

Higher Order Non-Determinism

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In this paper I formalize higher order non-determinism.

When one writes '0' , it can mean a lot of things. For example:

$0 : \mathbb{N}$	'0' is a natural number
$0 : \mathbb{Z}$	'0' is an integer
$0 : \mathbb{R}$	'0' is a real number
$0 : \mathbb{C}$	'0' is a complex number

This means it is possible to define a new type, e.g. for natural numbers:

$\therefore \quad 0 : ?\mathbb{N} \quad \text{'0'}$ is a higher order non-deterministic natural number

$\therefore \quad ? : T \rightarrow \text{type} \quad \text{'?'}$ is a higher order non-determinism type constructor

A higher order non-deterministic number has similar semantics to an unknown variable. It means that constants are “lifted” to represent unknown variables.

It is known that the number is equal to itself:

$$0 = 0 \quad x = x$$

However, it is not directly known that two non-equal numbers are the same or not:

$$0 = 1 \quad x = y$$

So, why not just use 'x' , 'y' , 'i' , 'j' and so on instead of higher order non-deterministic numbers?

The motivation is that when reasoning about generic non-deterministic functions, there is a duality between algorithms that describe sampling behavior over time and the statistical limit. Higher order non-determinism makes it possible to express both algorithms using the same code.

For example, in quantum non-determinism, it is common to sum over complex distributions:

$$\sum_{i : ?\mathbb{N}, j : ?\mathbb{N}} \{ x_i \cdot x_j^* \}$$
$$x : [\mathbb{C}]$$

This sum corresponds to the following equation:

$$\sum_{- \infty}^{\infty} \{ x[\text{floor}(\text{random}() \cdot \text{len}(x))] \cdot x[\text{floor}(\text{random}() \cdot \text{len}(x))]^* \} = \sum_{i, j} \{ x_i \cdot x_j^* \}$$