

# Higher-Order Asynchronous Effects

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# Today's Plan

- **Problem:** Synchrony of algebraic effects
- **Solution:** Asynchrony through decoupling operation call execution
- $\lambda_{\text{æ}}$ -calculus
- Examples
- Some recent extensions (the higher-order part of the talk's title)

D. Ahman, M. Pretnar. *Asynchronous Effects*. (POPL 2021)

<https://github.com/matijapretnar/aeff>

<https://github.com/danelahman/aeff-agda>

<https://github.com/danelahman/higher-order-aeff-agda>

# Æff web interface

<https://matija.pretnar.info/aeff/>

Æff

```
run waitForStop 2;  
  let b = let b = let b = (+) (10, 10) in (+) (10, b) in (+) (10, b) in  
  (+) (10, b)  
||  
run waitForStop 1;  
  let b = let b = let b = (+) (1, 1) in (+) (1, b) in (+) (1, b) in  
  (+) (1, b)
```

## Interaction

Re-edit source code

Undo last step

1

random steps

applyFun



applyFun

Inter

payload



## History

# Synchrony of algebraic effects

# Synchrony of algebraic effects

- The conventional operational treatment of algebraic effects

$$\dots \rightsquigarrow \text{op}(V, y.M)$$

# Synchrony of algebraic effects

- The conventional operational treatment of algebraic effects

$$\begin{array}{c} M_{\text{op}}[V/x] \\ \uparrow \\ \text{signalling op's implementation} \\ \dots \rightsquigarrow \text{op}(V, y.M) \end{array}$$

- $M_{\text{op}}$  - handler, runner, top-level default implementation, ...

# Synchrony of algebraic effects

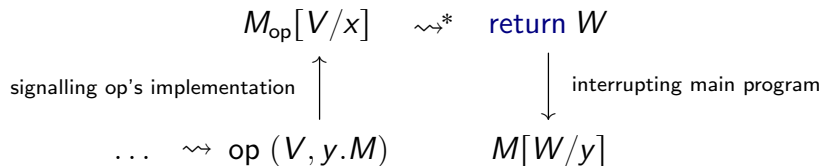
- The conventional operational treatment of algebraic effects

$$\begin{array}{ccc} M_{\text{op}}[V/x] & \rightsquigarrow^* & \text{return } W \\ \text{signalling op's implementation} & \uparrow & \\ \dots & \rightsquigarrow & \text{op}(V, y.M) \end{array}$$

- $M_{\text{op}}$  - handler, runner, top-level default implementation, ...

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- The conventional operational treatment of algebraic effects

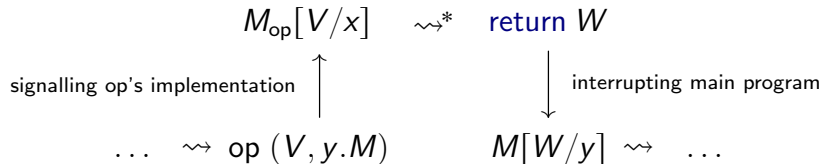


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# Synchrony of algebraic effects

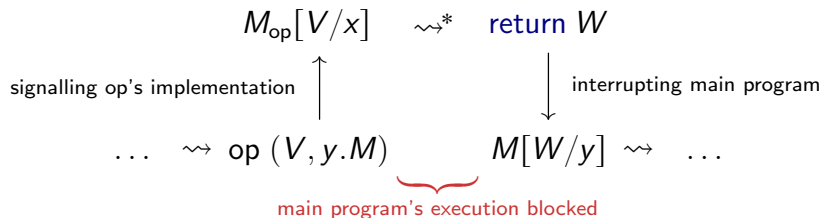
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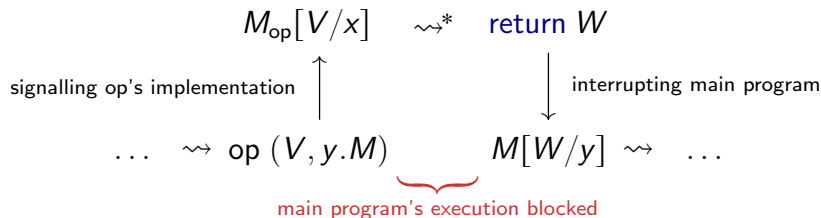
- The conventional operational treatment of algebraic effects



- $M_{\text{op}}$  - handler, runner, top-level default implementation, ...

# Synchrony of algebraic effects

- The conventional operational treatment of algebraic effects



- $M_{\text{op}}$  - handler, runner, top-level default implementation, ...
- In this work, we enable asynchrony for alg. ops. by
  - observing that alg. op. calls execute in multiple phases, and by
  - providing programming abstractions capturing these phases
  - in a self-contained core calculus

$\lambda_{\text{æ}}$ -calculus

## $\lambda_{\text{æ}}$ -calculus: basics

- Extension of Levy's fine-grain call-by-value  $\lambda$ -calculus (FGCBV)
- **Types:**  $X, Y ::= b \mid \dots \mid X \rightarrow Y!(o, \iota) \mid \dots$
- **Values:**  $V, W ::= x \mid \dots \mid \text{fun } (x : X) \mapsto M \mid \dots$
- **Computations:**  $M, N ::= \text{return } V \mid \text{let } x = M \text{ in } N \mid \dots$
- **Typing judgements:**  $\Gamma \vdash V : X \quad \Gamma \vdash M : X!(o, \iota)$
- **Small-step operational semantics:**  $M \rightsquigarrow N$

## $\lambda_{\text{æ}}$ -calculus: signals

- Signalling that some op's implementation needs to be executed

$$\frac{\text{TYCOMP-SIGNAL} \quad \text{op} : A_{\text{op}} \in \mathcal{O} \quad \Gamma \vdash V : A_{\text{op}} \quad \Gamma \vdash M : X!(\mathcal{O}, \iota)}{\Gamma \vdash \uparrow \text{op}(V, M) : X!(\mathcal{O}, \iota)}$$

where  $A_{\text{op}}$  is a ground type (prod. and sum of base types)

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- Operationally behave like algebraic operations
  - $\text{let } x = \uparrow \text{op}(V, M) \text{ in } N \rightsquigarrow \uparrow \text{op}(V, \text{let } x = M \text{ in } N)$

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  - $\text{let } x = \uparrow \text{op}(V, M) \text{ in } N \rightsquigarrow \uparrow \text{op}(V, \text{let } x = M \text{ in } N)$
- But importantly, they do not block their continuations
  - $M \rightsquigarrow M' \implies \uparrow \text{op}(V, M) \rightsquigarrow \uparrow \text{op}(V, M')$



## $\lambda_{\text{æ}}$ -calculus: interrupts

- Environment interrupting a computation (with some op's result)

$$\text{TYCOMP-INTERRUPT}$$
$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash V : A_{\text{op}} \quad \Gamma \vdash M : X! (o, \iota)}{\Gamma \vdash \downarrow \text{op} (W, M) : X! (\text{op} \downarrow (o, \iota))}$$

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- Operationally **behave like homomorphisms/effect handling**
  - $\downarrow \text{op} (W, \text{return } V) \rightsquigarrow \text{return } V$
  - $\downarrow \text{op} (W, \uparrow \text{op}' (V, M)) \rightsquigarrow \uparrow \text{op}' (V, \downarrow \text{op} (W, M))$
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  - ...
- And they also **do not block their continuations**
  - $M \rightsquigarrow M' \implies \downarrow \text{op} (V, M) \rightsquigarrow \downarrow \text{op} (V, M')$

# $\lambda_{\text{æ}}$ -calculus: interrupt handlers

- Allow computation to react to interrupts

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- Operationally **behave like (scoped) algebraic operations (!)**
  - $\text{let } x = (\text{promise } (\text{op } x \mapsto M_1) \text{ as } p \text{ in } M_2) \text{ in } N$   
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  - $\text{promise} (\text{op } x \mapsto M) \text{ as } p \text{ in } \uparrow \text{op} (V, N)$   
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 $\rightsquigarrow \text{promise } (\text{op } x \mapsto M_1) \text{ as } p \text{ in } (\text{let } x = M_2 \text{ in } N)$
  - $\text{promise } (\text{op } x \mapsto M) \text{ as } p \text{ in } \uparrow \text{op } (\mathbf{V}, N)$  (type safety!)  
 $\rightsquigarrow \uparrow \text{op } (\mathbf{V}, \text{promise } (\text{op } x \mapsto M) \text{ as } p \text{ in } N)$  ( $p \notin FV(V)$ )

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where  $p : \langle X \rangle$  is a **promise-typed variable**

- They are **triggered by matching interrupts**
  - $\downarrow \text{op} (W, \text{promise } (\text{op } x \mapsto M) \text{ as } p \text{ in } N)$   
 $\rightsquigarrow \text{let } p = M[W/x] \text{ in } \downarrow \text{op} (W, N)$



# $\lambda_{\text{æ}}$ -calculus: interrupt handlers

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  - $\downarrow_{\text{op}} (W, \text{promise } (\text{op } x \mapsto M) \text{ as } p \text{ in } N)$   
 $\rightsquigarrow \text{let } p = M[W/x] \text{ in } \downarrow_{\text{op}} (W, N)$
- And **non-matching interrupts** ( $\text{op} \neq \text{op}'$ ) are passed through
  - $\downarrow_{\text{op}} (W, \text{promise } (\text{op}' x \mapsto M) \text{ as } p \text{ in } N)$   
 $\rightsquigarrow \text{promise } (\text{op}' x \mapsto M) \text{ as } p \text{ in } \downarrow_{\text{op}} (W, N)$

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where  $p : \langle X \rangle$  is a **promise-typed variable**

- They also **do not block their continuations**
  - $N \rightsquigarrow N'$   
 $\implies$   
 $\text{promise } (\text{op } x \mapsto M) \text{ as } p \text{ in } N$   
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where  $p : \langle X \rangle$  is a **promise-typed variable**

- They also **do not block their continuations**

- $N \rightsquigarrow N'$

$\implies$

**promise** (op  $x \mapsto M$ ) **as**  $p$  **in**  $N$

$\rightsquigarrow$  **promise** (op  $x \mapsto M$ ) **as**  $p$  **in**  $N'$

For type safety, important that  $p$  **does not get an arbitrary type**

## $\lambda_{\text{æ}}$ -calculus: awaiting

- Enables programmers to selectively block execution

$$\frac{\text{TYCOMP-AWAIT} \quad \Gamma \vdash V : \langle X \rangle \quad \Gamma, x : X \vdash N : Y! (o, \iota)}{\Gamma \vdash \text{await } V \text{ until } \langle x \rangle \text{ in } N : Y! (o, \iota)}$$

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- Operationally behave like pattern-matching (and alg. ops.)
  - $\text{await } \langle V \rangle \text{ until } \langle x \rangle \text{ in } N \rightsquigarrow N[V/x]$
  - $\text{let } y = (\text{await } V \text{ until } \langle x \rangle \text{ in } M) \text{ in } N$   
 $\rightsquigarrow \text{await } V \text{ until } \langle x \rangle \text{ in } (\text{let } y = M \text{ in } N)$
- In contrast to earlier gadgets, **await blocks its cont.'s execution (!)**

## $\lambda_{\text{æ}}$ -calculus: environment

- We model the environment by running computations in parallel

$$P, Q ::= \text{run } M \mid P \parallel Q \mid \uparrow \text{op}(V, P) \mid \downarrow \text{op}(W, P)$$

(omitting typing judgement, typing rules, and type reduction)

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- Small-step operational semantics  $P \rightsquigarrow Q$ : congruence rules +
  - $\text{run}(\uparrow \text{op}(V, M)) \rightsquigarrow \uparrow \text{op}(V, \text{run } M)$

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  - $(\uparrow \text{op}(V, P)) \parallel Q \rightsquigarrow \uparrow \text{op}(V, (P \parallel \downarrow \text{op}(V, Q)))$
  - $P \parallel (\uparrow \text{op}(V, Q)) \rightsquigarrow \uparrow \text{op}(V, (\downarrow \text{op}(V, P) \parallel Q))$



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  - $\text{run}(\uparrow \text{op}(V, M)) \rightsquigarrow \uparrow \text{op}(V, \text{run } M)$
  - $(\uparrow \text{op}(V, P)) \parallel Q \rightsquigarrow \uparrow \text{op}(V, (P \parallel \downarrow \text{op}(V, Q)))$
  - $P \parallel (\uparrow \text{op}(V, Q)) \rightsquigarrow \uparrow \text{op}(V, (\downarrow \text{op}(V, P) \parallel Q))$
  - $\downarrow \text{op}(W, \text{run } M) \rightsquigarrow \text{run}(\downarrow \text{op}(W, M))$
  - ...

# Examples

**Example:** remote function calls

# Example: remote function calls

- Client

```
let callWith x =  
  let callNo = !callCounter in callCounter := !callCounter + 1;  
  ↑ call (x, callNo);  
  promise (result (y, callNo') when callNo = callNo' ↦ return ⟨y⟩) as resultProm in  
  return (fun () → await resultProm until ⟨resultValue⟩ in return resultValue)
```

# Example: remote function calls

- Client

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  return (fun () → await resultProm until ⟨resultValue⟩ in return resultValue)
```

- Server

```
let server f =  
  let rec loop () =  
    promise (call (x, callNo) ↦ let y = f x in ↑ result (y, callNo); loop ()) as p in  
    return p  
  in loop ()
```

# Example: remote function calls

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    return p  
  in loop ()
```

- **Shortcomings** (fixes for those later in the talk)

- **Necessitates general recursion** in the core calculus
- **No way to send the function f** from client to server
- Subsequent calls are **executed sequentially** on the server

## Example: preemptive multi-threading

- At the core of our approach is the following recursive definition

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```
let rec waitForStop () =  
  promise (stop _ ↦  
    promise (go _ ↦ return <()>) as p in (await p until <-> in waitForStop ())  
  ) as p' in return p'
```

- first wait for stop interrupt, but do not block execution
- next wait for go interrupt, and block execution
- repeat the cycle



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- To **initiate preemptive behaviour** for some comp, run the composite

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waitForStop (); comp
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- op. sem. propagates **promises** out, and wraps them around comp

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  - repeat the cycle
- To **initiate preemptive behaviour** for some comp, run the composite

```
waitForStop (); comp
```

- op. sem. propagates **promises** out, and wraps them around comp
- Note:** No need to access the cont. (of comp) in waitForStop (!)

## Other examples (see paper/prototype)

- Algebraic operation calls (special case of remote function calls)
- Multi-party web application
- (Simulating) cancellations of remote function calls
- Parallel variant of runners of algebraic effects
- Non-blocking post-processing of promised values

## Other examples (see paper/prototype)

- Algebraic operation calls (special case of remote function calls)
- Multi-party web application
- (Simulating) cancellations of remote function calls
- Parallel variant of runners of algebraic effects
- Non-blocking post-processing of promised values

```
promise (op x  $\mapsto$  original_interrupt_handler) as p in
...
processop p with ( $\langle is \rangle \mapsto$  filter (fun i  $\mapsto$  i > 0) is) as q in
processop q with ( $\langle js \rangle \mapsto$  fold (fun j j'  $\mapsto$  j * j') 1 js) as r in
processop r with ( $\langle k \rangle \mapsto$   $\uparrow$  productOfPositiveElements k) as _ in
...
```

where

```
processop p with ( $\langle x \rangle \mapsto$  comp) as q in cont
=
promise (op _  $\mapsto$  await p until  $\langle x \rangle$  in let y = comp in return  $\langle y \rangle$ ) as q in cont
```

**Resolving  $\lambda_{\text{æ}}$ 's shortcomings**

## **S1: general recursion in the core calculus**

- Used in almost all examples for reinstalling interrupt handlers

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- Used in almost all examples for reinstalling interrupt handlers
- **Solution:** **reinstallable** interrupt handlers

TY-COMP-REPROMISE

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} \Gamma, x : A_{op}, \quad r : 1 \rightarrow \langle X \rangle ! (\emptyset, \{op \mapsto (o', \iota')\}) \vdash M : \langle X \rangle ! (o', \iota') \\ (o', \iota') \sqsubseteq \iota(op) \quad \Gamma, p : \langle X \rangle \vdash N : Y ! (o, \iota) \end{array}}{\Gamma \vdash \text{promise } (op \times r \mapsto M) \text{ as } p \text{ in } N : Y ! (o, \iota)}$$

# S1: general recursion in the core calculus

- Used in almost all examples for reinstalling interrupt handlers
- **Solution:** **reinstallable** interrupt handlers

TY-COMP-RE PROMISE

$$\frac{\Gamma, x : A_{op}, r : 1 \rightarrow \langle X \rangle ! (\emptyset, \{op \mapsto (o', \iota')\}) \vdash M : \langle X \rangle ! (o', \iota') \quad (o', \iota') \sqsubseteq \iota(op) \quad \Gamma, p : \langle X \rangle \vdash N : Y ! (o, \iota)}{\Gamma \vdash \text{promise } (op \times r \mapsto M) \text{ as } p \text{ in } N : Y ! (o, \iota)}$$

- Operationally only difference in **triggering int. handlers**
  - $\downarrow op (W, \text{promise } (op \times r \mapsto M) \text{ as } p \text{ in } N)$   
 $\rightsquigarrow \text{let } p = M[W/x,$   
 $(\text{fun } \_ \mapsto \text{promise } (op \times r \mapsto M) \text{ as } p \text{ in return } p)/r ]$   
 $\text{in } \downarrow op (W, N)$



# S1: general recursion in the core calculus

- Used in almost all examples for reinstalling interrupt handlers
- **Solution:** **reinstallable** interrupt handlers

TY-COMP-REPROMISE

$$\frac{\Gamma, x : A_{op}, \quad r : 1 \rightarrow \langle X \rangle ! (\emptyset, \{op \mapsto (o', \iota')\}) \vdash M : \langle X \rangle ! (o', \iota')$$
$$\quad (o', \iota') \sqsubseteq \iota(op) \quad \Gamma, p : \langle X \rangle \vdash N : Y ! (o, \iota)}{\Gamma \vdash \text{promise } (op \times r \mapsto M) \text{ as } p \text{ in } N : Y ! (o, \iota)}$$

- For example, the preemptive multithreading now becomes

```
let waitForStop () =  
  promise (stop _ r  $\mapsto$   
    promise (go _ _  $\mapsto$  return <()>) as p in (await p until <-> in r ()))  
  ) as p' in return p'
```

## S2: signal/interrupt payloads ground-typed

- E.g., cannot send functions for remote execution
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- **Solution:** off-the-shelf **Fitch-style modal  $[X]$ -type** (Clouston et al.)

$X ::= \dots \mid [X]$        $A_{\text{op}} ::= \text{ground types} \mid [X]$

TYVAL-VARIABLE

$X$  is mobile  $\vee$    $\notin \Gamma'$

$\Gamma, x : X, \Gamma' \vdash x : X$

TYVAL-BOX

$\Gamma, \text{img alt="two people icon" data-bbox="648 538 678 578"} \vdash V : X$

$\Gamma \vdash [V] : [X]$

TYCOMP-UNBOX

$\Gamma \vdash V : [X]$        $\Gamma, x : X \vdash M : Y!(o, \iota)$

$\Gamma \vdash \text{unbox } V \text{ as } [x] \text{ in } M : Y!(o, \iota)$

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TYVAL-VARIABLE

$$\frac{X \text{ is mobile} \quad \forall \mathbf{A} \notin \Gamma'}{\Gamma, x : X, \Gamma' \vdash x : X}$$
$$\Gamma, x : X, \Gamma' \vdash x : X$$

TYVAL-BOX

$$\frac{\Gamma, \mathbf{A} \vdash V : X}{\Gamma \vdash [V] : [X]}$$
$$\Gamma \vdash [V] : [X]$$

TYCOMP-UNBOX

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash V : [X] \quad \Gamma, x : X \vdash M : Y!(o, \iota)}{\Gamma \vdash \text{unbox } V \text{ as } [x] \text{ in } M : Y!(o, \iota)}$$
$$\Gamma \vdash \text{unbox } V \text{ as } [x] \text{ in } M : Y!(o, \iota)$$

- Gives us **type-safe higher-order** payloads for signals/interrupts
  - $\Gamma, p : \langle X \rangle \vdash V : A_{\text{op}} \implies \Gamma \vdash V : A_{\text{op}}$

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$$\frac{\text{TYCOMP-SPAWN} \quad \Gamma, \mathbf{i} \vdash M : 1! (\sigma', \iota') \quad \Gamma \vdash N : X! (\sigma, \iota)}{\Gamma \vdash \text{spawn} (M, N) : X! (\sigma, \iota)}$$

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$$\frac{\text{TYCOMP-SPAWN} \quad \Gamma, \mathbb{A} \vdash M : 1! (o', \iota') \quad \Gamma \vdash N : X! (o, \iota)}{\Gamma \vdash \text{spawn} (M, N) : X! (o, \iota)}$$

- Operationally **propagates outwards** (like scoped alg. op.)
  - $\text{let } x = \text{spawn} (M_1, M_2) \text{ in } N \rightsquigarrow \text{spawn} (M_1, \text{let } x = M_2 \text{ in } N)$
  - also propagates through **promises**, where  $\mathbb{A}$  provides **type-safety**
- Eventually gives rise to a **new parallel process**
  - $\text{run} (\text{spawn} (M, N)) \rightsquigarrow \text{run } M \parallel \text{run } N$
- **Does not block** its continuation

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- Remote function calls can now execute in parallel

```
let server f =  
  promise (call (x, callNo) r  $\mapsto$   
    spawn (let y = f x in  $\uparrow$  result (y, callNo),  
           r ()))  
  ) as p in return p
```



# Conclusion

- A core calculus for asynchronous algebraic effects
  - based on decoupling the execution of alg. operation calls
  - accommodates both cooperative and preemptive behaviour
- Ongoing work on
  - $\lambda_{\text{æ}}$ 's denotational semantics
  - more efficient variant of the operational semantics

# Conclusion

- A core calculus for asynchronous algebraic effects
  - based on decoupling the execution of alg. operation calls
  - accommodates both cooperative and preemptive behaviour
- Ongoing work on
  - $\lambda_{\text{ae}}$ 's denotational semantics
  - more efficient variant of the operational semantics
- Same **algebraic & modal ideas** also useful in setting without  $\parallel$

$\text{async } M \text{ as } p \text{ in } N$

with

$$\text{async } (\uparrow \text{op } (V, M)) \text{ as } p \text{ in } N \rightsquigarrow \uparrow \text{op } (V, \text{async } M \text{ as } p \text{ in } N)$$

$$\text{async } M \text{ as } p \text{ in } (\uparrow \text{op } (V, N)) \rightsquigarrow \uparrow \text{op } (V, \text{async } M \text{ as } p \text{ in } N)$$

# Appendix

## $\lambda_{\text{æ}}$ -calculus: effect annotations

- The effect annotations  $(o, \iota)$  are drawn from sets  $O$  and  $I$ , given by

$$O = \mathcal{P}(\Sigma) \quad I = \nu Z . \Sigma \Rightarrow (O \times Z)_{\perp}$$

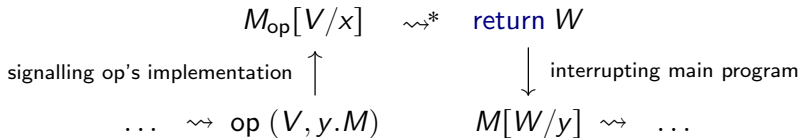
where  $\Sigma$  is the set of all signal/interrupt names

- Note: for meta-theory only, could also have  $I$  as a least fixpoint
- $O$  and  $I$  come with natural partial orders for subtyping
- The action  $\text{op} \downarrow (o, \iota)$  reveals effects of int. handlers for  $\text{op}$

$$\text{op} \downarrow (o, \iota) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \begin{cases} (o \cup o', \iota[\text{op} \mapsto \perp] \cup \iota') & \text{if } \iota(\text{op}) = (o', \iota') \\ (o, \iota) & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

## Example: (tail res.) alg. operation calls

- Based on the earlier observation



- At call site

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{op}(V, y.M) \\ \underline{\underline{\text{def}}} \\ \uparrow \text{call}_{\text{op}}(V, \text{promise}(\text{result}_{\text{op}} y \mapsto \text{return } \langle y \rangle)) \text{ as } p \text{ in} \\ \text{await } p \text{ until } \langle y \rangle \text{ in } M \end{array}$$

- At implementation site

$$\text{promise}(\text{call}_{\text{op}} x \mapsto \text{let } y = M_{\text{op}} \text{ in return } \langle y \rangle) \text{ as } p \text{ in} \\ \text{await } p \text{ until } \langle y \rangle \text{ in } \uparrow \text{result}_{\text{op}}(y, \text{return } ())$$

## Example: guarded interrupt handlers

- In many examples we often write for convenience

```
promise (op x when guard with r  $\mapsto$  comp) as p in cont
```

as a syntactic sugar for the **recursively defined interrupt handler**

```
promise (op x r  $\mapsto$  if guard then comp else r ()) as p in cont
```

- For well-typedness, important we have  $\text{comp} : \langle X \rangle$  instead of  $\text{comp} : X$
- In POPL paper, again **necessitated gen. rec.** in the core calculus