

Introduction to Concurrent Programming

The study of systems of interacting computer programs which share resources and run concurrently (i.e. at the same time). Concurrency, and hence process synchronization, is useful only when processes interact with each other

Parallelism: Occurring physically at the same time

Concurrency: Occurring logically at the same time, but could be implemented without real parallelism

Competative Processes

Deadlock: each thread takes a resource and waits indefinitely until the other one has freed that resource.

Livelock: each thread takes a resource, sees that the other thread has the other resource and returns it (this repeats indefinitely).

Starvation: one of the threads always takes the resources before the other one.

Communication mechanisms are necessary for cooperation to be possible.

Modeling Program Execution

Atomicity Assumption on Statements

Number of interleavings is exponential in the number of instructions. If P has m instructions and Q has n instructions, then there are $(m+n)^n = \frac{(m+n)!}{m!n!}$

A Transition System A is a tuple (S, \rightarrow, I) where S is the set of states, $\rightarrow \subseteq S \times S$ is a transition relation, and I is the set of initial states.

I is said to be finite if S is finite.

We write $s \rightarrow s'$ for $(s, s') \in \rightarrow$

Mutual Exclusion

An instruction such as $x = x+1$ is actually compiled into simpler sets of assembly instructions. This could cause undesired interleavings at the assembly level.

Atomic Operation

An operation is atomic if it cannot be interleaved at a lower level of abstraction.

• Atomic operations are the smallest units in terms of which a path can be constituted

• In order to reason about concurrency at the source level we need to know what is assumed atomic at the source level

- It is assigned in P, and occurs in another process 0, or
- It is read in P, and is assigned in another process 0.

We occasionally simulate lack of atomicity of assignment (at the source level) by decomposing it into several simple instructions.

For example:

```
counter = counter + 1;
// non-critical section
entry to critical section;
// CRITICAL SECTION
exit from critical section;
} // non-critical section
```

Race Condition

Once thread T1 starts doing something, it needs to "race" to finish it because if thread T2 looks at the shared variable before T1 is done, it may see something inconsistent

Critical Section

Concurrent programs that satisfy the LCR restriction yield the same set of behaviors whether the statements are considered atomic or are compiled to a machine architecture with atomic load and store.

Attempting to present programs that satisfy the LCR restriction is thus convenient

Race Condition

A part of the program that accesses shared memory and which would like to execute atomically

```
counter = counter + 1;
// non-critical section
entry to critical section;
// CRITICAL SECTION
exit from critical section;
} // non-critical section
```

Reasonable Assumptions of MEP

A program satisfies the Limited Critical Reference (LCR) property if every statement contains at most one critical reference

• The critical section is finite.

• The critical section always terminates.

• The scheduler is fair (a process that is waiting to run, will be able to do so eventually)

This is because if thread P goes into an infinite loop/throws an exception it will never complete and set the value of turn to 2 causing thread Q to never run.

General Scheme to Address the MEP

Once thread T1 starts doing something, it needs to "race" to finish it because if thread T2 looks at the shared variable before T1 is done, it may see something inconsistent

Race Condition

Arises if two or more threads access the same variables or objects concurrently and at least one does updates

1. it is assigned in P, and occurs in another process 0, or

2. it is read in P, and is assigned in another process 0.

In this case mutual exclusion does not hold since both threads can enter the critical section

```
boolean wantP = false;
Thread.start {
    Thread.start {
        while (true) { // P
            while (true) { // P
                while (true) { // P
                    wantP = true;
                    Thread.start {
                        wantP = false;
                        wantP = false;
                    } // non-critical section
                } // non-critical section
            } // non-critical section
        } // non-critical section
    } // non-critical section
} // non-critical section
```

Can guarantee MEP holds because there will never be a state $(P4, Q4, ?)$ in the transition system. This also enjoys absence of livelock, but not freedom from starvation.

Attempt I: Transition System

This is a common pattern of interaction which must cater for a difference in speed between each party.

Semaphores II

Patterns based on semaphores

A semaphore is an abstract data type with two operations (acquire and release), it can be used to solve the mutual exclusion problem and to synchronize cooperative threads.

Producers/consumers

There are shared resources between two types of threads.

• Readers: access the resources without modifying it (can access simultaneously)

• Writers: access the resource and may modify it (at most one at any given time)

Properties a Solution Should Possess

• Each read/write operation should occur inside the critical region

• Must guarantee mutual exclusion between the writers

• Must allow multiple readers to execute inside the critical region simultaneously

First Solution: Priority Readers

• One semaphore for controlling write access

• Before writing, the permission must be obtained and then released when done

◦ We need to count the number of readers inside the critical section

◦ This must be done inside its own critical section

Second Solution: Priority Writers

• The reader can potentially lock out all the writers

◦ We need to count the number of writers that are waiting

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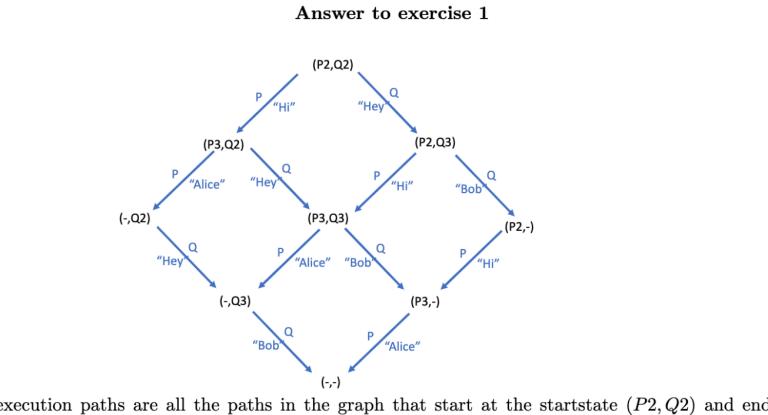
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Exercise Booklet 1: Paths

Note: For this booklet you must assume that assignment is atomic and that the scheduler is fair. Also, you may use `?"` for the value of uninitialized variables. Solutions to selected exercises (◊) are provided at the end of this document. Important: You should first try solving them before looking at the solutions. You will otherwise learn **nothing**.

Exercise 1. (◊) Assume that the `print` command is atomic. Build the transition system and then exhibit all possible paths of execution of the following program:

```
1 Thread.start { //P Thread.start { //Q
2   print("Hi");
3   print("Hey");
4 }
```



Exercise 2. Draw the transition system for the following programs. What values can x take at the end of the execution?

```
1 int x = 0;
2 Thread.start { //P Thread.start { //Q
3   int local = x; int local = x;
4   local = local + 1; local = local + 1;
5   x = local; x = local;
6 }
```



```
1 int x = 0;
2 Thread.start { //P Thread.start { //Q
3   x = x + 1; x = x + 1;
4 }
```

Exercise 3. (◊) Given the following program:

```
1 int x = 0;
2 int y = 0;
3 Thread.start { //Px Thread.start { //Q
4   y = x + 1; x = y + 1;
5 }
```

1. Show an execution path such that at the end $x = 2$ and $y = 1$.

2. Is there a path s.t. $x = y = 1$? Justify your answer. What would happen if the assumption on atomicity of assignment is dropped?

ANSWER TO EXERCISE 3

1. State format (IP_P, IP_Q, x, y). Path: $(P_2, Q_2, 0, 0) \rightarrow (-, Q_2, 0, 1) \rightarrow (-, -, 2, 1)$
2. There are not paths that result in x and y both holding one. If the assumption on atomicity of assignment is dropped, then there would be such a path.

Readers/Writers

```
monitor Pizzeria {
    // Data fields
    private int small_pizzas = 0;
    private int large_pizzas = 0;
    private Condition okToBuyLargePizza;
    private Condition okToBuySmallPizza;
    private Condition okToRead;
    private Condition okToWrite;
}

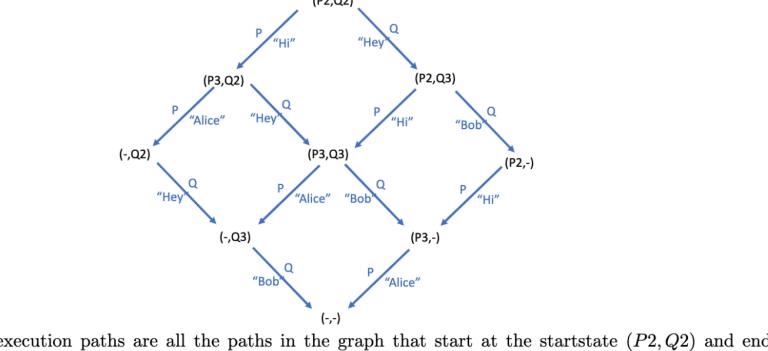
monitor Semaphore {
    private Condition nonZero;
    public Semaphore(int n) {
        this.permissions = n;
    }
    public void acquire() {
        while (nonZero.wait());
        permissions--;
    }
    public void release() {
        permissions++;
        if (permissions == 0)
            nonZero.notifyAll();
    }
}
```

Reader/Writers

```
monitor RW {
    int readers, writers = 0;
    Condition okToRead, okToWrite;
    public void StartRead() {
        while (writers == 0 || !okToWrite.empty())
            okToRead.wait();
        readers++;
    }
    public void EndRead() {
        readers--;
        if (readers == 0)
            okToWrite.notify();
    }
}

monitor RW {
    public void StartWrite() {
        while (writers == 0 || reader != 0)
            okToWrite.wait();
        writers = 1;
    }
    public void EndWrite() {
        writers = 0;
        okToWrite.signal();
        okToRead.signalAll();
    }
}
```

Answer to exercise 1



The execution paths are all the paths in the graph that start at the startstate (P_2, Q_2) and end in the endstate $(-, -)$.

Exercise 1. (◊) On Fridays the bar is usually full of men, therefore the owners would like to implement an access control mechanism in which one man can enter for every two women.

```
Semaphore ticket = new Semaphore(0);
Semaphore mutex = new Semaphore(1);

thread Men: {
    mutex.acquire();
    ticket.acquire();
    ticket.acquire();
    mutex.release();
}

thread woman: {
    ticket.release();
}
```

The Mutual Exclusion Problem

Guarantees that:

1. **Mutex:** At any point in time, there is at most one thread in the critical section
2. **Absence of livelock:** If various threads try to enter the critical section, at least one of them will succeed
3. **Free from starvation:** A thread trying to enter its critical section will eventually be able to do so

Processes should:

1. either back out if they discover they are contending with the other (Naive back-out);
2. take turns (Dekker's algorithm);
3. give priority to the first one that wanted access (Peterson's algorithm).

ANSWER TO EXERCISE 4

```
1. State format ( $IP_P, IP_Q, x, y$ ). Path:  $(P_2, Q_2, 0, 0) \rightarrow (-, Q_2, 0, 1) \rightarrow (-, -, 2, 1)$ 
2. There are not paths that result in  $x$  and  $y$  both holding one. If the assumption on atomicity of assignment is dropped, then there would be such a path.
```

Upholds the readers-writers invariant, however it gives priority to readers over writers because:

- New readers can enter the monitor without waiting as long as a reader is active
- waiting writers have to wait until the last reader calls `endRead` and signals `okToWrite`
- as long as readers keep arriving and queuing for entering the monitor, the waiting writers will never execute.

Fair Solution for Writers:

The problems above can be resolved by checking if there are waiting writers. Creating a solution without deadlock that is fair for both readers and writers is particularly difficult.

Concurrence is study of interacting comp progs which share resources and run concurrently

Assumptions:

- No shared vars in critical and non-critical sections
- Crit section terminates
- Scheduler is weekly fair (A process waiting will eventually be able to run)

MEP states:

- Mutex : One thread at a time
- Absence of deadlock
- Free from starvation

Styles: Break symmetry take turns (+ + -) (Could loop in non-crit)

RW Service queue solution if first reader acquire resource, otherwise read because another reader is already in

1. Implement such a mechanism, assuming that Jets fans will have to wait indefinitely if no Patriots fans arrive. You may assume, to simplify matters, that once fans go in, they never leave the bar.

2. Modify the solution assuming that, after a certain hour, everybody is allowed to enter (those that are waiting outside and those that yet to arrive). For that there is a thread that will invoke, when the time comes, the operation `itGotLate`. You may assume that the code for this thread is already given for you, the only thing that you must do is define the behavior of `itGotLate` and modify the threads that model the Jets and Patriots fans.

Groovy

```
import java.util.concurrent.Semaphore;
2 Semaphore ticket = new Semaphore(0);
3 Semaphore mutex = new Semaphore(1);
4
5 20.times{
6     Thread.start { // Patriots
7         ticket.release();
8     }
9 }
```

1. import java.util.concurrent.Semaphore;

2 Semaphore ticket = new Semaphore(0);

3 Semaphore mutex = new Semaphore(1);

4 boolean itGotLate = false;

5 Thread.start { // Jets

6 mutex.acquire();

7 ticket.acquire();

8 mutex.release();

9 }

10 20.times{
11 Thread.start { // Patriots
12 ticket.release();
13 }
14 }

15 Thread.start { // Jets

16 mutex.acquire();

17 ticket.acquire();

18 mutex.release();

19 }

20 def itGotLate() {
21 itGotLate=true;
22 ticket.release();
23 ticket.release();
24 }

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