

*Yet*  
**Another introduction to**  
*GADTs*

Generalized Algebraic Data Types

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- [github.com/xvw](https://github.com/xvw)
- **LambdaNantes**

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Scala 

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**DISCLAIMER**

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I am essentially an  
OCaml developer



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Very cool language  
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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

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

A quest of a litmus case

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

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Because it's quite a  
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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. In particular, we showed that the encodings of GADTs, demonstrated between, on one hand, the (sub)types of GADTs, and on the other hand, the 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!

Introduced by example since Scala 2.x

A huge amount of work

# A plan!

Reminder: Algebraic types

↳ and ADT vs AT



GADTs: a first definition



why they're useful



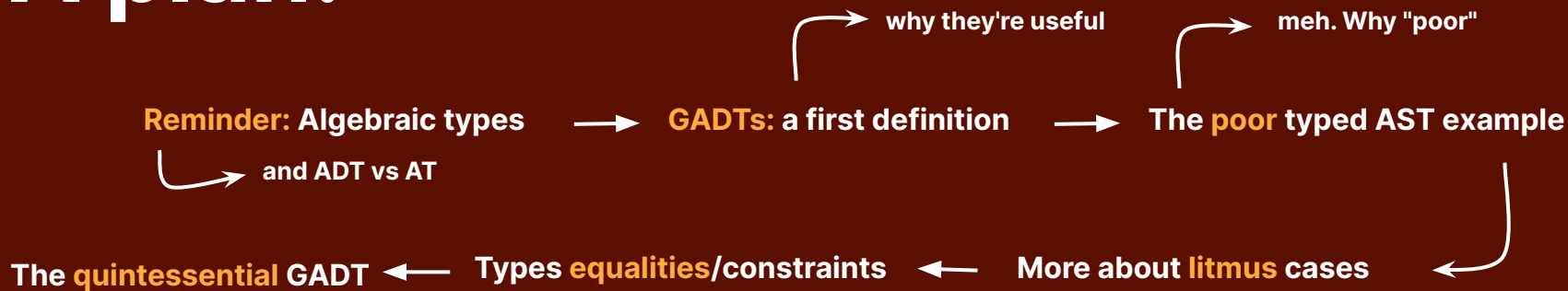
The poor typed AST example



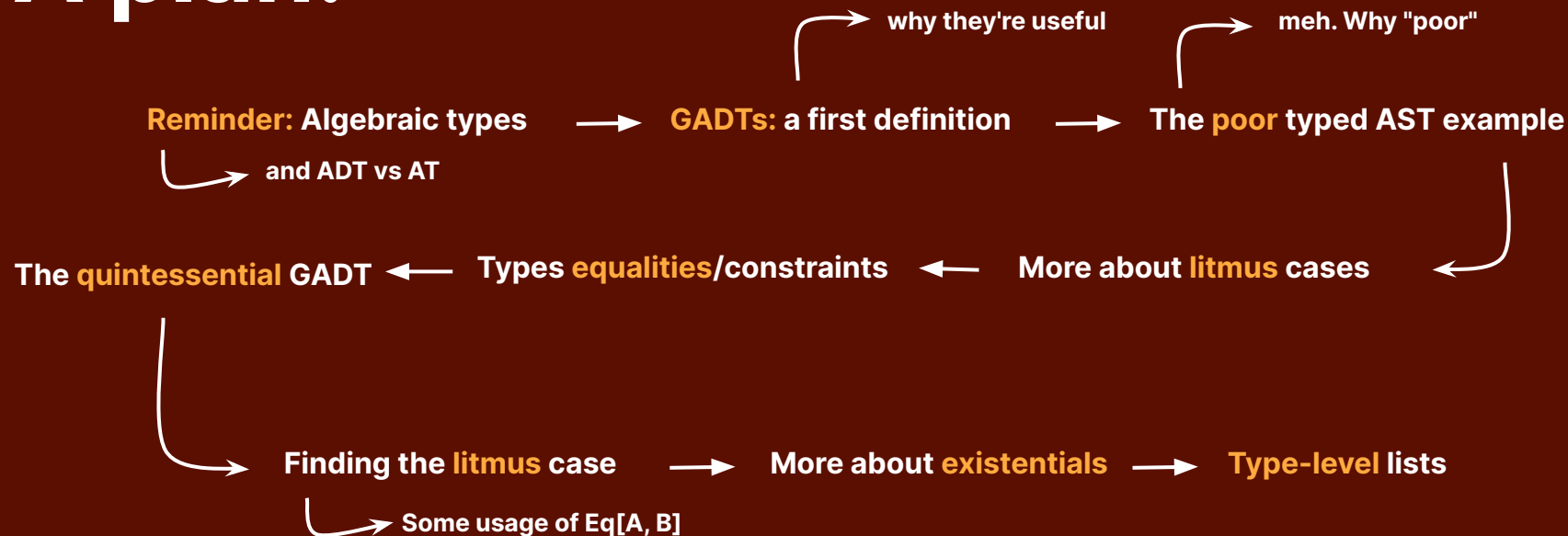
meh. Why "poor"



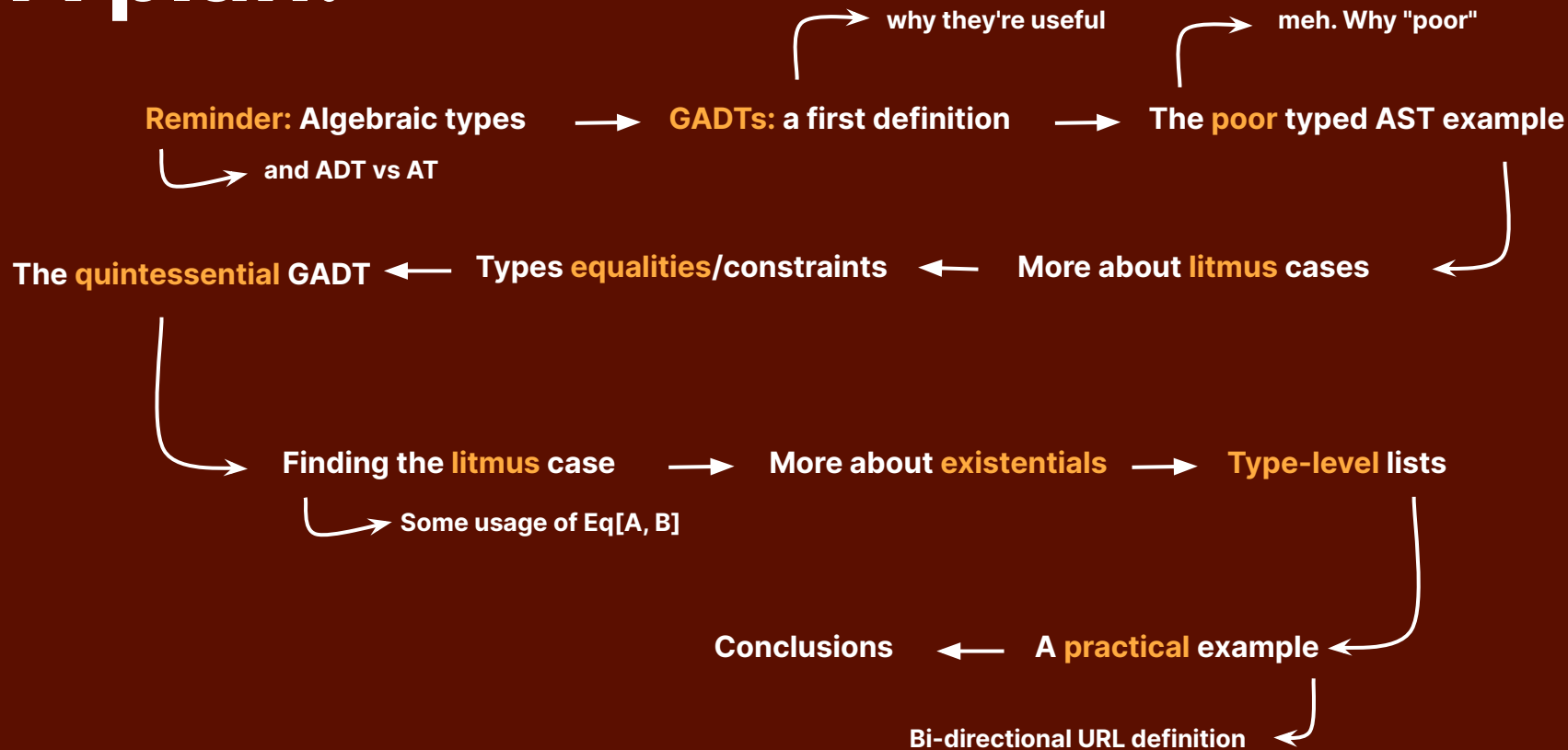
# A plan!



# 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**

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# Algebraic types



Are Algebraic **Data** Types

Describe Data 😊



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# Algebraic types



Are Algebraic **Data** Types  
*Describe Data* 😊

Have no particular name  
*Describe behaviour on data*

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As in common Algebra,  
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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

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*

# Product types

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

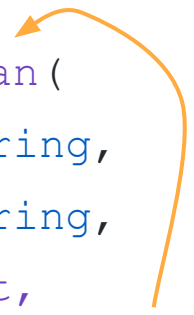
```
case class Human(  
  firstName: String,  
  lastName:  String,  
  age:      Int  
)
```

# Product types

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They can be **recursive**.

```
case class Human (  
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```



# Product types

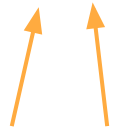
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**type parameters**  
(*generics*)



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

# Product types

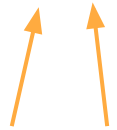
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Is, in fact, **the most minimal product type**

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  children: List[Human]  
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(*generics*)

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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  
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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)

```
enum Bool:  
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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 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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# Algebraic types


They have minimal representations

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



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

*"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)
```

```
    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 Mul(l: AST[Int], r: AST[Int])
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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[Boolean]
```

```
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  
    case Add(l, r)      => eval(l) + eval(r)  
    case Mul(l, r)      => eval(l) * eval(r)  
    case Equal(l, r)    => eval(l) == eval(r)  
    case Cond(c, t, f)  => if(eval(c)) then eval(t) else eval(f)
```

# Interpreting AST using polymorphic recursion

```
def eval[A] (ast: AST[A]) : A =  
  import AST.*  
  ast match  
    case I(x)           => x  
    case B(x)           => x  
    case Add(l, r)      => eval(l) + eval(r)  
    case Mul(l, r)      => eval(l) * eval(r)  
    case Equal(l, r)    => eval(l) == eval(r)  
    case Cond(c, t, f)  => if(eval(c)) then eval(t) else eval(f)
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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  
interpreter/AST does not  
guarantee that the language  
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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(ahem "typeclasses")

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

*Lionel Parreaux, Aleksander Boruch-Gruszecki, and Paolo G. Giarrusso.* **2019**.  
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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)

Can we find a Litmus case for GADTs?

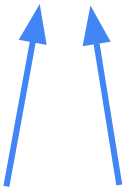
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enum Eq[A, B]:  
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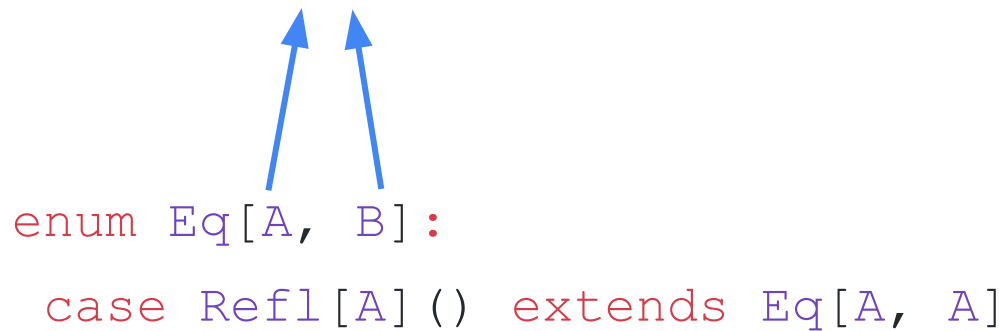
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type Z = Int  
val a : Eq[Int, String] = Eq.Refl() // does not compile  
val b : Eq[Int, Int] = Eq.Refl()  
val c : Eq[Int, Z] = Eq.Refl()
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Which can be translated as "if I can  
instantiate a `Refl() : 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

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### Free Cast

```
def cast[A, B](  
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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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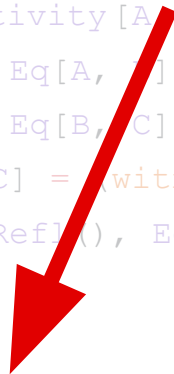
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**Works since Scala 3!**



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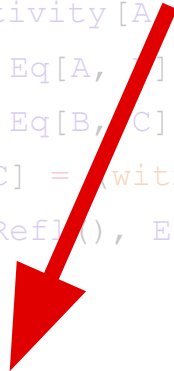
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Does Eq[A, B] only serve to prove the partially correct support of GADTs?

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## Fixing OOP with guarded methods



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## Fixing OOP with guarded methods



and without extension methods that  
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# Fixing OOP with guarded methods

methods that act only if the generics handle some types

and without extension methods that needs to break encapsulation

```
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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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**.



Patricia Johann and Neil Ghani. **2008**

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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()) => ""  
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But it may be my lack of Scala writing skills.

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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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MEH

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A very complicated issue.



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EQ[A, B]

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

Jacques Garrigue and Jacques Le Normand. **2015**.  
GADTs and exhaustiveness: looking for the impossible.

the constructor  
quality constraint  
(...that is exactly Eq)

A very complicated issue.



But it may be my lack  
of Scala writing skills.

Patricia Johann and Neil Ghani. **2008**.  
Foundations For Structured Programming With GADTs.

Warning on T.SString(\_)

```
def partial(  
  tagged: T[Int]  
) : Int = tagged match  
  case T.SInt(Eq.Refl()) => 0
```

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

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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**

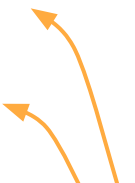
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**Witness to deal with usage**

**Type-level Continuation**

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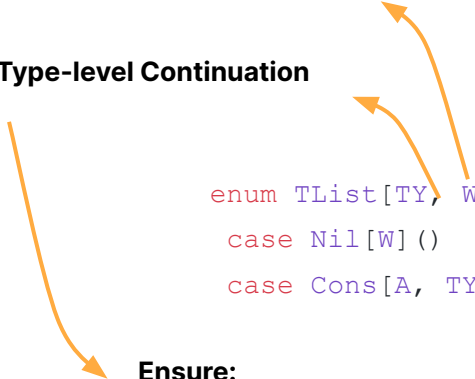
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**Ensure:**

$TY = X \Rightarrow W$



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**Existential, packed by the continuation**



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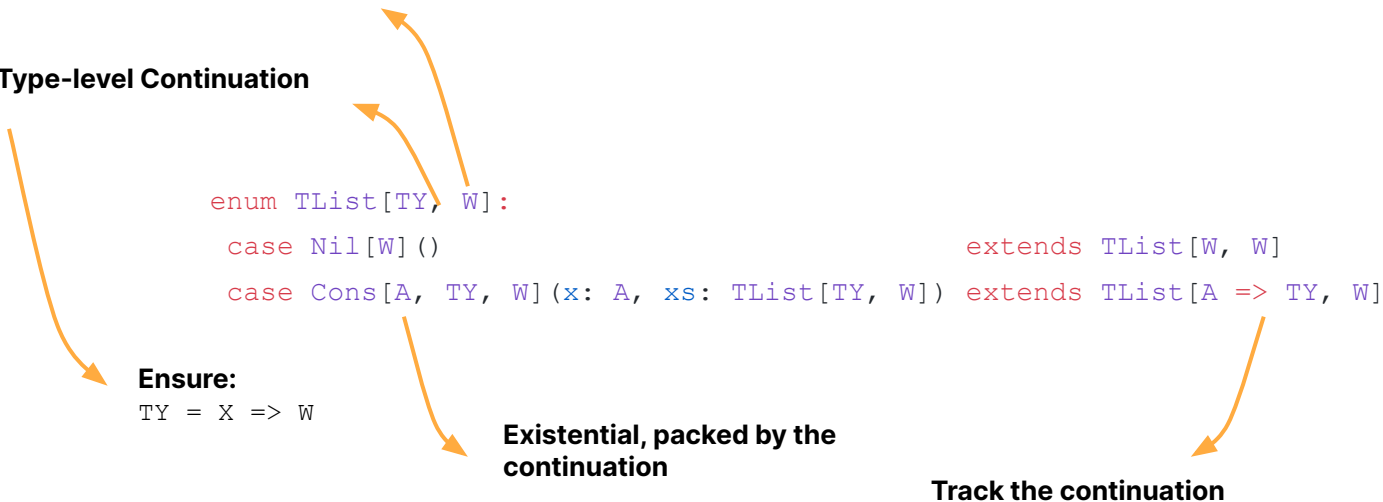
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```

**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()))
```

**Witness to deal with usage**

**Type-level Continuation**

```
enum TList[TY, W]:  
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```

**Ensure:**  
TY = X => W

**Existential, packed by the continuation**

**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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) (userName => userId => renderUserPage(userName, userId))
// Generate: Some(("u55", 10))
```

Generate controller from a path



# Bidirectional routing

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## Generate controller from a path



# Bidirectional routing

## Generate URL from a path



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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



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

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    extends Path[A => TY, W]  
  
  def ~:[A](x: V[A]) : Path[A => TY, W] = Path.Var(x, this)  
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Same as our List but constraint by V[T].

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

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    extends Path[A => TY, W]
```

A constant does not create Hole

```
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  
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```

Representing type, typelevel

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] = ...
```

Ensure:

$TY = X \Rightarrow W$

```
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]
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```
def eop[W] : Path[W, W] = Path.Eop[W] ()  
val string = V.String  
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## To conclude

*"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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*"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"*

**Thank You!**

