Type Classes in Scala and Haskell

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Recap: Implicits

Implicit declarations

```
implicit val x: X = ...
implicit def func: X = ...
implicit object X extends MyTrait { ... }
```

Implicit parameters

```
def method(implicit x: X): R = ...
```

Implicit conversions (a.k.a. implicit views)

```
implicit def aToB(a: A): B = ...
```

Implicit classes

```
implicit class Y(x: X) { ... }
```

Recap: Implicit parameter resolution

- If you do not give an argument to an implicit parameter, the compiler tries to provide one for you.
- Eligible are all implicit values that are visible at the point of call.
- If there is more than one eligible candidate, the most specific one is chosen.
- If there is no unique most specific candidate, an ambiguity error is reported.

Recap: Implicit parameter resolution

- The details of implicit parameter resolution are very complex and not covered here. There are 2 main resolution steps.
- <u>Step 1</u>: Implicit parameters are first looked up in "local scope": local declarations, imports (explicit or wildcard), inheritance (base classes or traits), local package object.
- <u>Step 2</u>: If implicit parameters cannot be resolved from the local scope the compiler searches the "**implicit scope**": companion object of the implicit parameter type and the package object of their type parameters (if any).
- Local scope always takes precedence over implicit scope.
- There are other precedence rules within implicit scope (specificity, inheritance) which are not covered here.

Recap: Implicit views/conversions

- An implicit conversion is an implicit function which converts a value of type A to a value of type B.
- Use with caution: Can easily undermine type safety!!!

```
import scala.language.implicitConversions  // suppress warnings
implicit def string2int(s: String): Int = Integer.parseInt(s)

val x: Int = "5"  // !! Assign a string to an int val

def useInt(x: Int): Unit = println("Int value: " + x)
useInt("42")  // !! Pass a string to an int param
```

Recap: Implicit views

- Define an implicit class
- The class must have a single parameter of the type in question.
- Define extension methods inside the class.
- This technique is also called the "Pimp up my library" pattern, some times also known as "static monkey patching".

Pimpin' - Implicit views (1)

```
// Implicit view/conversion: Int => EnrichedInt
implicit class EnrichedInt(i: Int) {
   def double: Int = 2 * i
   def triple: Int = 3 * i
   def square: Int = i * i
   def cube: Int = i * i * i
}

val double5: Int = 5.double // 10
val triple5: Int = 5.triple // 15
val squared5: Int = 5.square // 25
val cubed5: Int = 5.cube // 125
val doubledSquared5 = 5.double.square // 100
```

Pimpin' - Implicit views (2)

```
final case class Cat(name: String, age: Int, color: String)

// Implicit view/conversion: Cat => PimpedCat
implicit class PimpedCat(c: Cat) {
  def description: String =
        s"${c.name} is a ${c.age} year old ${c.color} colored cat."
  def describe(): Unit = println(c.description)
}

val mizzi = Cat("Mizzi", 1, "black")

val desc = mizzi.description
println(desc)

mizzi.describe()
```

Pimpin' - Implicit views (3)

Pimpin' - Implicit views (4)

Mechanics of implicit views

- The compiler looks up a method for a class.
- If the class implements the method, this one is used.
- If the class doesn't implement the method, it looks for an implicit conversion method or an implicit class that takes a parameter of the type in question.
- If the implicit class implements the method in question, it creates an instance, passes the parameter and invokes the method.
- Otherwise the compiler will bail out.

Type Classes

- Type classes are a fundamental concept in Scala and Haskell.
- Haskell provides specific keywords for type classes.
- Scala implements type classes based on implicits.
- A type class classifies a set of types by their common properties.
- E.g. the Scala type class Numeric (Haskell: Num) defines the arithmetic operations (as methods) which are common to all numeric types such as Int, Long, Float, Double, BigInteger, BigDecimal etc.

Examples: List methods

Some Type Classes (Scala)

- scala.math.Ordering[T]
- scala.math.Numeric[T]
- scala.collection.generic.
 CanBuildFrom[-From, -Elem, +To]
- JSON Serialization (in play-json etc.)
- cats.{Show, Monoid, Functor, Monad ...}
- There is hardly a Scala library not using type classes.

How to use the Type Class Pattern

1) Define a type class - a trait with at least one type parameter.

```
trait Printable[A] { ... }
```

2) For each type to support implement a type class instance. Each instance replaces the type parameter A by a concrete type (Int, Date, Cat, Option[A], etc.).

```
implicit val intPrintable Printable[Int] = ...
implicit val catPrintable Printable[Cat] = ...
```

3) Provide a generic user interface with an implicit type class parameter.

```
def stringify[A](value: A)(implicit p: Printable[A]) = ...
def pprint[A](value: A)(implicit p: Printable[A]) = ...
```

Define a type class (1)

```
// the type class,
// a trait with at least one type parameter
//
trait Printable[A] {
  def stringify(value: A): String
  def pprint(value: A): Unit = println(stringify(value))
}
```

Define type class instances (2)

```
// type class instance for Int
//
implicit val intPrintable: Printable[Int] = new Printable[Int] {
  override def stringify(value: Int): String = value.toString
// type class instance for Date
//
implicit val datePrintable: Printable[Date] = new Printable[Date] {
  override def stringify(value: Date): String = value.toString
// generic type class instance for Option[A] (must be a def)
// requires an implicit Printable[A]
implicit def optionPrintable[A]
     (implicit pA: Printable[A]): Printable[Option[A]] = ???
```

Use the type class instance (3)

Define type class instances (2)

```
final case class Cat(name: String, age: Int, color: String)
object Cat {
  implicit val catPrintable: Printable[Cat] =
                                new Printable[Cat] {
   override def stringify(cat: Cat): String = {
     val name = cat.name
     val age = cat.age.toString
     val color = cat.color
      s"$name is a $age year-old $color cat."
```

Generic type class instances (2)

Use the type class instances (3)

```
val mizzi = Cat("Mizzi", 1, "black")
val garfield = Cat("Garfield", 38, "ginger and black")

def pprint[A](value: A)(implicit p: Printable[A]): Unit = p.pprint(value)

pprint(mizzi)
pprint(garfield)

pprint(Option(garfield))
pprint(Option.empty[Cat])

pprint(List(mizzi, garfield))
pprint(List.empty[Cat])
```

Better Design

- Move stringify and pprint methods into an object (e.g. the companion object or package object of the type class).
- With a pimp (implicit class) type class methods can be used just like intrinsic methods of the respective type.
- The implicit class constructor must have a (typically generic) parameter.
- The implicit class methods take an implicit type class parameter.

Better Design (1)

• Move the interface object methods (stringify and pprint) into a singleton object (e.g. the companion object or package object of the type class).

```
// type class companion object
object Printable {

   // interface object methods for the type class
   def stringify[A](value: A)(implicit p: Printable[A]): String =
        p.stringify(value)
   def pprint[A](value: A)(implicit p: Printable[A]): Unit =
        p.pprint(value)
}
-----
package user
import path.to.libPrintable.Printable._

pprint(mizzi)
```

Better Design (2)

 Use a pimp by defining a generic implicit class. (The constructor has one parameter of the generic type. Methods take a type class instance as implicit parameter.)

```
// interface syntax methods defined by a pimp (= implicit view)
//
implicit class PrintableOps[A](value: A) {
   def stringify(implicit p: Printable[A]): String = p.stringify(value)
   def pprint(implicit p: Printable[A]): Unit = println(stringify)
}

val stringMizzi = mizzi.stringify
println(stringMizzi)

mizzi.pprint
```

Where to keep type class instances?

- Type class instances for standard types (String, Int, Date etc.) should be stored under the same package as the type class itself (typically in the type class companion object).
- Type class instances for your own types, i.e. domain classes (Cat, Person, Customer, Order, Invoice etc.) should be stored under the same package as the respective domain class (typically in the domain class companion object).
- Type class instances in companion objects are visible in implicit scope. They can be found automatically by the compiler without needing an extra import.

Only one import

- The library should provide the type class instances in a nonintrusive way so that user code easily can override them.
- User code needs only one import statement: import path.to.libPrintable._
- Type class instances in the type class companian object are found automatically without extra import. They are visible in the **implicit** scope (which can be overridden by local scope):
- Interface object methods and implicit class can be moved to the library's package object. By the above import they become visible in local scope. (Can be improved, see below.)
- If needed the user can provide his own instances in local scope: local declaration, import (explicit or wildcard), inheritance (base class or trait), package object.
- Local scope precedes implicit scope.

Only one import - code

```
package path.to.libPrintable
object Printable {
  implicit val intPrintable: Printable[Int] = ???
  implicit val datePrintable: Printable[Date] = ???
  implicit def optionPrintable[A: Printable]: Printable[Option[A]] = ???
package path.to
package object libPrintable {
  def stringify[A](value: A)(implicit p: Printable[A]): String = p.stringify(value)
  def pprint(value: A)(implicit p: Printable[A]): Unit = p.pprint(value)
  implicit class PrintableOps[A](value: A) {
    def stringify(implicit p: Printable[A]): String = p.stringify(value)
    def pprint(implicit p: Printable[A]): Unit = p.pprint(value)
  }
package userpkg
import path.to.libPrintable. // only one import needed
2.pprint
new Date().pprint
mizzi.pprint
```

Context Bound + implicitly (1)

```
// implicit class (without context bound)
//
implicit class PrintableOps[A](value: A) {
   def stringify(implicit p: Printable[A]): String = p.stringify(value)
   def pprint(implicit p: Printable[A]): Unit = p.pprint(value)
}
-----
// implicit class (with context bound and implicitly)
//
implicit class PrintableOps[A: Printable](value: A) {
   def stringify: String = implicitly[Printable[A]].stringify(value)
   def pprint(): Unit = implicitly[Printable[A]].pprint(value)
}
```

Context Bound + implicitly (2)

Method apply

```
object Printable {
    def apply[A: Printable]: Printable[A] =
        implicitly[Printable[A]]

    def stringify[A: Printable](value: A): String =
        Printable[A].stringify(value)

    def pprint[A: Printable](value: A): Unit =
        Printable[A].pprint(value)
    . . .
}
```

No more imports

- Move interface object methods and the pimp into a trait (e.g. PrintableUtils).
- The local package object (user code) extends that trait and brings them into local scope.
 - package object userpkg extends PrintableUtils
- Interface object methods and pimp can easily be overridden in the local package object.
- This architecture is **least intrusive** and gives good flexibility to the library user.
- No library imports needed

No more imports - code

```
package path.to.libPrintable
object Printable {
 implicit val intPrintable: Printable[Int] = ???
 implicit val datePrintable: Printable[Date] = ???
 implicit def optionPrintable[A: Printable]: Printable[Option[A]] = ???
trait PrintableUtils {
 def stringify[A](value: A)(implicit p: Printable[A]): String = ???
 def pprint(value: A)(implicit p: Printable[A]): Unit = ???
 implicit class PrintableOps[A](value: A) {
   def stringify(implicit p: Printable[A]): String = ???
   def pprint(implicit p: Printable[A]): Unit = ???
package userpkg
import path.to.libPrintable.{Printable, PrintableUtils}
package object userpkg extends PrintableUtils {
 // In the users package object base trait utilities and implicits can be overridden.
 implicit class MyPrintableOps[A: Printable](value: A) extends PrintableOps(value) {
   override def pprint(implicit p: Printable[A]): Unit = ???  // overrides default impl
}
```

Type class cats. Show

- If you are using cats ...
- No need to implement the Printable type class
- Cats already provides such a type class: cats.Show

Type classes in Cats

- Cats provides most of its functionality as type classes: cats. {Show, Eq, Ord, Num, Monoid, Functor, Monad, Applicative, Foldable} and many more.
- See https://typelevel.org/cats/typeclasses.html

Benefit of type classes

- <u>Separation of abstractions</u>: The type class (Printable) and the type you create an instance for, e.g. a domain class (Cat) are **completely decoupled**.
- Extensibility: You can extend and enrich not only your own types but also sealed types from libraries which you do not control.
- <u>Composability</u>: You do not need inheritence to extend existing classes or library classes (which is not possible if they are sealed).
- Overridability (only Scala): Default instances (in companion objects)
 can be overridden with your own instances.
- <u>Less repetition</u> and boilerplate, e.g. avoids repetitive passing of parameters and overloads.
- Type safety is maintained.

Downsides of type classes

- Type classes and implicits are hard to understand for the Scala newcomer (complicated rules of implicit resolution).
- Overuse of implicits often makes Scala code too difficult to read/understand.
- Implicits (and some other features) give Scala the reputation to be an arcane language.
- Resolution of implicit parameters and conversions may slow down the compiler.

Type classes in Haskell

Define a type class.

```
class Printable a where ...
```

 Create an instance for each type that should support the type class. (This enriches each type with the methods of the type class.)

```
instance Printable Int where ...
instance Printable Cat where ...
```

 That's it. Just use the type class methods for the types that have an instance. No extra user interface needs to be provided (like in Scala).

Define a type class

class Printable a where

```
-- stringify: signature
stringify :: a -> String
-- pprint: signature + impl
pprint :: a -> IO ()
pprint x = putStrLn $ stringify x
```

Define type class instances (1)

Define type class instances (2)

data Cat = Cat

Use the type class methods with the instance types.

putStrLn \$ stringify \$ utcTime 2018 4 9 19 15 00 pprint \$ utcTime 2018 4 9 19 15 01

let mizzi = Cat "Mizzi" 1 "black"
putStrLn \$ stringify mizzi
pprint mizzi

Type class Show

- No need to implement the Printable type class
- Haskell already has a type class Show in the Prelude

Type classes in Haskell

- Many type classes are available in the Haskell Prelude, i.e. without extra import.
- Haskell provides its own kosmos of type classes in Base (the standard library), most of them available in the Prelude: Show, Eq, Ord, Num, Integral, Fractional, Monoid, Functor, Applicative, Monad, Foldable etc.

Comparison

- Haskell has its own type class syntax (key words class and instance).
- Scala uses implicits to provide type classes.
- In Scala (using implicit val ...) you need to create an object for each type class instance.
- No object creation in Haskell.
- No implicit hocus-pocus in Haskell.
- No objects, no inheritance in Haskell
- Haskell type classes are coherent. Haskell allows globally only one type class instance per type. => No ambiguity errors! No precedence rules needed!

Resources (1)

- Source code and slides for this talk https://github.com/hermannhueck/typeclasses
- Book: "Scala with Cats" by Noel Welsh and Dave Gurnell https://underscore.io/books/scala-with-cats
- Book: "Scala in Depth" by Joshua D. Suereth https://www.manning.com/books/scala-in-depth
- Book: "Haskell Programming from first principles" by Christoper Allen and Julie Moronuki – http://haskellbook.com

Resources (2)

- Talk: "Implicits inspected and explained" by Tim Soethout on Implicits at ScalaDays 2016, New York – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHQbj-9r8A
- Talk: "Don't fear the implicits" by Daniel Westheide on Implicits and Type Classes at ScalaDays 2016, Berlin – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e9tcymPl7w
- Blog post: on type classes by Daniel Westheide –
 http://danielwestheide.com/blog/2013/02/06/the-neophytes-guide-t o-scala-part-12-type-classes.html
- Blog post: "*Pimp my Library*" by Martin Odersky, 2006 https://www.artima.com/weblogs/viewpost.jsp?thread=179766

Resources (3)

- Talk: "Implicits without import tax" by Josh Suereth at North East Scala Symposium 2011 – https://vimeo.com/20308847
- Blog post: on the details of implicit parameter resolution
 http://eed3si9n.com/revisiting-implicits-without-import-tax
- Implicits in the Scala 2.12 language specification https://scala-lang.org/files/archive/spec/2.12/07-implicits.html
- Keynote: "What to Leave Implicit" by Martin Odersky at ScalaDays 2017, Chicago – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oij5V7LQJsA

Thank you!

Q&A

https://github.com/hermannhueck/typeclasses