Hiding the Java Memory Model with Compilers

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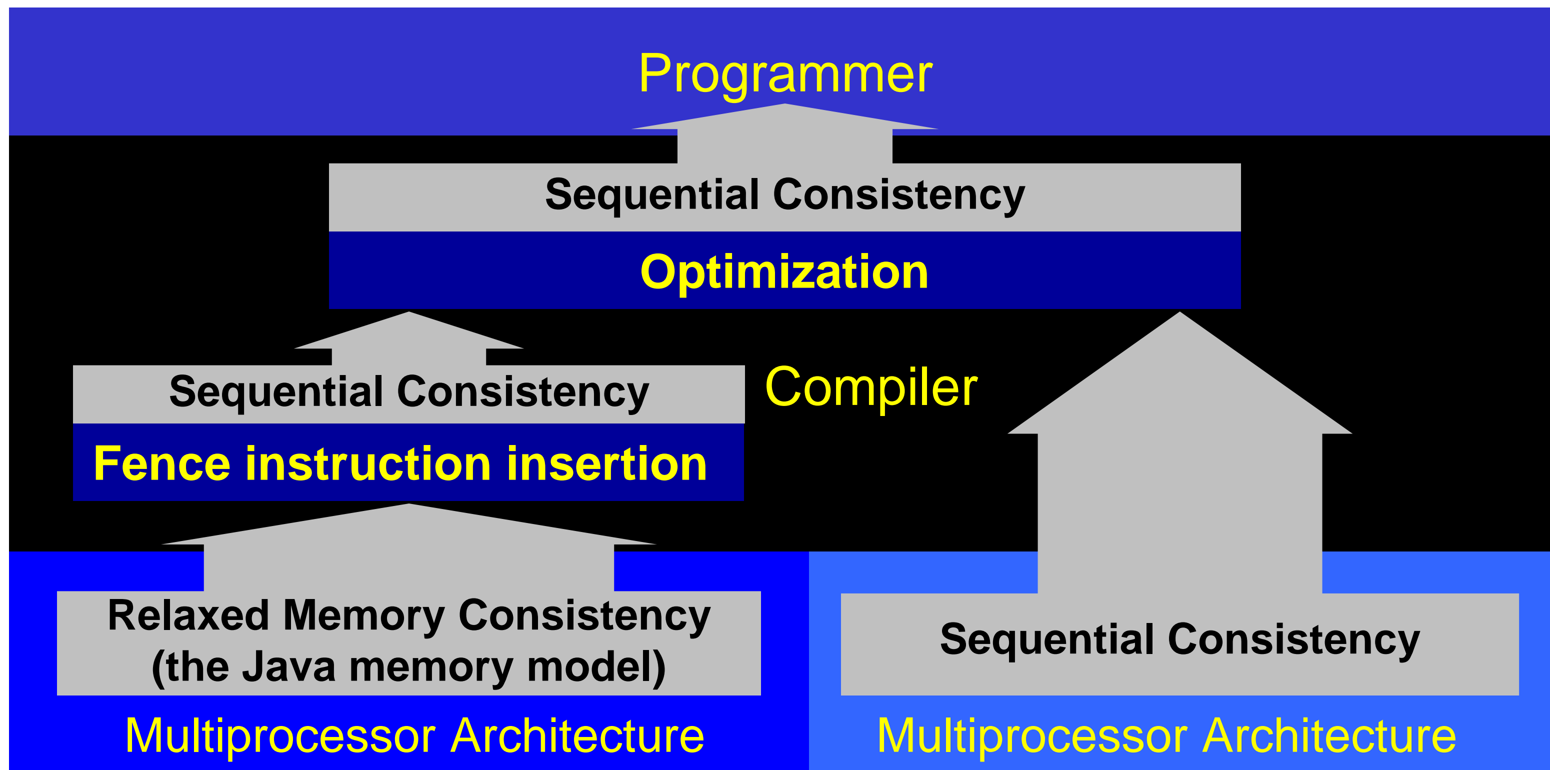
Motivation

- The Java memory model is widely known as difficult to understand.
  - It follows a relaxed memory consistency model.
- Data races and synchronization make it impossible to apply classical compiler optimization and analysis techniques directly to Java concurrent programs.
  - It follows a shared memory programming model.
- The synergic effect of the non-intuitive Java memory model and the non-deterministic behavior prevents the programmer from writing correct and efficient Java concurrent programs.
- What if the burden of considering the underlying memory model is shifted to a compiler?

The Compiler



- The compiler presents to programmers a sequentially consistent view of the underlying architecture.
- The compiler makes it possible to apply classical compiler optimization techniques correctly to parallel programs that are not handled by conventional compilers.

An Example of Incorrect Execution in Java

Initially, x = 0, y = 0

Thread 1	Thread 2
❶ X = x	❸ Y = y
❷ y = 1	❹ x = 1

Incorrect outcome: X = 1, Y = 1

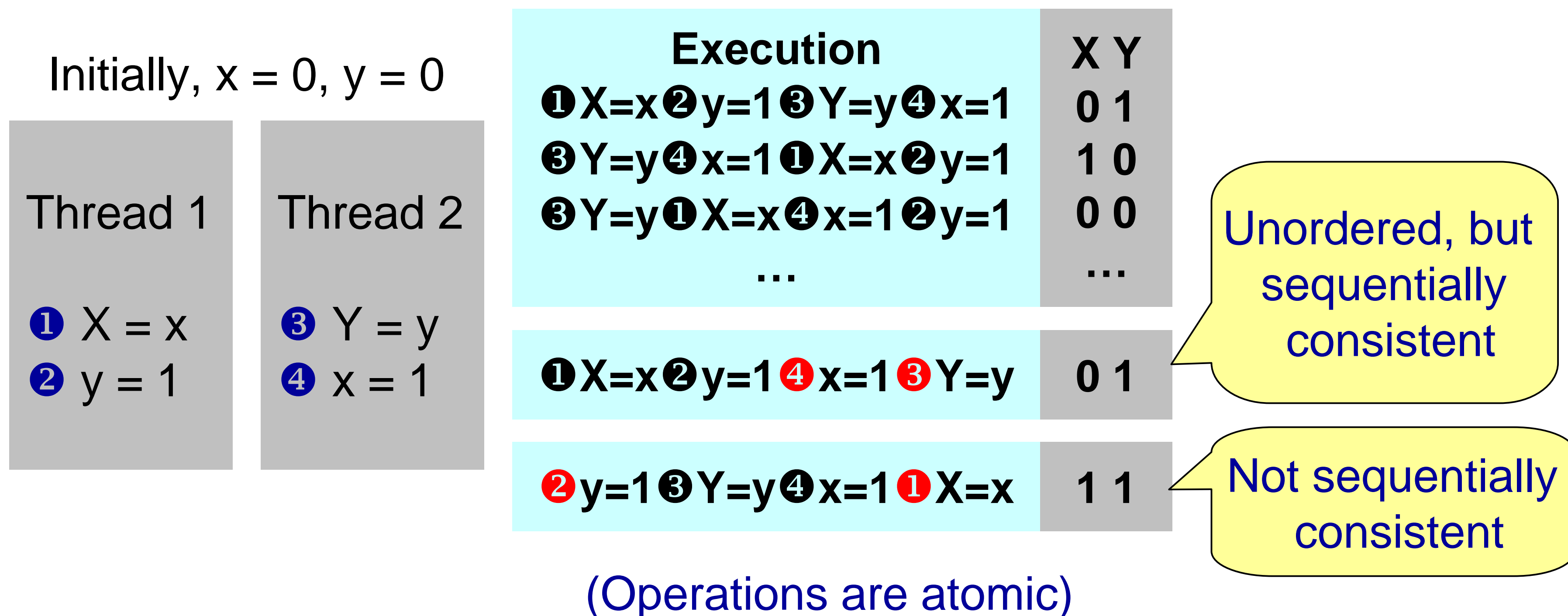
[Pugh, Java Grande'99]

❷ y = 1	X: 0, Y: 0
❸ Y = y	X: 0, Y: 1
❹ x = 1	X: 0, Y: 1
❶ X = x	X: 1, Y: 1

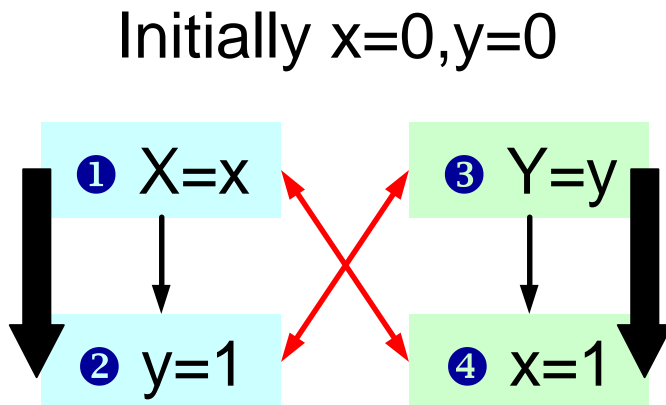
- With prescient stores.
- If X is equal to 1 then Y should be 0 (reasoning based on sequential consistency).
- A counter-intuitive result can occur, and this violates sequential consistency. It appears that instructions (i.e., ❶ and ❷) are reordered.

Correctness Criterion (Sequential Consistency)

- A multiprocessor system is sequentially consistent if the result of any execution is the same *as if the operations of all the processors were executed in some sequential order*, and *the operations of each individual processor appear in this sequence in the order specified by its program*. [Lamport, IEEE TOC, 1979]

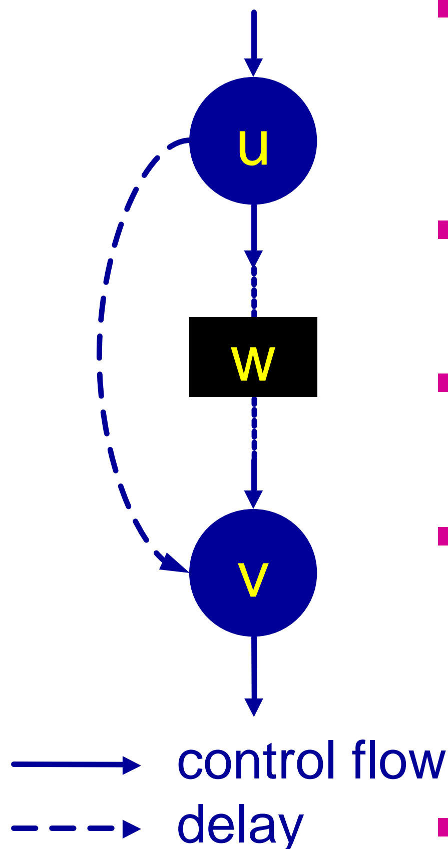


Delay Set Analysis [Shasha and Snir, TOPLAS, 1988]



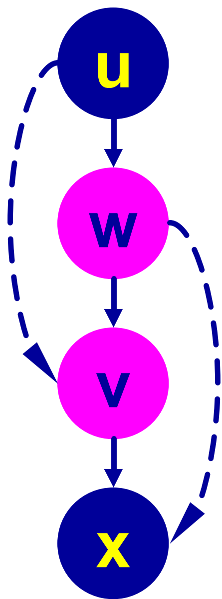
- Finds conflict relation (conflict edges) using an escape analysis.
- Finds critical cycles (minimal mixed cycles that consist of program ordering edges and conflict edges).
- Delays (❶D❷ and ❸D❹) are the program ordering edges in the critical cycles (e.g., ❷ ❸ ❹ ❶ ❷).
- Enforcing delays is a sufficient condition to guarantee sequential consistency.
- Delays are implemented by fence instructions or the ordering constraints of the underlying machine.

Inserting Fence Instructions



- $D_m = ((D \cup D_o)^+)^{tr} - D_o$ (reduce the number of delays by using the ordering constraints of the underlying architecture)
- We insert a fence instruction for each delay $u D_m v$ in a *memory-barrier node w*.
- w always executes after u and before v whenever *u* and *v* executes.
- A node *s dominates* a node *v* with *respect to a node u* (*s* $\mathbf{dom_u}$ *v*) if every control flow path from *u* to *v* goes through *s* [Lee and Padua, PACT'00].
- Any node in $\mathbf{dom_u}[v]$ can be a memory-barrier node to enforce the delay *u***D***v.*

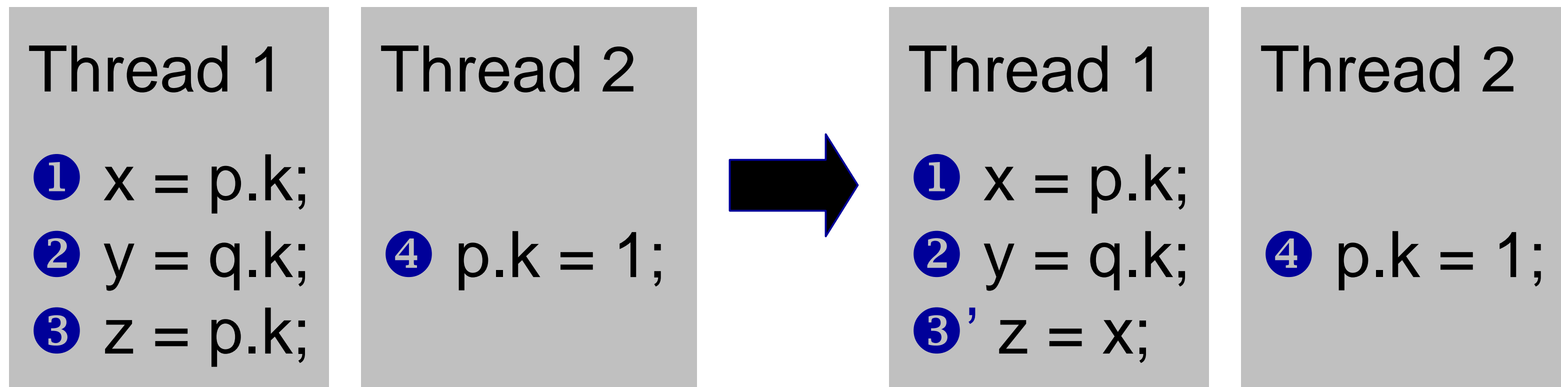
Minimizing the Number of Memory-Barrier Nodes



control flow
delay

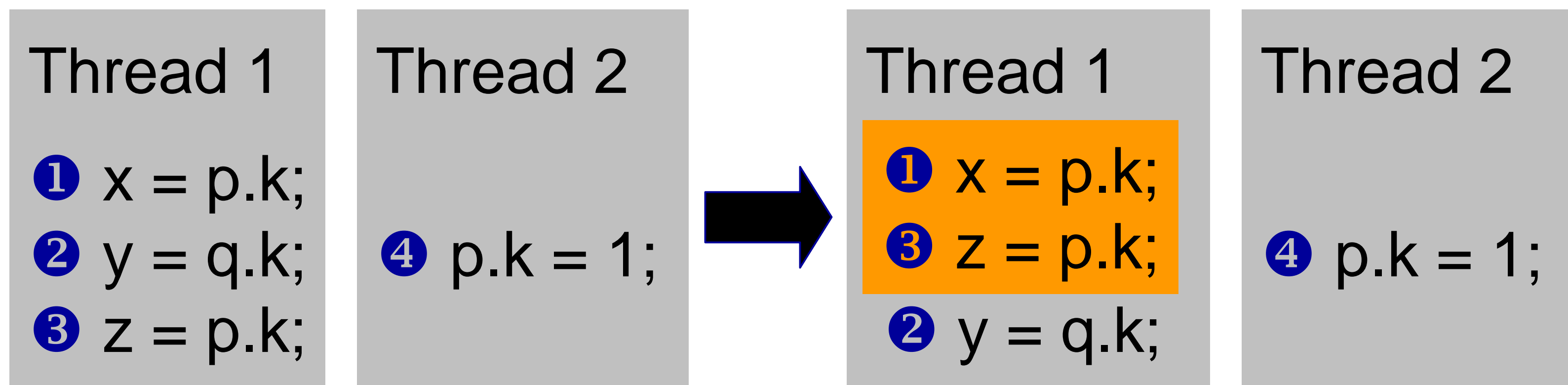
- If a node *w*∈ **dom**$_u$[*v*], then *w* enforces the delay *u***D**v.
- One memory-barrier node w (or v) is enough to enforce both delays *u***D***v* and *w***D***x.*
  (**dom**$_u$[*v*] **Ç** **dom**$_w$[*x*] = { *w*, *v* })
- Minimizing the number of memory-barrier nodes by using dominators with respect to a node is an *NP-hard* problem [Lee and Padua, PACT'00].
- Use a greedy approximation algorithm.

An Example of an Incorrect Compiler Optimization in Java



- p.k is not modified in between ❶ and ❸. In classical sense, it is OK to replace p.k in ❸ with x (one form of classical common subexpression elimination).
- If z is equal to 0 then both x and y should be 0 (reasoning based on sequential consistency).

Why It Is an Incorrect Compiler Optimization?

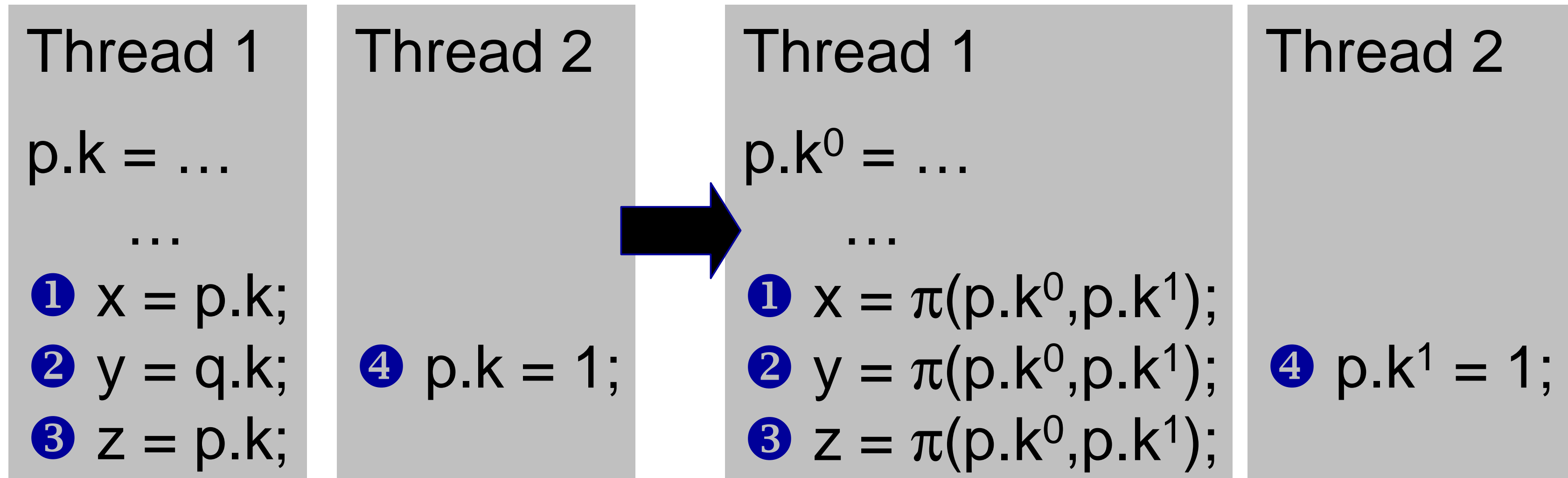


- The same as moving ❸ immediately after ❶ and executing ❶ and ❸ together without allowing ❹ interleaved in between them, i.e., ❷ and ❸ are reordered.
- A counter-intuitive result can occur, and this violates sequential consistency.

Another Correctness Criterion (Subset Correctness)

- A compiler transformation is correct if the set of all possible observable behaviors of a transformed program is a subset of all possible observable behavior of the original program [Lee, Padua, Midkiff, PPoPP'99].
- A sequential consistency violation implies a subset correctness violation, but not *vice versa*.

How to Avoid the Incorrect Optimization?



- Use delays as constraints for the compiler transformations.
- Use a confluence function π to summarize the interaction between threads (concurrent static single assignment (CSSA) form [Lee,Padua,Midkiff. PPoPP'99]).
- Use global value numbering to detect equivalent variables (concurrent global value numbering [Lee,Padua,Midkiff. PPoPP'99]).

Conclusions

- The compiler presents to programmers a natural and intuitive memory model (sequential consistency) irrespective of whether the underlying memory consistency model follows a sequentially consistent or a relaxed model.
- The compiler makes it possible to apply classical compiler optimization techniques correctly to parallel programs that are not handled by conventional compilers.

References

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