

Cosmo: a concurrent separation logic for the weak memory model of Multicore OCaml

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PhD defense

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An introduction to weak-memory concurrency

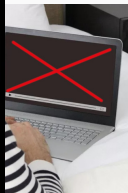
Family Cosmo **shares** a Movix account



Family Cost



ACCOUNT SHARING.
IT'S A CRIME.



Movix' policy: simultaneous accesses \implies account canceled

Family Cosmo **shares** a Movix account



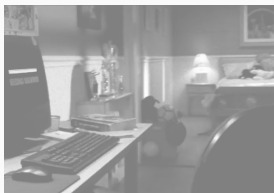
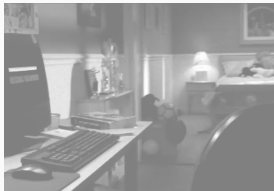
Movix' policy: simultaneous accesses \implies account canceled

Solution: Family Cosmo has established a protocol:

- a **totem** in the living room, that anyone can borrow
- to watch Movix, one must have borrowed the totem



Movix: mutual exclusion



Movix password

Family Cosmo's members can **change** the password

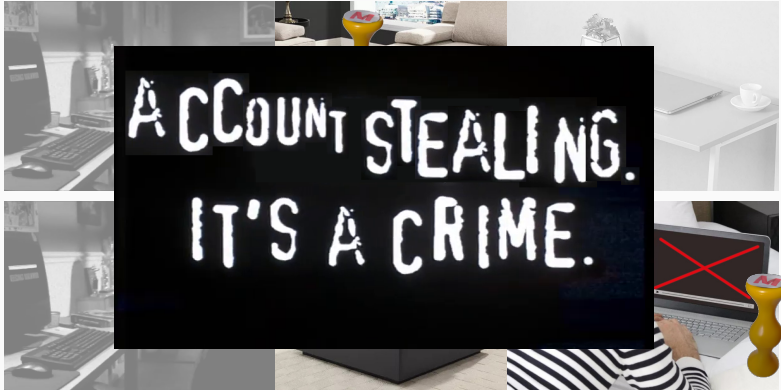
One day...



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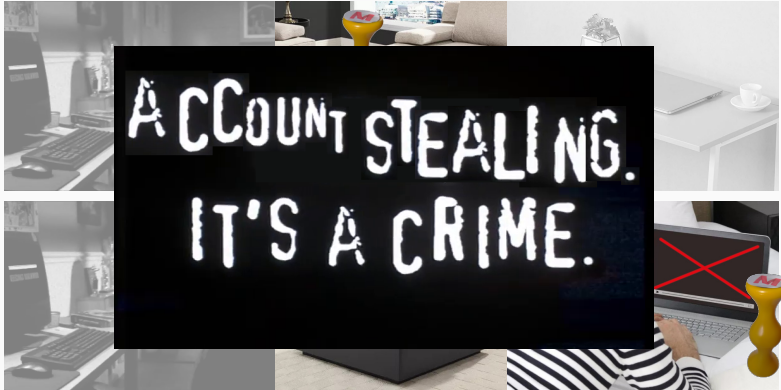
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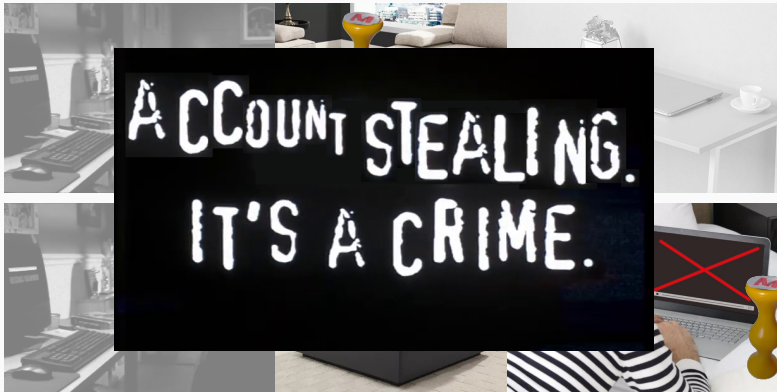


Alice had changed the password the day before, Bob didn't know

Movix password

Family Cosmo's members can **change** the password

One day...



Alice had changed the password the day before, Bob didn't know
Movix' security policy: wrong password \implies IP blocked

Movix: takeaway

Mutual exclusion is not enough

Alice and Bob have diverging **views** of their common password

Alice **must transmit** her (more up-to-date) knowledge to Bob

Movix: takeaway

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Solution: write the password on the totem



Weak memory models:

multicore architecture, shared memory

each thread has its own **view** of the state of the shared memory

- example: C11
- example: Java
- example: Multicore OCaml (“OCaml 5”)

[Dolan et al, PLDI 2018, *Bounding data races in space and time*]

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Program verification

Programming is **error-prone**... Concurrent programming even more!

Some bugs might have catastrophic consequences

- losing a paid Movix account
- killing patients: Therac-25 radiotherapy machine
- ...

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Specify it:

state the expected behavior of a program in mathematical terms

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How to improve confidence in software?

Specify it:

state the expected behavior of a program in mathematical terms

Verify it:

prove that the actual behavior matches the expected one

My aim:

- verifying
- fine-grained concurrent programs
- in the setting of Multicore OCaml

My contributions:

- Cosmo, a concurrent separation logic with views [ICFP 2020]
- case studies: locks [ICFP 2020], concurrent queue [ICFP 2021]

Verifying SC concurrent programs with Concurrent Separation Logic

Specifying a program [Hoare, 1969]

Hoare triple: $\{Pre\} e \{Post\}$

- e : program code
- Pre : precondition (logical assertion about the computer state)
- $Post$: postcondition (ditto)

“If we run e from a state that satisfies Pre , and if it terminates, then it ends in a state that satisfies $Post$.”

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Pre and $Post$ are stated in **Separation Logic**:

- an assertion represents the ownership of a resource
- the separating conjunction $P * Q$ asserts ownership of two **distinct** resources P and Q
- in general, $P \not\Rightarrow P * P$

Resources and locks

Portions of memory are ownable **resources**

- example: $a \rightsquigarrow \text{"azerty"}$

“Movix account a , whose current password is “azerty””

We can guard such resources by using a **lock** (like the totem)

Two operations for a lock lk guarding a resource R :

- acquire lk
grants R : we become its unique owner
- release lk
reclaims R : we give it back and stop owning it

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Formal specification?

{

if lk is a lock that guards R , then

acquiring lk assumes nothing and grants R

releasing lk reclaims R and grants nothing

Specification of a lock

$\boxed{\text{isLock } lk \ R} \vdash$ if lk is a lock that guards R , then

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \{\text{True}\} \text{ acquire } lk \ \{R\} \quad \text{acquiring } lk \text{ assumes nothing and grants } R \\ \{R\} \text{ release } lk \ \{\text{True}\} \quad \text{releasing } lk \text{ reclaims } R \text{ and grants nothing} \end{array} \right.$$

Specification of a lock

$\boxed{\text{isLock } lk \ R} \vdash$ if lk is a lock that guards R , then

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \{\text{True}\} \text{acquire } lk \ \{R\} \quad \text{acquiring } lk \text{ assumes nothing and grants } R \\ \{R\} \text{release } lk \ \{\text{True}\} \quad \text{releasing } lk \text{ reclaims } R \text{ and grants nothing} \end{array} \right.$$

$\text{isLock } lk \ R$ is an assertion describing the internal layout of lk
 \implies asserts unique ownership of lk

$\boxed{\text{isLock } lk \ R}$ is an Iris invariant containing $\text{isLock } lk \ R$
 \implies shares lk among all threads

The spin lock

A spin lock implements a lock using a Boolean reference:

```
let release lk =  
    lk := false
```

```
let try_acquire lk =  
    CAS lk false true
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Specification of operations used by the spin lock:

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} x \rightsquigarrow v \\ x := v' \\ x \rightsquigarrow v' \end{array} \right\} \quad \left\{ \begin{array}{l} x \rightsquigarrow v \\ \text{CAS } x \ v_1 \ v_2 \\ \text{if } ret \\ \text{then } x \rightsquigarrow v_2 * v = v_1 \\ \text{else } x \rightsquigarrow v \end{array} \right\}$$

Verifying the spin lock in Concurrent Separation Logic [Iris, 2015]

$$\text{isLock } lk \ R \triangleq \exists b. lk \rightsquigarrow b * (b = \text{false} \Rightarrow R)$$

```
isLock lk R ⊢  
// release:  
{R}
```

```
lk := false
```

```
{True}
```

```
isLock lk R ⊢  
// try_acquire:  
{True}
```

```
CAS lk false true
```

```
{(ret = true ⇒ R)}
```

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$$\text{isLock } lk \ R \triangleq \exists b. lk \rightsquigarrow b * (b = \text{false} \Rightarrow R)$$

// release:

{isLock *lk R* * *R*}

lk := false

{isLock *lk R*}

// try_acquire:

{isLock *lk R*}

CAS *lk* false true

{isLock *lk R* * (ret = true \Rightarrow *R*)}

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// release:

{isLock lk R * R }

{ $lk \rightsquigarrow _$ * R }

$lk := \text{false}$

{ $lk \rightsquigarrow \text{false}$ * R }

{isLock lk R }

// try_acquire:

{isLock lk R }

{ $lk \rightsquigarrow b$ * ($b = \text{false} \Rightarrow R$)}

CAS lk false true

{if ret
then $lk \rightsquigarrow \text{true}$ * R
else $lk \rightsquigarrow b$ * ($b = \text{false} \Rightarrow R$)}

{if ret
then isLock lk R * R
else isLock lk R }

{isLock lk R * ($ret = \text{true} \Rightarrow R$)}

Verifying Multicore OCaml programs with Cosmo

Using a lock

Example of using a lock *lk* to guard accesses to *pw*:

```
        initially, pw = 0
        initially, lk = false
acquire lk ||
pw := 1    || acquire lk
release lk || B := !pw
           || release lk
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Passing a message

Passing a write to pw from the left thread to the right thread:

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Possible (A, B): (true, 1), (true, 0), (false, 1)

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Traditional model of concurrency: [interleavings](#)

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Passing a message in Multicore OCaml

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Traditional model of concurrency **violated**

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Traditional model of concurrency **violated**

- hardware optimizations (e.g. buffering writes)
- compiler optimizations (e.g. reordering independent writes)

The essence of weak memory: subjectivity

Weak memory: each thread has its own **view** of memory [Dolan et al]

In Cosmo: [ICFP 2020]

Some assertions are **subjective**: they depend on the thread's view

- example: $pw \rightsquigarrow \text{"azerty"}$

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The lock's resource R might be subjective,
so cannot be put in an invariant as we did

Synchronization through atomic references

The left thread must transmit its view to the right thread
⇒ need for a **synchronization** mechanism

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In Multicore OCaml: **atomic references** [Dolan et al]

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Specification of atomic references?

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- $x \rightsquigarrow_{\text{at}} (v, \mathcal{U})$
“x stores the value v **and a view** (at least) \mathcal{U} ”
- this assertion is objective
- reasoning rules (sample):

$$\frac{\left\{ x \rightsquigarrow_{\text{at}} (v, \mathcal{U}) * \uparrow \mathcal{U}' \right\}}{x :=_{\text{at}} v'} \quad \frac{\left\{ x \rightsquigarrow_{\text{at}} (v_1, \mathcal{U}) \right\}}{\text{CAS } x \ v_1 \ v_2} \quad \left\{ x \rightsquigarrow_{\text{at}} (v', \mathcal{U}') \right\} \quad \left\{ \text{ret} = \text{true} * x \rightsquigarrow_{\text{at}} (v_2, \mathcal{U}) * \uparrow \mathcal{U} \right\}$$

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views

views are mathematical objects;
they enjoy a lattice structure

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acquire

The spin lock in Multicore OCaml

A spin lock implements a lock using an **atomic** Boolean reference:

```
let release lk =
  lk :={at} false
let try_acquire lk =
  CAS lk false true
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Described by this assertion:

$$\text{isLock } lk \ R \triangleq \exists b . lk \rightsquigarrow_{\text{at}} b \quad * \quad (b = \text{false} \Rightarrow R)$$

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R may be subjective!

objective part of an assertion

$R @ \mathcal{U}$: “ R where the current view is fixed to \mathcal{U} ”

Verifying the spin lock in Multicore OCaml

$$\text{isLock } lk \ R \triangleq \exists b, \mathcal{U}. lk \rightsquigarrow_{\text{at}}(b, \mathcal{U}) * (b = \text{false} \Rightarrow R @ \mathcal{U})$$

// release:

```
{ isLock lk R * R }
{ lk ~>_at _ * R }
{  $\exists \mathcal{U}. lk \rightsquigarrow_{\text{at}} \_ * \overbrace{\uparrow \mathcal{U} * R @ \mathcal{U}}$  } }
lk :=_at false
{ lk ~>_at (false, \mathcal{U}) * R @ \mathcal{U} }
{ isLock lk R }
```

// try_acquire:

```
{ isLock lk R }
{ lk ~>_at (b, \mathcal{U}) * (b = false \Rightarrow R @ \mathcal{U}) }
CAS lk false true
{ if ret
  then lk ~>_at (true, \mathcal{U}) *  $\overbrace{\uparrow \mathcal{U} * R @ \mathcal{U}}$ 
  else ... }
{ if ret
  then isLock lk R * R
  else ... }
{ isLock lk R * (ret = true \Rightarrow R) }
```

splitting rule

$$P \iff \exists \mathcal{U}. \underbrace{P @ \mathcal{U}}_{\text{objective}} * \underbrace{\uparrow \mathcal{U}}_{\text{subjective}}$$

A method for proving correctness under weak memory:

1. Start with the invariant under sequential consistency;
2. Identify how information flows between threads;
 - i.e. where are the synchronization points;
3. Refine the invariant with corresponding views.

Case study: a multiple-producer multiple-consumer queue

A MPMC queue

case study: [ICFP 2021]

specifying and verifying a fine-grained concurrent queue
in the weak memory model of Multicore OCaml

challenges:

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tool: views [ICFP 2020]

- **fine-grained** specification, more permissive than lock-based

non-trivial implementation taking profit from the relaxed spec

A specification for concurrent queues in SC

$$\langle n, v_0, \dots, v_{n-1}. \text{IsQueue } q [v_0, \dots, v_{n-1}] \rangle$$

enqueue q v

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Comparison with refinement in weak memory

Refinement is another approach to specifying the queue:
“this queue can replace a sequential queue guarded by a lock”

Shortcoming of the refinement spec:
the lock induces synchronization between **all** operations

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Shortcoming of the refinement spec:
the lock induces synchronization between **all** operations

Our spec is **more permissive**:
no guaranteed synchronization from dequeuer to enqueueer

Allows for more relaxed implementations... like the one we verified

Conclusion

Contributions

- BaseCosmo: A low-level program logic for the weak memory model of Multicore OCaml [ICFP 2020]
 - closely reflects the operational semantics
- Cosmo: A higher-level logic, based on a notion of views [ICFP 2020]
 - easier to use, cannot reason about racy programs
- Verification of locks and mutual exclusion algorithms [ICFP 2020]
- Specification and verification of a non-trivial lock-free queue [ICFP 2021]
 - demonstrates the expressivity of Cosmo
 - methodology: add views wherever synchronization is relevant
- Mechanized in Coq (Iris) 

Takeaways

The logic of views enables concise and natural reasoning about how threads synchronize

Enables fine-grained specifications

Don't hide views: make them apparent in specifications!

Prove specifications with the splitting rule

Fits naturally into a Hoare/Concurrent Separation Logic framework

Model of the logic in Iris

Assertions are predicates on views:

$$\text{vProp} \triangleq \text{view} \longrightarrow \text{iProp}$$

$$\uparrow \mathcal{U}_0 \triangleq \lambda \mathcal{U}. \mathcal{U}_0 \sqsubseteq \mathcal{U}$$

$$P * Q \triangleq \lambda \mathcal{U}. P \ \mathcal{U} * Q \ \mathcal{U}$$

$$P \multimap Q \triangleq \lambda \mathcal{U}. \quad P \ \mathcal{U} \multimap Q \ \mathcal{U}$$

We equip a language-with-view with an operational semantics:

$$\text{exprWithView} \triangleq \text{expr} \times \text{view}$$

Iris builds a WP calculus for `exprWithView` in `iProp`.

We derive a WP calculus for `expr` in `vProp` and prove adequacy:

$$\text{WP } e \ \varphi \triangleq \lambda \mathcal{U}. \quad$$

$$\text{valid } \mathcal{U} \multimap \text{WP } \langle e, \mathcal{U} \rangle \ (\lambda \langle v, \mathcal{U}' \rangle. \text{valid } \mathcal{U}' * \varphi \ v \ \mathcal{U}')$$

where $\varphi : \text{val} \rightarrow \text{vProp}$

Model of the logic in Iris

Assertions are **monotonic** predicates on views:

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Assertions are monotonic

Subjective assertions are **monotonic** w.r.t. the thread's view.

One reason is the frame rule:

$$\frac{\left\{ x \rightsquigarrow_{\text{na}} v * P \right\}}{x :=_{\text{na}} v'}$$
$$\left\{ \lambda(). x \rightsquigarrow_{\text{na}} v' * P \right\}$$

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Subjective assertions are **monotonic** w.r.t. the thread's view.

One reason is the frame rule:

$$\frac{\left\{ x \rightsquigarrow_{\text{na}} v * P \text{ — holds at the thread's current view} \right\}}{x :=_{\text{na}} v'}$$
$$\left\{ \lambda(). x \rightsquigarrow_{\text{na}} v' * P \text{ — holds at the thread's now extended view} \right\}$$

Key idea: decomposing subjective assertions

Decompose subjective assertions:

$$P \iff \exists \mathcal{U}. \underbrace{P @ \mathcal{U}}_{\text{objective}} * \underbrace{\uparrow \mathcal{U}}_{\text{subjective}}$$

$$P @ \mathcal{U} \implies \text{Objectively } \uparrow \mathcal{U} * P$$

Share parts via distinct mechanisms:

- $P @ \mathcal{U}$: via an objective **invariant**
- $\uparrow \mathcal{U}$: via **synchronization** offered by the memory model

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$$P @ \mathcal{U} \iff \text{Objectively}(\uparrow \mathcal{U} * P)$$

$$\text{Objectively } Q \iff (\forall \mathcal{U}. Q @ \mathcal{U}) \iff Q @ \emptyset$$

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