

# Chapter 7: Computations lifted to a functor context II. Monads and semimonads

## Part 1: Intuitions, examples, use cases

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# Computations within a functor context: Semimonads

Intuitions behind adding more “generator arrows”

Example of nested iterations:

$$\sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^n \sum_{k=1}^n f(i, j, k)$$

Using Scala's `for`/`yield` syntax (“functor block”)

```
(for { i ← 1 to n
      j ← 1 to n
      k ← 1 to n
    } yield f(i, j, k)
).sum
```

```
(1 to n).flatMap { i ⇒
  (1 to n).flatMap { j ⇒
    (1 to n).map { k ⇒
      f(i, j, k)
    }
  }
}.sum
```

- `map` replaces the last left arrow, `flatMap` replaces other left arrows
  - ▶ When the functor is *also* filterable, we can use “`if`” as well
- Standard library defines `flatMap()` as replacement of `map() ◦ flatten`
  - ▶ `(1 to n).map(j ⇒ ...).flatten` is `(1 to n).flatMap(j ⇒ ...)`
- Functors having `flatMap`/`flatten` are “flattenable” or **semimonads**
  - ▶ Most of them also have method `pure: A ⇒ F[A]` and so are **monads**
    - ★ The method `pure` is not relevant in the functor block
    - ★ We will not need `pure` in this part of the tutorial; focus on semimonads

# How `flatMap` works with lists

- consider `List(x1, x2, x3).flatMap(x  $\Rightarrow$  f(x))`
- assume that

```
f: X  $\Rightarrow$  List[Y]
f(x1) = List(y0, y1)
f(x2) = List(y2)
f(x3) = List(y3, y4, y5, y6)
```

- then the result is `List(y0, y1, y2, y3, y4, y5, y6)`
- if we first do `.map(f)` then `flatten`:

```
List(x1, x2, x3).map(f).flatten =
  List(List(y0, y1), List(y2), List(y3, y4, y5, y6)).flatten =
  List(y0, y1, y2, y3, y4, y5, y6)
```

# What is `flatMap` doing with the data in a collection?

Consider this schematic code, using `Seq` as the container type:

```
val result = for {
  i ← 1 to m
  j ← 1 to n
  x = f(i, j)
  k ← 1 to p
  y = g(i, j, k)
} yield h(x,y)

val result = {
  (1 to m).flatMap { i ⇒
    (1 to n).flatMap { j ⇒
      val x = f(i, j)
      (1 to p).map { k ⇒
        val y = g(i, j, k)
        h(x,y) } } } }
```

Computations are repeated for all  $i$ , for all  $j$ , etc., from each collection

- All “generator lines” must use the same container type
  - ▶ Each generator line finally computes a container of *that* type
  - ▶ The total number of resulting data items is  $\leq m * n * p$
  - ▶ All the resulting data items must fit within *the same* container type!
  - ▶ The set of *container capacity counts* must be closed under multiplication
- What container types have this property?
  - ▶ `Seq`, `NonEmptyList` – can hold *any* number of elements  $\geq$  min. count
  - ▶ `Option`, `Either`, `Try`, `Future` – can hold 0 or 1 elements (“pass/fail”)
  - ▶ “Tree-like” containers, e.g. can hold only 3, 6, 9, 12, ... elements
  - ▶ “Non-standard” containers:  $F^A \equiv \text{String} \Rightarrow A$ ;  $F^A \equiv (A \Rightarrow \text{Int}) \Rightarrow \text{Int}$

# Worked examples I: List-like monads

`Seq`, `NonEmptyList`, `Iterator`, `Stream`

Typical tasks for “list-like” monads:

- Create a list of all combinations or all permutations of a sequence
- Traverse a “solution tree” with DFS and filter out incorrect solutions
  - ▶ Can use eager (`Seq`) or lazy (`Iterator`, `Stream`) evaluation strategies
  - ▶ Usually, list-like containers have many additional methods
    - ★ `append`, `prepend`, `concat`, `fill`, `fold`, `scan`, etc.

Worked examples: see code

- 1 All permutations of `Seq("a", "b", "c")`
- 2 All subsets of `Set("a", "b", "c")`
- 3 All subsequences of length 3 out of a given sequence
- 4 Generalize examples 1-3 to support arbitrary length  $n$  instead of 3
- 5 All solutions of the “8 queens” problem
- 6 Generalize example 5 to solve  $n$ -queens problem
- 7 Transform Boolean formulas between CNF and DNF

# Intuitions for pass/fail monads

Option, Either, Try, Future

- Container  $F^A$  can hold  $n = 1$  or  $n = 0$  values of type  $A$
- Such containers will have methods to create “pass” and “fail” values

Schematic example of a functor block program using the `Try` functor:

```
val result: Try[A] = for { // computations in the Try functor
  x ← Try(...) // first computation; may fail
  y = f(x) // no possibility of failure in this line
  if p(y) // the entire expression will fail if this is false
  z ← Try(g(x, y)) // may fail here
  r ← Try(...) // may fail here as well
} yield r // r is of type A, so result is of type Try[A]
```

- Computations may yield a result ( $n = 1$ ), or may fail ( $n = 0$ )
- The functor block chains several such computations *sequentially*
  - ▶ Computations are sequential even if using the `Future` functor!
  - ▶ Once any computation fails, the entire functor block fails ( $0 * n = 0$ )
  - ▶ Only if *all* computations succeed, the functor block returns *one* value
  - ▶ Filtering can also make the entire functor block fail
- “Flat” functor block replaces a chain of nested `if/else` or `match/case`

# Worked examples II: Pass/fail monads

Type constructors:

- `Option[A]`  $\equiv 1 + A$
- `Either[Z, A]`  $\equiv Z + A$
- `Try[A]`  $\equiv \text{Either}[\text{Throwable}, A]$

Typical tasks for pass/fail monads:

- Perform a linear sequence of computations that may fail
- Avoid crashing on failure, instead return an *error value*

Worked examples: see code

- 1 Read values of Java properties, checking that they all exist
- 2 Obtain values from `Future` computations in sequence
- 3 Make arithmetic safe by returning error messages in `Either`
- 4 Pass/fail chain: sequencing computations that may throw an exception

# Intuitions for tree-like monads

Examples of tree-like recursive type constructors:

- $F^A \equiv A + F^A \times F^A$  (binary tree)
- $F^A \equiv A + S^{F^A}$  ( $S$ -shaped tree, where  $S$  is a functor)
- $F^A \equiv A \times A + F^A \times F^A$  (binary tree with binary leaves)
- $F^A \equiv S^A + S^{F^A}$  ( $S$ -shaped tree with  $S$ -shaped leaves)

Implementing `flatMap` for these type constructors is recursive

- See example code

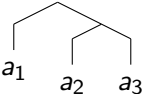


Example of a *non-monadic* tree-like functor:

- $F^A \equiv A + A \times A + A \times A \times A \times A + \dots$  (powers of 2)
- Recursive definition:  $F^A = A + F^{A \times A}$

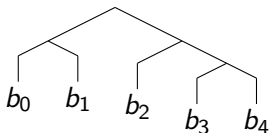


## Worked examples III: Tree-like monads

How `flatMap` works for a binary tree: assume  $f: A \Rightarrow \text{Tree}[B]$  and

`tree1` =  ;  $f(a_1) =$   ;  $f(a_2) = b_2$ ;  $f(a_3) =$  

• then `tree1.flatMap(f)` =



• grafting subtrees plays the role of “flattening”

Typical tasks for tree-like monads:

- Traverse a tree, graft subtrees at leaves
- Substitute subexpressions in a syntax tree

Worked examples: see code

- 1 Implement a tree of `String` properties with arbitrary branching
- 2 Implement variable substitution for a simple arithmetic language

## Worked examples IV: Single-value monads

- Pretend that container holds exactly 1 value, together with a “context”
- Usually, methods exist to insert a value and to work with the “context”

Typical tasks for single-value monads:

- Managing extra information about computations along the way
- Chaining computations with a nonstandard evaluation strategy

Examples: see code

- 1 **Writer**: Perform computations and log information about each step
  - ▶  $\text{Writer}^A \equiv A \times W$  where  $W$  is a monoid or a semigroup
- 2 **Reader**: Read-only context, or dependency injection
  - ▶  $\text{Reader}^A \equiv E \Rightarrow A$  where  $E$  represents the “environment”
- 3 **Eval**: Perform a sequence of lazy or memoized computations
  - ▶  $\text{Eval}^A \equiv A + (1 \Rightarrow A)$
- 4 **Cont**: A chain of asynchronous operations
  - ▶  $\text{Cont}^A \equiv (A \Rightarrow R) \Rightarrow R$  where  $R$  is the fixed “result” type
- 5 **State**: A sequence of steps that update state while returning results
  - ▶  $\text{State}^A \equiv S \Rightarrow A \times S$  where  $S$  is the fixed “state” value type

# Deriving the types of single-value monads

Motivation for the choice of the type constructors  $\text{Writer}^A$ ,  $\text{Reader}^A$ ,  $\text{State}^A$ ,  $\text{Cont}^A$

We want previous values to be transformed via `flatMap` to next values

- **Writer**: a computation  $(A \Rightarrow B)$  and some info  $(W)$  about it
  - ▶  $x^A \Rightarrow f(x) : B$  and  $x^A \Rightarrow g(x) : W$ ; the type is  $(A \Rightarrow B) \times (A \Rightarrow W)$
  - ▶ this function should have type  $A \Rightarrow \text{Writer}^B$ , hence  $\text{Writer}^B \equiv B \times W$ 
    - ★ use the “arithmetic” Curry-Howard to transform types:  $b^a w^a = (bw)^a$
- **Reader**: Read-only context, or “environment” of type  $E$ 
  - ▶  $x^A \Rightarrow f(r, x) : B$  where  $r^E$  is fixed; the type is  $A \times E \Rightarrow B$
  - ▶ this function should have type  $A \Rightarrow \text{Reader}^B$ , hence  $\text{Reader}^B \equiv E \Rightarrow B$ 
    - ★ we used the “arithmetic” Curry-Howard to transform  $b^{ae} = (b^e)^a$
- **Cont**: A computation that registers an asynchronous callback
  - ▶  $x^A \Rightarrow f(cb) : 1$  where  $cb : B \Rightarrow 1$  (usually, callbacks return `Unit`)
  - ▶ the type is  $A \Rightarrow (B \Rightarrow 1) \Rightarrow 1$ ; this function should have type  $A \Rightarrow \text{Cont}^B$ , hence  $\text{Cont}^B \equiv (B \Rightarrow 1) \Rightarrow 1$
  - ▶ generalize to  $\text{Cont}^A \equiv (A \Rightarrow R) \Rightarrow R$  where  $R$  is a fixed “result” type
- **State**: A computation can update state  $(S)$  while producing a result
  - ▶  $x^A \Rightarrow f(x, s)$  and  $s^S := g(x, s)$ ; the type is  $(A \times S \Rightarrow B) \times (A \times S \Rightarrow S)$
  - ▶ this will be  $A \Rightarrow \text{State}^B$  if  $\text{State}^B \equiv (S \Rightarrow B) \times (S \Rightarrow S) \equiv S \Rightarrow B \times S$ 
    - ★ we used the “arithmetic” Curry-Howard:  $b^{as} s^{as} = (b^s s^s)^a = ((bs)^s)^a$

# Exercises I

- 1 For a given `Set[Int]`, compute all subsets  $(w, x, y, z)$  of size 4 such that  $w < x < y < z$  and  $w + z = x + y$
- 2 Given 3 sequences `xs`, `ys`, `zs` of type `Seq[Int]`, compute all  $(x, y, z)$  such that  $x \in xs$ ,  $y \in ys$ ,  $z \in zs$  and  $x < y < z$  and  $x + y + z < 10$
- 3 How many chess queens can avoid each other on an  $3 \times 3 \times 3$  cube?
- 4 Write a tiny library for arithmetic using `Future`'s; use it to compute  $1 + 2 + \dots + 100$  via `for/yield` and verify the result. E.g. implement:

```
const: Int  $\Rightarrow$  Future[Int]
add(x: Int): Int  $\Rightarrow$  Future[Int]
isEqual(x: Int): Int  $\Rightarrow$  Future[Boolean]
```

- 5 Read a file into a string and write it to another file using Java `Files` and `Paths` API. Use `Try` and `for/yield` to make this safe.
- 6 Given a semigroup  $W$ , make a semimonad out of  $F^A \equiv E \Rightarrow A \times W$
- 7 Implement a semimonad instance for the (recursive) type constructor  $F^A = A + A \times A + F^A + F^A \times F^A$
- 8 Find the largest prime number below 1000 via a simple **Sieve of Eratosthenes**; use the `State[S, Int]` monad with `S = Array[Boolean]`