

Yet
Another introduction to
GADTs

Generalized Algebraic Data Types

Xavier Van de Woestyne

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- github.com/xvw
- **LambdaNantes**

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DISCLAIMER

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Very cool language
btw

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yes, **why**? As a **keynote**?

Yet

Another introduction to GADTs

Generalized Algebraic Data Types

**Because it's quite a
story!**

Because it's **quite** a
story!

A quest of a litmus case



Betrayals

Because it's **quite** a
story!

A quest of a litmus case

Betrayals

Introduced by example
since Scala 2.x

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Nov 16, 2011: [Paul Chiusano's gist](#)

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**A huge amount of
work**

A quest of a litmus case

Lionel Parreaux, Aleksander Boruch-Gruszecki, and Paolo G. Giarrusso. **2019.**
Towards improved GADT reasoning in Scala.

4 Conclusions and Future Work

GADTs in Scala have historically been poorly understood.

In this paper, we showed that they can be explained in terms of simpler features already present in Scala's core type system. We sketched different encodings of GADTs, demonstrating the tight correspondence between, on one hand, the (sub)type proofs and existential types that normally underlie GADT reasoning and, on the other hand, bounded abstract type members and intersection types, which are core to Scala.

It would be desirable to formalize GADT semantics by elaboration into pDOT following our sketches, which we leave for future work. In any case, the insights presented in this paper can already be used to guide future GADT developments in upcoming versions of the Scala compiler.

A huge amount of work

4 Conclusions and Future Work

GADTs in Scala have historically been poorly understood.

In this paper, we showed that they can be explained in terms of simpler features already present in Scala's core type system. That is, we showed that the encodings of GADTs, demonstrated in the paper, are quite different from the ones that underlie (sub)types in Scala. In particular, we showed that GADTs are not abstract type members and intersection types, which are core to Scala.

It would be desirable to formalize GADT semantics by elaboration into pDOT following our sketches, which we leave for future work. In any case, the insights presented in this paper can already be used to guide future GADT developments in upcoming versions of the Scala compiler.

Betrayals



So, let's try to:

- understand why
- trying with an other approach

Be a
story!

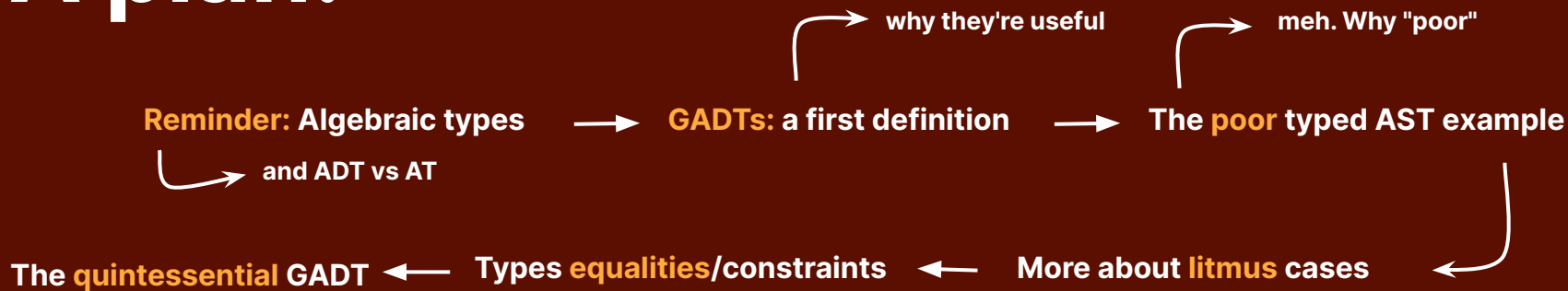
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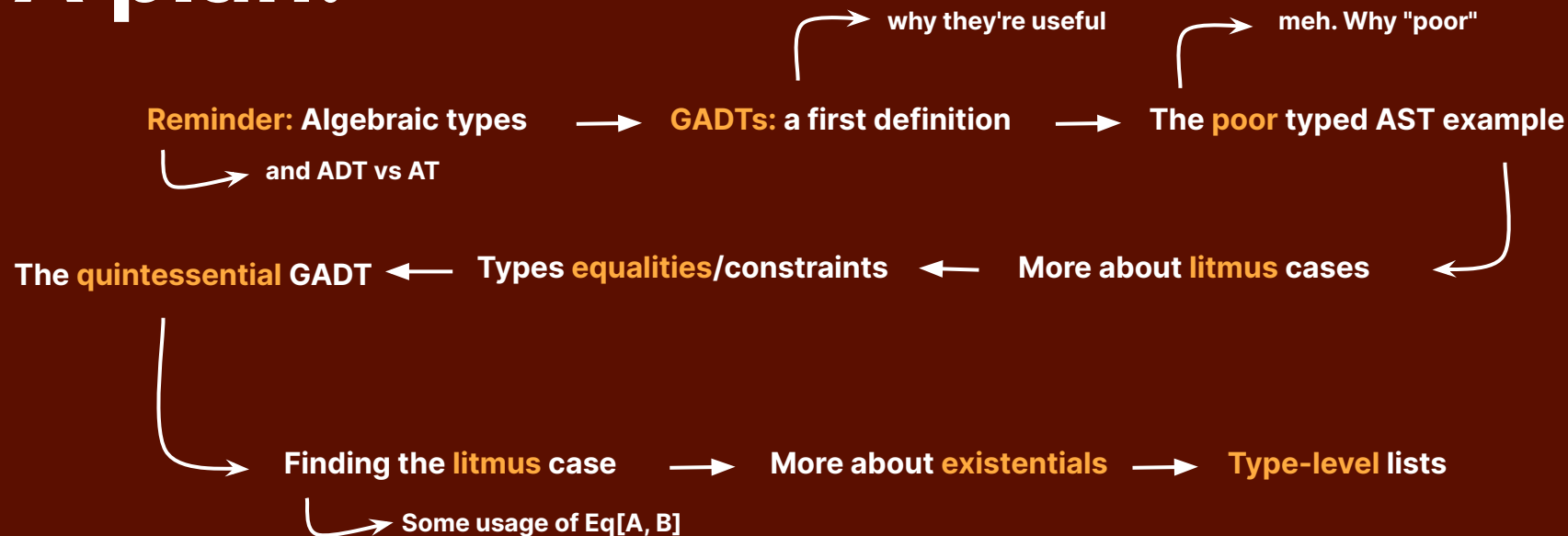
A plan!



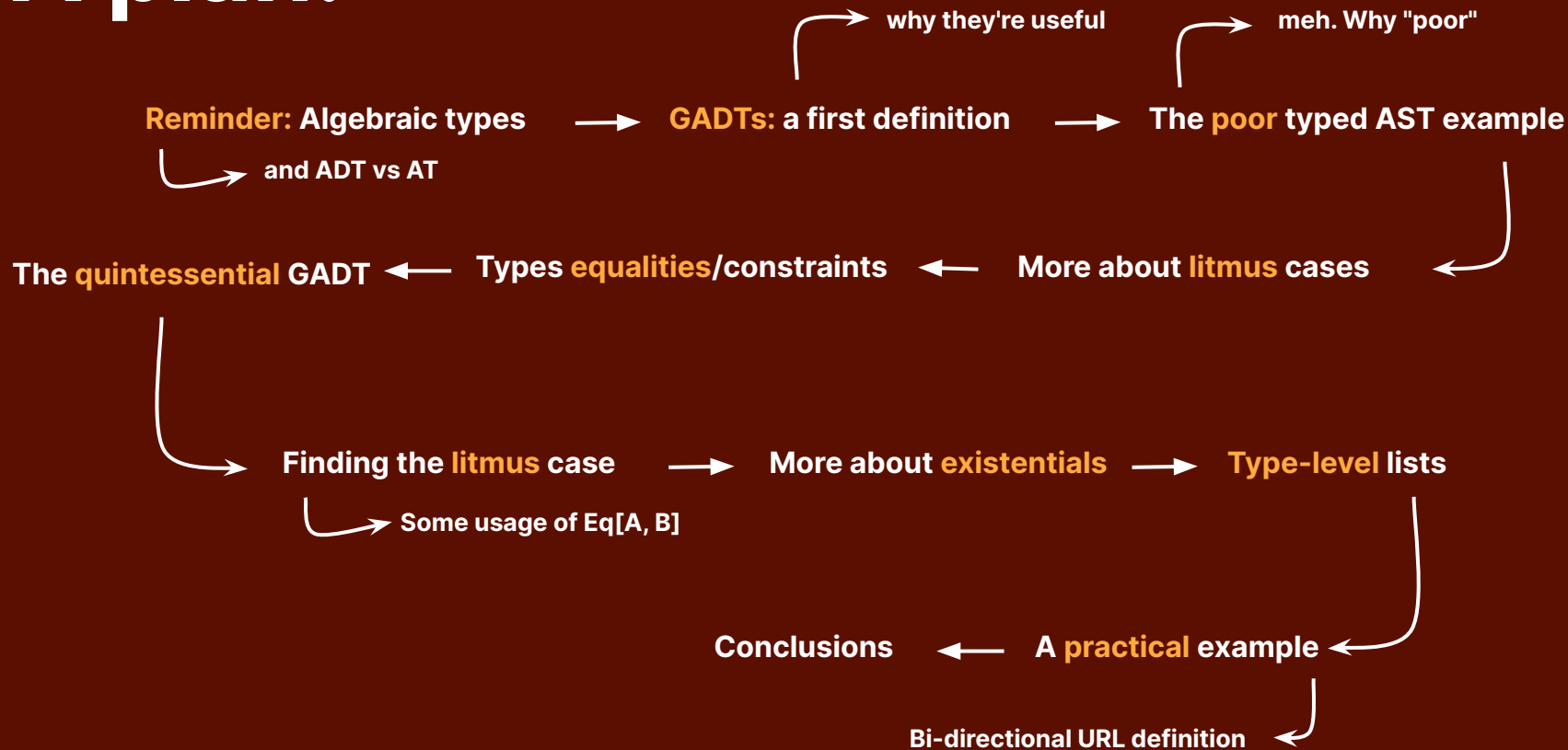
A plan!



A plan!



A plan!



Algebraic types

Reuniting broken fragments

Algebra: الجبر, *al-jabr*

Algebraic types

Reuniting broken fragments

As in common Algebra,
we can **build new types on top of types and operators**
and applying **equational reasoning**

Algebra: الجبر, *al-jabr*

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Are Algebraic **Data** Types

Describe Data 😊

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Describe Data 😊

Have no particular name
Describe behaviour on data

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Algebraic types

Since the subject of the presentation
is **GADT**, we will focus on **ADTs**

Are Algebraic **Data** Types
Describe Data 😊



Have no particular name
Describe behaviour on data

equational reasoning can be used to estimate cardinality and more computational algebra, but this is not at all what the presentation is about

And it is, in fact, not very interesting except for DDD.

Reuniting broken fragments

As in common Algebra, we can **build new types on top of types and operators** and applying **equational reasoning**

Algebra: الجبر, *al-jabr*

Algebraic types

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Have no particular name
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Product types

Describes the conjunction of several types (their **Cartesian product**).

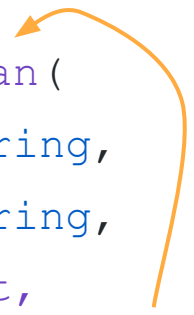
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case class Human(  
  firstName: String,  
  lastName:  String,  
  age:      Int  
)
```

Product types

Describes the conjunction of several types (their **Cartesian product**).

They can be **recursive**.

```
case class Human (  
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  children: List[Human]  
)
```



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Describes the conjunction of several types (their **Cartesian product**).

They can be **recursive**.

They can introduce **Type Parameters** (*parametric polymorphism*), sometimes introducing **variance** markers for expressing subtyping relations.

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case class Human(  
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type parameters
(*generics*)



```
case class Prod[+A, +B](fst: A, snd: B)
```

Product types

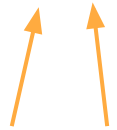
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Is, in fact, **the most minimal product type**

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case class Prod[+A, +B](fst: A, snd: B)
```



Is, in fact, **the most minimal product type**

```
val quad = Prod(1, Prod(2, Prod(3, 4)))
```



Sum types

Describes the disjunction of several types (their **Disjoint union**).

```
enum Bool:  
  case True extends Bool  
  case False extends Bool
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Refutable but: 
highlights encoding via **subtyping** and **sealing**.

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Refutable but: highlights encoding via **subtyping** and **sealing**.

This sometimes requires **annotation** or **unification tricks**.

Sum types

Describes the disjunction of several types (their **Disjoint union**).

As for Product, they can be **recursive** and introducing **generics** (and **variance** markers)

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```
enum MList[+A]:  
  case Nil  
  case Cons(x: A, xs: MList[A])
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And as for Product, there is a minimal Sum type (**Either**)

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enum MList[+A]:  
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```

```
enum Sum[+A, +B]:  
  case Left(x: A)  
  case Right(x: B)
```

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```
type Triple = Sum[Int, Sum[Double, String]]  
val a : Triple = Sum.Left(1)  
val b : Triple = Sum.Right(Sum.Left(1.0))  
val c : Triple = Sum.Right(Sum.Right("1"))
```

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```

minimal exponential type

type Arr[-A, +B] = A ⇒ B

to conclude on

Algebraic types

They can express Model/Domain



to conclude on

Algebraic types

They can express Model/Domain

Paired with Pattern matching they
are expressive for defining Data Structures

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Sum types relies on **subtyping** and **sealing**

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Let's play with that

Sum types relies on **subtyping** and **sealing**


```
enum StringOrInt:  
  case SString(x: String)  
  case SInt(x: Int)
```

Let's be more explicit




```
enum StringOrInt:  
  case SString(x: String) extends StringOrInt  
  case SInt(x: Int) extends StringOrInt
```

Let's add a type parameter, **just for fun**




```
enum StringOrInt:  
  case SString(x: String) extends StringOrInt  
  case SInt(x: Int) extends StringOrInt
```


Does not compile String and Int needs a Type Parameter



```
enum StringOrInt[A]:  
  case SString(x: String) extends StringOrInt[A]  
  case SInt(x: Int)        extends StringOrInt[A]
```

Let's fix the type parameter



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enum StringOrInt[A]:  
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```
def eval[A](x: StringOrInt[A]) : A =  
  x match  
    case StringOrInt.SString(x) => x  
    case StringOrInt.SInt(x)    => x
```

Let's fix the type parameter

We no longer rely on **subtyping** to describe tags. We use a concrete type

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enum StringOrInt[A]:  
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Constructors of our sum are no more **Surjective** in **[A]**

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enum StringOrInt[A]:  
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  case SInt(x: Int) extends StringOrInt[Int]
```

Since we are no more surjective, we can have **partial pattern matching**

```
def getInt(x: StringOrInt[Int]) =  
  x match  
    case StringOrInt.SInt(x) => x
```

```
def eval[A](x: StringOrInt[A]) : A =  
  x match  
    case StringOrInt.SString(x) => x  
    case StringOrInt.SInt(x) => x
```

*"A Generalized Algebraic Data Type **is a sum type that allows its constructors to be non-surjective** on one or more of its type parameters and **introduces local type-equality constraints in pattern-matching branches**, making the expression of existential types trivial"*

We've just seen how

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This was the part **forgotten** in many GADT definitions

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We'll see why later in the presentation, but it's a **consequence** of introducing local type equality constraints.

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This was the part **forgotten** in many GADT definitions

We'll see why later in the presentation, but it's a **consequence** of introducing local type equality constraints.

Let's see why using a **poor** example

We have a little arithmetic AST

```
enum AST:
```

```
  case I(x: Int)
```

```
  case Add(l: AST, R: AST)
```

```
  case Mul(l: AST, R: AST)
```

```
def eval(ast: AST) : Int =
```

```
  import AST.*
```

```
  ast match
```

```
    case I(x)      => x
```

```
    case Add(l, r) => eval(l) + eval(r)
```

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    case Mul(l, r) => eval(l) * eval(r)
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Let's add some Boolean/Condition support

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Let's add some Boolean/Condition support

Haskell Doc has a beautiful elaboration about the implementation, progressively, but since the example of the AST is broken:

let's get straight to the point

Introducing Boolean support

```
enum AST[A]:  
  case I(x: Int) extends AST[Int]  
  case B(x: Boolean) extends AST[Boolean]  
  case Add(l: AST[Int], r: AST[Int]) extends AST[Int]  
  case Mul(l: AST[Int], r: AST[Int]) extends AST[Int]  
  case Equal(l: AST[A], r: AST[A]) extends AST[Boolean]  
  case Cond(c: AST[Boolean], t: AST[A], f:AST[A]) extends AST[A]
```


Introducing Boolean support

We use a witness, for the GADT



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```
  case Equal(l: AST[A], r: AST[A])
```

```
  case Cond(c: AST[Boolean], t: AST[A], f:AST[A])
```

We fix the return type of every constructor

```
  extends AST[Int]
```

```
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Normal forms of AST can be constrained

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You can keep polymorphic constructors

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```
  extends AST[A]
```

You can keep polymorphic constructors

Invalid ASTs can no longer be built

Interpreting AST using polymorphic recursion

```
def eval[A] (ast: AST[A]) : A =  
  import AST.*  
  ast match  
    case I(x)           => x  
    case B(x)           => x  
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As you can see, GADTs allow you to express static invariants and, as far as possible, make code that's **correct by construction!**

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As you can see, GADTs allow you to express static invariants and, as far as possible, make code that's **correct by construction!**

So what's the problem with this example?
(that worked in Scala 2.x)



It only covers this part of the definition

*"A Generalized Algebraic Data Type **is a sum type that allows its constructors to be non-surjective** on one or more of its type parameters **and introduces local type-equality constraints in pattern-matching branches**, making the expression of existential types trivial"*

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The Litmus case was **wrong**

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So implementing the typed
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So implementing the typed
interpreter/AST does not
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supports GADTs.

GADTs: algebraic types whose constructors **introduce** existential types and use **type equality constraints**
OBJECTS: classes whose methods **universally** quantify over types, and use **subtyping constraints**

Both enable statically typed AST implementation

But if both approaches allow the **same** encodings, with **incredibly** similar usage, what's the problem?



Some Haskell/OCaml examples are not **transposable**

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(ahem "typeclasses")

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Yes, Scala 2.x **didn't** support GADTs properly

Lionel Parreaux, Aleksander Boruch-Gruszecki, and Paolo G. Giarrusso. **2019**.
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One of the easiest ways to prove that a language is **Turing-Complete** is to implement a **Brainfuck interpreter**, a very minimalist language that is also Turing-Complete.

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Can we find a Litmus case for GADTs?

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As the **local equality constraint** was not used, we define it via a **GADT** (or an indexed type if it is not supported)

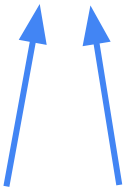
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```
enum Eq[A, B]:  
  case Refl[A] () extends Eq[A, A]
```

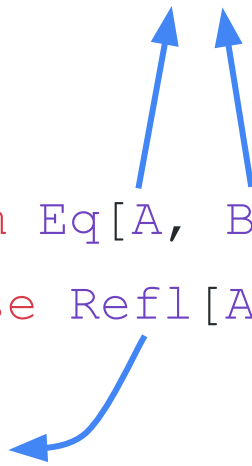

We define equality between **A** and **B**



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The diagram consists of three blue arrows. Two arrows originate from the 'A' and 'B' parameters in the 'enum Eq[A, B]:' line and point upwards to the text 'We define equality between A and B'. A third arrow originates from the 'Refl[A] ()' constructor in the 'case Refl[A] () extends Eq[A, A]' line and points downwards and to the left towards the text 'With only 1 constructor Refl'.

With only 1 constructor **Refl**

We define equality between **A** and **B**

```
enum Eq[A, B]:  
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Can only be embodied with
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With only 1 constructor **Refl**

```
type Z = Int  
val a : Eq[Int, String] = Eq.Refl() // does not compile  
val b : Eq[Int, Int] = Eq.Refl()  
val c : Eq[Int, Z] = Eq.Refl()
```

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Which can be translated as "if I can
instantiate a `Refl() : Eq[A, B]`, then I
have a witness that **A** and **B** are locally
equal types.

And to ensure equalities, we can apply the Leibniz Substitution Principle to gives some tools

We define equality between **A** and **B**

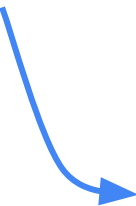
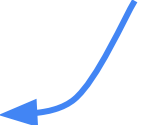
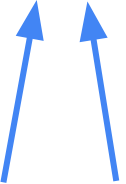
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Transitivity

```
def transitivity[A, B, C](  
  witnessA: Eq[A, B],  
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) : Eq[A, C] = (witnessA, witnessB) match  
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Free Cast

```
def cast[A, B](  
  witness: Eq[A, B],  
  value: A  
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```



Which gives a free-cast that can cross abstraction and boxing (if the cookie has been instantiated in the right place)

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Injectivity

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def injectivity[T[_], A, B](  
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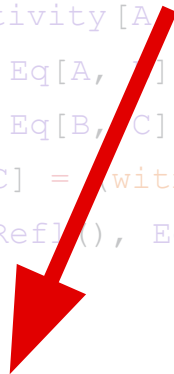
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Works since Scala 3!



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Free Cast

Handling type equalities with injectivity support is very tricky. So supporting them is a litmus case for GADTs

```
def freeCast[A, B](  
  witness: Eq[A, B],  
  value: A  
) : B = witness match  
  case Eq.Refl() => value
```

Transitivity

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def symmetry[A, B](  
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Jeremy Yallop, Oleg Kiselyov. 2010.

First-class modules: hidden power and tantalizing promises.

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) : B = witness match  
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```
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  witnessA: Eq[A, B],  
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  (witnessA, witnessB) match  
case (Eq.Refl(), Eq.Refl()) => Eq.Refl()
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Does this mean that GADTs are absolutely perfect in Scala? **Nah**

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enum Eq[A, B]:  
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```

Does Eq[A, B] only serve to prove the partially correct support of GADTs?

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```
def symmetry[A, B] (  
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Free Cast

Handling type equalities with injectivity support is very tricky. So supporting them is a litmus case for GADTs

```
def value: A  
) : B = witness match  
case Eq.Refl() => value
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def transitivity[A, B, C] (  
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methods that act only if the generics handle
some types

Fixing OOP with guarded methods



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Fixing OOP with guarded methods



and without extension methods that
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```
class MList[A] (val v: List[A]):  
  def sum(witness: Eq[A, Int]) : Int =  
    witness match  
    case Eq.Refl() =>  
      this.v.reduce((x, y) => x + y)
```

```
  def flatten[B] (witness: Eq[A, List[B]]) : List[B] =  
    witness match  
    case Eq.Refl() =>  
      this.v.flatMap(X => X)
```

guarding sum using Eq[A, Int]

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Fixing OOP with guarded methods

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guarding flatten using Eq[A,List[B]]

In fact, `Eq[A, B]` is the **quintessential** GADT. And much like `Sum`, `Prod` and `Arr`, it's *normally* sufficient to **encode all other GADTs**.

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Can be used as a GADT

```
def zero[A](tagged: T[A]) : A =  
  import T.*  
  tagged match  
    case SString(Eq.Refl()) => ""  
    case SInt(Eq.Refl()) => 0
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GADT

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Warning on T.SString(L)

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def partial (
  tagged: T[Int]
) : Int = tagged match
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Jacques Garrigue and Jacques Le Normand. **2015**.
GADTs and exhaustiveness: looking for the impossible.

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Eq[A, B] is the **quintessential** GADT. And much
moreover, Prod and Arr, it's *normally* sufficient to encode
other GADTs.

MEH

Can be used as a GADT

```
def zero[A](tagged: T[A]) : A =  
  import T.*  
  tagged match  
    case SString(Eq.Refl()) => ""  
    case SInt(Eq.Refl()) => 0
```

GADT

```
enum T[A]:  
  case SString() extends T[String]  
  case SSInt() extends T[Int]
```

EQ[A, B]

```
enum T[A]:  
  case SString(w: Eq[A, String])  
  case SInt(w: Eq[A, Int])
```


*"A Generalized Algebraic Data Type **is a sum type that allows its constructors to be non-surjective** on one or more of its type parameters and **introduces local type-equality constraints in pattern-matching branches,** making the expression of existential types trivial"*

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Haskell's
ExistentialQuantification
predate GADT introduction

Introducing Local Types Equation is stronger than
introducing Local Types (existentials) this is why
GADTs come, *de facto* with existentials

```
enum TList[TY, W]:  
  case Nil[W]() extends TList[W, W]  
  case Cons[A, TY, W](x: A, xs: TList[TY, W]) extends TList[A => TY, W]
```

Witness to deal with usage

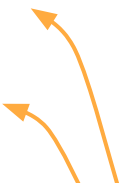
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Witness to deal with usage

Type-level Continuation

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Ensure:

$TY = X \Rightarrow W$

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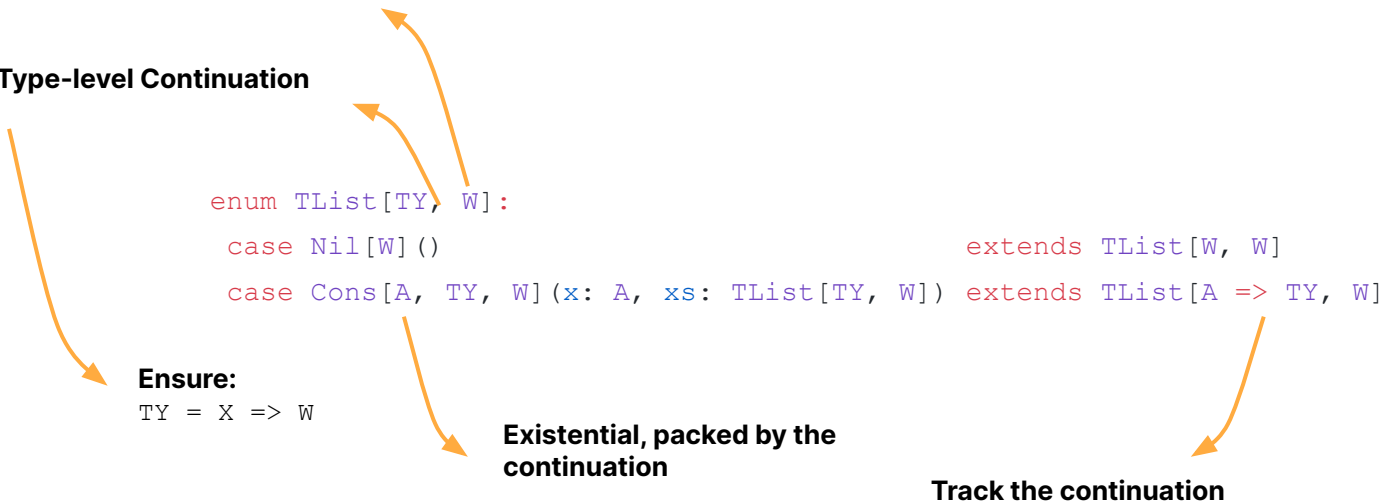
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Ensure:
TY = X => W

Existential, packed by the continuation

Track the continuation



```
val r : TList[Int => String => String, String] =  
  import TList.*  
  Cons(1, Cons("foo", Nil()))
```

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Track the continuation

Going further

Bidirectional routing

```
val url = genLink("user" ~: string ~: "id" ~: int ~: eop) ("u55") (10)
// Generate : /user/u55/id/10/

val page : Option[(String, Int)] = handleLink(
  "user/u55/id/10/",
  "user" ~: string ~: "id" ~: int ~: eop
) (userName => userId => (userName, userId))
// Generate: Some(("u55", 10))
```

Bidirectional routing

Generate URL from a path



```
val url = genLink("user" ~: string ~: "id" ~: int ~: eop) ("u55") (10)
// Generate : /user/u55/id/10/
```

```
val page : Option[Html]= handleLink(
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  "user" ~: string ~: "id" ~: int ~: eop
) (userName => userId => renderUserPage(userName, userId))
// Generate: Some(("u55", 10))
```

Generate controller from a path



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Generate controller from a path



Using a technique similar to Typelevel List

Bidirectional routing

```
enum V[T]:  
  case String extends V[String]  
  case Int    extends V[Int]  
  case Bool   extends V[Boolean]
```

```
enum Path[TY, W]:  
  case Eop[W] ()  
    extends Path[W, W]  
  
  case Const(x: String, xs: Path[TY, W])  
  
  case Var[A, TY, W](x: V[A], xs: Path[TY, W])  
    extends Path[A => TY, W]  
  
  def ~:[A](x: V[A]) : Path[A => TY, W] = Path.Var(x, this)  
  def ~:(x: String) : Path[TY, W]     = Path.Const(x, this)  
  
  def eop[W] : Path[W, W] = Path.Eop[W]()  
  val string = V.String  
  val int    = V.Int  
  val bool   = V.Bool
```

Bidirectional routing

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Representing type, typelevel



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Representing type, typelevel

Same as our List but constraint by V[T].

```
def genLink[TY]  
  (path: Path[TY, String]) : TY = ...
```

Ensure:

$TY = X \Rightarrow W$

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```

A constant does not create Hole

```
def ~:[A](x: V[A]) : Path[A => TY, W] = Path.Var(x, this)  
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```

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Same as our List but constraint by V[T].

```
def genLink[TY]  
  (path: Path[TY, String]) : TY = ...
```

```
def handleLink[TY, W]  
  (uri: String, path: Path[TY, W])  
  (controller: TY) : Option[W] = ...
```

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enum Path[TY, W]:
```

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To conclude

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Thank You!

