

# Combinatorics and Stochasticity for Chemical Reaction Networks

$$\mathcal{M}f = \sum_{x \in \mathbb{N}^S} \frac{z^x}{x!} \langle z'^x e^{z'}, f \rangle = \sum_{x \in \mathbb{N}^S} (z + 1)^x \cdot f_x$$





# Combinatorics and Stochasticity for Chemical Reaction Networks

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PhD Advisor: Erik Winfree

Thesis Defense  
November 12, 2021





# Overview

Chemical reaction networks

Stochasticity

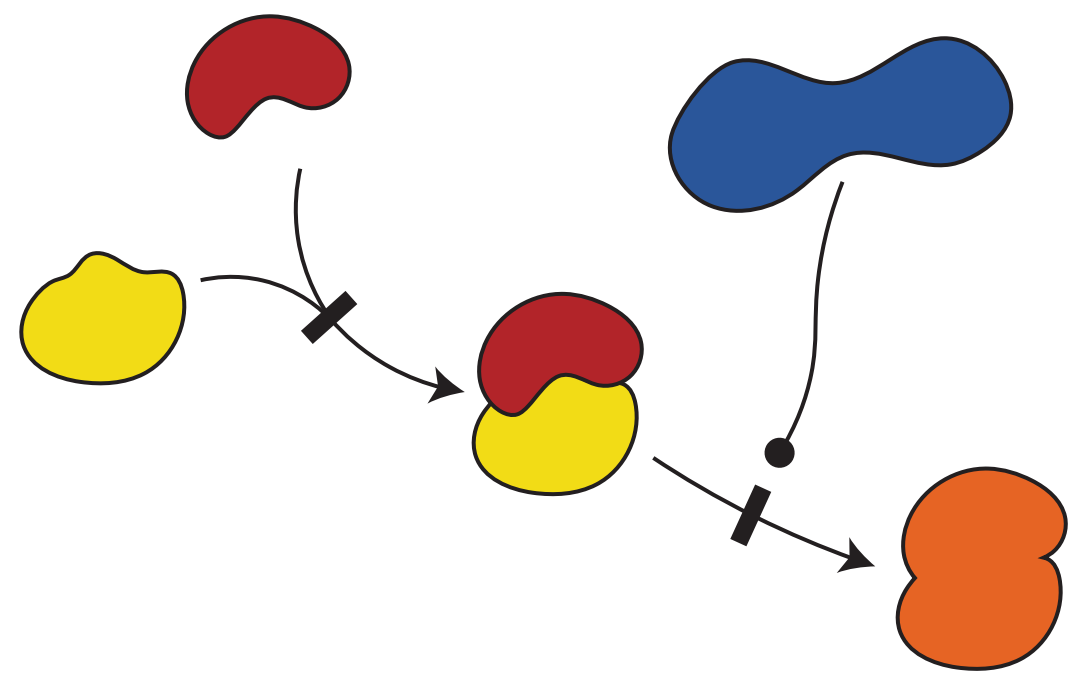
Combinatorics

Formal Semantics





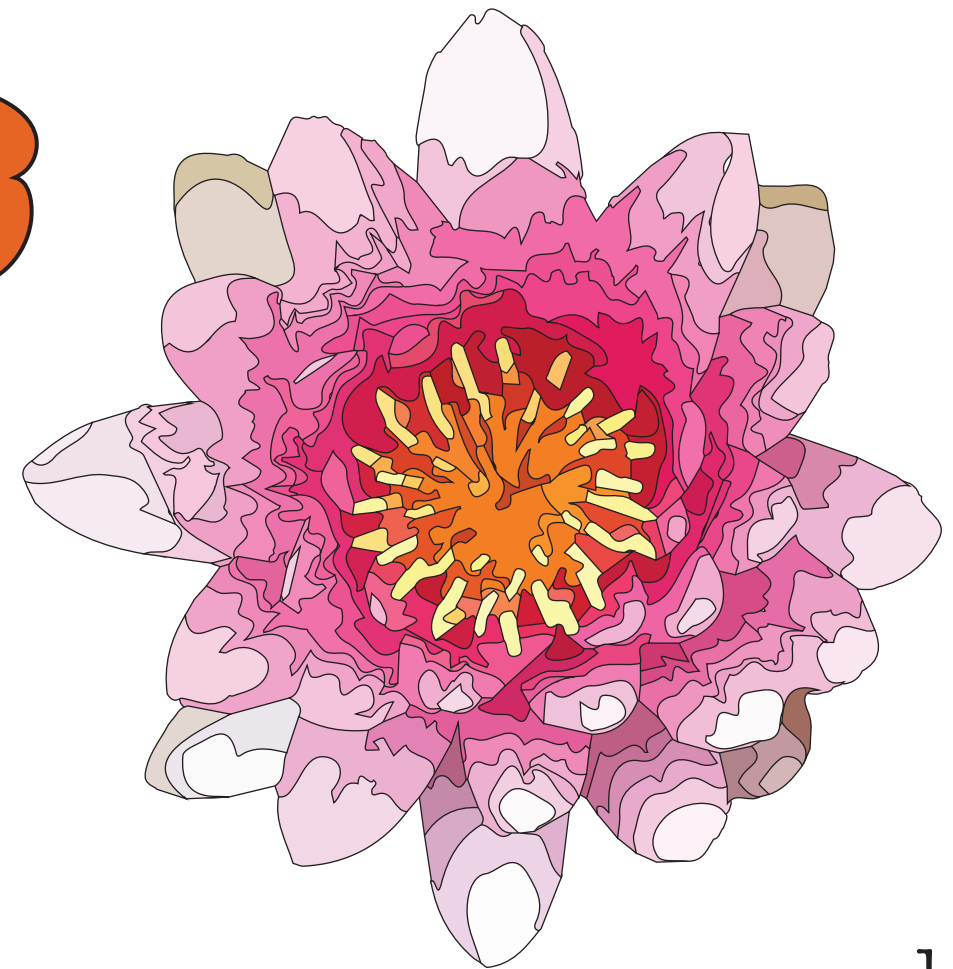
# Flowers are theorems



$$\frac{\frac{A \quad B}{A \wedge B} \quad (A \wedge B) \rightarrow C}{C}$$

$$\forall n \forall x \forall y \forall z. (n \geq 3 \rightarrow x^n + y^n \neq z^n)$$

Theorems are flowers



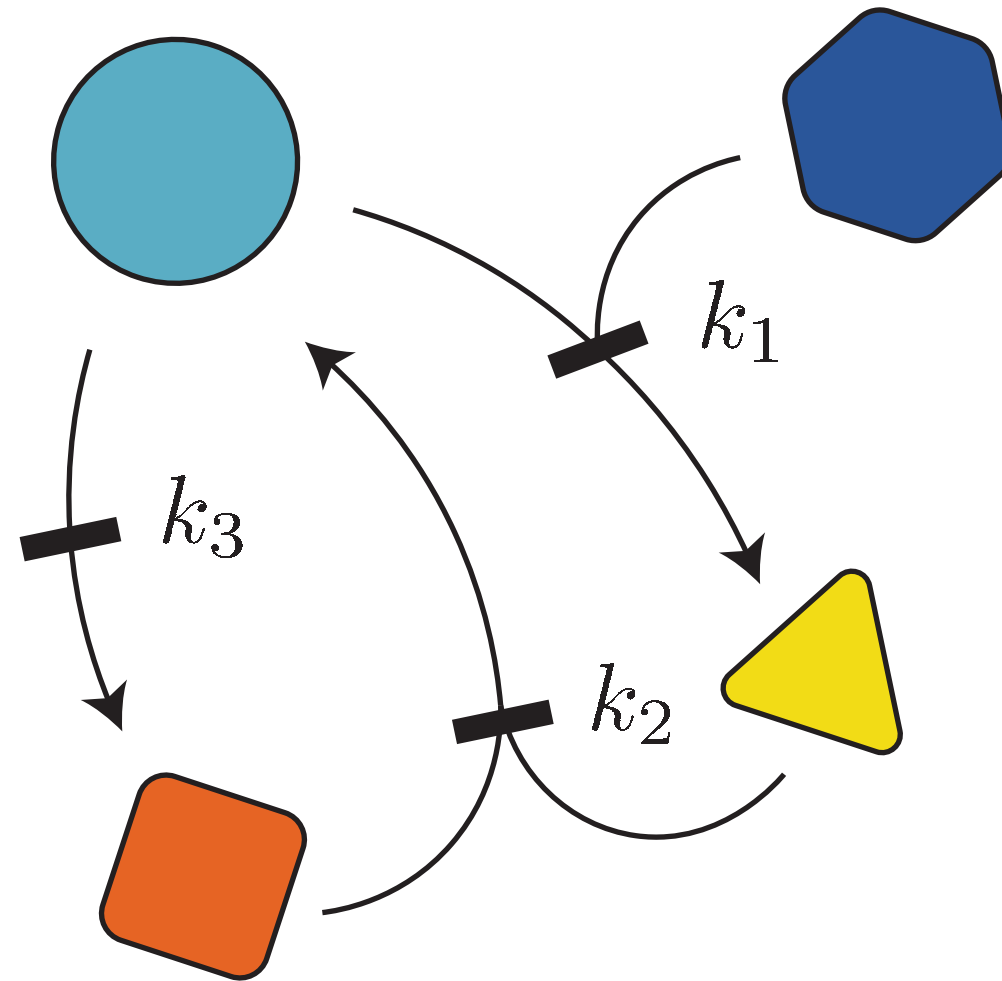


# Chemical Reaction Networks

How can we model **biomolecular**  
systems **mathematically**?



# Chemical reaction networks are abstract models of systems with interacting species



$S$  species  
 $R$  reactions

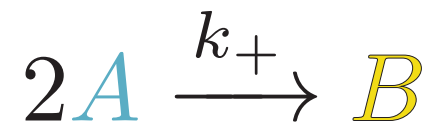
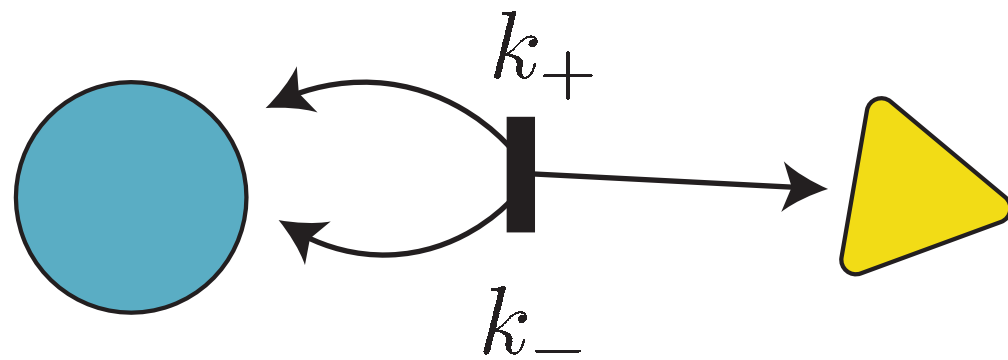
$\rho : R \times S \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$   
reactants

$\pi : R \times S \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$   
products

$k : R \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^+$   
rate constants

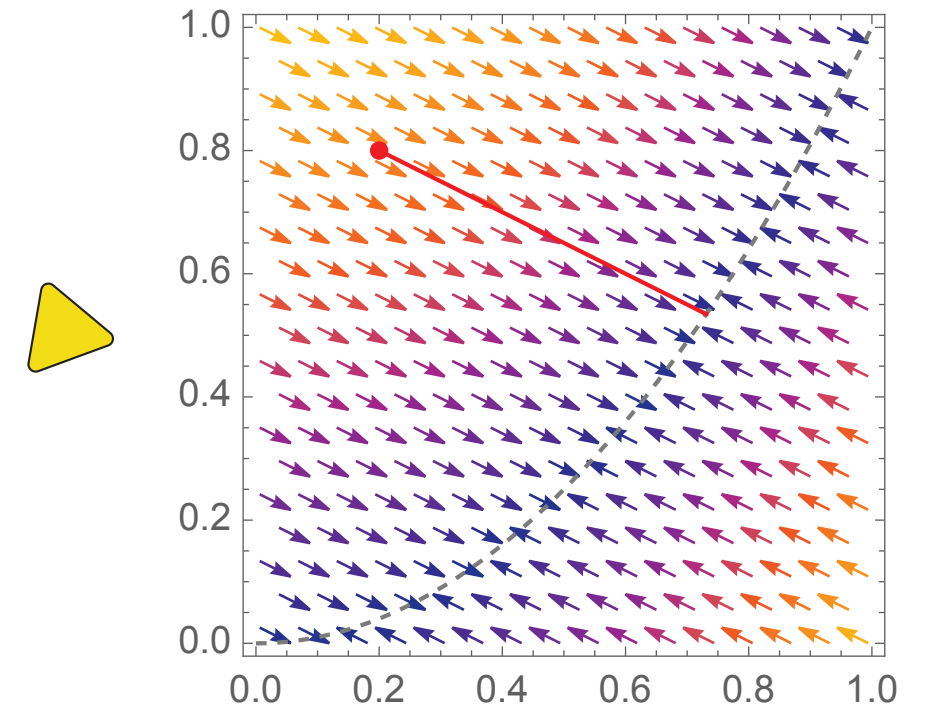


# Continuous models are **deterministic**



$$\frac{d[A]}{dt} = 2k_- [B] - 2k_+ [A]^2$$

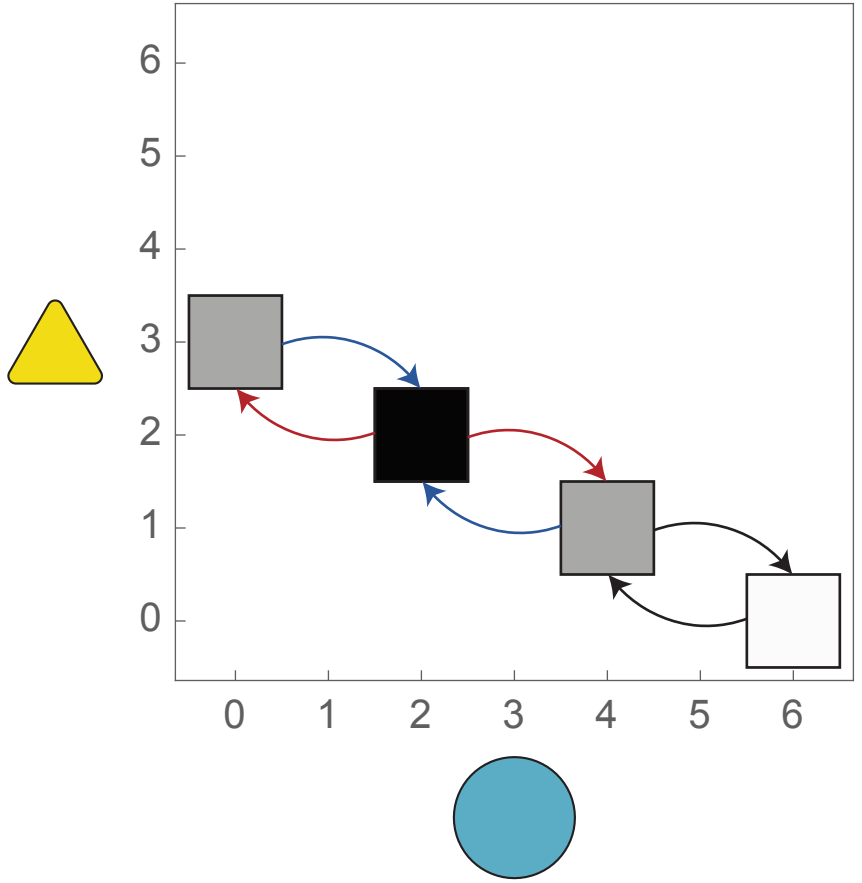
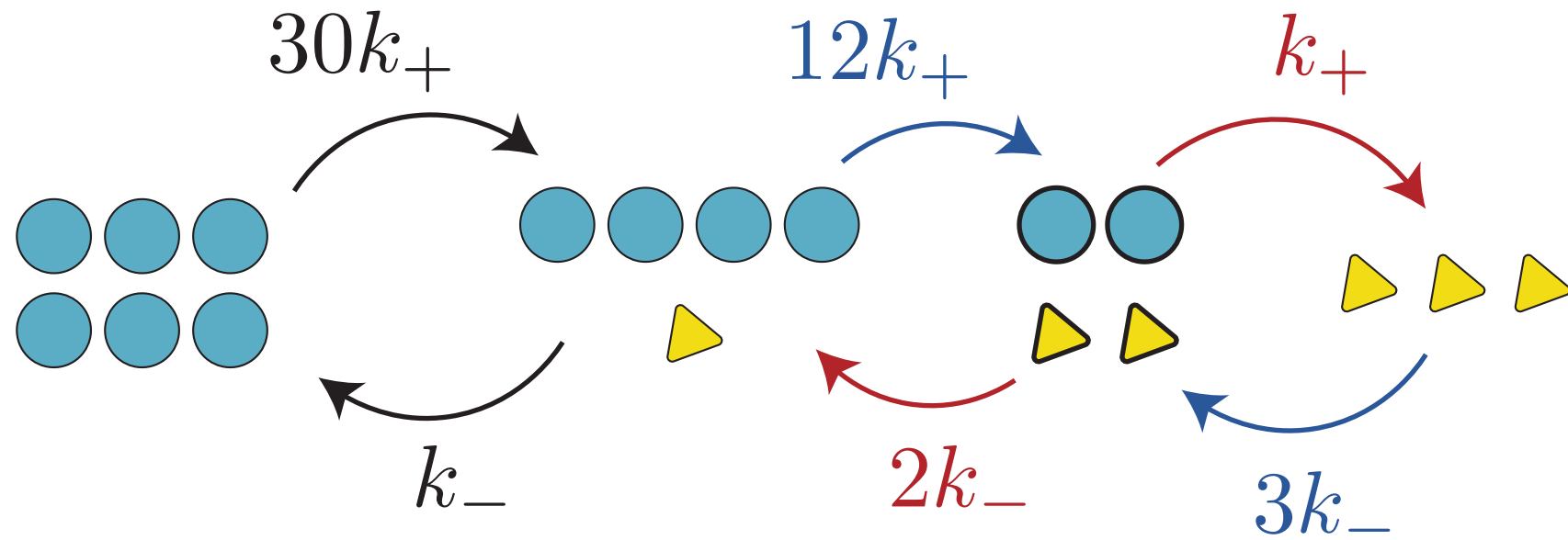
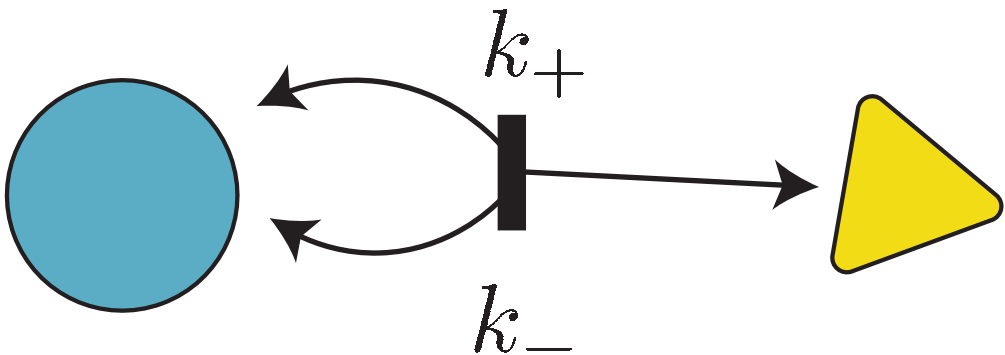
$$\frac{d[B]}{dt} = k_+ [A]^2 - k_- [B]$$



# Discrete models are **stochastic**

$$\frac{dp_{2,2}}{dt} = 12k_+p_{4,1} + 3k_-p_{0,3}$$

$$-k_+p_{2,2} - 2k_-p_{2,2}$$

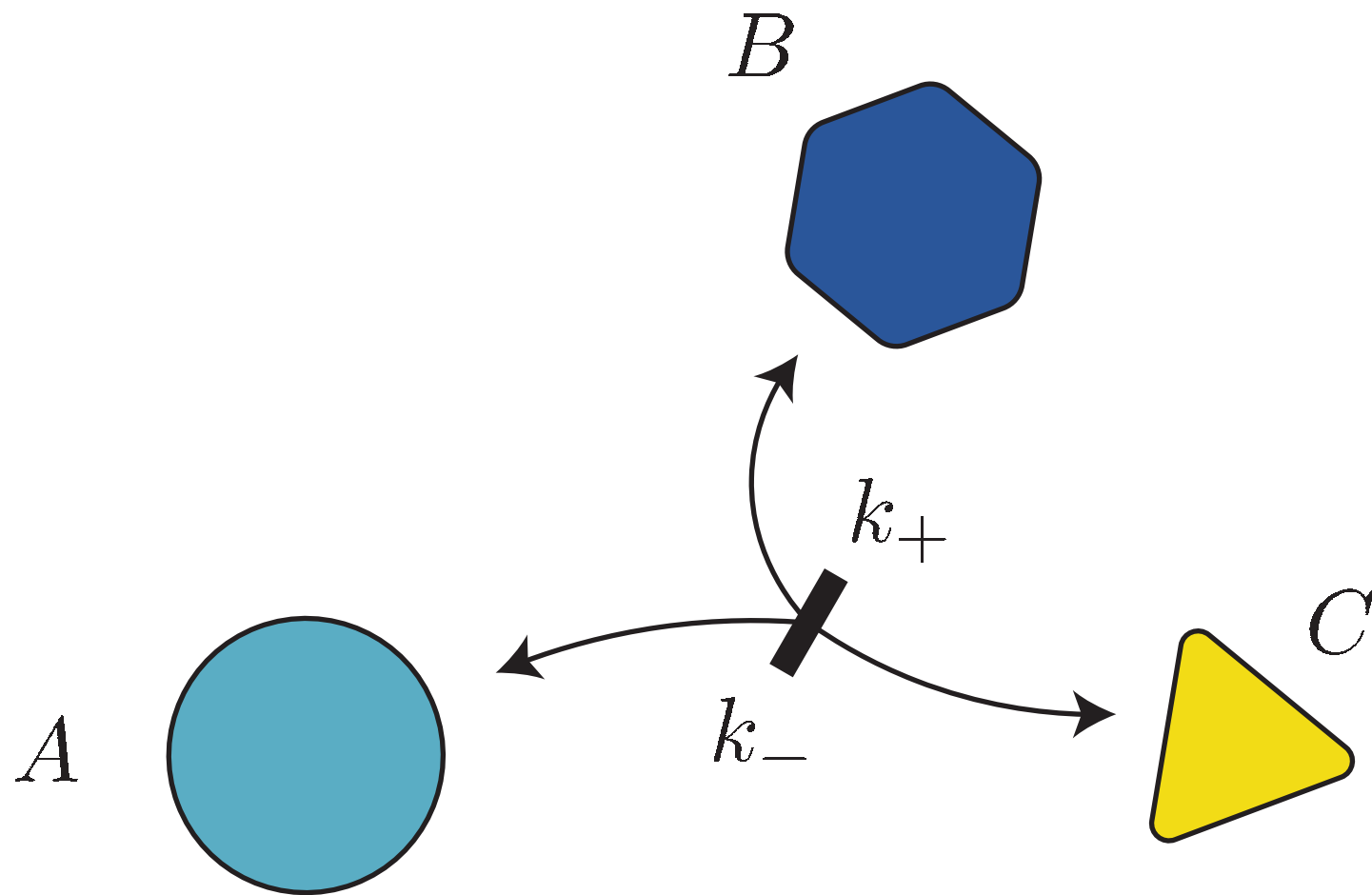




# Stochasticity

What are discrete, **stochastic** chemical systems capable of?

If each reaction is in equilibrium with its reverse reaction then the system is in **detailed balance**



$$G_C - G_A - G_B = \ln \frac{k_-}{k_+}$$

$$\varepsilon_A = e^{-G_A}$$

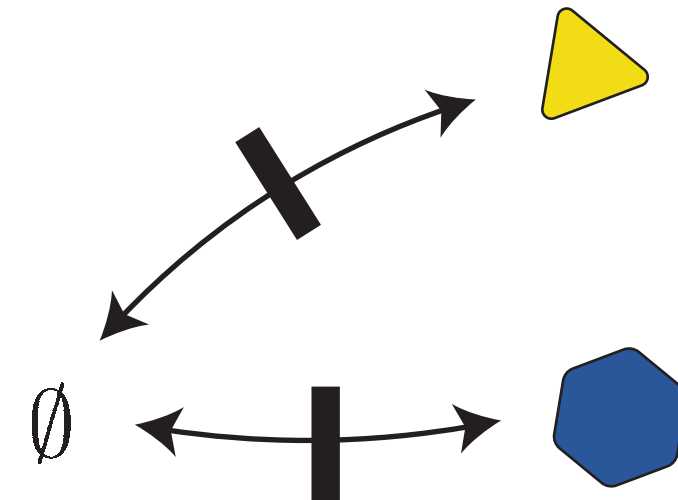
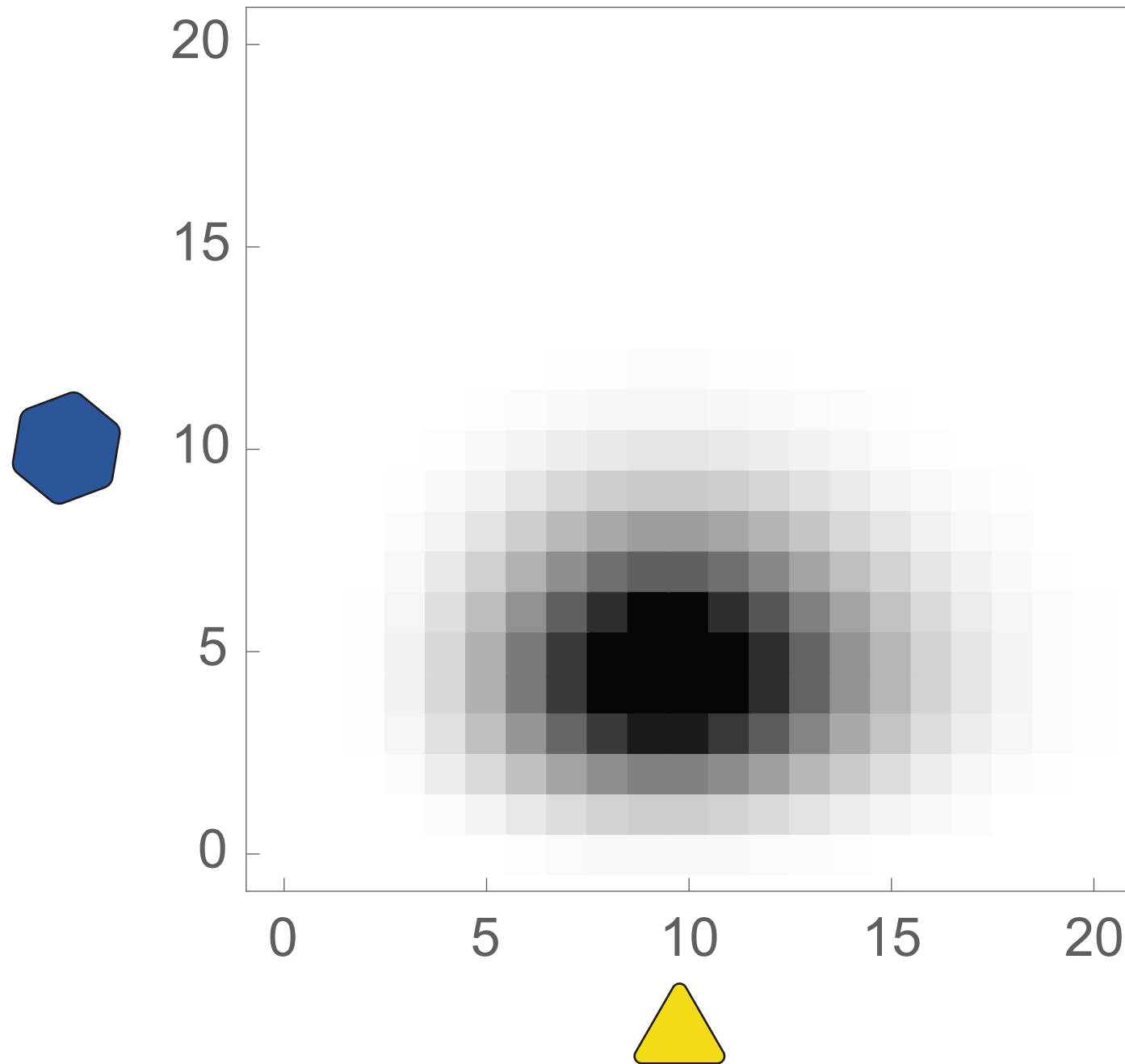
$$\varepsilon_B = e^{-G_B}$$

$$\varepsilon_C = e^{-G_C}$$

$$k_+ \varepsilon_A \varepsilon_B = k_- \varepsilon_C$$



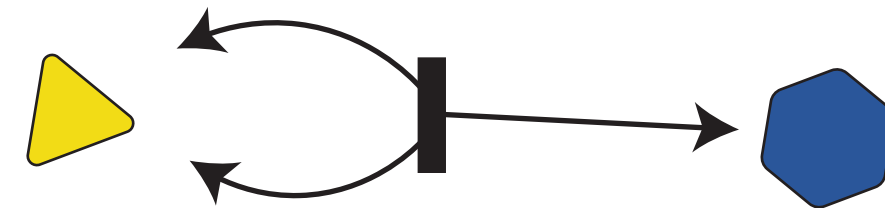
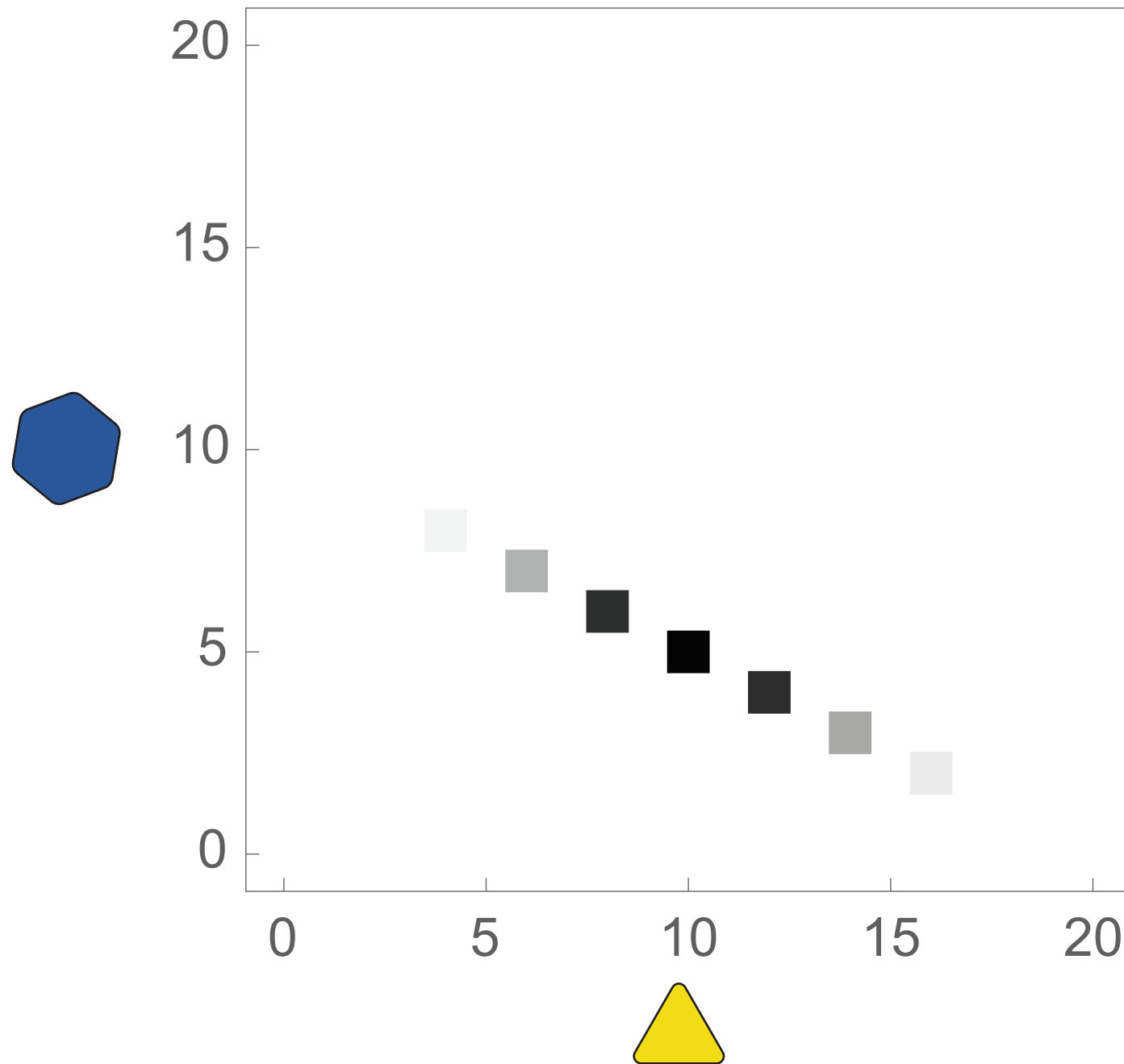
Detailed balanced systems have **stationary** multivariate **Poisson distributions**



$$p_{m,n} \propto \frac{\epsilon_A^m \epsilon_B^n}{m!n!}$$

**multivariate Poisson distribution**

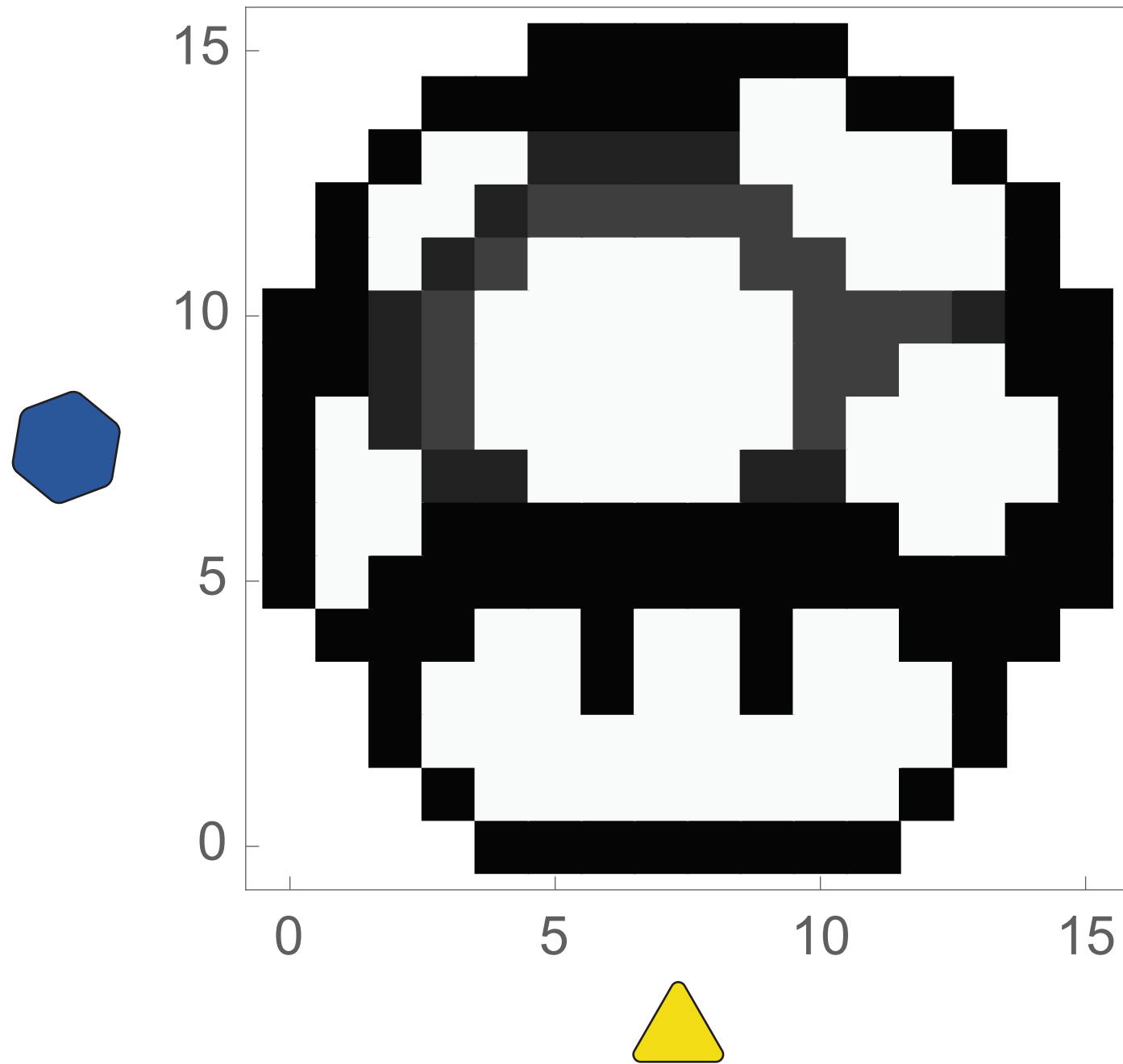
Detailed balanced systems have **stationary**  
multivariate **Poisson distributions**



$$p_{m,n} \propto \frac{\epsilon_A^m \epsilon_B^n}{m!n!}$$

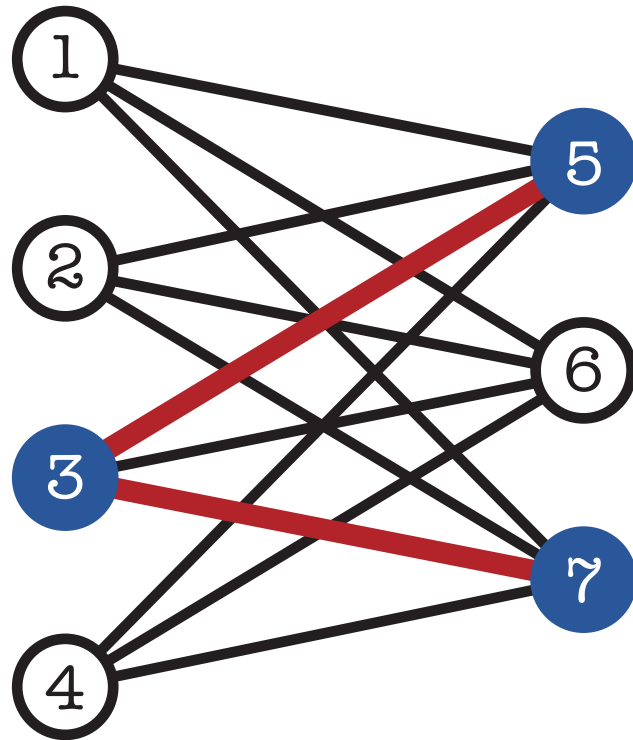
**restricted multivariate  
Poisson distribution**

Can detailed balanced systems produce **complex distributions**?





# Boltzmann machines are stochastic models of neural networks

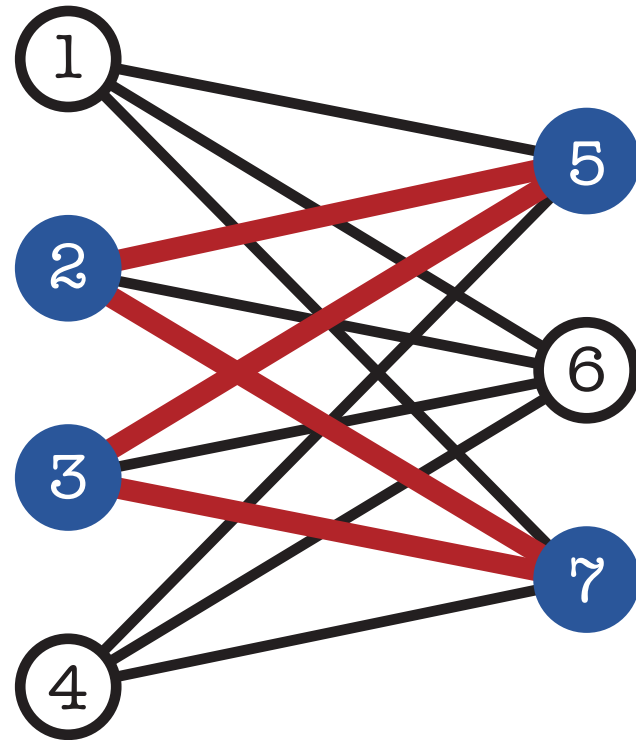


$$E(0, 0, 1, 0; 1, 0, 1) =$$

$$-w_{3,5} - w_{3,7} + \theta_3 + \theta_5 + \theta_7$$

$$p(x) = \frac{e^{-E(x)}}{Z}$$

# Boltzmann machines are stochastic models of neural networks

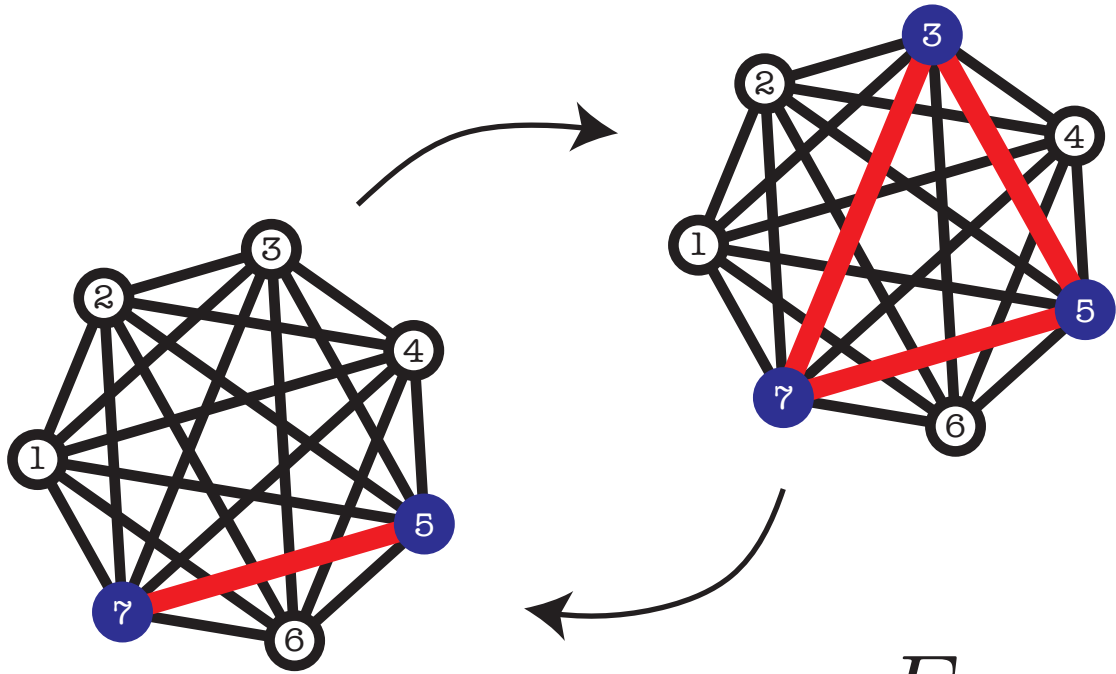


$$E(0, 0, 1, 0; 1, 0, 1) =$$

$$-w_{2,5} - w_{2,7} - w_{3,5} - w_{3,7} + \theta_3 + \theta_5 + \theta_7 + \theta_2$$

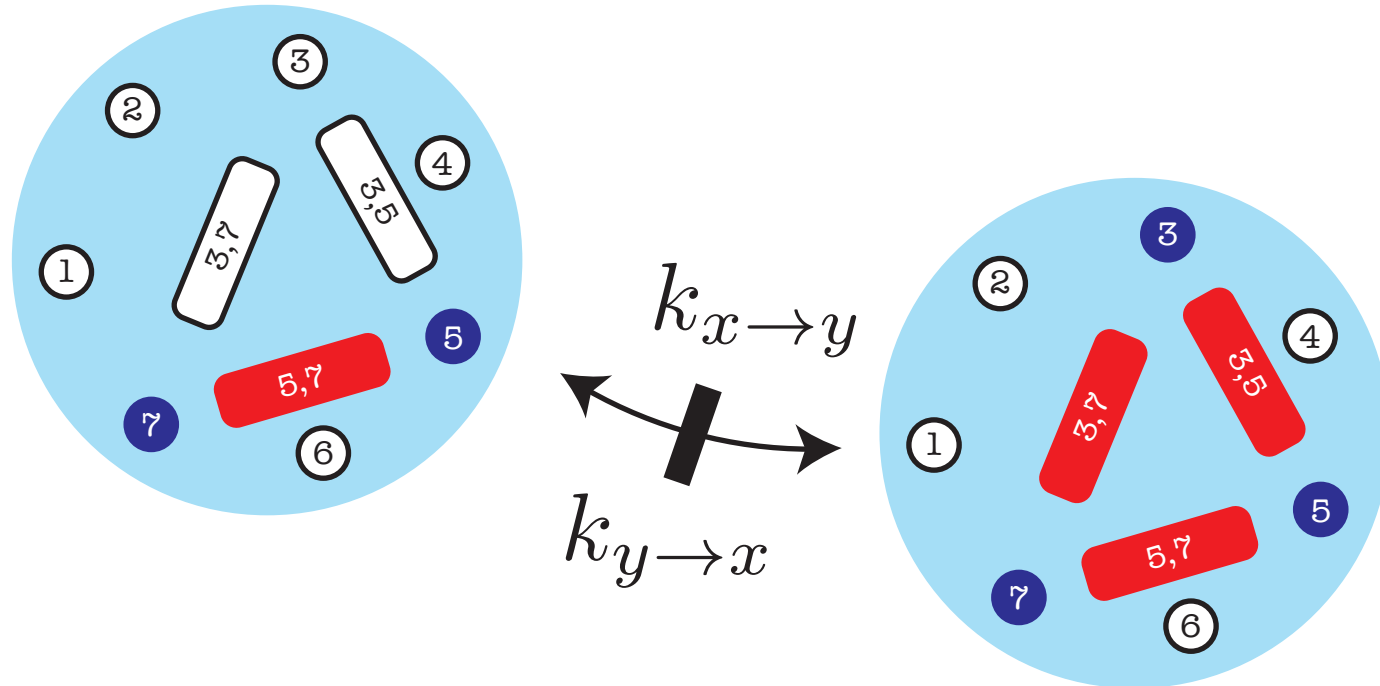
$$p(x) = \frac{e^{-E(x)}}{Z}$$

# Chemical systems can behave like Boltzmann machines



$$E_x = -w_{5,7} + \theta_5 + \theta_7$$

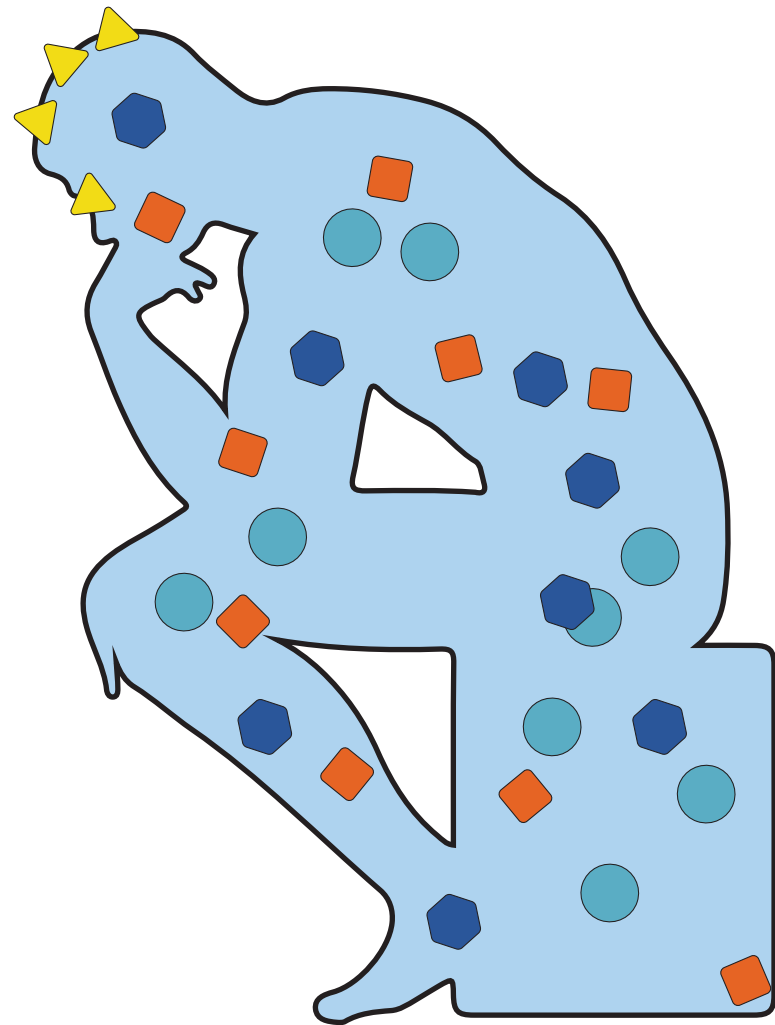
$$E_y = -w_{3,5} - w_{3,7} - w_{5,7} + \theta_3 + \theta_5 + \theta_7$$



$$\ln \frac{k_{y \rightarrow x}}{k_{x \rightarrow y}} = E_y - E_x$$

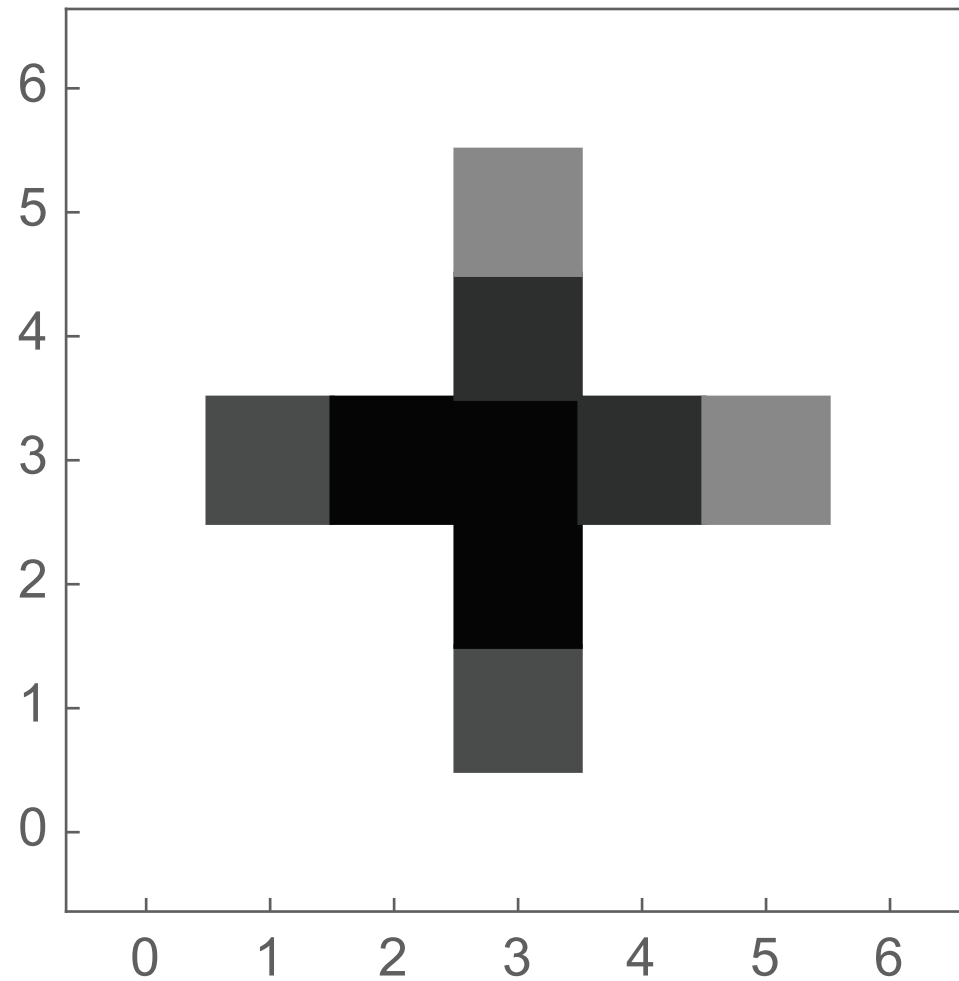
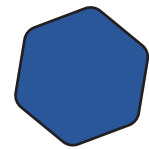
$$= -w_{3,5} - w_{3,7} + \theta_3$$



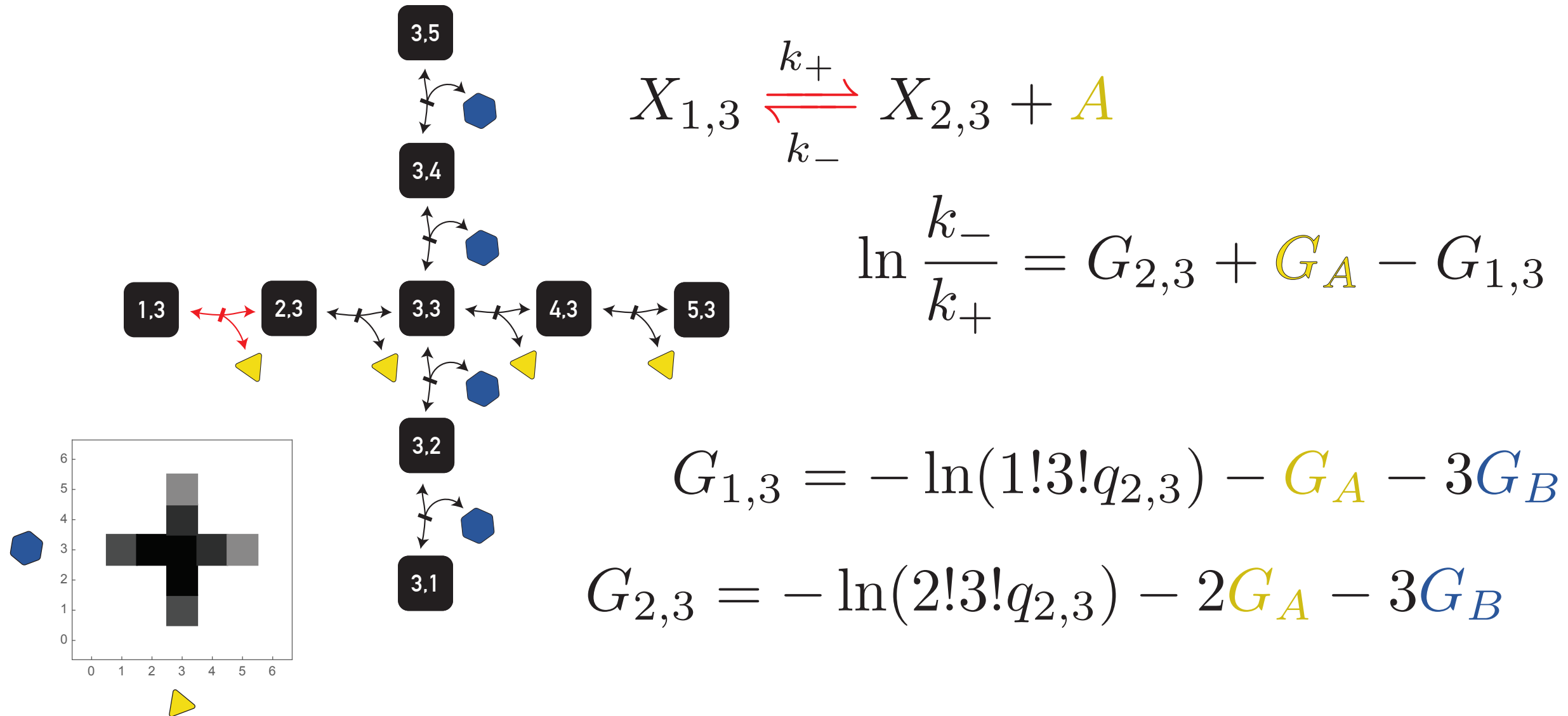


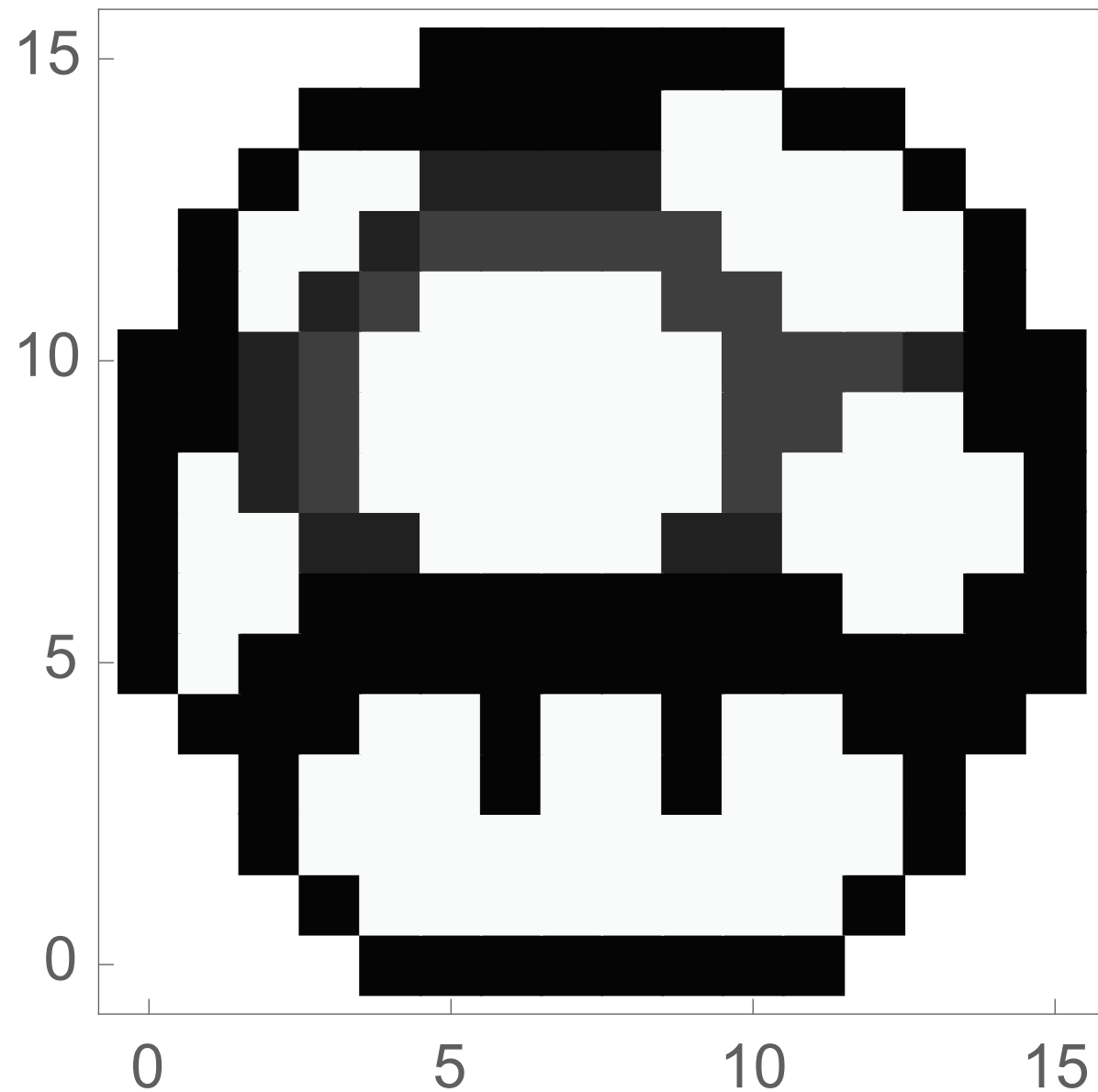
Chemical systems can produce  
**complex distributions,**  
**sample** them,  
and perform **inference**

# Detailed-balanced systems with **hidden species** can produce any distribution



# Detailed-balanced systems with **hidden species** can produce any distribution





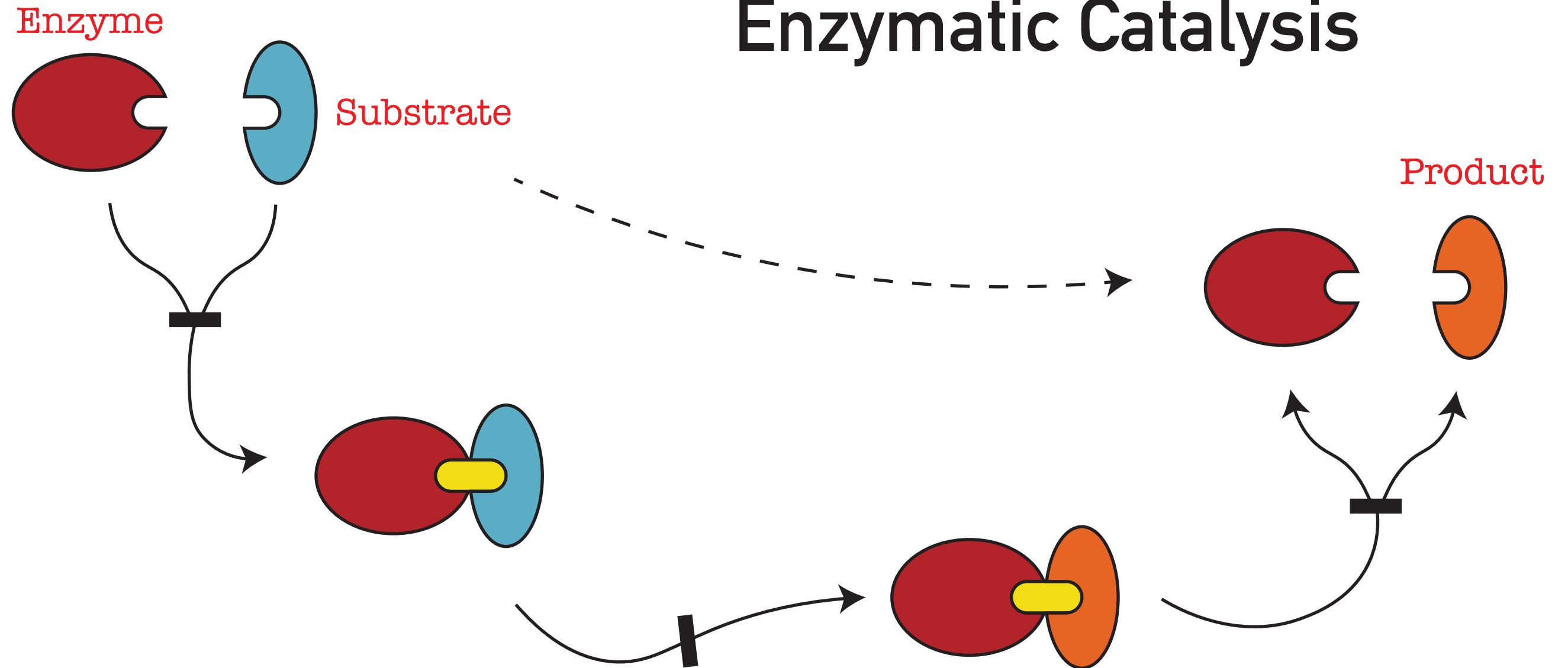
Chemical reaction networks  
can approximate **arbitrary**  
probability distributions!

# Combinatorics

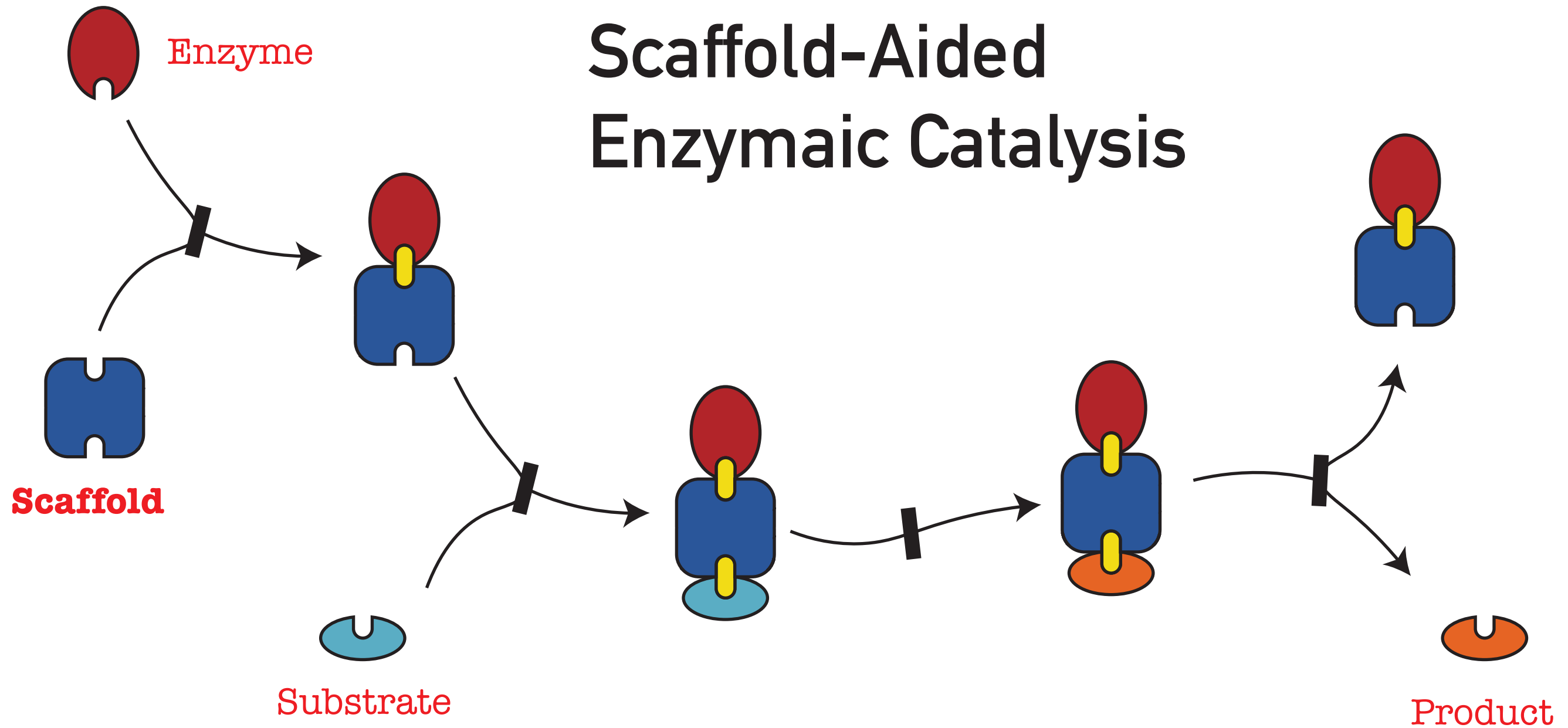
What role does **combinatorics**  
play in biology?



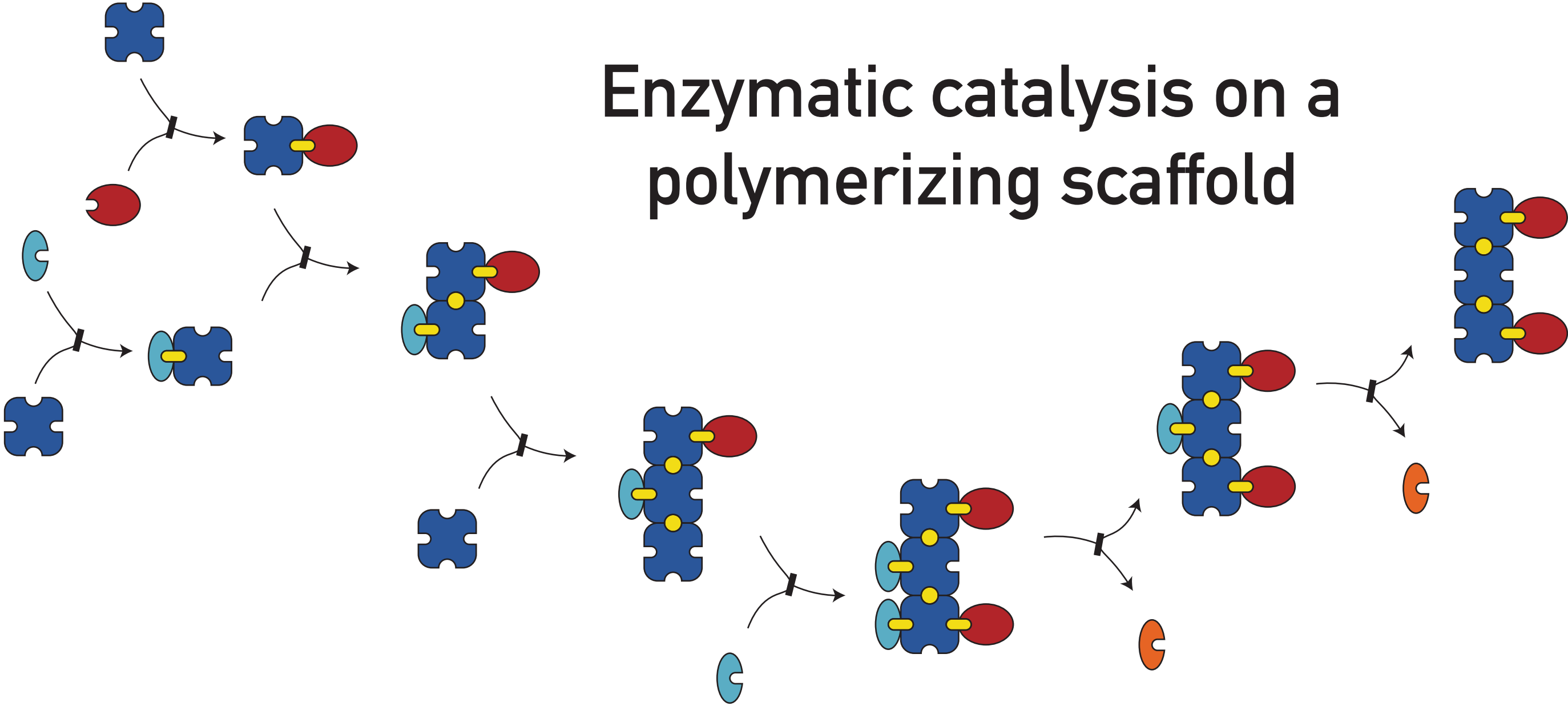
# Enzymatic Catalysis



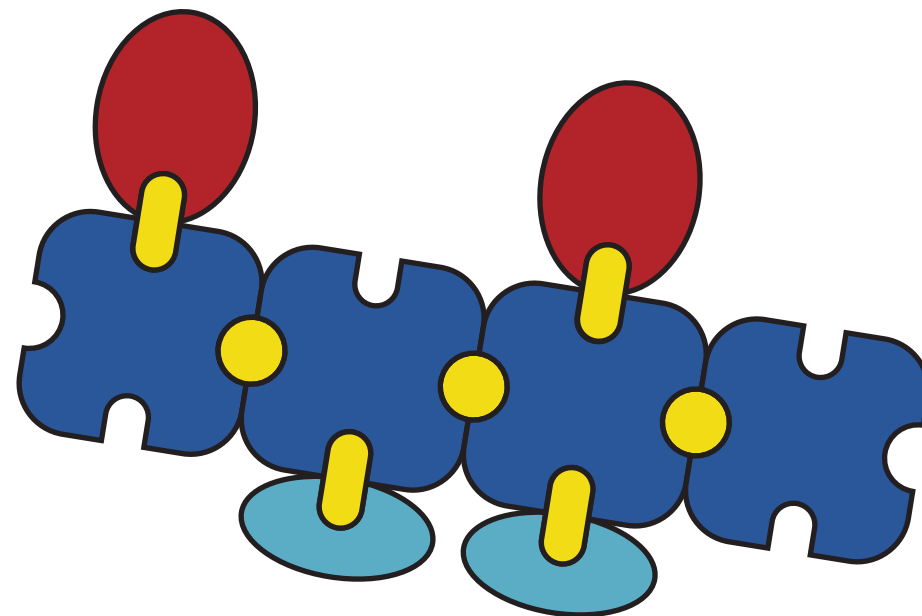
# Scaffold-Aided Enzymatic Catalysis



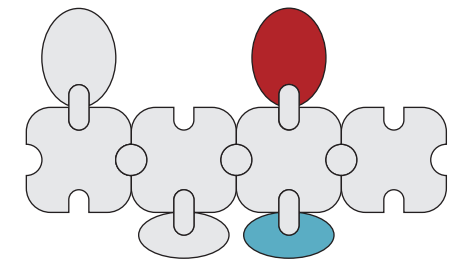
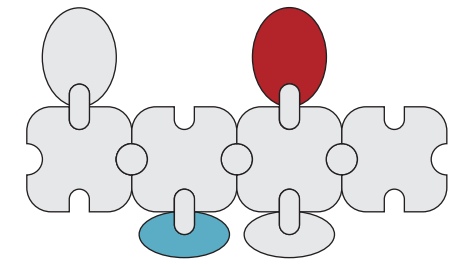
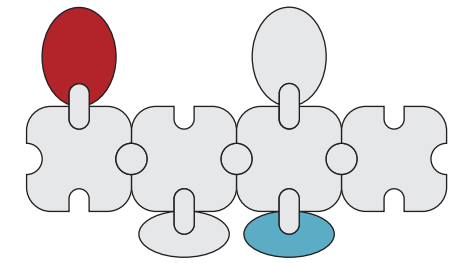
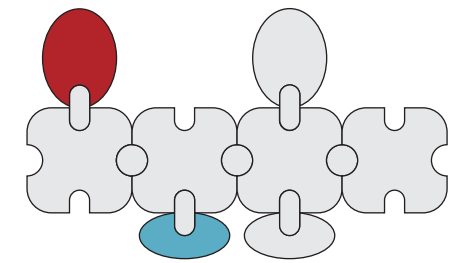
# Enzymatic catalysis on a polymerizing scaffold



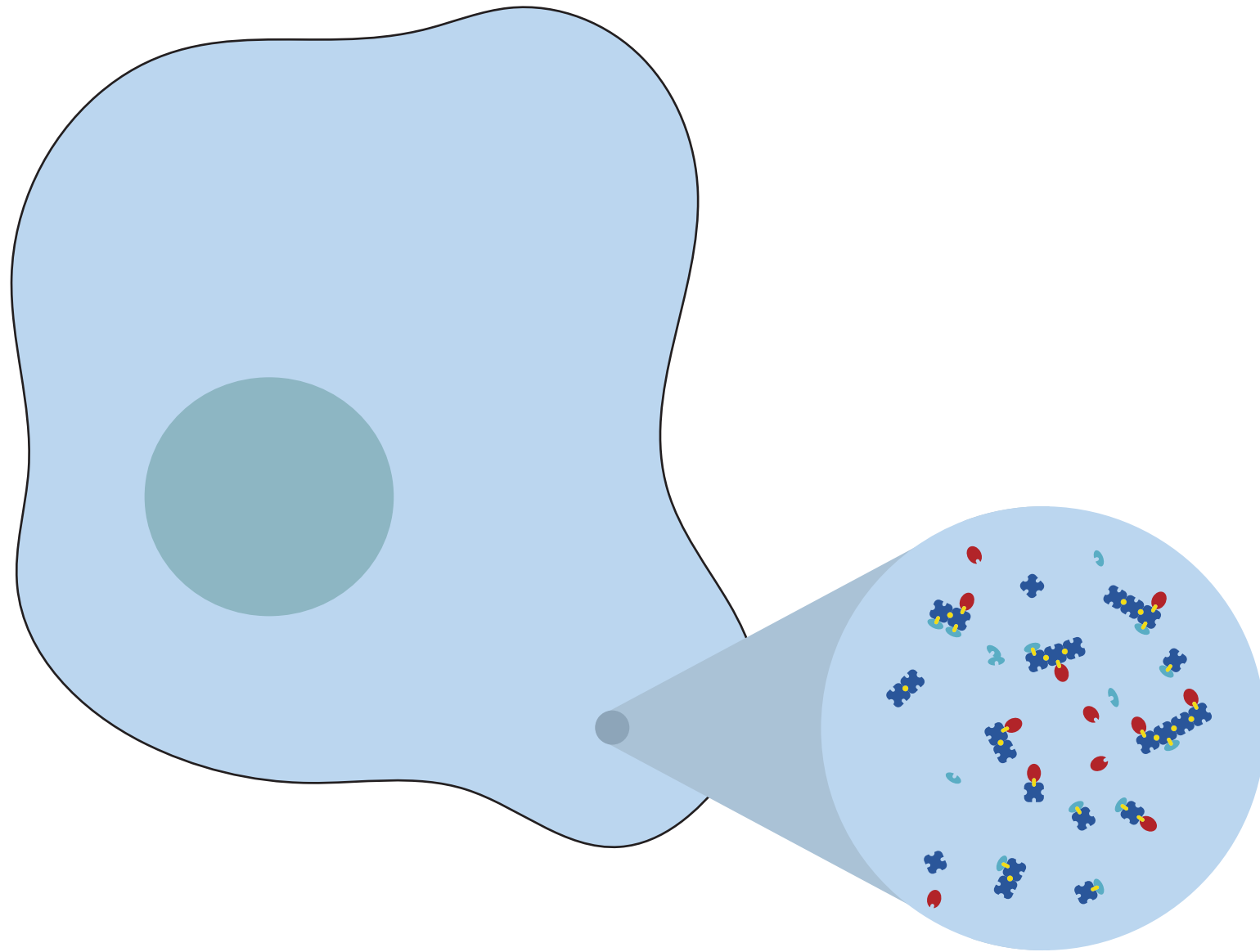
The **catalytic potential** of a complex is its effective concentration of potential **enzyme-substrate interactions**



complex



potential interactions



What is the catalytic potential of a cell?

$$x^4 = \blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare$$

$$\frac{d}{dx}x^4 = 4x^3$$

$$= \square\blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare + \blacksquare\square\blacksquare\blacksquare + \blacksquare\blacksquare\square\blacksquare + \blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare\square$$

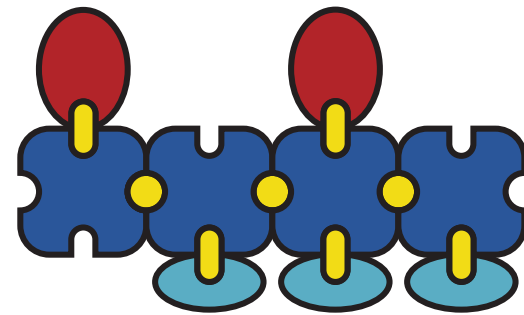
**Generating functions** encode complex combinatorial patterns as algebraic expressions

$$f = 1 + x + x^2 + x^3 + \dots = 1 + \blacksquare + \blacksquare\blacksquare + \blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare + \dots$$

$$= 1 + \blacksquare f = 1 + x f = \frac{1}{1-x}$$

$$\frac{df}{dx} = \frac{1}{(1-x)^2} = f^2 = (1 + \blacksquare + \blacksquare\blacksquare + \dots) \square (1 + \blacksquare + \blacksquare\blacksquare + \dots)$$





$$= \alpha^2 \beta^3 \sigma^3 a^2 b^3 s^4$$

We can use generating functions to encode the class of all **possible complexes**

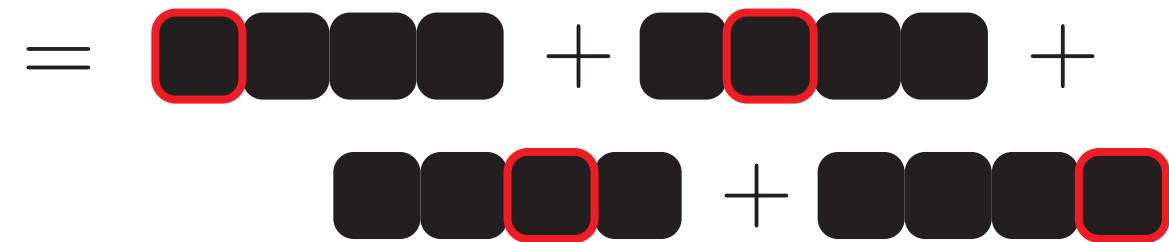
$$W = \text{red oval} + \text{blue oval} + \text{blue piece} + \text{red oval on blue piece} + \text{blue piece on blue oval} + \text{two blue pieces} + \text{red oval on two blue pieces} + \dots$$

$$= a + b + s + \alpha a s + \beta b s + \sigma s^2 + \alpha \beta a b s + \dots$$

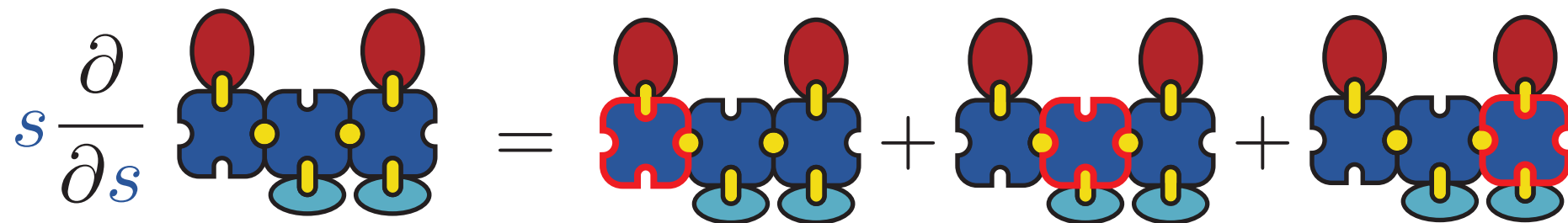
$$= \text{red oval} + \text{blue oval} + \underset{1}{\text{red oval on blue piece}} + \dots + \underset{n}{\text{red oval on } n \text{ blue pieces}} + \dots = a + b + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \sigma^{n-1} s^n (1 + \alpha a)^n (1 + \beta b)^n$$

$$= a + b + \frac{s(1 + \alpha a)(1 + \beta b)}{1 - \sigma s(1 + \alpha a)(1 + \beta b)}$$

$$x \frac{d}{dx} x^4 = 4x^4$$



We can take derivatives of the complex generating function to express **conservation laws**



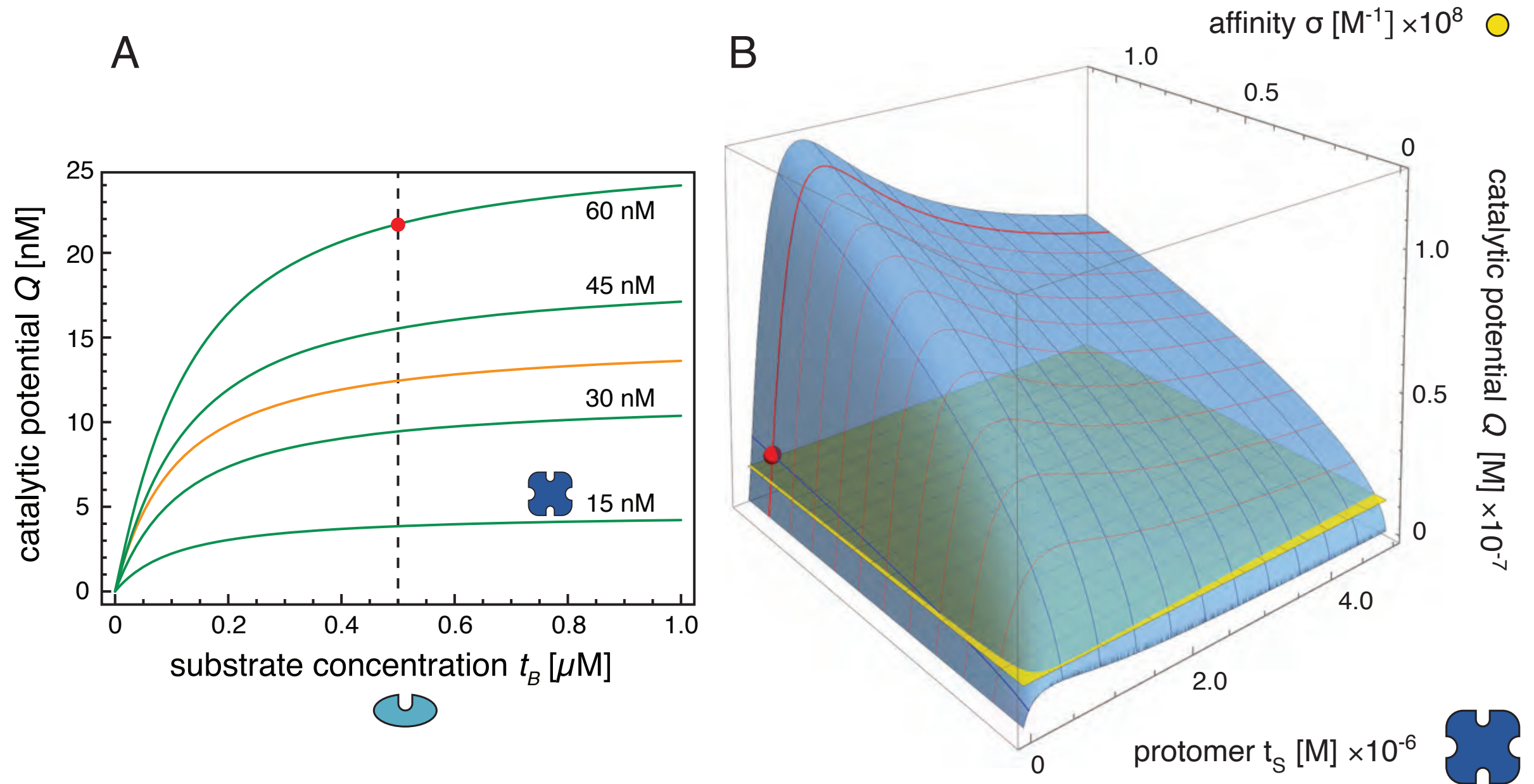
$$t_A = a \frac{\partial W}{\partial a}$$

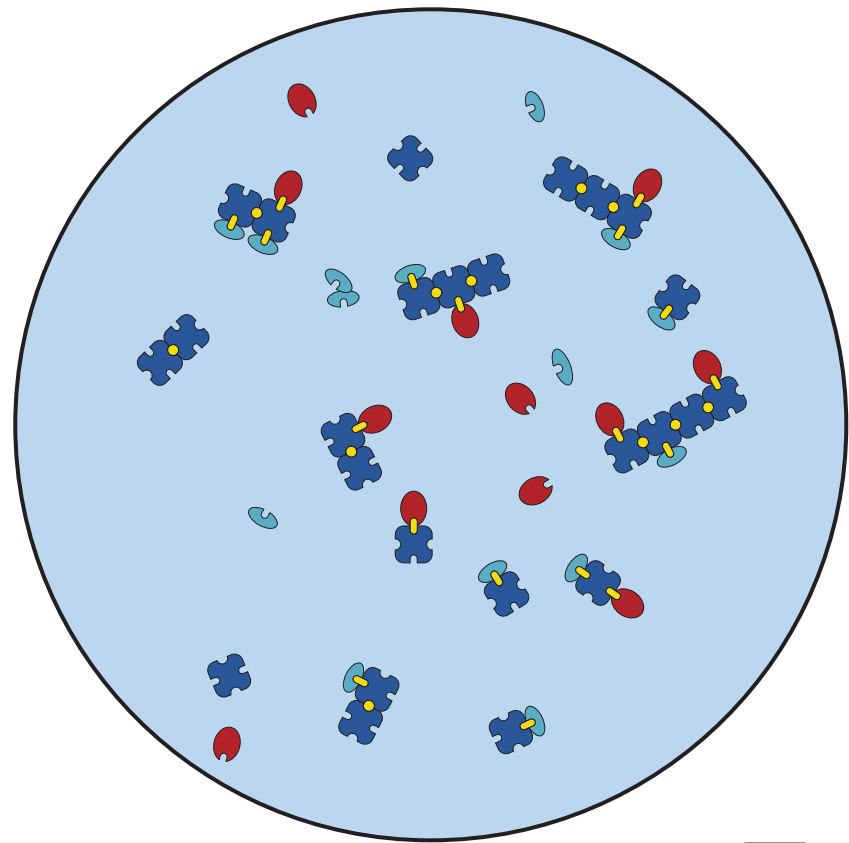
$$t_B = b \frac{\partial W}{\partial b}$$

$$t_S = s \frac{\partial W}{\partial s}$$



# Catalytic potential is sensitive to polymerization parameters





The **stochasticity** of the system can also be analyzed using generating functions

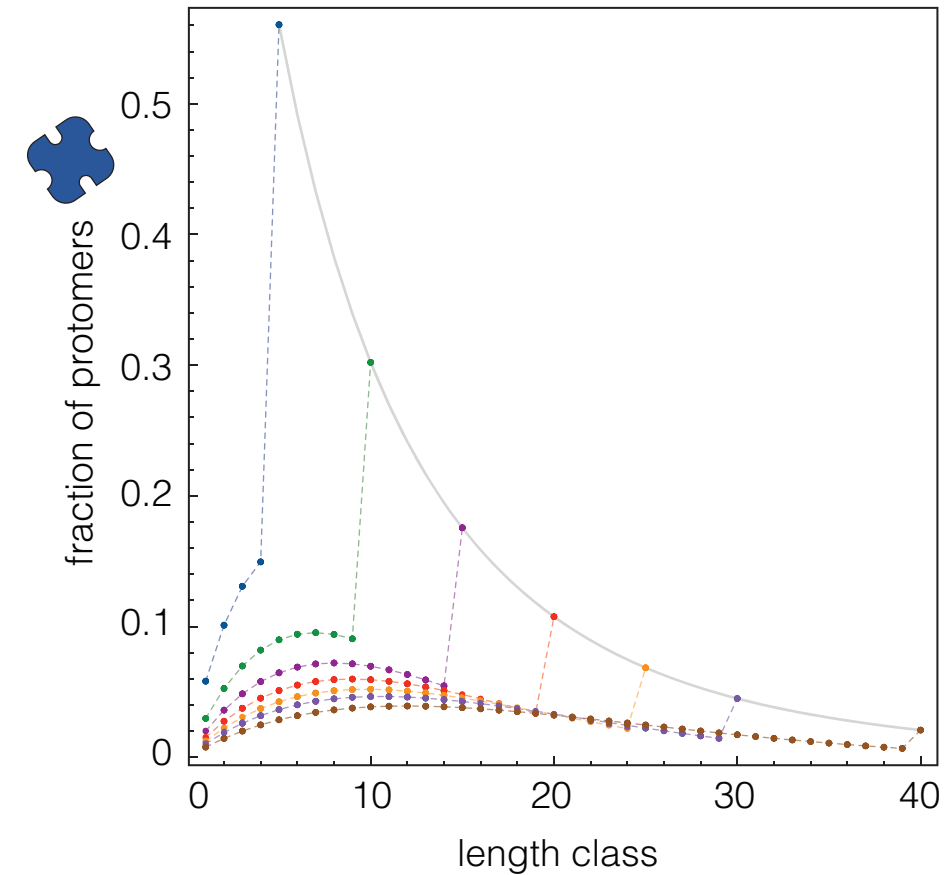
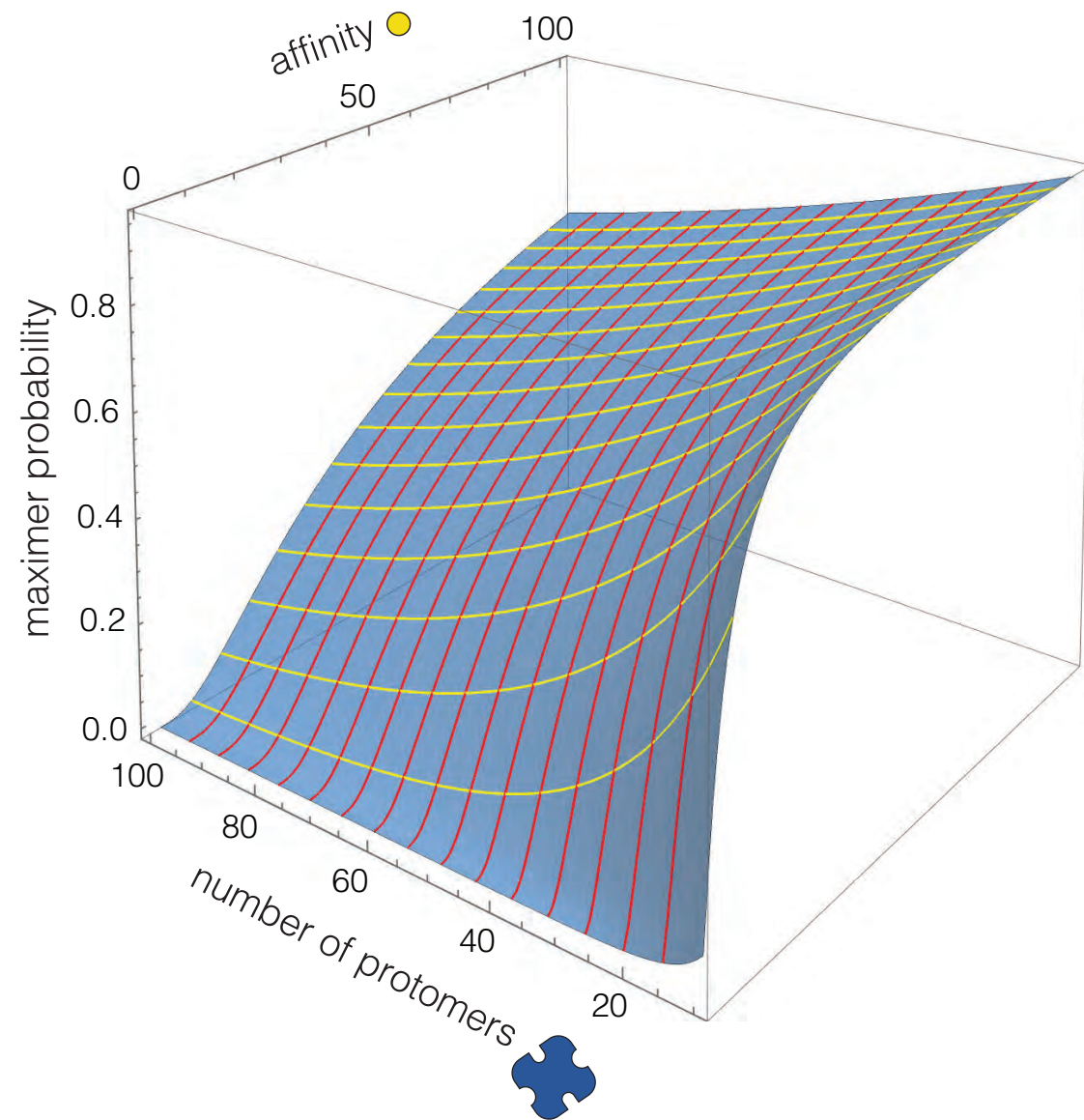
$$Z = e^W \quad \text{ensemble generating function}$$

$$= \text{circle} + \text{circle with light blue sphere} + \text{circle with red sphere} + \text{circle with blue puzzle piece} + \text{circle with light blue sphere and blue puzzle piece} + \text{circle with blue puzzle piece and yellow dot} + \text{circle with blue puzzle piece, light blue sphere, and red sphere} + \dots$$

$$= \sum_{(t_A, t_B, t_C) \in \mathbb{N}^3} Z_{t_A, t_B, t_C} a^{t_A} b^{t_B} c^{t_C}$$

$$Z_{1,1,1} = \text{circle with light blue sphere, blue puzzle piece, and red sphere} + \text{circle with red sphere, blue puzzle piece, and light blue sphere} + \text{circle with light blue sphere, blue puzzle piece, and yellow dot} + \text{circle with red sphere, blue puzzle piece, and yellow dot}$$

# The discrete system has a polymer of **maximum** length



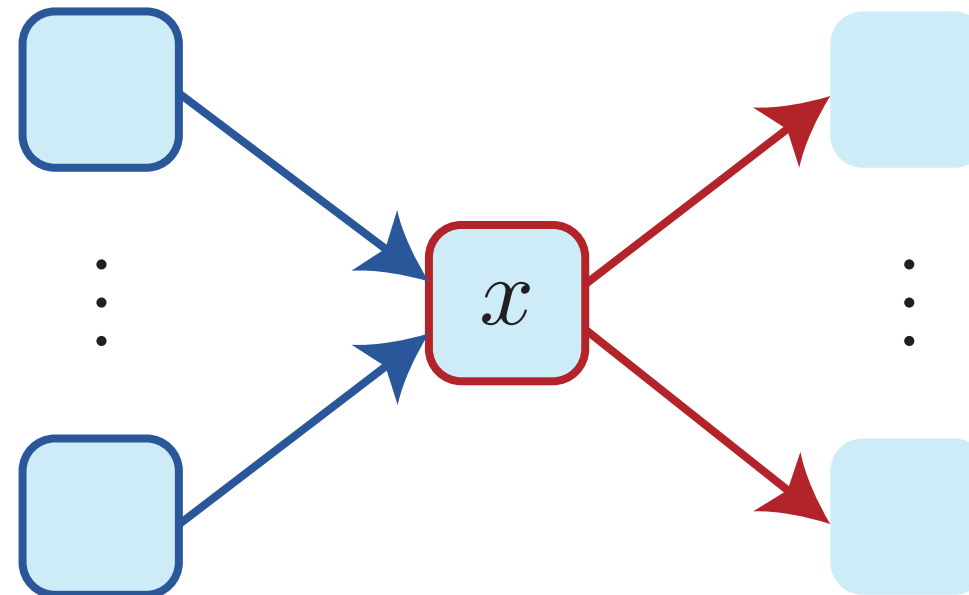


# Formal Semantics

Can we interpret each variable  
*formally* rather than *numerically*?

# The **chemical master equation** is a probability **flux** equation

$$\frac{dp_x}{dt} = \sum_{r \in R} k_r \frac{(x + \rho_r - \pi_r)!}{(x - \pi_r)!} p_{x + \rho_r - \pi_r} - k_r \frac{x!}{(x - \rho_r)!} p_x$$



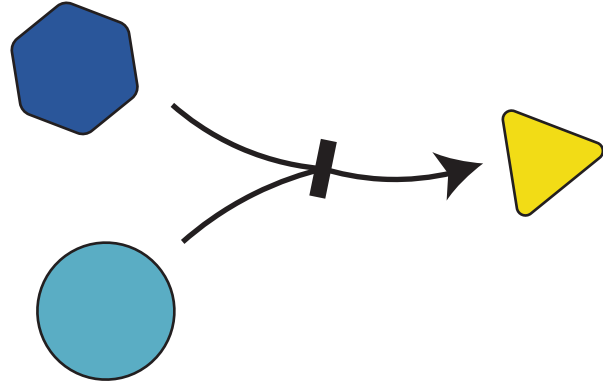
**Probability generating functions** can encode complex probability distributions in algebraic expressions

$$f = \sum_{(m,n) \in \mathbb{N}^2} p_{m,n} z_A^m z_B^n$$

$$= \text{circle} p_{0,0} + \text{circle with 1 blue die} p_{1,0} + \text{circle with 1 red die} p_{0,1} + \text{circle with 2 blue dice} p_{2,0} + \text{circle with 1 blue and 1 red die} p_{1,1} + \text{circle with 2 red dice} p_{0,2} + \dots$$

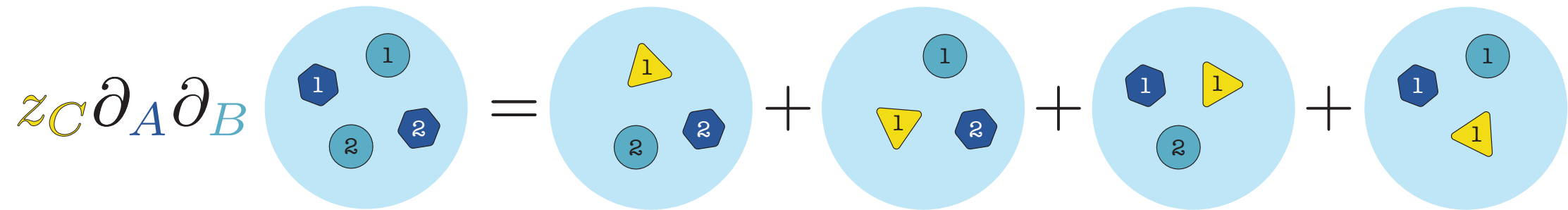
$$f = e^{\lambda_A(z_A - 1) + \lambda_B(z_B - 1)} = \sum_{(m,n) \in \mathbb{N}^2} \left( e^{-\lambda_A} \frac{\lambda_A^m}{m!} \right) \left( e^{-\lambda_B} \frac{\lambda_B^n}{n!} \right) z_A^m z_B^n$$

$$\propto \text{circle} + \text{circle with 1 blue die} + \text{circle with 1 red die} + \text{circle with 2 blue dice} + \text{circle with 1 blue and 1 red die} + \text{circle with 2 red dice} + \text{circle with 3 blue dice} + \dots$$



**Reaction operators** can be encoded  
as partial differential operators

$$z_C \partial_A \partial_B (z_A^2 z_B^2) = 4 z_A z_B z_C$$



$$\mathbf{A}_r f = k_r (z_C - z_A z_B) \partial_A \partial_B f$$

$$\sum_{r \in R} \mathbf{A}_r = \mathbf{A} \quad \frac{df}{dt} = \mathbf{A}f$$

The **stochastic dynamics** of a system can be obtained by applying reaction operators recursively

$$f = f_0 + \int_0^t \mathbf{A}f dt$$

$$\int_0^t \mathbf{A} dt = \mathbf{R} \quad f = f_0 + \mathbf{R}f$$

$$= f_0 + \mathbf{R}f_0 + \mathbf{R}\mathbf{R}f_0 + \mathbf{R}\mathbf{R}\mathbf{R}f_0 + \dots$$

$$= f_0 + t \mathbf{A}f_0 + \frac{t^2}{2} \mathbf{A}\mathbf{A}f_0 + \frac{t^3}{6} \mathbf{A}\mathbf{A}\mathbf{A}f_0 + \dots$$

$$= \boxed{e^{t\mathbf{A}}f_0} = \mathbf{E}f_0$$

$$\mathcal{R} = \rightarrow - \downarrow$$

$$f = f_0 + \mathcal{R} f$$

$$f + \downarrow f = f_0 + \rightarrow f$$

The stochastic dynamics  
can be expressed as a path integral  
in terms of **waiting operators**

$$\mathcal{W} = 1 - \downarrow + \downarrow \downarrow - \downarrow \downarrow \downarrow + \dots = \frac{1}{1 + \downarrow}$$

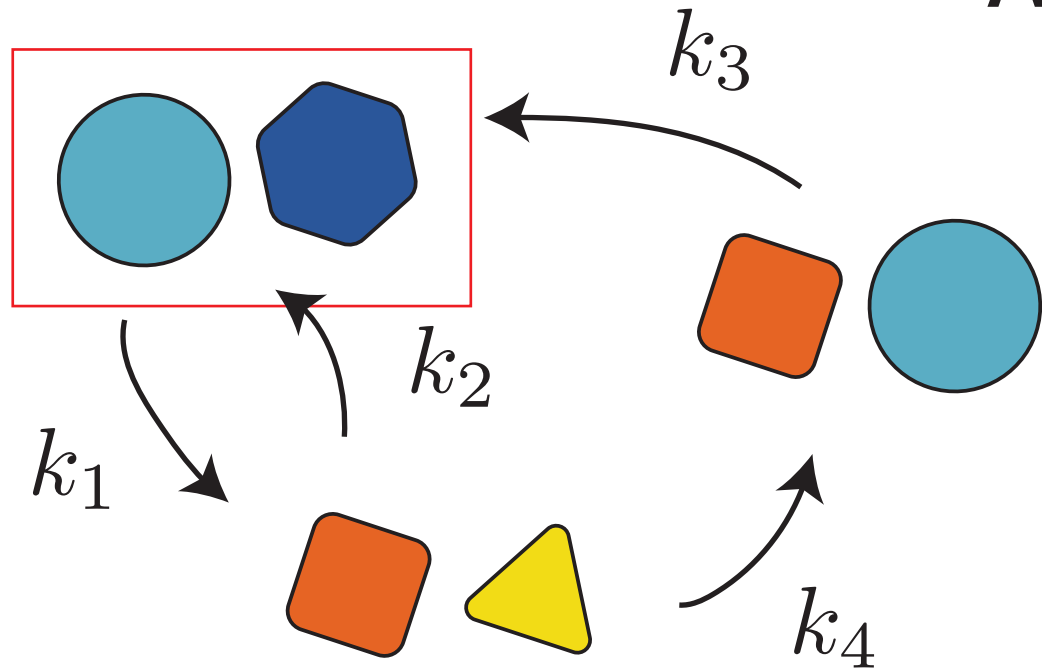
$$f = \mathcal{W} f_0 + \mathcal{W} \rightarrow f$$

$$= \mathcal{W} f_0 + \mathcal{W} \rightarrow \mathcal{W} f_0 + \mathcal{W} \rightarrow \mathcal{W} \rightarrow \mathcal{W} f_0 + \dots$$

$$\mathcal{W} f_0 = e^{-t \mathcal{A}^-} f_0$$



A system has a stationary Poisson distribution if, and only if, it is **complex-balanced**



$$k_1 \varepsilon_A \varepsilon_B = k_2 \varepsilon_C \varepsilon_D + k_3 \varepsilon_A \varepsilon_C$$

$$\mathbf{A} e^{\varepsilon_A z_A + \varepsilon_B z_B + \varepsilon_C z_C + \varepsilon_D z_D} = 0$$

$$p_{i,j,k,l} \propto \frac{\varepsilon_A^i}{i!} \frac{\varepsilon_B^j}{j!} \frac{\varepsilon_C^k}{k!} \frac{\varepsilon_D^l}{l!}$$

$$0 = \mathbf{A} e^{\varepsilon z} = e^{\varepsilon z} \sum_{c \in C} z^c \left( \sum_{r: \pi_r = c} k_r \varepsilon^{\rho_r} - \sum_{r: \rho_r = c} k_r \varepsilon^c \right)$$

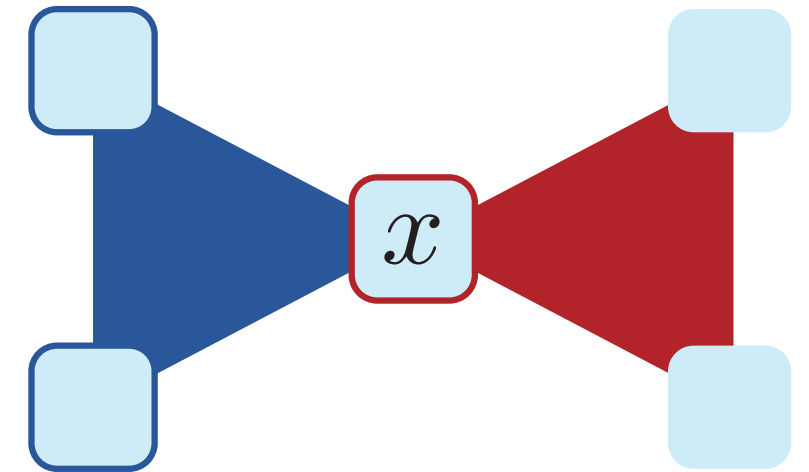
$$\sum_{r: \pi_r = c} k_r \varepsilon^{\rho_r} = \sum_{r: \rho_r = c} k_r \varepsilon^c$$

## Factorial moments are expectation values of permutations

$$\mu_3 = (3 \cdot 2 \cdot 1)p_3 + (4 \cdot 3 \cdot 2)p_4 + (5 \cdot 4 \cdot 3)p_5 + \dots = \sum_{n \geq 3} \frac{n!}{(n-3)!} p_n$$

$$p_n = e^{-\lambda} \frac{\lambda^n}{n!} \quad \mu_n = \lambda^n$$

$$\frac{d\mu_x}{dt} = \sum_{r \in R} k_r \left( \sum_{y \leq \pi_r} \binom{\pi_r}{y} \frac{x!}{(x-y)!} \mu_{x-y+\pi_r} - \sum_{y \leq \rho_r} \binom{\rho_r}{y} \frac{x!}{(x-y)!} \mu_{x-y+\rho_r} \right)$$

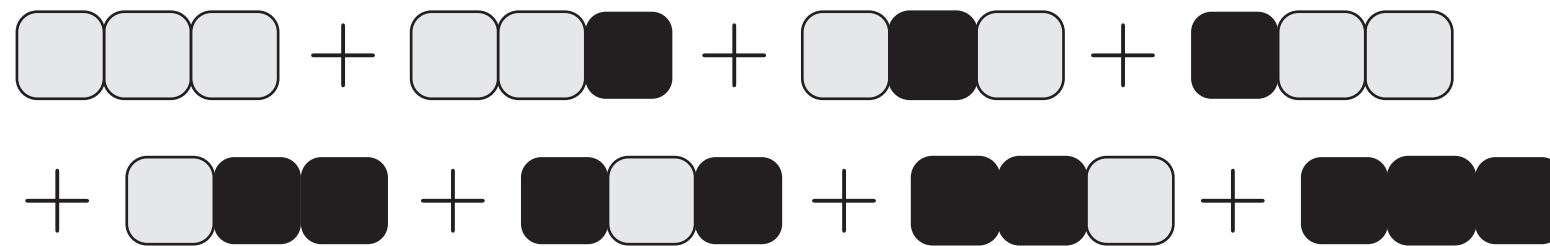


$$m = \mu_0 + \mu_1 z + \frac{\mu_2}{2} z^2 + \frac{\mu_3}{6} z^3 + \dots = \sum_{n \in \mathbb{N}} \frac{\mu_n}{n!} z^n$$

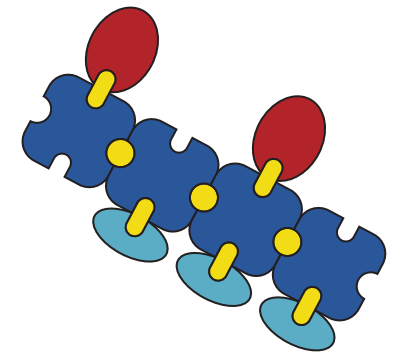
$$m(z) = f(z+1) \quad f = e^{\lambda(z-1)} \quad m = e^{\lambda z}$$

The generating functions of factorial moments and probability have a simple relationship

$$(z+1)^3 = 1 + 3z + 3z^2 + z^3$$



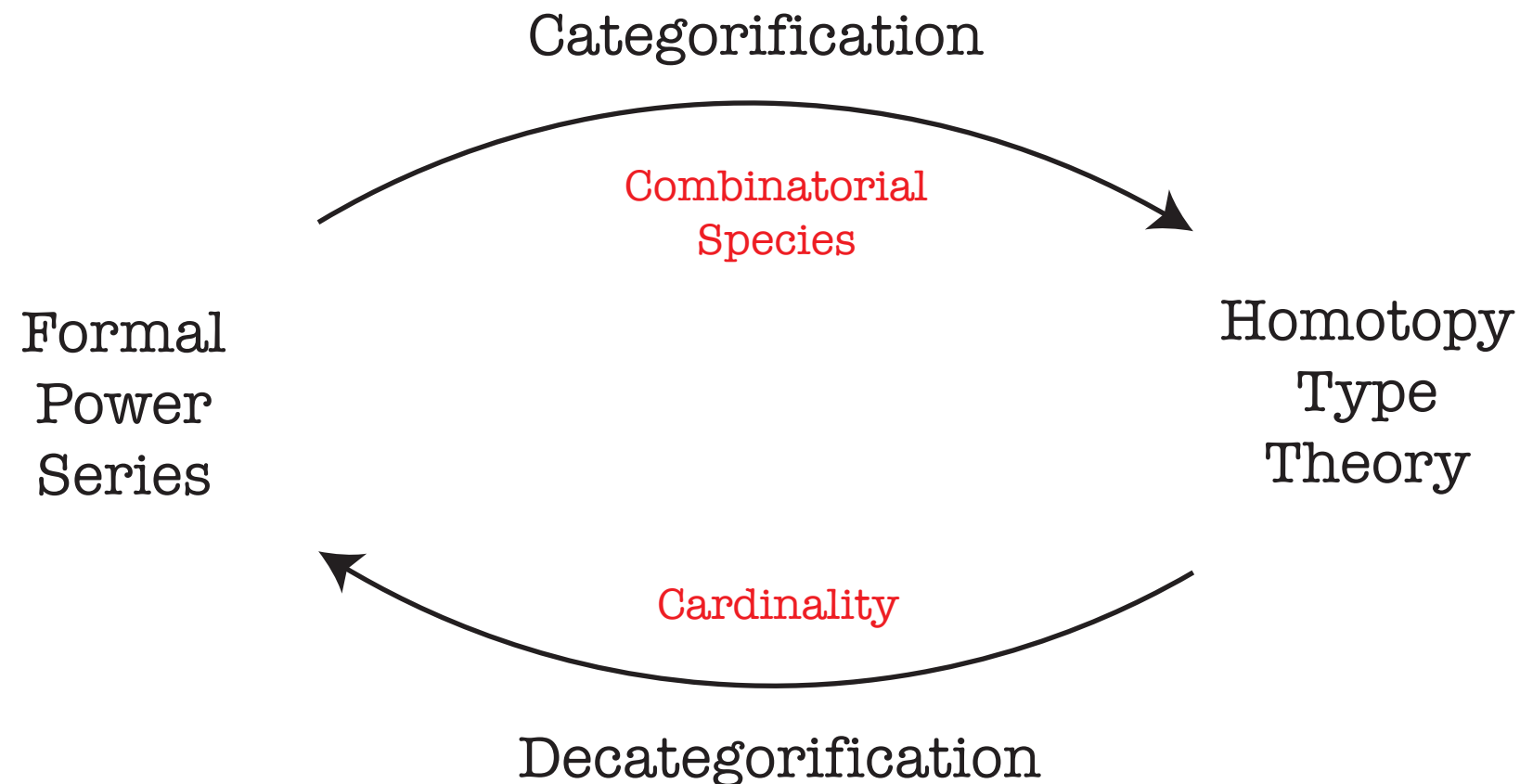
$$\frac{dm}{dt} = \sum_{r \in R} k_r \left( (z+1)^{e_r^+} - (z+1)^{e_r^-} \right) \partial_z^{e_r^-} m$$



# The Barrier of Objects

“In Nature, interaction involves objects directly and never by a numerical value describing them. Stepping outside of conventional dynamical systems requires taking this observation seriously.”

W. Fontana & L. Buss, 1992



# Acknowledgements



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**Walter Fontana**

# Acknowledgements

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# No Soy Poeta

Dicen que no soy poeta  
tiene razón quien lo diga  
Tan solo escribo versos  
para bendecir a Dios  
o elogiar a una hormiga

Pascual Ortiz Saucedo

