Script generated by TTT

Title: Simon: Programmiersprachen (06.12.2013)

Date: Fri Dec 06 14:17:53 CET 2013

Duration: 77:41 min

Pages: 52

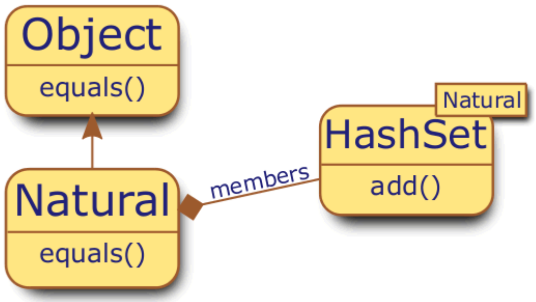
TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT MÜNCHEN
FAKULTÄT FÜR INFORMATIK

Programming Languages

Dispatching Method Calls

Dr. Axel Simon and Dr. Michael Petter
Winter term 2013

Sets of Natural Numbers



Sets of Natural Numbers

```
class Natural {
  Natural(int n){ number=Math.abs(n); }
  int number;
  public boolean equals(Natural n){
    return n.number == number;
  }
}
. .
  Set<Natural> set = new HashSet<>();
  set.add(new Natural(0));
  set.add(new Natural(0));
  System.out.println(set);
```

Sets of Natural Numbers

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  int number;
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}
...
  Set<Natural> set = new HashSet<>();
  set.add(new Natural(0));
  set.add(new Natural(0));
  System.out.println(set);
```

```
>$ java Natural
[0,0]
```

⚠ Why? Is HashSet buggy?

Generalization

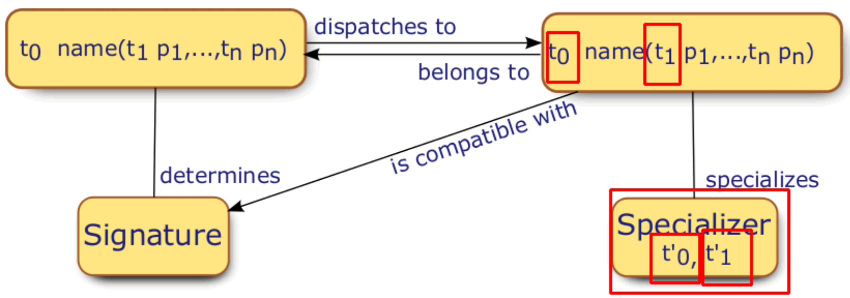
Let's think language independent!

Generalization

Let's think language independent!

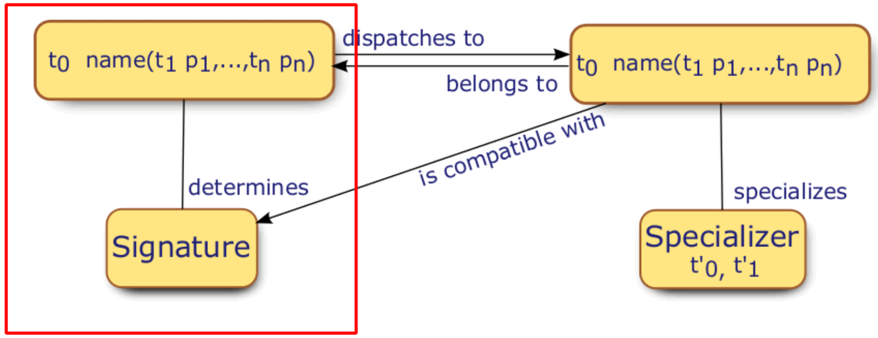
`n1.equals(n2);` $\Longrightarrow$ `equals(n1,n2);`

Methods are *dynamically dispatched*



Methods are *dynamically dispatched*

Generic Function
Dynamically dispatched function



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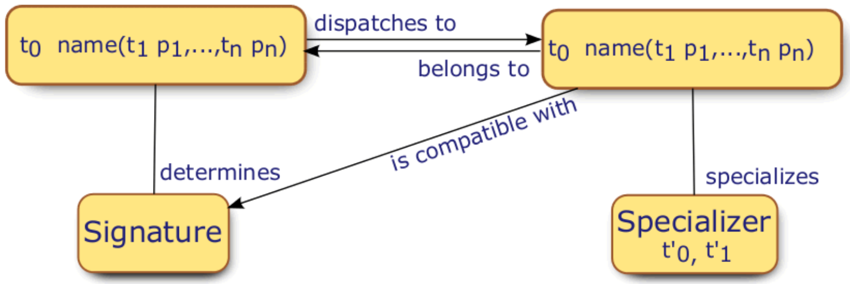
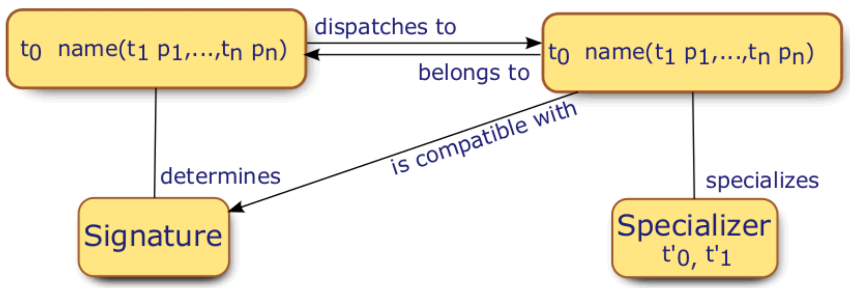


Signature
Permissible arguments for calls to generic functions

Methods are *dynamically dispatched*

Generic Function
Dynamically dispatched function

Concrete Method
Provides code body for a generic function



Signature
Permissible arguments for calls to generic functions

Specializer
Specialized types to be matched at the call

Example: Java [4]

Java determines *generic function signatures* implicitly at each call site from the static types of the arguments.

```
Object o1 = new Natural(1);
Object o2 = new Natural(2);
equals(o1,o2);
```

Signature for call to generic function:

```
equals(Object, Object)
```

Concrete methods within Natural:

```
boolean equals(Natural n1, Natural n2)
boolean equals(Object o1, Object o2)
```

Example: Java [4]

Java determines *generic function signatures* implicitly at each call site from the static types of the arguments.

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Object o1 = new Natural(1);
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⚠ Specializer in Java only for return type and first argument

Concrete methods within Natural:

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boolean equals(Natural n1, Natural n2)
boolean equals(Object o1, Object o2)

boolean equals(Natural o1, Object o2)
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Example: Java [4]

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Object o1 = new Natural(1);
Object o2 = new Natural(2);
equals(o1,o2);
```

Signature for call to generic function:

`equals(Object, Object)`

⚠ Specializer in Java only for return type and first argument

⚠ and static methods are not specialized at all

Concrete methods within Natural:

```
boolean equals(Natural n1, Natural n2)
boolean equals(Object o1, Object o2)

boolean equals(Natural o1, Object o2)
```


Mini-Quiz: Java Method Dispatching

```
class A {
   public static  void p  (Object o) { System.out.println(o); }
   public         void m1 (A a) {      p("m1(A) in A");        }
   public         void m1 () {         m1(new B());            }
   private static void m2 (A a) {      p("m2(A) in A");        }
   public         void m2 () {         m2(this);               }
}
class B extends A {
   public         void m1 (B b) {      p("m1(B) in B");        }
   public         void m2 (A a) {      p("m2(A) in B");        }
   public         void m3 () {         super.m1(this);         }
}
```

```
B b=new B(); A a =b; a.m1(b);
```


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```

```
B b=new B(); A a =b; a.m1(b);
```

`m1(A) in A`

Mini-Quiz: Java Method Dispatching

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}
```

```
B b=new B(); A a =b; a.m1(b);          m1(A) in A
B b=new B(); B a =b; b.m1(a);
```


Mini-Quiz: Java Method Dispatching


```
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   public         void m3 () {         super.m1(this);         }
}
```


this

```
B b=new B(); A a =b; a.m1(b);          m1(A) in A
B b=new B(); B a =b; b.m1(a);          m1(B) in B
B b = new B(); b.m1();
```


Mini-Quiz: Java Method Dispatching


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B b = new B(); b.m1();                     m1(A) in A
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B b = new B(); b.m1();                     m1(A) in A
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B b=new B(); A a =b; a.m1(b);              m1(A) in A
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B b = new B(); b.m1();                     m1(A) in A
B b = new B(); b.m2();                     m2(A) in A
B b = new B(); b.m3();
```


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B b = new B(); b.m3();                     m1(A) in A
```

Inside the Javac

Concept of methods being *applicable* for arguments:

```
// true if the given method is applicable to the given arguments
boolean isApplicable(MemberDefinition m, Type args[]) {
    // Sanity checks:
    Type mType = m.getType();
    if (!mType.isType(TC_METHOD))                return false;

    Type mArgs[] = mType.getArgumentTypes();
    if (args.length != mArgs.length)             return false;

    for (int i = args.length ; --i >= 0 ;)
        if (!isMoreSpecific(args[i], mArgs[i])) return false;
    return true;
}
```

Concept of methods being *more specific* than others:

```
// true if "best" is in every argument at least as good as "other"
boolean isMoreSpecific(MemberDefinition best, MemberDefinition other) {
    Type bestType = best.getClassDeclaration().getType();
    Type otherType = other.getClassDeclaration().getType();
    return isMoreSpecific(bestType, otherType) // return types
           && isApplicable(other, best.getType().getArgumentTypes());
}
```


Inside the Javac

```
MemberDefinition matchMethod(Environment env, ClassDefinition accessor,
                             Identifier methodName, Type[] argumentTypes) throws ... {
    // A tentative maximally specific method.
    MemberDefinition tentative = null;
    // A list of other methods which may be maximally specific too.
    List candidateList = null;
    // Get all the methods inherited by this class which have the name 'methodName'
    for (MemberDefinition method : allMethods.lookupName(methodName)) {
        // See if this method is applicable.
        if (!env.isApplicable(method, argumentTypes)) continue;
        // See if this method is accessible.
        if ((accessor != null) && (!accessor.canAccess(env, method))) continue;
        if ((tentative == null) || (env.isMoreSpecific(method, tentative))) 
            // 'method' becomes our tentative maximally specific match.
            tentative = method;
        else { // If this method could possibly be another maximally specific
               // method, add it to our list of other candidates.
               if (!env.isMoreSpecific(tentative,method)) {
                   if (candidateList == null) candidateList = new ArrayList();
                   candidateList.add(method);
    }   }      }
    if (tentative != null && candidateList != null)
        // Find out if our 'tentative' match is a uniquely maximally specific.
        for (MemberDefinition method : candidateList )
            if (!env.isMoreSpecific(tentative, method))
                throw new AmbiguousMember(tentative, method);
    return tentative;
}
```


Bytecode

The Java compiler generates the following static bytecode:

```
Code:
 0:   new             #4; //class Natural
 3:   dup
 4:   iconst_1
 5:   invokespecial   #5; //Method "<init>":(I)V
 8:   astore_1
 9:   new             #4; //class Natural
12:   dup
13:   iconst_2
14:   invokespecial   #5; //Method "<init>":(I)V
17:   astore_2
18:   aload_1
19:   aload_2
20:   invokevirtual   #6; //Method java/lang/Object.equals:(Ljava/lang/Object;)Z
23:   pop
24:   return
```

What does the interpreter/hotspot vm do with these instructions?

Inside the Hotspot

```
void LinkResolver::resolve_method(methodHandle& resolved_method, KlassHandle resolved_klass,
                                  Symbol* method_name, Symbol* method_signature,
                                  KlassHandle current_klass) {

  // 1. check if klass is not interface
  if (resolved_klass->is_interface()) ;//... throw "Found interface, but class was expected"

  // 2. lookup method in resolved klass and its super klasses
  lookup_method_in_klasses(resolved_method, resolved_klass, method_name, method_signature);
     // calls klass::lookup_method() -> next slide

  if (resolved_method.is_null()) { // not found in the class hierarchy
    // 3. lookup method in all the interfaces implemented by the resolved klass
    lookup_method_in_interfaces(resolved_method, resolved_klass, method_name, method_signature)

    if (resolved_method.is_null()) {
      // JSR 292:  see if this is an implicitly generated method MethodHandle.invoke(*...)
      lookup_implicit_method(resolved_method, resolved_klass, method_name, method_signature, cu
    }

    if (resolved_method.is_null()) { // 4. method lookup failed
      // ... throw  java_lang_NoSuchMethodError()
  } }

  // 5. check if method is concrete
  if (resolved_method->is_abstract() && !resolved_klass->is_abstract()) {
     // ... throw java_lang_AbstractMethodError()
  }

  // 6. access checks, etc.
```

Inside the Hotspot

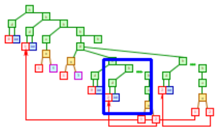
The method lookup recursively traverses the super class chain:

```
MethodDesc* klass::lookup_method(Symbol* name, Symbol* signature) {
  for (KlassDesc* klas = as_klassOop(); klas != NULL; klas = klass::cast(klas)->super()) {
    MethodDesc* method = klass::cast(klass)->find_method(name, signature);
    if (method != NULL) return method;
  }
  return NULL;
}
```


Inside the Hotspot

```
MethodDesc* klass::find_method(ObjArrayDesc* methods, Symbol* name, Symbol* signature) {
  int len = methods->length();
  // methods are sorted, so do binary search
  int i, l = 0 , h = len - 1;
  while (l <= h) {
    int mid = (l + h) >> 1;
    MethodDesc* m = (MethodDesc*)methods->obj_at(mid);
    int res = m->name()->fast_compare(name);
    if (res == 0) {
      // found matching name; do linear search to find matching signature
      // first, quick check for common case
      if (m->signature() == signature) return m;
      // search downwards through overloaded methods
      for (i = mid - 1; i >= l; i--) {
        MethodDesc* m = (MethodDesc*)methods->obj_at(i);
        if (m->name() != name) break;
        if (m->signature() == signature) return m;
      }
      // search upwards
      for (i = mid + 1; i <= h; i++) {
        MethodDesc* m = (MethodDesc*)methods->obj_at(i);
        if (m->name() != name) break;
        if (m->signature() == signature) return m;
      }
      return NULL; // not found
    } else if (res < 0) l = mid + 1;
        else         h = mid - 1;
  }
  return NULL;
}
```


Single Dispatching – Overview

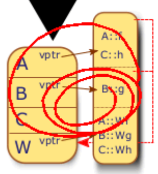


Javac

Matches a method expression *statically* to the *most specific* method signature via `matchMethod( ... )`

Hotspot VM

Interprets `invokevirtual` via `resolve_method(...)`, scanning the superclass chain with `find_method(...)`



So what to do with Single-Dispatching?

Mainstream languages support specialization of first parameter:

C++, Java, C#, Smalltalk, Lisp

So how do we solve the `equals()` problem?

1. introspection?
2. generic programming?
3. cheating?

Inside the Hotspot

```
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```


Introspection

```
class Natural {
  Natural(int n){ number=Math.abs(n); }
  int number;
  public boolean equals(Object n){
    if (!(n instanceof Natural)) return false;
    return ((Natural)n).number == number;
  }
}
...
  Set<Natural> set = new HashSet<>();
  set.add(new Natural(0));
  set.add(new Natural(0));
  System.out.println(set);
```


Introspection

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...
  Set<Natural> set = new HashSet<>();
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  System.out.println(set);
```

```
>$ java Natural
[0]
```

✓ Works

Introspection

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class Natural {
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>$ java Natural
[0]
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✓ Works ⚠ but burdens programmer with type safety

Introspection

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class Natural {
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  int number;
  public boolean equals(Object n){
    if (!(n instanceof Natural)) return false;
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...
  Set<Natural> set = new HashSet<>();
  set.add(new Natural(0));
  set.add(new Natural(0));
  System.out.println(set);
```

```
>$ java Natural
[0]
```

✓ Works ⚠ but burdens programmer with type safety
⚠ and is only available for languages with type introspection

Generic Programming

```
interface Equalizable<T>{
  boolean equals(T other);
}
class Natural implements Equalizable<Natural> {
  Natural(int n){ number=Math.abs(n); }
  int number;
  public boolean equals(Natural n){
    return n.number == number;
  }
}
...
  EqualizableAwareSet<Natural> set = new MyHashSet<>();
  set.add(new Natural(0));
  set.add(new Natural(0));
  System.out.println(set);
```


Generic Programming

```
interface Equalizable<T>{
  boolean equals(T other);
}
class Natural implements Equalizable<Natural> {
  Natural(int n){ number=Math.abs(n); }
  int number;
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    return n.number == number;
  }
}
...
  EqualizableAwareSet<Natural> set = new MyHashSet<>();
  set.add(new Natural(0));
  set.add(new Natural(0));
  System.out.println(set);
```
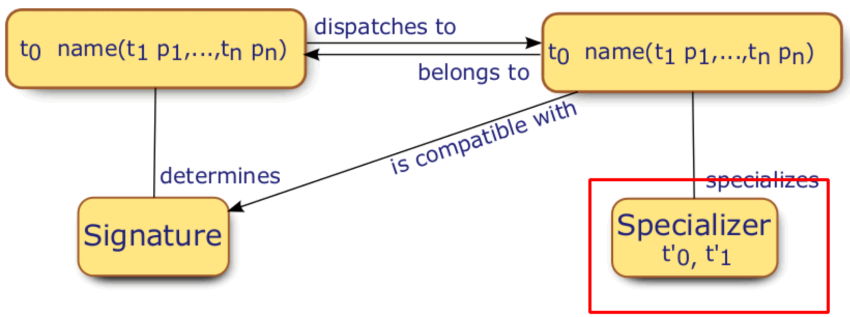

⚠ but needs another Set implementation and...

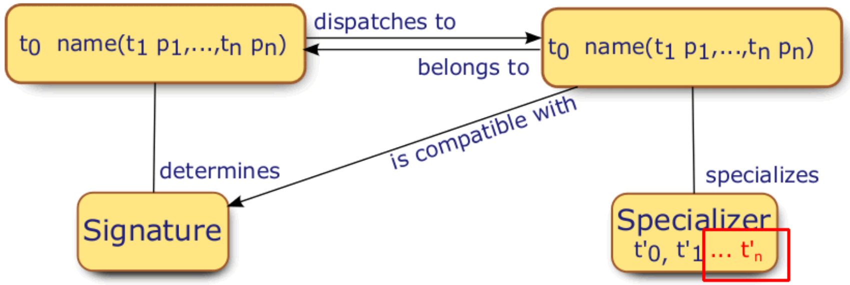
Formal Model of Multi-Dispatching [7]



Formal Model of Multi-Dispatching [7]

Idea

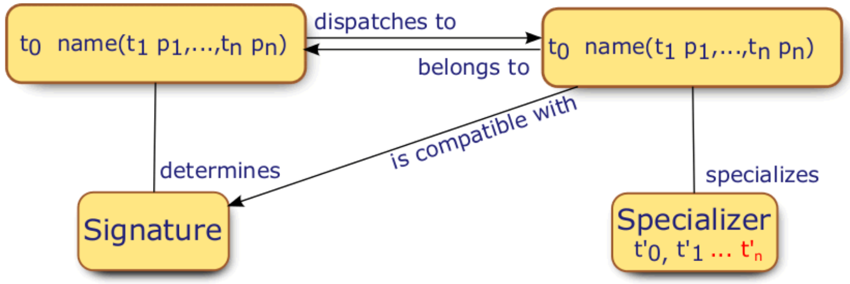
Introduce Specializers for all parameters



Formal Model of Multi-Dispatching [7]

Idea

Introduce Specializers for all parameters



How it works

1. Specializers as subtype annotations to parameter types
2. Dispatcher selects *Most Specific* Concrete Method

Implications of the implementation

Type-Checking

1. Typechecking families of concrete methods introduces checking the existance of unique most specific methods for all *valid visible type tuples*.
2. Multiple-Inheritance or interfaces as specializers introduce ambiguities, and thus induce runtime ambiguity exceptions

Code-Generation

1. Specialized methods generated separately
2. Dispatcher method calls specialized methods
3. Order of the dispatch tests ensures to find the most specialized method

Performance penalty

The runtime-penalty for multi-dispatching is number of parameters of a multi-method many `instanceof` tests.

Natural Numbers in Multi-Java [3]

```
class Natural {
  public Natural(int n){ number=Math.abs(n); }
  private int number;
  public boolean equals(Object@Natural n){
    return n.number == number;
  }
}
...
  Set<Natural> set = new HashSet<>();
  set.add(new Natural(0));
  set.add(new Natural(0));
  System.out.println(set);
```

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  Set<Natural> set = new HashSet<>();
  set.add(new Natural(0));
  set.add(new Natural(0));
  System.out.println(set);
```

```
>$ java Natural
[0]
```

✓ Clean Code!

Natural Numbers Behind the Scenes

```
>$ javap -c Natural
```

```
public boolean equals(java.lang.Object);
 Code:
  0:   aload_1
  1:   instanceof      #2; //class Natural
  4:   ifeq    16
  7:   aload_0
  8:   aload_1
  9:   checkcast       #2; //class Natural
  12:  invokespecial   #28; //Method equals$body3$0:(LNatural;)Z
  15:  ireturn
  16:  aload_0
  17:  aload_1
  18:  invokespecial   #31; //Method equals$body3$1:(LObject;)Z
  21:  ireturn
```


Natural Numbers Behind the Scenes

```
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```
public boolean equals(java.lang.Object);
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  21:  ireturn
```


⇝ Redirection to methods `equals$body3$1` and `equals$body3$0`

Natural Numbers in Clojure

```
(derive ::number ::class)

(defmulti equ (fn [a b] [a b]))
(defmethod equ [::number ::number] [a b] (pr "number-equals"))
(defmethod equ [::class  ::class]  [a b] (pr "ordinary equals"))

(equ ::number ::number)
(println)
```

```
number-equals
```

More Creative dispatching in Clojure

```
(defn salary [amount]
        (cond (< amount 600)   :poor
              (>= amount 5000) :boss
              :else            :assi))

(defrecord UniPerson [name wage])

(defmulti  print (fn [person] (salary (:wage person)) ))
(defmethod print :poor    [person] (str "HiWi " (:name person)))
(defmethod print :assi    [person] (str "Dr. "  (:name person)))
(defmethod print :boss    [person] (str "Prof. "(:name person)))

(pr (print (UniPerson. "Simon" 4000)))
(pr (print (UniPerson. "Vanessa" 500)))
(pr (print (UniPerson. "Seidl" 6000)))
```


More Creative dispatching in Clojure

```
(defn salary [amount]
        (cond (< amount 600)   :poor
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(pr (print (UniPerson. "Simon" 4000)))
(pr (print (UniPerson. "Vanessa" 500)))
(pr (print (UniPerson. "Seidl" 6000)))
```


```
Dr. Simon
HiWi Vanessa
Prof. Seidl
```


Multidispatching

Pro

- Generalization of an established technique
- Directly solves problem
- Eliminates boilerplate code
- Compatible with modular compilation/type checking

Con

- Counters privileged 1st parameter
- Runtime overhead
- New exceptions when used with multi-inheritance
- *Most Specific Method* ambiguous

Other Solutions (extract)

- Dylan (MD)
- Scala (Dependent types, Mixin-Composition, etc.)

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned

1. Dynamically dispatched methods are complex interaction of static and dynamic techniques
2. Single Dispatching as in major OO-Languages
3. Multi Dispatching generalizes single dispatching
4. Multi Dispatching Java
5. Multi Dispatching Clojure

Further reading...

[1] hotspot/src/share/vm/interpreter/linkResolver.cpp.
OpenJDK 7 Hotspot JIT VM.
http://hg.openjdk.java.net/jdk7/jdk7.

[2] jdk/src/share/classes/sun/tools/ClassDefinition.java.
OpenJDK 7 Javac.
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[3] C. Clifton, T. Millstein, G. T. Leavens, and C. Chambers.
Multijava: Design rationale, compiler implementation, and applications.
ACM Transactions on Programming Languages and Systems (TOPLAS), May 2006.

[4] J. Gosling, B. Joy, G. Steele, and G. Bracha.
The Java Language Specification, Third Edition.
Addison-Wesley Longman, Amsterdam, 3 edition, June 2005.

[5] S. Halloway.
Programming Clojure.
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[6] T. Lindholm, F. Yellin, G. Bracha, and A. Buckley.
The Java Virtual Machine Specification.
Addison-Wesley Professional, Java SE7 edition, 2013.

[7] R. Muschevici, A. Potanin, E. Tempero, and J. Noble.
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23rd ACM SIGPLAN conference on Object-oriented programming systems languages and applications (OOPSLA), September 2008.