ▶  $(\mathbf{T}, \text{return}, \gg)$  strong monad over  $\mathcal{C}$
- ▶  $\llbracket - \rrbracket : \text{Type} \rightarrow \mathcal{C}$  type interpretation

induces:

- ▶ A CBV-structure:  $\text{CBV-Struct} \ni \mathbf{M}_s \Gamma := \mathcal{C}(\llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket, \llbracket s \rrbracket)$
- ▶ Standard interpretation of contexts, computations, renaming:

$$\mathcal{C} \ni \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket := \prod_{(x:A) \in \Gamma} \llbracket A \rrbracket \quad \mathcal{C} \ni \llbracket \text{comp } A \rrbracket := \mathbf{T} \llbracket A \rrbracket$$

$$\llbracket \rho \rrbracket : \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket \xrightarrow{(\pi_{x[\rho]} : \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket \rightarrow \llbracket A \rrbracket)_{(x:A) \in \Delta}} \prod_{(x:A) \in \Delta} \llbracket A \rrbracket = \llbracket \Delta \rrbracket$$

# MAST taster: common structure for substitution

## Syntactic substitution monoid

$$\$^0 \mathbf{H} \otimes \$^0 \mathbf{H} \xrightarrow{-[-]} \$^0 \mathbf{H} \xleftarrow{\text{var}} \mathbb{I}$$

Monoid axioms amounts to syntactic substitution lemma

## Example

Semantic substitution monoid:

$$\mathbf{M} \otimes \mathbf{M} \xrightarrow{-[-]} \mathbf{M} \xleftarrow{\text{var}} \mathbb{I}$$

- ▶ Substitution via composition:

$$\left( \llbracket \Delta \rrbracket \xrightarrow{f} \llbracket s \rrbracket \right) \left[ \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket \xrightarrow{\theta} \llbracket \Delta \rrbracket \right] : \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket \xrightarrow{\theta} \llbracket \Delta \rrbracket \xrightarrow{f} \llbracket s \rrbracket$$

- ▶ Variables:  
(1<sup>st</sup>-class sorts only)

$$\text{var} : ((x : A) \in \Gamma \mapsto \left( \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket \xrightarrow{\pi_x} \llbracket A \rrbracket \right))$$

# MAST taster: compatibility

Substitution-compatible algebra

$$[\![-\!]\!] : \mathbf{OM} \rightarrow \mathbf{M}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{str} \xrightarrow{\quad} \underline{\mathbf{O}(\underline{\mathbf{M}} \otimes \underline{\mathbf{M}})} \\ \xleftarrow{(\underline{\mathbf{OM}}) \otimes \text{env}^{\mathbf{M}}} [\![-\!]\!] \otimes \text{id} = \xrightarrow{\quad \text{compatibility} \quad} \underline{\mathbf{O}(-[-]_{\mathbf{M}})} \\ \xleftarrow{\quad \underline{\mathbf{M}} \otimes \underline{\mathbf{M}} \quad} \underline{\mathbf{M}} \xrightarrow{-[-]_{\mathbf{M}}} \underline{\mathbf{M}} \end{array}$$

Example (Seq-compatibility)

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket & \xrightarrow{(id, (f \circ \theta))} & \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket \times T \llbracket A \rrbracket \\ \theta \downarrow & \text{products} = & \downarrow \theta \times id \\ \llbracket \Delta \rrbracket & \xrightarrow{(id, f)} & \llbracket \Delta \rrbracket \times T \llbracket A \rrbracket \end{array}$$

Compatibility:

$\xrightarrow{\quad \text{strong monad laws} \quad}$

$\xrightarrow{\quad \cancel{g} \quad}$

Example (Seq-algebra)

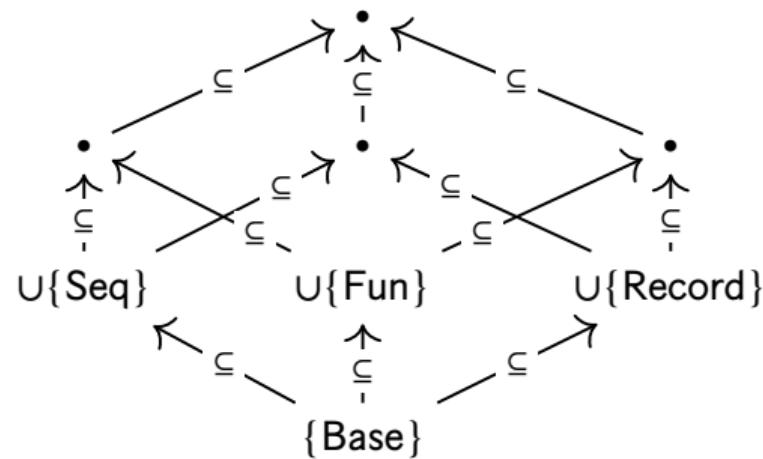
$$\begin{array}{c} \llbracket \text{let } x : A = (\llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket \xrightarrow{f} T \llbracket A \rrbracket) \text{ in } (\llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket \times \llbracket A \rrbracket \xrightarrow{g} T \llbracket B \rrbracket) \rrbracket \\ \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket \xrightarrow{(id, f)} \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket \times T \llbracket A \rrbracket \xrightarrow{\cancel{g}} T \llbracket B \rrbracket \end{array}$$

Takeaway

Equip each semantic interpretation with its compatibility proof

## Substitution **O**-monoid

Substitution monoid with compatible **O**-algebra structure



# Want more?

## In the paper:

- ▶ All the details
- ▶ A CBV case-study (128 substitution lemmata)



## In the future:

- ▶ Idris 2 implementation of computational fragment  
*[cf. Fiore and Szamosvancev'22]*
- ▶ Replace skew monoidal structure and monoids with  
monoidal structure and actions

# Contribution

## Modular Abstract Syntax Trees (MAST)

- ▶ SOAS  $\xrightarrow{\text{generalise}}$  2<sup>nd</sup>-class sorts
- Using **skew** bicategories/monoidal categories, and:
  - ▶ Kleisli bicategories [Gambino, Fiore, Hyland, and Winskel'19]
  - ▶ Familial theory of SOAS [Fiore and Szamosvancev'25]
- ▶ MAST tutorial
- ▶ Case-study: CBV semantics á la carte (128 substitution lemmata)

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