The Reflectivity

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Structural Reflection

> Structure modeled as objects
  - e.g. Classes, methods
  - Causally connected

> Uses:
  - Development environments
  - Language extensions and experiments
Methods and Reflection

- Method are Objects
  - e.g. in Smalltalk

- No high-level model for sub-method elements
  - Message sends
  - Assignments
  - Variable access

- Structural reflection stops at the granularity of methods
Sub-Method Reflection

> Many tools work on sub method level
  — Profiler, Refactoring Tool, Debugger, Type Checker

> Communication between tools needed
  — example: Code coverage

> All tools use different representations
  — Tools are harder to build
  — Communication not possible
Solution: Reflective Methods

- Annotated, persistent AST
- Bytecode generated on demand and cached
Reflectivity

> Implementation of Reflective Methods for Squeak Smalltalk

> Smalltalk Compiler generates Reflective Methods
  — Translated to Bytecode on demand

> Open Compiler: Plugins
  — Generator plugin: called before code generation
    – *Transform a copy of the AST*
  — Analysis plugin: called after name analysis
> Show invalidation of code
> Show assert Demo
Reflective Methods: Annotations

> **Source visible annotations**
  > extended Smalltalk syntax

  \[(9 \text{ raisedTo: 10000}) \text{ <:evaluateAtCompiletime:}>\]

> **Source invisible annotations**
  > Reflective API
  > Can reference any object

> Every node can be annotated

> Semantics: Compiler Plugins
Example: Pluggable Type-System

> Example for textual annotations

```plaintext
bitFromBoolean: aBoolean :+: Boolean :>
^ (aBoolean ifTrue: [1] ifFalse: [0]) :+: Integer :>
```

> Optional, pluggable type-system
> Types stored as annotations in the Reflective Methods
Reflex: Partial Behavioral Reflection

> Hooksets: collection of operation occurrences

> Links
  - Bind hooksets to metaobjects
  - Define Protocol between base and meta

> Goals
  - Highly selective reification
  - Flexible metalevel engineering
    - Protocol specification
    - Cross-cutting hooksets

Tanter, OOPSLA03
Links as Annotations

> Links can be annotations on the AST
Demo II: Geppetto

- Show Bounce Demo
- Show Coverage Demo
Future Work

- Optimize Size of AST Representation
  - Simpler AST
  - AST Compression

- Contextual Reifications
  - Context depended Links

- Beyond Text
  - Store only AST (no text)
  - Build text from annotated AST