

# Bilateral Proofs of Concurrent Programs

Jayadev Misra

Department of Computer Science  
University of Texas at Austin

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Pasadena

# Agonizing Reappraisal

- Is it realistic to prove concurrent programs in practice?
- Need to prove only tightly-coupled programs?  
Can they be handled through model-checking?
- Could loose-coupled concurrency become the norm,  
say through mobile computing?

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# Status of Program Design and Verification in Four Decades

- Astounding gains for sequential programming.
- Vast improvement in understanding of concurrent programming.
- Theory and practice lag considerably for the latter, compared to the former.
- Very small concurrent programs proved manually, occasionally.
- Larger concurrent programs proved using model checking. Only bright spot.

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## Why sequential Programs are more amenable

- Hoare's Proof Theory: Program specification by **pre- and postcondition**.
- Permits verification of sequential program code for a given specification.
- **Proof rules**: permit composition of the component specifications, for hierarchical construction.
- Specification used in program construction, instead of source code.
- Concurrent programming lacks a theory of *composable specification*.  
Pre- and postcondition do not compose for concurrent programs.
- Needed: a scalable theory of composable specification of concurrent programs.

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## Motivation for the current work: Commutative, Associative Fold of a bag

- Bag  $u$ .

Commutative, associative binary operator  $\oplus$

Write fold of  $u$  as  $\Sigma u$ .

- Problem: Replace all elements of  $u$  by  $\Sigma u$ .
- Strategy: Define  $f_k$  that transforms  $u$ 
  - reduces the size of  $u$  by  $k$ , and
  - the resulting bag has the same fold as the original bag.

## An Orc Program

$$f_1 = \text{get}(x); \text{get}(y); \text{put}(x \oplus y)$$

$$f_k = f_1 \parallel f_{k-1}, \quad k > 1$$

Given that  $u$  has  $n$  items initially,  $n > 1$ , apply  $f_{n-1}$ .

- Safety: Finally  $u$  has one item, the fold of the original items. **Easy**.
- Progress: Program terminates. **Hard**.

The result does not hold for  $f_n$ . There is deadlock.

- No known proof technique for this program.

## Observations about the problem

- Desired: Respect the recursive program structure in proof.
- Note interplay between sequential and concurrent aspects.
- Entire code is not available.

Another very difficult program to prove

$$\{x = 0\}$$

$$x := x + 1 \quad \square \quad x := x + 2$$

$$\{x = 3\}$$

## Owicki's Thesis

- Construct annotation of each sequential component.

$$\{x = 0\}$$

$$(\{x = 0 \vee x = 2\} x := x + 1 \{x = 1 \vee x = 3\})$$

$$[] \{x = 0 \vee x = 1\} x := x + 2 \{x = 2 \vee x = 3\})$$

$$\{(x = 1 \vee x = 3) \wedge (x = 2 \vee x = 3)\}$$

$$\{x = 3\}$$

- Show: **proofs** don't interfere, e.g.,  
given assertions valid in concurrent execution

$$\{(x = 0 \vee x = 2) \wedge (x = 0 \vee x = 1)\} x := x + 2 \{x = 0 \vee x = 2\}$$

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# Assessment

- First real proof technique for concurrent programs.
- Works well for small tightly-coupled components.
- Not scalable.
- Needs program code.
- No notion of a specification.

## Rely-Guarantee of Cliff Jones

- Replace non-interference proofs by checks against stable predicates.
- Hoare-like proof rule.
- Limited to safety properties.



# Unity by Chandy and Misra

- Simplify program structure:  $\text{loop } \langle g \rightarrow s \rangle \parallel \text{loop } \langle g' \rightarrow s' \rangle \parallel \dots$
- Each  $\langle g \rightarrow s \rangle$  is a guarded action.
- Prove program properties, not assertions at program points:
  - A resource is never granted unless requested.
  - A request for a resource is eventually granted.
- Specification is a set of properties.
- Composition rules for specification are given.

The guard holds as a precondition in concurrent execution.

# Limitations of the Unity approach

- Does not support traditional program structure.
- Auxiliary variables needed to capture program control points.

## Current Theory: Specification

- **Terminal** property: postcondition of a program for a given precondition.
- **Perpetual** property: holds throughout every program execution.

Similar to invariant.

- (**Safety**) once it requests a resource the thread waits until the resource is granted,
  - (**Progress**) once the resource is granted the thread will eventually release it.
- **Specification**: Terminal and Perpetual properties.

## Summary of the approach

- Create program annotation as before, but with restrictions.
- Annotations are valid even under concurrent execution.  
As in UNITY.
- **Bilateral**: Derive terminal and perpetual properties from annotations.  
And conversely.
- Composition rules for specifications.

# Program Model

- **command**: Uninterruptible, terminating code,  
e.g.:  $x := x - 1$ , *put* on a channel.
- **action**: Guarded command,  $b \rightarrow \alpha$ ,  
e.g.:  $x > 0 \rightarrow x := x - 1$ , or  
*get* from a channel, where the guard is implicit.
- $f, g ::$  **component**:  $\text{action} \mid f \square g \mid \text{seq}(f_0, f_1, \dots, f_n)$
- **program**: component executing alone.

# Programming Constructs

- seq: Any sequential programming construct that has a proof rule, e.g.:

$s; t$   
**if**  $b$  **then**  $s$  **else**  $t$   
**while**  $b$  **do**  $s$

- Join:  $f \parallel g$  is commutative, associative.
- Arbitrary hierarchy of sequential and concurrent constructs:

$(f \parallel g); (f' \parallel g')$

# Program Execution

- Sequential components follow their execution rules.
- Join: starts all components simultaneously.  
Terminates when they all do.
- Program control may reside at multiple program points simultaneously.
- At any moment the action at **some** control point is executed.
- Every control point is chosen eventually for execution.

## Action Execution

- Execution of  $b \rightarrow \alpha$  always terminates, either **effectively** or **ineffectively**.
- **Effective** execution:  
 $b$  is true and  $\alpha$  is executed to completion.  
Program control moves past the action.
- **Ineffective** execution:  
 $b$  is *false*.  
Program control remains before the action.
- Evaluation of  $b$  is uninterruptible in all cases.
- If  $b$  is true:  $\alpha$  is executed immediately.



## Example: Distributed counter

Program  $f = \prod_j f_j$  implements counter  $ctr$ .

**initially**  $ctr = 0$

$f_j ::$

**initially**  $old_j, new_j = 0, 0$

**loop**

$new_j := old_j + 1;$

**if**  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} ctr = old_j \rightarrow ctr := new_j \\ | \quad ctr \neq old_j \rightarrow old_j := ctr \end{array} \right]$

**forever**

Show:

Safety:  $ctr$  is changed only by incrementation (increased by 1).

Progress:  $ctr$  is changed eventually.

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## Inviolable preconditions of actions

- Find precondition  $p$  of each action so that  $p$  remains true as long as control remains at the action.

$$\begin{aligned} & ( \{x = 0 \vee x = 2\} x := x + 1 \{x = 1 \vee x = 3\} \\ & \square \{x = 0 \vee x = 1\} x := x + 2 \{x = 2 \vee x = 3\} ) \\ & \{(x = 1 \vee x = 3) \wedge (x = 2 \vee x = 3)\} \end{aligned}$$

- Owicki: Check that precondition can not be violated by any concurrent action.
- Unity: Programmer specifies guards for each action.
- In the current theory:  
Unknown concurrent environment.  
General programs: Guards are usually too weak.  
Control flow carries additional information.

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## Access rights to variables

- $x$  **local** to  $f$ :  $f$  has exclusive write-access to  $x$  during any execution.
- $p$  **local predicate** of  $f$ : every variable in  $p$  is local to  $f$ .

## Local Annotation

- Annotation of a program in which all predicates are local to the component in which they appear.
- Assert: Given local annotation in which  $\{p\} b \rightarrow \alpha$ ,  $p$  holds whenever  $b \rightarrow \alpha$  is executed.
- Construct local annotation using Hoare-proof rules for seq construct.
- For join, use:

$$\frac{\begin{array}{c} \{r\} f \{s\} \\ \{r'\} g \{s'\} \end{array}}{\{r \wedge r'\} f \parallel g \{s \wedge s'\}}$$



## Local Annotation: Distributed Counter

$f_j ::$   
**initially**  $old_j, new_j = 0, 0$   
 $\{true\}$   
**loop**  
 $\{true\}$   
 $\alpha_j :: new_j := old_j + 1;$   
 $\{new_j = old_j + 1\}$   
**if** [ $\beta_j :: \{new_j = old_j + 1\} ctr = old_j \rightarrow ctr := new_j \{true\}$   
 $\mid \gamma_j :: \{new_j = old_j + 1\} ctr \neq old_j \rightarrow old_j := ctr \{true\}$ ]  
 $\{true\}$   
**forever**

## Safety Property $\text{co}$

- $p \text{ co } q$  in component  $f$ :  
**Effective** execution of any action of  $f$  in a  $p$ -state achieves a  $q$ -state.
- In program  $f$ : once  $p$  holds it continues to hold until  $q$  is established.
- As a composition rule:  
 $p \text{ co } q$  holds in  $f$  if it holds in every component of  $f$ .

## Formal definition of **co**

$$\{r\} f \{s\}$$

For every action  $b \rightarrow \alpha$  with precondition  $pre$  in the annotation of  $f$  :

$$\{pre \wedge b \wedge p\} \alpha \{q\}$$

---

$$\{r\} f \{p \textbf{co} q \mid s\}$$

## Special cases of **co**

- **stable**  $p$ : Once  $p$  holds, it continues to hold:

$$p \text{ co } p$$

- **constant**  $e$ : Value of expression  $e$  never changes:

$$(\forall c :: \text{stable } e = c)$$

- **invariant**  $p$ :  $p$  always holds:

$$\text{initially } p \text{ and } \text{stable } p$$

## Distributed Counter, contd.

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 $\{true\}$   
**forever**

## Safety: $ctr$ 's value is only incremented

- Show:  $ctr = m \text{ co } ctr = m \vee ctr = m + 1$  in  $f$   
prove:  $ctr = m \text{ co } ctr = m \vee ctr = m + 1$  holds in all  $f_j$ .

- For each action  $b \rightarrow \alpha$  with precondition  $pre$ , show:

$$\{pre \wedge b \wedge ctr = m\} \alpha \{ctr = m \vee ctr = m + 1\}$$

- Only  $\beta_j$  may change the value of  $ctr$ . So, prove:

$$\{ctr = m \wedge new_j = old_j + 1 \wedge ctr = old_j\}$$

$$ctr := new_j$$

$$\{ctr = m \vee ctr = m + 1\}$$

# Progress Properties

- Transient: Fundamental property. Compositional.

**transient**  $p$ :  $p$  is false eventually.  $\Box\Diamond\neg p$ .

- Ensures:  $p \text{ en } q$

Once  $p$  holds, it continues to hold until  $q$  holds; and  $q$  holds eventually.

More useful in practice.

Defined using transient.

- Leads-to:  $p \mapsto q$

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# Simplistic Definition of **transient** $p$ in $f$ :

$p$  is false eventually in  $f$

- Each action of  $f$  is effectively executed if  $p$  is a precondition, and
- its execution establishes  $\neg p$ .

For every action  $b \rightarrow \alpha$  of  $f$  with precondition  $pre$  :

$$\frac{\begin{array}{c} pre \wedge p \Rightarrow b \\ \{pre \wedge p\} \alpha \{\neg p\} \end{array}}{\{\} f \{ \text{transient } p \mid \}}$$

## Stronger Rules for transient $p$

- $f; g$ : either  $f$  terminates or  $p$  transient in  $f$  AND  $p$  transient in  $g$ .  
Sufficient:  $f$  terminates AND  $p$  transient in  $g$ .
- $f \parallel g$ :  $p$  transient in  $f$  or  $g$ .
- Inheritance: If  $p$  transient in ALL components of  $f$ ,  $p$  transient in  $f$ .

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- $p \wedge \neg q \text{ co } p \vee q$
- $\text{transient } p \wedge \neg q$

## Distributed Counter

- Prove: *ctr* increases eventually.
- Can not be proved as an ensures property.
- Prove:

In every step, either *ctr* increases, or  
the number of *old<sub>j</sub>* that differ from *ctr* decreases.

- *nb*: number of *old<sub>j</sub>* such that  $ctr \neq old_j$ .

$ctr = m \wedge nb = N$  **en**  $nb < N \vee ctr > m$  in *f* (E)

## Proof strategy

$ctr = m \wedge nb = N$  **en**  $nb < N \vee ctr > m$  in  $f$  (E)

- To prove (E) in  $\sqcup_j f_j$ : Prove (E) in each  $f_j$ .
- To prove (E) in *initialization*; **loop**  $body_j$  **forever**:  
Since *initialization* terminates, show (E) in: **loop**  $body_j$  **forever**.
- To prove (E) in **loop**  $body_j$  **forever**:  
using inheritance prove (E) in  $body_j$ , .
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Effective executions of  $\beta_j$  and  $\gamma_j$  establish the postcondition of (E)  
given its pre-condition.



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# Proof Obligations

Relevant Annotation of  $f_j$ :

**if**  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} \beta_j :: \{new_j = old_j + 1\} \text{ } ctr = old_j \rightarrow ctr := new_j \{true\} \\ \quad | \gamma_j :: \{new_j = old_j + 1\} \text{ } ctr \neq old_j \rightarrow old_j := ctr \{true\} \end{array} \right]$   
 $\{true\}$

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 $\quad ctr := new_j$   
 $\{nb < N \vee ctr > m\}$

$\gamma_j :: \{ctr = m \wedge nb = N \wedge new_j = old_j + 1 \wedge ctr \neq old_j\}$   
 $\quad old_j := ctr$   
 $\{nb < N \vee ctr > m\}$

## Leads-to

$p \mapsto q$ : once  $p$  holds,  $q$  holds eventually.

- (basis) 
$$\frac{p \text{ en } q}{p \mapsto q}$$

- (transitivity) 
$$\frac{p \mapsto q, q \mapsto r}{p \mapsto r}$$

- (disjunction) For any (finite or infinite) set of predicates  $S$

$$\frac{(\forall p : p \in S : p \mapsto q)}{(\forall p : p \in S : p) \mapsto q}$$

## Derived Rules: What makes Proofs Practical. For $\rightarrow$

$$\text{false} \rightarrow q$$

$$p \rightarrow \text{true}$$

$$\frac{p \rightarrow q, p' \rightarrow q'}{p \wedge p' \rightarrow q \wedge q'} \quad (\text{CONJUNCTION})$$

$$\frac{p \rightarrow q, p' \rightarrow q'}{p \vee p' \rightarrow q \vee q'} \quad (\text{DISJUNCTION})$$

$$\frac{p \rightarrow q}{p \wedge p' \rightarrow q} \quad (\text{LHS STRENGTHENING})$$

$$\frac{p \rightarrow q}{p \rightarrow q \vee q'} \quad (\text{RHS WEAKENING})$$

## Lightweight Derived Rules for $\mapsto$

1. (implication) 
$$\frac{p \Rightarrow q}{p \mapsto q}$$

2. (lhs strengthening, rhs weakening)

$$\frac{p \mapsto q}{\begin{array}{l} p' \wedge p \mapsto q \\ p \mapsto q \vee q' \end{array}}$$

3. (cancellation) 
$$\frac{p \mapsto q \vee r, r \mapsto s}{p \mapsto q \vee s}$$



# Heavyweight Derived Rules for $\mapsto$

$$1. \text{ (PSP) } \frac{p \mapsto q \quad \text{stable } p'}{p \wedge p' \mapsto q \wedge p'}$$

2. (induction)  $M : \text{Program States} \rightarrow W$ .  $(W, \prec)$  well-founded.

$$\frac{(\forall m :: p \wedge M = m \mapsto (p \wedge M \prec m) \vee q)}{p \mapsto q}$$

3. (completion)  $p_i$  and  $q_i$  are predicates;  $i$  index over a finite set.

$$\frac{(\forall i :: \begin{array}{l} p_i \mapsto q_i \vee b \\ q_i \text{ co } q_i \vee b \end{array})}{(\forall i :: p_i) \mapsto (\forall i :: q_i) \vee b}$$

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## Distributed Counter

- Prove in  $f$ :  $ctr$  increases unboundedly:

$true \mapsto ctr > C$ , for any integer  $C$

- Proved in  $f$ :  $ctr = m \wedge nb = N \text{ en } nb < N \vee ctr > m$
- Use definition of  $\mapsto$  and its derived rules for the proof.

## Distributed Counter, Contd.

$ctr = m \wedge nb = N$  **en**  $nb < N \vee ctr > m$

proven

$ctr = m \wedge nb = N \mapsto nb < N \vee ctr > m$

basis rule of *leads-to*

$ctr = m \wedge nb = N \mapsto ctr = m \wedge nb < N \vee ctr > m$

PSP with  $ctr = m$  **co**  $ctr = m \vee ctr = m + 1$

## Distributed Counter, Contd.

$$ctr = m \wedge nb = N \text{ \textcolor{red}{en} } nb < N \vee ctr > m$$

proven

$$ctr = m \wedge nb = N \text{ \textcolor{red}{\mapsto} } nb < N \vee ctr > m$$

basis rule of *leads-to*

$$ctr = m \wedge nb = N \text{ \textcolor{red}{\mapsto} } ctr = m \wedge nb < N \vee ctr > m$$

PSP with  $ctr = m$  co  $ctr = m \vee ctr = m + 1$

## Distributed Counter, Contd.

$$ctr = m \wedge nb = N \text{ en } nb < N \vee ctr > m$$

proven

$$ctr = m \wedge nb = N \mapsto nb < N \vee ctr > m$$

basis rule of *leads-to*

$$ctr = m \wedge nb = N \mapsto ctr = m \wedge nb < N \vee ctr > m$$

PSP with  $ctr = m$  co  $ctr = m \vee ctr = m + 1$



## Apply Induction Rule

$$ctr = m \wedge nb = N \mapsto ctr = m \wedge nb < N \vee ctr > m$$

Induction rule:

$$\frac{(\forall m :: p \wedge M = m \mapsto (p \wedge M < m) \vee q)}{p \mapsto q}$$

Use  $nb$  for  $M$  and  $<$  for  $<$  to conclude:

$$ctr = m \mapsto ctr > m$$

## Distributed Counter, Contd.

$ctr = m \wedge nb = N \text{ en } nb < N \vee ctr > m$

proven

$ctr = m \wedge nb = N \mapsto nb < N \vee ctr > m$

basis rule of *leads-to*

$ctr = m \wedge nb = N \text{ en } ctr = m \wedge nb < N \vee ctr > m$

PSP with  $ctr = m \text{ co } ctr = m \vee ctr = m + 1$

$ctr = m \mapsto ctr > m$

Induction rule; well-founded order  $<$  over natural numbers

$true \mapsto ctr > C$ , for any integer  $C$

Induction rule, well-founded order  $<$  over natural numbers.

## Distributed Counter, Contd.

$$ctr = m \wedge nb = N \text{ en } nb < N \vee ctr > m$$

proven

$$ctr = m \wedge nb = N \mapsto nb < N \vee ctr > m$$

basis rule of *leads-to*

$$ctr = m \wedge nb = N \text{ en } ctr = m \wedge nb < N \vee ctr > m$$

PSP with  $ctr = m \text{ co } ctr = m \vee ctr = m + 1$

$$ctr = m \mapsto ctr > m$$

Induction rule; well-founded order  $<$  over natural numbers

$$true \mapsto ctr > C, \text{ for any integer } C$$

Induction rule, well-founded order  $<$  over natural numbers.