
A DENOTATIONAL APPROACH TO RELEASE/ACQUIRE CONCURRENCY

GOAL

RELEASE/ACQUIRE

**For weak,
shared-
memory model**

**Using Brookes-style [1996],
totally-ordered traces**

**Design a standard, monad-based
denotational semantics à la Moggi [1991]**

WHY RELEASE/ACQUIRE?



RA is an important fragment of C11, enables decentralized architectures (POWER)

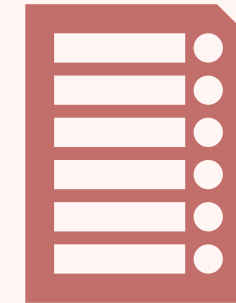


First adaptation of *Brookes's traces* to a relaxed-memory software model

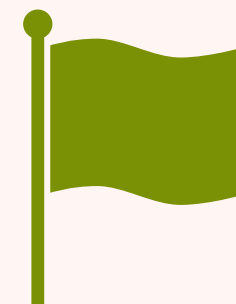


Intricate causal semantics, not overwhelmingly detailed

acyclic $(po \cup rf)^+ |_{loc} \cup mo \cup rb$



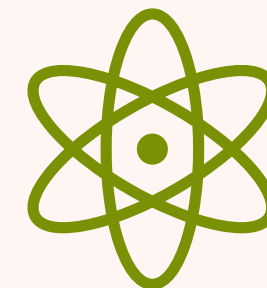
Threads can disagree about the order of writes (non-multi-copy-atomic)



Supports flag-based synchronization (e.g. for signaling a data structure is ready)



Supports important transformations (e.g. thread sequencing, write-read-reorder)



Supports read-modify-write atomicity (e.g. atomic compare-and-swap)

WHY MONAD-BASED?



Standard



Program effects added modularly



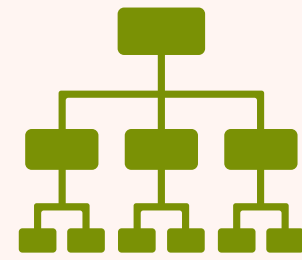
The core language remains exactly the same



Higher-order programming built-in



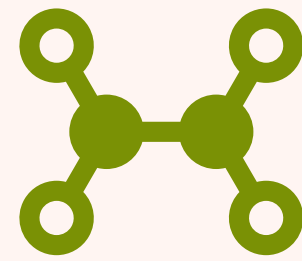
Rich toolkit of definitions, theorems, and techniques



Structural transformations

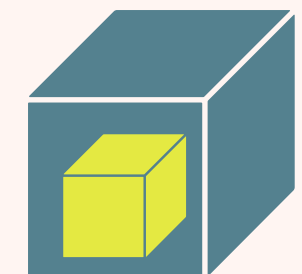
$\text{if } K_{\text{pure}} \text{ then } M; P_1 \text{ else } M; P_2$

$\cong M; \text{if } K_{\text{pure}} \text{ then } P_1 \text{ else } P_2$



Logical relations

“related inputs go to related outputs”



Substitution lemma

syntax substitution ~ semantic context

etc
etc
etc

DENOTATIONAL SEMANTICS

$\llbracket - \rrbracket : \text{Term} \rightarrow \text{Deno}$
compose from subterms' denotations

For example:

$\llbracket \text{let } x = M_1 \text{ in } M_2 \rrbracket \stackrel{\Delta}{=} \llbracket M_1 \rrbracket \overset{\text{Monadic bind}}{\gg} \lambda x. \llbracket M_2 \rrbracket$

$\llbracket M_1 \parallel M_2 \rrbracket \stackrel{\Delta}{=} \llbracket M_1 \rrbracket \parallel \llbracket M_2 \rrbracket$

A modular effect extension

ADEQUACY

Abstraction:

We want this to hold
as much as possible

$\llbracket - \rrbracket : \text{Term} \rightarrow \text{Deno}$

$\llbracket M \rrbracket \geq \llbracket K \rrbracket \implies M \rightsquigarrow K$

K denotationally refines *M*

K contextually refines *M*
safe to replace within any context



ADEQUACY

With non-determinism as sets

Abstraction:

We want this to hold
as much as possible

$\text{Deno} = \mathcal{P}(\text{Behavior})$

$$\llbracket M \rrbracket \supseteq \llbracket K \rrbracket \implies M \rightsquigarrow K$$

Every possible behavior of K
is a possible behavior of M

K contextually refines M
safe to replace within any context



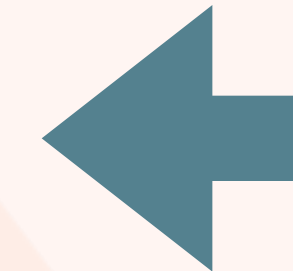
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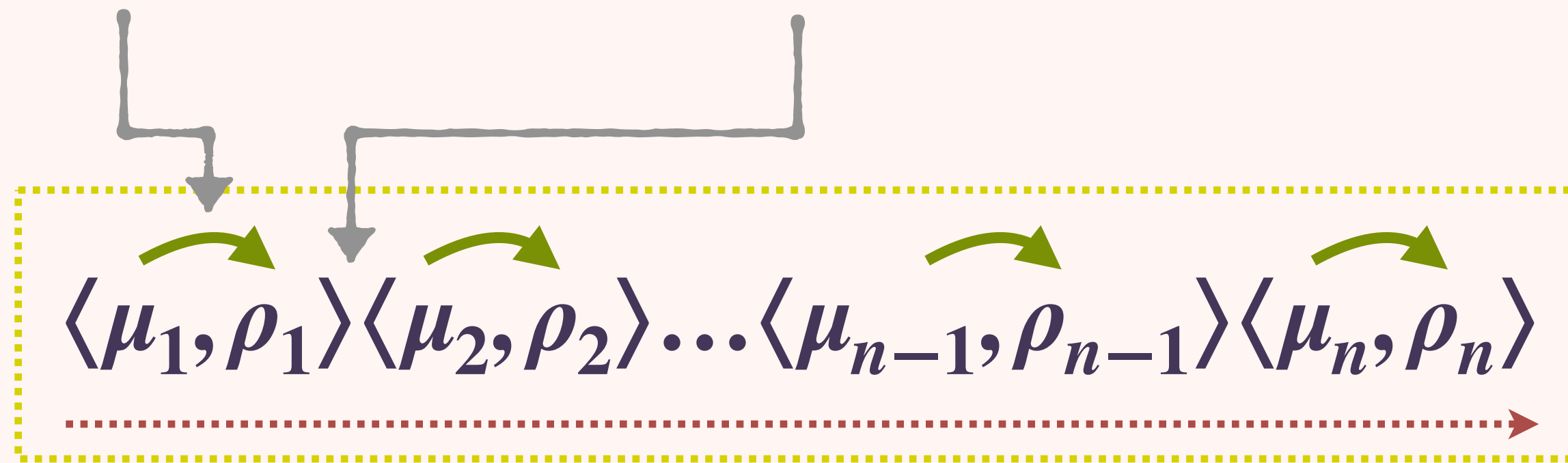
TRACE-BASED SEMANTICS

Brookes [1996]

Main ingredient:

- **linearly-ordered** traces
- **of local state-transitions**
- that **sequence** and **interleave**

No interference Possible interference



$\langle \mu_1, \mu'_1 \rangle \langle \mu_2, \mu'_2 \rangle \dots \langle \mu_n, \mu'_n \rangle$

$\langle \rho_1, \rho'_1 \rangle \langle \rho_2, \rho'_2 \rangle \dots \langle \rho_n, \rho'_n \rangle$

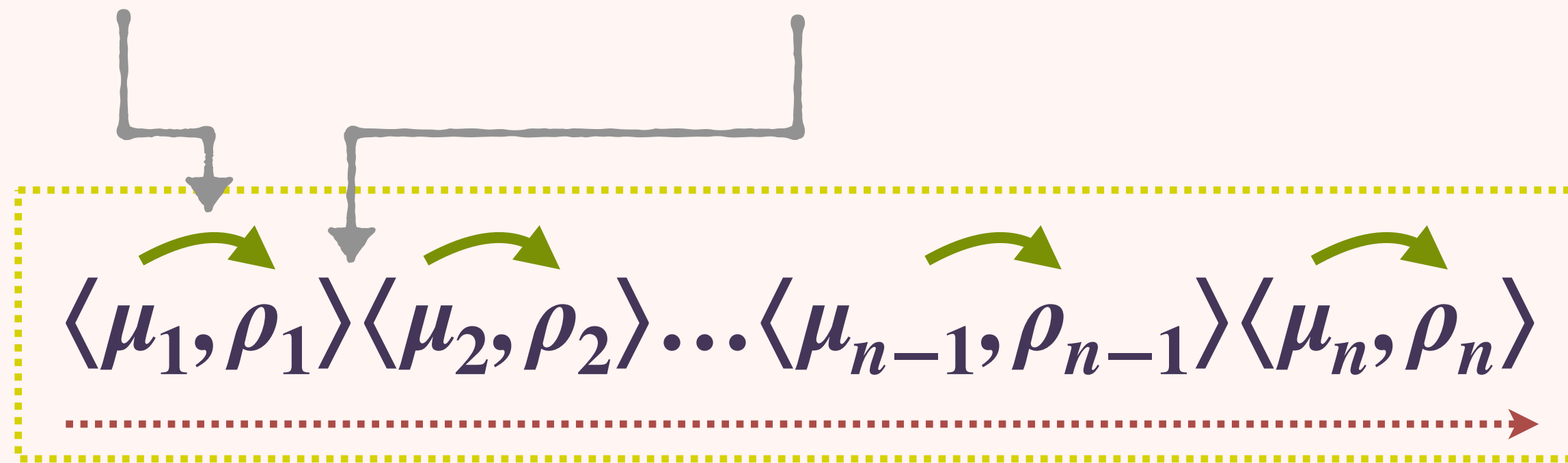
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SEQUENCE

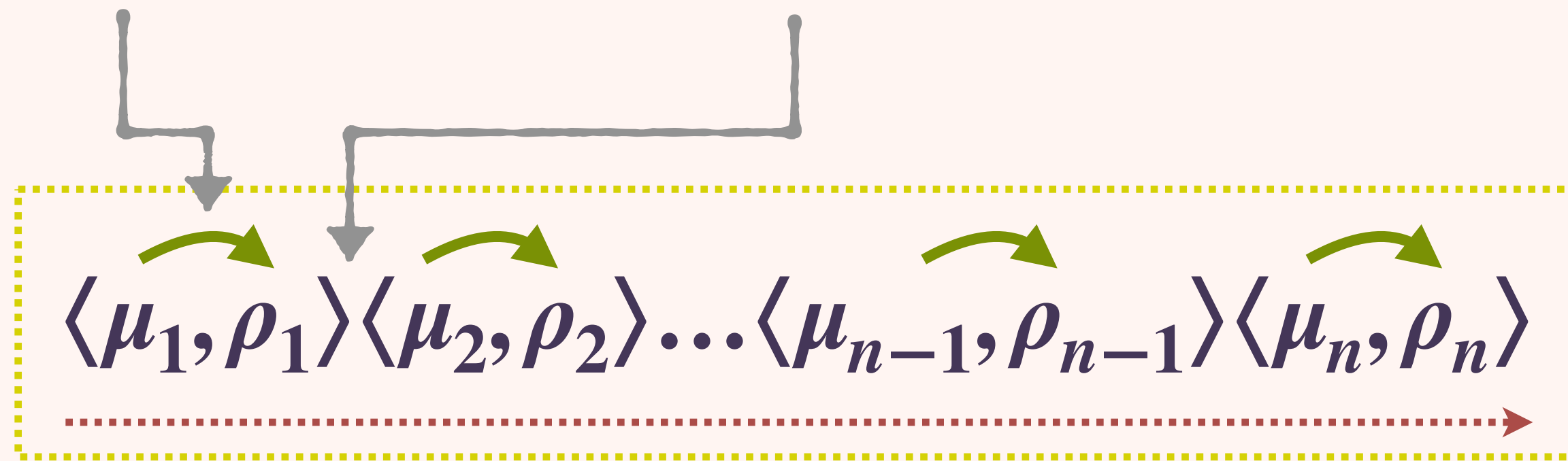
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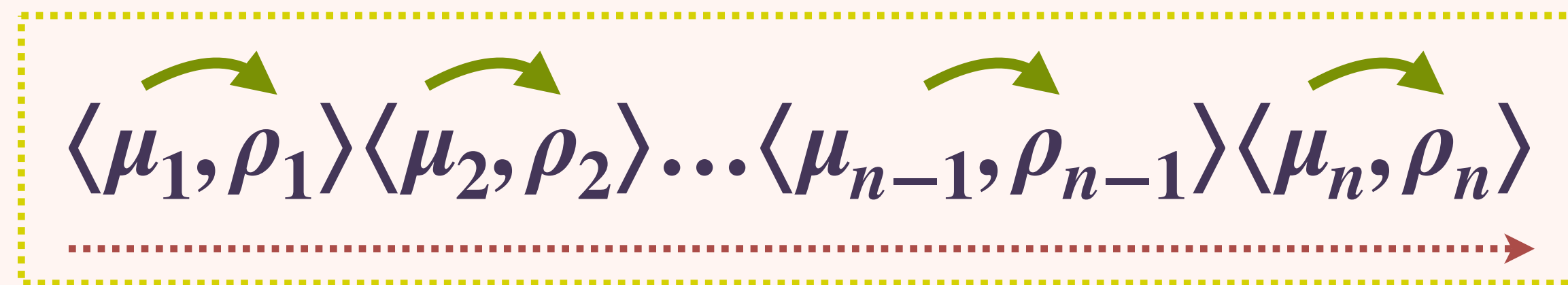


$\langle \rho_1, \rho'_1 \rangle \langle \mu_1, \mu'_1 \rangle \langle \mu_2, \mu'_2 \rangle \langle \rho_2, \rho'_2 \rangle \dots \langle \mu_n, \mu'_n \rangle \langle \rho_n, \rho'_n \rangle$

INTERLEAVE

CONTRIBUTION

- Standard denotational semantics
- Adequate for Release/Acquire
- Abstract enough to verify every known RA-valid transformation in the literature (but no full-abstraction theorem)
- Subtlety: **Rely**/**Guarantee** interpretation of traces
(our traces do not correspond directly to interrupted executions)



RELEASE/ACQUIRE

INTUITION VIA LITMUS TESTS

Store Buffering

```
x := 0; y := 0;  
x := 1; || y := 1;  
y? || x?
```

Message Passing

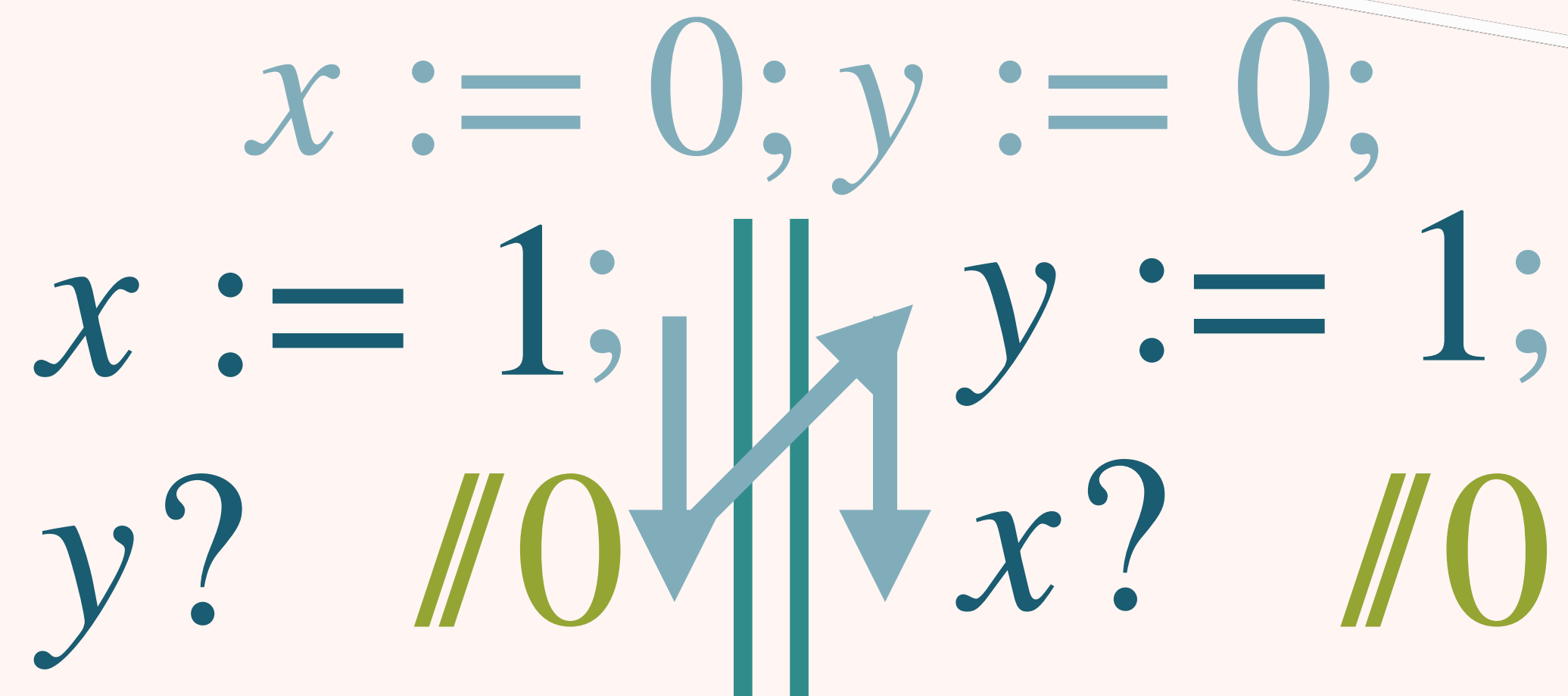
```
x := 0; y := 0;  
x := 1; || y?;  
y := 1 || x?
```

INTUITION VIA LITMUS TESTS

Propagation is
not instant

Store Buffering

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x := 0; y := 0;  
x := 1; || y := 1;  
y? //0 || x? //0
```



Message Passing

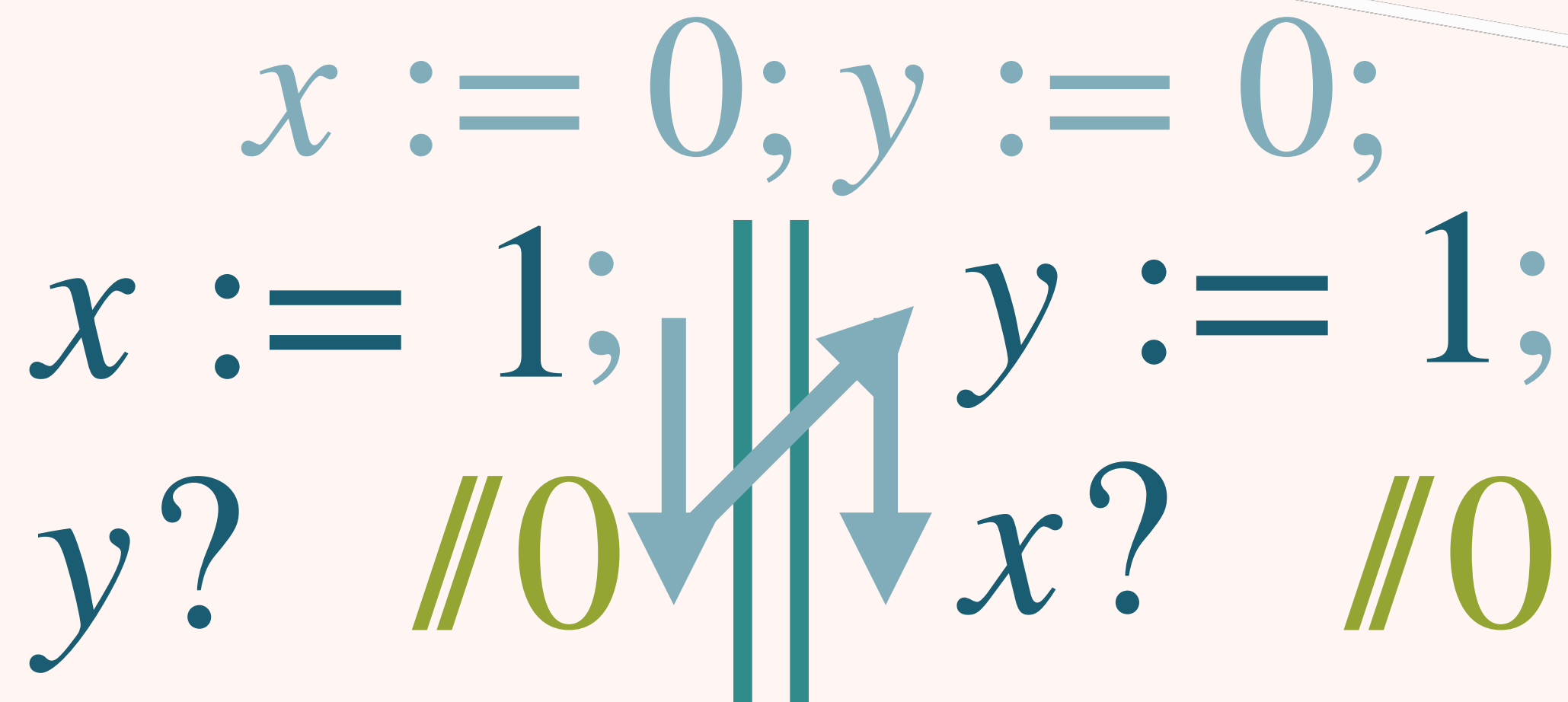
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INTUITION VIA LITMUS TESTS

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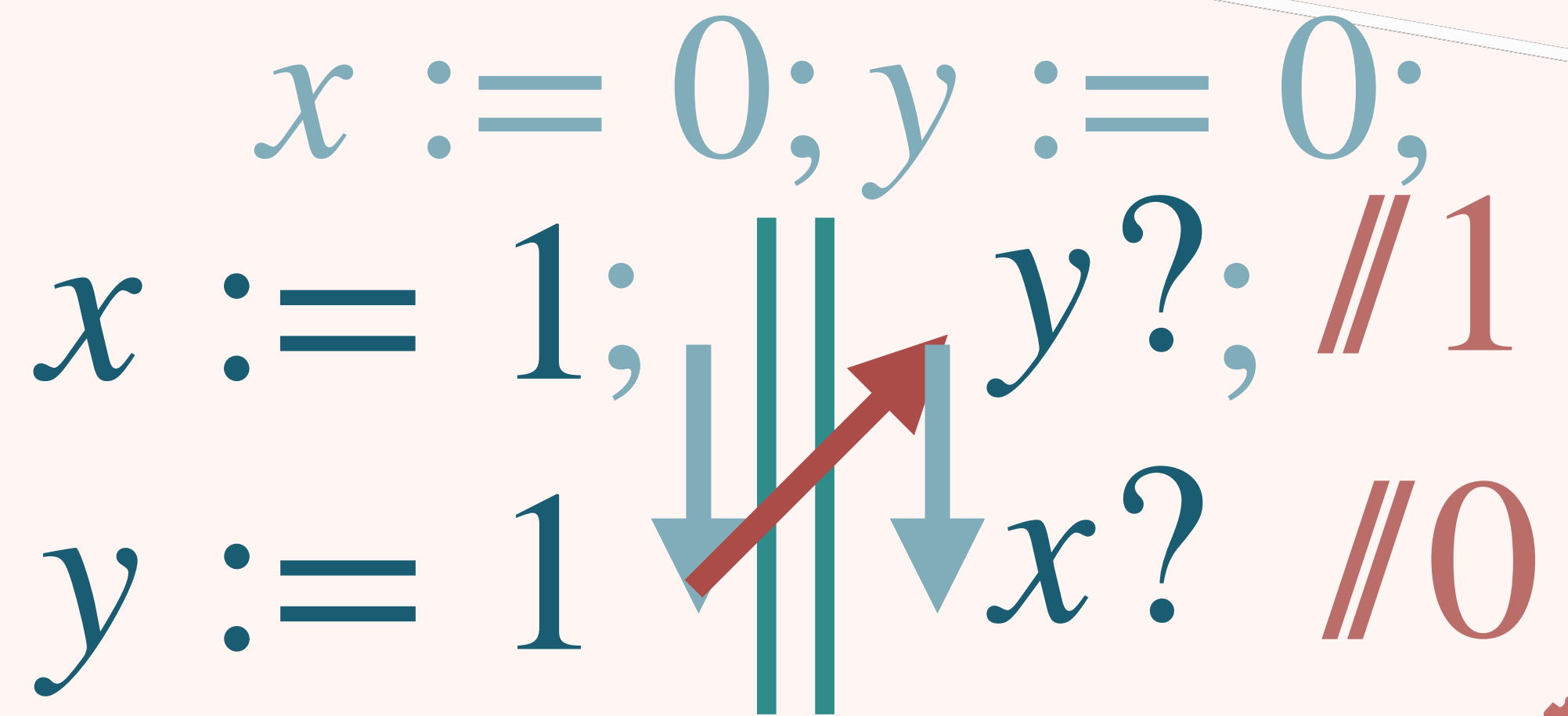
```
x := 0; y := 0;  
x := 1; || y := 1;  
y? //0 || x? //0
```



Message Pas

Propagation respects causality

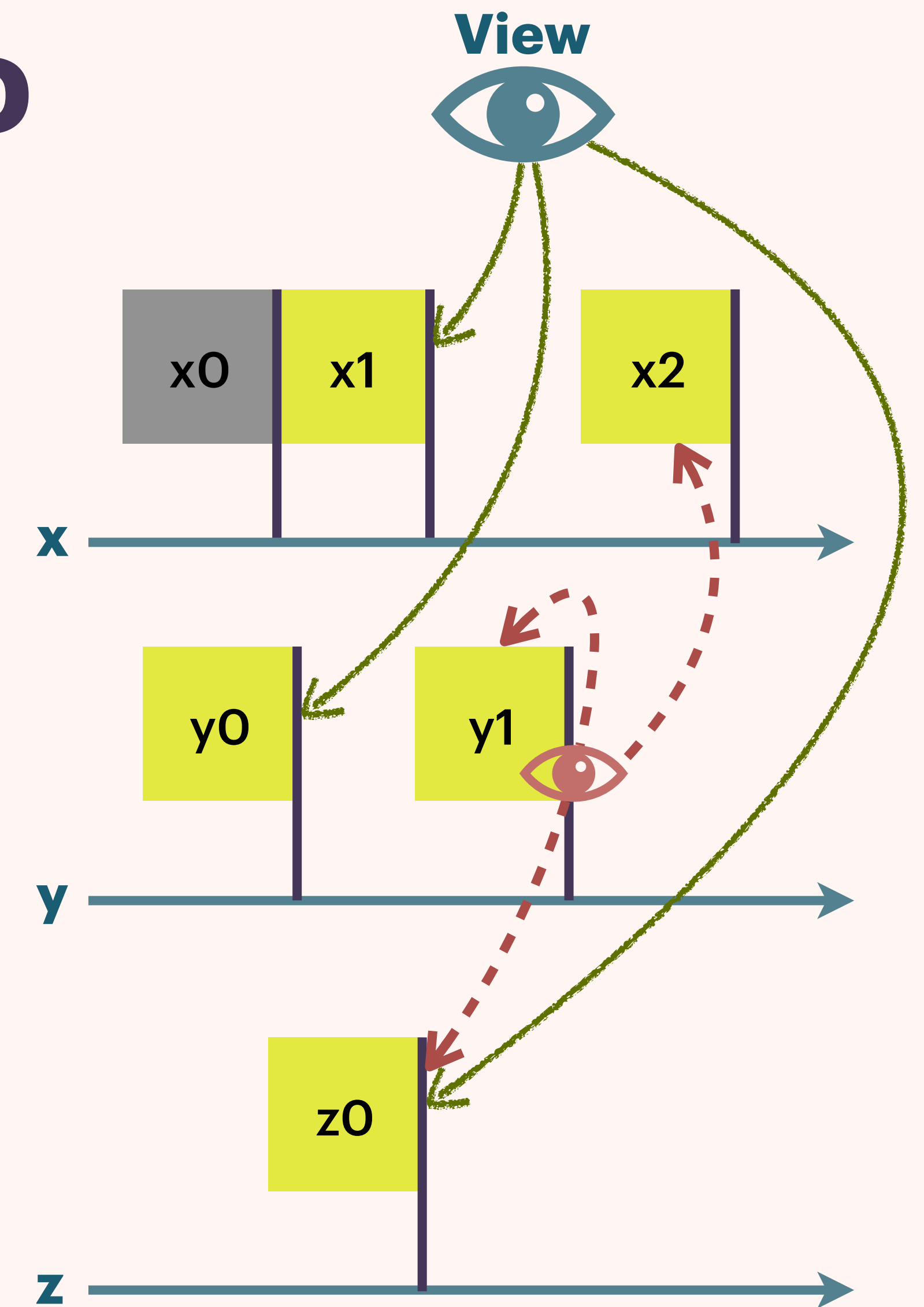
```
x := 0; y := 0;  
x := 1; || y?; //1  
y := 1 || x? //0
```



RELEASE/ACQUIRE VIEW-BASED OPERATIONAL SEMANTICS

Kang et al. [2017]

- **Memory:** Timeline per location
- Populated with **immutable messages holding values**
- Each **view points to msgs on each timeline**
- **Threads have views** — **cannot read from “the past”**
- **Msgs have views** for enforcing **causal propagation**



Propagation is not instant

Propagation respects causality

SUPPORTING FIRST-CLASS PARALLELISM

In the operational semantics

Traditional op-sem: **static view-array**

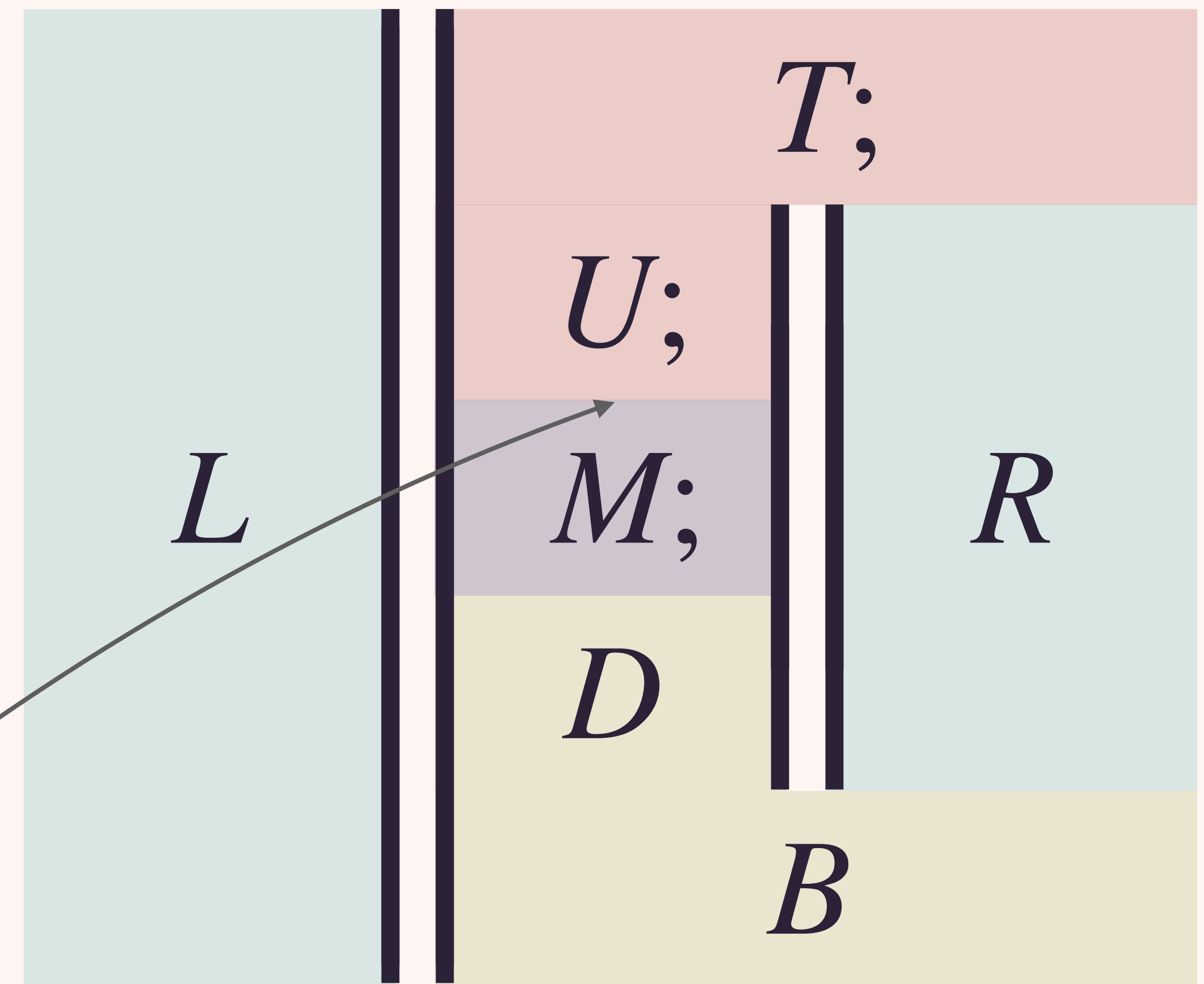
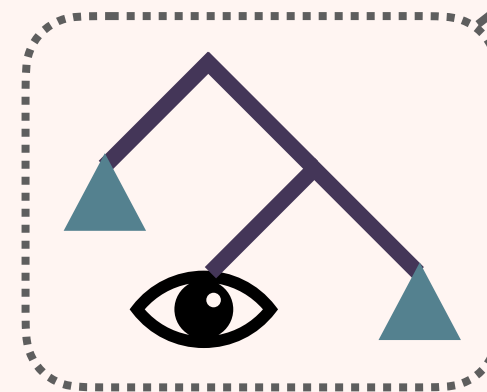
Laws of Parallel Programming, e.g. Left Neutrality

$$\llbracket M \rrbracket = \llbracket (\langle \rangle \parallel M).snd \rrbracket$$

Write-Read Deorder (Crucial RA refinement)

$$\llbracket x := 1; y? \rrbracket \supseteq \llbracket (x := 1 \parallel y?).snd \rrbracket$$

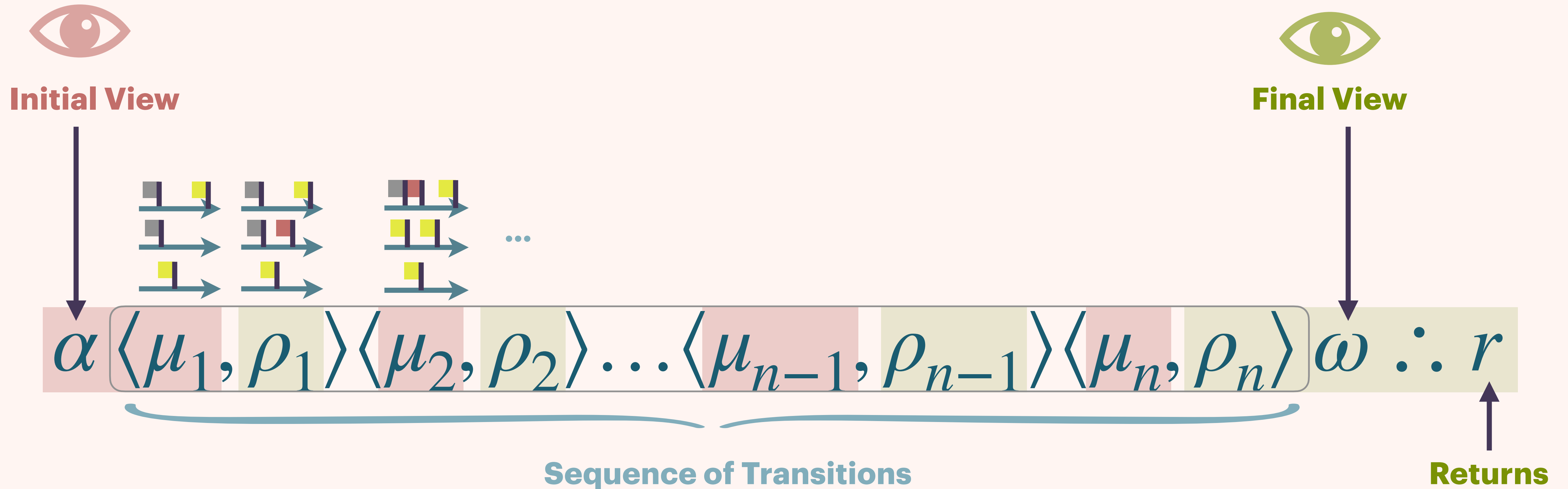
Extended op-sem: **dynamic view-tree**



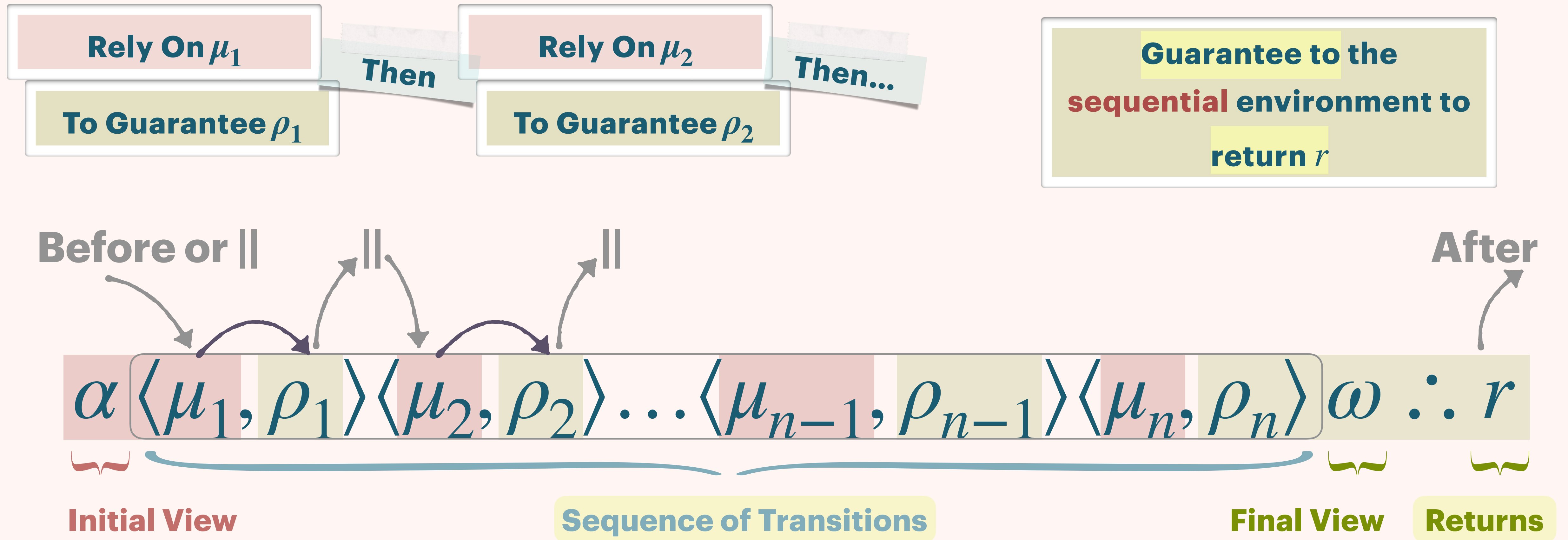
RELEASE/ACQUIRE TRACES



TRACE-BASED SEMANTICS IN RA



TRACE-BASED SEMANTICS IN RA



TRACE-BASED SEMANTICS IN RA

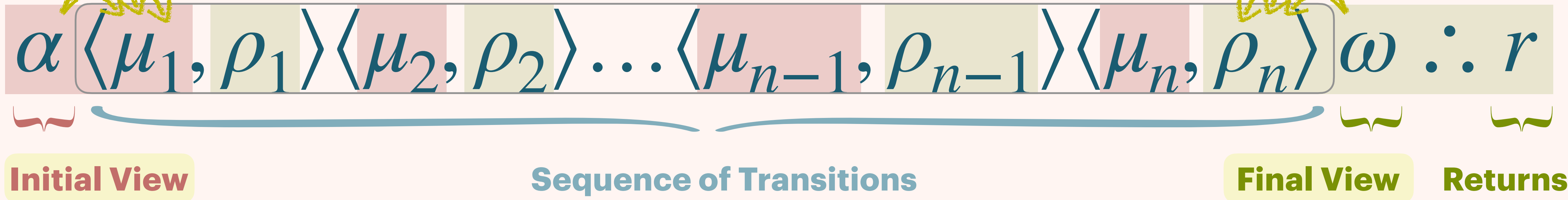
Rely on the sequential environment to reveal messages

Guarantee to the sequential environment to reveal messages

Before

After

Avoid including whole state in transitions



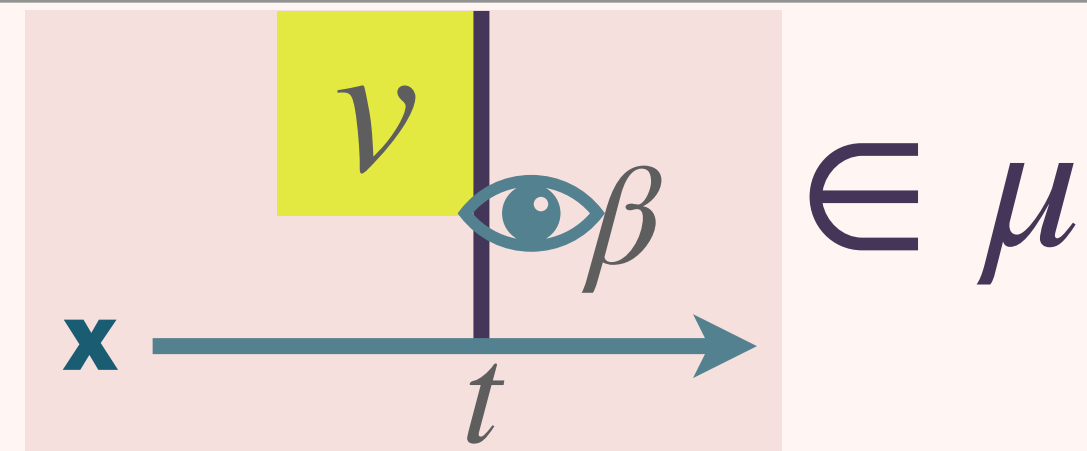
RA DENOTATIONS

$\llbracket - \rrbracket : \text{Term} \rightarrow \text{Deno}$

MEMORY ACCESS

Read

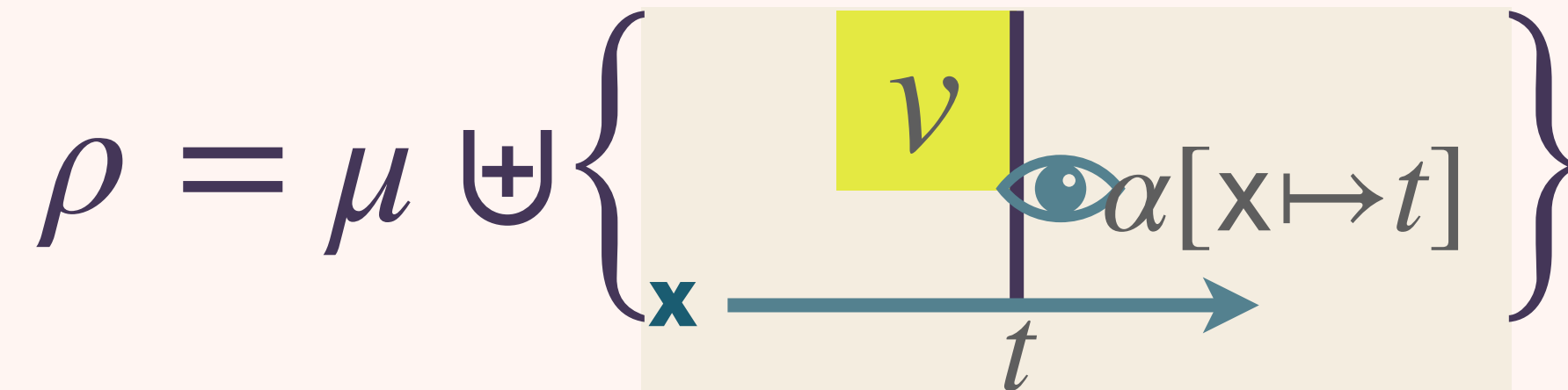
$$\alpha(x) \leq t$$



$$\alpha \langle \mu, \mu \rangle \alpha \sqcup \beta \therefore v \in \llbracket x? \rrbracket$$

Write

$$\alpha(x) < t$$



$$\alpha \langle \mu, \rho \rangle \alpha[x \mapsto t] \therefore \langle \rangle \in \llbracket x := v \rrbracket$$

RMW

Read the extended paper

$$r(\hat{_} \hat{_})\epsilon$$

COMPOSITION

Sequential

$$\alpha \xi_1 \kappa \text{ :: } r_1 \in \llbracket M_1 \rrbracket \quad \kappa \xi_2 \omega \text{ :: } r_2 \in \llbracket M_2 \rrbracket [x \mapsto r_1]$$

$$\alpha \xi_1 \xi_2 \omega \text{ :: } r_2 \in \llbracket \text{let } x = M_1 \text{ in } M_2 \rrbracket$$

SEQUENCING TRANSITIONS

Parallel

$$\forall i \in \{1,2\}. \alpha \xi_i \omega \text{ :: } r_i \in \llbracket M_i \rrbracket$$

INTERLEAVING TRANSITIONS

$$\xi \in \xi_1 \parallel \xi_2$$

$$\alpha \xi \omega \text{ :: } \langle r_1, r_2 \rangle \in \llbracket M_1 \parallel M_2 \rrbracket$$

REWRITE CLOSURE RULES

➤ **Close denotations under
rewrite rules**

x-Rewrite Closure

$$\pi \because r \in \llbracket M \rrbracket$$

$$\pi \xrightarrow{x} \tau$$

$$\tau \because r \in \llbracket M \rrbracket$$

Brookes

$$\alpha \xi \eta \omega \xrightarrow{\text{stutter}} \alpha \xi \langle \mu, \mu \rangle \eta \omega$$

Propagate **Reliance**
as a **Guarantee**

$$\alpha \xi \langle \mu, \rho \rangle \langle \rho, \theta \rangle \eta \omega \xrightarrow{\text{mumble}} \alpha \xi \langle \mu, \theta \rangle \eta \omega$$

Rely on an
omitted **Guarantee**

➤ **Never introduced externally
observable behavior**

REWRITE CLOSURE RULES

- **Close denotations under rewrite rules**

x-Rewrite Closure

$$\pi \because r \in \llbracket M \rrbracket$$

$$\pi \xrightarrow{x} \tau$$

$$\tau \because r \in \llbracket M \rrbracket$$

$$\alpha' \leq \alpha$$

$$\alpha \xi \omega \xrightarrow{\text{rewind}} \alpha' \xi \omega$$

Relying on more
being revealed

RA

$$\omega \leq \omega'$$

$$\alpha \xi \omega \xrightarrow{\text{forward}} \alpha \xi \omega'$$

Guaranteeing less
being revealed

- **Never introduced externally observable behavior**

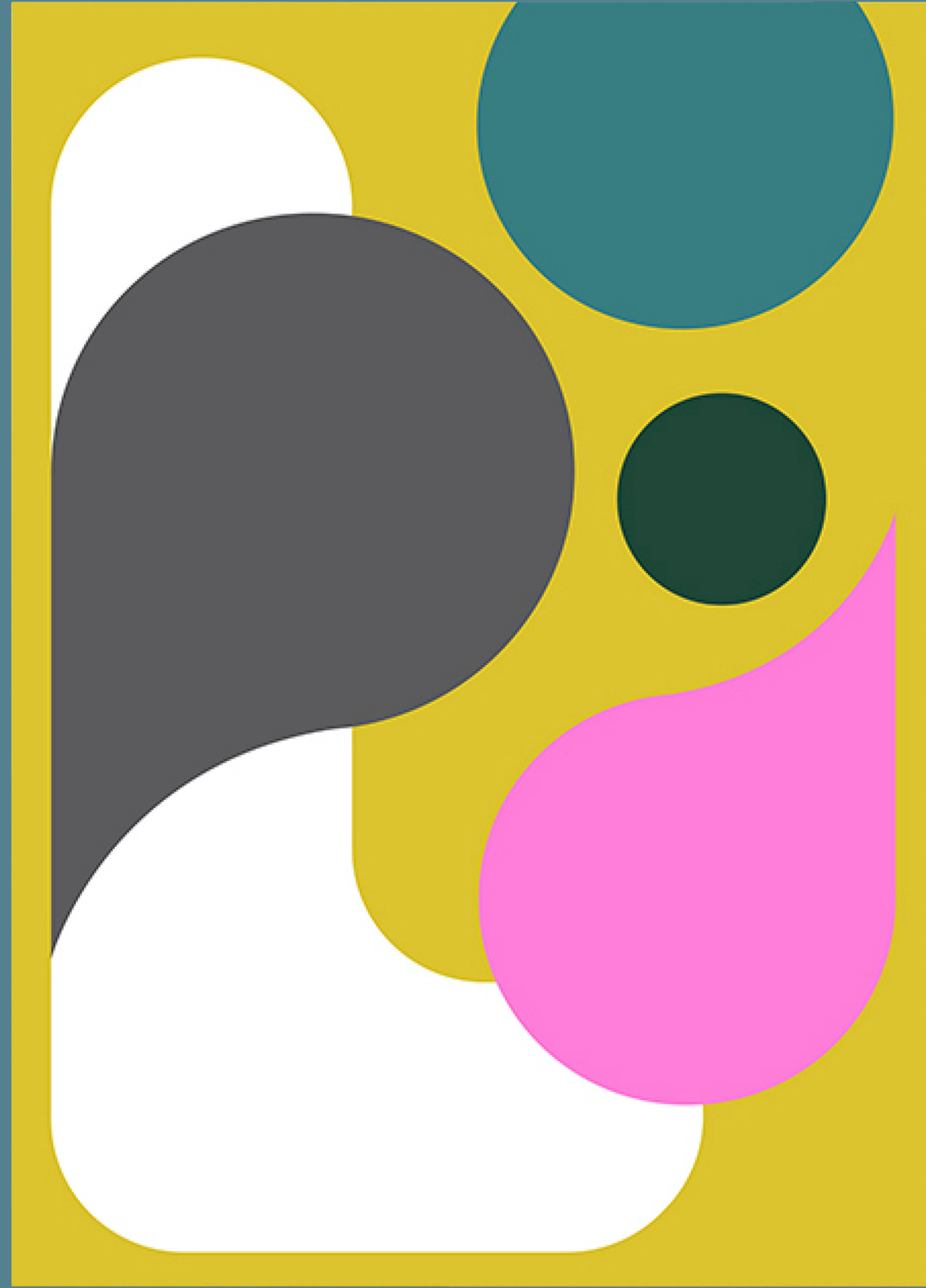
STRUCTURAL AND PARALLEL LAWS

Monad laws — structural equivalences for free, e.g. Hoisting

$$\llbracket \text{if } K_{\text{pure}} \text{ then } M; P_1 \text{ else } M; P_2 \rrbracket = \llbracket M; \text{if } K_{\text{pure}} \text{ then } P_1 \text{ else } P_2 \rrbracket$$

Interleaving — properties of parallel composition, e.g. generalized sequencing

$$\llbracket (M_1; M_2) \parallel (K_1; K_2) \rrbracket \supseteq \llbracket (M_1 \parallel K_1); (M_2 \parallel K_2) \rrbracket$$



ABSTRACTION

SOPHISTICATION REQUIRED

Some transformations are valid due to more complicated reasons, e.g.:

Redundant Read Elimination

$$y?; M \rightarrow M$$

holds due to
delicate semantic invariants

Overwritten Write Elimination

$$x := 0; x := 1 \rightarrow x := 1$$

holds even though
state diverges

DELICATE SEMANTIC INVARIANTS

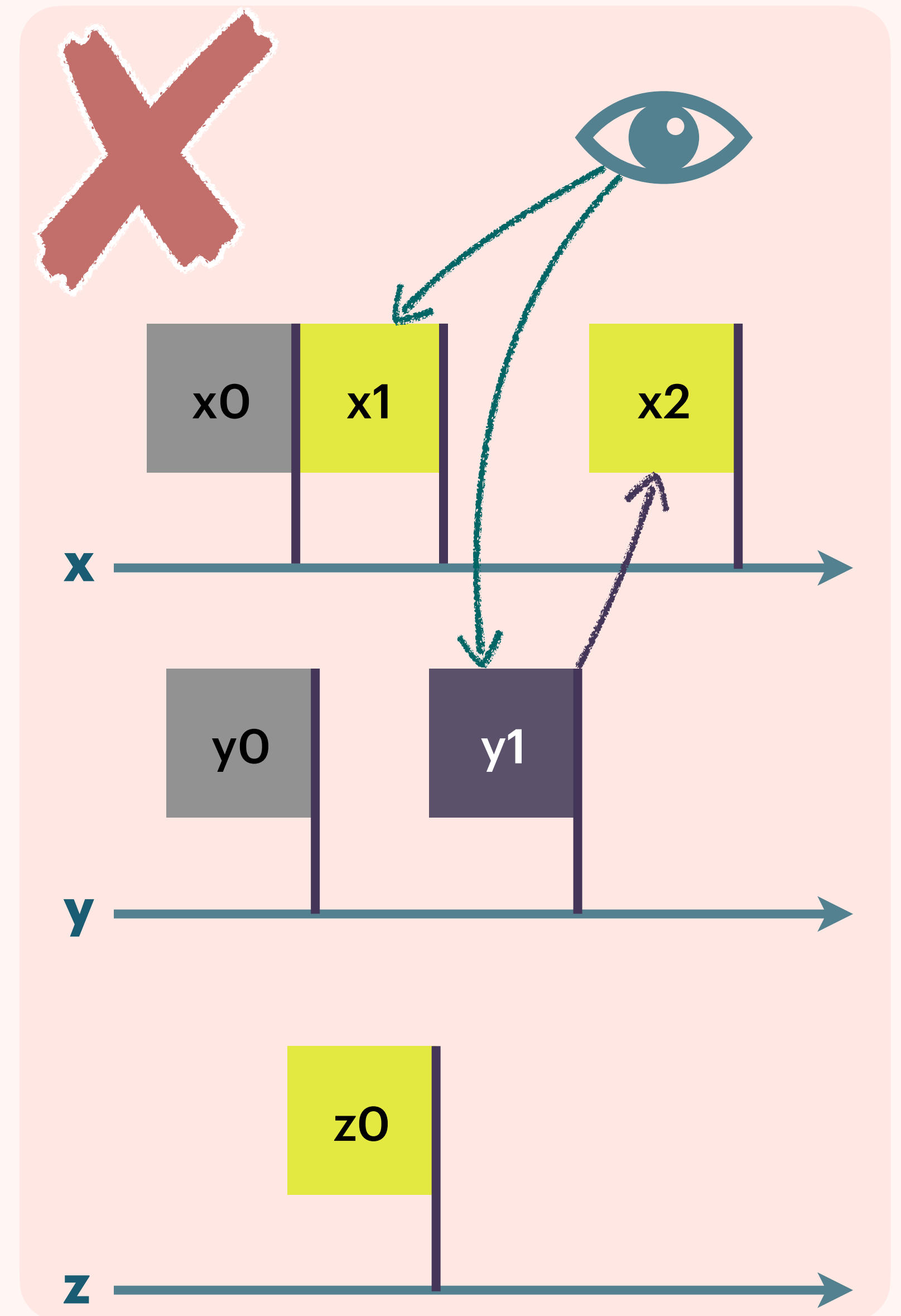
Redundant Read Elimination

$$y?; M \rightarrow M$$

we identify operational invariants

and impose them as denotational requirements

$$\kappa \langle \mu, \mu \rangle \kappa \text{ s.t. } \langle \rangle \in \llbracket \langle \rangle \rrbracket \implies \exists v. \kappa \langle \mu, \mu \rangle \kappa \text{ s.t. } v \in \llbracket y? \rrbracket$$



DIVERGING STATE

Overwritten Write Elimination

$x := 0; x := 1 \rightarrow x := 1$

$\alpha \langle \mu, \mu \uplus \{ \text{1} \} \rangle \omega \cdot \langle \rangle$
 \cup

$\llbracket x := 0; x := 1 \rrbracket \supseteq \llbracket x := 1 \rrbracket$

DIVERGING STATE

Overwritten Write Elimination

$x := 0; x := 1 \rightarrow x := 1$

$\alpha \langle \mu, \mu \uplus \{ \text{1} \} \rangle \omega \cdot \langle \rangle$
 \cup

$\llbracket x := 0; x := 1 \rrbracket \supseteq \llbracket x := 1 \rrbracket$

\cap

$\alpha \langle \mu, \mu \uplus \{ \text{0} \} \rangle \langle \mu \uplus \{ \text{0} \}, \mu \uplus \{ \text{0} \text{1} \} \rangle \omega \cdot \langle \rangle$

DIVERGING STATE

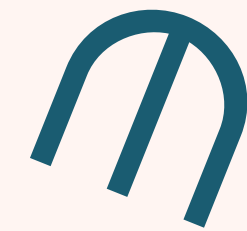
Overwritten Write Elimination

$x := 0; x := 1 \rightarrow x := 1$

$$\alpha \langle \mu, \mu \uplus \{ \text{1} \} \rangle \omega \text{ :. } \langle \rangle$$

\cup

$$\llbracket x := 0; x := 1 \rrbracket \supseteq \llbracket x := 1 \rrbracket$$



$$\alpha \langle \mu, \mu \uplus \{ \text{0} \mid \text{1} \} \rangle \omega \text{ :. } \langle \rangle$$

$$\alpha \langle \mu, \mu \uplus \{ \text{0} \} \rangle \langle \mu \uplus \{ \text{0} \}, \mu \uplus \{ \text{0} \mid \text{1} \} \rangle \omega \text{ :. } \langle \rangle$$

mumble

DIVERGING STATE

Overwritten Write Elimination

$$x := 0; x := 1 \rightarrow x := 1$$

$$\llbracket x := 0; x := 1 \rrbracket \supseteq \llbracket x := 1 \rrbracket$$

$$\alpha \langle \mu, \mu \uplus \{ \text{1} \} \rangle \omega \text{ :. } \langle \rangle$$

\cup

absorb

$$\alpha \langle \mu, \mu \uplus \{ \text{0} \mid \text{1} \} \rangle \omega \text{ :. } \langle \rangle$$

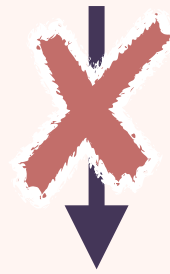
\cap

mumble

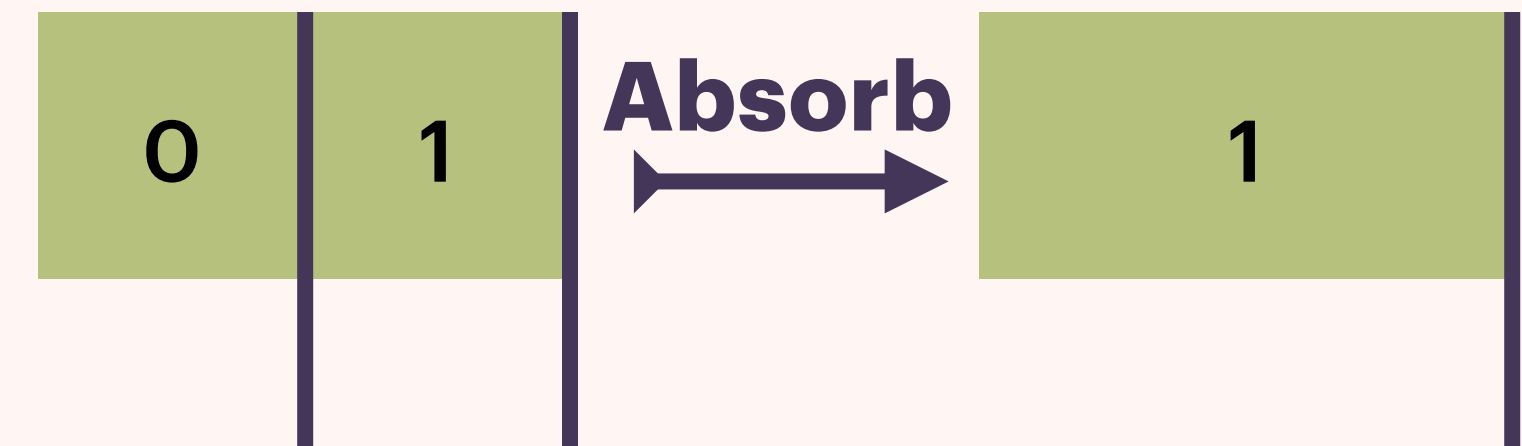
$$\alpha \langle \mu, \mu \uplus \{ \text{0} \} \rangle \langle \mu \uplus \{ \text{0} \}, \mu \uplus \{ \text{0} \mid \text{1} \} \rangle \omega \text{ :. } \langle \rangle$$

NO CORRESPONDENCE WITH INTERRUPTED EXECUTIONS

$\alpha \langle \mu_1, \rho_1 \rangle \langle \mu_2, \rho_2 \rangle \dots \langle \mu_{n-1}, \rho_{n-1} \rangle \langle \mu_n, \rho_n \rangle \omega \therefore r$

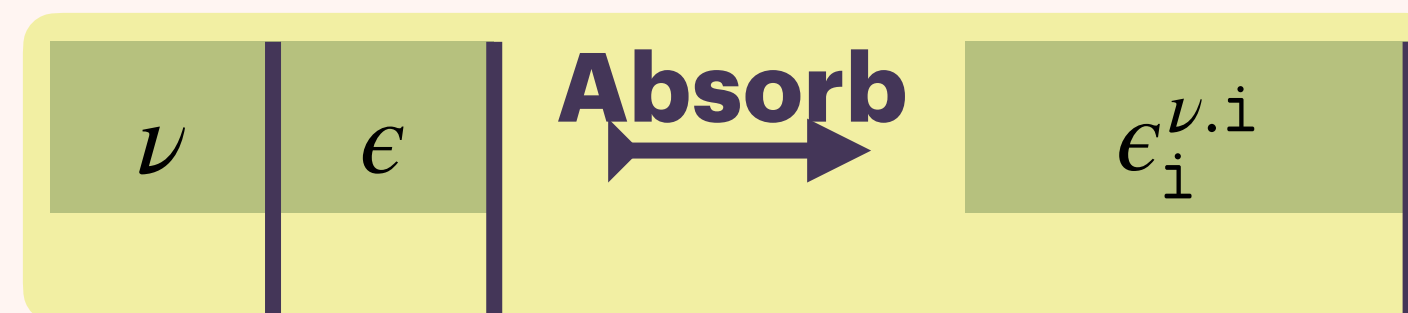


$\dots \langle \mu_2, - \rangle, M_1 \rightarrow^* \langle \rho_2, - \rangle, M_2 \dots$



ALL REWRITE RULES

Loosen	$\alpha \boxed{\xi (\eta \bar{\cup} \{\epsilon\})} \omega$	$\xrightarrow{\text{Ls}}$	$\alpha \boxed{\xi (\eta \bar{\cup} \{v\})} \omega$	$v \leq_{vw} \epsilon$
Expel	$\alpha \boxed{\xi (\eta \bar{\cup} \{\epsilon_i^{v.i}\})} \omega$	$\xrightarrow{\text{Ex}}$	$\alpha \boxed{\xi (\eta \bar{\cup} \{v, \epsilon\})} \omega$	$v \dashv \subset \epsilon$
Condense	$\alpha \boxed{\xi (\eta \bar{\cup} \{v, \epsilon\})} \omega$	$\xrightarrow{\text{Cn}}$	$(\alpha \boxed{\xi (\eta \bar{\cup} \{v\})} \omega) [\uparrow \epsilon]$	$v \dashv \in \epsilon$
Stutter	$\alpha \boxed{\xi \eta} \omega$	$\xrightarrow{\text{St}}$	$\alpha \boxed{\xi \langle \mu, \mu \rangle \eta} \omega$	
Mumble	$\alpha \boxed{\xi \langle \mu, \rho \rangle \langle \rho, \theta \rangle \eta} \omega$	$\xrightarrow{\text{Mu}}$	$\alpha \boxed{\xi \langle \mu, \theta \rangle \eta} \omega$	
Tighten	$\alpha \boxed{\xi \langle \mu, \rho \bar{\cup} \{v\} \rangle \eta \bar{\cup} \{v\}} \omega$	$\xrightarrow{\text{Ti}}$	$\alpha \boxed{\xi \langle \mu, \rho \bar{\cup} \{\epsilon\} \rangle \eta \bar{\cup} \{\epsilon\}} \omega$	$v \leq_{vw} \epsilon$
Absorb	$\alpha \boxed{\xi \langle \mu, \rho \bar{\cup} \{v, \epsilon\} \rangle \eta \bar{\cup} \{v, \epsilon\}} \omega$	$\xrightarrow{\text{Ab}}$	$\alpha \boxed{\xi \langle \mu, \rho \bar{\cup} \{\epsilon_i^{v.i}\} \rangle \eta \bar{\cup} \{\epsilon_i^{v.i}\}} \omega$	$v \dashv \subset \epsilon$
Dilute	$(\alpha \boxed{\xi \langle \mu, \rho \bar{\cup} \{v\} \rangle \eta \bar{\cup} \{v\}} \omega) [\uparrow \epsilon]$	$\xrightarrow{\text{Di}}$	$\alpha \boxed{\xi \langle \mu, \rho \bar{\cup} \{v, \epsilon\} \rangle \eta \bar{\cup} \{v, \epsilon\}} \omega$	$v \dashv \in \epsilon$
Rewind	$\kappa \boxed{\xi} \omega$	$\xrightarrow{\text{Rw}}$	$\alpha \boxed{\xi} \omega$	$\alpha \leq \kappa$
Forward	$\alpha \boxed{\xi} \kappa$	$\xrightarrow{\text{Fw}}$	$\alpha \boxed{\xi} \omega$	$\kappa \leq \omega$



NEW ADEQUACY PROOF IDEA

Traces are not operational — adequacy proof is *significantly* more challenging:

1. **We first define a denotational semantics $\llbracket M \rrbracket$ but without the abstract rules**
2. **We show it is adequate — easier: traces correspond to interrupted executions**
(with an admissible view-advancing rule)
3. **We show it is enough to apply the abstract closure \dagger on top** $\llbracket M \rrbracket = \llbracket M \rrbracket^\dagger$
 - ***This is the main technical challenge — complicated commutativity property***
4. **We show that the abstract rewrites preserve **observable results****
(rather than interrupted executions)





Laws of Parallel Programming

Symmetry $M \parallel N \rightarrow \mathbf{match} N \parallel M \mathbf{with} \langle y, x \rangle. \langle x, y \rangle$

Generalized Sequencing

$(\mathbf{let} x = M_1 \mathbf{in} M_2) \parallel (\mathbf{let} y = N_1 \mathbf{in} N_2) \rightarrow \mathbf{match} M_1 \parallel N_1 \mathbf{with} \langle x, y \rangle. M_2 \parallel N_2$

Eliminations

Irrelevant Read $l? ; \langle \rangle \rightarrow \langle \rangle$

Write-Write $l := v ; l := w \xrightarrow{\text{Ab}} l := w$

Write-Read $l := v ; l? \rightarrow l := v ; v$

Write-FAA $l := v ; \mathbf{FAA} (l, w) \xrightarrow{\text{Ab}} l := (v + w) ; v$

Read-Write $\mathbf{let} x = l? \mathbf{in} l := (x + v) ; x \rightarrow \mathbf{FAA} (l, v)$

Read-Read $\langle l?, l? \rangle \rightarrow \mathbf{let} x = l? \mathbf{in} \langle x, x \rangle$

Read-FAA $\langle l?, \mathbf{FAA} (l, v) \rangle \rightarrow \mathbf{let} x = \mathbf{FAA} (l, v) \mathbf{in} \langle x, x \rangle$

FAA-Read $\langle \mathbf{FAA} (l, v), l? \rangle \rightarrow \mathbf{let} x = \mathbf{FAA} (l, v) \mathbf{in} \langle x, x + v \rangle$

FAA-FAA $\langle \mathbf{FAA} (l, v), \mathbf{FAA} (l, w) \rangle \xrightarrow{\text{Ab}} \mathbf{let} x = \mathbf{FAA} (l, v + w) \mathbf{in} \langle x, x + v \rangle$

Others

Irrelevant Read Introduction $\langle \rangle \rightarrow l? ; \langle \rangle$

Read to FAA $l? \xrightarrow{\text{Di}} \mathbf{FAA} (l, 0)$

Write-Read Deorder $\langle (l := v), l'? \rangle \xrightarrow{\text{Ti}} (l := v) \parallel l'? \quad (l \neq l')$

Write-Read Reorder $\langle (l := v), l'? \rangle \xrightarrow{\text{Ti}} \mathbf{let} x = l'? \mathbf{in} (l := v) ; x \quad (l \neq l')$

CONCLUSION

- **Standard, adequate and fully-compositional denotational semantic for RA**
- **Sufficiently abstract: validates all RA transformations that we know of (memory access, laws of parallel programming, structural transformations)**
- **More nuanced, complicated traces**
 - interpreted as **Rely/Guarantee** sequences
 - denotations closed under **10** rewrite rules
- **Extended RA view-based machine with compositional (i.e. first-class) parallelism (weak-memory models are usually studied with top-level parallelism)**

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Language features (e.g. recursion)**
- **Type-and-effect system (e.g. regions)**
- **Algebraic presentation (refines monad approach)**
- **Full C11 model (e.g. non-atomics)**
- **Full abstraction theorem (for first-order)?**