

What is parametricity?

Data abstraction

Separation of implementation and interface

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Counter =  $\exists \alpha. \{ \text{new} : \alpha,$   
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c1 = {new = 0,  
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indistinguishable



Existential types...

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- If two expressions have the same existential type, no program context can distinguish them.

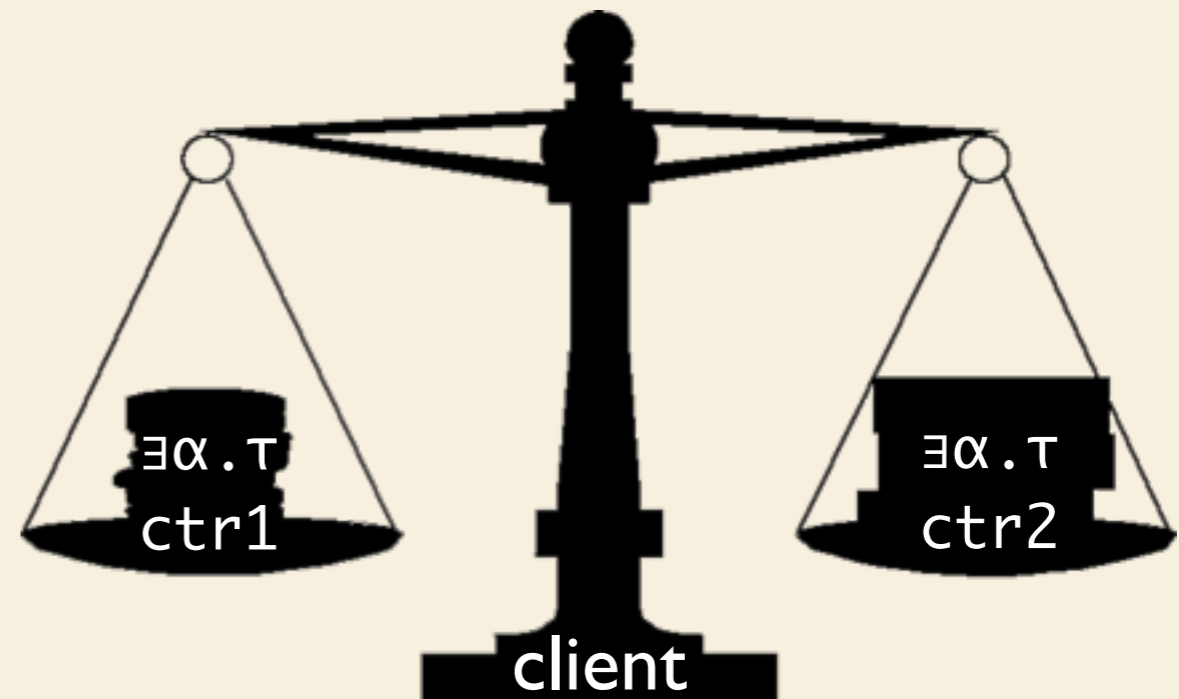
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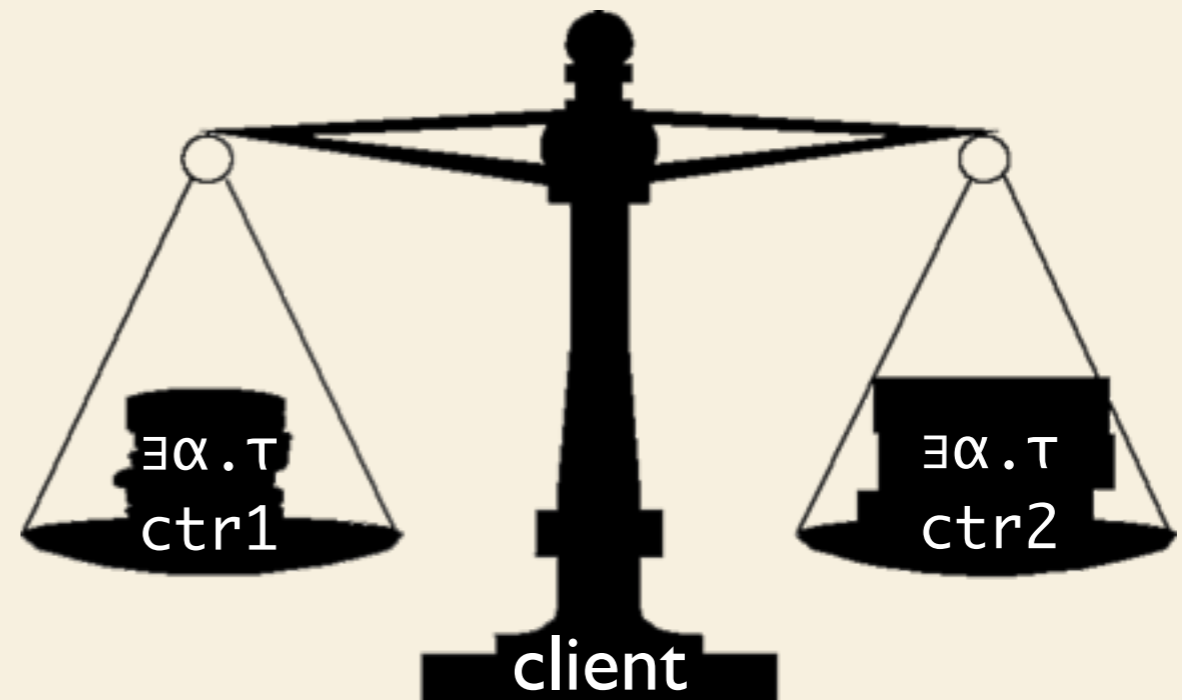
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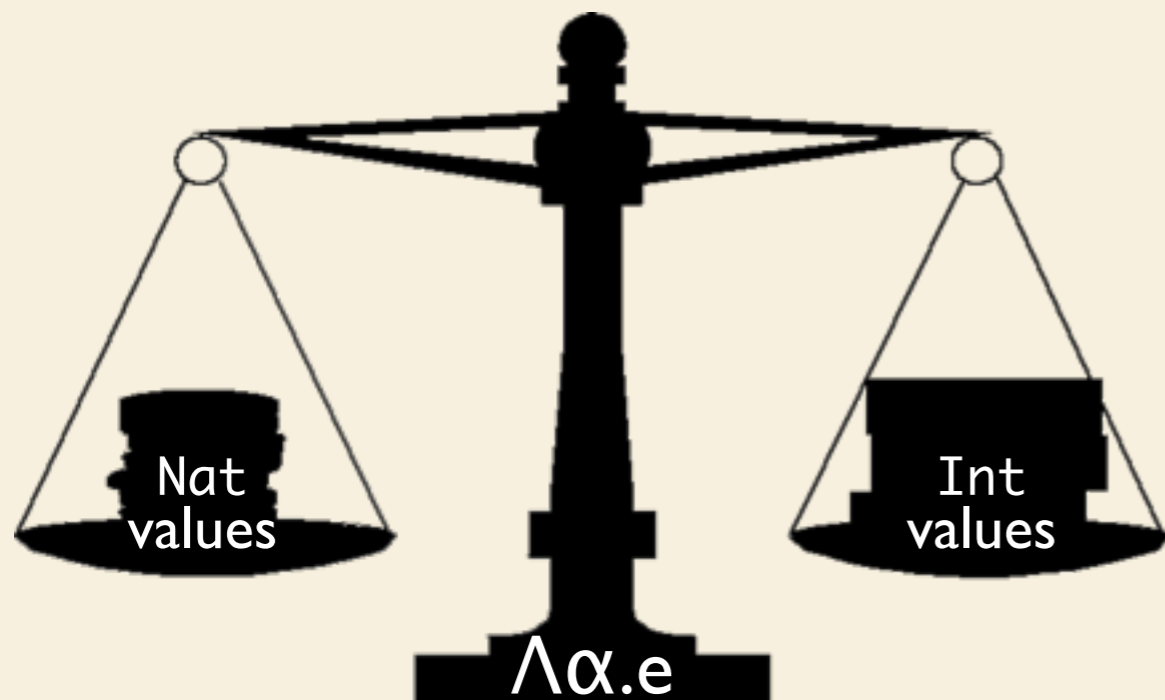


Existential types...and their dual, universal types

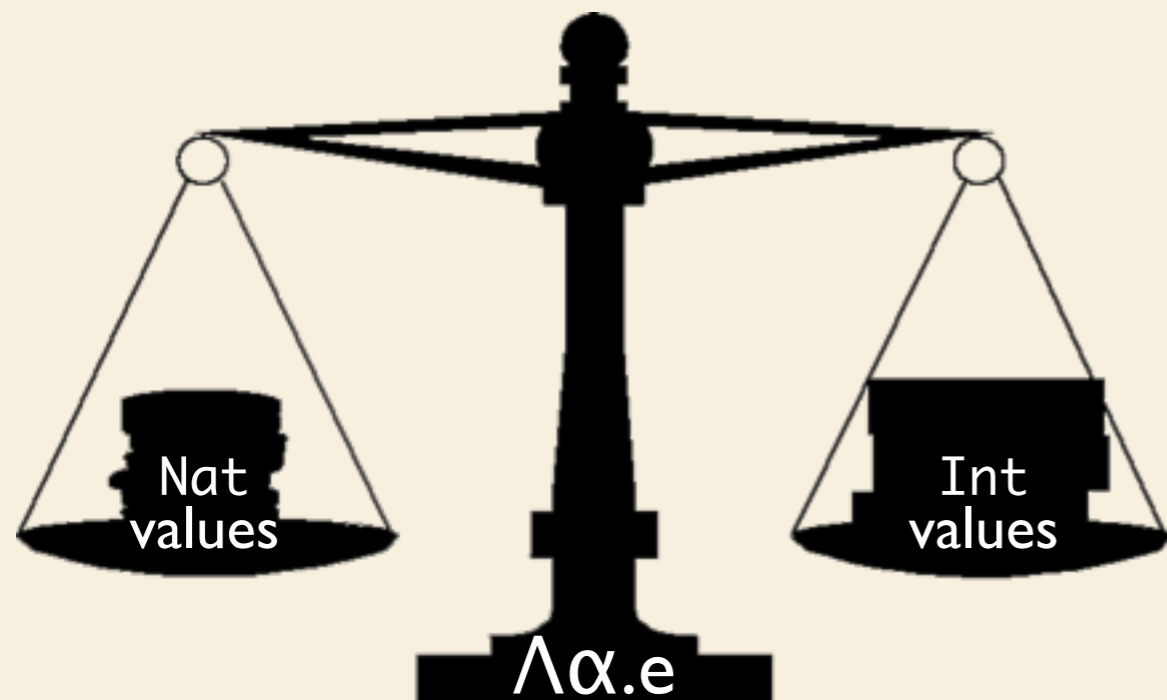
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- No two program contexts (*instantiations*) can cause an expression of type $\forall\alpha.\tau$ to behave differently.

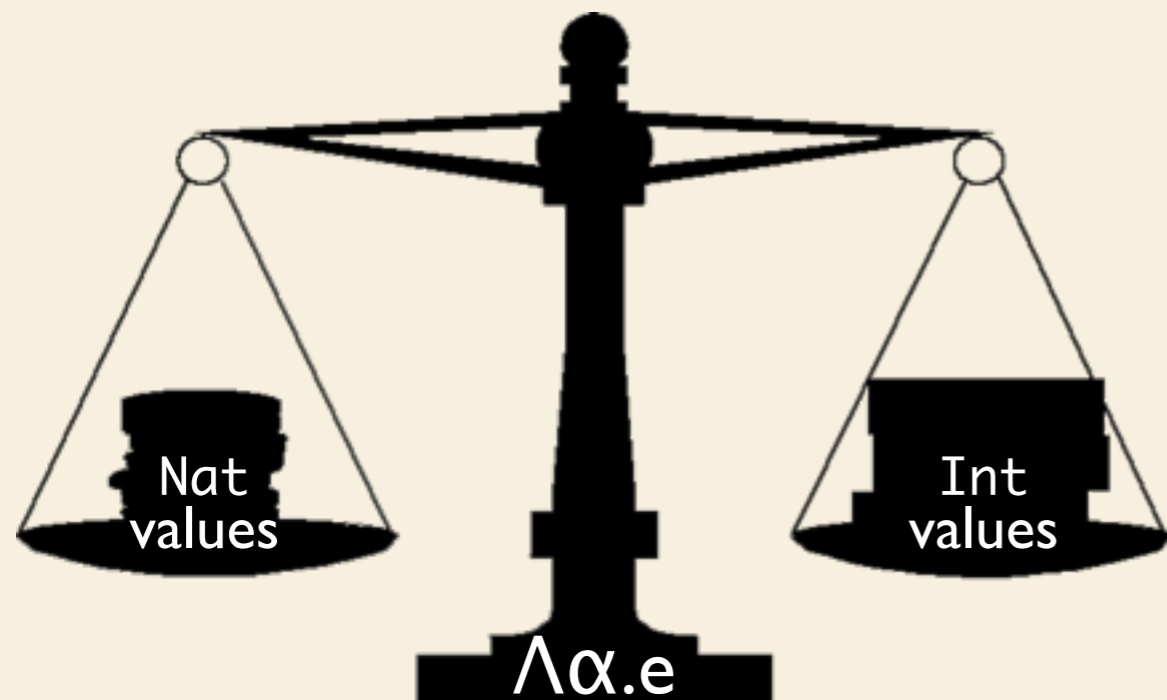


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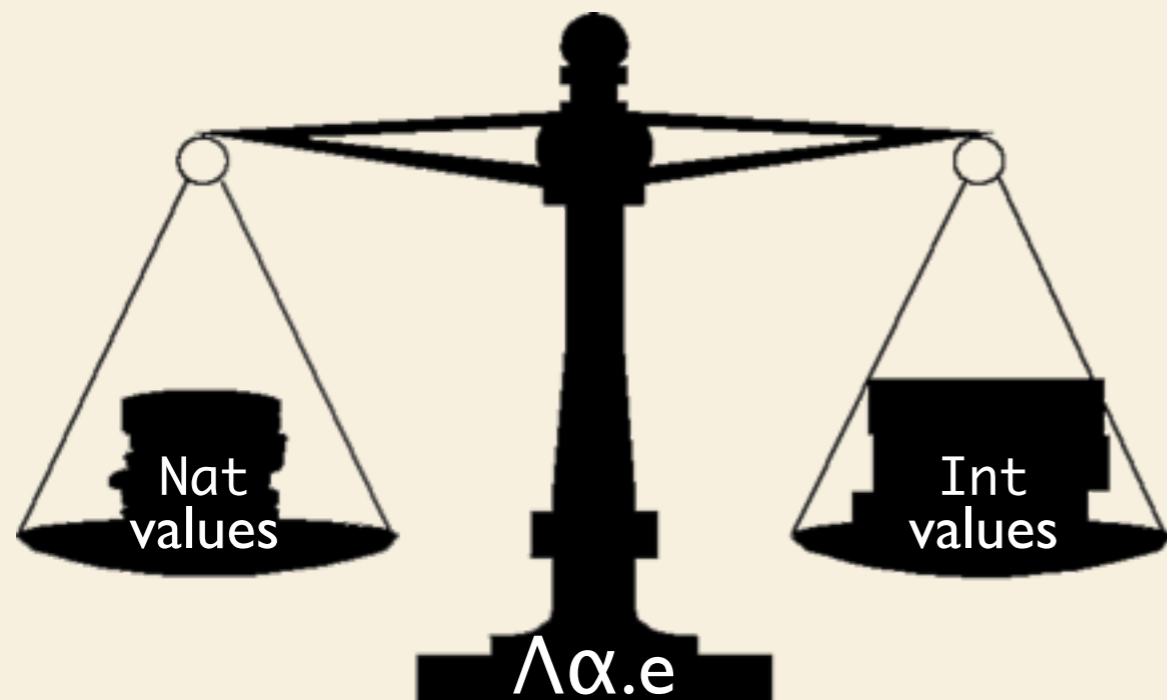
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Nat



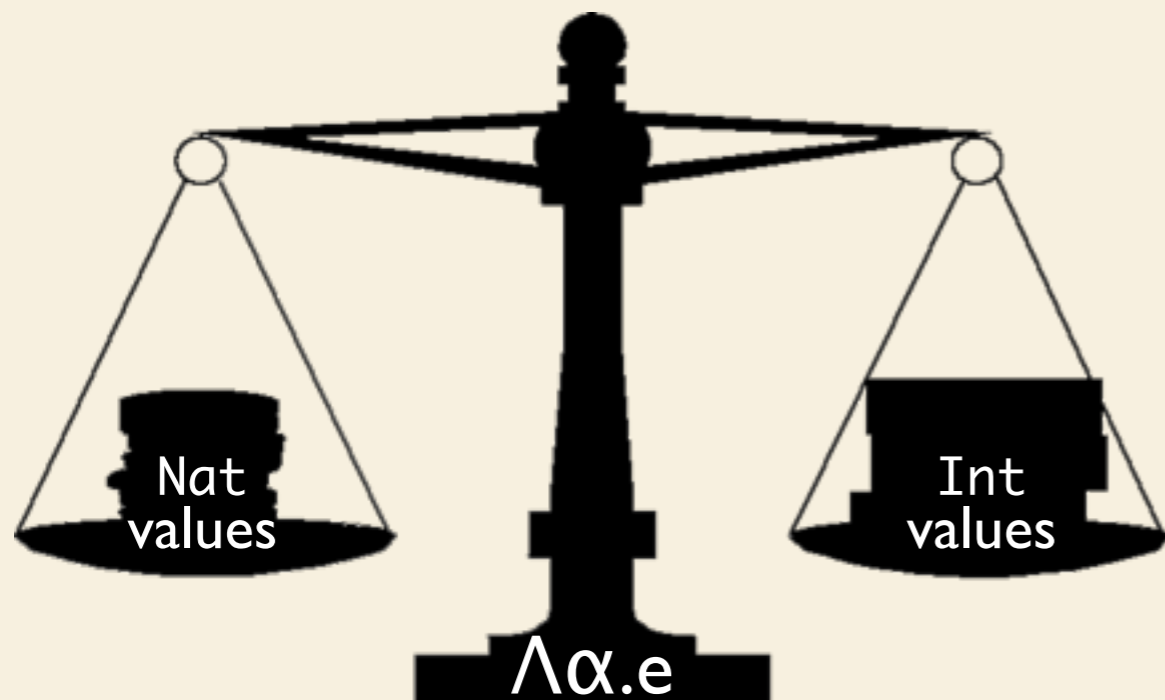
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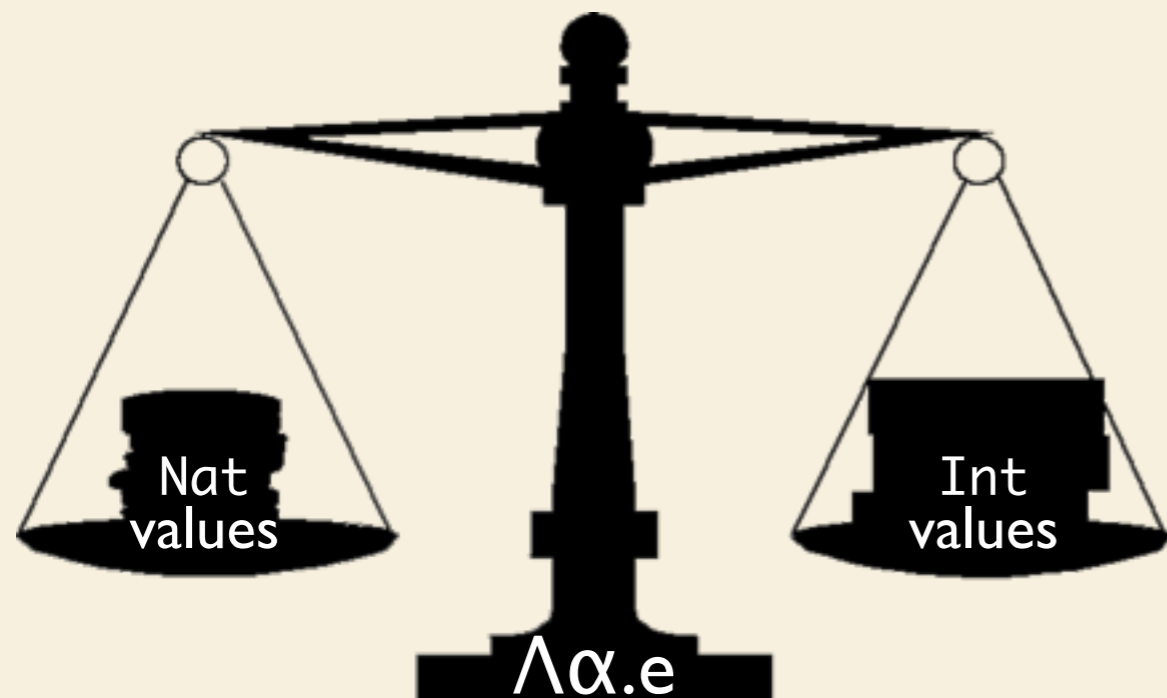
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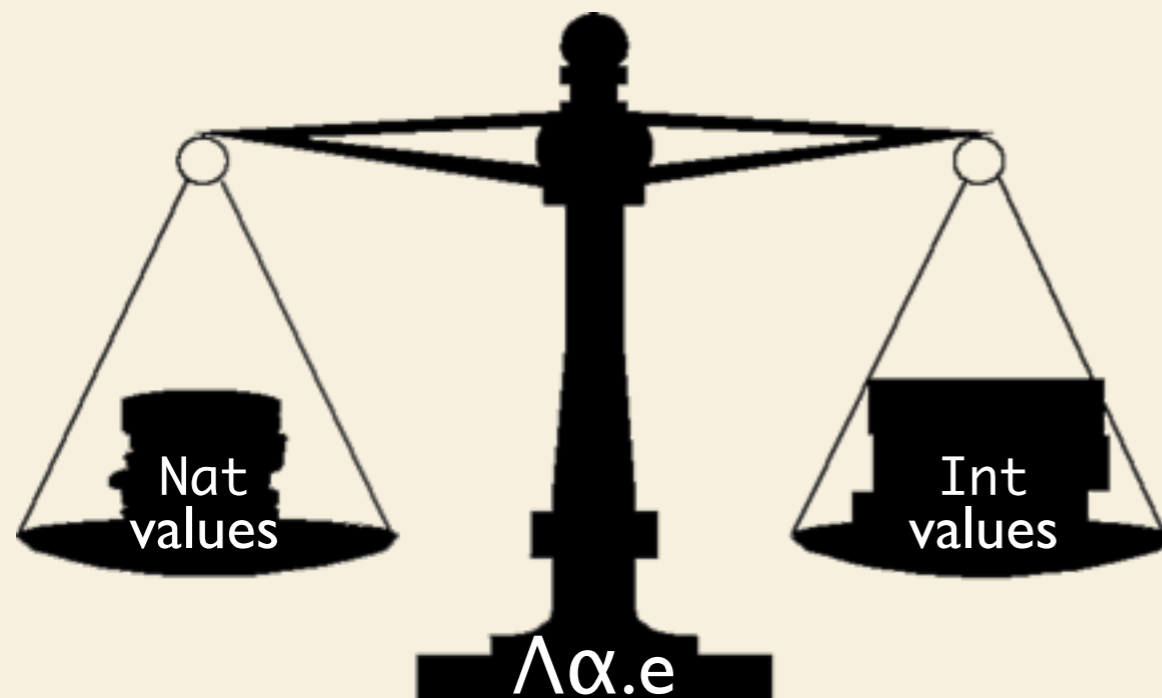
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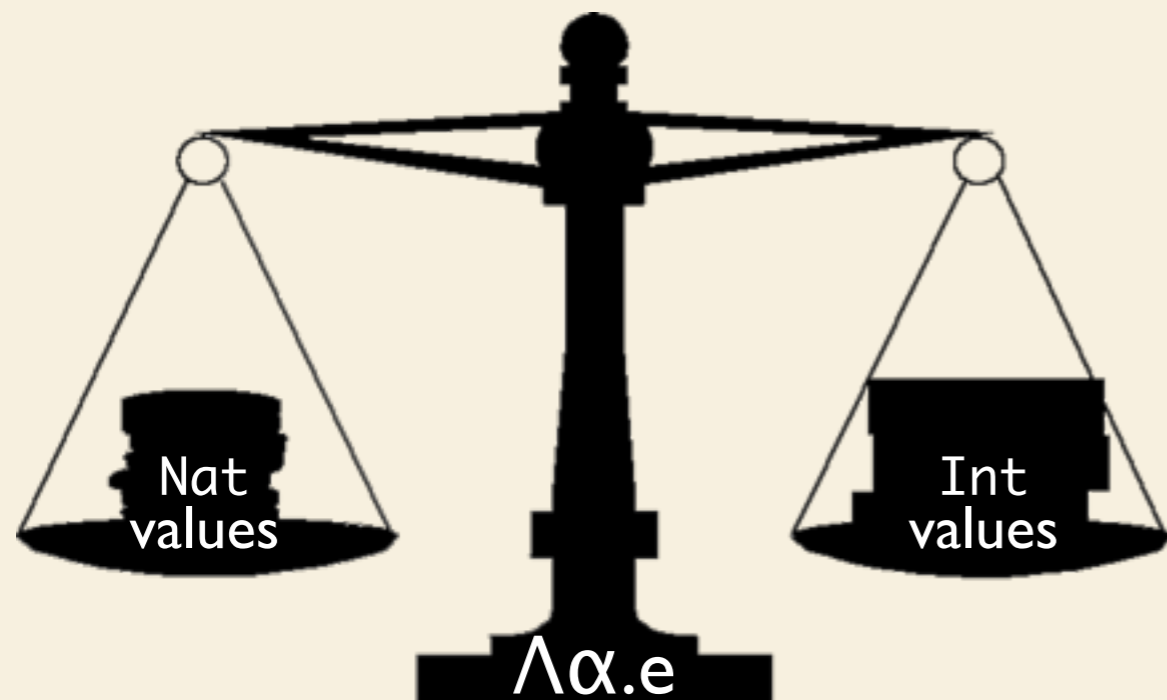
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$$f : \forall \alpha. \alpha \rightarrow \alpha$$
$$f = \Lambda \alpha. \lambda x: \alpha. x$$

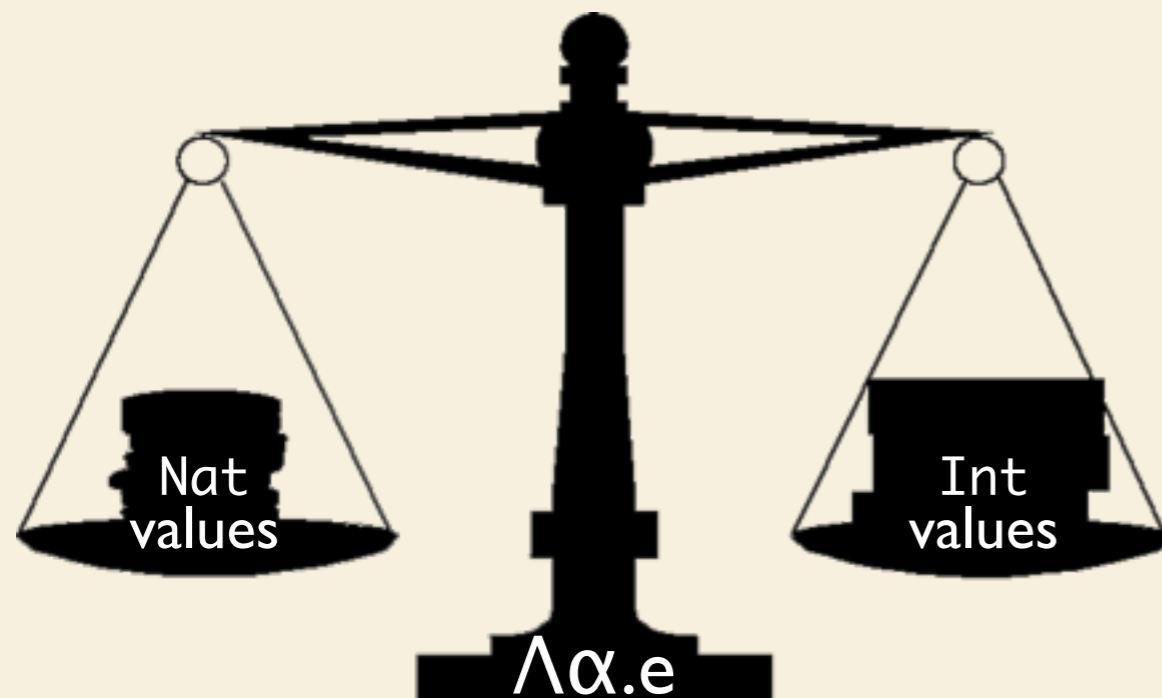
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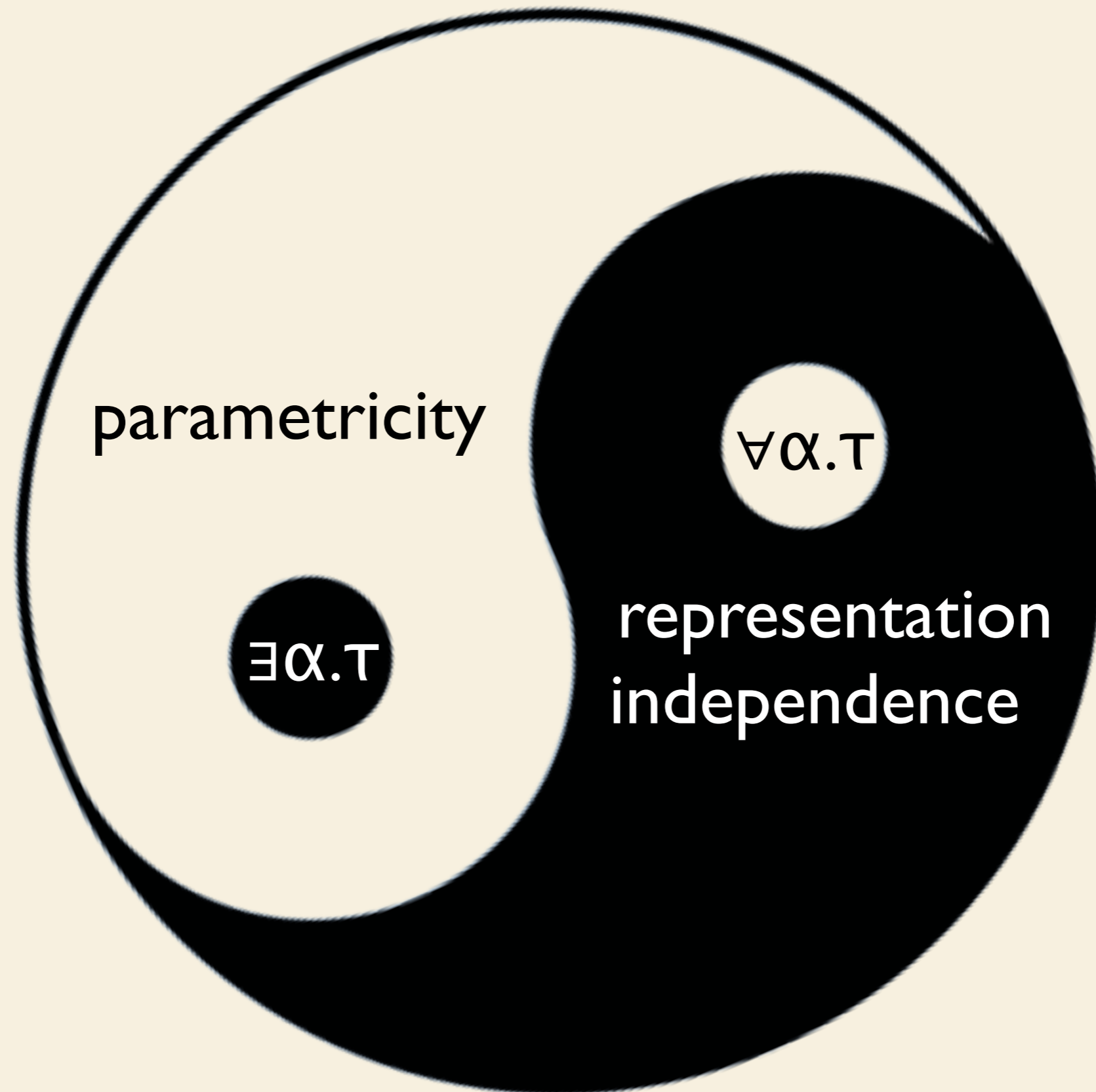


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Breaking parametricity

How to break parametricity in one easy step

```
 $\Lambda\alpha. \lambda x: \alpha. \text{ (if (nat? x) } \\ \text{ (+ x 1) } \\ \text{ x) }$ 
```


How to break parametricity in one easy step

```
 $\Lambda \alpha. \lambda x: \alpha. (\text{if } (\text{nat? } x)$   

 $\quad \quad \quad (+ \ x \ 1)$   

 $\quad \quad \quad x)$ 
```

behaves differently at
run-time depending on
how α is instantiated

Putting dynamically typed code in an
otherwise statically typed program
provides a way to
“smuggle values past the type system”
(Abadi *et al.*, 1989)

A two-language system

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- How can we assign a type to a program that's written in **two languages**?

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- We'll combine a minimal “**Scheme**” and a minimal “**ML**” in a **multi-language embedding** (Matthews & Findler, 2007):

A two-language system

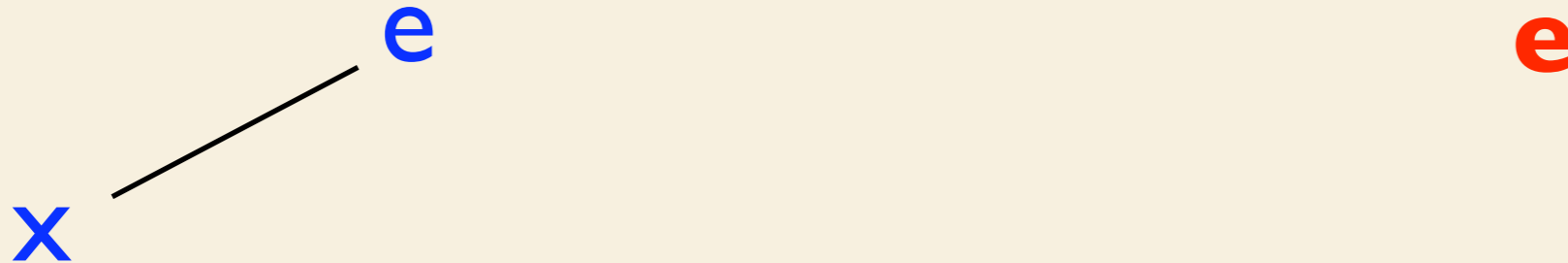
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Using a Scheme procedure in ML

$(\tau_1 \rightarrow \tau_2) \text{MS } (\lambda x. e)$

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have to choose some type at
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$$(\tau_1 \rightarrow \tau_2) \text{ MS } (\lambda x. e) \mapsto (\lambda \mathbf{x} : \tau_1. \quad)$$

Using a Scheme procedure in ML

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$$\left(\tau_1 \rightarrow \tau_2 \text{MS} \left(\lambda x. e \right) \right) \mapsto \left(\lambda x : \tau_1. \left(\tau_2 \text{MS} \left(\lambda x. e \right) \left(\text{SM}^{\tau_1} x \right) \right) \right)$$

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direction of conversion reverses
for arguments

A first attempt at polymorphism

$$(\forall \alpha. \tau \text{MS } (\lambda x. e))$$


A first attempt at polymorphism

embedding a Scheme procedure in
ML at a universal type


$$(\forall \alpha. \tau_{MS} (\lambda x. e))$$


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$$\left(\forall \alpha. \tau_{MS} (\lambda x. e) \right) \longmapsto \left(\Lambda \alpha. \right)$$

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A first attempt at polymorphism

embedding a Scheme procedure in
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$$(\forall \alpha. \tau_{MS} (\lambda x. e)) \quad \longmapsto \quad (\Lambda \alpha. (\tau_{MS} (\lambda x. e)))$$

evaluation stops here, and continues
when we apply to a concrete type:

$$(\Lambda \alpha. e) \text{ Nat} \longmapsto e[\alpha := \text{Nat}]$$

A first attempt at polymorphism: example

$$\left(\forall \alpha. \alpha \rightarrow \alpha \text{ MS } (\lambda x. x) \right) \text{ Nat } \overline{3}$$

A first attempt at polymorphism: example

$$(\forall \alpha. \alpha \rightarrow \alpha \text{MS } (\lambda x. x)) \text{Nat } \overline{3}$$

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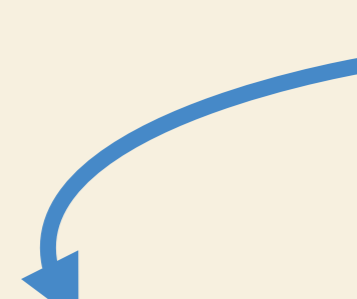
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How parametricity breaks

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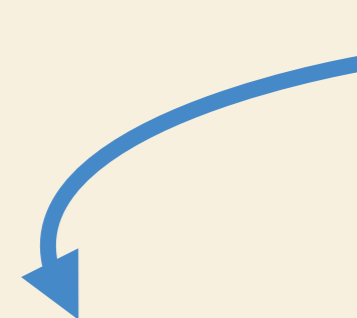
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Restoring parametricity

Data abstraction, revisited

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indistinguishable



Another approach to data abstraction

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- Programs can create unique seals in their local scope and hand out opaque, sealed values to clients

Updating our system to use dynamic sealing

- Operational semantics defined not just on expressions, but on **configurations** that include a **seal store**

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$$\psi \mid (\Lambda \alpha. \mathbf{e}) \tau \longmapsto \psi, s \mid \mathbf{e}[\alpha := \langle s; \tau \rangle]$$

Back to our example...

$(\forall \alpha. \alpha \rightarrow \alpha) \text{MS } (\lambda x. (\text{if0 } (\text{nat? } x) (+ x \bar{1}) x)) \text{ Nat}$

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