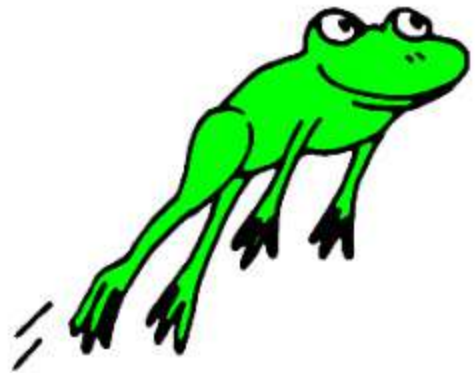


A gentle introduction to deep inference

6. Atomic flows



ESSLLI 2025

Victoria Barrett and Lutz Straßburger

From derivations to flows

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \boxed{\text{ac}\uparrow \frac{a}{a \wedge a}} \vee \boxed{\text{ac}\uparrow \frac{\bar{a}}{\bar{a} \wedge \bar{a}}} \\
 \hline
 \text{m} \frac{(a \vee \bar{a}) \wedge (a \vee \bar{a})}{s} \\
 \hline
 a \vee \boxed{s \frac{\bar{a} \wedge (a \vee \bar{a})}{\boxed{\text{ai}\uparrow \frac{\bar{a} \wedge a}{\perp}} \vee \frac{a}{\top}}
 \end{array}$$

From derivations to flows

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \begin{array}{c}
 \text{ac}\uparrow \\
 a \quad a \\
 \wedge \\
 a \quad a
 \end{array}
 \vee
 \boxed{\text{ac}\uparrow \frac{\bar{a}}{\bar{a} \wedge \bar{a}}}
 \\
 \hline
 m \\
 (a \vee \bar{a}) \wedge (a \vee \bar{a})
 \\
 \hline
 s \\
 a \vee \boxed{
 \begin{array}{c}
 s \frac{\bar{a} \wedge (a \vee \bar{a})}{\perp} \\
 \vee \frac{a}{\top}
 \end{array}
 }
 \end{array}$$

From derivations to flows

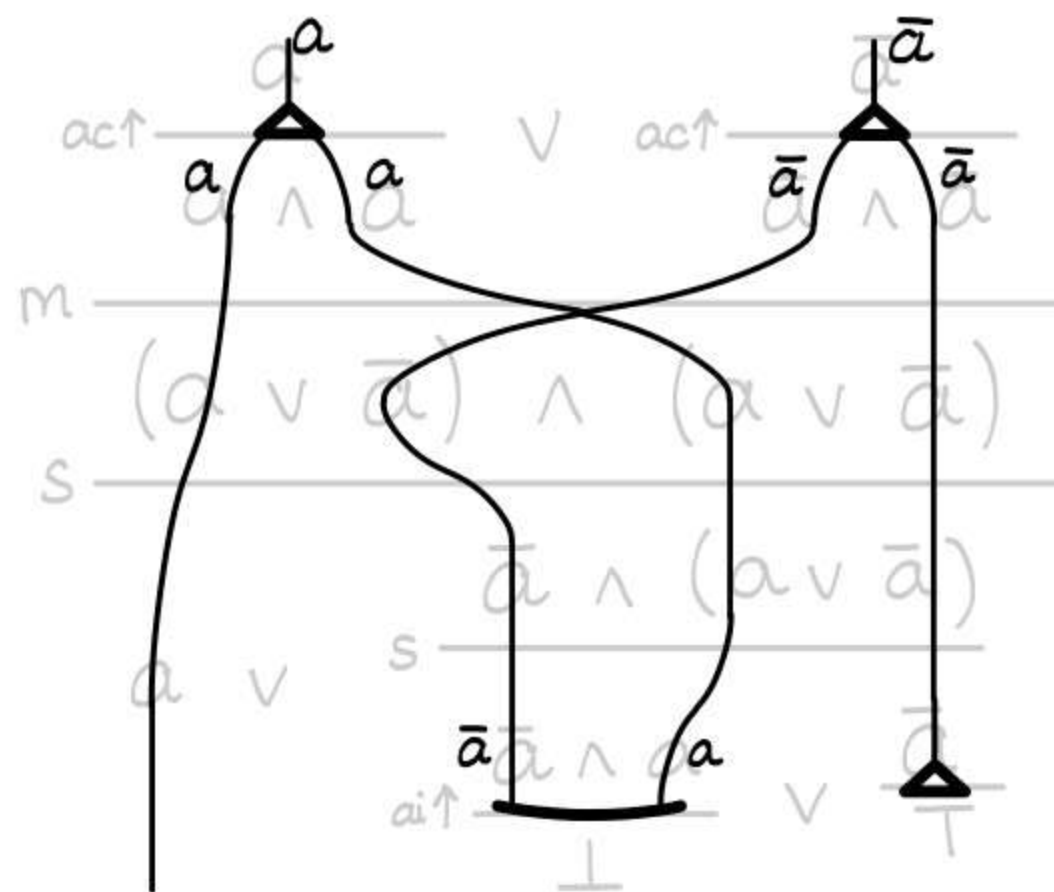
$$\begin{array}{c}
 \begin{array}{c}
 \text{ac}\uparrow \\
 a \quad a \\
 \wedge \\
 a \quad a
 \end{array}
 \vee
 \boxed{
 \begin{array}{c}
 \bar{a} \\
 \text{ac}\uparrow \frac{\bar{a}}{\bar{a} \wedge \bar{a}}
 \end{array}
 } \\
 \hline
 m \\
 (a \vee \bar{a}) \wedge (a \vee \bar{a}) \\
 \hline
 s \\
 a \vee \boxed{
 \begin{array}{c}
 \bar{a} \wedge (a \vee \bar{a}) \\
 s \frac{\bar{a} \wedge (a \vee \bar{a})}{\bar{a} \wedge a \vee \bar{a} \wedge a} \\
 \text{ai}\uparrow \frac{\bar{a} \wedge a \vee \bar{a} \wedge a}{\perp} \vee \frac{a}{\top}
 \end{array}
 }
 \end{array}$$

From derivations to flows

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \begin{array}{c}
 \text{ac}\uparrow \\
 \begin{array}{c}
 a \\
 \wedge \\
 a
 \end{array}
 \end{array}
 \vee
 \boxed{
 \begin{array}{c}
 \bar{a} \\
 \text{ac}\uparrow \frac{\quad}{\bar{a} \wedge \bar{a}}
 \end{array}
 } \\
 \hline
 m \\
 (a \vee \bar{a}) \wedge (a \vee \bar{a}) \\
 \hline
 s \\
 a \vee \boxed{
 \begin{array}{c}
 \bar{a} \wedge (a \vee \bar{a}) \\
 s \frac{\quad}{\quad} \\
 \begin{array}{c}
 \bar{a} \wedge a \\
 \text{ai}\uparrow \frac{\quad}{\perp}
 \end{array}
 \vee
 \begin{array}{c}
 \bar{a} \\
 \top
 \end{array}
 \end{array}
 }
 \end{array}$$

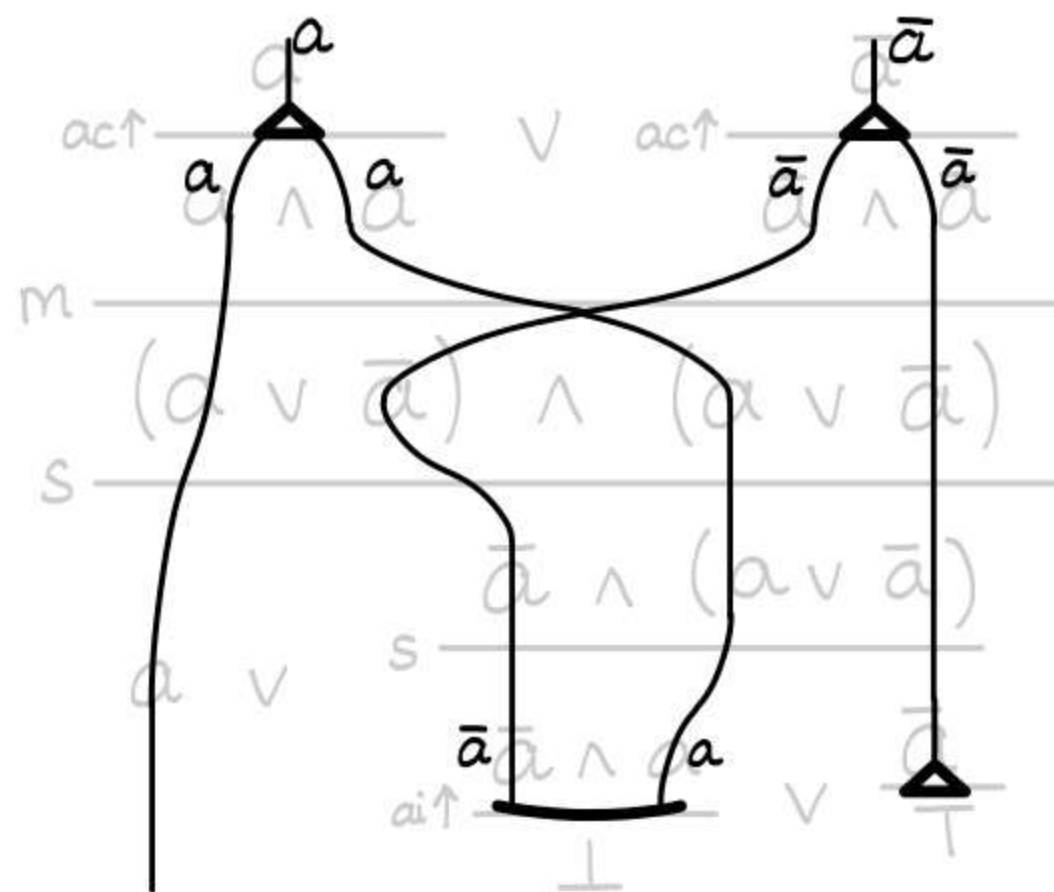
From derivations to flows

We retain only the structural information

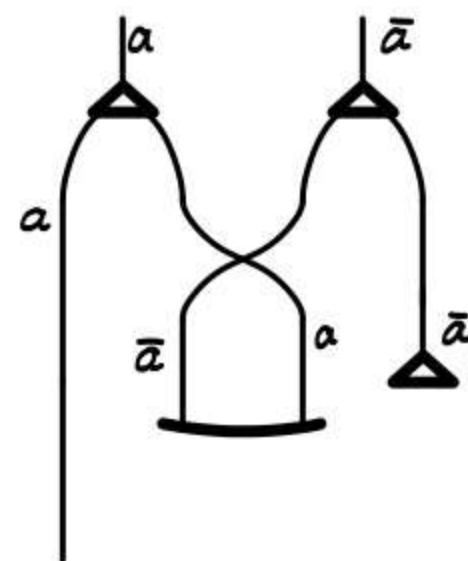


From derivations to flows

We retain only the structural information

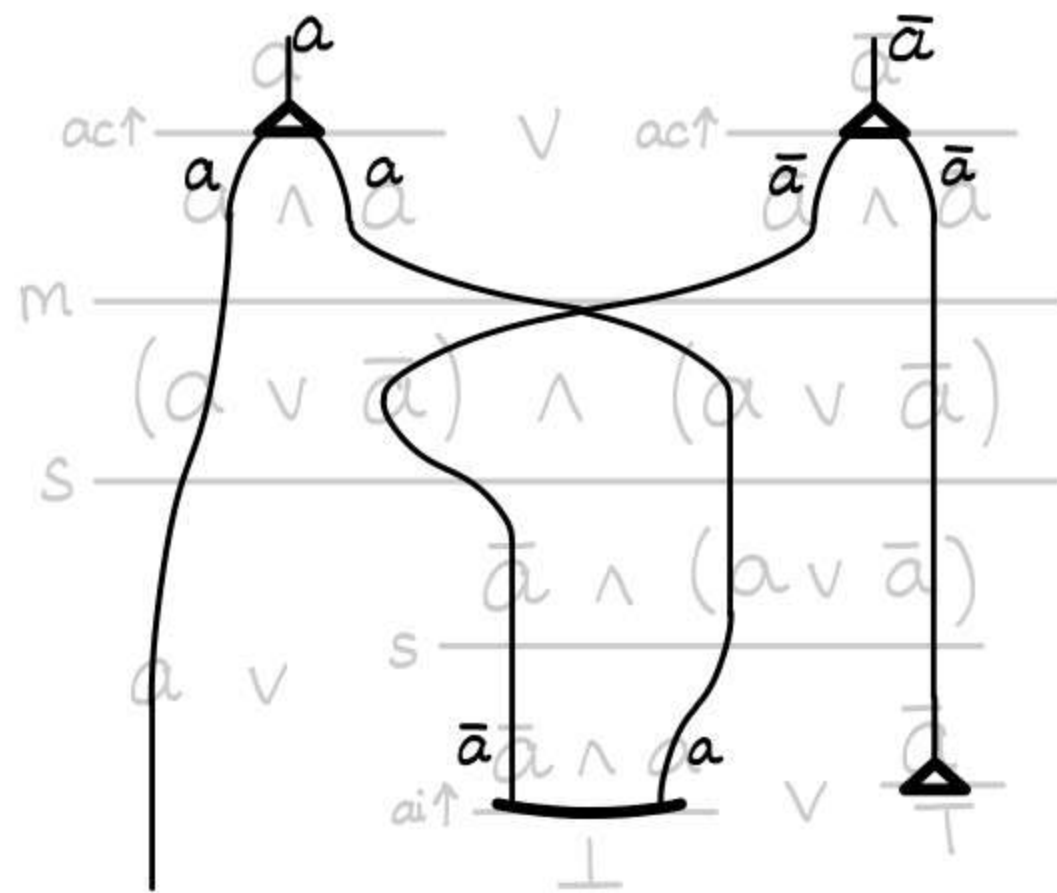


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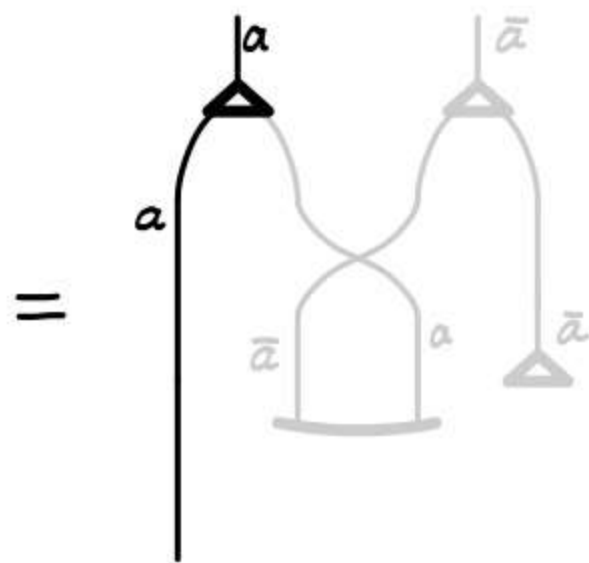


Flows are equal under continuous deformation

From derivations to flows

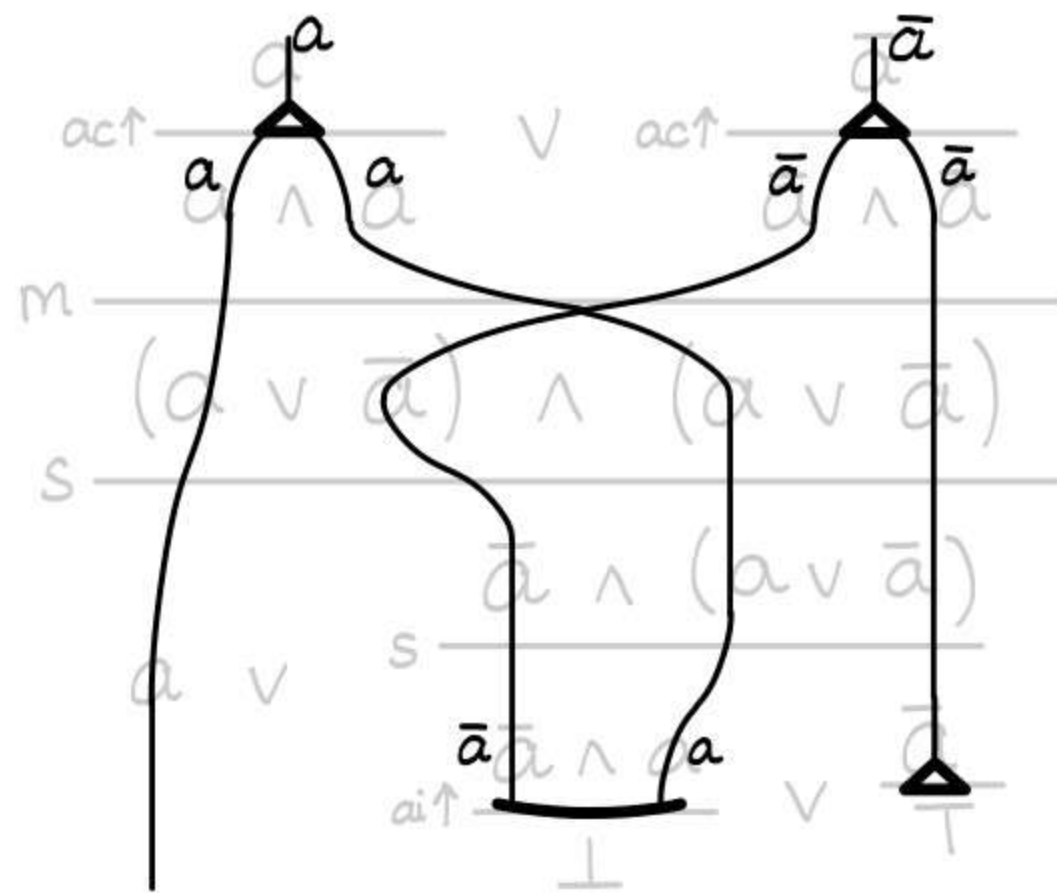


We retain only the structural information and can trace the paths of atoms

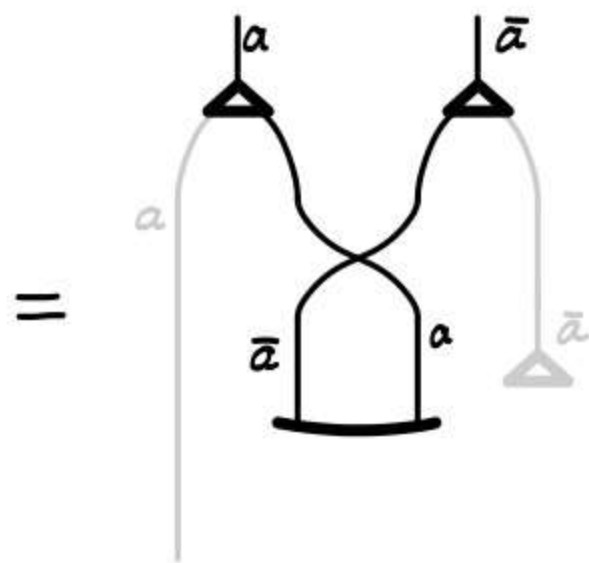


Flows are equal under continuous deformation

From derivations to flows

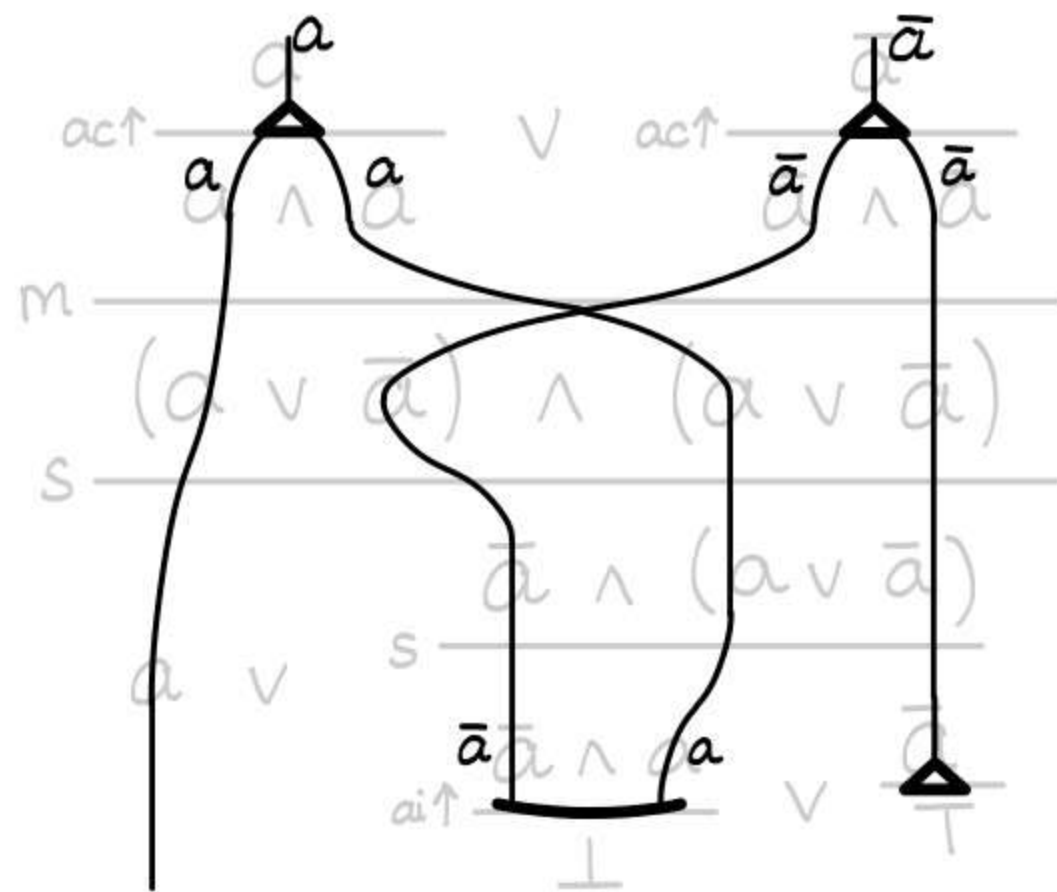


We retain only the structural information and can trace the paths of atoms

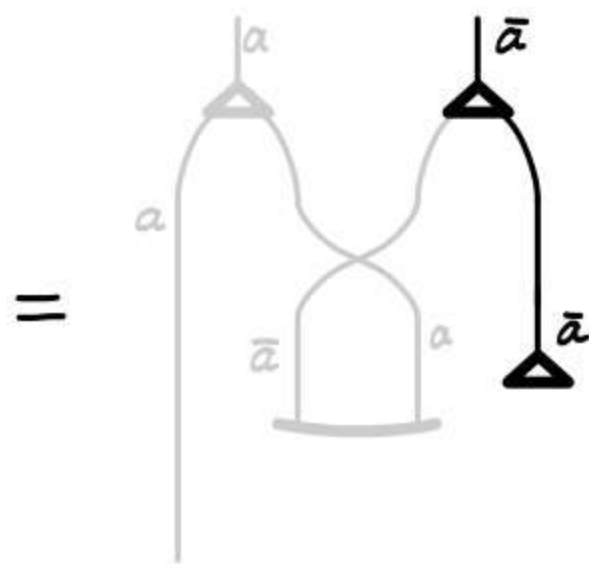


Flows are equal under continuous deformation

From derivations to flows

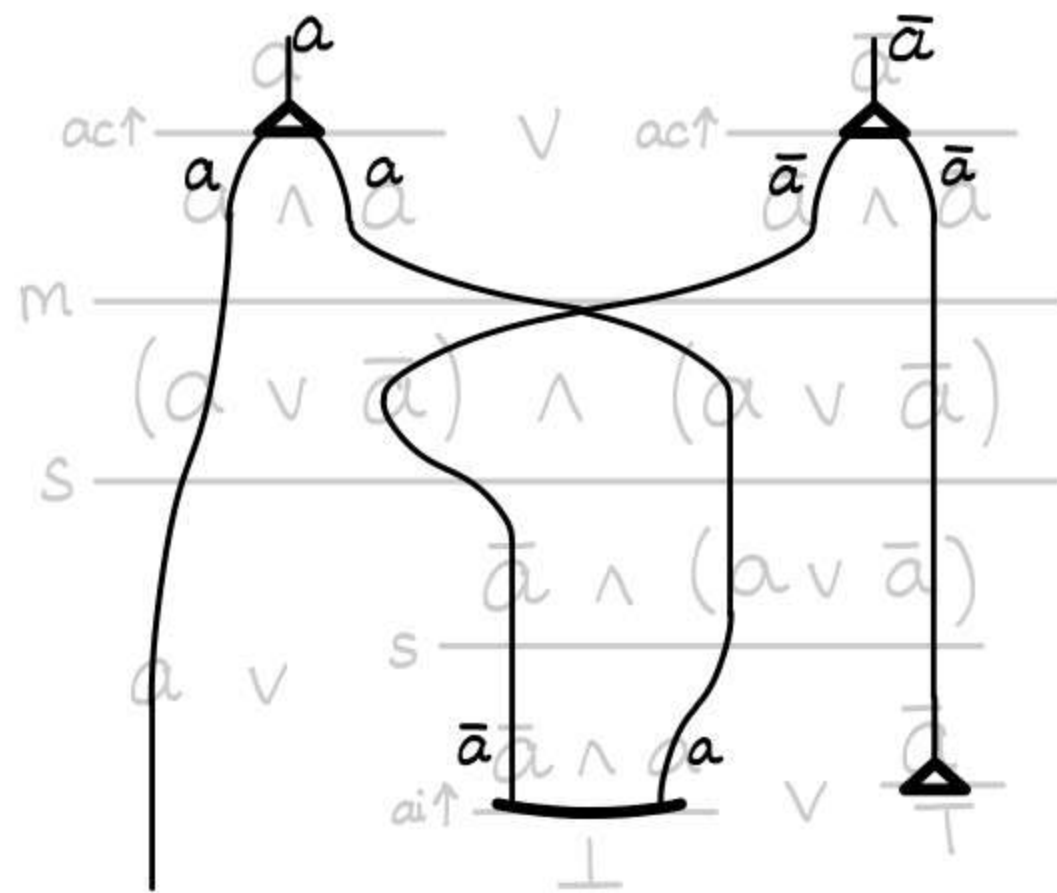


We retain only the structural information and can trace the paths of atoms

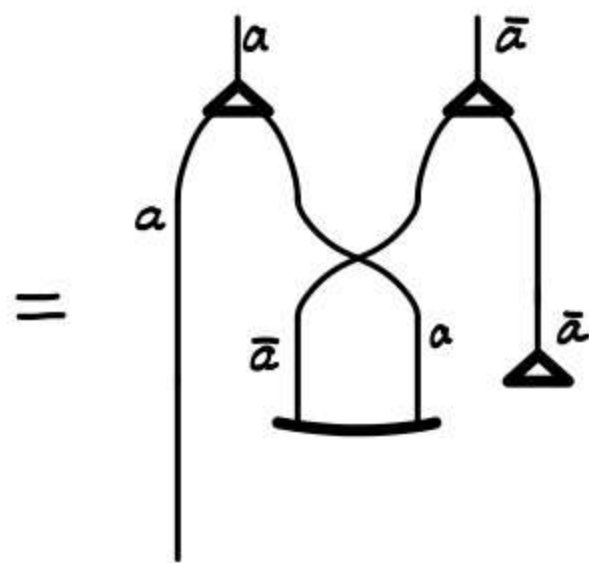


Flows are equal under continuous deformation

From derivations to flows

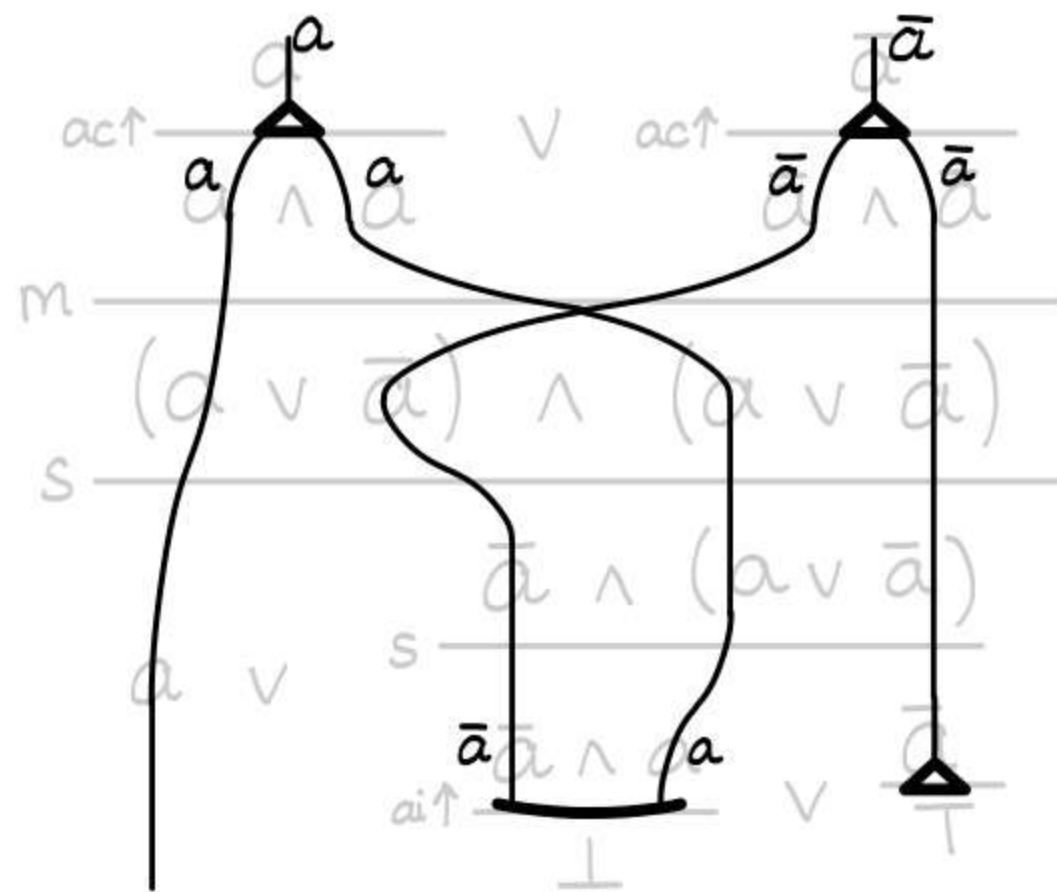


We retain only the structural information and can trace the paths of atoms

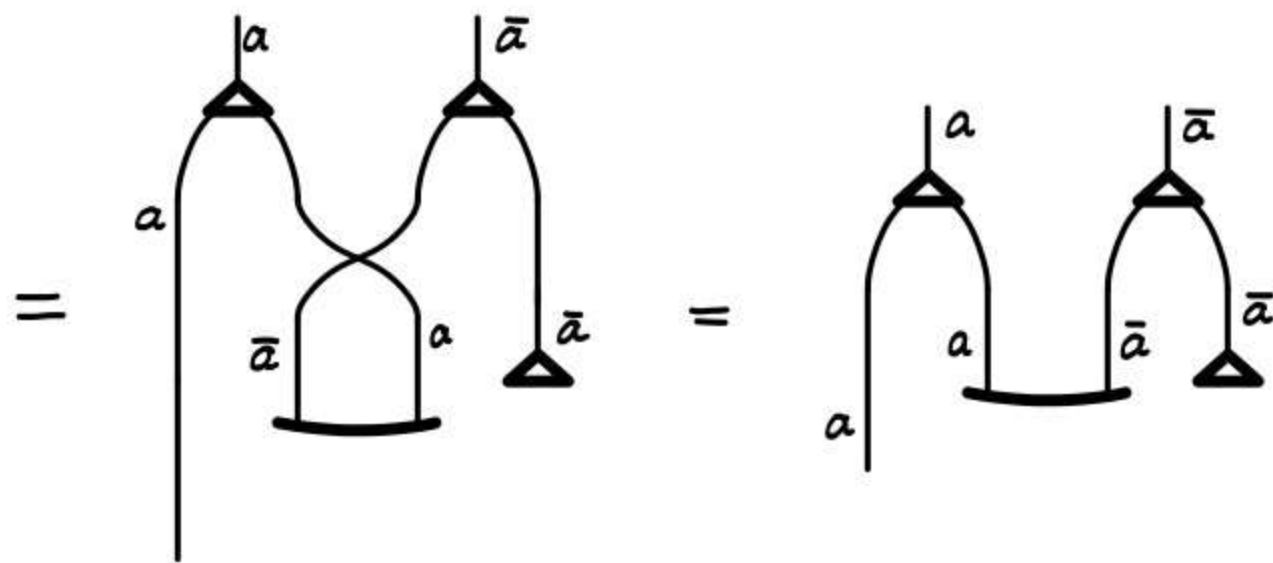


Flows are equal under continuous deformation

From derivations to flows

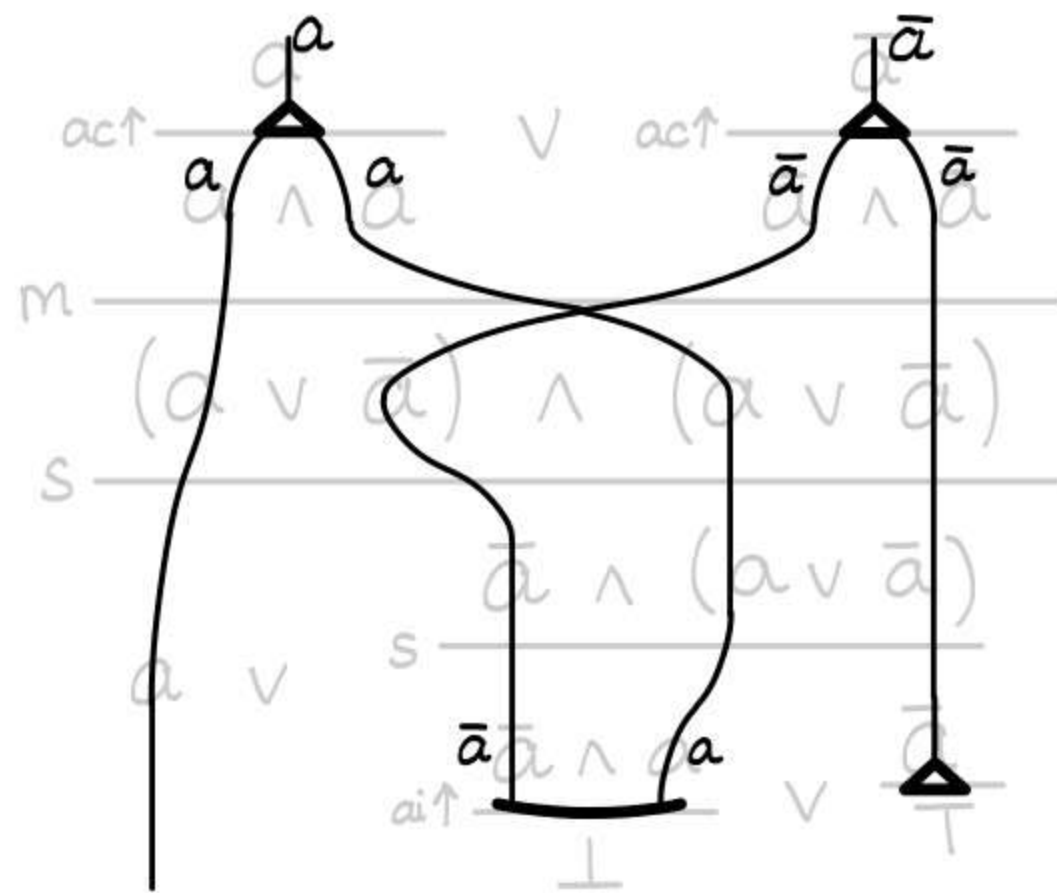


We retain only the structural information and can trace the paths of atoms

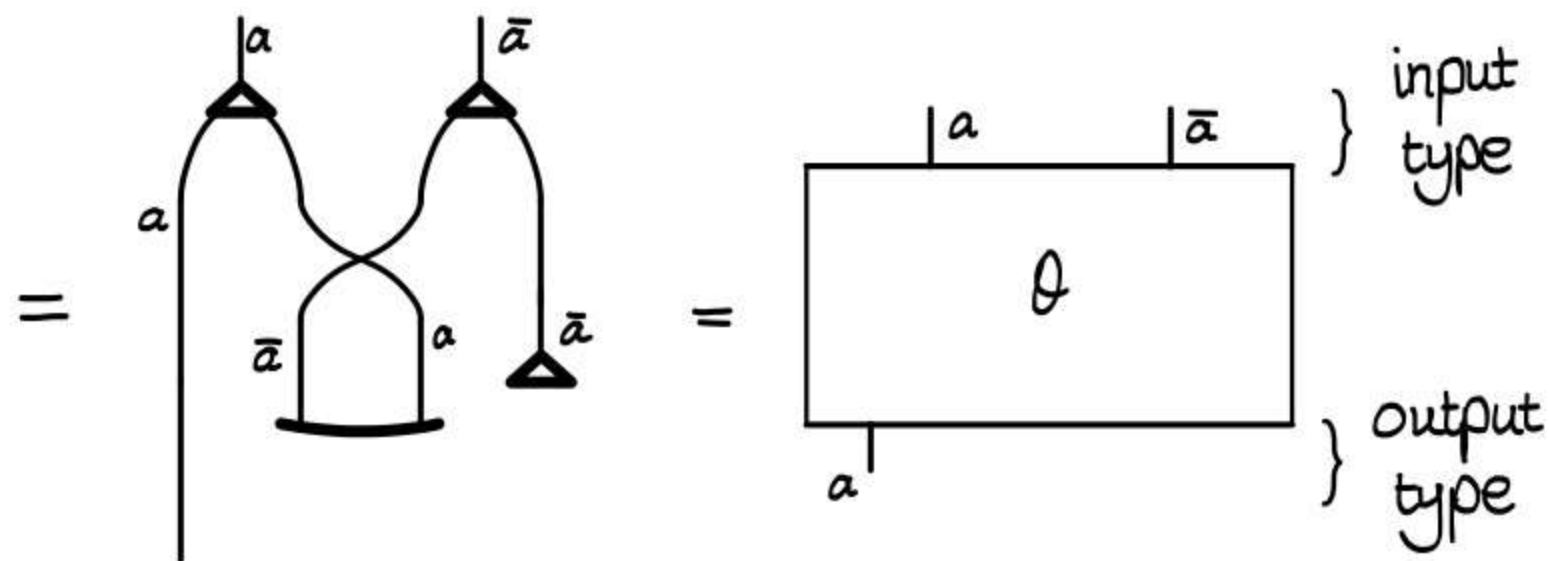


Flows are equal under continuous deformation

From derivations to flows



We retain only the structural information and can trace the paths of atoms

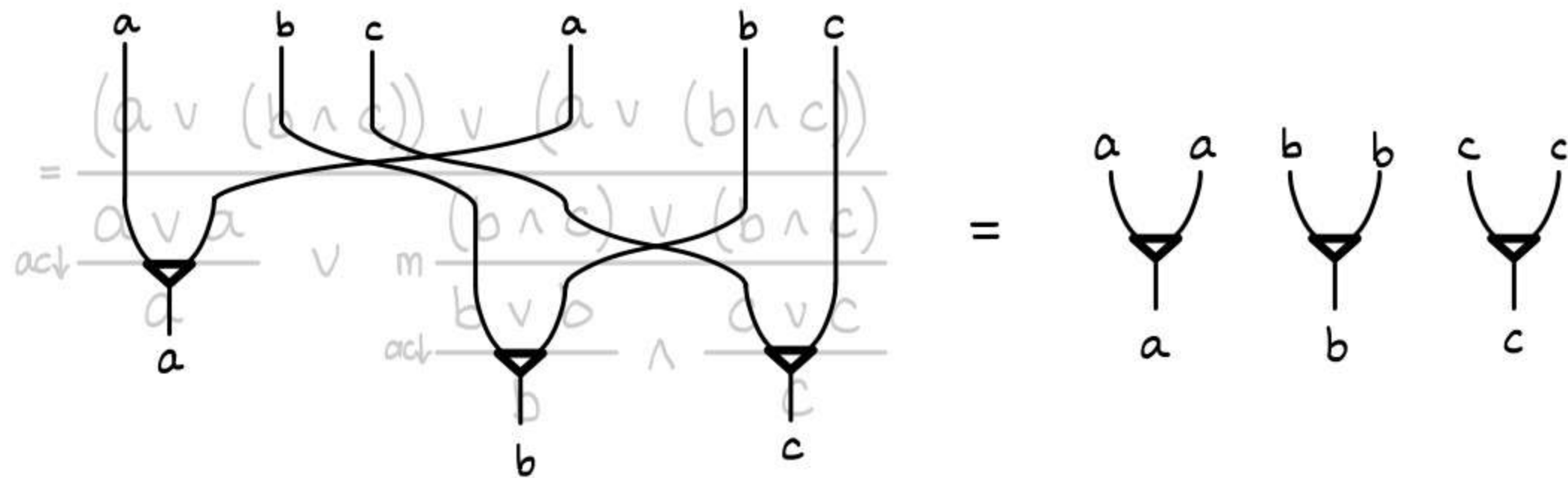


Flows are equal under continuous deformation

From derivations to flows

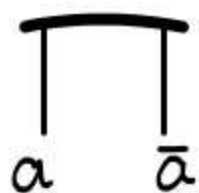
$$\begin{aligned}
 &= \frac{(a \vee (b \wedge c)) \vee (a \vee (b \wedge c))}{\text{ac} \downarrow \frac{a \vee a}{a} \vee \text{m} \frac{(b \wedge c) \vee (b \wedge c)}{\text{ac} \downarrow \frac{b \vee b}{b} \wedge \frac{c \vee c}{c}}}
 \end{aligned}$$

From derivations to flows



From derivations to flows

$$ai \downarrow \frac{\top}{a \vee \bar{a}}$$



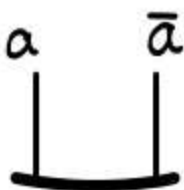
$$ac \downarrow \frac{a \vee a}{a}$$



$$aw \downarrow \frac{\perp}{a}$$



$$ai \uparrow \frac{a \wedge \bar{a}}{\perp}$$



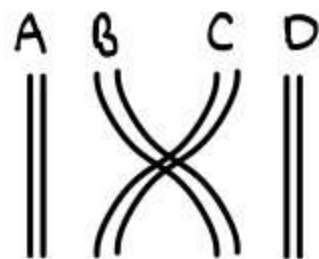
$$ac \uparrow \frac{a}{a \wedge a}$$



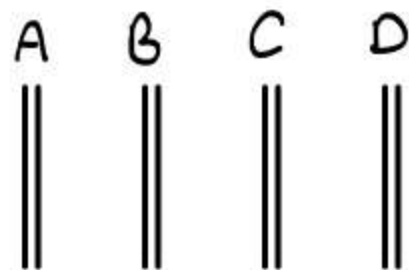
$$aw \uparrow \frac{a}{\top}$$



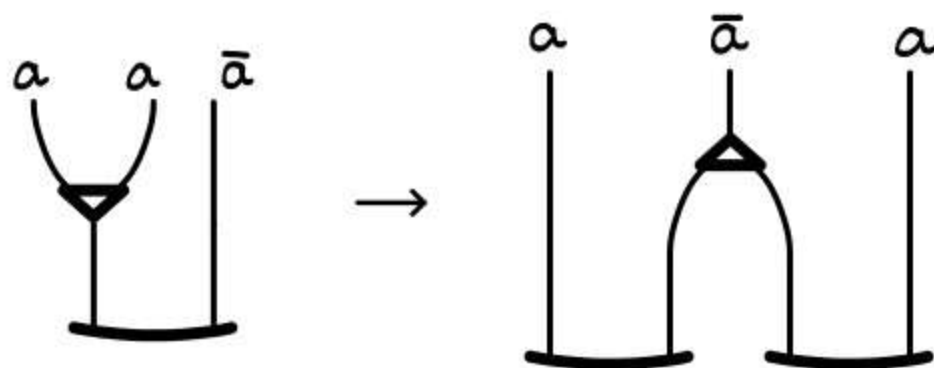
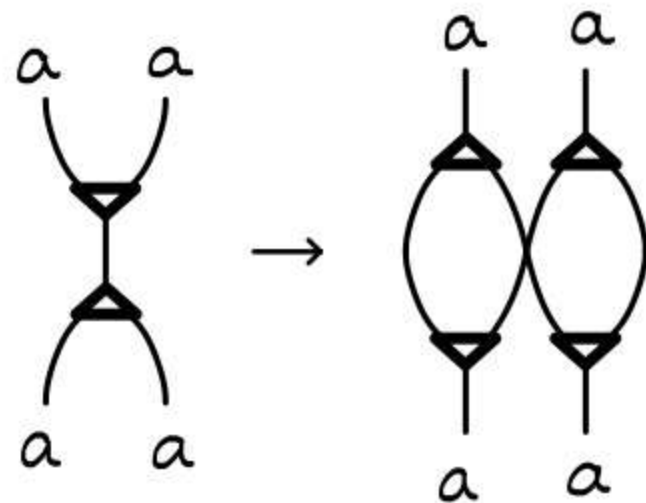
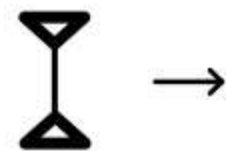
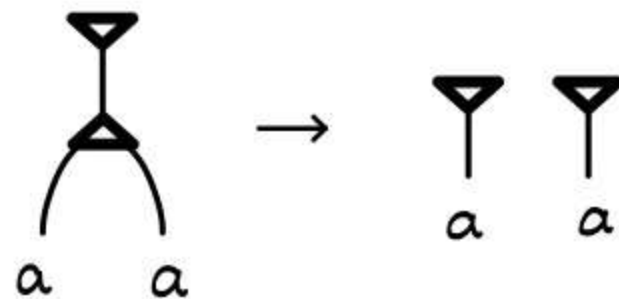
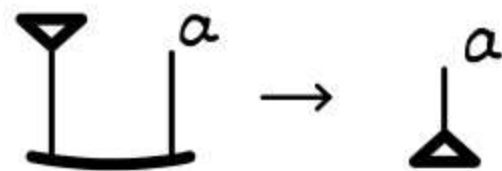
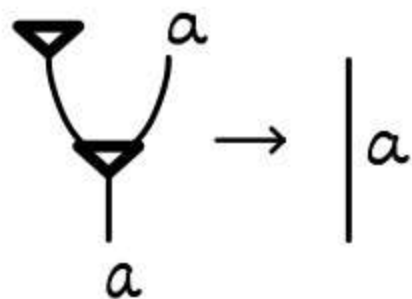
$$m \frac{(A \wedge B) \vee (C \wedge D)}{(A \vee C) \wedge (B \vee D)}$$



=



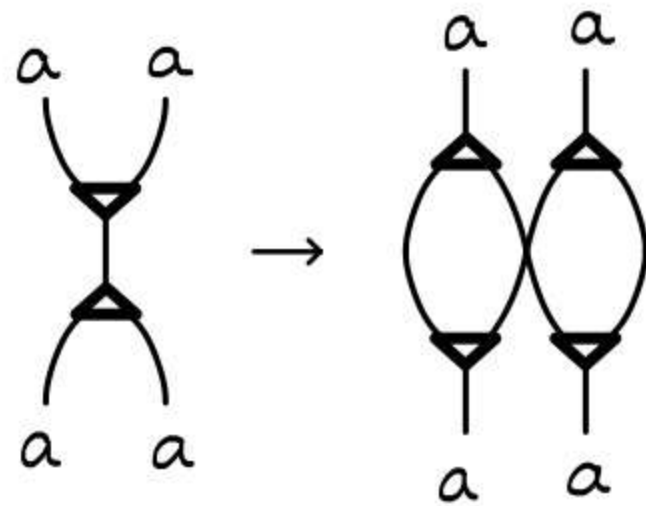
Rewriting flows



and duals



Rewriting flows lifts to derivations

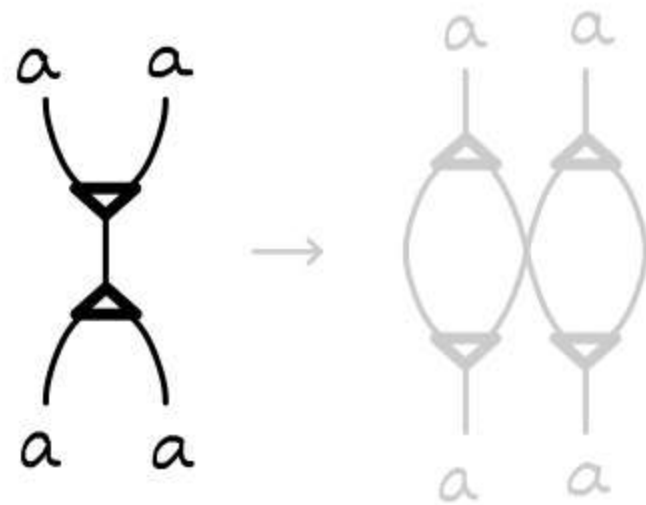


Rewriting flows lifts to derivations



$$\begin{array}{c}
 K \left\{ \text{ac} \downarrow \frac{a \vee a}{a^*} \right\} \\
 \hline
 \Phi \\
 \hline
 H \left\{ \text{ac} \uparrow \frac{a^*}{a \wedge a} \right\}
 \end{array}$$

Rewriting flows lifts to derivations



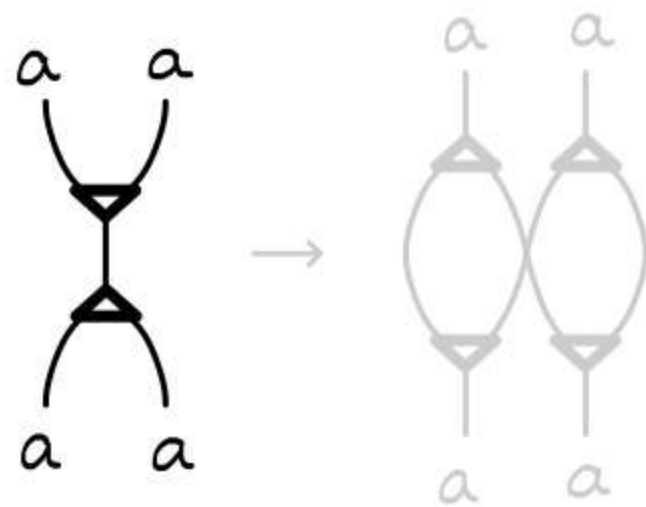
$$\frac{K\left\{ac\downarrow\frac{a\vee a}{a^*}\right\}}{\Phi}$$



$$\frac{H\left\{ac\uparrow\frac{a^*}{a\wedge a}\right\}}{\Phi}$$

$$\frac{K\{a\vee a\}}{[ava/a^*]\Phi}$$

Rewriting flows lifts to derivations

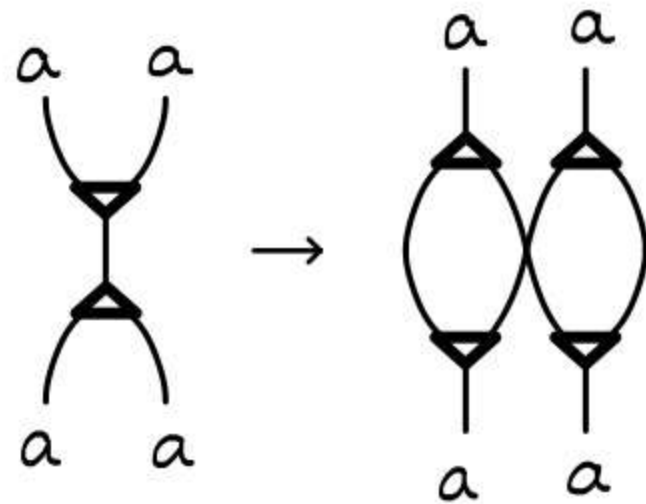


$$\frac{K\left\{ac\downarrow \frac{a \vee a}{a^*}\right\}}{\Phi} \quad \frac{H\left\{ac\uparrow \frac{a^*}{a \wedge a}\right\}}{\Phi}$$

→

$$\frac{K\{a \vee a\}}{[ava/a^*] \Phi} \quad H\left\{ \begin{array}{l} ac\uparrow \frac{a}{a \wedge a} \vee ac\uparrow \frac{a}{a \wedge a} \\ m \frac{a \vee a}{a} \wedge ac\downarrow \frac{a \vee a}{a} \end{array} \right\}$$

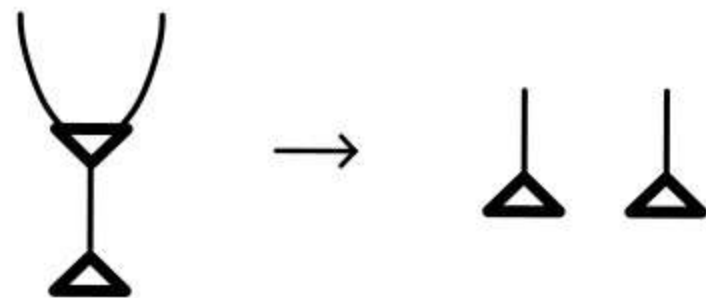
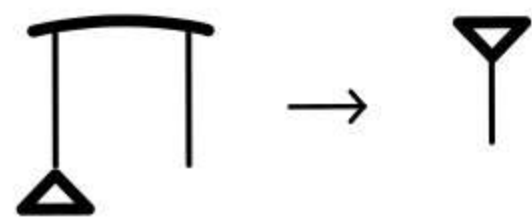
Rewriting flows lifts to derivations



$$\frac{K\left\{ac\downarrow \frac{a \vee a}{a^*}\right\}}{\Phi} \rightarrow \frac{H\left\{ac\uparrow \frac{a^*}{a \wedge a}\right\}}{\Phi}$$

$$\frac{K\{a \vee a\}}{[ava/a^*] \Phi} \rightarrow H\left\{ \begin{array}{l} ac\uparrow \frac{a}{a \wedge a} \vee ac\uparrow \frac{a}{a \wedge a} \\ m \frac{a \vee a}{a} \wedge ac\downarrow \frac{a \vee a}{a} \end{array} \right\}$$

Rewriting flows lifts to derivations

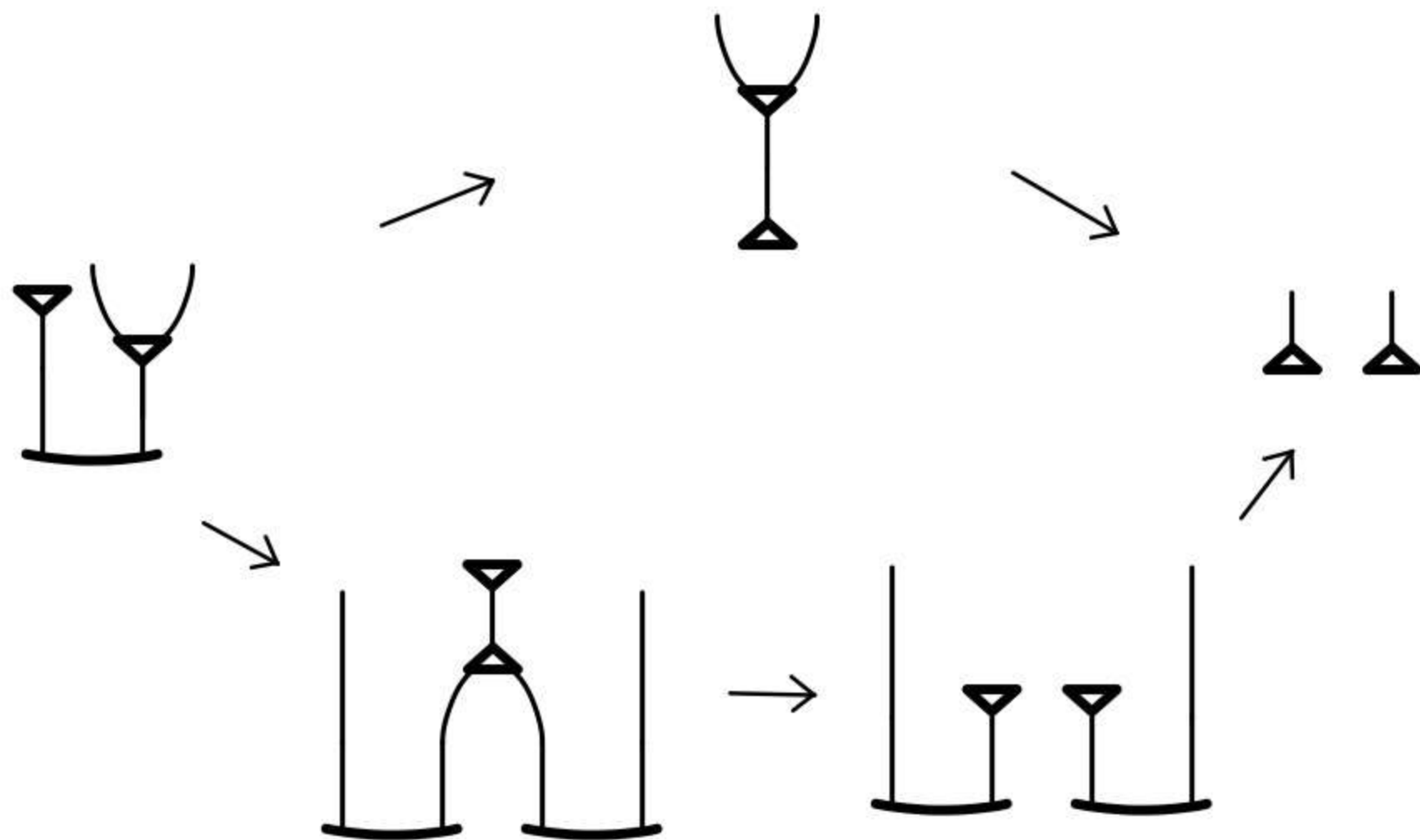


We've seen these rewrite steps
before in the cut elimination
procedure for SKS!

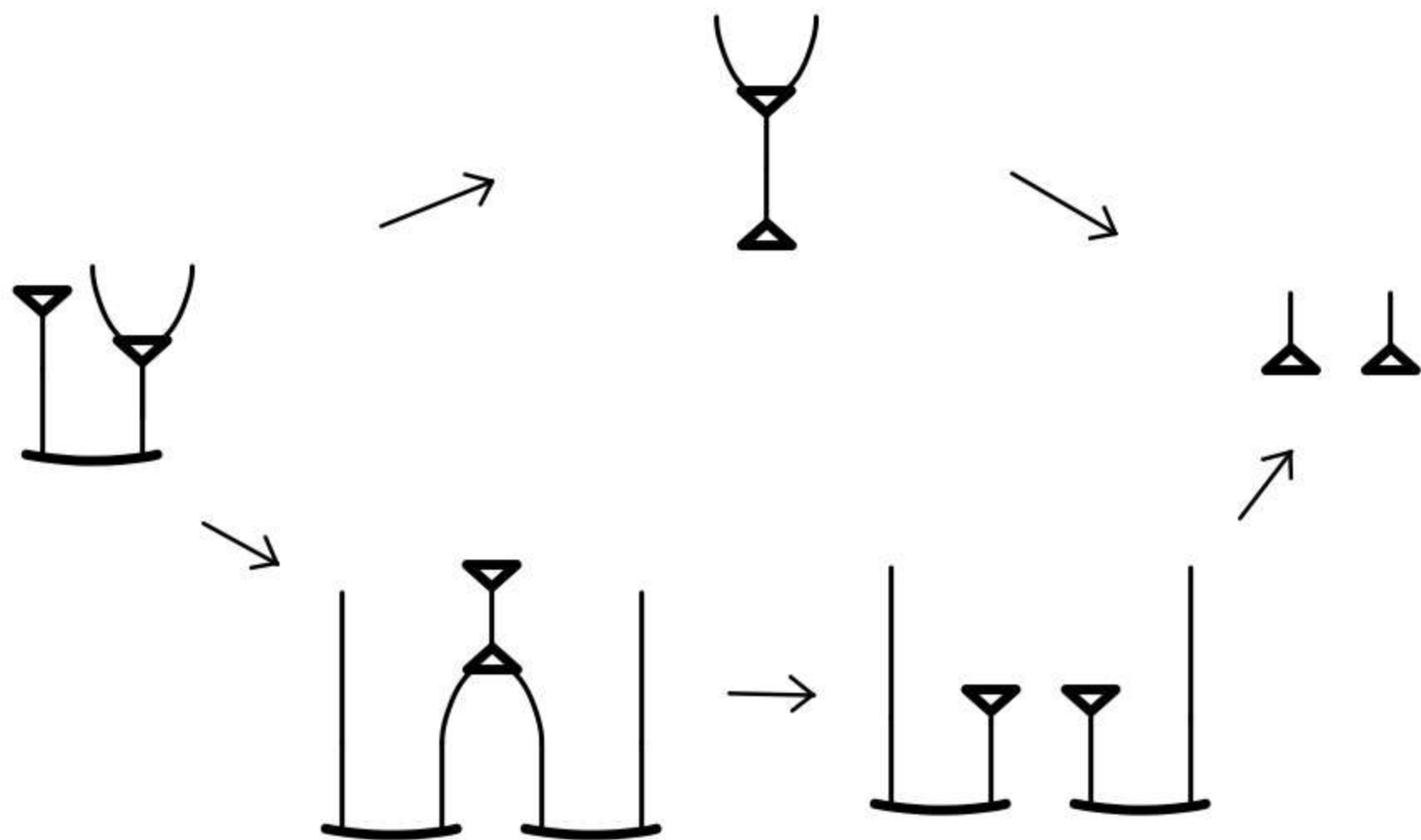
Rewriting flows is locally confluent



Rewriting flows is locally confluent

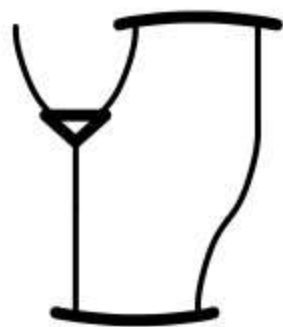


Rewriting flows is locally confluent

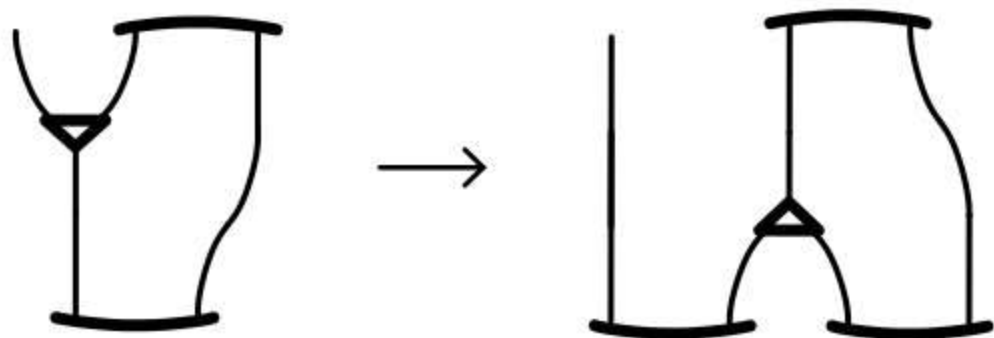


sometimes rewriting
eliminates cuts,
sometimes it
duplicates them

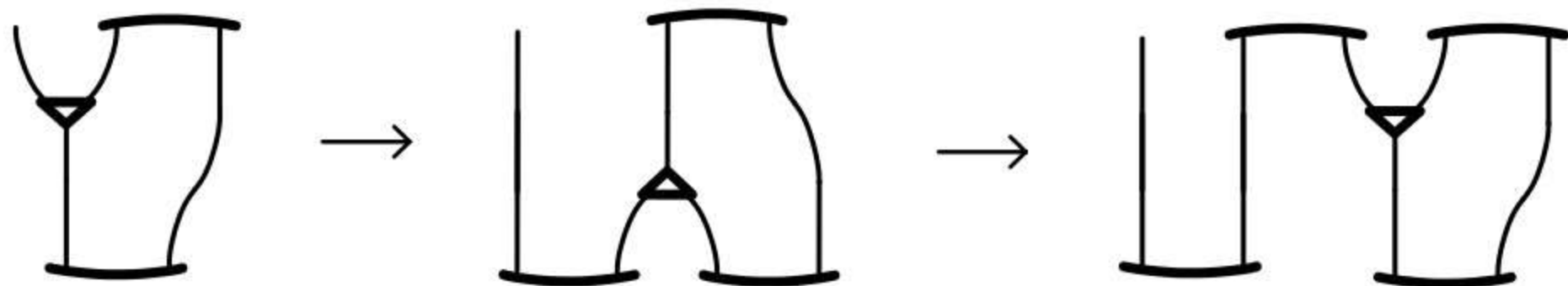
Rewriting flows does not always terminate!



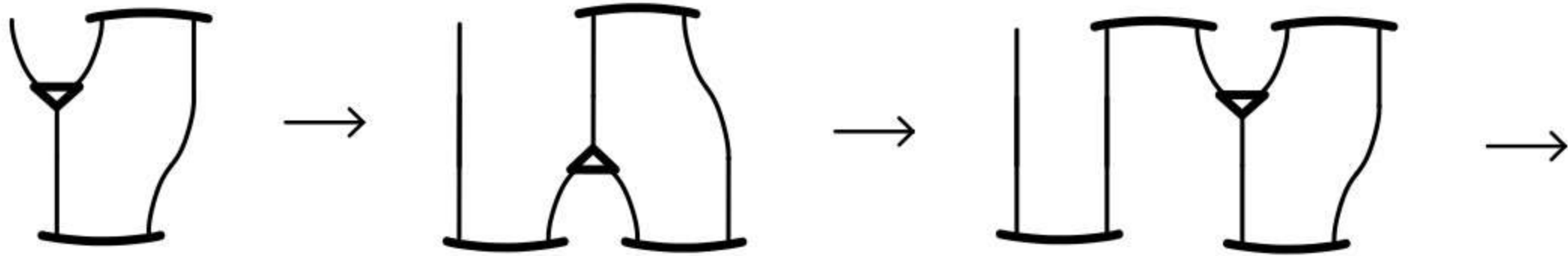
Rewriting flows does not always terminate!



Rewriting flows does not always terminate!

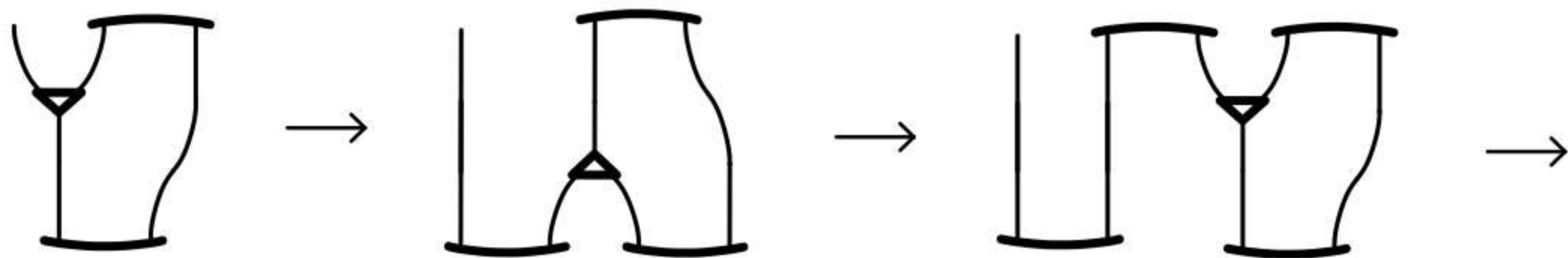


Rewriting flows does not always terminate!



the problem arises when a (co)contraction gets into a path
from an identity to a cut

Rewriting flows does not always terminate!



the problem arises when a
from an identity to a cut

(co)contraction gets into a path



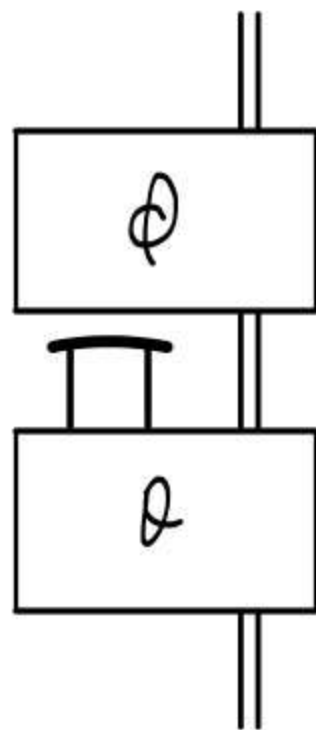
break the paths between
cuts and identities

Identities can be pulled up derivations

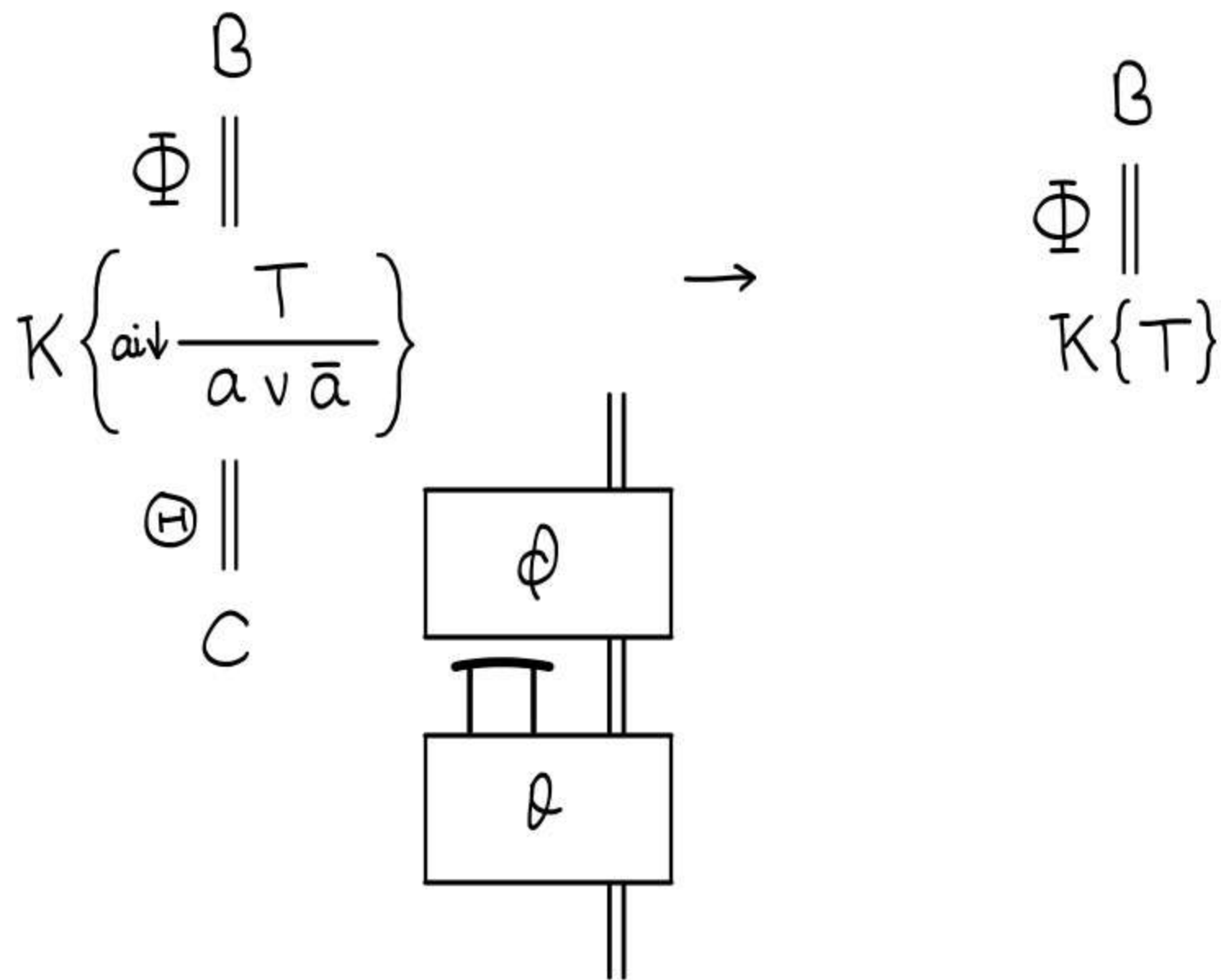
$$\begin{array}{c}
 \mathcal{B} \\
 \Phi \parallel \\
 K \left\{ a \downarrow \frac{T}{a \vee \bar{a}} \right\} \\
 \oplus \parallel \\
 \mathcal{C}
 \end{array}$$

Identities can be pulled up derivations

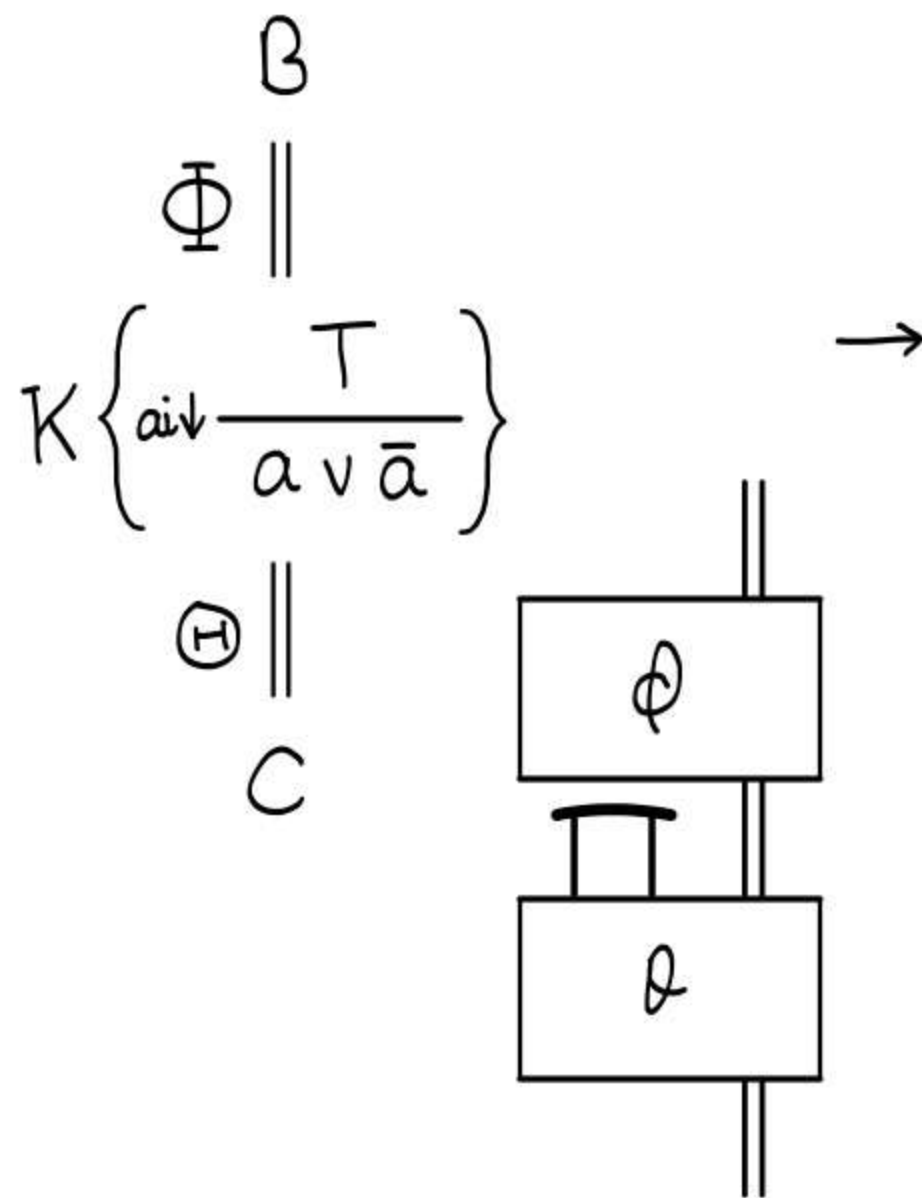
$$\begin{array}{c}
 \mathcal{B} \\
 \Phi \parallel \\
 K \left\{ aiv \frac{T}{a \vee \bar{a}} \right\} \\
 \oplus \parallel \\
 C
 \end{array}$$



Identities can be pulled up derivations

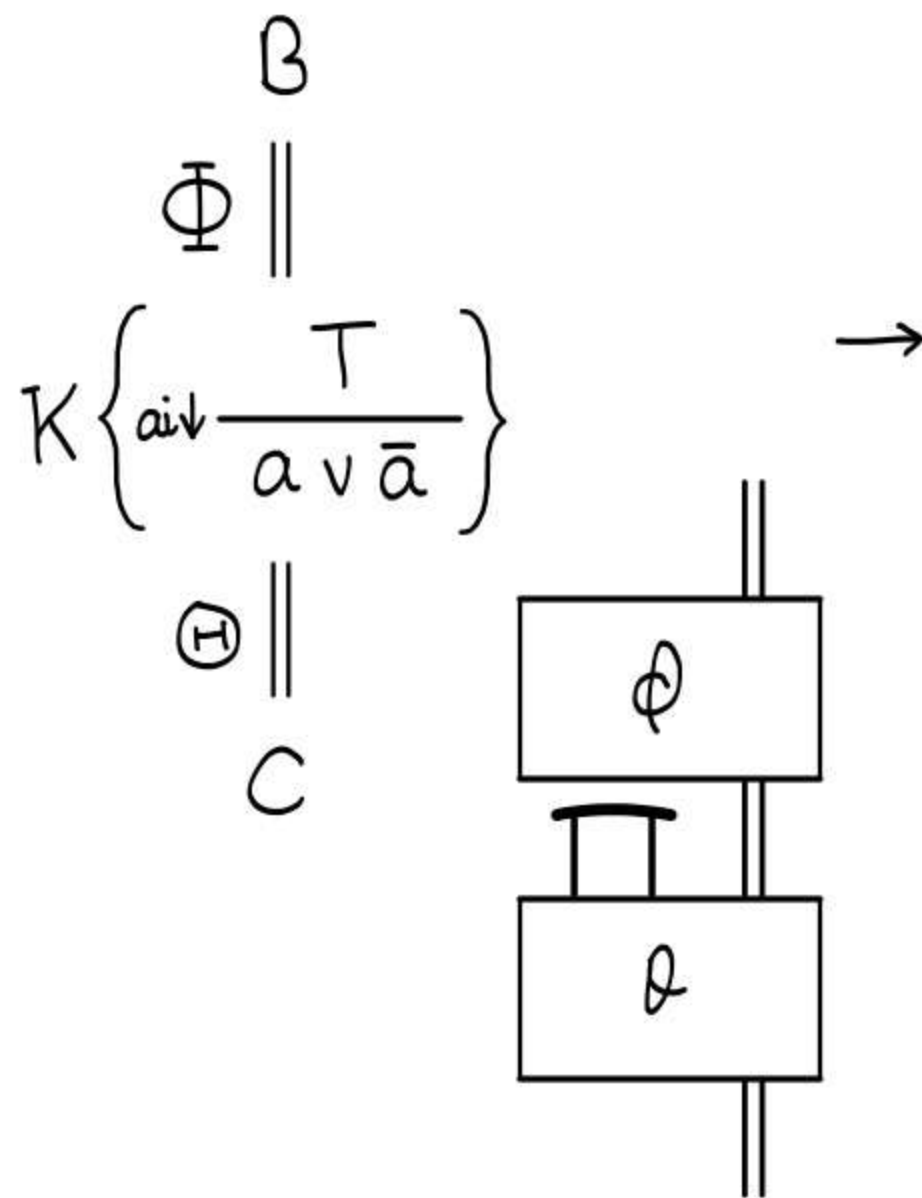


Identities can be pulled up derivations



$$\boxed{\begin{array}{c} \beta \\ \Phi \parallel \\ K\{T\} \end{array} \wedge \text{ai} \downarrow \frac{T}{a \vee \bar{a}}}$$

Identities can be pulled up derivations

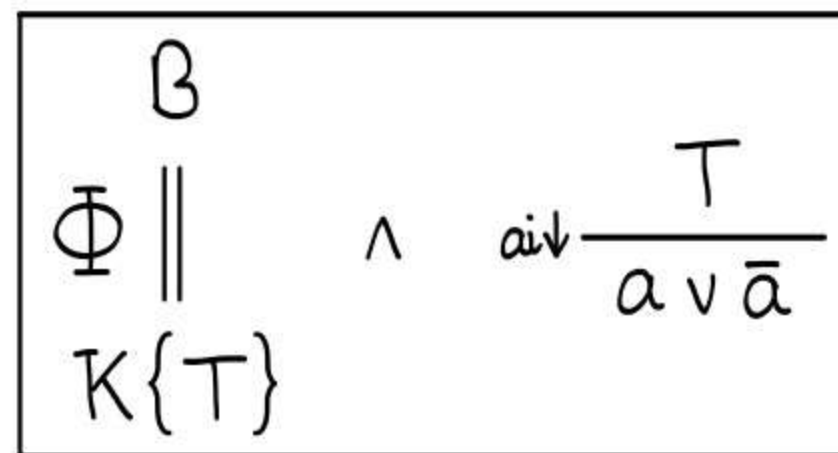
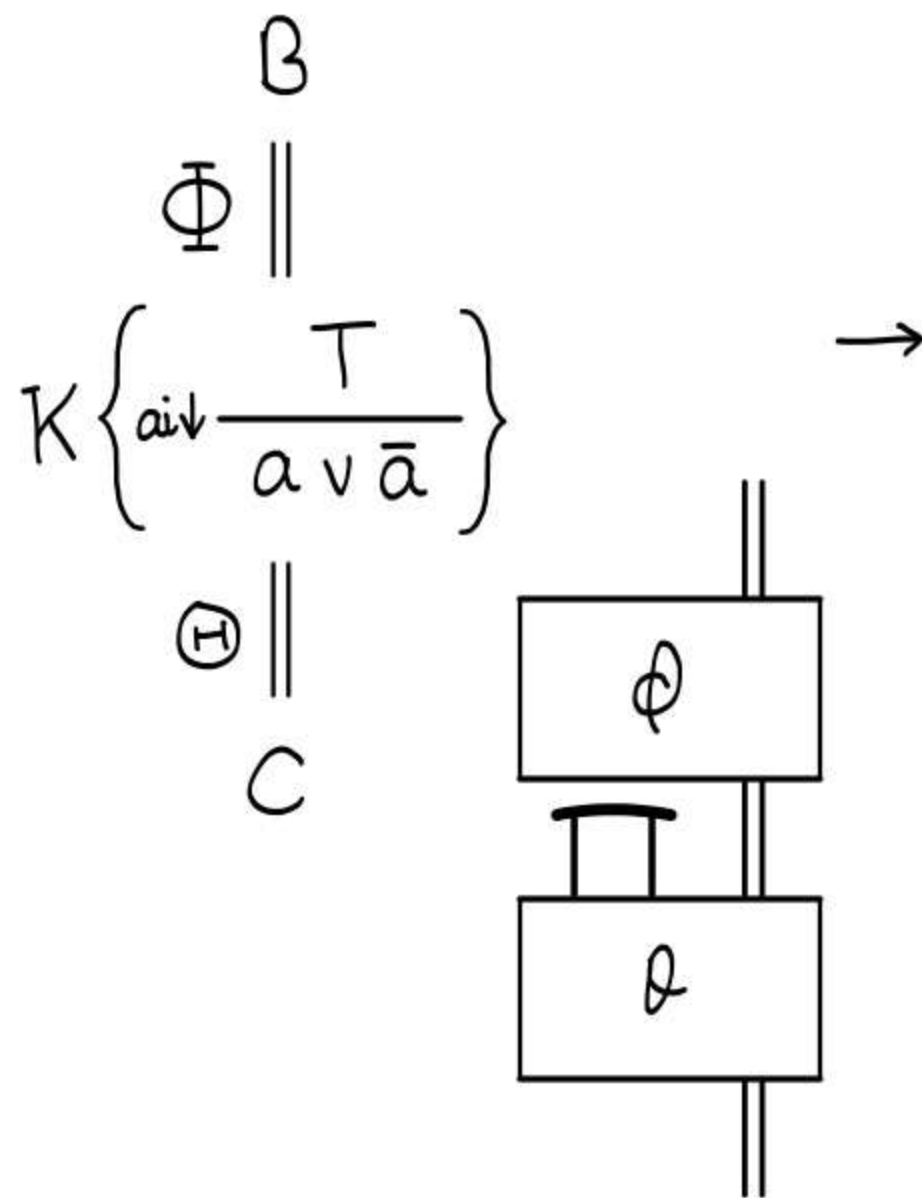


$$\boxed{\begin{array}{c} \beta \\ \Phi \parallel \\ K\{T\} \end{array} \wedge \text{ai} \downarrow \frac{T}{a \vee \bar{a}}}$$

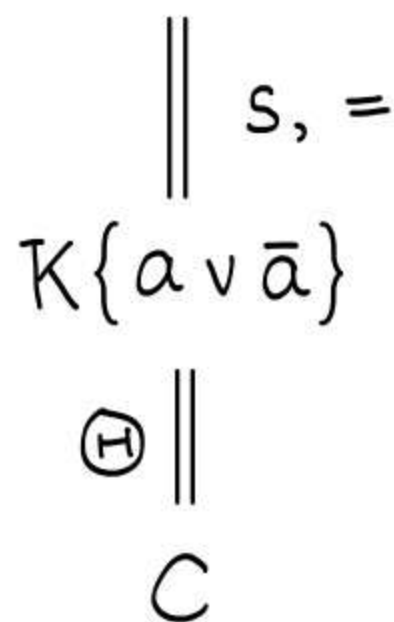
induction
on $K\{\}$

$$\parallel s, = \\ K\{a \vee \bar{a}\}$$

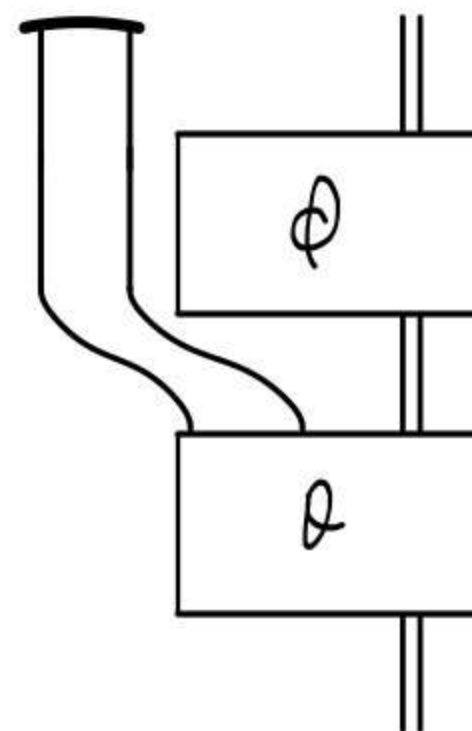
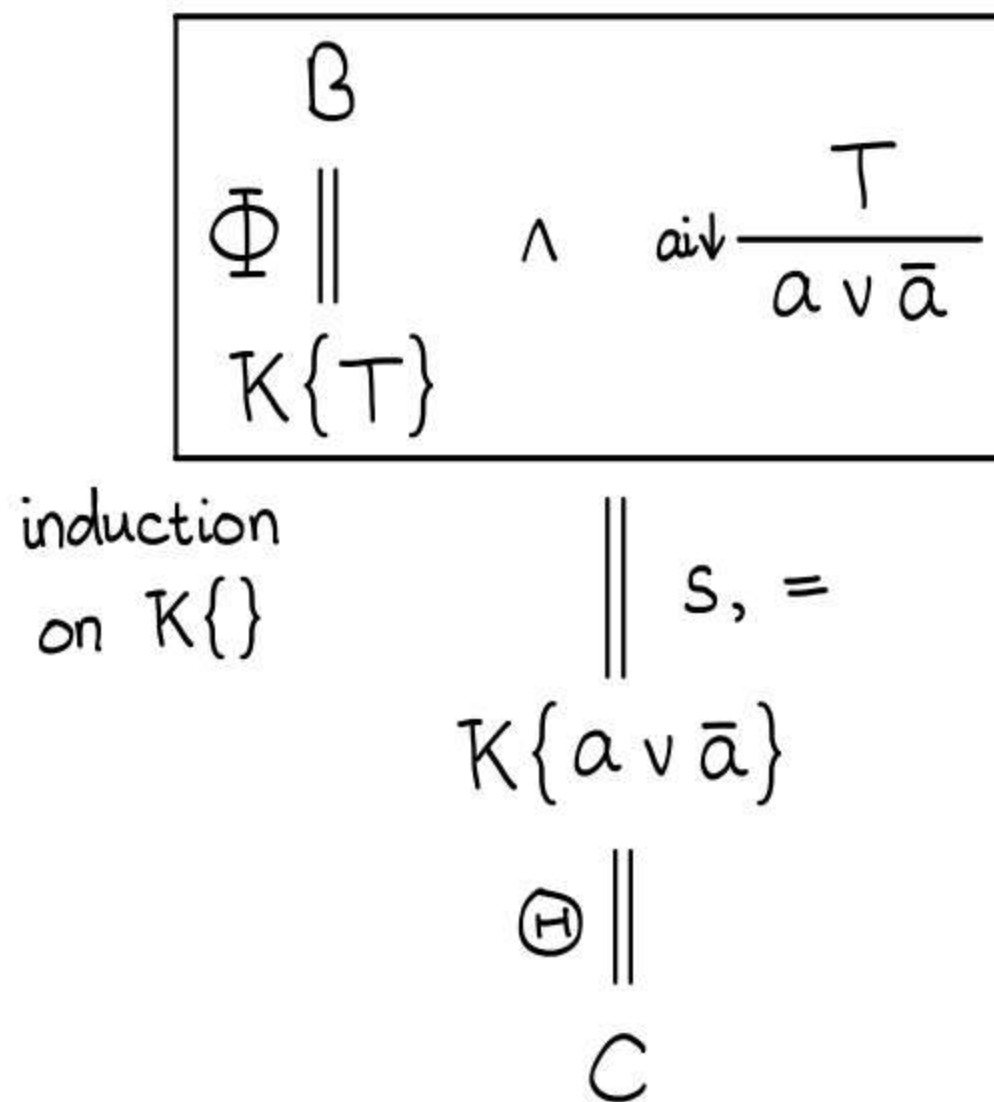
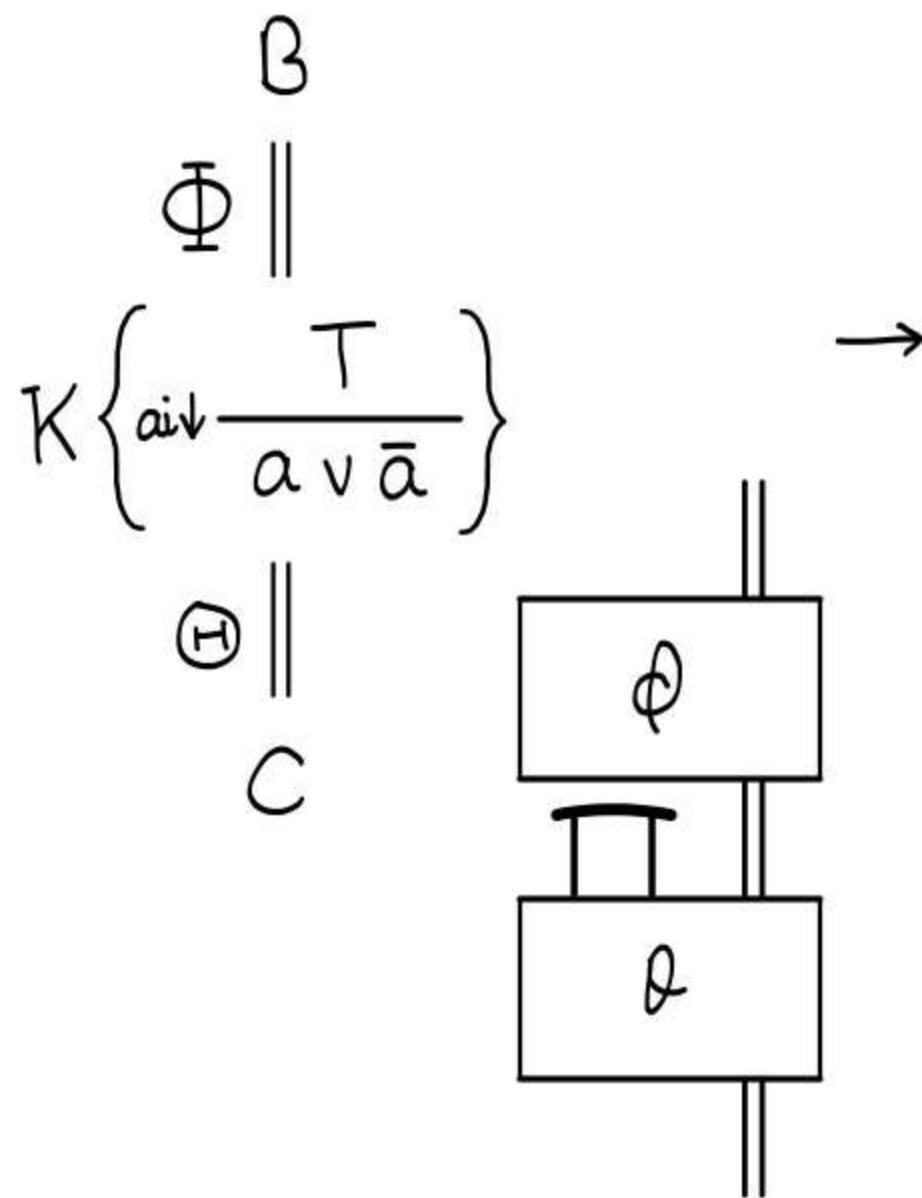
Identities can be pulled up derivations



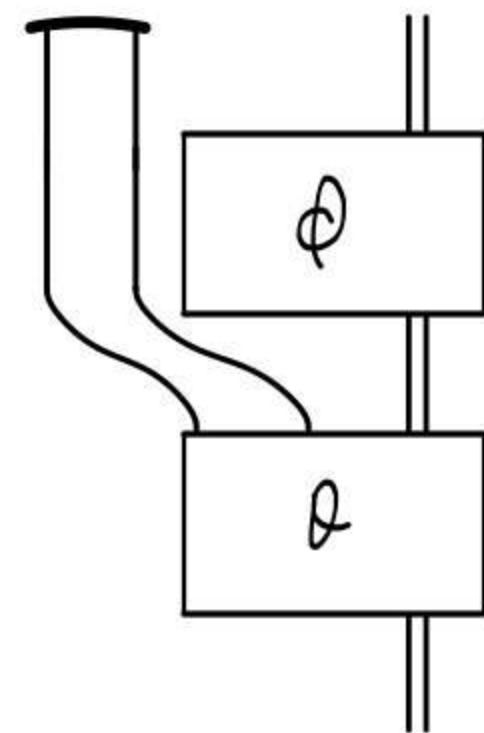
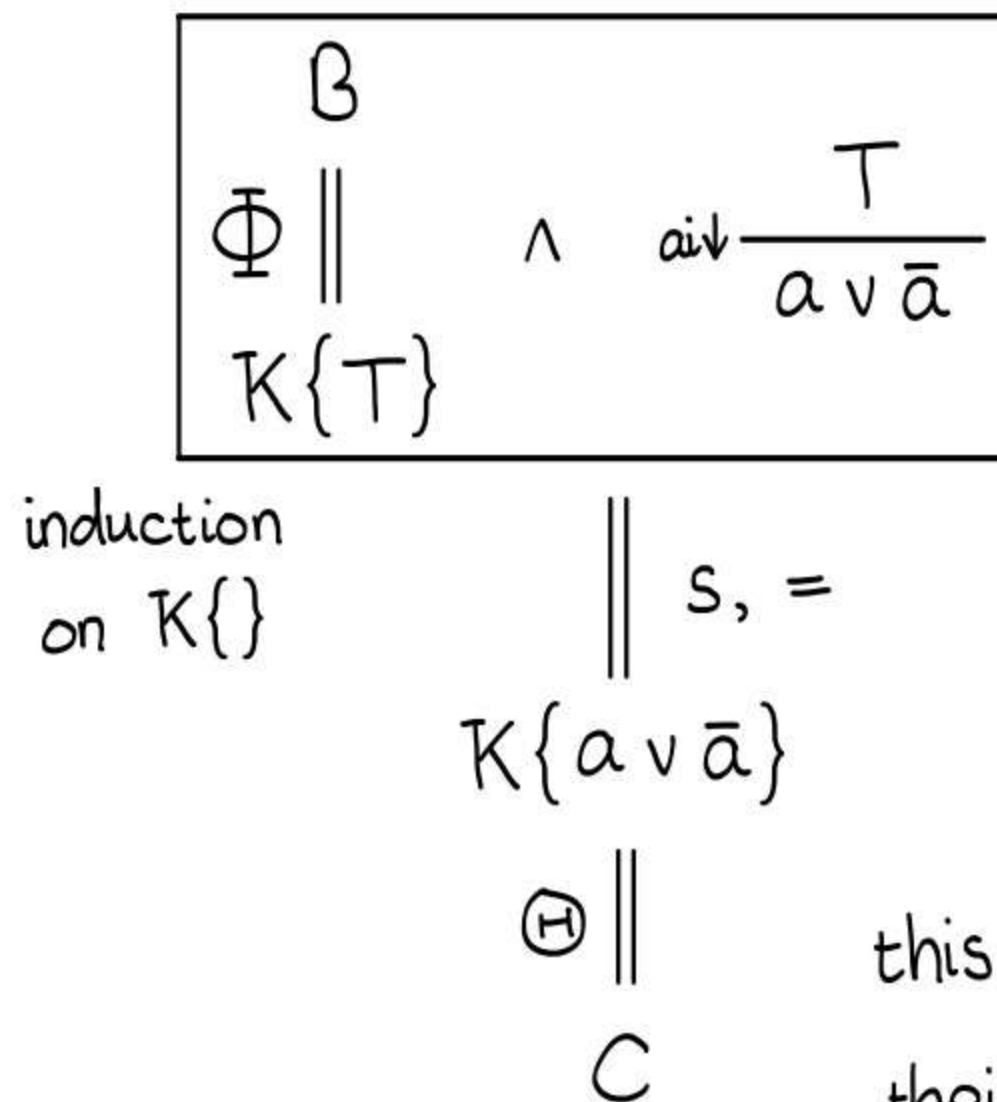
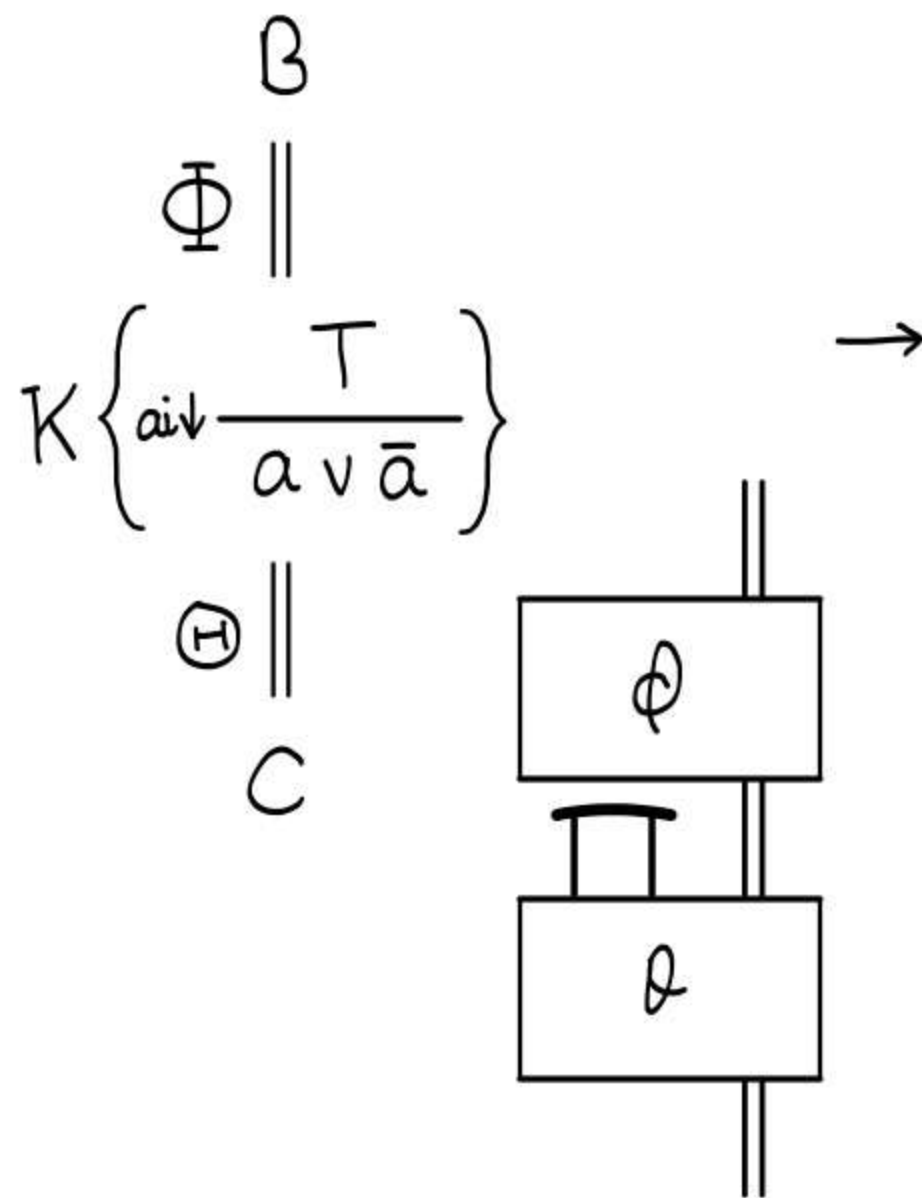
induction
on $K\{\}$



Identities can be pulled up derivations



Identities can be pulled up derivations



this justifies identifying their flows

For some atom a , pull every identity up and every cut down to get this:

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \overbrace{\quad\quad\quad}^{m \geq 0} \\
 B \wedge \frac{T}{a \vee \bar{a}} \wedge \dots \wedge \frac{T}{a \vee \bar{a}} \\
 \quad \quad \quad \Downarrow \exists \\
 C \wedge \frac{a \wedge \bar{a}}{\perp} \vee \dots \vee \frac{a \wedge \bar{a}}{\perp} \\
 \underbrace{\quad\quad\quad}_{n \geq 0}
 \end{array}$$

For some atom a , pull every identity up and every cut down to get this:

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \underbrace{m \geq 0} \\
 B \wedge \frac{T}{a \vee \bar{a}} \wedge \dots \wedge \frac{T}{a \vee \bar{a}} \\
 \Xi \parallel \\
 C \wedge \underbrace{\frac{a \wedge \bar{a}}{\perp} \vee \dots \vee \frac{a \wedge \bar{a}}{\perp}}_{n \geq 0}
 \end{array}$$

then transform it like this to get a single cut and identity on a

→

$B \wedge$

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \frac{T}{a \vee \bar{a}} \\
 \parallel ac \uparrow, m, = \\
 (a \vee \bar{a}) \wedge \dots \wedge (a \vee \bar{a})
 \end{array}$$

$\Xi \parallel$

$C \vee$

$$\begin{array}{c}
 (a \wedge \bar{a}) \vee \dots \vee (a \wedge \bar{a}) \\
 \parallel ac \uparrow, m, = \\
 \frac{a \wedge \bar{a}}{\perp}
 \end{array}$$

Every proof Φ that contains a cut $\frac{a \wedge \bar{a}}{\perp}$
 can be transformed into a proof

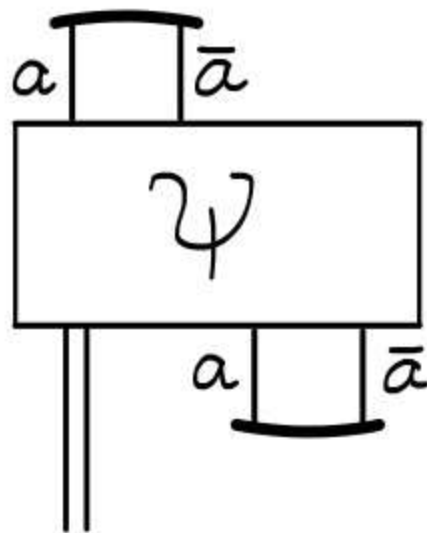


$$\frac{\top}{a \vee \bar{a}}$$

$$\Psi \parallel$$

with flow

$$\boxed{\mathcal{B} \vee \frac{a \wedge \bar{a}}{\perp}}$$



where Ψ contains no
 cuts or identities on a .

Every proof Φ that contains a cut $\frac{a \wedge \bar{a}}{\perp}$
 can be transformed into a proof

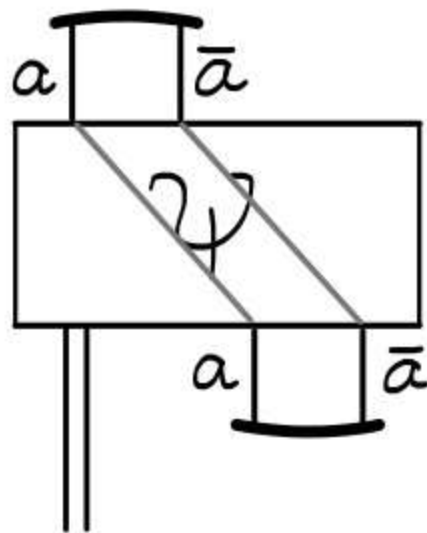


$$\frac{\top}{a \vee \bar{a}}$$

$$\Psi \parallel$$

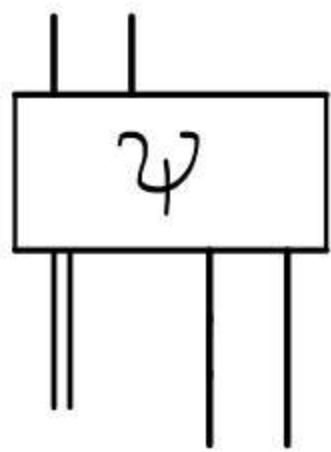
with flow

$$\boxed{B \vee \frac{a \wedge \bar{a}}{\perp}}$$



where Ψ contains no
 cuts or identities on a .

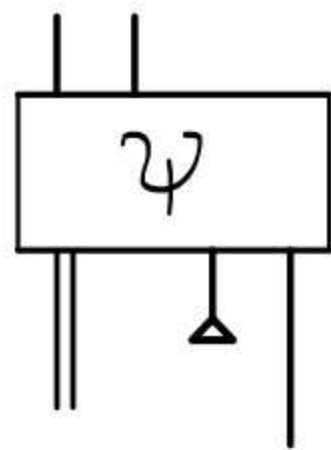
Ψ contains paths from the identity to the cut and these are what
 we want to break



$$a \vee \bar{a}$$

$$\neg \psi \parallel$$

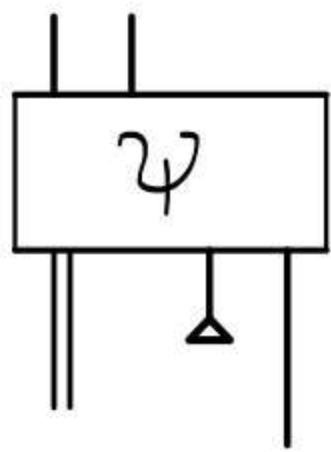
$$B \vee (a \wedge \bar{a})$$



$$a \vee \bar{a}$$

$$\neg \psi \parallel$$

$$B \vee (\underline{\underline{\tau}} \wedge \bar{a})$$

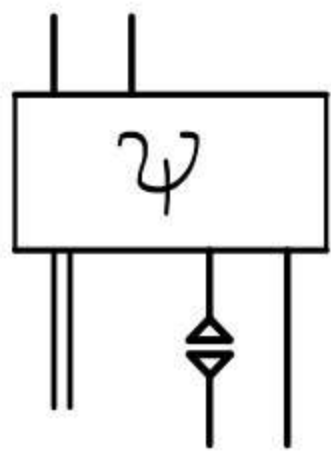


$$a \vee \bar{a}$$

$$\Psi \parallel$$

$$B \vee (\underline{\underline{a}} \wedge \bar{a})$$

$$\pi_a = \boxed{\begin{aligned} & a \uparrow \frac{a}{\top} \wedge \bar{a} \\ & = \frac{\quad}{\bar{a}} \\ & = \frac{\perp}{a \downarrow \frac{\perp}{a} \vee \bar{a}} \end{aligned}}$$

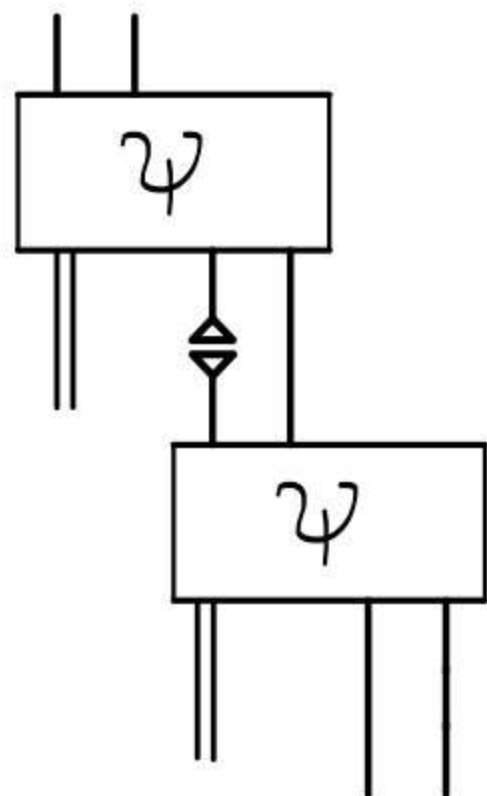


$$a \vee \bar{a}$$

$$\Psi \parallel$$

$$B \vee (\underline{\underline{a}} \wedge \bar{a})$$

$$\pi_a = \boxed{\begin{array}{l} a \uparrow \frac{a}{\tau} \wedge \bar{a} \\ = \frac{\quad}{\bar{a}} \\ = \frac{1}{a} \vee \bar{a} \end{array}}$$

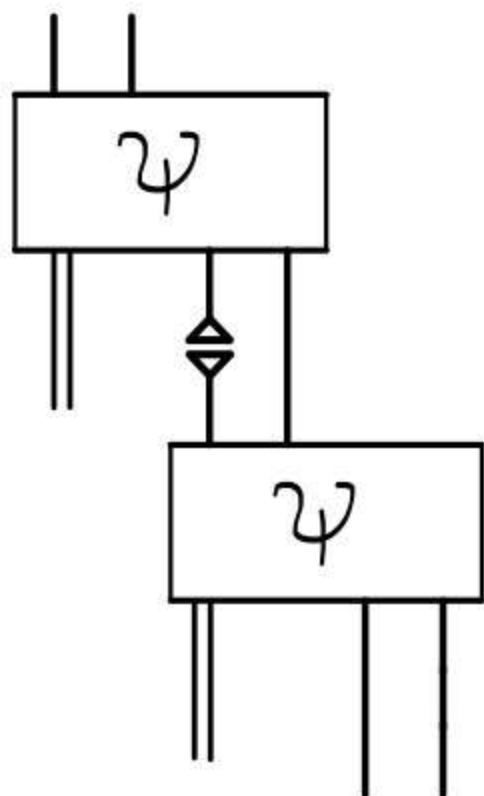


$$a \vee \bar{a}$$

$$\Psi \parallel$$

$$B \vee (\underline{\underline{a}} \wedge \bar{a})$$

$$\pi_a = \boxed{\begin{array}{l} a \uparrow \frac{a}{\top} \wedge \bar{a} \\ = \frac{\quad}{\bar{a}} \\ = \frac{\perp}{a} \vee \bar{a} \end{array}}$$



$$a \vee \bar{a}$$

$$\Psi \parallel$$

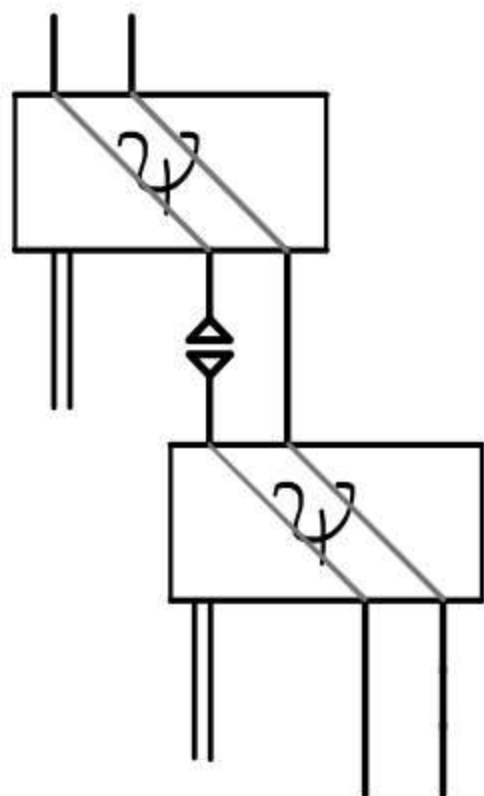
$$\mathcal{B} \vee (a \wedge \bar{a})$$

$$\Pi_a =$$

$a \uparrow$	$\frac{a}{\top}$	$\wedge \bar{a}$
$= \frac{\quad}{\bar{a}}$		
$a \downarrow$	$\frac{\perp}{a}$	$\vee \bar{a}$

$$\mathcal{B} \vee$$

$a \vee \bar{a}$
$\Psi \parallel$
$(a \wedge \bar{a})$
$\Pi_a \parallel$
$a \vee \bar{a}$
$\Psi \parallel$
$\mathcal{B} \vee (a \wedge \bar{a})$



$$a \vee \bar{a}$$

$$\Psi \parallel$$

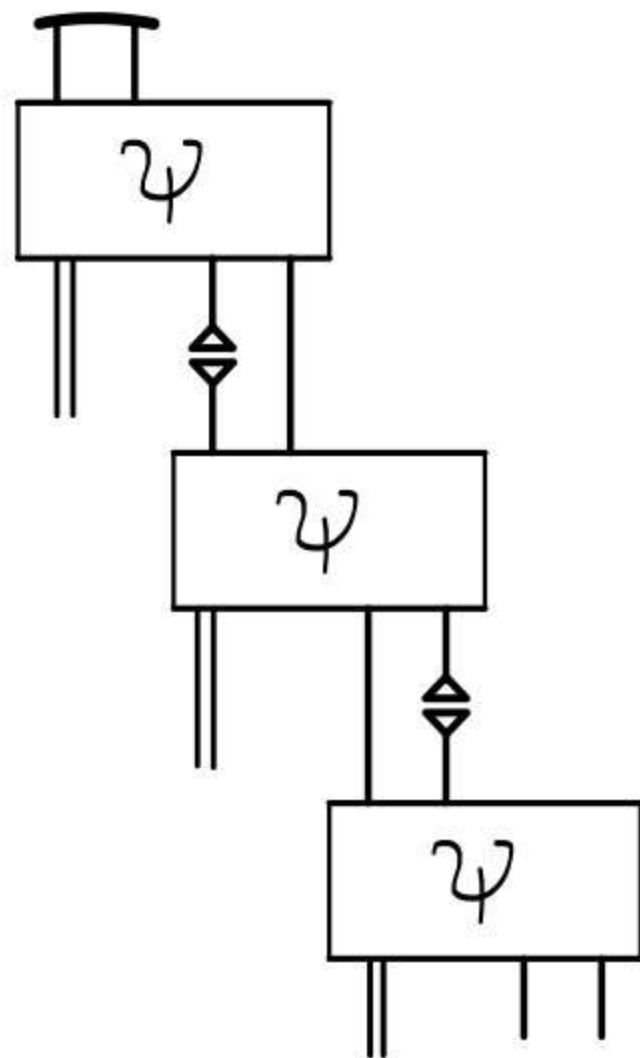
$$\mathcal{B} \vee (a \wedge \bar{a})$$

$$\pi_a =$$

$a \uparrow \frac{a}{\top} \wedge \bar{a}$
$= \frac{\quad}{\bar{a}}$
$= \frac{\perp}{a \downarrow \frac{\perp}{a} \vee \bar{a}}$

$$\mathcal{B} \vee$$

$a \vee \bar{a}$ $\Psi \parallel$ $(a \wedge \bar{a})$ $\pi_a \parallel$ $a \vee \bar{a}$ $\Psi \parallel$ $\mathcal{B} \vee (a \wedge \bar{a})$
--



$$a \vee \bar{a}$$

$$\Psi \parallel$$

$$\mathcal{B} \vee (a \wedge \bar{a})$$

$$\Pi_a =$$

$$\frac{a \wedge \bar{a}}{\top}$$

$$= \frac{\quad}{\bar{a}}$$

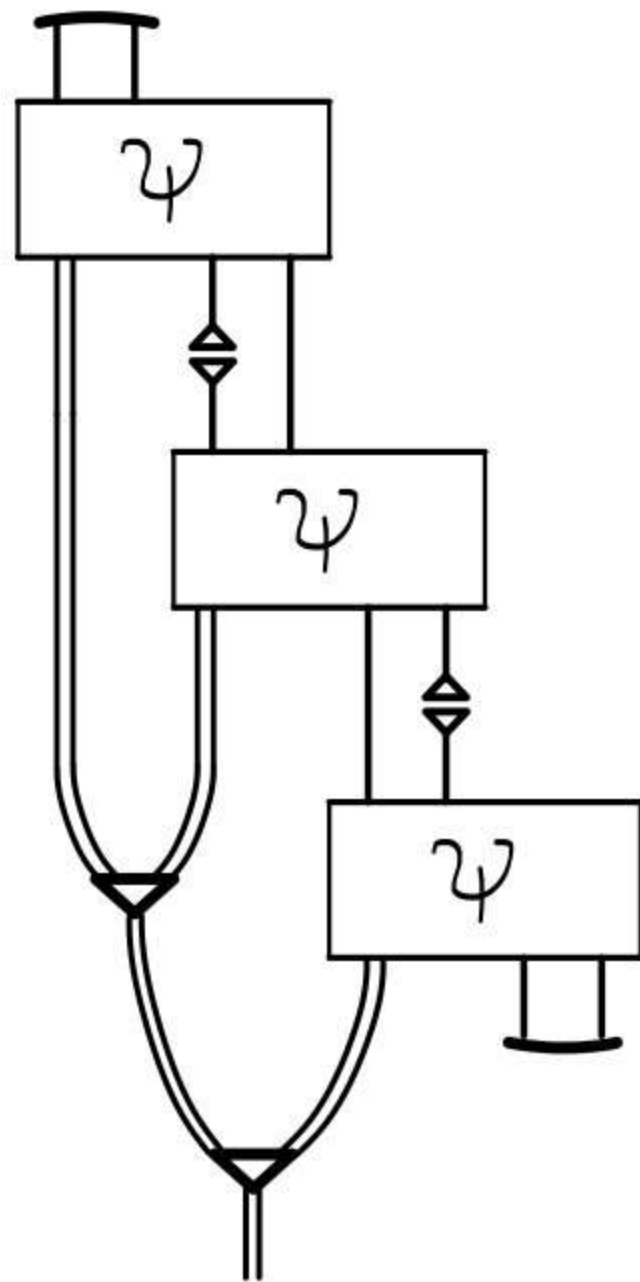
$$= \frac{\perp}{a \vee \bar{a}}$$

$$a \vee \bar{a}$$

$$\Psi \parallel$$

$$\mathcal{B} \vee$$

$$\left(\begin{array}{l} (a \wedge \bar{a}) \\ \Pi_a \parallel \\ a \vee \bar{a} \\ \Psi \parallel \\ \mathcal{B} \vee (a \wedge \bar{a}) \end{array} \right)$$



$$a \vee \bar{a}$$

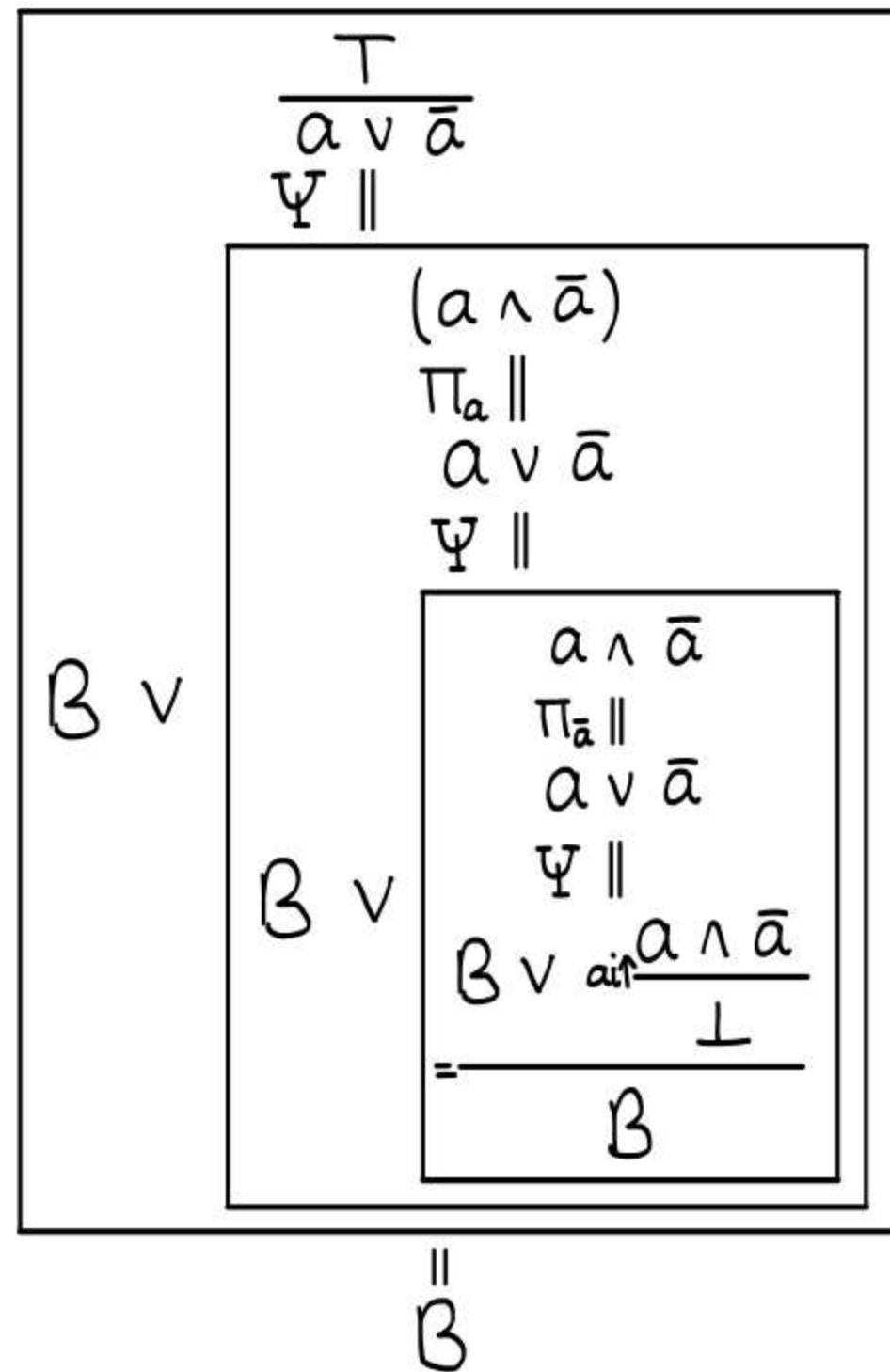
$$\Psi \parallel$$

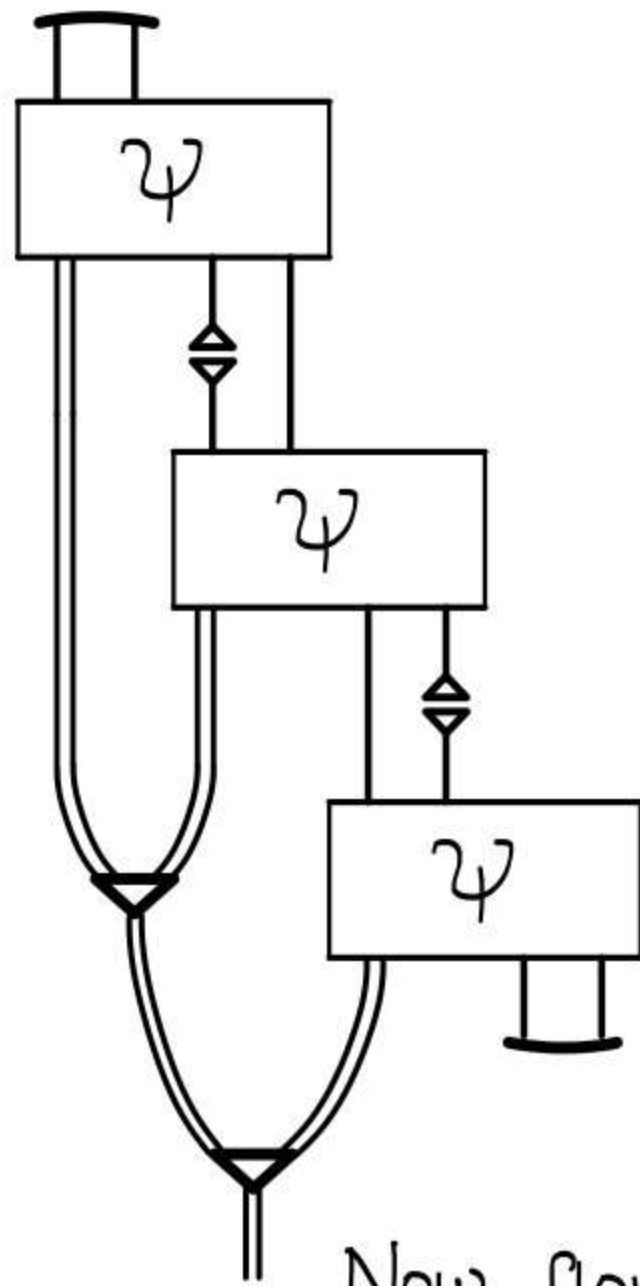
$$B \vee (a \wedge \bar{a})$$

$$\Pi_a =$$

$$\frac{a \uparrow \frac{a}{\top} \wedge \bar{a}}{= \frac{\top}{\bar{a}}}$$

$$= \frac{\perp \downarrow \frac{\perp}{a} \vee \bar{a}}{B}$$





$$a \vee \bar{a}$$

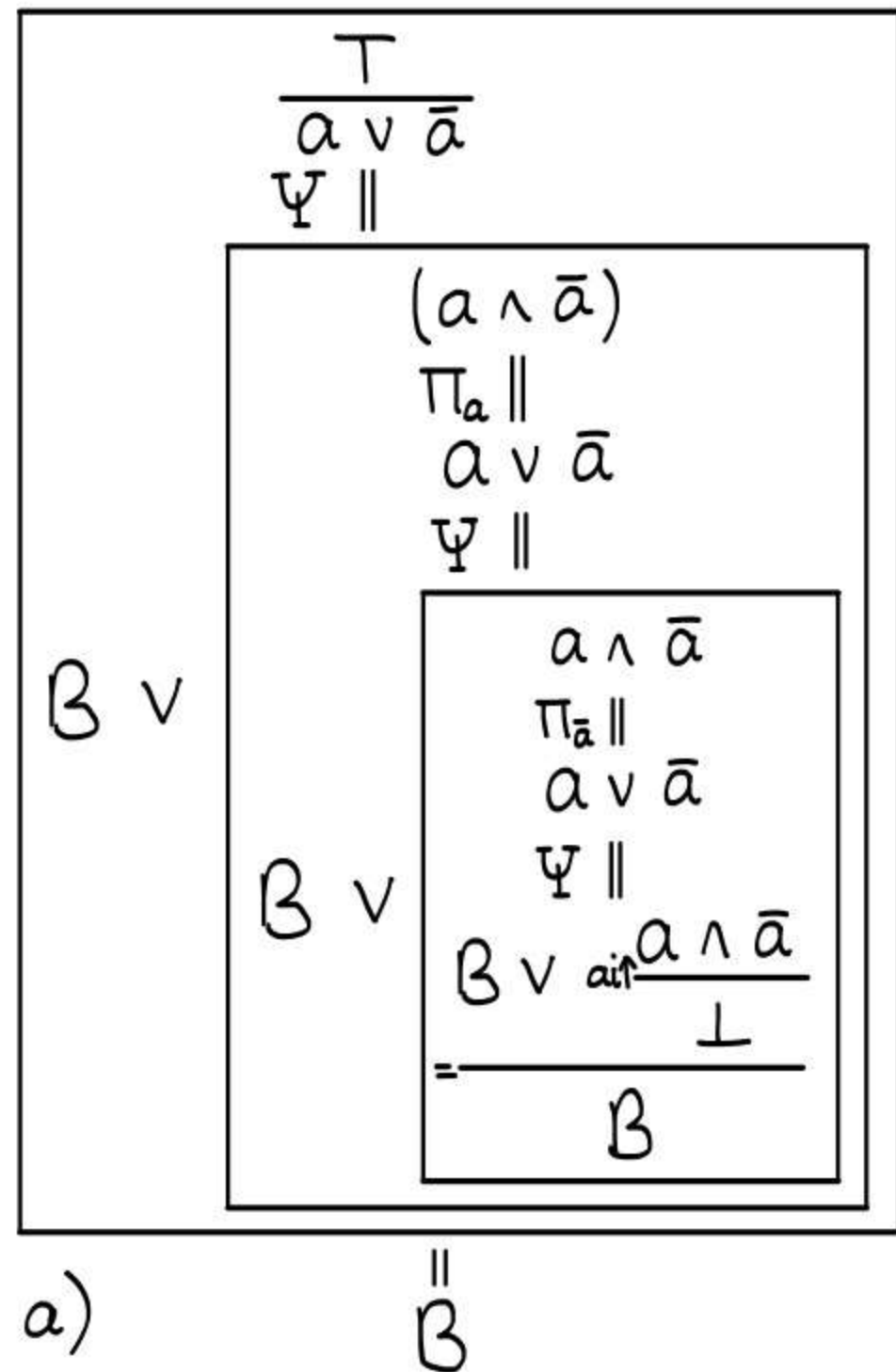
$$\Psi \parallel$$

$$B \vee (a \wedge \bar{a})$$

$$\Pi_a =$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{awf} \frac{a}{\top} \wedge \bar{a} \\ = \frac{\quad}{\bar{a}} \\ = \frac{\text{awf} \frac{\perp}{a} \vee \bar{a}}{\quad} \end{array}$$

Now flow rewriting will terminate! (for a)



Atomic flows do not form a proof system : essential information is lost and there is no polynomial correctness criterion* (Das 2013)

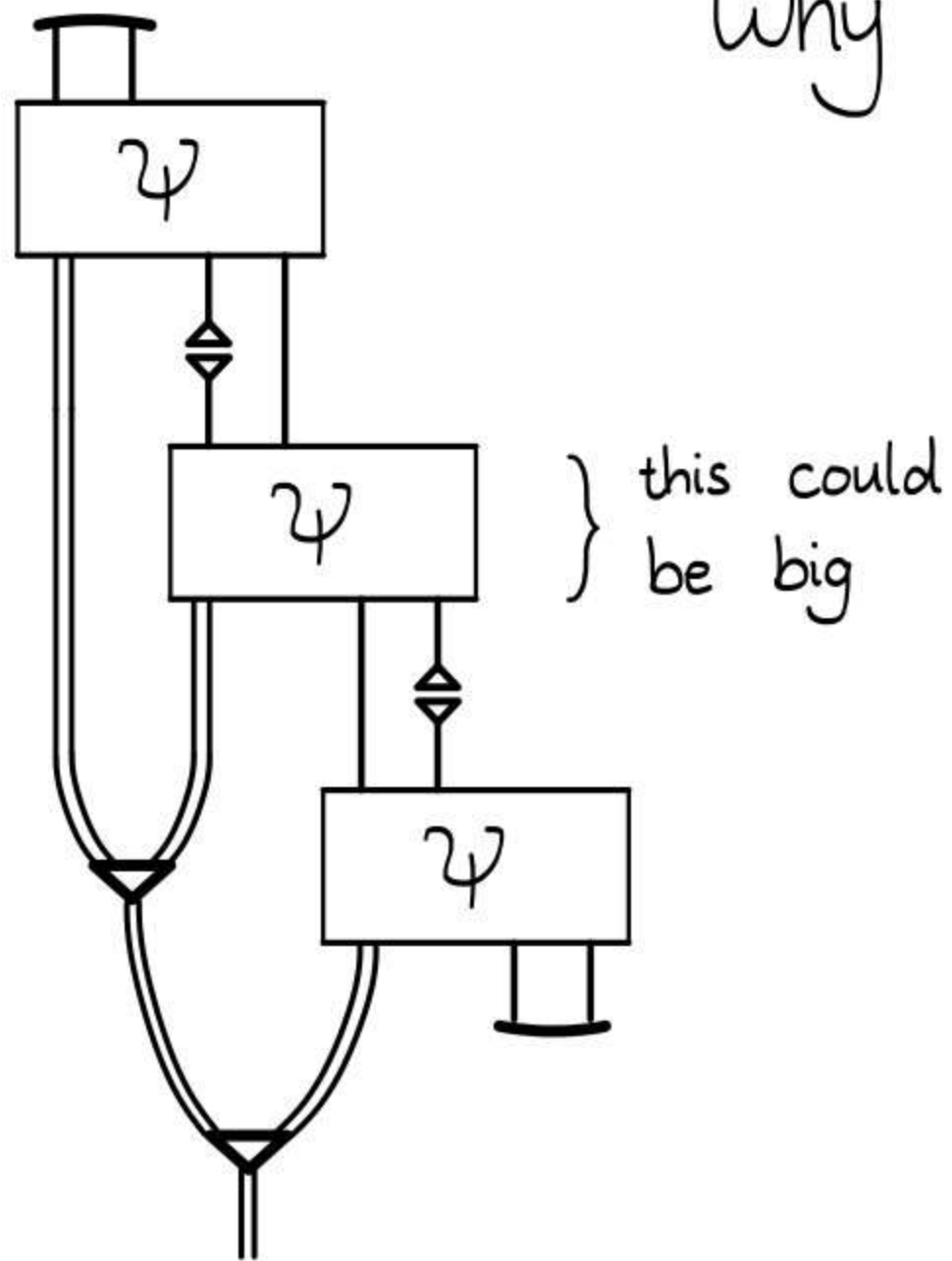
*unless integer factoring is in $P/poly$

Atomic flows do not form a proof system : essential information is lost and there is no polynomial correctness criterion* (Das 2013) *unless integer factoring is in $P/poly$

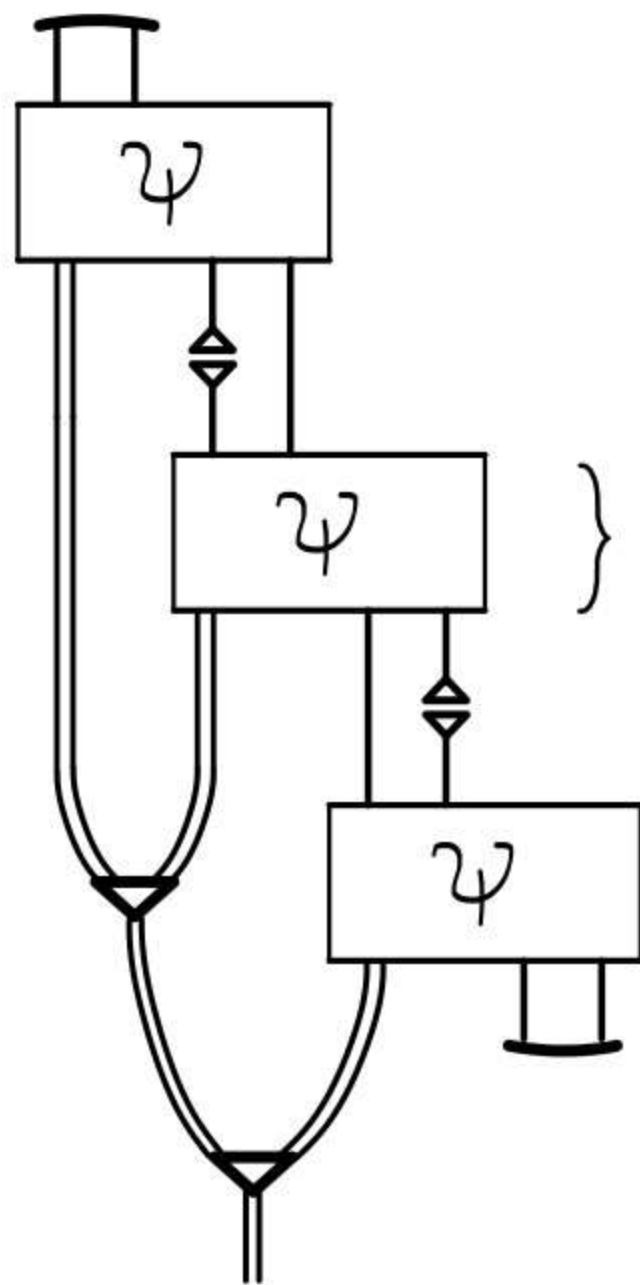
but they give us some idea for how the substitution of proofs could work

Why substitution of proofs?

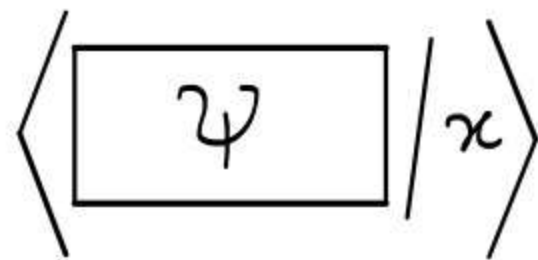
Why substitution of proofs?



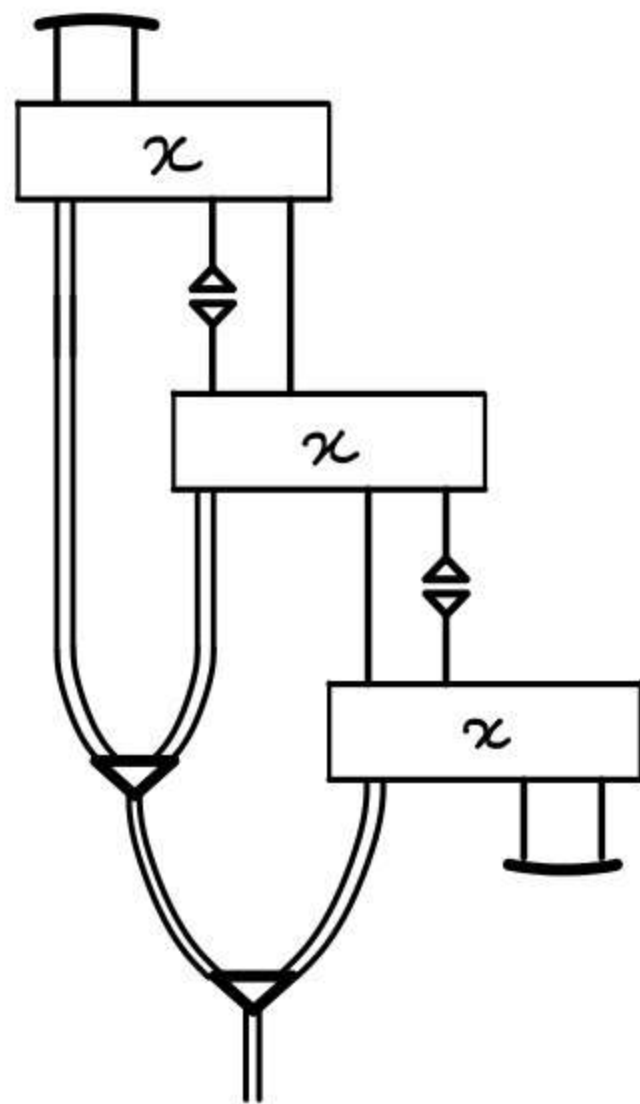
Why substitution of proofs?



} this could
be big

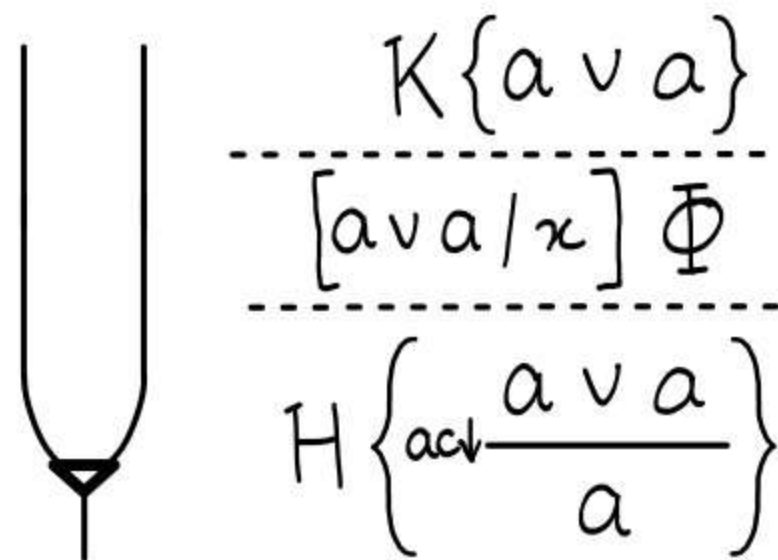
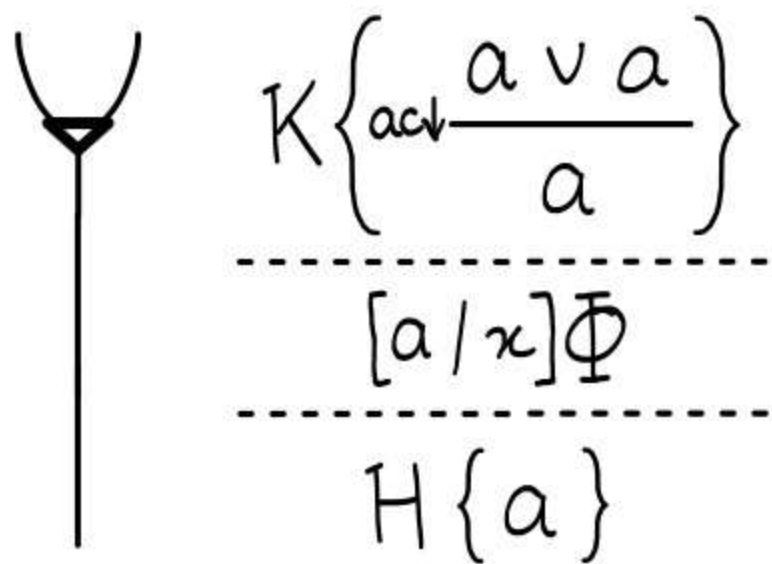


Factorisation would lead to
proof compression, especially
in normalisation procedures



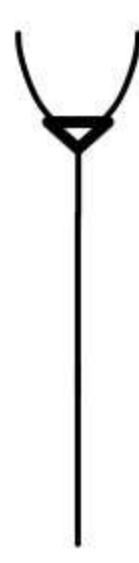
Why substitution of proofs?

Why substitution of proofs?



Why substitution of proofs?

$$\frac{K\{a \vee a\}}{\frac{\left\langle \text{act} \frac{a \vee a}{a} / \kappa \right\rangle \Phi}{H\{a\}}}$$



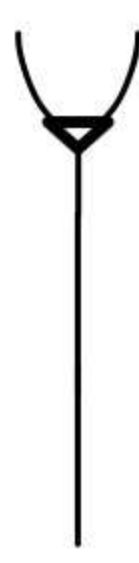
$$\frac{K\left\{\text{act} \frac{a \vee a}{a}\right\}}{\frac{[a / \kappa] \Phi}{H\{a\}}}$$



$$\frac{K\{a \vee a\}}{\frac{[a \vee a / \kappa] \Phi}{H\left\{\text{act} \frac{a \vee a}{a}\right\}}}$$

Why substitution of proofs?

$$\frac{\frac{K\{a \vee a\}}{\left\langle \text{act} \frac{a \vee a}{a} / \kappa \right\rangle \Phi}}{H\{a\}}$$



$$\frac{K\left\{\text{act} \frac{a \vee a}{a}\right\}}{[a / \kappa] \Phi}$$

$$H\{a\}$$

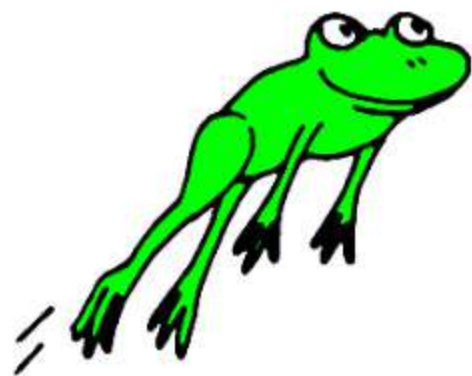
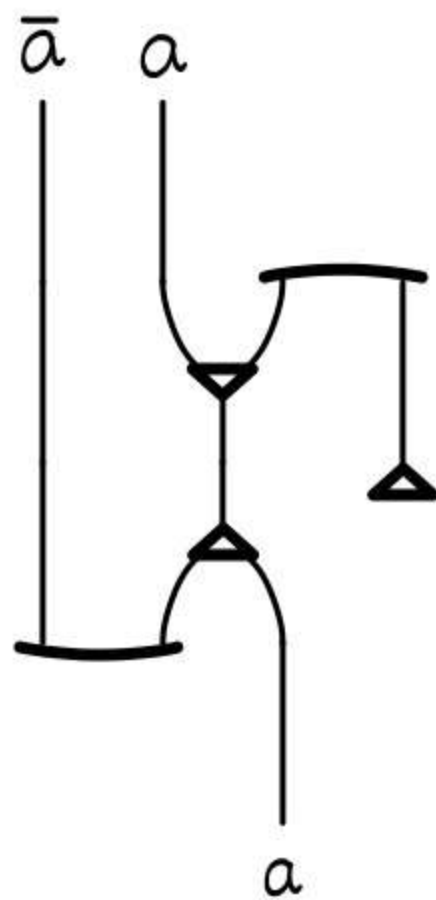
Factorisation would reduce bureaucracy by identifying proofs whose flows are continuous deformations



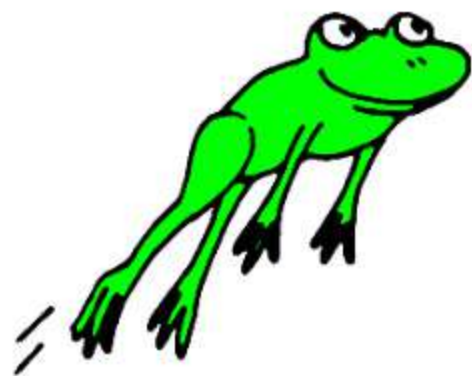
$$[a \vee a / \kappa] \Phi$$

$$H\left\{\text{act} \frac{a \vee a}{a}\right\}$$

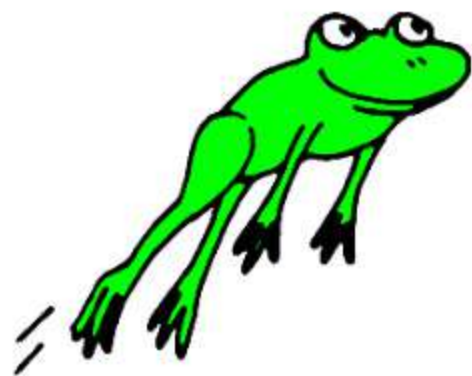
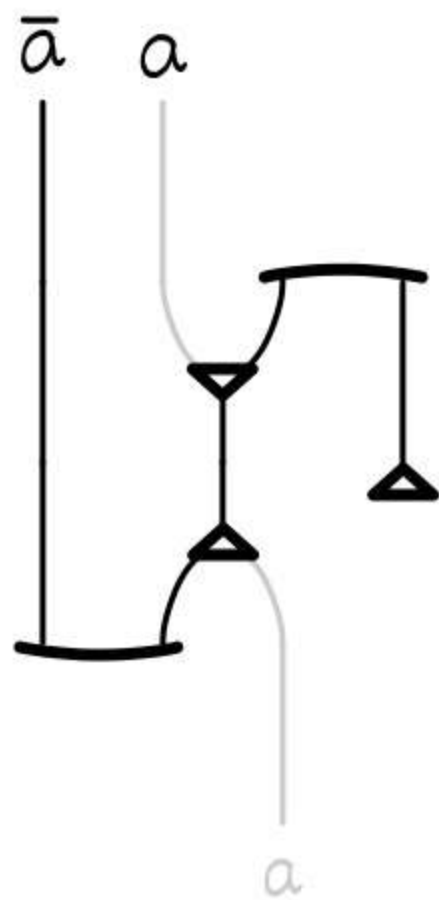
$$\left\langle \begin{array}{c} B \\ \Phi || \\ C \end{array} \right\rangle / a$$

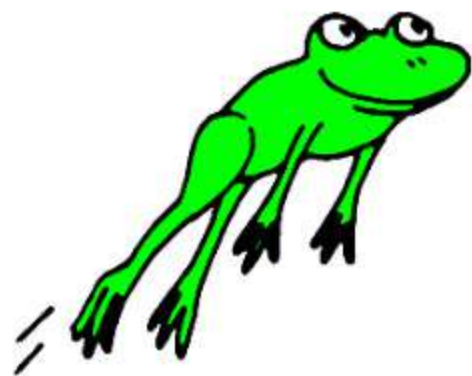
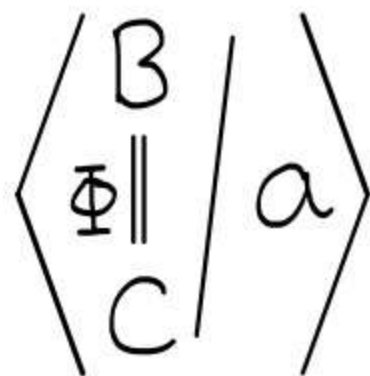


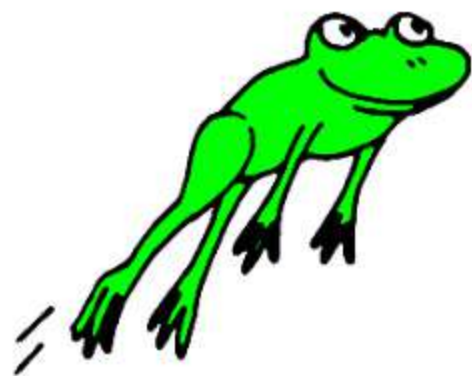
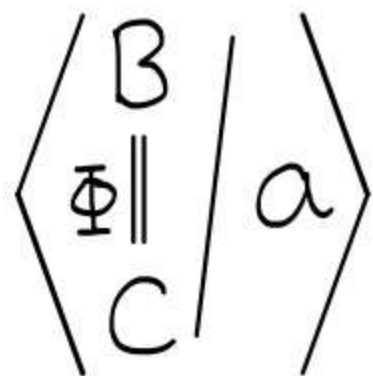
$$\left\langle \begin{array}{c} B \\ \Phi || \\ C \end{array} \right\rangle a$$



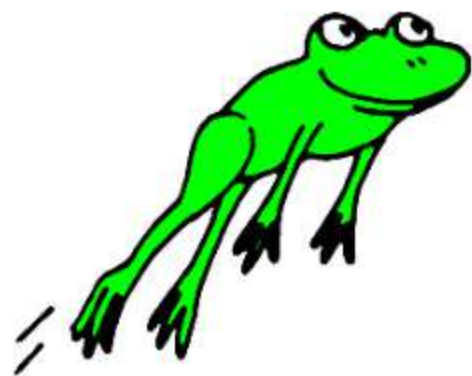
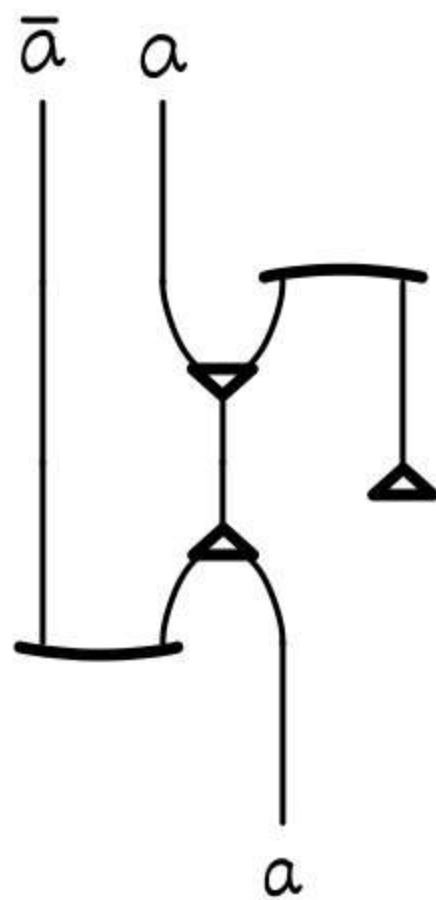
$$\left\langle \begin{array}{c} \mathcal{B} \\ \Phi \parallel \\ \mathcal{C} \end{array} \right\rangle a$$

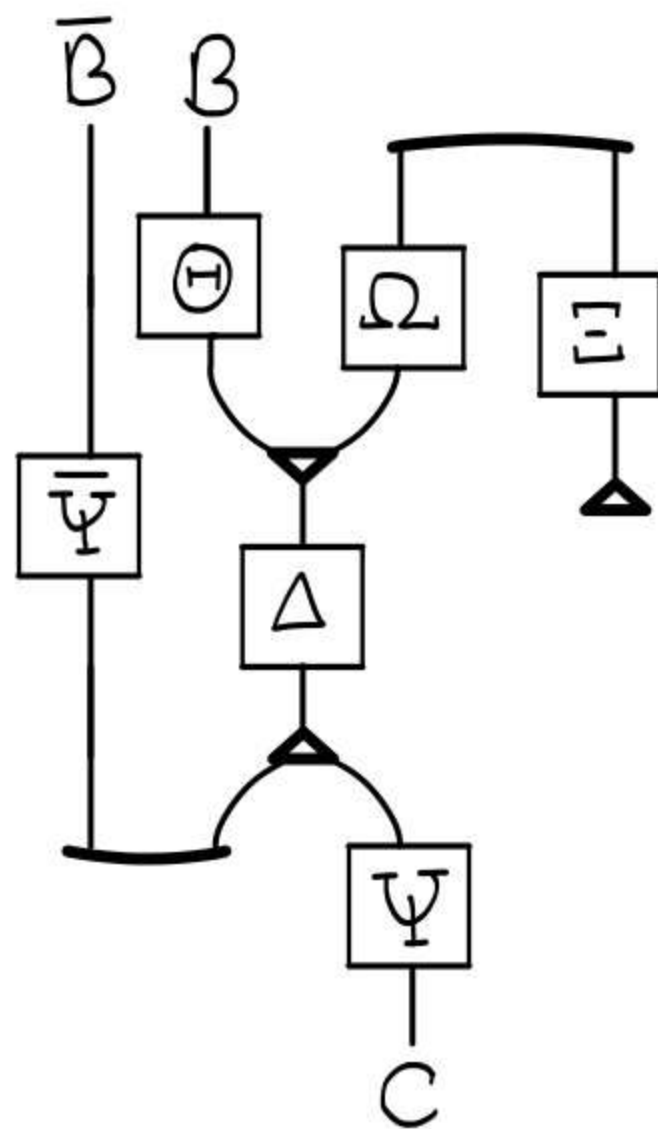
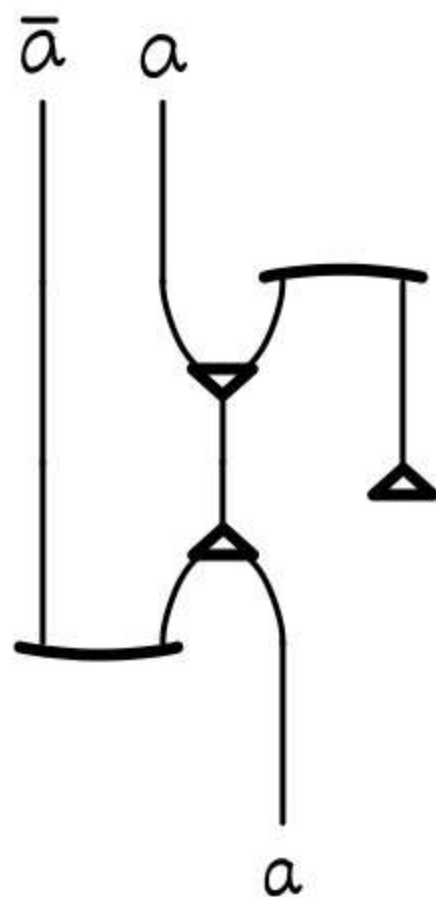
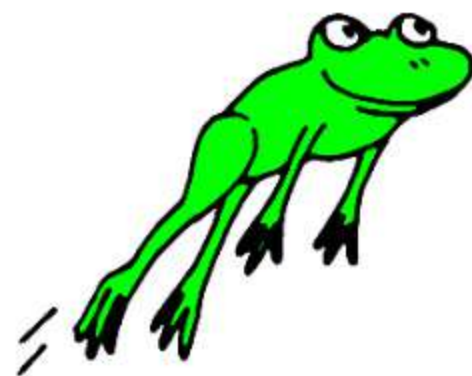
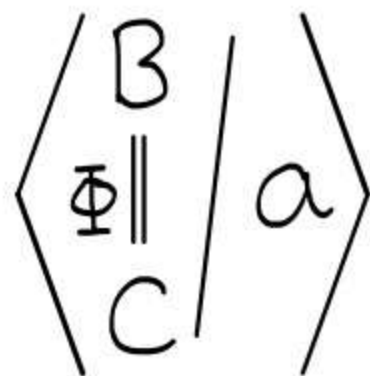


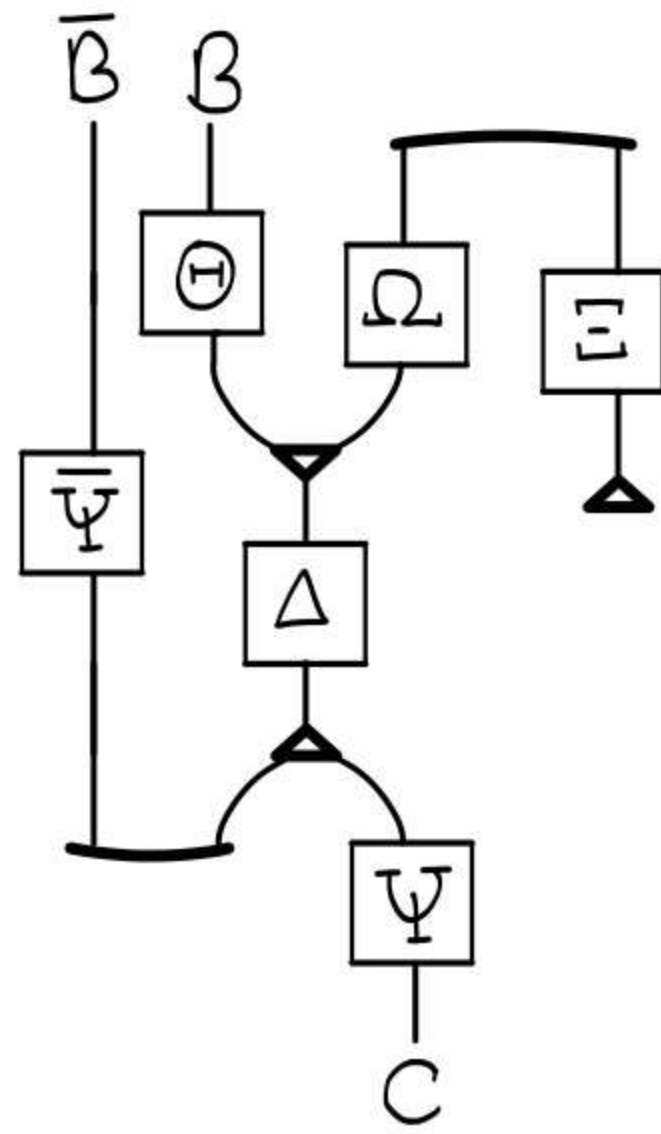
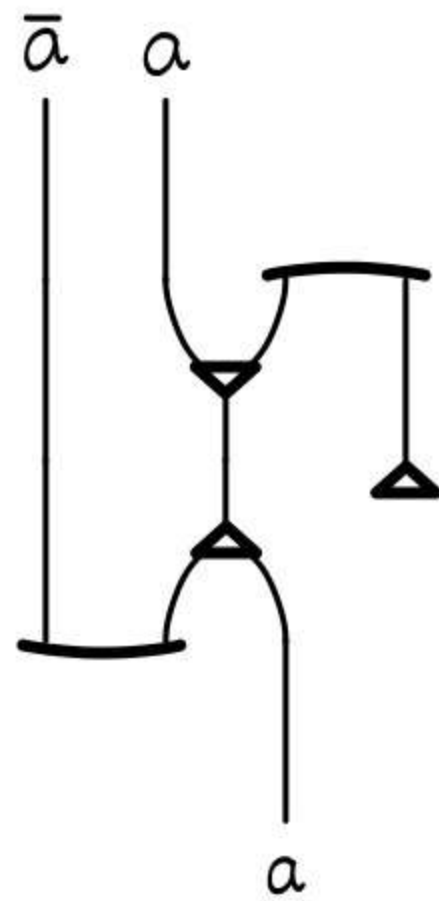
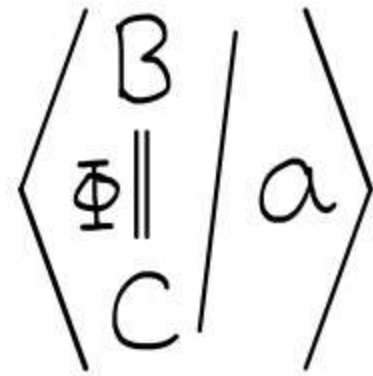
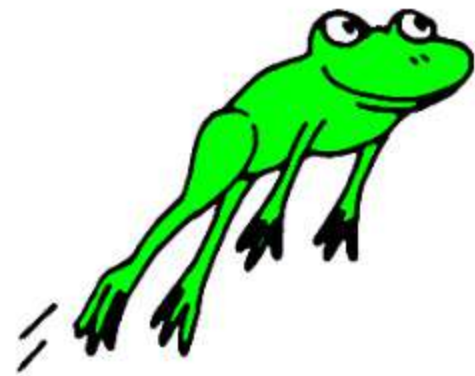




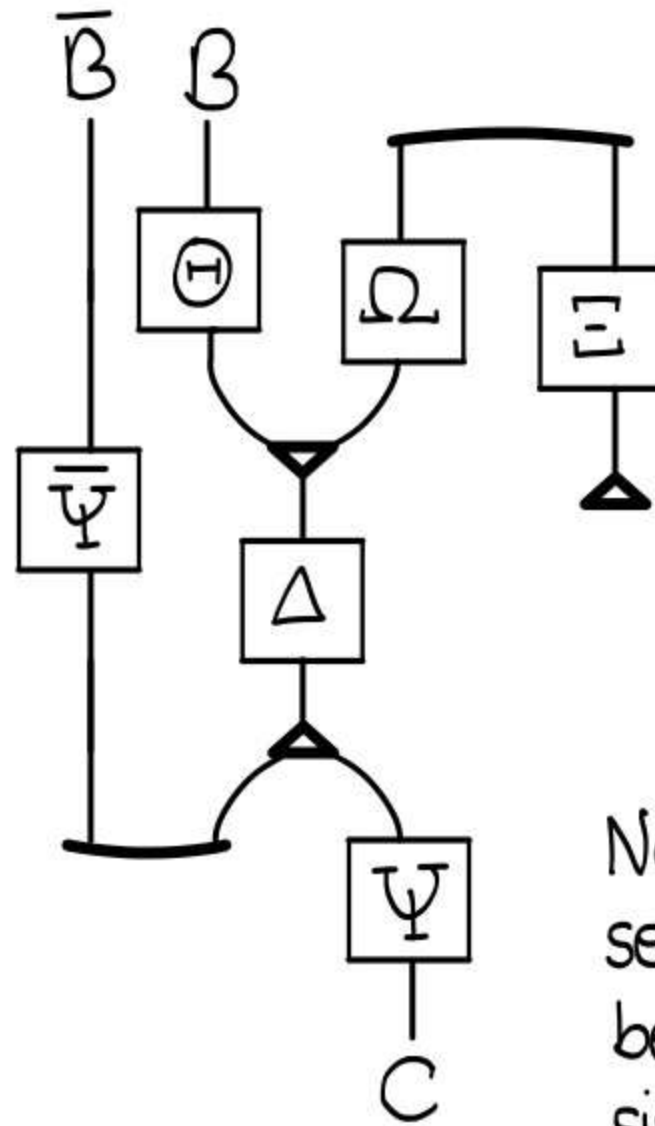
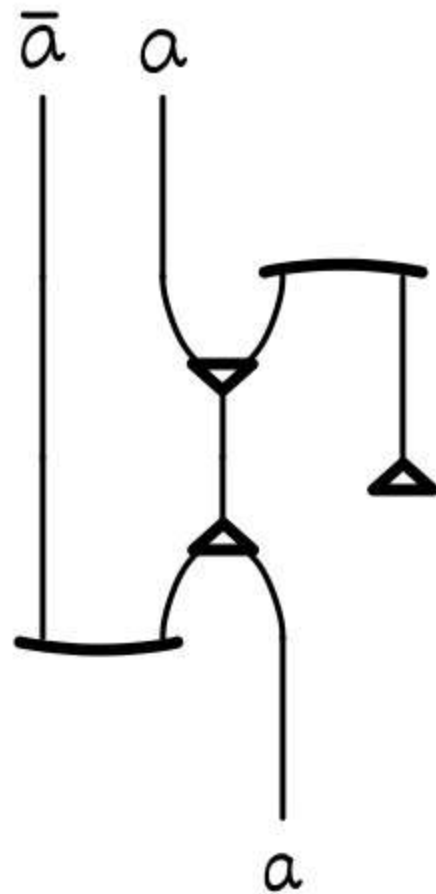
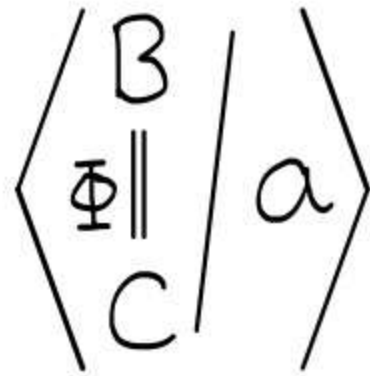
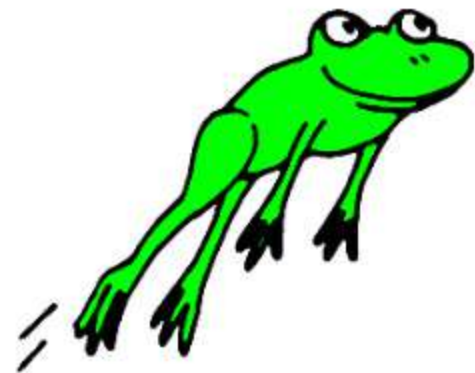
$$\left\langle \begin{array}{c} B \\ \Phi || \\ C \end{array} \right\rangle a$$







$$\Phi = \frac{\frac{\Theta}{\Delta}}{\Psi} = \frac{\frac{\Xi}{\Delta}}{\Psi}$$



$$\Phi = \frac{\frac{\text{H}}{\Delta}}{\Psi} = \frac{\frac{\frac{\Omega}{\Delta}}{[\cdot]}}{\Psi}$$

Negation of a derivation makes sense in deep inference because all rules have a single premise and are dualisable