

ALEA IACTA EST

A Declarative Domain-Specific Language for Manually Performable Random Experiments

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TFPiE

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AGENDA

Introduction

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Bonus Examples

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Conclusion

Chance!



By Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. <http://www.cngcoins.com>, CC BY-SA 3.0

- Toss a denarius coin. Determine whether it shows a head or a ship.

Chance!



- Roll seven ten-sided dice.
- For every die that shows a ten, roll another and add it to the pool.
- Count the number of dice that show values greater than five. Compare to the number of dice that show a one.
- If the difference is positive, you win by that amount.
- If the difference is zero or negative, you lose.
- If there are no values greater than five but there is a one, you lose badly.

Background

- Random experiments have a history of millenia in human culture.
 - toss coins, cast bones, roll dice, draw from a bag / urn / card deck, ...
- **Stochastics** as a discipline has evolved from their study.

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 - toss coins, cast bones, roll dice, draw from a bag / urn / card deck, ...
- **Stochastics** as a discipline has evolved from their study.
- Random experiments feature prominently
 - in the teaching of stochastics,
 - in simulations,
 - in games.

Goals

- Declarative domain-specific language for random experiments
- First-order functional programming + randomness

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- Declarative domain-specific language for random experiments
- First-order functional programming + randomness
- Rich statistical datatypes, simple control flow
- Clean semantics
- Easy and intuitive to use for non-expert programmers
- Amenable to static stochastic analysis — Turing-incomplete
- Pseudo-random simulator & game assistant

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Probability Distributions

- Consider only rational, discrete, finite distributions.
- Stochastically effective: Calculate the distribution of any random variable that is a **computable** function.
- Strong algebraic structure: Commutative Monad
 - Moggi-style denotational semantics for a term language
- Closed under finitary computations.
- **Not** closed under unbounded iteration / recursion:
Repeat rolling a die until it shows a six.

Data

- Exact numbers: **rational**, unbounded precision
 - with IEEE 754-style NaN
 - subtypes: integer, natural, **boolean**

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- Records
 - field names or $1 \dots n$ for tuples
- Tagged Data
 - like ADT constructors, but free without type declaration
 - tagged unit tuple = *enum* constant

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 - graphical (Unicode) operators; no keywords
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s := (a + b + c) / 2; (s - a) * (s - b)
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```
max(gcd(a, b), 17)      k := ~uniform{1, 2, 3, 4}
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```

- distributions are **not** referentially transparent:

```
n := ~uniform{+1, -1}; n - n
```

Collections

- Unified treatment of lists, sets and bags
 - homogeneous elements
 - each with a distinguished shape of brackets

[1, 2, 3]

{1, 2, 3}

$\langle 1, 2, 3 \rangle$

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`[n^2 | n \in L]` `{ x \in S | x \geq 0 }`

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`{ x + y | x \in S; y \in S }` `{ x + y | {x, y} \in S }`

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`{ x + y | x ← S; y ← S }` `{ x + y | {x, y} ← S }`

- *reduce* by semigroup operations

`min[a, b, c, d]` `(+)⟨ x ≥ 0 | x ← B ⟩`

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(`x`: 1, `y`: 2) (3, 4, 5) `p.x` `t.#1`

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`(x: 1, y: 2) (3, 4, 5) p.x t.#1`

- Patterns in assignments

`(a, b, c) := (3, 4, 5)`

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`x ? { @just(n) → n; @nothing → 0 }`

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 - also for integers (C-style *switch*)
 $n ? \{ 0 \rightarrow @none; 1, 2, 3 \rightarrow @few; _ \rightarrow @many \}$

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`@just(42) @nothing`
- Case distinction with elementary pattern matching
 - $x ? \{ @just(n) \rightarrow n; @nothing \rightarrow \theta \}$
 - also for integers (C-style *switch*)
 $n ? \{ \theta \rightarrow @none; 1, 2, 3 \rightarrow @few; _ \rightarrow @many \}$
 - special case: booleans
 $a ? b : c \quad a ? \{ 1 \rightarrow b; 0 \rightarrow c \}$

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- Flexible overloading for library functions
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 - parametric overloading for collections
 - semigroup overloading for *reduce*
- Decidable, bottom-up inference of principal types
- Sanity checks
 - function argument types
 - *switch* reachability/completeness
 - *reduce* laws
 - ...

Function Overloading

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 - overloading concerns only *total* restrictions (type signatures)
 - consequence: `/` and `// (div)` must be distinct functions

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 - cover T' with $\prod T_i \implies$ result is $U' = \prod U_i$

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- Example:

$\text{max} : \mathbb{Z} \times \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$

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$\text{max} : \mathbb{Z} \times \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$

$\text{max} : \mathbb{Q} \times \mathbb{Q} \rightarrow \mathbb{Q}$

$\text{max}(3, 4) : \mathbb{N} \sqcap \mathbb{N} \sqcap \mathbb{Z} \sqcap \mathbb{Q}$

$\text{max}(3, -4) : \mathbb{N} \sqcap \mathbb{Z} \sqcap \mathbb{Q}$

$\text{max}(-3, -4) : \mathbb{Z} \sqcap \mathbb{Q}$

$\text{max}(22/7, -4) : \mathbb{Q}$

Semigroups

- Apply a binary function/operator to a collection (instead of a pair of elements).
- Idea: *reduce*

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 - associative** for all collections
 - commutative** for sets & bags
 - monoid** for possibly empty collections

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commutative for sets & bags

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- Known magically for library functions; currently no mechanism for user definitions.

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 - choice of computational monad
 - fun fact: in OO implementation, pseudo-random is almost for free

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 - evaluation succeeds for well-typed expressions of nonempty types
 - results in / distributed-over the type inhabitants

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- Three flavors: deterministic, stochastic, pseudo-random
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 - fun fact: in OO implementation, pseudo-random is almost for free
- Strong normalization for well-typed programs
 - evaluation succeeds for well-typed expressions of nonempty types
 - results in / distributed-over the type inhabitants
 - challenge: pseudo-random evaluation & the law of large numbers

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Example #1

```
coin := ~uniform{@head, @ship}
```

Example #2

```
dice1 := <~uniform{1..10} | _ ← {1..7}>;  
tens := <d ← dice1 | d = 10>;  
dice2 := <~uniform{1..10} | _ ← tens>;  
dice := dice1 + dice2;  
nhigh := (+)(d > 5 | d ← dice);  
nones := (+)(d = 1 | d ← dice);  
diff := nhigh - nones;  
  
verdict := diff > 0  
? @succeed(diff)  
: (nhigh = 0 ∧ nones > 0 ? @botch  
: @fail)
```

*Roll seven ten-sided dice.
For every die that shows a ten,
roll another
and add it to the pool.
Count the number > 5.
Compare to the number of
dice that show 1.*

*If the difference is positive,
you win by that amount.
If there are no values > 5 but
there is a 1, you lose badly.*

Example #2

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dice1 := <~uniform{1..10} | _ ← {1..7}>;  
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*Roll seven ten-sided dice.
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Yahtzee Scoring

```
dice := < ~uniform{1 .. 6} | _ ← {1 .. 5} >;  
(  
  Dice:          dice,  
  Aces:          (+)( d ← dice | d = 1 ),  
  Twos:          (+)( d ← dice | d = 2 ),  
  Threes:        (+)( d ← dice | d = 3 ),  
  Fours:         (+)( d ← dice | d = 4 ),  
  Fives:         (+)( d ← dice | d = 5 ),  
  Sixes:         (+)( d ← dice | d = 6 ),  
  Chance:        (+)(dice),  
  ThreeofaKind:  (+)(dice) * (max(mults(dice)) ≥ 3),  
  FourofaKind:   (+)(dice) * (max(mults(dice)) ≥ 4),  
  FullHouse:    25 * (mults(dice) = {2, 3}),  
  SmallStraight: 30 * (dice ≥ {1 .. 4} ∨ dice ≥ {2 .. 5} ∨ dice ≥ {3 .. 6}),  
  LargeStraight: 40 * (dice ≥ {1 .. 5} ∨ dice ≥ {2 .. 6}),  
  Yahtzee:       50 * (mults(dice) = {5})  
)
```

How can I tackle this probability question on deck of cards with replacement?

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- Posted 2025-01-04
- Formalized in ALEA 2025-01-04

How can I tackle this probability question on deck of cards with replacement?

- Posted 2025-01-04
- Formalized in ALEA 2025-01-04
- Findings:
 - development time ~ 20 min
 - 17 LoC, no corrections necessary
 - complete formal model no longer than high-level English text
 - analysis result agrees with top answer
 - already indicates that user-defined functions are missing

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Implementation

- Java application (~ 5 kLoC)
- Lexer & parser: combinator libraries
- Semantic analysis: visitor pattern

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- DEMO

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 - distributions as “anonymous random variables”
 - statistic datatypes & operations

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 - compare functional-logic programming
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- Declarative, but not referentially transparent
 - compare functional-logic programming
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- Language design emulates traditional mathematics
 - low threshold for non-programmers
- Random experiment idioms facilitated by special features:
 - numeric booleans, counting
 - bag comprehensions
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- Random experiment idioms facilitated by special features:
 - numeric booleans, counting
 - bag comprehensions
 - structurally free records & tagged unions
- Implementation in Java (very nearly open source)

Future Work

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 - more pre-defined functions
- User-definable subprograms
 - type signatures, determinism, ...
- Visualization of distributions
 - histograms, pie charts, ...
- Code generation
 - embed in other applications
- Optimization
 - tune the runtime environment
 - deforestation of collections
 - stochastic independence vs. referential transparency

Collaborations Welcome!

- Curious to try ALEA in teaching?
- Thinking of some interesting example application?
- Suggestions for syntax, semantics or library?
- Contribute a visualization, UI or tool connection?
- ...

<http://bandm.eu/metatools/doc/usage/getit.html>

AGENDA

Formal Stuff

Types

```
Type ::= any | none
      | num(Num) | coll(Shape, Mode, Type)
      | prod(FieldId ↗ Type) | sum(CaseId ↗ Type)

Num ::= bool | nat | int | rat

Shape ::= list | bag | set

Mode ::= pos | opt
```

Untyped Values

```
Val ::= const( $\mathcal{Q}$ ) | NaN | thelist( $\mathcal{L}(\text{Val})$ ) | thebag( $\mathcal{M}(\text{Val})$ ) | theset( $\mathcal{P}(\text{Val})$ )
      | record(FieldId  $\not\rightarrow$  Val) | tag(CaseId  $\times$  Val)
```

Extensions

$$\llbracket \text{none} \rrbracket_V = \emptyset$$

$$\llbracket \text{any} \rrbracket_V = \text{Val}$$

$$\llbracket \text{num(bool)} \rrbracket_V = \text{const}(\mathbb{B})$$

$$\llbracket \text{num(nat)} \rrbracket_V = \text{const}(\mathbb{N}) \cup \{\text{NaN}\}$$

$$\llbracket \text{num(int)} \rrbracket_V = \text{const}(\mathbb{Z}) \cup \{\text{NaN}\}$$

$$\llbracket \text{num(rat)} \rrbracket_V = \text{const}(\mathbb{Q}) \cup \{\text{NaN}\}$$

$$\llbracket \text{coll(list, opt, } t \rrbracket_V = \text{thelist}(\mathbf{L}(\llbracket t \rrbracket_V))$$

$$\llbracket \text{coll(list, pos, } t \rrbracket_V = \text{thelist}(\mathbf{L}(\llbracket t \rrbracket_V) \setminus \{\emptyset\})$$

$$\llbracket \text{coll(bag, opt, } t \rrbracket_V = \text{thebag}(\mathbf{M}(\llbracket t \rrbracket_V))$$

$$\llbracket \text{coll(bag, pos, } t \rrbracket_V = \text{thebag}(\mathbf{M}(\llbracket t \rrbracket_V) \setminus \{\emptyset\})$$

$$\llbracket \text{coll(set, opt, } t \rrbracket_V = \text{theset}(\mathbf{P}(\llbracket t \rrbracket_V))$$

$$\llbracket \text{coll(set, pos, } t \rrbracket_V = \text{theset}(\mathbf{P}(\llbracket t \rrbracket_V) \setminus \{\emptyset\})$$

$$\llbracket \text{prod}(T) \rrbracket_V = \text{record}(\{f : \text{FieldId} \nrightarrow \text{Val} \mid \forall i \in \text{dom}(T). f(i) \in \llbracket T(i) \rrbracket_V\})$$

$$\llbracket \text{sum}(T) \rrbracket_V = \bigcup_{i \in \text{dom}(T)} \text{tag}(\{i\} \times \llbracket T(i) \rrbracket_V)$$

Empty or Inhabited?

$$\frac{}{\text{empty none}}$$

$$\frac{\forall i \in \text{dom}(T). \text{empty } T(i)}{\text{empty sum}(T)}$$

$$\frac{\text{empty } t}{\text{empty coll}(s, \text{pos}, t)}$$

$$\frac{\exists i \in \text{dom}(T). \text{empty } T(i)}{\text{empty prod}(T)}$$

Subtyping

$$\frac{}{\text{none} \sqsubseteq t \sqsubseteq \text{any}}$$

$$\frac{n_1 \sqsubseteq n_2}{\text{num}(n_1) \sqsubseteq \text{num}(n_2)}$$

$$\frac{}{\text{bool} \sqsubseteq \text{nat} \sqsubseteq \text{int} \sqsubseteq \text{rat}}$$

$$\frac{s_1 \sqsubseteq s_2 \quad m_1 \sqsubseteq m_2 \quad t_1 \sqsubseteq t_2}{\text{coll}(s_1, m_1, t_1) \sqsubseteq \text{coll}(s_2, m_2, t_2)}$$

$$\frac{}{\text{pos} \sqsubseteq \text{opt}}$$

$$\frac{\forall i \in \text{dom}(T_2). T_1(i) \sqsubseteq T_2(i)}{\text{prod}(T_1) \sqsubseteq \text{prod}(T_2)}$$

$$\frac{\forall i \in \text{dom}(T_1). T_1(i) \sqsubseteq T_2(i)}{\text{sum}(T_1) \sqsubseteq \text{sum}(T_2)}$$

Abstract Syntax

```
Expr ::= var(VarId) | const(Val × Type) | app(FunId × Expr)
      | choose( $\mathcal{D}(\text{Expr})$ ) | exp(Expr) | dist(DistId × Expr)
      | let(Expr × VarId × Expr)
      | nswitch(Expr × ( $\llbracket \text{num(rat)} \rrbracket_V \uplus \{\text{default}\} \nrightarrow \text{Expr}$ ))
      | iter(Expr × VarId × Expr)
      | tuple(FieldId  $\nrightarrow$  Expr) | select(Expr × FieldId)
      | cons(CaseId × Expr) | cswitch(Expr × (CaseId  $\nrightarrow$  VarId × Expr))
```

Type Assignment (1/2)

$$\frac{\Gamma(x) = t}{\Gamma \vdash \text{var}(x) : t} \quad \frac{v \in \llbracket t \rrbracket_v}{\Gamma \vdash \text{const}(v, t) : t} \quad \frac{\Gamma \vdash e : t \quad \vdash f : t \rightarrow u}{\Gamma \vdash \text{app}(f, e) : u}$$

$$\frac{\bigwedge_{k=1}^n \Gamma \vdash e_k : t_k}{\Gamma \vdash \text{choose}(\{e_1 \mapsto p_1, \dots, e_n \mapsto p_n\}) : \bigsqcup_{k=1}^n t_k}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash e : t \quad t \sqsubseteq \text{num(rat)}}{\Gamma \vdash \text{exp}(e) : \text{num(rat)}} \quad \frac{\Gamma \vdash e : t \quad \vdash f : t \rightarrow u}{\Gamma \vdash \text{dist}(f, e) : u}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash e : t \quad \Gamma \oplus \{x \mapsto t\} \vdash e' : t'}{\Gamma \vdash \text{let}(e, x, e') : t'}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash e_0 : t \quad t \sqsubseteq \text{num(rat)} \quad \vdash t \bullet C = \{e_1, \dots, e_k\} \quad \bigwedge_{k=1}^n \Gamma \vdash e_k : u_k}{\Gamma \vdash \text{nswitch}(e_0, C) : \bigsqcup_{k=1}^n u_k}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash e : \text{coll}(s, m, t) \quad s \sqsubseteq s' \quad \Gamma \oplus \{x \mapsto t\} \vdash e' : \text{coll}(s', m', t')}{\Gamma \vdash \text{iter}(e, x, e') : \text{coll}(s', m \sqcup m', t')}$$

Type Assignment (2/2)

$$\frac{\bigwedge_{k=1}^n \Gamma \vdash e_k : t_k}{\Gamma \vdash \text{tuple}(\{i_1 \mapsto e_1, \dots, i_n \mapsto e_n\}) : \text{prod}(\{i_1 \mapsto t_1, \dots, i_n \mapsto t_n\})}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash e : \text{prod}(T) \quad T(i) = t}{\Gamma \vdash \text{select}(e, i) : t} \qquad \frac{\Gamma \vdash e : t}{\Gamma \vdash \text{cons}(i, e) : \text{sum}(\{i \mapsto t\})}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash e_0 : \text{sum}(\{i_1 \mapsto t_1, \dots, i_n \mapsto t_n\}) \quad \bigwedge_{k=1}^n \Gamma \oplus \{x_k \mapsto t_k\} \vdash e_k : u_k}{\Gamma \vdash \text{switch}(e_0, C \oplus \{i_1 \mapsto (x_1, e_1), \dots, i_n \mapsto (x_n, e_n)\}) : \bigsqcup_{k=1}^n u_k}$$

$$\frac{[\![t]\!]_V \subseteq \text{dom}(C)}{\vdash t \bullet C = C([\![t]\!]_V)} \qquad \frac{[\![t]\!]_V \notin \text{dom}(C) \quad \text{default} \in \text{dom}(C)}{\vdash t \bullet C = C([\![t]\!]_V \cup \{\text{default}\})}$$

Evaluation (Deterministic)

$$\frac{E(x) = v}{E \vdash \text{var}(x) \rightsquigarrow v}$$

$$\frac{}{E \vdash \text{const}(v, t) \rightsquigarrow v}$$

$$\frac{E \vdash e \rightsquigarrow v \quad \llbracket f \rrbracket_F(v) = v'}{E \vdash \text{app}(f, e) \rightsquigarrow v'}$$

$$\frac{E \vdash e \rightsquigarrow v \quad E \oplus \{x \mapsto v\} \vdash e' \rightsquigarrow v'}{E \vdash \text{let}(e, x, e') \rightsquigarrow v'}$$

$$\frac{E \vdash e_0 \rightsquigarrow v_0 \quad E \vdash C'(v_0) \rightsquigarrow v}{E \vdash \text{nswitch}(e_0, C) \rightsquigarrow v} \quad \text{where } C'(v) = \begin{cases} C(v) & \text{if defined} \\ C(\text{default}) & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$\frac{E \vdash e \rightsquigarrow \text{the } S(v_1, \dots, v_n) \quad \bigwedge_{k=1}^n E \oplus \{x \mapsto v_k\} \vdash e' \rightsquigarrow v'_k}{E \vdash \text{iter}(e, x, e') \rightsquigarrow v'_1 \oplus \dots \oplus v'_n}$$

$$\frac{\bigwedge_{k=1}^n E \vdash e_k \rightsquigarrow v_k}{E \vdash \text{tuple}(\{i_1 \mapsto e_1, \dots, i_n \mapsto e_n\}) \rightsquigarrow \{i_1 \mapsto v_1, \dots, i_n \mapsto v_n\}}$$

$$\frac{E \vdash e \rightsquigarrow \text{record}(V) \quad V(i) = v}{E \vdash \text{select}(e, i) \rightsquigarrow v} \quad \frac{E \vdash e \rightsquigarrow v}{E \vdash \text{cons}(i, e) \rightsquigarrow \text{tag}(i, v)}$$

$$\frac{E \vdash e_0 \rightsquigarrow (i, v_0) \quad C(i) = (x, e) \quad E \oplus \{x \mapsto v_0\} \vdash e \rightsquigarrow v}{E \vdash \text{cswitch}(e_0, C) \rightsquigarrow v}$$

Evaluation (Stochastic)

$$\frac{}{E \vdash \text{const}(v, t) \rightarrow \delta(v)}$$

$$\frac{\bigwedge_{k=1}^n E \vdash e_k \rightarrow Q_k}{E \vdash \text{choose}(\{e_1 \mapsto p_1, \dots, e_n \mapsto p_n\}) \rightarrow \mu(\{Q_1 \mapsto p_1, \dots, Q_n \mapsto p_n\})}$$

$$\frac{E \vdash e \rightarrow \{\text{const}(x_1) \mapsto p_1, \dots, \text{const}(x_n) \mapsto p_n\} \quad m = \sum_{k=1}^n p_n \cdot x_n}{E \vdash \exp(e) \rightarrow \delta(\text{const}(m))}$$

$$\frac{E \vdash e \rightarrow P = \{v_1 \mapsto p_1, \dots, v_n \mapsto p_n\} \quad \bigwedge_{k=1}^n \llbracket f \rrbracket_F(v_k) = Q_k}{E \vdash \text{dist}(f, e) \rightarrow \mu(\{Q_1 \mapsto p_1, \dots, Q_n \mapsto p_n\})}$$

$$\frac{E \vdash e \rightarrow P = \{v_1 \mapsto p_1, \dots, v_n \mapsto p_n\} \quad \bigwedge_{k=1}^n E \oplus \{x \mapsto v_k\} \vdash e' \rightarrow Q_k}{E \vdash \text{let}(e, x, e') \rightarrow \mu(\{Q_1 \mapsto p_1, \dots, Q_n \mapsto p_n\})}$$

Evaluation (Pseudo-Random)

$$\frac{\overline{E \vdash \text{const}(v, t) \xrightarrow{s \rightarrow s} v}}{\wedge_{k=1}^n E \vdash e_k \xrightarrow{s_{k-1} \rightarrow s_k} v_k}$$
$$\frac{}{E \vdash \text{tuple}(\{i_1 \mapsto e_1, \dots, i_n \mapsto e_n\}) \xrightarrow{s_0 \rightarrow s_n} \{i_1 \mapsto v_1, \dots, i_n \mapsto v_n\}}$$
$$\frac{\text{random}(s; p_1, \dots, p_n) = (s', k) \quad E \vdash e_k \xrightarrow{s' \rightarrow s''} v}{E \vdash \text{choose}(\{e_1 \mapsto p_1, \dots, e_n \mapsto p_n\}) \xrightarrow{s \rightarrow s''} v}$$