Introduction and Lambda Calculus

Hype for Types

January 16, 2024

Introduction

Welcome to Hype for Types!

- Instructors:
  - Ari Battleman (zbattlem)
  - Kiera O'Flynn (koflynn)
  - Sonya Simkin (ssimkin)
  - Yosef Alsuhaibani (yalsuhai)
- Attendance
  - In general, you have to come to lecture to pass
  - Let us know if you need to miss a week
- Homework
  - Every lecture will have an associated homework
  - Graded on effort (*not* correctness)
  - If you spend more than an hour, please stop[1]

[1] Unless you're having fun!

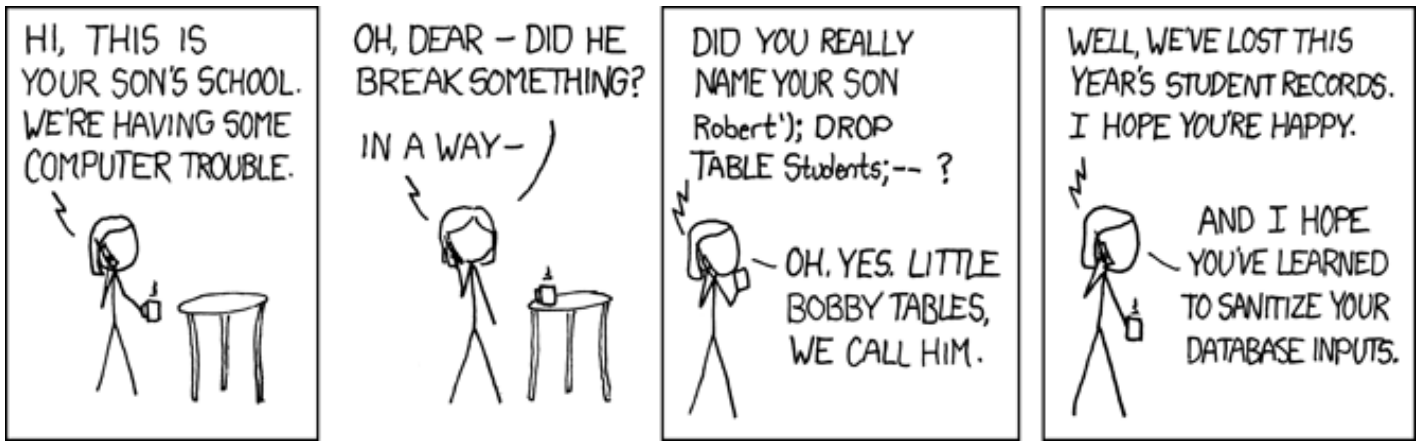
Other Stuff

- Please join the Discord and Gradescope if you haven't
- We assume everyone has 150 level knowledge of functional programming and type systems
  - If you don't have this and feel really lost, talk to us after class (and a 150 head TA will bring you up to speed)

Motivation

Programming is Hard

There are many common classes of mistakes/bugs/errors in code:



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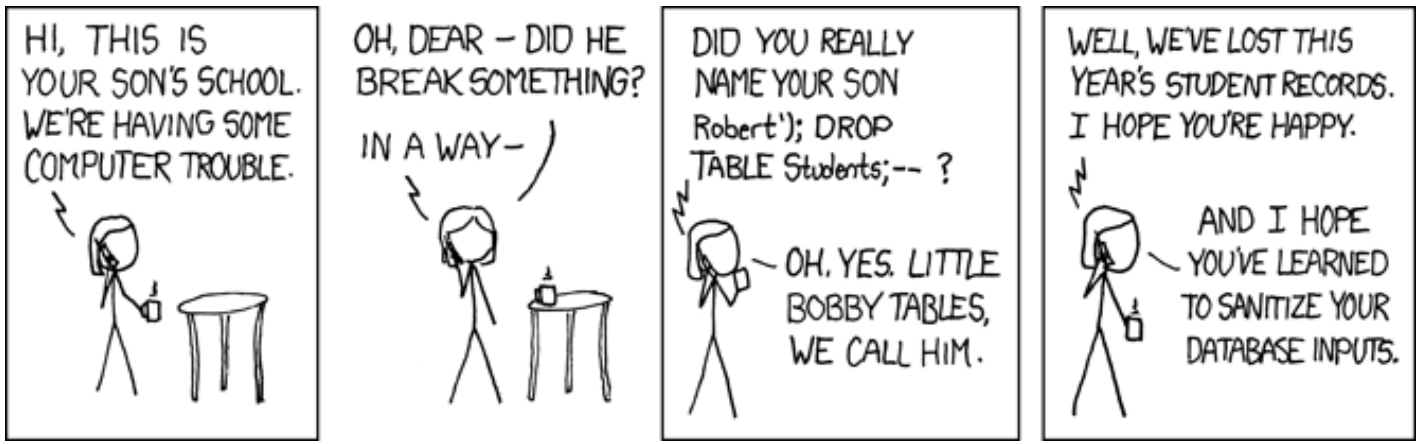

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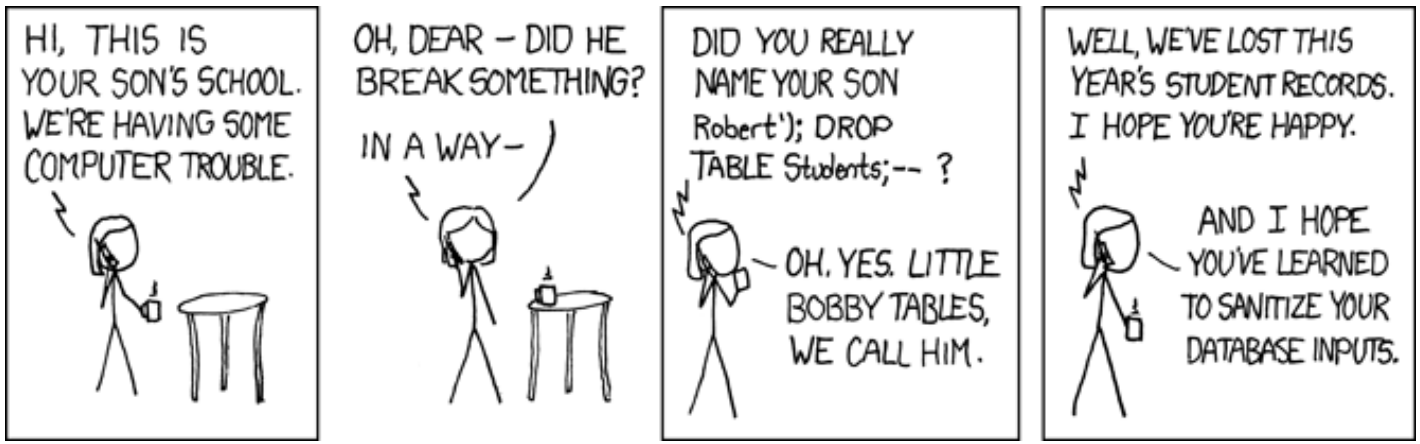

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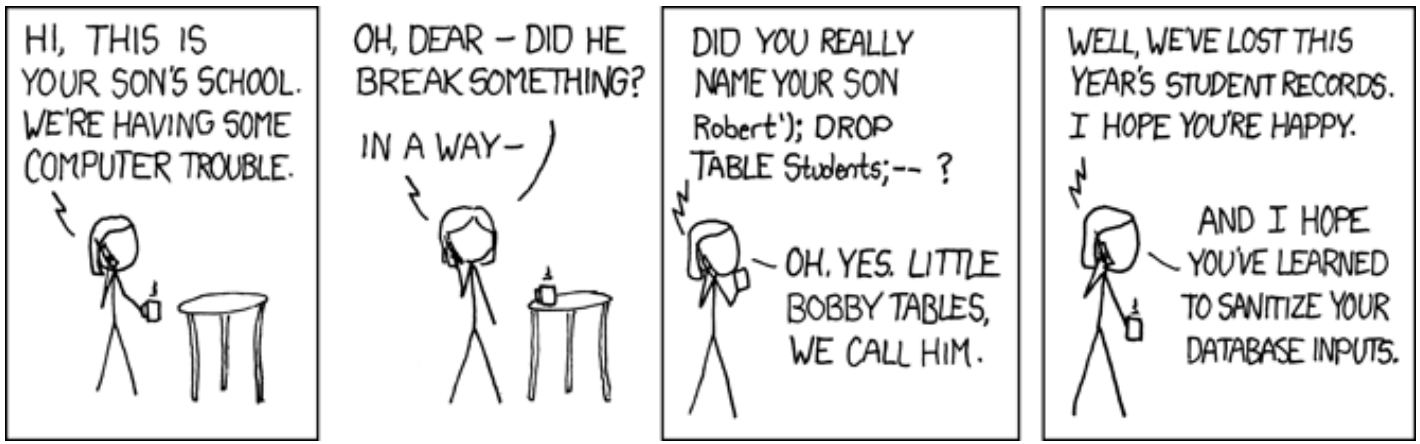

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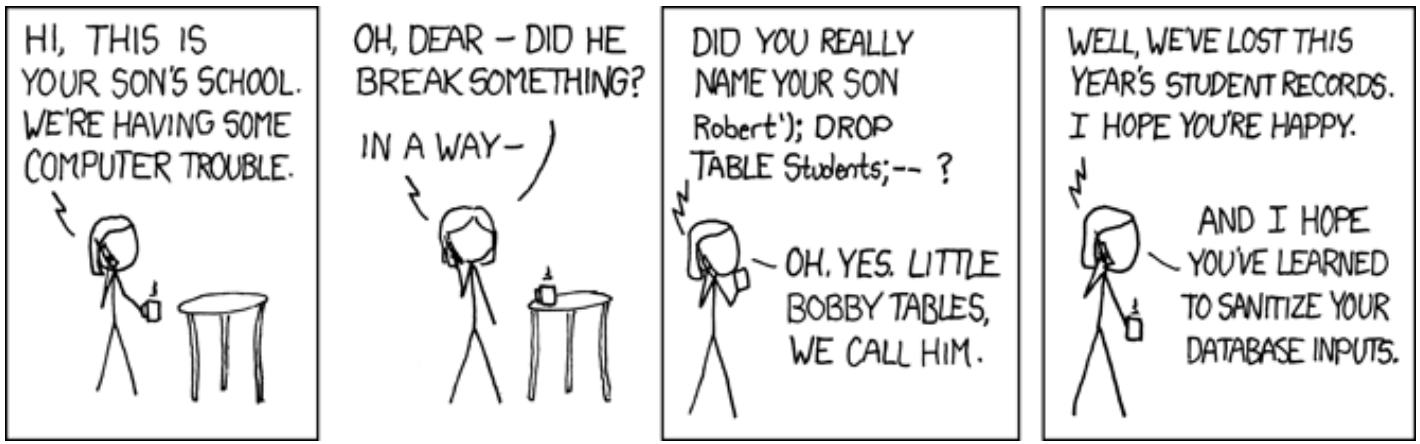

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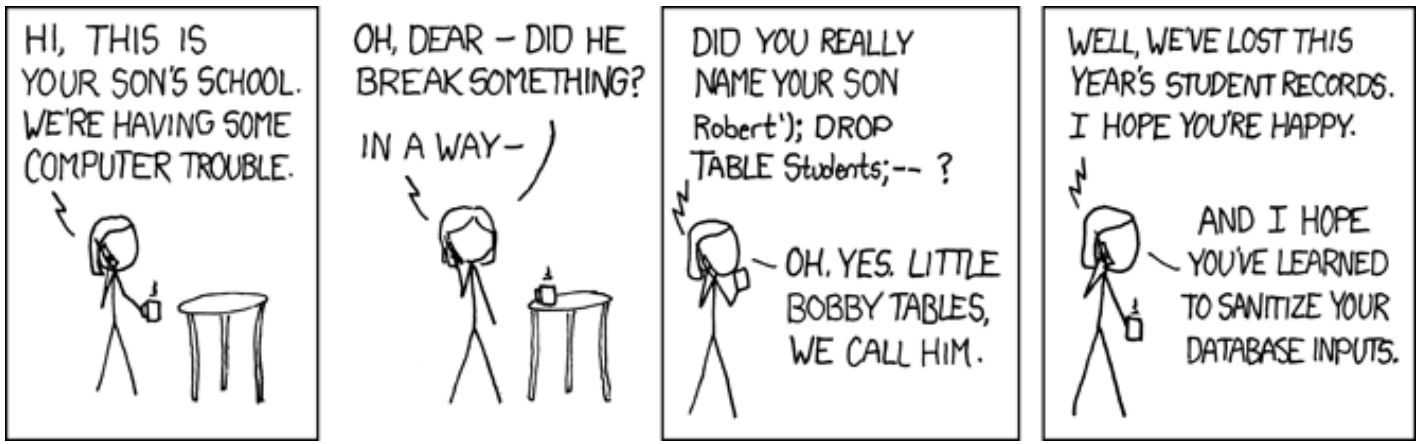

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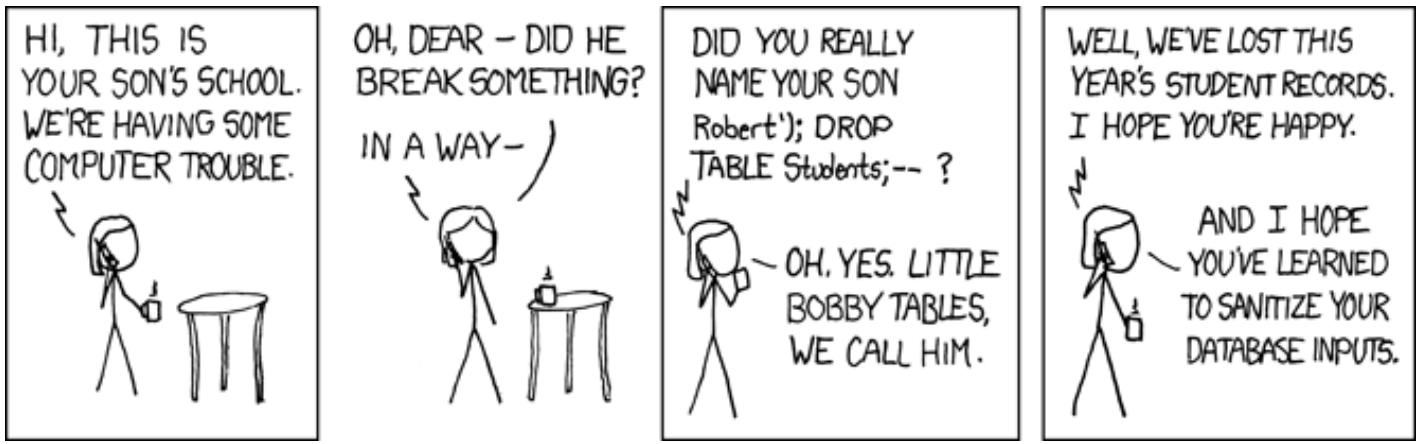
- `free(A); free(A);`
- `A[len(A)]`
- `@requires is_sorted(A)`



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Types are... hype!

Types are *descriptions* of how some piece of data can be used.

[2] Foreshadowing: "a literary device in which a writer gives an advance hint of what is to come later in the story." *Wikipedia, "Foreshadowing," retrieved 30 Aug 2022*

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Guiding Question

How can we use types to catch errors at compile-time?

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Can we use types for more than just bug-catching?[2]

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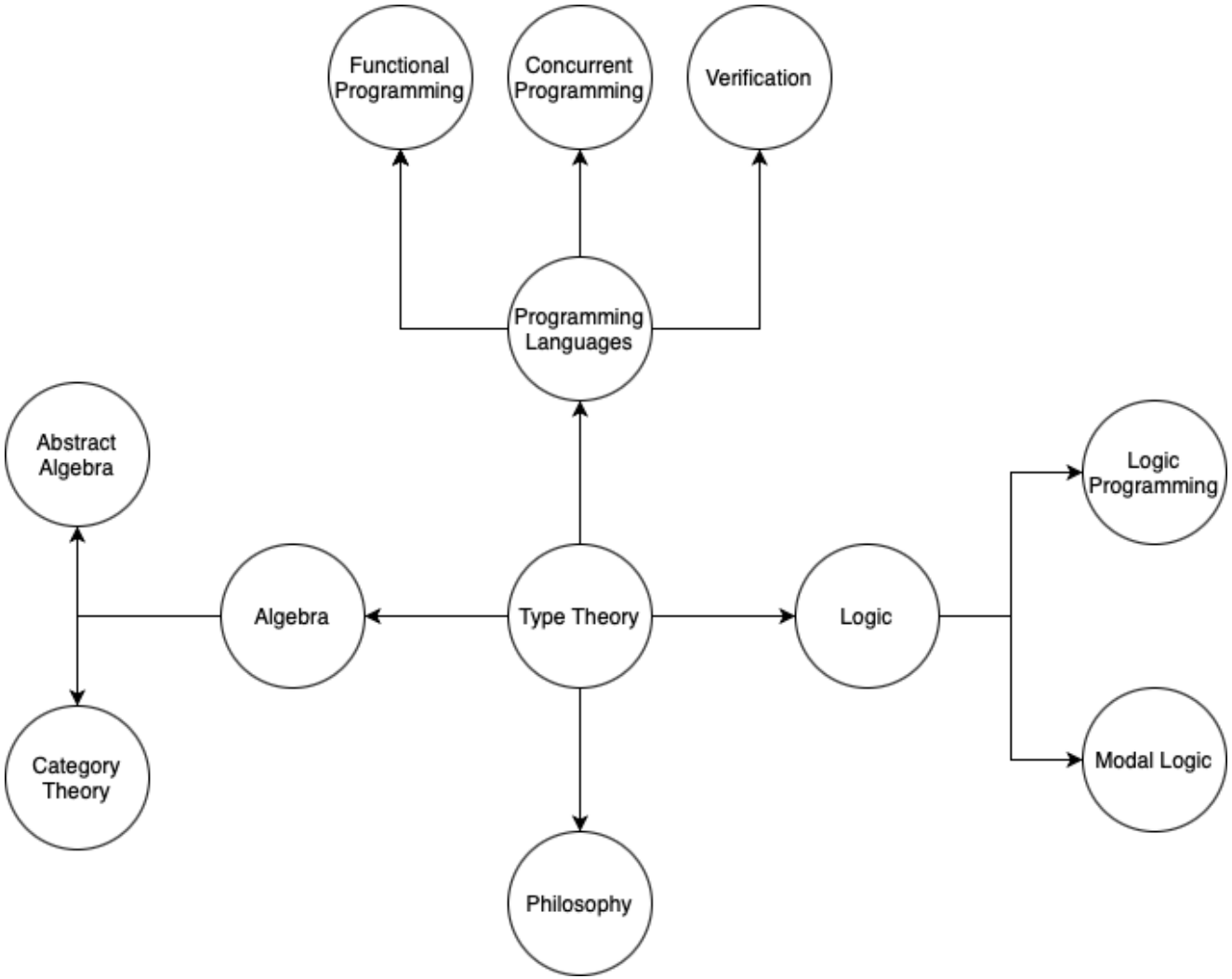
Type Theory at Large



Goal of This Course

- We do not ask students to master the content as in an academic course
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- We do not ask students to master the content as in an academic course
- We do not replace any academic courses
- We do not focus on depth, but rather focus on breath
- We DO expect you to have fun
- We DO hope to spark your interest in PL theory and start pursuing coursework and/or research in adjacent areas after taking this course
- We DO want you to learn about different fascinating aspects of types that you would otherwise take advanced courses and/or read complicated academic papers to understand

Course Credit

- 3 unit, P/F
- For undergraduate, count towards 360 total units graduation requirement
- For MSCS, count towards 12 units "MSCS elective units"

Caveat

You will see a lot of weird symbols in this class, please don't be intimated. We especially love λ.

Lambda Calculus

Building a tiny language

The *simply-typed lambda calculus* is simple. It only has four features[3]:

- Unit ("empty tuples")
- Booleans
- Tuples
- Functions

[3] which is a subset of Standard ML

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Goal

To use STLC as a tool to study how type checker works.

[3] which is a subset of Standard ML

Expressions

We represent our expressions using a *grammar*:

e	$::=$	x	variable
	$\mid$	$\langle\rangle$	unit
	$\mid$	**false**	false boolean
	$\mid$	**true**	true boolean
	$\mid$	**if** e_1 **then** e_2 **else** e_3	boolean case analysis
	$\mid$	$\langle e_1, e_2 \rangle$	tuple
	$\mid$	**fst**(e)	first tuple element
	$\mid$	**snd**(e)	second tuple element
	$\mid$	$\lambda x : \tau.\ e$	function abstraction (lambda)
	$\mid$	$e_1\ e_2$	function application

Types

Similarly, we define our types as follows:

$$
\begin{array}{rcl}
\tau & ::= & \textbf{unit} \\
& | & \textbf{bool} \\
& | & \tau_1 \times \tau_2 \\
& | & \tau_1 \to \tau_2
\end{array}
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Million-dollar Question

How do we check if $e : \tau$?

Inference Rules

In logic, we use *inference rules* to state how facts follow from other facts.

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For example:

$$\frac{\text{you are here} \quad \text{you are hyped}}{\text{you are hyped for types}} \qquad \frac{}{\text{functions are values}}$$

$$\frac{\text{it's raining} \quad x \text{ is outside}}{x \text{ is getting wet}} \qquad \frac{\text{Socrates is a man} \quad \text{All men are mortal}}{\text{Socrates is mortal}}$$

$$\frac{n \text{ is a number}}{n + 1 \text{ is a number}} \qquad \frac{f \text{ total} \quad x \text{ valuable}}{f\ x \text{ valuable}}$$

Typing Rules: First Attempt

Consider the judgement $e : \tau$ ("e has type τ"). Let's try to express some simple typing rules.

$$\frac{}{\langle\rangle : \textbf{unit}} \qquad \frac{}{\textbf{false} : \textbf{bool}} \qquad \frac{}{\textbf{true} : \textbf{bool}} \qquad \frac{e_1 : \textbf{bool} \quad e_2 : \tau \quad e_3 : \tau}{\textbf{if } e_1 \textbf{ then } e_2 \textbf{ else } e_3 : \tau}$$

$$\frac{e_1 : \tau_1 \quad e_2 : \tau_2}{\langle e_1, e_2 \rangle : \tau_1 \times \tau_2} \qquad \frac{e : \tau_1 \times \tau_2}{\textbf{fst}(e) : \tau_1} \qquad \frac{e : \tau_1 \times \tau_2}{\textbf{snd}(e) : \tau_2}$$

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Question

How do we write rules for functions?

Typing Rules: Functions

Let's give it a shot.

$$\frac{e_1 : \tau_1 \to \tau_2 \quad e_2 : \tau_1}{e_1\ e_2 : \tau_2}$$

Looks good so far...

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Key Idea

Expressions only have types *given a context*!

Contexts

Intuition

If, given $x : \tau_1$, we know $e : \tau_2$, then $(\lambda x : \tau_1.\ e) : \tau_1 \to \tau_2$.

Therefore, we need a context (denoted Γ) which associates types with variables.

$$\frac{\Gamma, x : \tau_1 \vdash e : \tau_2}{\Gamma \vdash (\lambda x : \tau_1.\ e) : \tau_1 \to \tau_2}$$

What types does some variable x have? It depends on the previous code!

$$\frac{x : \tau \in \Gamma}{\Gamma \vdash x : \tau}$$

All the rules!

$$\frac{x : \tau \in \Gamma}{\Gamma \vdash x : \tau}\ (\textsc{var}) \qquad \frac{}{\Gamma \vdash \langle\rangle : \mathbf{unit}}\ (\textsc{unit}) \qquad \frac{}{\Gamma \vdash \mathbf{false} : \mathbf{bool}}\ (\textsc{false})$$

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Example: what's the type?

Let's derive that

$$\cdot \vdash (\lambda x : \mathbf{unit}.\ \langle x, \mathbf{true} \rangle)\ \langle\rangle : \mathbf{unit} \times \mathbf{bool}$$

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Homework Foreshadowing

That looks like a trace of a typechecking algorithm!

Get Hype.

The Future is Bright

- How can you use basic algebra to manipulate types?
- How do types and programs relate to logical proofs?
- How can we automatically fold (and unfold) any recursive type?
- How can types allow us to do safe imperative programming?
- Can we make it so that programs that typecheck iff they're correct?