EE382N: Computer Architecture
Parallelism and Locality
Fall 2009

Lecture 8 – Parallelism in Software (Patterns for Parallel Programming)

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Announcements

- I won’t be able to teach next Monday
- Option 1: Derek Chiou will give a lecture on dataflow architectures
- Option 2: Re-schedule class to later in the week. Maybe Thursday evening or Friday during the day
- I’ll post a survey

Credits

- Most of the slides courtesy Dr. Rodric Rabbah (IBM)
  - Taken from 6.189 IAP taught at MIT in 2007.

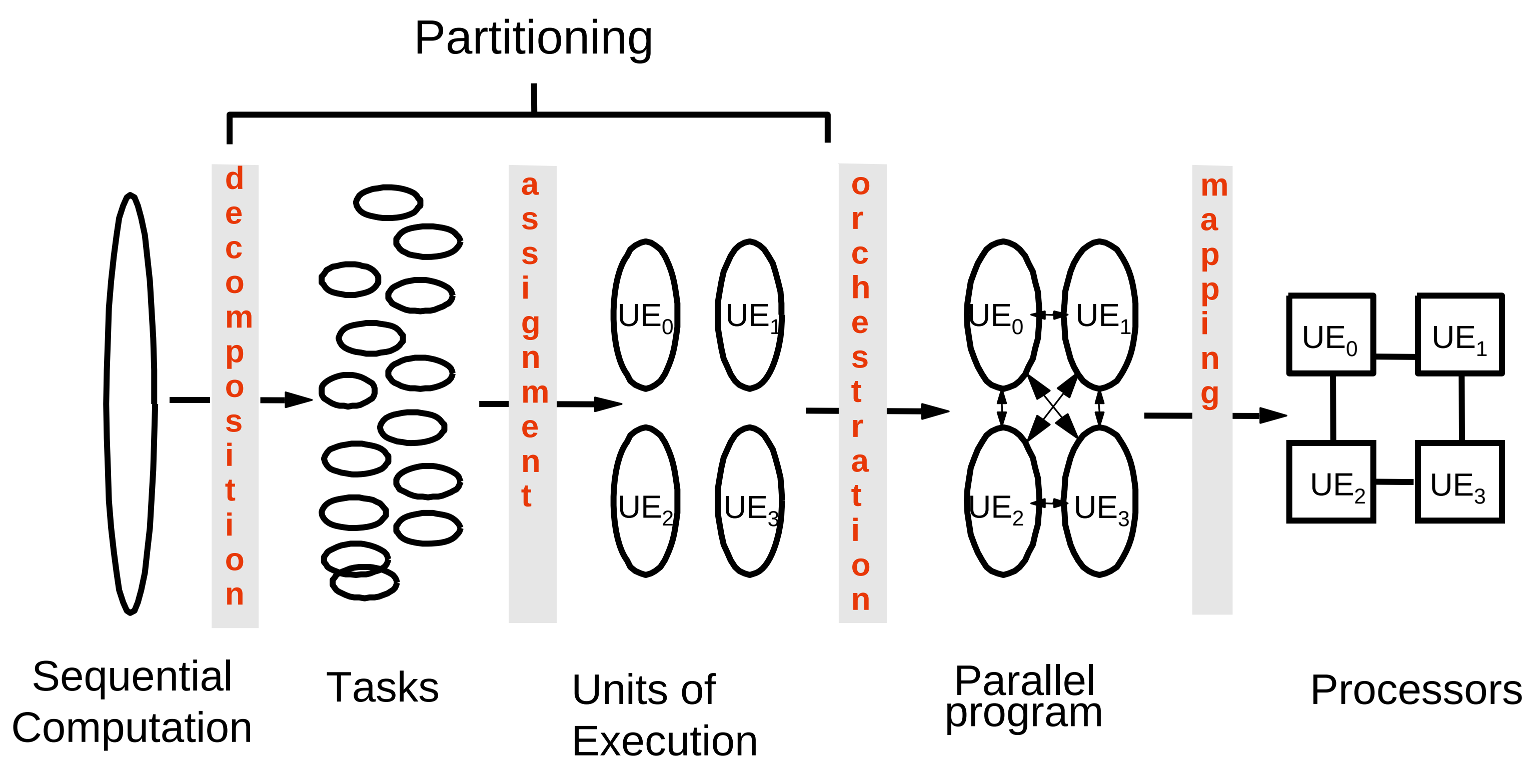
Outline

- Parallel programming
  – Start from scratch
  – Reengineering for parallelism
- Parallelizing a program
  – Decomposition (finding concurrency)
  – Assignment (algorithm structure)
  – Orchestration (supporting structures)
  – Mapping (implementation mechanisms)
- Patterns for Parallel Programming

Parallel programming from scratch

- Start with an algorithm
  - Formal representation of problem solution
  - ***Sequence*** of steps
- Make sure there is parallelism
  - In each algorithm step
  - Minimize synchronization points
- Don’t forget locality
  - Communication is costly
    - Performance, Energy, System cost
- More often start with existing sequential code

4 Common Steps to Creating a Parallel Program



Reengineering for Parallelism

- Parallel programs often start as sequential programs
  - Easier to write and debug
  - Legacy codes
- How to reengineer a sequential program for parallelism:
  - Survey the landscape
  - Pattern provides a list of questions to help assess existing code
  - Many are the same as in any reengineering project
  - Is program numerically well-behaved?
- Define the scope and get users acceptance
  - Required precision of results
  - Input range
  - Performance expectations
  - Feasibility (back of envelope calculations)

Reengineering for Parallelism

- Define a testing protocol
- Identify program hot spots: where is most of the time spent?
  - Look at code
  - Use profiling tools
- Parallelization
  - Start with hot spots first
  - Make sequences of small changes, each followed by testing
  - Patterns provide guidance

Decomposition

- Identify concurrency and decide at what level to exploit it
- Break up computation into tasks to be divided among processes
  - Tasks may become available dynamically
  - Number of tasks may vary with time
- Enough tasks to keep processors busy
  - Number of tasks available at a time is upper bound on achievable speedup

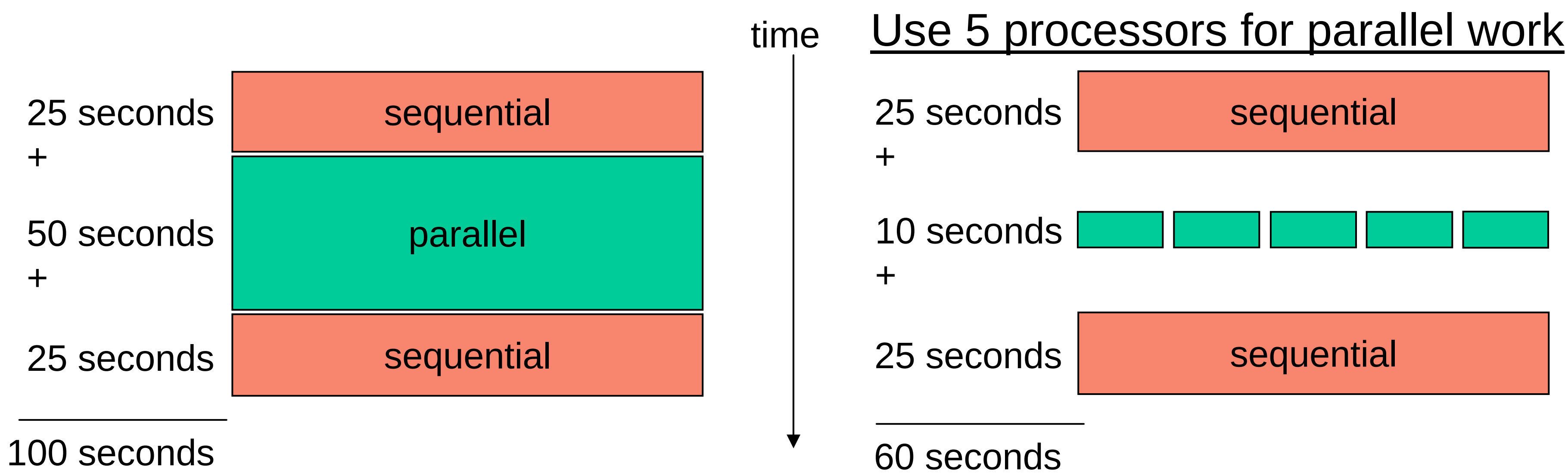
Main consideration: coverage and Amdahl's Law

Coverage

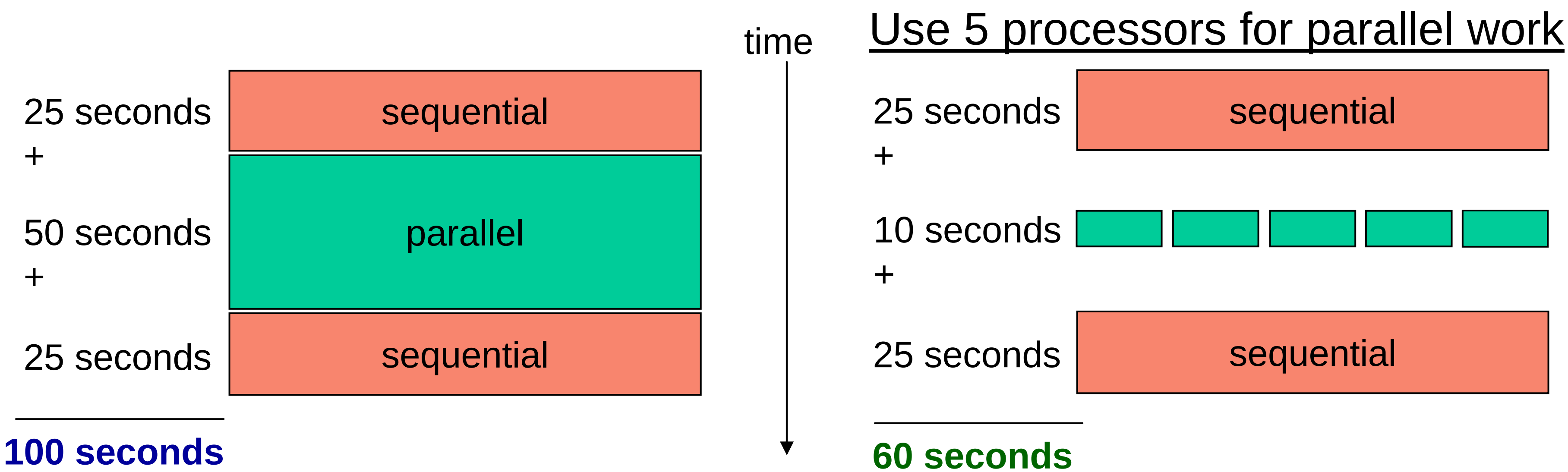
- **Amdahl's Law**: *The performance improvement to be gained from using some faster mode of execution is limited by the fraction of the time the faster mode can be used.*
  - Demonstration of the law of diminishing returns

Amdahl's Law

- Potential program speedup is defined by the fraction of code that can be parallelized



Amdahl's Law



- Speedup = old running time / new running time

  = 100 seconds / 60 seconds

  = 1.67

  (parallel version is 1.67 times faster)

Amdahl's Law

- p = fraction of work that can be parallelized
- n = the number of processor

$$speedup = \frac{\text{old running time}}{\text{new running time}}$$

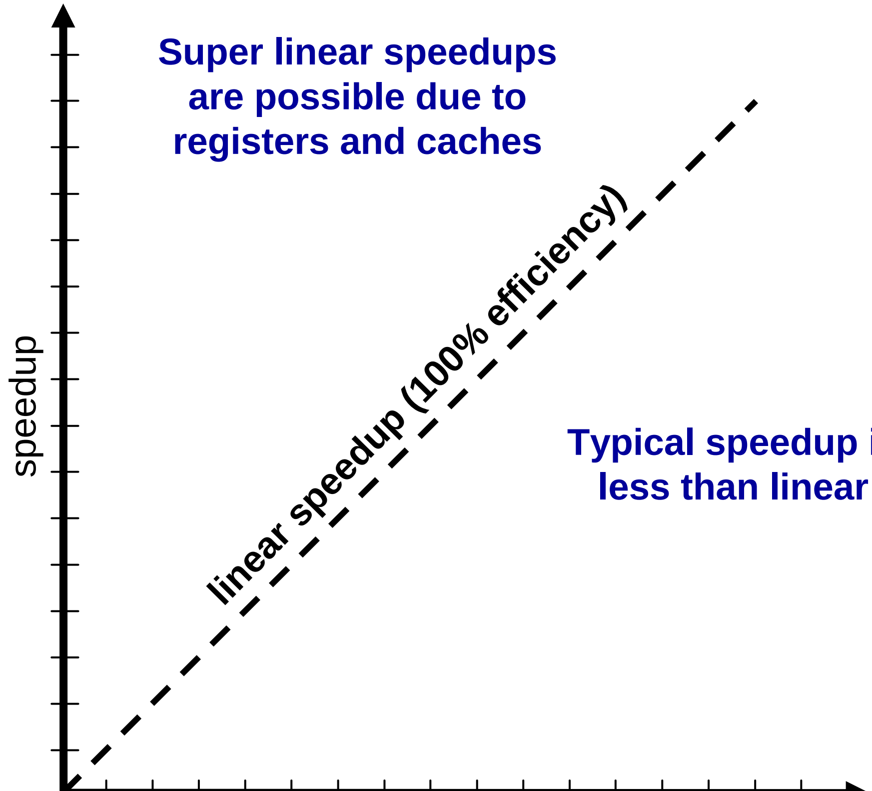
$$= \frac{1}{(1-p) + \frac{p}{n}}$$

$(1-p)$: fraction of time to complete sequential work

$\frac{p}{n}$: fraction of time to complete parallel work

Implications of Amdahl's Law

- Speedup tends to $\frac{1}{1-p}$ as number of processors tends to infinity



Parallelism only worthwhile when it dominates execution

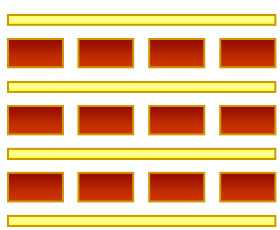
Assignment

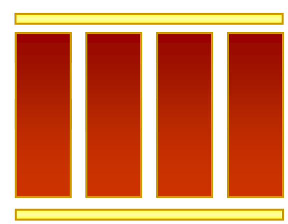
- Specify mechanism to divide work among PEs
  - Balance work and reduce communication
- Structured approaches usually work well
  - Code inspection or understanding of application
  - Well-known design patterns
- As programmers, we worry about partitioning first
  - Independent of architecture or programming model?
  - Complexity often affects decisions
  - Architectural model affects decisions

Main considerations: granularity and locality

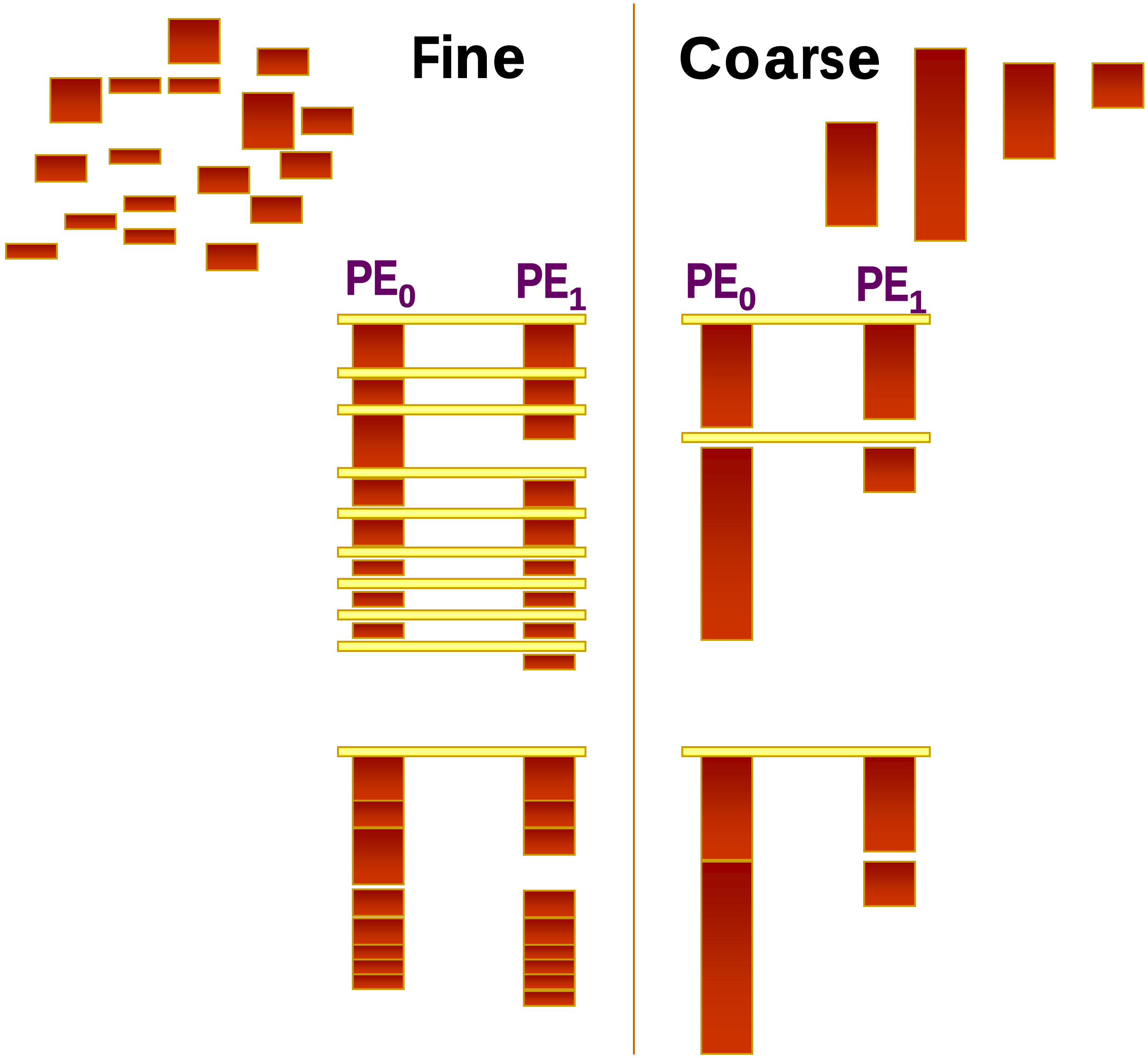
Fine vs. Coarse Granularity

- Fine-grain Parallelism
  - Low computation to communication ratio
  - Small amounts of computational work between communication stages
  - High communication overhead
    - Potential HW assist
- Coarse-grain Parallelism
  - High computation to communication ratio
  - Large amounts of computational work between communication events
  - Harder to load balance efficiently





Load Balancing vs. Synchronization



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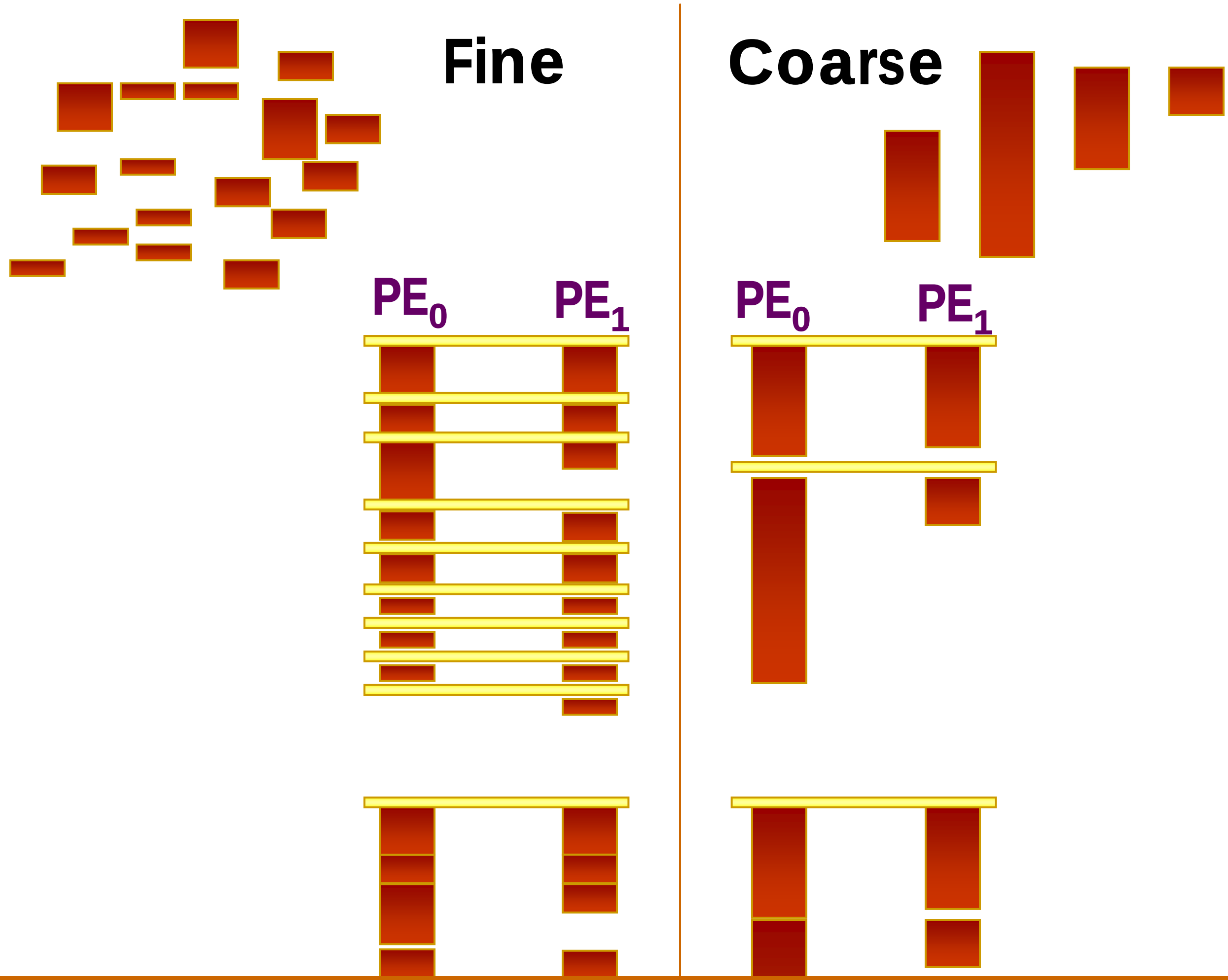


Expensive sync → coarse granularity

Few units of exec + time disparity → fine granularity

Orchestration and Mapping

- Computation and communication concurrency
- Preserve locality of data
- Schedule tasks to satisfy dependences early
- Survey available mechanisms on target system

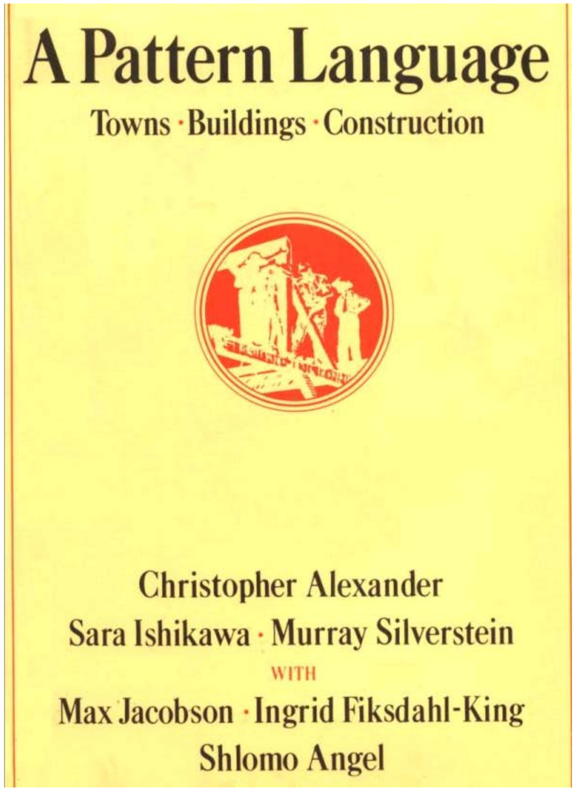
Main considerations: locality, parallelism, mechanisms (efficiency and dangers)

Parallel Programming by Pattern

- Provides a cookbook to systematically guide programmers
  - Decompose, Assign, Orchestrate, Map
  - Can lead to high quality solutions in some domains
- Provide common vocabulary to the programming community
  - Each pattern has a name, providing a vocabulary for discussing solutions
- Helps with software reusability, malleability, and modularity
  - Written in prescribed format to allow the reader to quickly understand the solution and its context
- Otherwise, too difficult for programmers, and software will not fully exploit parallel hardware

History

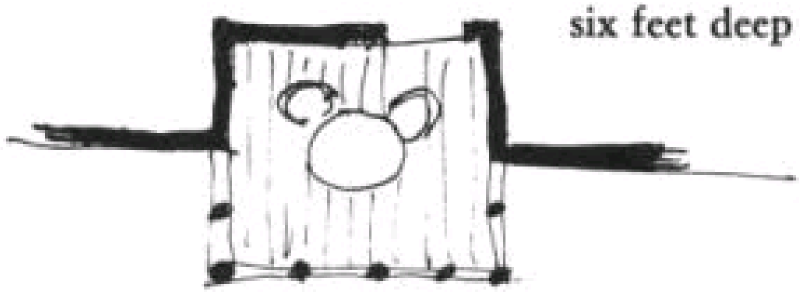
- Berkeley architecture professor Christopher Alexander
- In 1977, patterns for city planning, landscaping, and architecture in an attempt to capture principles for "living" design



Example 167 (p. 783): 6ft Balcony

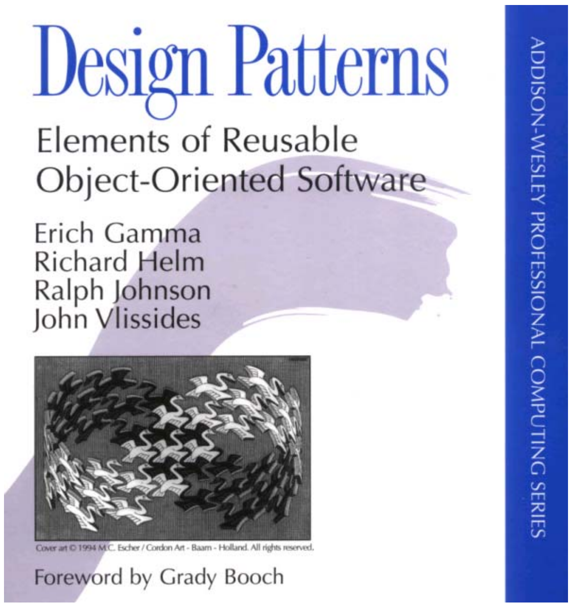
Therefore:

Whenever you build a balcony, a porch, a gallery, or a terrace always make it at least six feet deep. If possible, recess at least a part of it into the building so that it is not cantilevered out and separated from the building by a simple line, and enclose it partially.



Patterns in Object-Oriented Programming

- Design Patterns: Elements of Reusable Object-Oriented Software (1995)
  - Gang of Four (GOF): Gamma, Helm, Johnson, Vlissides
  - Catalogue of patterns
  - Creation, structural, behavioral



Patterns for Parallelizing Programs

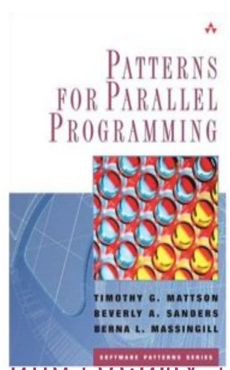
4 Design Spaces

Algorithm Expression

- Finding Concurrency
  - Expose concurrent tasks
- Algorithm Structure
  - Map tasks to processes to exploit parallel architecture

Software Construction

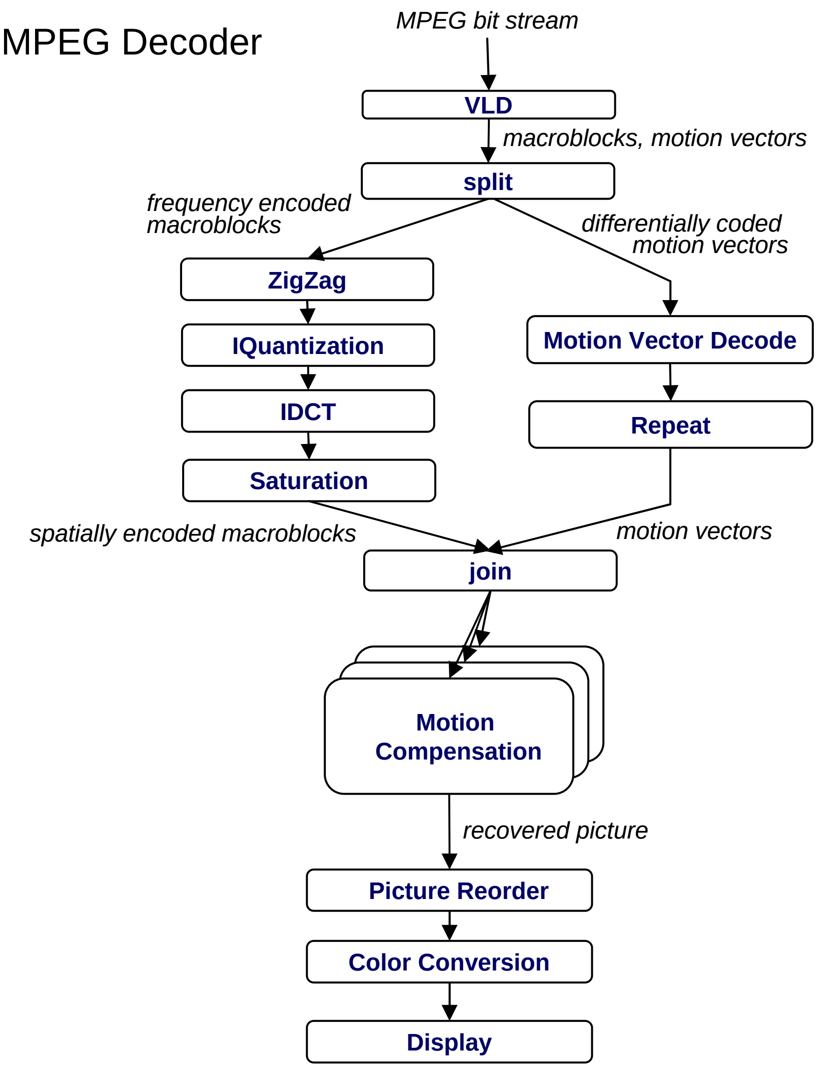
- Supporting Structures
  - Code and data structuring patterns
- Implementation Mechanisms
  - Low level mechanisms used to write parallel programs



Patterns for Parallel Programming. Mattson, Sanders, and Massingill (2005).

Here's my algorithm. Where's the concurrency?

MPEG Decoder



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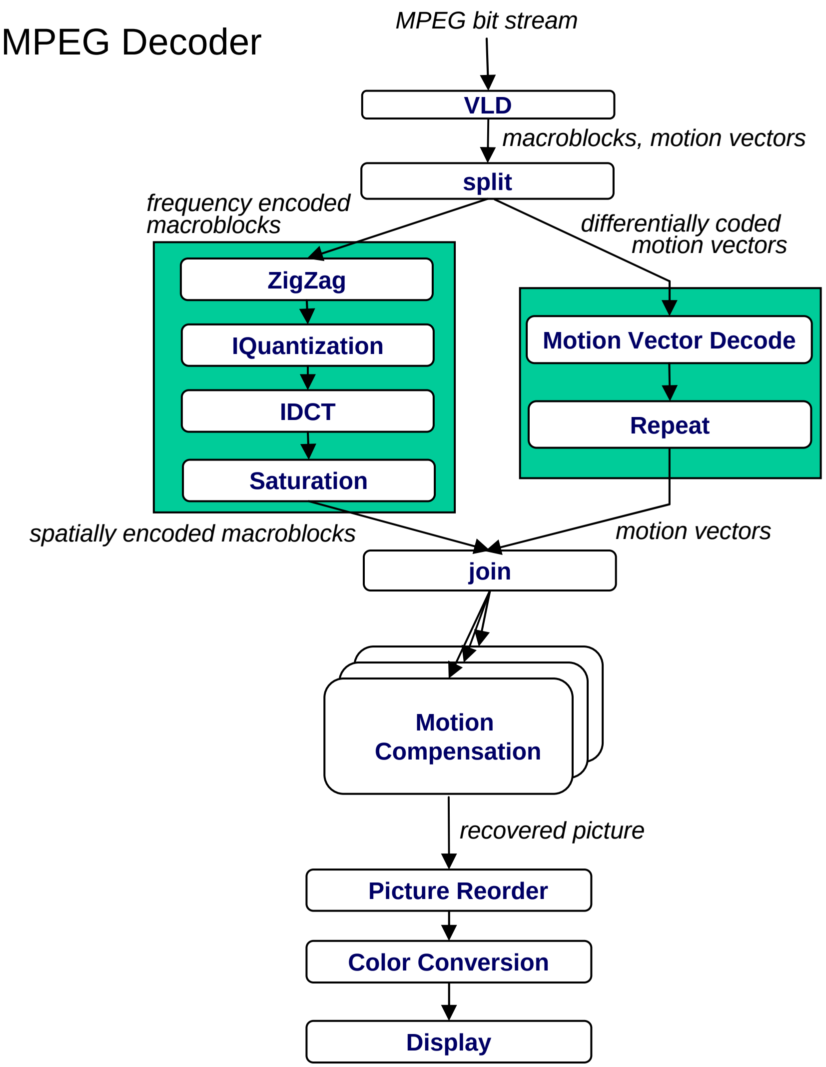
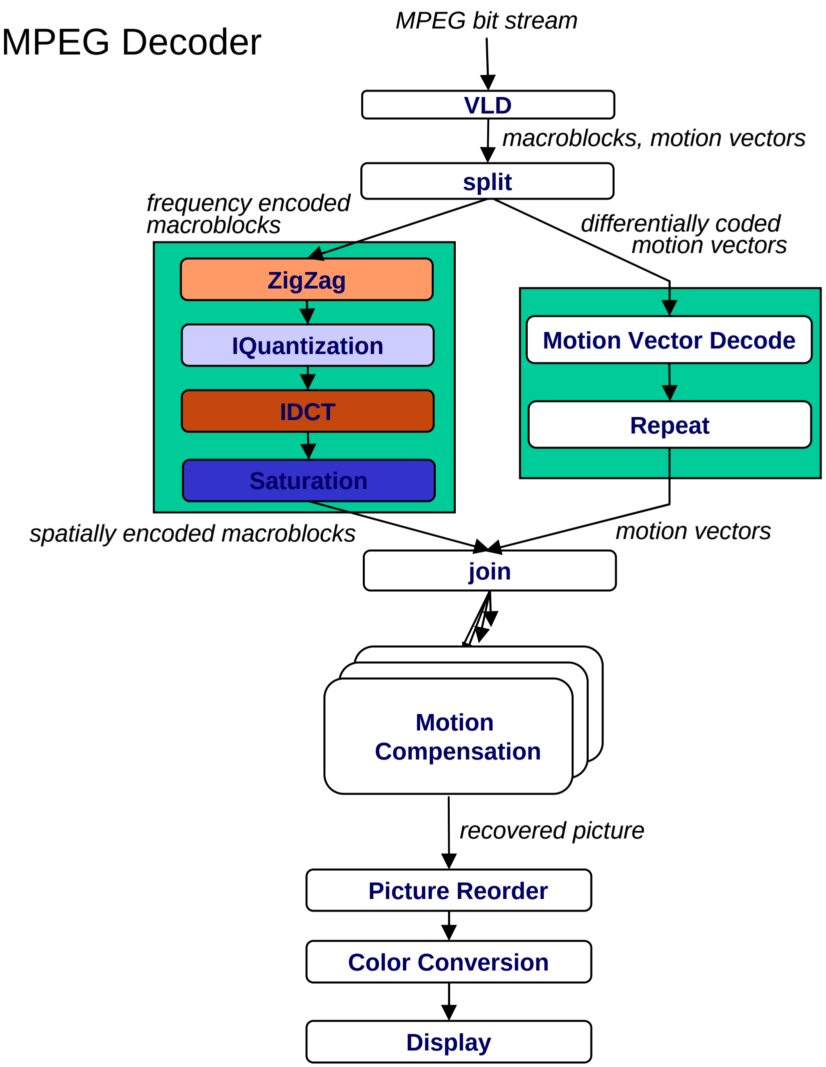


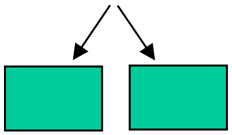
- Task decomposition
  - Independent coarse-grained computation
  - Inherent to algorithm
- Sequence of statements (instructions) that operate together as a group
  - Corresponds to some logical part of program
  - Usually follows from the way programmer thinks about a problem

Here's my algorithm. Where's the concurrency?

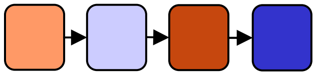
MPEG Decoder



- Task decomposition
  - Parallelism in the application



- Pipeline task decomposition
  - Data assembly lines
  - Producer-consumer chains



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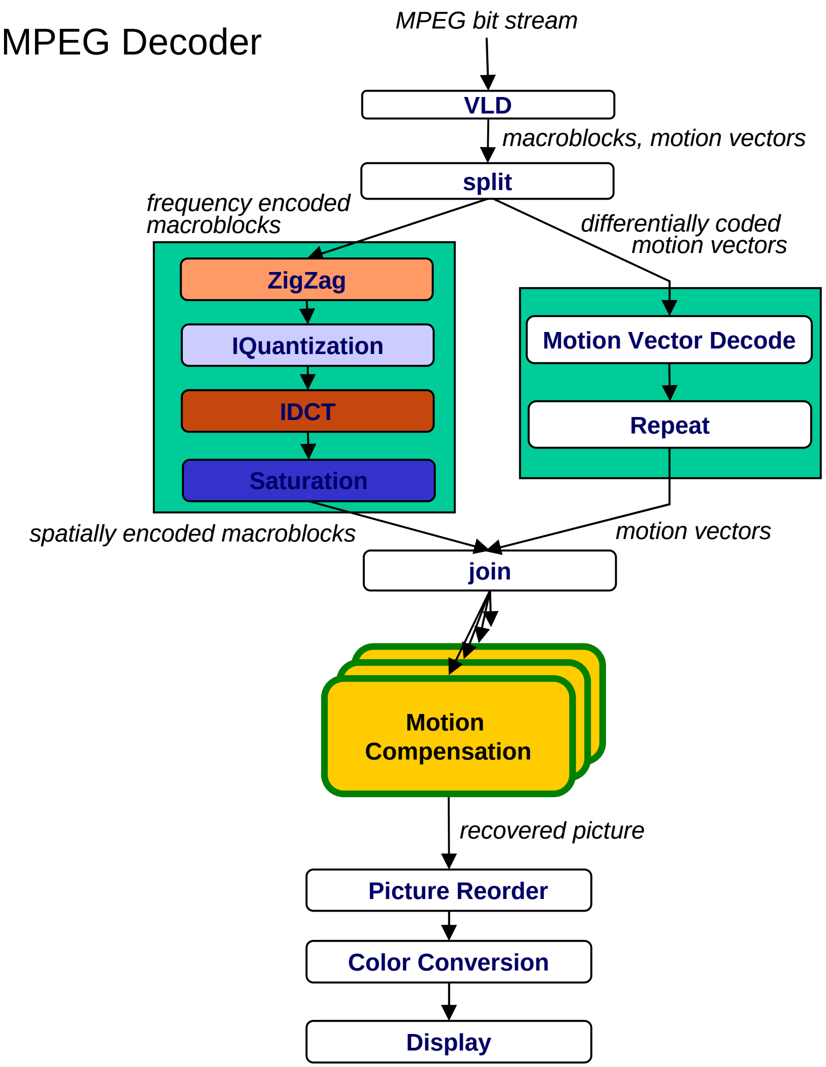

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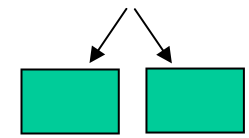

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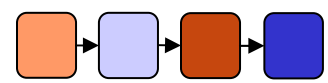
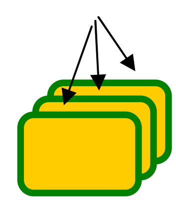


- Data decomposition
  - Same computation is applied to small data chunks derived from large data set



Guidelines for Task Decomposition

- Algorithms start with a good understanding of the problem being solved

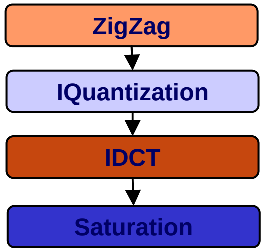
- Programs often naturally decompose into tasks
  - Two common decompositions are
    - Function calls and
    - Distinct loop iterations

- Easier to start with many tasks and later fuse them, rather than too few tasks and later try to split them

Guidelines for Task Decomposition

- Flexibility
  - Program design should afford flexibility in the number and size of tasks generated
    - Tasks should not tied to a specific architecture
    - Fixed tasks vs. Parameterized tasks
- Efficiency
  - Tasks should have enough work to amortize the cost of creating and managing them
  - Tasks should be sufficiently independent so that managing dependencies doesn't become the bottleneck
- Simplicity
  - The code has to remain readable and easy to understand, and debug

Case for Pipeline Decomposition



- Data is flowing through a sequence of stages
  - Assembly line is a good analogy
- What's a prime example of pipeline decomposition in computer architecture?
  - Instruction pipeline in modern CPUs
- What's an example pipeline you may use in your UNIX shell?
  - Pipes in UNIX: cat foobar.c | grep bar | wc
- Other examples
  - Signal processing
  - Graphics

Guidelines for Data Decomposition

- Data decomposition is often implied by task decomposition
- Programmers need to address task and data decomposition to create a parallel program
  - Which decomposition to start with?
- Data decomposition is a good starting point when
  - Main computation is organized around manipulation of a large data structure
  - Similar operations are applied to different parts of the data structure