An Application of Ramsey's Theorem to Proving Programs Terminate: An Exposition

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Who is Who

1. Work by
   1.1 Floyd,
   1.2 Byron Cook, Andreas Podelski, Andrey Rybalchenko,
   1.3 Lee, Jones, Ben-Amram
   1.4 Others
2. Pre-Apology: Not my area-some things may be wrong.
3. Pre-Brag: Not my area-some things may be understandable.

Overview I

Problem: Given a program we want to prove it terminates no matter what user does (called TERM problem).

1. Impossible in general- Harder than Halting.
2. But can do this on some simple progs. (We will.)

Overview II

In this talk I will:

1. Do example of traditional method to prove progs terminate.
2. Do harder example of traditional method.
3. DIGRESSION: A very short lecture on Ramsey Theory.
4. Do that same harder example using Ramsey Theory.
5. Compelling example with Ramsey Theory.
6. Do same example with Ramsey Theory and Matrices.

Notation

1. Will use psuedo-code progs.
2. KEY: If A is a set then the command

   ```
   x = input(A)
   ```

   means that x gets some value from A that the user decides.
3. Note: we will want to show that no matter what the user does the program will halt.
4. The code

   ```
   (x,y) = (f(x,y),g(x,y))
   ```

   means that simultaneously x gets f(x,y) and y gets g(x,y).

Easy Example of Traditional Method

```
(x,y,z) = (input(INT), input(INT), input(INT))
While x>0 and y>0 and z>0
        control = input(1,2,3)
        if control == 1 then
                (x,y,z)=(x+1,y-1,z-1)
        else
        if control == 2 then
                (x,y,z)=(x-1,y+1,z-1)
        else
                (x,y,z)=(x-1,y-1,z+1)
```

Sketch of Proof of termination:

Easy Example of Traditional Method

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Whatever the user does $x+y+z$ is decreasing.

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Sketch of Proof of termination:
Whatever the user does x+y+z is decreasing.
Eventually x+y+z=0 so prog terminates there or earlier.

What is Traditional Method?

General method due to Floyd: Find a function f(x,y,z) from the values of the variables to N such that

1. in every iteration f(x,y,z) decreases
2. if f(x,y,z) is ever 0 then the program must have halted.

Note: Method is more general- can map to a well founded order such that in every iteration f(x,y,z) decreases in that order, and if f(x,y,z) is ever a min element then program must have halted.

Hard Example of Traditional Method

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(x,y,z) = (input(INT),input(INT),input(INT))
While x>0 and y>0 and z>0
        control = input(1,2)
        if control == 1 then
                (x,y,z) =(x-1,input(y+1,y+2,...),z)
        else
                (x,y,z)=(x,y-1,input(z+1,z+2,...))
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Sketch of Proof of termination:
Use Lex Order: $(0,0,0) < (0,0,1) < \cdots < (0,1,0) \cdots$.
Note: $(4, 10^{100}, 10^{10!}) < (5,0,0)$.

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In every iteration (x,y,z) decreases in this ordering.

If hits bottom then all vars are 0 so must halt then or earlier.

Well Ordering is Key!

Definition An ordering $(X, \preceq)$ is a well founded if there are no infinite decreasing sequeces. (Induction proofs can be done on suchmorderings.)

Examples and Counterexamples
N in its usual ordering is well founded
Z in its usual ordering is NOT well founded.
Lex order on $N \times N \times N$ is well founded. Discuss.

Notes about Proof

1. Bad News: We had to use a funky ordering. This might be hard for a proof checker to find. (Funky is not a formal term.)
2. Good News: We only had to reason about what happens in one iteration.

Keep these in mind- our later proof will use a nice ordering but will need to reason about a block of instructions.

Digression Into Ramsey Theory (Parties!)

The following are known:

1. If you have 6 people at a party then either 3 of them mutually know each other or 3 of them mutually don't know each other.

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2. If you have 18 people at a party then either 4 of them mutually know each other or 4 of them mutually do not know each other.
3. If you have 2^{2k-1} people at a party then either k of them mutually know each other of k of them mutually do not know each other.

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3. If you have 2^{2k-1} people at a party then either k of them mutually know each other of k of them mutually do not know each other.
4. If you have an infinite number of people at a party then either there exists an infinite subset that all know each other or an infinite subset that all do not know each other.

Digression Into Ramsey Theory (Math!)

Definition

Let $c, k, n \in \mathrm{N}$. K_n is the complete graph on n vertices (all pairs are edges). K_ω is the infinite complete graph. A c-coloring of K_n is a c-coloring of the edges of K_n. A homogeneous set is a subset H of the vertices such that every pair has the same color (e.g., 10 people all of whom know each other).

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The following are known.

1. For all 2-colorings of K_6 there is a homog 3-set.
2. For all c-colorings of $K_{c^{ck-c}}$ there is a homog k-set.
3. For all c-colorings of the K_ω there exists a homog ω-set.

Alt Proof Using Ramsey

```
(x,y,z) = (input(INT),input(INT),input(INT))
While x>0 and y>0 and z>0
        control = input(1,2)
        if control == 1 then
                (x,y,z) =(x-1,input(y+1,y+2,...),z)
        else
                (x,y,z)=(x,y-1,input(z+1,z+2,...))
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Begin Proof of termination:

Alt Proof Using Ramsey

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        else
                (x,y,z)=(x,y-1,input(z+1,z+2,...))
```

Begin Proof of termination:
If program does not halt then there is infinite sequence
$(x_1, y_1, z_1), (x_2, y_2, z_2), \ldots,$ representing state of vars.

Reasoning about Blocks

```
control = input(1,2)
if control == 1 then
        (x,y,z) =(x-1,input(y+1,y+2,...),z)
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        (x,y,z)=(x,y-1,input(z+1,z+2,...))
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        (x,y,z)=(x,y-1,input(z+1,z+2,...))
```

Look at $(x_i, y_i, z_i), \ldots, (x_j, y_j, z_j)$.

1. If control is ever 1 then $x_i > x_j$.
2. If control is never 1 then $y_i > y_j$.

Reasoning about Blocks

```
control = input(1,2)
if control == 1 then
        (x,y,z) =(x-1,input(y+1,y+2,...),z)
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```

Look at $(x_i, y_i, z_i), \ldots, (x_j, y_j, z_j)$.

1. If control is ever 1 then $x_i > x_j$.
2. If control is never 1 then $y_i > y_j$.

Upshot: For all $i < j$ either $x_i > x_j$ or $y_i > y_j$.

Use Ramsey

If program does not halt then there is infinite sequence $(\mathrm{x}_1, \mathrm{y}_1, \mathrm{z}_1), (\mathrm{x}_2, \mathrm{y}_2, \mathrm{z}_2), \ldots,$ representing state of vars.
For all $i < j$ either $\mathrm{x}_i > \mathrm{x}_j$ or $\mathrm{y}_i > \mathrm{y}_j$.
Define a 2-coloring of the edges of K_ω:

$$COL(i,j) = \begin{cases} X \text{ if } \mathrm{x}_i > \mathrm{x}_j \\ Y \text{ if } \mathrm{y}_i > \mathrm{y}_j \end{cases} \tag{1}$$

By Ramsey there exists homog set $i_1 < i_2 < i_3 < \cdots$.
If color is X then $\mathrm{x}_{i_1} > \mathrm{x}_{i_2} > \mathrm{x}_{i_3} > \cdots$
If color is Y then $\mathrm{y}_{i_1} > \mathrm{y}_{i_2} > \mathrm{y}_{i_3} > \cdots$
In either case will have eventually have a var ≤ 0 and hence program must terminate. Contradiction.

Compare and Contrast

1. Trad. proof used lex order on $\mathbb{N}^3$–complicated!
2. Ramsey Proof used only used the ordering $\mathbb{N}$.
3. Traditional proof only had to reason about single steps.
4. Ramsey Proof had to reason about blocks of steps.

What do YOU think?

VOTE:

1. Traditional Proof!
2. Ramsey Proof!
3. Emily/Erika in 2020! (First Law: ban all gross functions.)

A More Compelling Example

```
(x,y) = (input(INT),input(INT))
While x>0 and y>0
        control = input(1,2)
        if control == 1 then
                (x,y)=(x-1,x)
        else
        if control == 2 then
                (x,y)=(y-2,x+1)
```

Reasoning about Blocks

If program does not halt then there is infinite sequence $(x_1, y_1), (x_2, y_2), \ldots,$ representing state of vars. Need to show that for all $i < j$ either $x_i > x_j$ or $y_i > y_j$. Can show that one of the following must occur:

1. $x_j < x_i$ and $y_j \leq x_i$ (x decs),
2. $x_j < y_i - 1$ and $y_j \leq x_i + 1$ (x+y decs so one of x or y decs),
3. $x_j < y_i - 1$ and $y_j < y_i$ (y decs),
4. $x_j < x_i$ and $y_j < y_i$ (x and y both decs).

Now use Ramsey argument.

Comments

1. The condition in the last proof is called a Termination Invariant. They are used to strengthen the induction hypothesis.
2. The proof was found by the system of B. Cook et al.
3. Looking for a Termination Invariant is the hard part to automate but they have automated it.
4. Can we use these techniques to solve a fragment of Termination Problem?

Model control=1 via a Matrix

```
if control == 1 then (x,y)=(x-1,x)
```

Model as a matrix A indexed by x,y,x+y.

$$\begin{pmatrix} -1 & 0 & \infty \\ \infty & \infty & \infty \\ \infty & \infty & \infty \end{pmatrix}$$

For a,b $\in$ {x,y,x+y}
Entry (a,b) is difference between NEW b and OLD a.
Entry (a,a) is most interesting- if neg then a decreased.

Model control=2 via a Matrix

```
if control == 2 then (x,y)=(y-2,x+1)
```

Model as a matrix B indexed by x,y,x+y.

$$\begin{pmatrix} \infty & 1 & \infty \\ -2 & \infty & \infty \\ \infty & \infty & -1 \end{pmatrix}$$

Redefine Matrix Mult

A and B matrices, C=AB defined by

$$c_{ij} = \min_k \{a_{ik} + b_{kj}\}.$$

Lemma

If matrix A models a statement s_1 and matrix B models a statement s_2 then matrix AB models what happens if you run $s_1; s_2$.

Matrix Proof that Program Terminates

- A is matrix for control=1. B is matrix for control=2.
- Show: any prod of A's and B's some diag is negative.
- Hence in any finite seg one of the vars decreases.
- Hence, by Ramsey proof, the program always terminates