

Semester Project Report

Proving Algebraic Properties with Stainless

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Contents

Introduction	3
Typeclasses	3
Definition	3
Laws	4
Associated methods	5
Typeclass inheritance	5
Typeclasses in Haskell	5
Typeclasses in Scala	6
Ambiguity errors	7
Coherence	8
	10
Anonymous classes	10
Laws	11
Coherence	13
Results	14
Conclusion	15
Further work	15
References	16
Appendix Appendix A	1 7

1 Introduction

Stainless aims to help developers build verified Scala software. While it does not support the full Scala language yet, Stainless understands a substantial, purely functional subset of it: Pure Scala. This subset, while already very expressive and powerful, still lacks some features commonly used in the Scala community. Of those, typeclasses are one of the most notable ones. The aim of this project was thus to enrich Pure Scala with typeclasses and modify Stainless to properly handle them.

2 Typeclasses

2.1 Definition

Type classes were introduced by Wadler [6] as an extension to the Hindley/Milner type system to implement a certain kind of overloading, known as ad-hoc polymorphism.

A typeclass is identified by its name, and is associated with a set of (usually polymorphic) functions signatures, its *methods*. It can then be *instanciated* at various types, given that the user is able to provide a concrete implementation for each method. A user can then apply these methods to any type for which there is a corresponding instance, which essentially corresponds to *overloading*.

In Haskell notation, a typeclass Num, which allows to overload the arithmetic operations + and *, can be defined as follows:

```
class Num a where
(+) :: a -> a -> a
(*) :: a -> a -> a
```

An instance for the Int and Float types can then be provided in the following way:

```
-- Assuming these functions are provided by the standard library
addInt, mulInt :: Int -> Int -> Int
addFloat, mulFloat :: Float -> Float

instance Num Int where
(+) = addInt
(*) = mulInt

instance Num Float where
(+) = addFloat
(*) = mulFloat
```

allowing the user to call such functions on either integers or floating-point values.

```
twice :: Int -> Int
twice x = x + x
```

 $^{^{1} \}rm http://leon.epfl.ch/doc/intro.html \\ ^{2} \rm http://leon.epfl.ch/doc/purescala.html$

```
square :: Float -> Float
square x = x * x
```

A more general version of these two user-defined functions can be written, by abstracting over the specific type they are applied to, provided it is an instance of the Num typeclass.

```
twice :: Num a => a -> a
twice x = x + x

square :: Num a => a -> a
square x = x * x

a :: Float
a = twice (square 1.337f)
b :: Int
b = square (twice 42)
```

2.2 Laws

Let's now imagine that some savy programmer comes across the following piece of code during a refactoring:

```
compute :: Num a \Rightarrow a \rightarrow a \rightarrow a \rightarrow a
compute a b c = c * b + b * a
```

While this is a perfectly good piece of code, she rightly realises that it could expressed a more concise manner, namely:

```
compute :: Num a => a -> a -> a -> a compute a b c = b * (a + c)
```

However, for this refactoring to preserve the existing semantics of the compute function, some assumptions are needed. In this case, these assumptions correspond to the laws of arithmetic. That is, any type which is a instance of the Num class must provide an implementation of + and * which adheres to the following laws:

- Associativity: (a+b)+c=a+(b+c) and (a*b)*c=a*(b*c)
- Commutativity: a + b = b + a and a * b = b * a
- Distributivity: a * (b + c) = a * b + a * c

Should these properties not hold, the above refactoring might end up changing the meaning of the program, and potentially introduce a bug or break an existing unit test.

This is why typeclasses are often informally associated with a set of laws which programmers must make sure that their implementation adheres to. These laws often correspond to the very algebraic laws which govern how an algebraic structure can be used.

Most mainstream languages, amongst which Haskell and Scala, do not provide a way to ensure the validity of a typeclass instance at compile time. Rather, programmers must delay this task to runtime, often by the means of property-based testing [2]. That is, the have their tests generate various runtime values and feed those to functions which check that the aforementioned laws hold for these values. While this technique yields fairly good results in general, it is neither foolproof, nor does it provide any type of mathematical guarantee. We would therefore like to

discharge these obligations to Stainless, in order to let programmers semi-automatically prove the correctness of their instances, an endeavour we describe further on in this document.

2.3 Associated methods

On top of the abstract operations we have seen above, a typeclass can also introduces concrete methods which do not need to (but can) be (re-)defined by the programmer at instance declaration time. One could e.g. add a square method to the Num class we introduced above:

```
class Num a where
  (+) :: a -> a -> a
  (*) :: a -> a -> a
  square :: a -> a
  square x = x * x
```

While this method could be defined as a standalone function, like we did above, having it be a part of the class allows users to override it with e.g. a more efficient implementation specific to the datatype they are instantiating the class for.

2.4 Typeclass inheritance

Much like regular object-oriented classes, typeclasses can inherit from each other. Let's take for example the Ord typeclass, which describes totally ordered datatypes. This class is defined as follows:

```
class Eq a => Ord a where
  (<=) :: a -> a -> Boolean

  (<) :: a -> a -> Boolean
  x < y = x != y && x <= y

where the Eq class itself is defined as:
class Eq a where
  (==) :: a -> a -> Boolean
  (!=) :: a -> a -> Boolean
  x != y = not (x == y)
```

Looking at the implementation of <, we see that it uses the != method provided by the Eq class. Hence why, the class declaration is provided with a constraint on the type a, namely that it must be a instance of the Eq class as well. This can also be read as: if a is an instance of Ord, then it also is a instance of Eq.

2.5 Typeclasses in Haskell

In Haskell, typeclasses are desugared during compilation into a simpler form which fits in the standard Hindley/Milner type system [3].

```
class Eq a => Ord a where
  (<=) :: a -> a -> Boolean
  (<) :: a -> a -> Boolean
  x < y = x != y && x <= y
instance Ord Int where
  (<=) = lteInt
gt :: Ord a => a -> a -> Boolean
gt x y = not (x \le y)
main = print (gt 1 2)
becomes
data OrdD a
  = OrdD
  \{ eqD :: EqD a \}
  , (<=) :: a -> a -> Boolean
  , (<) :: a -> a -> Boolean
}
mkOrdD :: EqD a -> (a -> a -> Boolean) -> Maybe (a -> a -> Boolean) -> OrdD a
mkOrdD eqD lte Nothing = OrdD { eqD = eqD, (<=) = lte, (<) = \xy \rightarrow eqD.(!=) x y && lte x y }
mkOrdD eqD lte (Just le) = OrdD { eqD = eqD, (<=) = lte, (<) = le }</pre>
OrdD_Int :: OrdD Int
OrdD_Int = mkOrdD EqD_Int lteInt Nothing
gt :: OrdD a -> a -> Boolean
gt ordD x y = not (ordD.(<=) x y)
main :: IO ()
main = print (gt OrdD_Int 100 2) -- True
```

We see here that classes are represented as a dictionary holding the superclasses, if any, as well as the methods' implementations. Instances then just becomes values of this type, and are passed explicitly to functions which require them.

2.6 Typeclasses in Scala

Unlike Haskell, Scala does not provide first-class support for typeclasses. Fortunately, its powerful implicit resolution mechanism for implicit parameters allow an encoding of these in a way which is very reminiscent of the desugared Haskell version [4]. The example above would be written in Scala as:

```
abstract class Eq[A] {
  def eq(x: A, y: A): Boolean
  def neq(x: A, y: A): Boolean = !eq(x, y)
}
```

```
abstract class Ord[A] extends Eq[A] {
  def lte(x: A, y: A): Boolean
  def lt(x: A, y: A): Boolean = lte(x, y) && neq(x, y)
}

implicit object ordInt extends Ord[Int] {
  override def eq(x: A, y: A): Boolean = x == y
  override def lte(x: Int, y: Int): Boolean = x <= y
}

def gt[A](x: A, y: A)(implicit O: Ord[A]): Boolean = !O.lte(x, y)

def main(): Unit = println(gt(100, 2)) // true</pre>
```

In Scala, typeclasses are represented as abstract classes, typeclass inheritance as regular class inheritance, instances as implicit objects. Functions which require a type to be an instance of some typeclass are provided with an implicit parameter of the corresponding type.

2.7 Ambiguity errors

One issue with the encoding above based on inheritance is that a programmer might encounter *ambiguous implicits errors* when . Such an error arise when the Scala compiler sees to equally valid implicit values in scope and thus cannot decide which one to use, as in this example, adapted from the Typelevel blog.³

```
trait Functor[F[_]] { /* ... */ }
trait Applicative[F[_]] extends Functor[F] { /* ... */ }
trait Monad[F[_]] extends Applicative[F] { /* ... */ }
trait Traverse[F[_]] extends Functor[F] { /* ... */ }

implicit object monadInt extends Monad[Int] { /* ... */ }

implicit object traverseInt extends Traverse[Int] { /* ... */ }

// The fact we don't actually use `Functor` here is irrelevant.
def bar[F[_]: Applicative: Functor]: F[Int] = Applicative[F].pure(10)

def callBar[F[_]](implicit M: Monad[F], T: Traverse[F]): F[Int] = bar[F]

// <console>:19: error: ambiguous implicit values:
// both value T of type cats.Traverse[F]
// and value M of type cats.Monad[F]
// match expected type cats.Functor[F]
```

Here, both M and T satisfy the requirement for a Functor[F] instance because Monad[F] and Traverse[F] are both subtypes of Functor[F]. Although both instances should be perfectly valid,⁴ the typesystem has no way of knowing that and can do nothing but bail out. In order to alleviate the problem, the Scala community has settled on a different encoding,⁵ which is

 $^{^3} Subtype\ type\ classes\ don't\ work\ \text{http://typelevel.org/blog/2016/09/30/subtype-typeclasses.html}$

⁴But they might in general not be, an issue which we go over in the next section.

⁵Scalaz: Subtyping-free encoding for typeclasses https://github.com/scalaz/scalaz/issues/1084

much closer to the way type classes are implemented in Haskell. Rather than having type classes inherit from their superclasses, they instead hold an instance of the superclass, much like the desugared dictionaries we have seen previously. Here is how a part of the hierarchy above is expressed with this encoding:⁶

```
trait Applicative[F[_]] {
  def functor: Functor[F]

  def pure[A](a: A): F[A]
  def map2[A, B, C](fa: F[A], fb: F[B])(f: (A, B) => C): F[C]
}

trait Traverse[F[_]] { def functor: Functor[F] }

trait FunctorConversions1 {
  implicit def applicativeIsFunctor[F[_]: Applicative]: Functor[F] =
   implicitly[Applicative[F]].functor
}

trait FunctorConversions0 extends FunctorConversions1 {
  implicit def traverseIsFunctor[F[_]: Traverse]: Functor[F] =
   implicitly[Traverse[F]].functor
}
```

object Prelude extends FunctorConversionsO

This encoding makes use of implicit conversions and Scala's facility for prioritizing them to work around the ambiguity issues posed by subtyping. That is, if both an Applicative and Traverse instances are in scope, the Scala compiler will extract the Functor instance from the latter.

2.8 Coherence

Let's now look at another issue that might arise when working with typeclasses in Scala.

```
abstract class Monoid[A] {
   def empty: A
   def combine(x: A, y: A): A
}

implicit object intAddMonoid extends Monoid[Int] {
   override def empty: Int = 0
   override def combine(x: Int, y: Int): Int = x + y
}

implicit object intProdMonoid extends Monoid[Int] {
   override def empty: Int = 1
   override def combine(x: Int, y: Int): Int = x * y
}
```

⁶Subtype type classes don't work http://typelevel.org/blog/2016/09/30/subtype-typeclasses.html

```
def fold[A](list: List[A])(implicit M: Monoid[A]): A = {
   list.foldRight(M.empty)(M.combine)
}

val list: List[Int] = List(2, 3)
val res: Int = fold(list) // ?
```

Once again, the Scala compiler bails out with an ambiguous implicits error but for good reasons this time. Indeed, depending on which instance of Monoid[Int] it picks, res can either be equal to 5 or 6. This issue arise because the two instances above are overlapping, which has the effect of making the type system incoherent [5]. For a type system to be coherent, "every valid typing derivation for a program [must lead] to a resulting program that has the same dynamic semantics", which is clearly not the case here. While in this specific example, the compiler will rightfully reject the program, this might always be possible as one could import a different instance in scope in two different modules, and then a third module might assume that these modules actually make use of the same instance, silently breaking the program. Imagine trying to merge two Sets that have been created with two different Ord instances in scope.

Haskell partially solves this problem by enforcing that instances defined in the same module do not overlap, that is to say that the compiler would reject the program above. We deem Haskell's approach only partial as it allows the programmer to define two or more overlapping instances, provided that they are not defined in the same module. A program is then only rejected when the programmer makes imports such overlapping instances in scope and attempts to make use of them. This decision stems from the will to allow linking together two different libraries which both define a class instance for the same type. If one were to operate under a closed-world assumption, one could go further and disallow overlapping instances altogether which, as we will see, is the approach we have chosen in Stainless.

While current versions of Scala provides no such mechanism to enforce coherence, its version 3.0 will at least improve over the existing situation by letting the programmer declare a class as being coherent.⁷

With a coherent type system, one might still want to provide both an additive and multiplicative Monoid instance for integers. To this end, one can wrap values of type Int with two different wrapper (value-)classes for which we will define the respective instances.

⁷ Allow Typeclasses to Declare Themselves Coherent https://github.com/lampepfl/dotty/issues/2047

```
def fold[A](list: List[A])(implicit M: Monoid[A]): A = {
   list.foldRight(M.empty)(M.combine)
}

def foldMap[A, B](list: List[A])(f: A => B)(implicit M: Monoid[B]): B = {
   fold(list.map(f))
}
```

It then becomes possible to unambiguously pick which instance to use depending on the semantics we want.

```
val list: List[Int] = List(2, 3)

val sum: Int = foldMap(list)(Sum(_)).value // 5
val product: Int = foldMap(list)(Product(_)).value // 6
```

3 Our contributions

3.1 Anonymous classes

Scala programmers are used to define typeclass instances using anonymous classes. In order to support idiomatic instances declarations, we have made Stainless aware of those. To do so, we scan the program for abstract classes or traits which have no named concrete descendants. Such classes are converted into a regular ADT. Anonymous class declarations are then themselves converted into an instance of the previously introduced datatype.

As such, the following code

```
abstract class Bar[A] {
  def baz: Baz
}

object foo extends Bar[Foo] {
  def baz: Baz = /* ... */
}

def foo[A](implicit ev: GetBaz[A]) extends Bar[A] {
  def baz: Baz = ev.getBaz
}

is now extracted as
case class Bar[A](baz: Baz)

val foo = Bar[Foo](/* ... */)

def foo[A](implicit ev: GetBaz[A]) = Bar[A](ev.getBaz)
```

3.2 Laws

We also allow the user to specify the laws a typeclass is held to by providing methods annotated with the **@law** annotation, rather than having to specify them within an ADT invariant.

```
abstract class Semigroup[A] {
  def combine(x: A, y: A): A
  @law
  def law_associative = forall { (x: A, y: A, z: A) =>
    combine(combine(x, y), z) == combine(x, combine(y, z))
  // Alternatively
  // @law
  // def law_associative(x: A, y: A, z: A) = {
  // combine(combine(x, y), z) == combine(x, combine(y, z))
  1/ }
}
becomes
@coherent
case class Semigroup[A](combine: (A, A) => A) {
  require {
    forall { (x: A, y: A, z: A) =>
      combine(combine(x, y), z) == combine(x, combine(y, z))
  }
}
```

A new phase, named TypeclassEncoding performs the encoding of typeclasses into a representation that Stainless natively understands.

Namely, this phase takes care of:

- Lifting typeclass definitions into an algebraic datatype.
- Building the appropriate invariant based on the laws defined by the user.
- Convert anonymous classes definitions found in instances declarations to instances of the datatype introduced earlier.
- Lift supplementary laws proof provided by the user to a require clause in the instance declaration.

We show below the code that the user is now able to feed Stainless together with its encoded version. The full code for the input program can be found in Appendix A.

Before:

```
@coherent
abstract class Monoid[A](implicit val semigroup: Semigroup[A]) {
  def empty: A
  @inline def combine(x: A, y: A): A = semigroup.combine(x, y)
  @law def law_leftIdentity = forall { (x: A) =>
    combine(empty, x) == x
  }
  @law def law_rightIdentity = forall { (x: A) =>
    combine(x, empty) == x
  }
}
After:
@coherent
case class Monoid[A](val semigroup: Semigroup[A], empty: A) {
  require(law_leftIdentity && law_rightIdentity)
  @inline def combine(x: A, y: A): A = semigroup.combine(x, y)
  def law_leftIdentity = forall { (x: A) =>
    combine(empty, x) == x
  }
  def law_rightIdentity = forall { (x: A) =>
    combine(x, empty) == x
  }
}
```

Before:

```
implicit def intSumSemigroup: Semigroup[Sum] = new Semigroup[Sum] {
  override def combine(x: Sum, y: Sum): Sum = Sum(x.value + y.value)
  override def law_associative = super.law_associative because {
    forall { (x: Sum, y: Sum, z: Sum) => lemma_sumAssociative(x, y, z) }
  }
}
After:
def intSumSemigroup: Semigroup[Sum] = {
  require {
    forall { (x: Sum, y: Sum, z: Sum) => lemma_sumAssociative(x, y, z) }
  Semigroup[Sum]((x: Sum, y: Sum) \Rightarrow Sum(x.value + y.value))
Before:
implicit def intSumMonoid: Monoid[Sum] = new Monoid[Sum] {
  override def empty: Sum = Sum(0)
}
After:
def intSumMonoid: Monoid[Sum] = Monoid[Sum](intSumSemigroup, Sum(0))
```

3.3 Coherence

Because Stainless operates under a closed-world assumption, we can actually enforce coherence by disallowing the definition of multiple instances of the same typeclasses. This is done in a new phase called EnforceCoherence. This phase also substitute comparison for equality between values which are instances of a class annotated with the @coherent annotation with the boolean literal true. This ensure that, should a user choose too perform such a comparison, coherence will rightly be preserved. This transformation allows the following code to verify:

```
def lemma1[A](a: Monoid[A], b: Monoid[A]) = {
    a == b
} holds

def lemma2(a: Monoid[Int], b: Monoid[Int]) = {
    a == b
} holds

val set1 = Set(foo)
val set2 = Set(foo, foo)

def lemma3 = {
    set1 == set2
} holds
```

4 Results

We have tested our implementation over a corpus of type classes⁸ and some of their possible instances. Below are the verification results of each test case:

Testcase	Instance	Result	ADT invariant (s)	Total time (s)
AnyMonoid	Monoid[Any]	valid	0.222	5.236
FirstMonoid	Monoid[First]	valid	1.107	3.796
IntMonoid	Monoid[Int] (additive)	valid	2.746	4.951
SumMonoid	Monoid[Sum]	valid	0.214	5.811
SemigroupMonoid	Monoid[Int] (additive)	valid	0.431	4.856
SemigroupMonoid	Semigroup[Int] (additive)	valid	1.044	4.856
Newtype	Newtype[Sum, BigInt]	valid	0.133	10.178
EqOrd_partial	Eq[Int]	valid	1.536	5.835
EqOrd_partial	Ord[Int]	valid	1.725	5.835
EqOrd_full	Eq[Int]	timeout	-	-
EqOrd_full	Ord[Int]	timeout	-	-
EndoMonoid	Monoid[Endo]	timeout	-	-
ListMonoid	Monoid[List]	timeout	-	-
NatMonoid	Monoid[Nat]	timeout	-	-
OptionMonoid	Monoid[Option]	timeout	-	-
NonEmptySemigroup	Semigroup[NonEmpty]	timeout	-	-
Uniplate	Uniplate[Expr]	timeout	-	-
Semiring	Semiring[Int] (disjunctive)	timeout	-	-
Semiring	Semiring[Boolean] (disjunctive)	timeout	-	-
Semiring	Semiring[Boolean] (conjunctive)	timeout	-	

 $^{{}^{8}} https://github.com/romac/LARA-MscSemesterProject/tree/master/Testcases/$

5 Conclusion

We have shown how to provide coherent typeclass support for Stainless in a user-friendly way, and have managed to prove various algebraic properties using the newly supported syntax and facilities. While we have not been able to verify all the properties we hoped to prove, we are confident that with some more work, a good chunk of the remaining ones could be proved valid as well.

Our implementation can be found on Github. We hope to integrate it in the main repository once we address the remaining limitations that we describe in the next section.

6 Further work

As can be seen above, Stainless is still unable to verify some of the more involved testcases, both with our current implementation and the latest published version of Stainless with a manual encoding. As such, more work is needed to figure out exactly how to best help Stainless verify those testcases, whether it is by providing more lemmas, or by improving its handling of invariants over lambdas.

The newly supported syntax is also still quite rigid, and has potential to be relaxed a bit, e.g. by allowing for local anonymous class definitions.

While orthognal to our project, Stainless' lack of support for higher-kinded types prevents us from working with some of the more interesting typeclasses, such as Functor, Monad, etc. If proper support for such types is eventually added to Stainless, we are confident that our approach should either work out of the box or require few adaptations.

⁹https://github.com/romac/stainless/tree/typeclass-syntax

7 References

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8 Appendix

8.1 Appendix A

```
import stainless.lang._
import stainless.annotation._
import stainless.collection._
@coherent abstract class Semigroup[A] {
  def combine(x: A, y: A): A
  @law def law_associative = forall { (x: A, y: A, z: A) =>
    combine(combine(x, y), z) == combine(x, combine(y, z))
  }
}
@coherent abstract class Monoid[A](implicit val semigroup: Semigroup[A]) {
  def empty: A
  @inline def combine(x: A, y: A): A = semigroup.combine(x, y)
  @law def law_leftIdentity = forall { (x: A) =>
    combine(empty, x) == x
  @law def law_rightIdentity = forall { (x: A) =>
    combine(x, empty) == x
  }
}
case class Sum(value: Int)
def lemma_sumAssociative(x: Sum, y: Sum, z: Sum): Boolean = {
  Sum((x.value + y.value) + z.value) == Sum(x.value + (y.value + z.value))
} holds
implicit def intSumSemigroup: Semigroup[Sum] = new Semigroup[Sum] {
  override def combine(x: Sum, y: Sum): Sum = Sum(x.value + y.value)
  override def law_associative = super.law_associative because {
    forall { (x: Sum, y: Sum, z: Sum) => lemma_sumAssociative(x, y, z) }
  }
}
implicit def intSumMonoid: Monoid[Sum] = new Monoid[Sum] {
  override def empty: Sum = Sum(0)
```