CSE 332 Autumn 2023 Lecture 24: Concurrency

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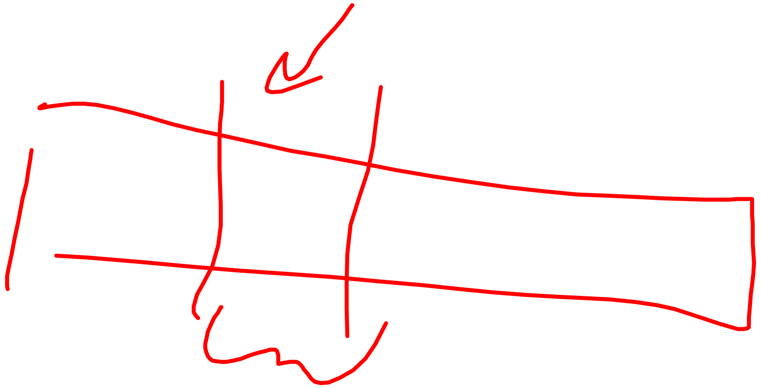
Reasons to use threads (beyond algorithms)

- Code Responsiveness:
  - While doing an expensive computation, you don't what your interface to freeze
- Processor Utilization:
  - If one thread is waiting on a deep-hierarchy memory access you can still use that processor time
- Failure Isolation:
  - If one portion of your code fails, it will only crash that one portion.

Memory Sharing With ForkJoin



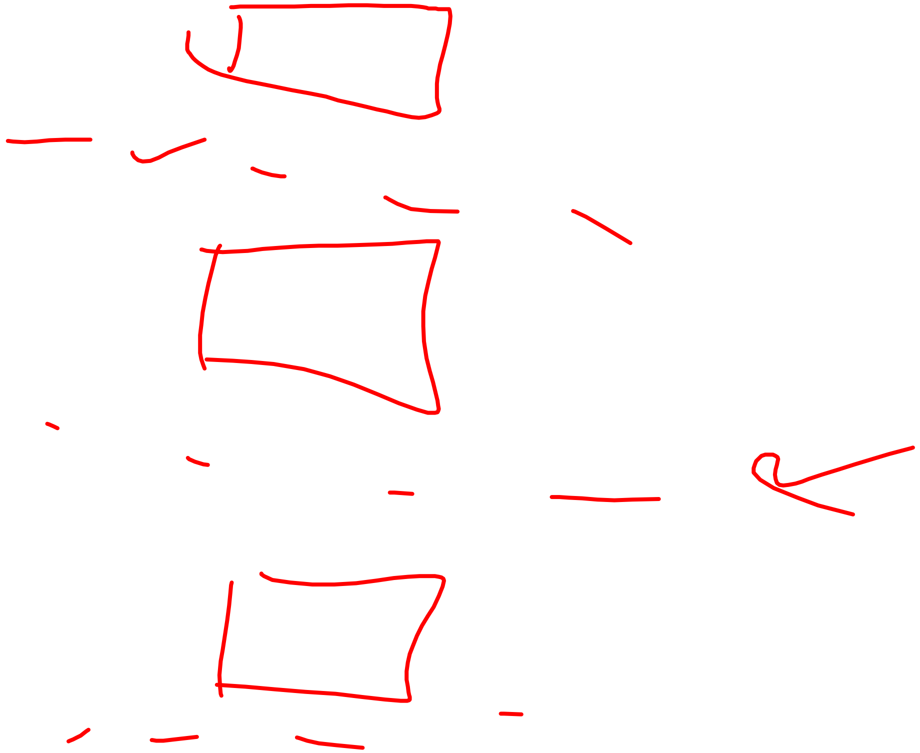
- Idea of ForkJoin:
  - Reduce span by having many parallel tasks
  - Each task is responsible for **its own portion** of the input/output
  - If one task needs another's result, use join() to ensure it uses the final answer
- This does not help when:
  - Memory accessed by threads is overlapping or unpredictable
  - Threads are doing independent tasks using same resources (rather than implementing the same algorithm)

Example: Shared Queue

```
enqueue(x){
        if ( back == null ){
                back = new Node(x);
                front = back;
        }
        else {
                back.next = new Node(x);
                back = back.next;
        }
}
```

Imagine two threads are both using the same linked list based queue.

What could go wrong?



Concurrent Programming

- Concurrency:
  - Correctly and efficiently managing access to shared resources across multiple possibly-simultaneous tasks
- Requires synchronization to avoid incorrect simultaneous access
  - Use some way of “blocking” other tasks from using a resource when another modifies it or makes decisions based on its state
  - That blocking task will free up the resource when it’s done
- Warning:
  - Because we have no control over when threads are scheduled by the OS, even correct implementations are highly non-deterministic
  - Errors are hard to reproduce, which complicates debugging

Bank Account Example

- The following code implements a bank account object correctly for a ~~synchronized~~ situation Sequential, u
- Assume the initial balance is 150

```
class BankAccount {
        private int balance = 0;
        int getBalance() { return balance; }
        void setBalance(int x) { balance = x; }
        void withdraw(int amount) {
                int b = getBalance();
                if (amount > b)
                        throw new WithdrawTooLargeException();
                setBalance(b – amount); }
        // other operations like deposit, etc.
}
```

What Happens here?

```
withdraw(100);
withdraw(75)
```

Bank Account Example - Parallel

- Assume the initial balance is 150

```
class BankAccount {
        private int balance = 0;
        int getBalance() { return balance; }
        void setBalance(int x) { balance = x; }
        void withdraw(int amount) {
                int b = getBalance();
                if (amount > b)
                        throw new WithdrawTooLargeException();
                setBalance(b – amount); }
        // other operations like deposit, etc.
}
```

Thread 1:

```
withdraw(100);
```

Thread 2:

```
withdraw(75);
```

Interleaving

- Due to time slicing, a thread can be interrupted at any time
  - Between any two lines of code
  - Within a single line of code
- The sequence that operations occur across two threads is called an interleaving
- Without doing anything else, we have no control over how different threads might be interleaved

A “Good” Interleaving

- Assume the initial balance is 150

Thread 1:

```
withdraw(100);
```

Thread 2:

```
withdraw(75);
```

	int b = getBalance();
	if (amount > b)
	throw new Exception();
	setBalance(b – amount);
int b = getBalance();	
if (amount > b)	
throw new Exception();	
setBalance(b – amount);	

A “Bad” Interleaving

- Assume the initial balance is 150

Thread 1:	Thread 2:
withdraw(100);	withdraw(75);

int b = getBalance(); → 5 = 150	

	int b = getBalance(); 150
	if (amount > b)
	    throw new Exception();
	setBalance(b – amount);
	75

if (amount > b)
    throw new Exception();
setBalance(b – amount);	

50

Another result?

- Assume the initial balance is 150

Thread 1:

withdraw(100);

Thread 2:

withdraw(75);

	int b = getBalance(); 15
int b = getBalance(); 150	
if (amount > b)	
throw new Exception();	
setBalance(b – amount);	
	if (amount > b)
50	throw new Exception();
	setBalance(b – amount);

75

A Bad Fix

- Assume the initial balance is 150

```
class BankAccount {
        private int balance = 0;
        int getBalance() { return balance; }
        void setBalance(int x) { balance = x; }
        void withdraw(int amount) {
                if (amount > getBalance())
                        throw new WithdrawTooLargeException();
                setBalance(getBalance() – amount); }
        // other operations like deposit, etc.
}
```

A still "Bad" Interleaving

- Assume the initial balance is 150

Thread 1:	Thread 2:
withdraw(100);	withdraw(75);

	150 if (amount > getBalance())
150 if (amount > getBalance())	
throw new Exception();	
setBalance(getBalance() – amount); 150	
	throw new Exception();
	setBalance(getBalance() – amount); 150 75
setBalance(getBalance() – amount); 150 50	

What we want – Mutual Exclusion

- While one thread is withdrawing from the account, we want to exclude all other threads from also withdrawing
- Called mutual exclusion:
  - One thread using a resource (here: a bank account) means another thread must wait
  - We call the area of code that we want to have mutual exclusion (only one thread can be there at a time) a **critical section**.
- The programmer must implement critical sections!
  - It requires programming language primitives to do correctly

A Bad attempt at Mutual Exclusion

```
class BankAccount {
        private int balance = 0;
        private Boolean busy = false;
        int getBalance() { return balance; }
        void setBalance(int x) { balance = x; }
        void withdraw(int amount) {
                while (busy) { /* wait until not busy */ }
                busy = true;
                int b = getBalance();
                if (amount > b)
                        throw new WithdrawTooLargeException();
                setBalance(b – amount);
                busy = false;}
        // other operations like deposit, etc.
}
```

A still “Bad” Interleaving

- Assume the initial balance is 150

Thread 1:

```
withdraw(100);
```

```
while (busy) { /* wait until not busy */ }

busy = true;

int b = getBalance();





if (amount > b)
        throw new Exception();
setBalance(b – amount);
busy = false;
```

Thread 2:

```
withdraw(75);
```

```
while (busy) { /* wait until not busy */ }
busy = true;

int b = getBalance();

if (amount > b)
        throw new Exception();
setBalance(b – amount);
busy = false;
```

Solution

- We need a construct from Java to do this
- One Solution – A **Mutual Exclusion Lock** (called a Mutex or Lock)
- We define a **Lock** to be a ADT with operations:
  - New:
    - make a new lock, initially “not held”
  - Acquire:
    - If lock is not held, mark it as “held”
      - These two steps always done together in a way that cannot be interrupted!
    - If lock is held, pause until it is marked as “not held”
  - Release:
    - Mark the lock as “not held”

Almost Correct Bank Account Example

```
class BankAccount {
        private int balance = 0;
        private Lock lk = new Lock();
        int getBalance() { return balance; }
        void setBalance(int x) { balance = x; }
        void withdraw(int amount) {
                lk.acquire();
                int b = getBalance();
                if (amount > b)
                        throw new WithdrawTooLargeException();
                setBalance(b – amount);
                lk.release();}
        // other operations like deposit, etc.
}
```

lk. release

Questions:

1. What is the critical section?
2. What is the Error?

Try…Finally

- Try Block:
  - Body of code that will be run
- Finally Block:
  - Always runs once the program exits try block (whether due to a return, exception, anything!)

Correct (but not Java) Bank Account Example

```
class BankAccount {
        private int balance = 0;
        private Lock lck = new Lock();
        int getBalance() { return balance; }
        void setBalance(int x) { balance = x; }
        void withdraw(int amount) {
                try{
                        lk.acquire();
                        int b = getBalance();
                        if (amount > b)
                                throw new WithdrawTooLargeException();
                        setBalance(b – amount); }
                finally { lk.release(); } }
        // other operations like deposit, etc.
}
```

Questions:

1. Should deposit have its own lock object, or the same one?
2. What about getBalance?
3. What about setBalance?

A still “Bad” Interleaving

- Assume the initial balance is 150

Thread 1:

```
withdraw(100);
```

```
try{
        lk.acquire();
        int b = getBalance();
        if (amount > b)
                throw new Exception();



        setBalance(b – amount); }
        finally { lk.release(); }
```

Thread 2:

```
if(getBalance()<75)
        setBalance(75);
```

```






if(getBalance() < 75)
        setBalance(75);
```

What’s wrong here…

```
class BankAccount {
        private int balance = 0;
        private Lock lck = new Lock();
        int setBalance(int x) {
                try{
                        lk.acquire();
                        balance = x; }
                finally{ lk.release(); } }
        void withdraw(int amount) {
                try{
                        lk.acquire();
                        int b = getBalance();
                        if (amount > b)
                                throw new WithdrawTooLargeException();
                        setBalance(b – amount); }
                finally { lk.release(); } }}
```

Withdraw calls setBalance!

Withdraw can never finish because in setBalance the lock will always be held!

Re-entrant Lock (Recursive Lock)

- Idea:
  - Once a thread has acquired a lock, future calls to acquire on the same lock will not block progress
- If the lock used in the previous slide is re-entrant, then it will work!

Re-entrant Lock Details

- A re-entrant lock (a.k.a. recursive lock)
- “Remembers”
  - the thread (if any) that currently holds it
  - a count of “layers” that the thread holds it
- When the lock goes from not-held to held, the count is set to 0
- If (code running in) the current holder calls acquire:
  - it does not block
  - it increments the count
- On release:
  - if the count is > 0, the count is decremented
  - if the count is 0, the lock becomes not-held

Java’s Re-entract Lock Class

- java.util.concurrent.locks.ReentrantLock
- Has methods lock() and unlock()
- Important to guarantee that lock is always released!!!
- Recommend something like this:

```
myLock.lock();
try { // method body }
finally { myLock.unlock(); }
```

How this looks in Java

```
java.util.concurrent.locks.ReentrantLock;
class BankAccount {
        private int balance = 0;
        private ReentrantLock lck = new ReentrantLock();
        int setBalance(int x) {
                try{
                        lk.lock();
                        balance = x; }
                finally{ lk.unlock(); } }
        void withdraw(int amount) {
                try{
                        lk.lock();
                        int b = getBalance();
                        if (amount > b)
                                throw new WithdrawTooLargeException();
                        setBalance(b – amount); }
                finally { lk.unlock(); } }}
```

Java Synchronized Keyword

- Syntactic sugar for re-etrant locks
- You can use the synchronized statement as an alternative to declaring a ReentrantLock
- Syntax:

```
synchronized( /* expression returning an Object */ ) {statements}
```

- Any Object can serve as a “lock”
  - Primitive types (e.g. int) cannot serve as a lock
- Acquires a lock and blocks if necessary
  - Once you get past the “{“, you have the lock
- Released the lock when you pass “}”
  - Even in the cases of returning, exceptions, anything!
  - Impossible to forget to release the lock

Back Account Using Synchronize (Attempt 1)

```
class BankAccount {
        private int balance = 0;
        private Object lk = new Object();
        int getBalance() {
                synchronized (lk) { return balance; }
        }
        void setBalance(int x) {
                synchronized (lk) { balance = x; }
        }
        void withdraw(int amount) {
                synchronized (lk) {
                        int b = getBalance();
                        if (amount > b)
                                throw new Exception();
                        setBalance(b – amount); } } // deposit would also use synchronized(lk)
}
```

Back Account Using Synchronize (Attempt 2)

```
class BankAccount {
        private int balance = 0;
        int getBalance() {
                synchronized (this) { return balance; }
        }
        void setBalance(int x) {
                synchronized (this) { balance = x; }
        }
        void withdraw(int amount) {
                synchronized (this) {
                        int b = getBalance();
                        if (amount > b)
                                throw new Exception();
                        setBalance(b – amount); } } // deposit would also use synchronized(lk)
}
```

Since we have one lock per account regardless of operation, it's more intuitive to use the account object itself as the lock!

More Syntactic Sugar!

- Using the object itself as a lock is common enough that Java has convenient syntax for that as well!
- Declaring a method as “**synchronized**” puts its body into a synchronized block with “this” as the lock

Back Account Using Synchronize (Final)

```
class BankAccount {
        private int balance = 0;
        synchronized int getBalance() { return balance; }
        synchronized void setBalance(int x) { balance = x; }
        synchronized void withdraw(int amount) {
                int b = getBalance();
                if (amount > b)
                        throw new WithdrawTooLargeException();
                setBalance(b – amount); }
        // other operations like deposit (which would use synchronized)
}
```