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A Promising Semantics for Relaxed-Memory Concurrency

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A Message Passing Example: No Data Race Initially: D = F = 0while (1) { D = 42LOCK(L) f = FLOCK(L) UNLOCK(L) F = 1UNLOCK(L) if (f) break } d = D

Sequentially Consistent Concurrency

Initially: D = F = 0

D = 42	while (1) {
F = 1	f = F
	if (f) break }
	d = D







Release & Acquire with Tweak

Initially: D = F = 0[acq] f = FD = 42if (f) { d = D // d = 42? [rel] F = 1} D = 10

Concurrency Models

- Semantics of multi-threaded programs?
 - Sequential consistency (SC): simple but expensive
- Relaxed memory model (C/C++, Java)
 - Many consistency modes (cost vs. consistency tradeoff)
 - Open problem: what is the "right" semantics?

Conflicting goals of compilers, hardware & programmers

- Compiler/hardware: validating optimizations (e.g. reordering, merging)
- Programmer: supporting reasoning principles (e.g. DRF theorem, program logic)

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C/C++ memory model

Key problem: "out-of-thin-air"

Thread 1Thread 2a = Xb = YY = aX = 42

(allowed: a=b=42)

"Out-of-thin-air" problem (1/3) Load-Buffering (LB) Registers Thead 1 Thread 2 b = Ya = XY = aX = 42(allowed: a=b=42)





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(allowed: a=b=42)









"Out-of-thin-air" problem (2/3) Classical Out-of-thin-air (OOTA)

Thread 1Thread 2a = Xb = YY = aX = b

(forbidden: a=b=42)

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Thread 1Thread 2a = Xb = YY = aX = b

(forbidden: a=b=42)

42 is out-of-thin-air!

Reasoning principles (e.g. invariant a=b=X=Y=0) Classical Out-of-thin-air (OOTA) Thread 1 Thread 2 (X=Y=0) (sequence

"Out-of-thin-air" problem (2/3)

a = X b = YY = a X = b

(forbidden: a=b=42)

42 is out-of-thin-air!

Reasoning principles (e.g. invariant a=b=X=Y=0) (X=Y=0) (sequencedbefore) Read X,42(read-from)Read Y,42 Write Y,42 Write X,42 Allowed by justification (C/C++) "Out-of-thin-air" problem (2/3) Classical Out-of-thin-air (OOTA)

Thread 1 Thread 2 a = X b = Y Y = a X = b(forbidden: a=b=42)

42 is out-of-thin-air!

Reasoning principles (e.g. invariant a=b=X=Y=0)

(X=Y=0) (sequenced-before) before) Read X,42_(read-from)Read Y,42 Write Y,42 Write X,42 Allowed by justification C/C++) What does hardware do?

Thread 1Thread 2a = Xb = YY = aX = 42

(a=b=42?)

Thread 1Thread 2a = Xb = YY = aX = b(a=b=42?)

Thread 1Thread 2a = Xb = YY = aX = 42

(a=b=42?)

Thread 1 Thread 2 a = X Y = a(a=b=42?)













Promising Semantics

- Solving the out-of-thin-air problem
- Supporting optimizations & reasoning principles
- Covering most C/C++ concurrency features
- Operational semantics w/o undefined behavior

Most results are verified in Coq

http://sf.snu.ac.kr/promise-concurrency

Key Idea 1: Messages & Views

- Memory: pool of **messages** (loc, val, timestamp)
- Per-thread **view** on the memory



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Threa	d	1
Ý	′ =	= 42
З	l =	= X



Thread 1
Y = 42
a = X
Loc. 🕇





Timestamp









Thre	eac	d '	
	а	=	Х
	Y	=	а

Timestamp



Key Idea 2: Promises

 A thread can promise to write X=V in the future, after which other threads can read X=V.

 To avoid OOTA, the promising thread must certify that it can write X=V in isolation.

 Until all its promises are fulfilled, the thread can take certifiable steps only.

Thre	a	d 1	
	а	=	Х
	Y	=	а



Timestamp

Thre	eac	d '	
	а	=	Х
	Y	=	а



Thread 2's 42 promise

Thread 1	Thread 2
a = X	b = Y
Y = a	X = 42 (allowed: $a=b=42$)
Loc.	Thread 2's
X	42 promise
Y	in isolation
	Timestamp









Thread 1 a = X Y = a	Thread 2 b = Y X = 42 (allowed: $a=b=42$)
Loc.XV	Thread 2's Promise is certified!
	Timestamp



Thread 1 a = X Y = a	Thread 2 b = Y X = 42 (allowed: $a=b=42$)
Loc. X Y	Thread 2's tage promise tage promise is certified! 42
	Timestamp







Thread 1 a = X Y = a

(forbidden: a=b=42)

Timestamp



Thread 1 a = X Y = a

Loc.

Х

(forbidden: a=b=42)

Thread 2's 42 promise?



Promises: "Semantic Solution" to OOTA



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Release & Acquire with Tweak

Initially: D = F = 0[acq] f = FD = 42if (f) { d = D // d = 42? [rel] F = 1} D = 10

• A thread must **re-certify during the execution** that it can write all its promises **in isolation**.



(forbidden: X=1)

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(forbidden: X=1)





















Thread 1	Thread 2
X = 1	X = 2
a = X	b = X

Thre	ead 1
	X = 1
	a = X

Thread 1	Thread 2
X = 1	X = 2
a = X	b =)

$$X = 2$$

b = X

Thread 1	
X = 1	
🛶 a = X	



Thread	d 1
Х	= 1
👝 a	= X



Thre	ac	1	
**************************************	Х	=	1
	Х	=	2

Thre	ead 1
	X = 1
	X = 2

Thre	ac	1	
	Х	=	1
	Х	=	2

Thre	ead 1
	X = 1
	X = 2



Thre	ad 1
	X = 1
	X = 2



Results (1/2) Compiler/HW Optimizations

 Operational semantics for C/C++ concurrency: plain/relaxed/release/acquire r/w/u/fence, SC fence

- Compiler optimizations
 (reordering, merge, dead load elim., ...)
- Compilation to x86 🦆 & Power 📝

Results (2/2) Reasoning Principles

- **DRF-SC: D**ata **R**ace **F**reedom \Rightarrow SC
 - DRF-PromiseFree:
 DRF ⇒ semantics w/o promises

 Invariant-based logic: soundness of global invariant (e.g. a=b=X=Y=0)

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More comprehensive semantics for C/C++ concurrency

- **DRF-SC: D**ata **R**ace **F**reedom \Rightarrow SC
 - DRF-PromiseFree:
 DRF ⇒ semantics w/o promises

 Invariant-based logic: soundness of global invariant (e.g. a=b=X=Y=0)

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Future Work

- Supporting SC reads & writes
 (We found a flaw in C/C++11 on SC)
- Supporting **consume** reads
- Developing a rich program logic & Verifying fine-grained concurrent programs