



Centrum Wiskunde & Informatica

INSTITUT NATIONAL  
DE RECHERCHE  
EN INFORMATIQUE  
ET EN AUTOMATIQUE



# The mechanics of building a DSL using Rascal

Jurgen J. Vinju  
IPA spring days  
April 17th 2012



# Rascal Team

Paul  
Klint



Jurgen  
Vinju



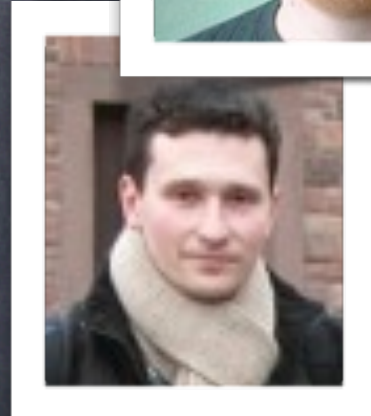
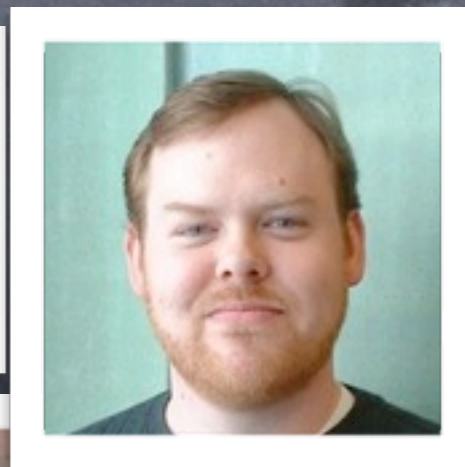
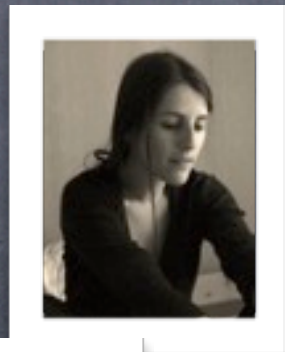
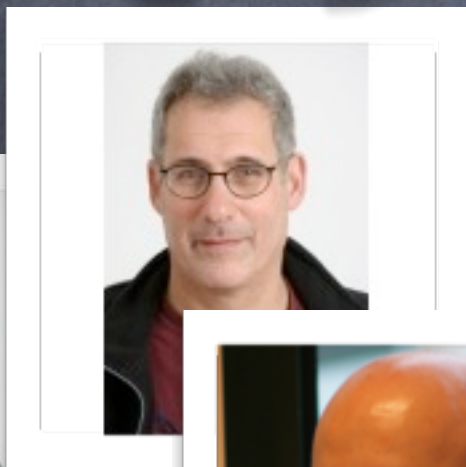
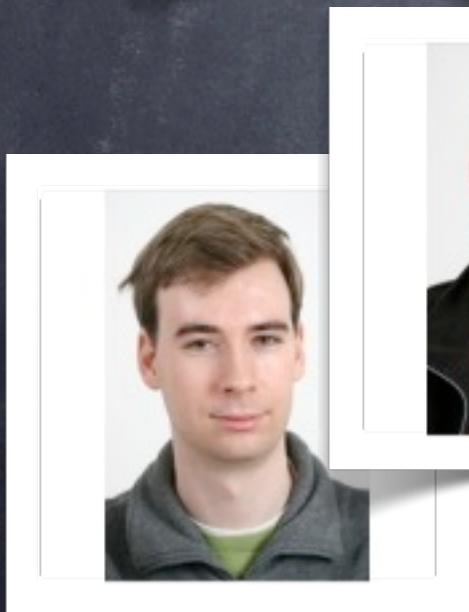
Tijs  
v/d Storm



Bob  
Fuhrer



IMP





# Credits

How Tijs & I were drafted...

- Esprit: GIPE I & GIPE II (90's)
- ASF+SDF Meta-Environment (00's)
- Eclipse
- IDE Meta Tooling Platform (IMP)
- Rascal is a part of IMP now
- Rascal draws inspiration from countless other projects (see SCAM 2009 paper for references)

"Generation of Interactive Programming Environments"





# Why we need Rascal @CWInl



Meta Tool



Tools

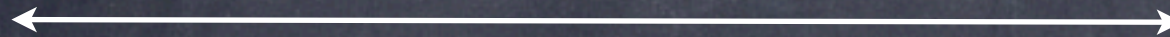
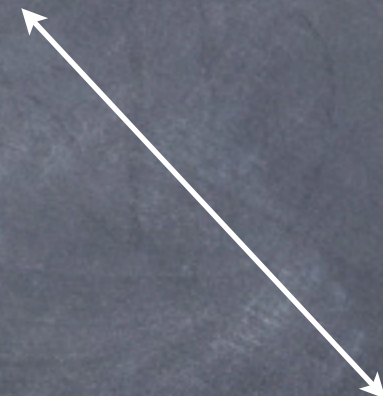
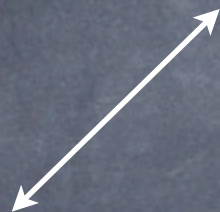
Every week  
a new tool  
a new DSL



Research



Application

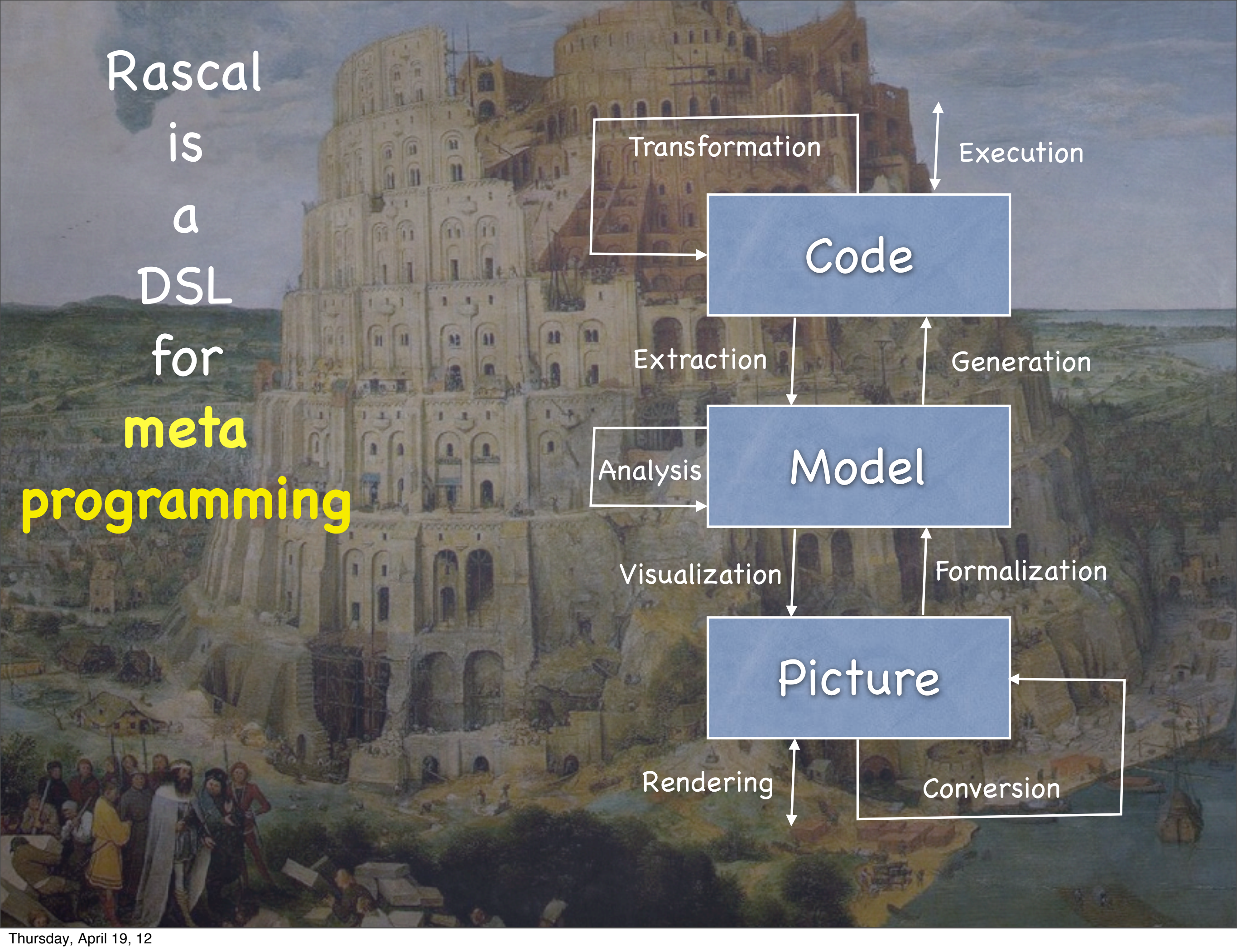




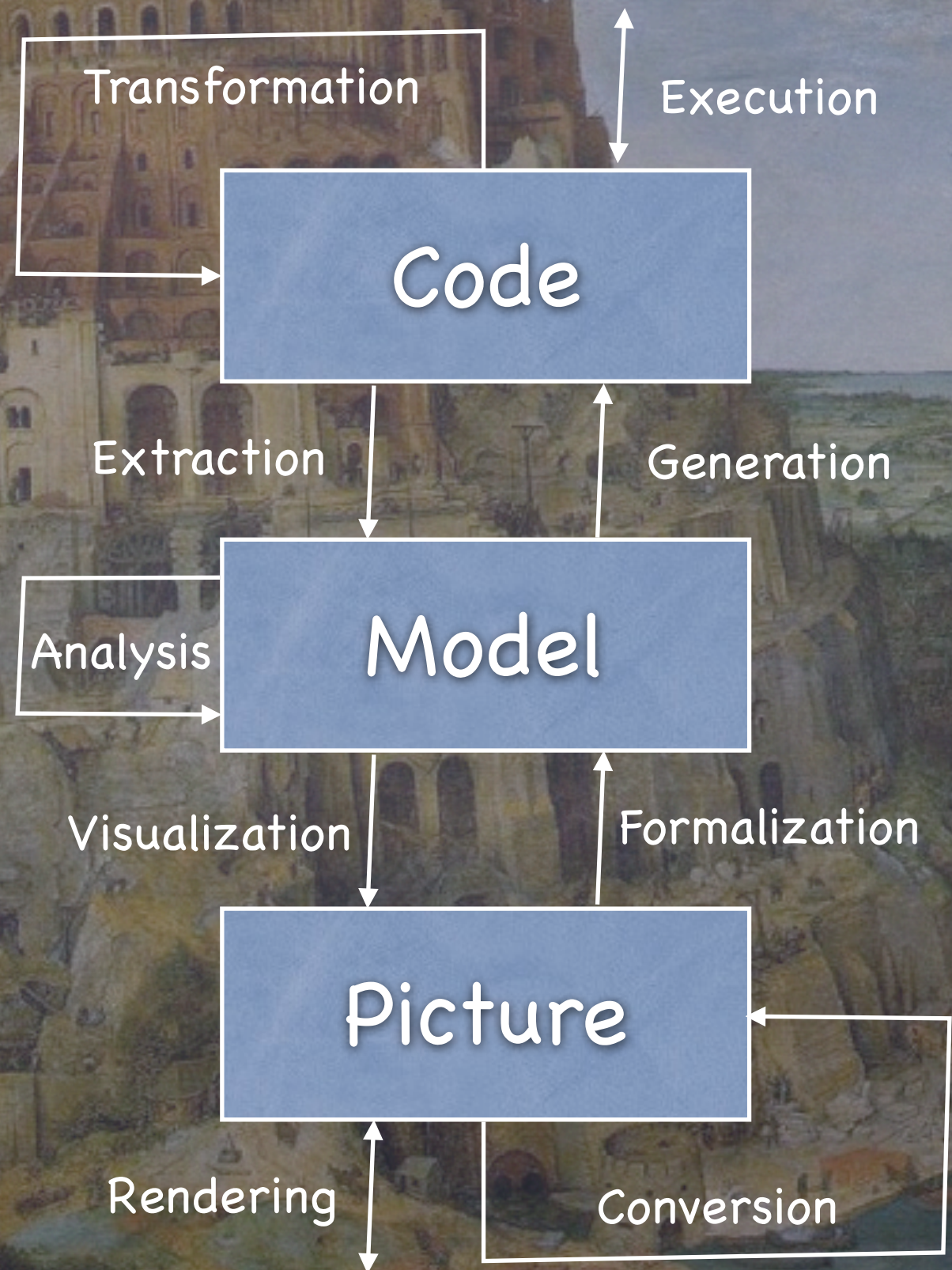
# Story

- We focus on
  - textual DSLs (not graphical)
  - external DSLs (not embedded/internal)
  - executability via code generation (not interpreted)
- This talk is about
  - source file in, source file out
  - language prototyping
  - building a DSL using a DSL



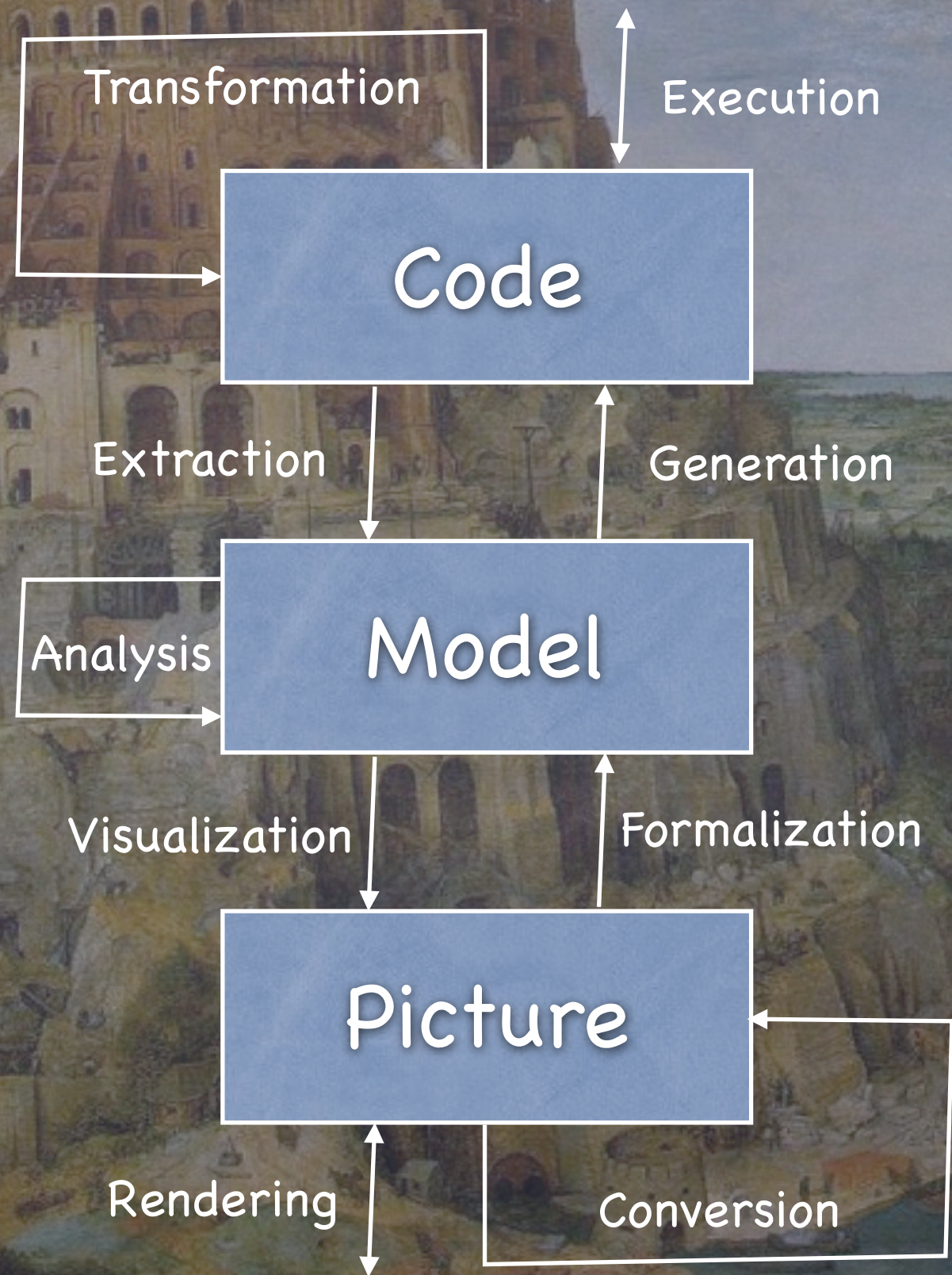


Rascal  
is  
a  
DSL  
for  
**meta  
programming**



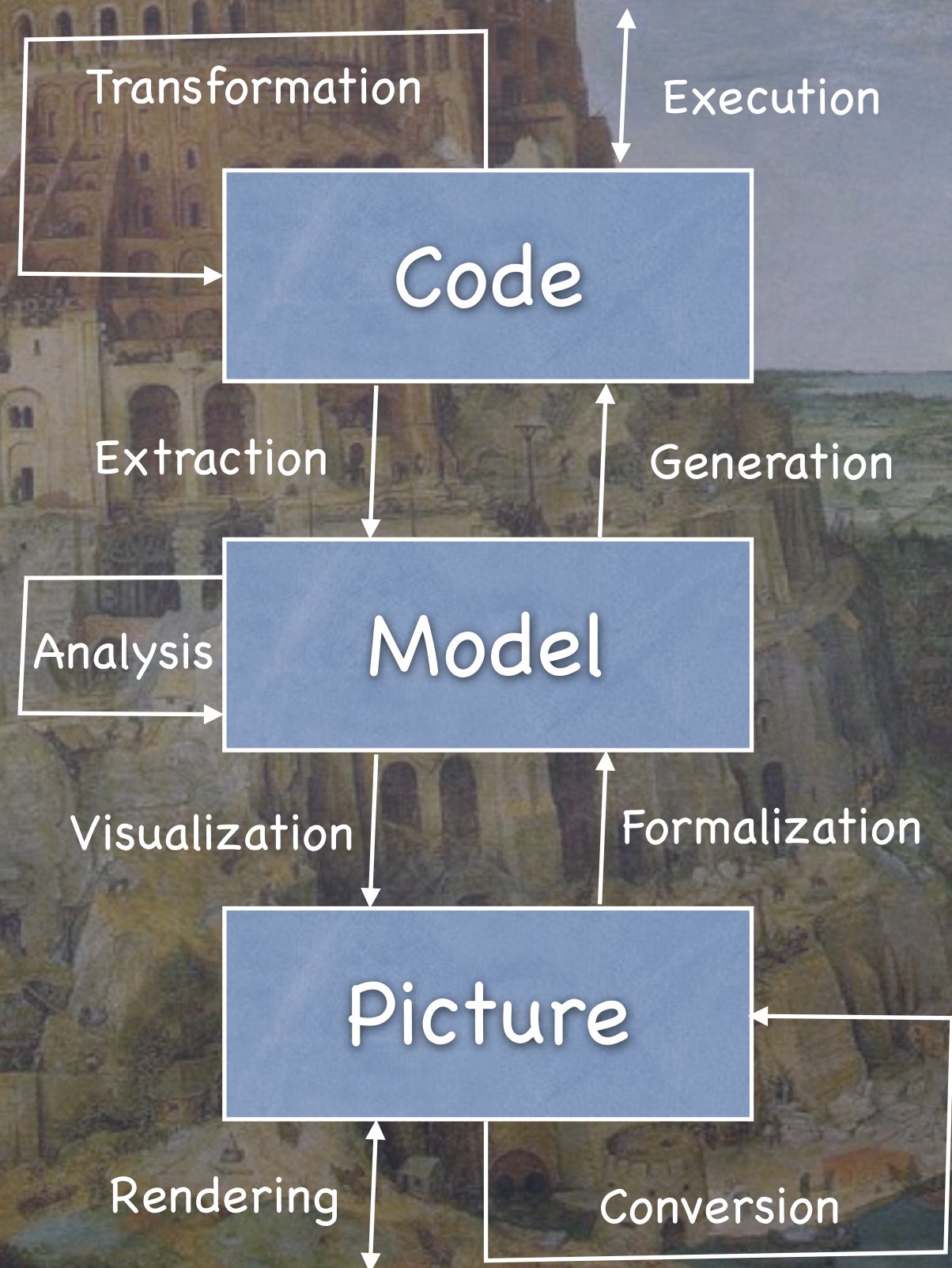


Rascal  
is  
a  
DSL  
for  
**meta  
programming**  
=  
moving  
between  
representations  
of  
source code

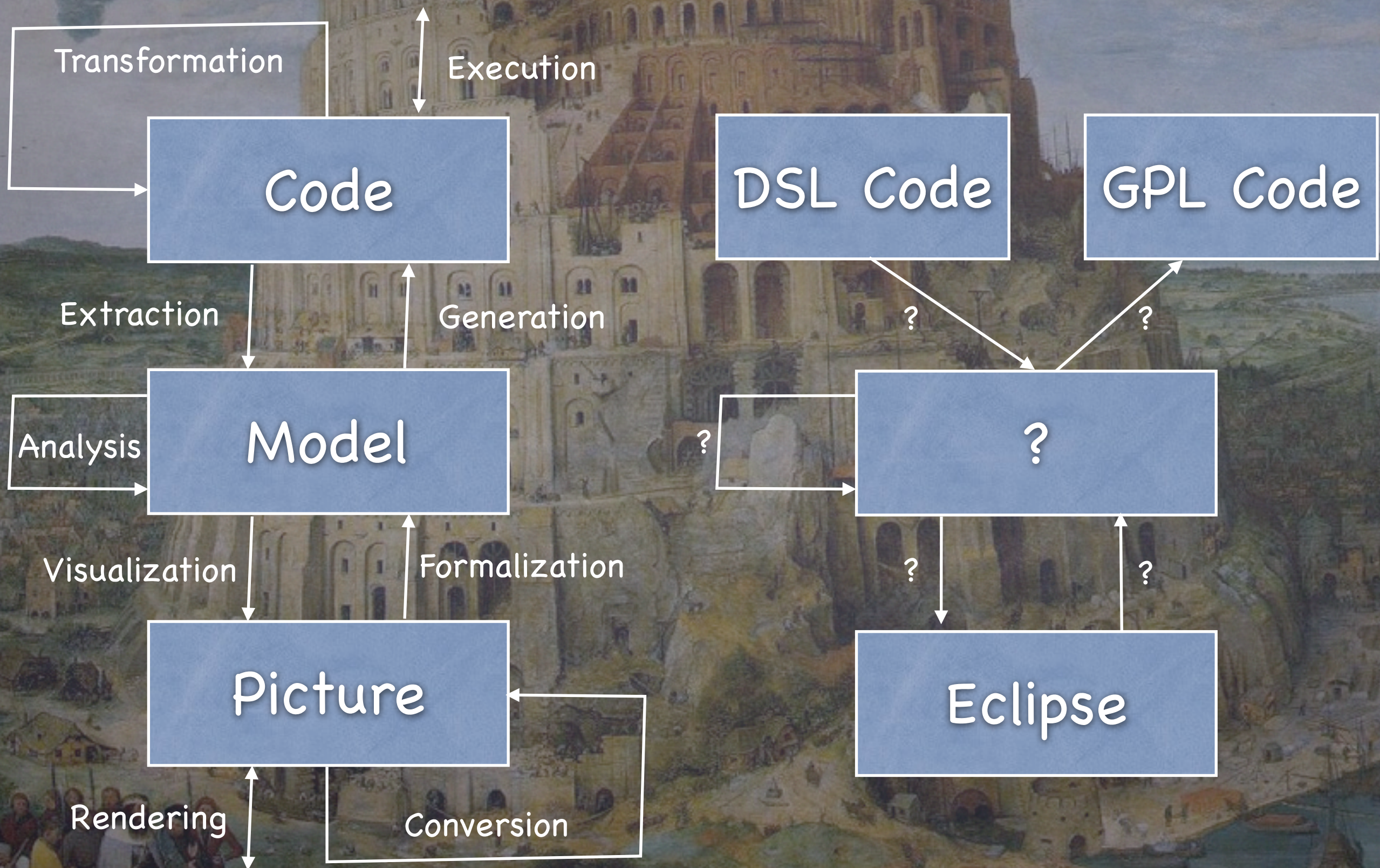




Static analysis  
Software metrics  
Model extraction  
Model-to-model  
Model-to-code  
Code-to-model  
Compilation  
Code generation  
Visualization  
Parsing  
Source-to-source  
etc.





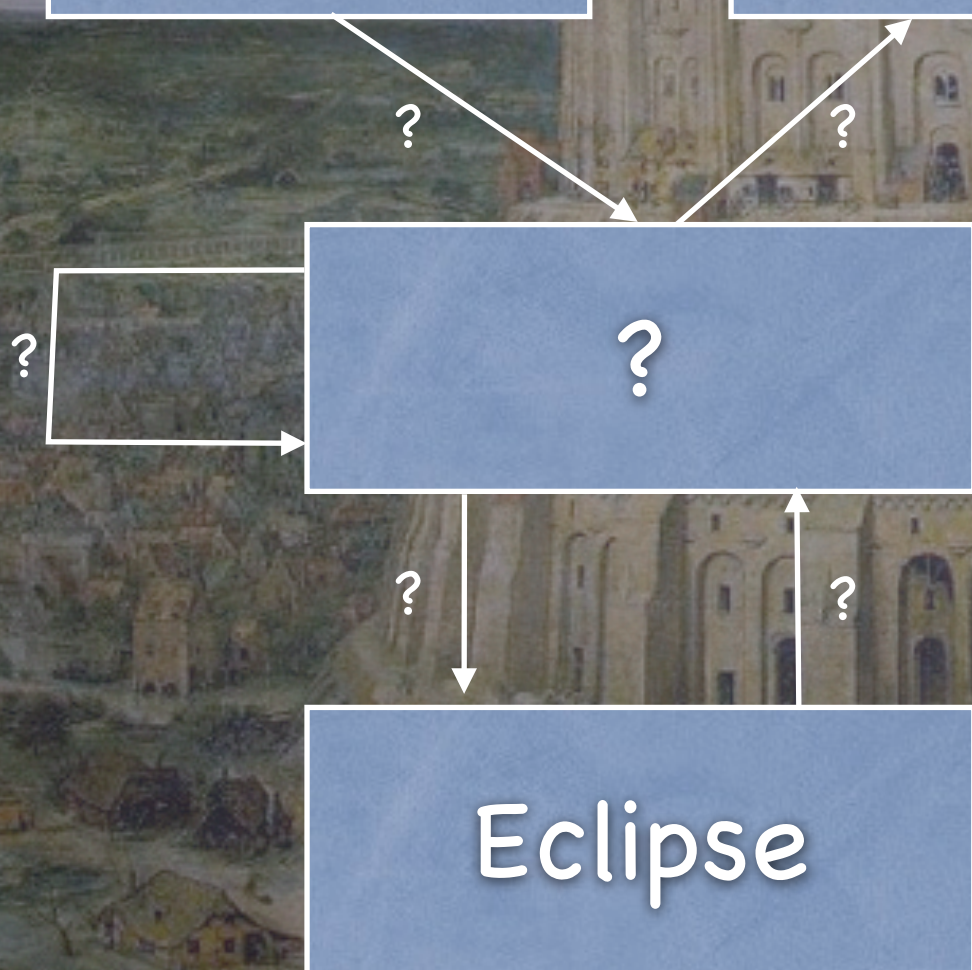




# Choices

DSL Code

GPL Code



external design

- source input

- source output

internal mechanics

- parsing

- models

- stages

- analysis

- optimization

- user feedback

- IDE



External design is wicked





# Rascal

is about making  
the mechanics  
of the internal design  
so easy to manipulate  
that you can  
experiment with the  
external design  
without much  
punishment;  
modularly,  
incrementally





# Rascal

is about making  
the mechanics  
of the internal design  
so easy to manipulate  
that you can  
experiment with the  
external design  
without much  
punishment;  
modularly,  
incrementally



Rascal does not solve the  
external design problem,  
it does solve the internal  
mechanics problem



# Design Principles (a.k.a. Requirements)

- Scaling up and scaling down
- Expressivity without magic
- One-stop-shop (integrated)
- Open
- Debuggable/Understandable

Simple = Simple

Advanced =  
Accessible

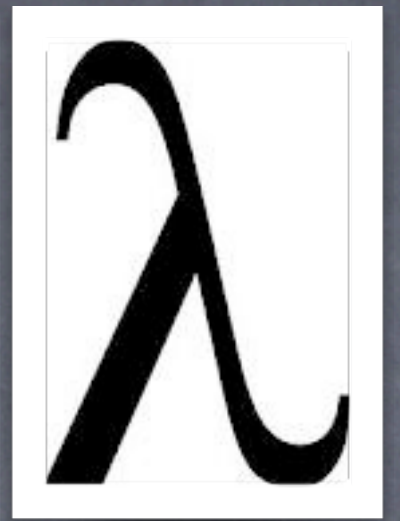
Meta  
Programming =  
Programming

REPL

Integration = Valuable



# What's good about programming



- Rascal provides primitives for constructing the mechanics of meta programs
- It is a high level **programming** language
- This means that
  - it looks & feels like a programming language
  - and the code can be very concise
  - and you still control what happens
  - and you can still observe what happens at run-time



# Ingredients

- Familiar syntax & notation
- Immutable data
- Pattern-based dispatch
- Domain specific data-types
- General context-free grammars
- String templates
- Java back door
- IDE integration via Eclipse IMP

procedural++

functional

parse tree

relations

matching

traversal

modular

typed

FormalMethods 



# Ingredients

## Code

Source  
Text Files

Parse  
Trees

Abstract  
Syntax  
Trees

## Model

Relations

Sets

Maps

ADTs

## Tools

CF Grammars

Relational Queries

Pattern matching

Traversal

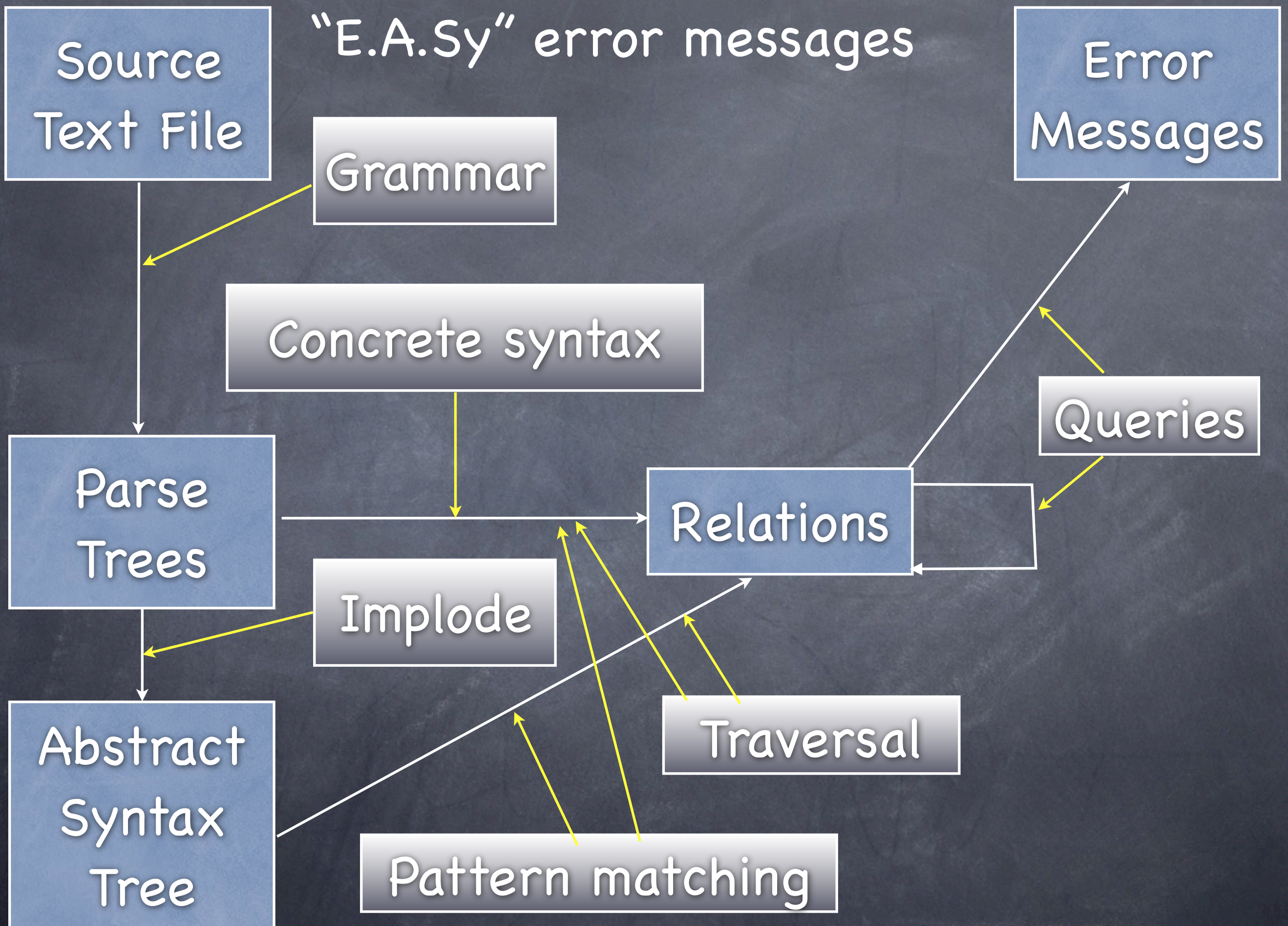
Templates

Concrete syntax

Closures

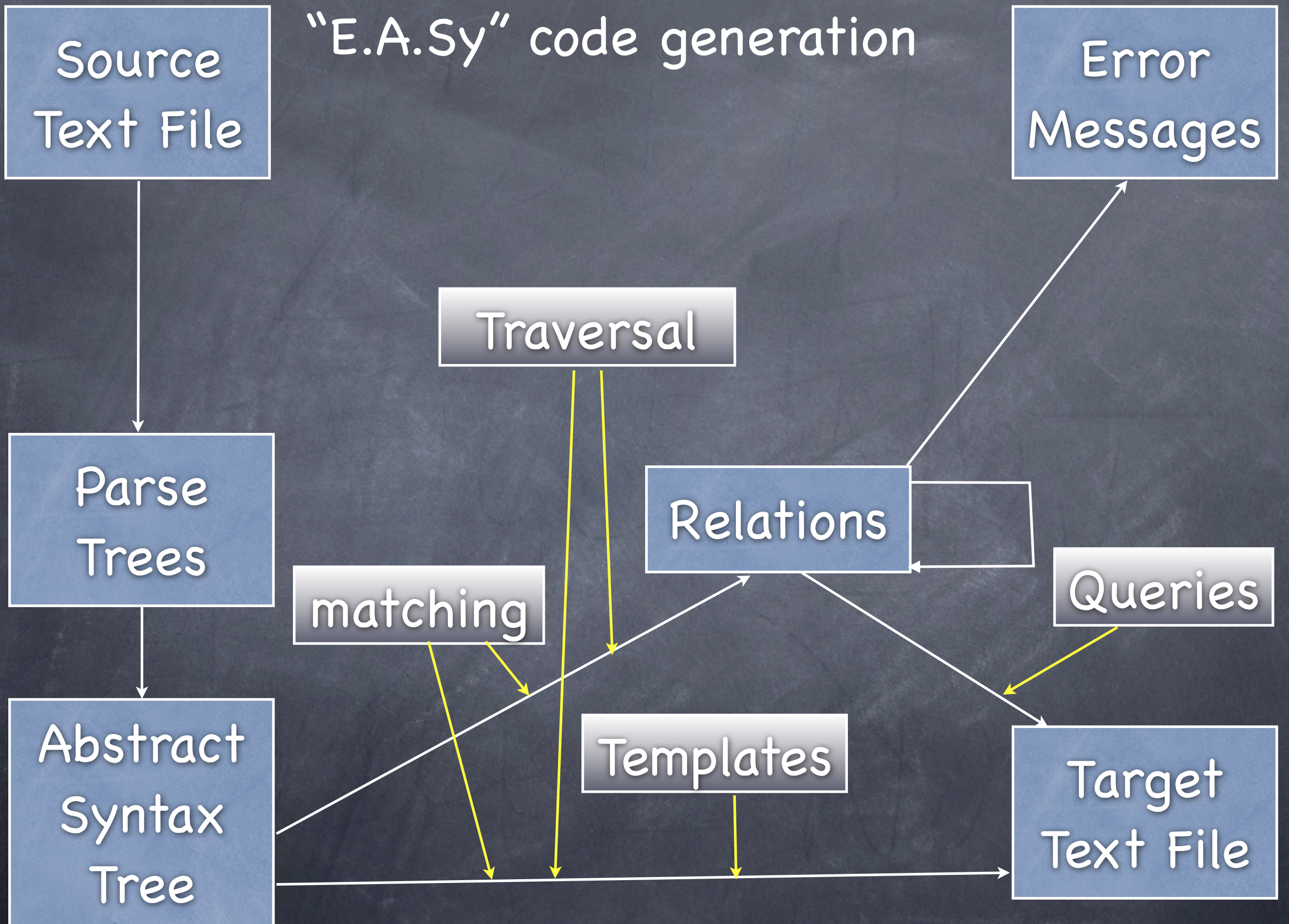


# "E.A.Sy" error messages



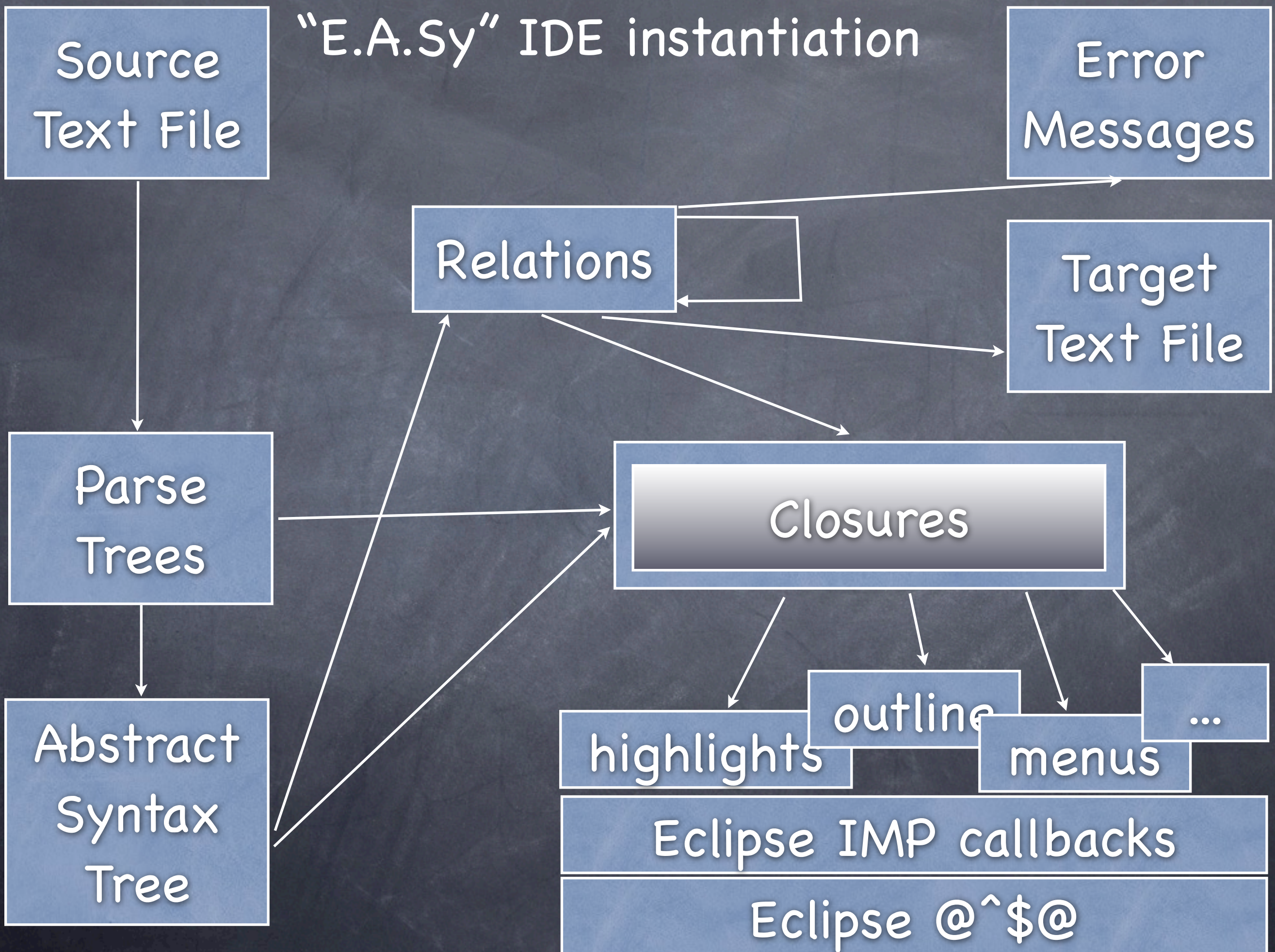


# "E.A.Sy" code generation





# "E.A.Sy" IDE instantiation





# Summary of DSLs with Rascal

- **Parse** using context-free grammars
- **Extract** info using patterns, traversals
  - either concrete or abstract syntax
- **Query** using relational operators
- **Generate** code using templates
- callback **Closures** to interact with Eclipse





# Summary of DSLs with Rascal

- **Parse** using context-free grammars
- **Extract** info using patterns, traversals
  - either concrete or abstract syntax
- **Query** using relational operators
- **Generate** code using templates
- callback **Closures** to interact with Eclipse



# Miss Grant



Martin Fowler

- State Machine Language
- Static analysis for error messages
- Code generators for different designs
  - methods are states
  - switch
  - object-oriented (dynamic) representation
- State machine visualization





DEMO



# Design Principles (a.k.a. Requirements)

- Scaling up and scaling down
- Expressivity without magic
- One-stop-shop (integrated)
- Open
- Immediate

Just Tracing

Just Profiling

Just Debugging

No Database

No Coordination

No Diagrams

No Algorithms

Just Control flow

Just Matching

Just EBNF

Just Trees

Just Relations

Just IMP



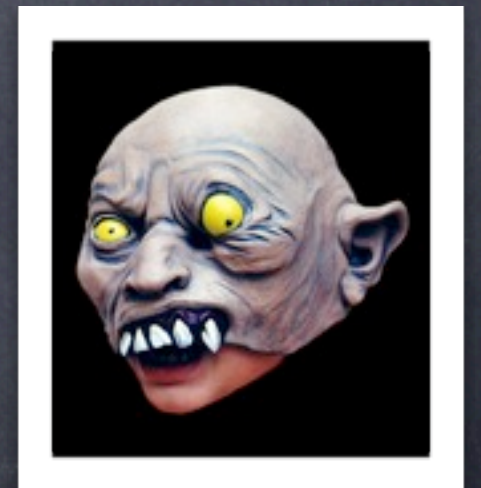
# Other applications

- Java refactorings/generics [SCAM2009, N. Izmaylova]
- Source code Visualization
- Oberon-0 compiler in 4 levels [LDTA2011]
- Language Workbench Competitions '11 en '12
- Derric: DSL for CSI (Digital Forensics) [ICSE 2011]
- Visitor 2 Interpreter refactoring [TOOLS 2011]
- PHP backward compat analysis
- Debunking McCabe
- Student projects (Java analysis, SVN analysis, ...)
- Maude/K-framework collaboration
- etc.



# Quality of Rascal S.W.O.T.

- [S] simple, powerful, immediate, integral
- [W] alpha/beta quality, slow
- [O] optimization, applications, collaboration, growing team
- [T] the feature creep







# Immediate future

- Applications in Software Analysis & Transformation
- Applications in DSL development and evaluation
- Move to **Eclipse.org**
- More **grammarware** (CASE for grammars)
- More source/model **visualization**
- More front-ends and back-ends for GPLS



# Questions?



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<http://www.rascal-mpl.org>

<http://www.eclipse.org/imp>

<http://www.cwi.nl/sen1>

<http://tutor.rascal-mpl.org>

<http://ask.rascal-mpl.org>

interactive docs

stackoverflow



# Questions?



Centrum Wiskunde & Informatica



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interactive docs

stackoverflow



# Demo Outline

- **First** Entities & Instances languages
  - Immediate IDE: highlighting, folding, error marking, ...
  - Java and SQL generation
  - Online checking and error marking
- **Then** modular extensions
  - Packages: Source-to-source transformation
  - Derived I: expression language extension
  - Derived II: linking to host language using annotations



Rascal - lwc11/input/person.entities - Eclipse Platform

Package Explorer

- lwc11
  - eclipse
  - input
    - car.entities
    - car.package
    - example.entities
    - person.entities
    - person.package
    - product.derived
    - voelter.instances
  - output
  - src
    - lang
      - database
      - derived
      - entities
      - instances
      - packages
    - Plugin.rsc
  - std
  - oberon0

person.entities

```
1 entity Person {
2     string name
3     string firstName
4     date birthDate
5     Car2 ownedCar
6 }
7
8 entity Car {
9     string make
10    string model
11 }
```

Outline

- Person
  - name
  - firstName
  - birthDate
  - ownedCar
- Car
  - make
  - model

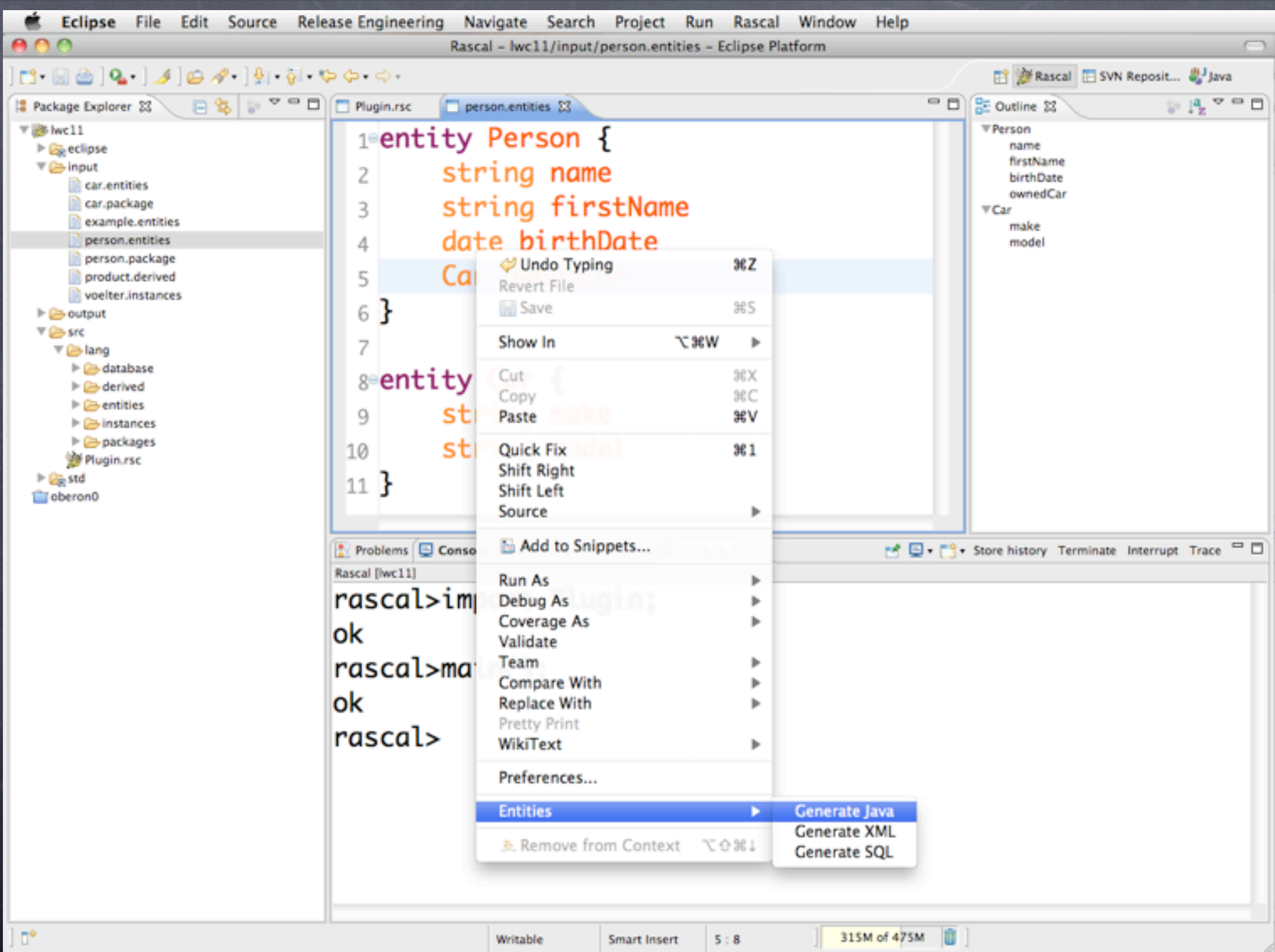
Problems Console Error Log Progress Console

Rascal [lwc11]

```
rascal>import Plugin;
ok
rascal>main();
ok
rascal>
```

Writable Smart Insert 5 : 7 315M of 475M







EclipseFileEditRelease EngineeringSourceRefactorNavigateSearchProjectRunRascalWindowHelp

Rascal - lwc11/output/Person.java - Eclipse Platform

Package Explorer

lwc11

eclipse

input

car.entities

car.package

example.entities

person.entities

person.package

product.derived

voelter.instances

output

Car.java

car.sql

car.xml

Car2.java

Car3.java

Car4.java

Person.java

person.Person.java

person.xml

Product.java

src

lang

database

derived

entities

instances

packages

Plugin.rsc

std

oberon0

person.entities

Person.java

```
1 public class Person {
2
3     private java.lang.String name;
4     public java.lang.String getName() {
5         return this.name;
6     }
7     public void setName(java.lang.String name) {
8         this.name = name;
9     }
10
```

Car.java

```
1 public class Car {
2
3     private java.lang.String make;
4     public java.lang.String getMake() {
5         return this.make;
6     }
7     public void setMake(java.lang.String make) {
8         this.make = make;
9     }
10
```

Outline

Person

name : String

getName() : String

setName(String) : void

firstName : String

getFirstName() : String

setFirstName(String) : void

birthDate : Date

getBirthDate() : Date

setBirthDate(Date) : void

ownedCar : Car

getOwnedCar() : Car

setOwnedCar(Car) : void

Problems

Console

Error Log

Progress

Console

Store history

Terminate

Interrupt

Trace

Rascal [lwc11]

```
rascal>import Plugin;
ok
rascal>main();
ok
```

Writable

Smart Insert

1 : 1

317M of 475M



The screenshot shows the Eclipse IDE interface. The Package Explorer on the left displays the project structure for 'lwc11', including folders like 'eclipse', 'input', 'output', and 'src'. The main editor window shows the file 'person.sql' with the following SQL code:

```
1
2 create table Person (
3   _id int primary key,
4   name varchar ,
5   firstName varchar ,
6   birthDate date ,
7   ownedCar int foreign key references Car(_id)
8 );
9
10 create table Car (
11   _id int primary key,
12   make varchar ,
13   model varchar
14 );
15
16
```

The bottom console shows the Rascal REPL output:

```
Rascal [lwc11]
rascal>import Plugin;
ok
rascal>main();
ok
```



Rascal - lwc11/src/lang/entities/syntax/Entities.rsc - Eclipse Platform

Package Explorer

- lwc11
  - eclipse
  - input
  - output
  - src
    - lang
      - database
      - derived
      - entities
        - ast
        - check
        - compile
        - ide
        - render
        - syntax
          - Entities.rsc
          - Ident.rsc
          - Layout.rsc
          - Types.rsc
        - transform
        - utils
      - instances
      - packages
      - Plugin.rsc
      - std
      - oberon0

person.entities Entities.rsc

```

1 module lang::entities::syntax::Entities
2
3 import lang::entities::syntax::Layout;
4 import lang::entities::syntax::Ident;
5 import lang::entities::syntax::Types;
6
7 start syntax Entities
8   = entities: Entity* entities;
9
10 syntax Entity
11   = @Foldable entity: "entity" Name name "{" Field* "}";
12
13 syntax Field
14   = field: Type Ident name;

```

Outline

- Variables
- Functions
- Types
- Aliases
- Rules
- Annotations
- Tags
- Imports
  - lang::entities::syntax::Layc
  - lang::entities::syntax::Iden
  - lang::entities::syntax::Typ
- Syntax
  - Entities
  - Entity
  - Field

Problems Console Error Log Progress Console

Rascal [lwc11]

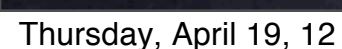
```

rascal>import lang::entities::syntax::Types;
ok
rascal>`entity X { }`
`entity X { }`
Entity: appl(prod([lit("entity"),layouts("LAYOUTLIST"),label("name",sort("N
rascal>

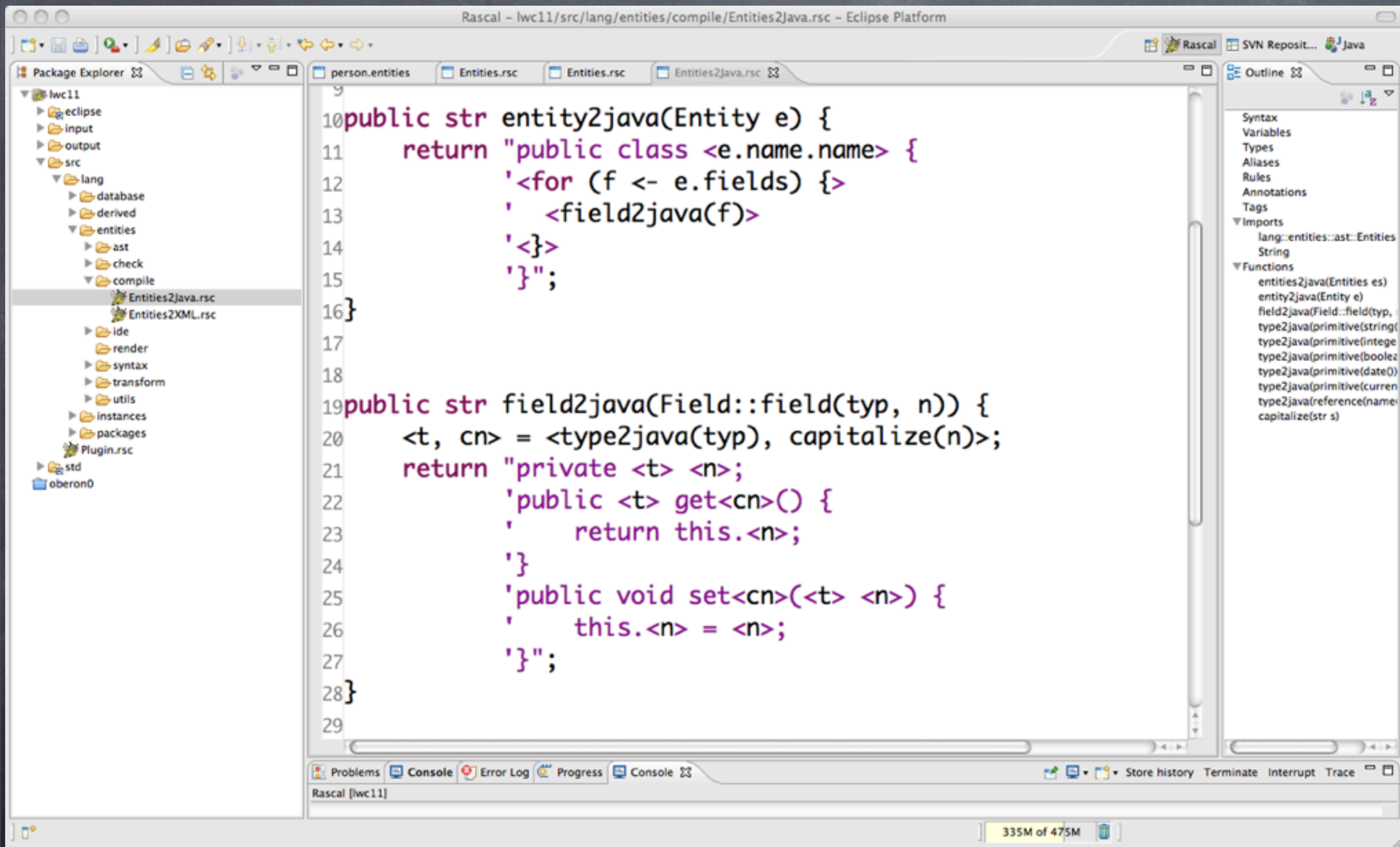
```

332M of 475M











Package Explorer

- lwc11
  - eclipse
  - input
  - output
  - src
    - lang
      - database
      - derived
      - entities
        - ast
        - check
          - Entities.rsc
        - compile
          - Entities2Java.rsc
          - Entities2XML.rsc
        - ide
          - Entities.rsc
          - Outline.rsc
        - render
        - syntax
        - transform
        - utils
      - instances
      - packages
      - Plugin.rsc
    - std
    - oberon0

person.entities

Entities.rsc

Entities.rsc

Entities2Java.rsc

Entities2XML.rsc

Entities.rsc

Entities.rsc

```

2
3 import lang::entities::ast::Entities;
4 import Message;
5 import Relation;
6
7 public list[Message] check(Entities es) {
8     defs = {};
9     errors = for (e <- es.entities) {
10         if (e.name in defs) {
11             append error("Redeclared entity", e.name@location);
12         }
13         defs += {e.name};
14     }
15
16     return ( errors | it + checkEntity(e, defs) | e <- es.entities )
17 }
18
19
20 public list[Message] checkEntity(Entity e, set[Name] defs) {
21     fs = {};
22     return for (f <- e.fields) {

```

- Syntax
- Variables
- Types
- Aliases
- Rules
- Annotations
- Tags
- Imports
  - lang::entities
  - Message
  - Relation
- Functions
  - check(Entity
  - checkEntity()
  - nameStr(nan

Problems Console Error Log Progress Console

Rascal [lwc11]

Store history Terminate Interrupt Trace

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Rascal - lwc11/src/lang/entities/ide/Entities.rsc - Eclipse Platform

Package Explorer

- lwc11
  - eclipse
  - input
  - output
  - src
    - lang
      - database
      - derived
      - entities
        - ast
        - check
        - compile
          - Entities2Java.rsc
          - Entities2XML.rsc
        - ide
          - Entities.rsc
          - Outline.rsc
        - render
        - syntax
        - transform
        - utils
      - instances
      - packages
      - Plugin.rsc
    - std
    - oberon0

Entities.rsc

```
45 public str ENTITIES_LANGUAGE = "Entities";
46
47
48 public void registerEntities() {
49     contribs = {
50         popup(
51             menu(ENTITIES_LANGUAGE, [
52                 action("Generate Java", generateJava),
53                 action("Generate XML", generateXML),
54                 action("Generate SQL", generateSQL)
55             ])
56         )
57     };
58
59     registerLanguage(ENTITIES_LANGUAGE, ENTITIES_EXTENSION, pars
60     registerAnnotator(ENTITIES_LANGUAGE, checkAndAnnotatePT);
61     registerOutliner(ENTITIES_LANGUAGE, outlineEntities);
62     registerContributions(ENTITIES_LANGUAGE, contribs);
63 }
64
```

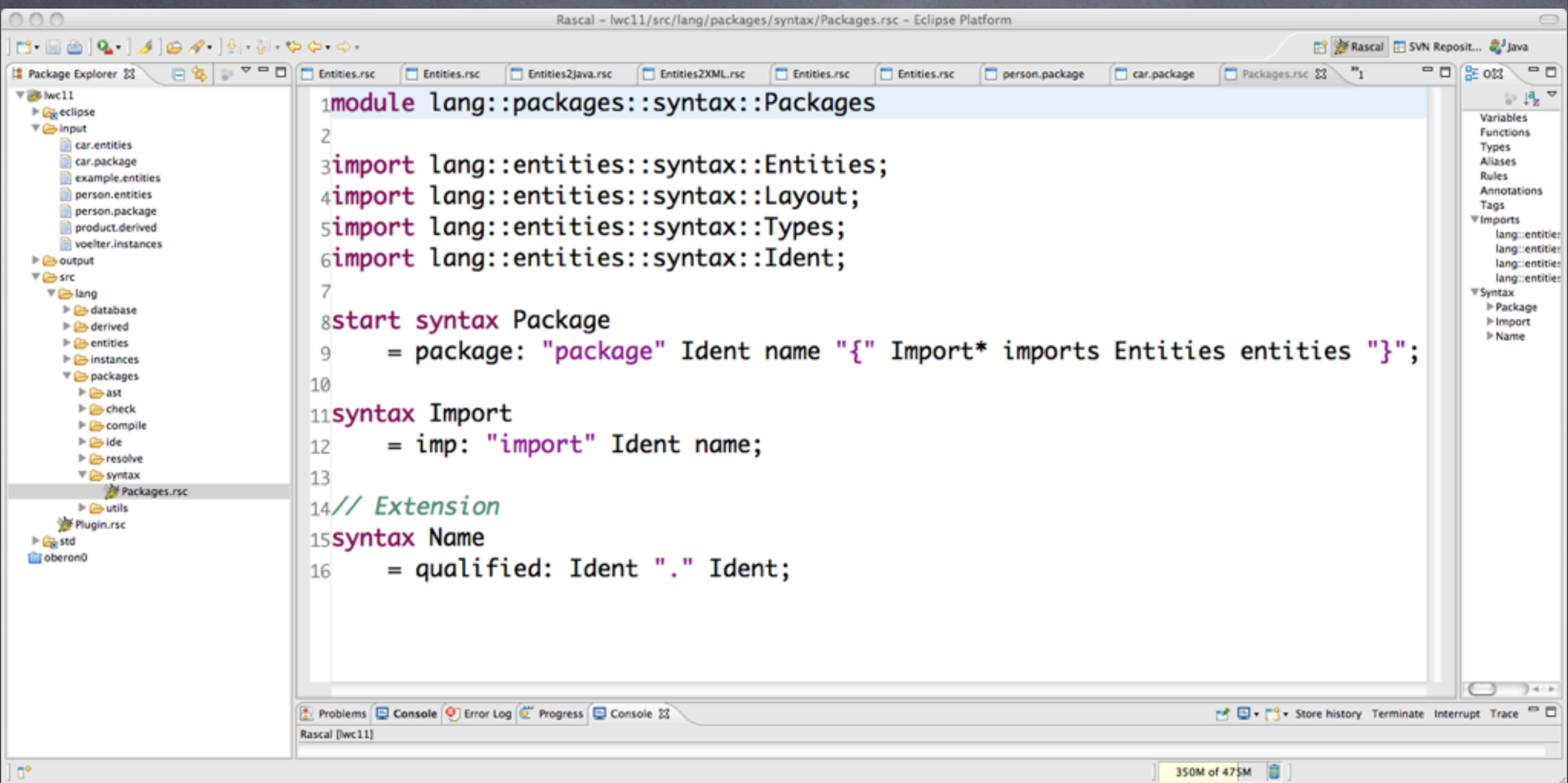
Syntax  
Types  
Aliases  
Rules  
Annotations  
Tags  
Imports  
lang::entities  
lang::entities  
lang::entities  
lang::entities  
lang::entities  
lang::entities  
lang::entities  
lang::entities  
lang::databa  
util::IDE  
List  
XMLDOM  
IO  
Message  
ParseTree  
Functions  
generateJava  
baseName(lc  
generateXML  
generateSQL  
registerEntit  
checkAndAn  
Variables  
ENTITIES\_EX  
ENTITIES\_LA

Problems Console Error Log Progress Console

Rascal [lwc11]

344M of 475M







```

15//  entities are declared out of order and may have cyclic deps
16//  if a package imports 2 packages that export the same name it is an error
17//  (here we assume this has already been checked for)
18//  (resolve will actually resolve them, hiding the error)
19
20
21public WorkingSet resolve(WorkingSet pkgs) {
22    return { <k, success(l, resolvePkg(pkg, pkgs))> | <k, success(l, pkg)> <- p
23}
24
25private Package resolvePkg(Package pkg, WorkingSet pkgs) {
26    imps = imports(pkg) + {pkg.name};
27    return visit (pkg) {
28        case Name n:name(str x) => qualified(ip.name, x)[@location=n@location]
29        when i <- imps, <i, success(_, Package ip)> <- pkgs, x in exports
30    }
31}
32
33

```



Rascal - lwc11/src/lang/packages/compile/Package2Java.rsc - Eclipse Platform

Package Explorer

- lwc11
  - eclipse
  - input
    - car.entities
    - car.package
    - example.entities
    - person.entities
    - person.package
    - product.derived
    - voelter.instances
  - output
  - src
    - lang
      - database
      - derived
      - entities
      - instances
      - packages
        - ast
        - check
        - compile
          - Package2Java.rsc
          - Package2XML.rsc
        - ide
        - resolve
          - Packages.rsc
        - syntax
          - Packages.rsc
        - utils
      - Plugin.rsc
      - std
      - oberon0

Entities2Java.rsc   Entities2XML.rsc   Entities.rsc   Entities.rsc   person.package   car.package   Packages.rsc   Packages.rsc   Package2Java.rsc

```
2
3 import List;
4
5 import lang::packages::ast::Packages;
6 extend lang::entities::compile::Entities2Java;
7
8 public rel[str, str] package2java(Package pkg) {
9     return { "<pkg.name>.<e.name.name>", packagedEntity2Java(pkg, e) > | e <- p
10 }
11
12 public str packagedEntity2Java(Package pkg, Entity e) {
13     return "package <pkg.name>;
14         '<for (i <- pkg.imports) {>
15         'import <i.name>.*;
16         '<}>
17         '<entity2java(e)>";
18 }
19
20 public str type2java(reference(qualified(str pkg, str name))) = "<pkg>.<name>"
```

Problems Console Error Log Progress Console

Rascal [lwc11]

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The screenshot shows the Eclipse IDE with the Rascal editor open. The editor displays the following code for the `Product` entity:

```
1 entity Product {  
2     string name  
3     currency price  
4     currency vat = 0.19 * price  
5  
6     @host("tax.utils.VAT.computeVAT")  
7     currency vat2  
8 }
```

The left sidebar shows the Project Explorer with the following structure:

- lwc11
  - eclipse
  - input
    - car.entities
    - car.package
    - example.entities
    - person.entities
    - person.package
    - product.derived
    - voelter.instances
  - output
  - src
    - lang
      - database
      - derived
      - entities
      - instances
      - packages
        - ast
        - check
        - compile
          - Package2Java.rsc
          - Package2XML.rsc
        - ide
        - resolve
          - Packages.rsc
        - syntax
          - Packages.rsc
        - utils
  - Plugin.rsc
  - std
  - eron0

The right sidebar shows the Outline view with the following structure:

- Product
  - name
  - price
  - vat
  - vat2

The bottom of the IDE shows the Console view with the following output:

```
IMP Runtime  
generating item allocations  
computing priority and associativity filter  
computing lookahead sets  
optimizing lookahead automaton  
printing the source code of the parser class
```

The status bar at the bottom indicates 352M of 475M memory usage.



The screenshot shows the Eclipse IDE interface. The main editor displays the Rascal file `Product.java` with the following code:

```

10
11 private java.util.Currency price;
12 public java.util.Currency getPrice() {
13     return this.price;
14 }
15 public void setPrice(java.util.Currency price) {
16     this.price = price;
17 }
18
19 public java.util.Currency getVat() {
20     return (0.19 * getPrice());
21 }
22
23 public java.util.Currency getVat2() {
24     return tax.utils.VAT.computeVAT(this);
25 }
26
27 }

```

The Outline view on the right shows the structure of the `Product` class:

- name : String
- getName() : String
- setName(String) : void
- price : Currency
- getPrice() : Currency
- setPrice(Currency) : void
- getVat() : Currency
- getVat2() : Currency

The Console view at the bottom shows the output of the Rascal runtime:

```

IMP Runtime
generating item allocations
computing priority and associativity filter
computing lookahead sets
optimizing lookahead automaton
printing the source code of the parser class

```

The status bar at the bottom indicates the file is Writable, Smart Insert is enabled, and the cursor is at line 1, column 1. The memory usage is 342M of 475M.



```
10 syntax Field
11     = derived: Type Ident name "=" Expression
12     | annotated: Annotation Type Ident name
13     ;
14
15 syntax Annotation
16     = @category="MetaVariable" host: "@host" "(" Str arg ")"
17     ;
18
19 syntax Expression
20     = const: Value value
21     | field: Ident var
22     | bracket Bracket: "(" Expression exp ")"
23     | neg: "-" Expression arg
24     >
25     left (
26         mul: Expression lhs "*" Expression rhs
27         | div: Expression lhs "/" Expression rhs
28     )
29     >
30     left (
31         add: Expression lhs "+" Expression rhs
```



```

9 public str field2java(derived(t, n, exp)) {
10     return getter(t, n, exp2java(exp));
11 }
12
13 public str field2java(annotated(host(a), t, n)) {
14     method = substring(a, 1, size(a) - 1);
15     return getter(t, n, "<method>(this)");
16 }
17
18 private str getter(Type t, str n, value exp) {
19     <tn, cn> = <type2java(t), capitalize(n)>;
20     return "public <tn> get<cn>() {
21         '    return <exp>;
22         '}"
23 }
24
25 public str exp2java(const(integer(n)))           = "<n>";
26 public str exp2java(const(float(f)))             = "<f>";
27 public str exp2java(const(boolean(b)))           = "<b>";
28 public str exp2java(const(string(s)))            = replaceAll(s, "\n", "\n");
29 public str exp2java(const(date(d, m, y)))         = "new java.util.Date(<y>";
30 public str exp2java(Expression::field(n))        = "get<capitalize(n)>()";

```



# Summary

- 4 languages
- 1+4 IDEs (Rascal's + Dynamically installed)
- 3 checkers
- 3 code generators to Java
  - 1 SQL code generator
  - 2 XML code generators
- Total lines of code: 950 LOC