

# Concurrent Java

## Java Programming in a Multicore World

**Angelika Langer**

Trainer/Consultant

<http://www.AngelikaLanger.com/>

# objective

- take look at current trends in concurrent programming
- explain the Java Memory Model
- discuss future trends such as lock-free programming and transactional memory

## speaker's relationship to topic

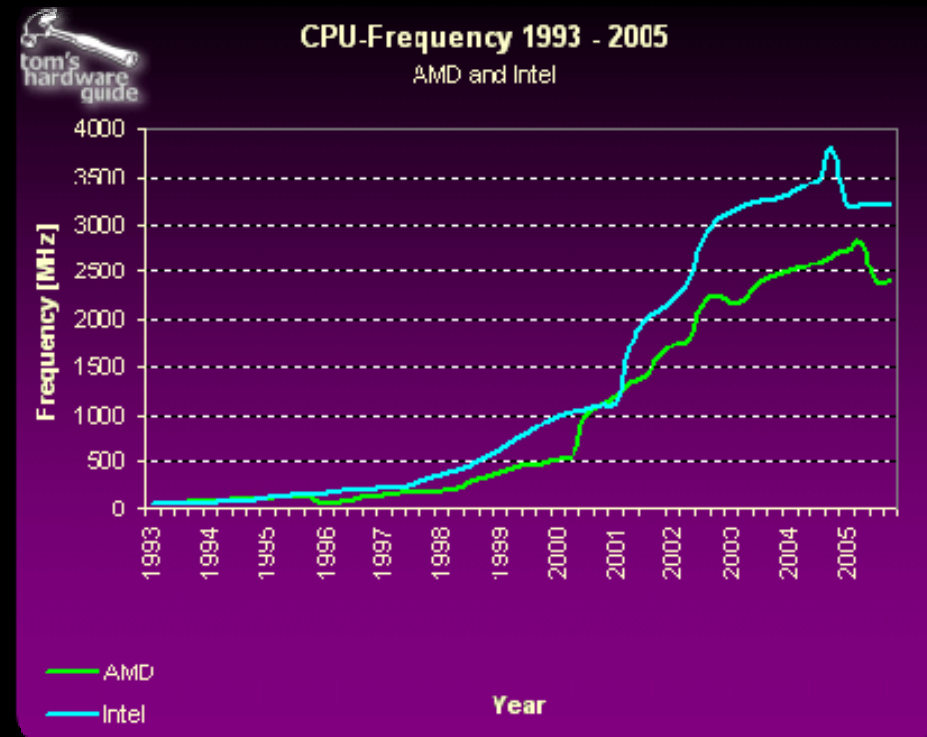
- independent trainer / consultant / author
  - teaching C++ and Java for 10+ years
  - curriculum of a dozen challenging courses
  - co-author of "Effective Java" column
  - author of Java Generics FAQ online
  - Java champion since 2005

# agenda

- **history of concurrency & concurrency trends**
- synchronization and memory model
- fight the serialization – improve scalability
- future trends

# CPU development

- Moore's law:
  - number of transistors doubles every two years
  - since 2004: more cores
  - until 2004: faster ones
  - main reason: heat
- 2 cores became standard 2007
  - 6-12 in 2009 (AMD)
- more complex caches
  - hierarchy



# CPU development implies

- new CPU will not solve your performance problems
  - if your program does not scale (well) to multiple cores
  - i.e.: find (and fight) the serialization
- existing programs
  - undetected errors might pop up
  - multi-core + caching uncovers synchronization problems
- Java adapts
  - to the needs and requirements of the changing MT uses

# Java history

- initially we had only low level functionality
  - language support (synchronized, Object.wait(), ...)
  - incomplete memory model
- major improvements since Java 5.0
  - explicit locks and conditions (java.util.concurrent.locks)
  - high-level abstractions
    - thread pool, synchronizers, concurrent collections
- ongoing effort in JDK 7 and 8
  - Fork/Join, Parallel Arrays

## former niche => main stream

- former niche becomes main stream with multi core CPUs
- more people build Java MT programs  
for multiprocessor platforms
  - MT patterns and idioms became common knowledge
    - => need for high-level abstractions
  - we strive for better scalability of MT abstractions
    - need for lock free programming
    - => need a clear and exact **memory model**
- not only Java development adapts
  - software architecture does so, too



# architecture history

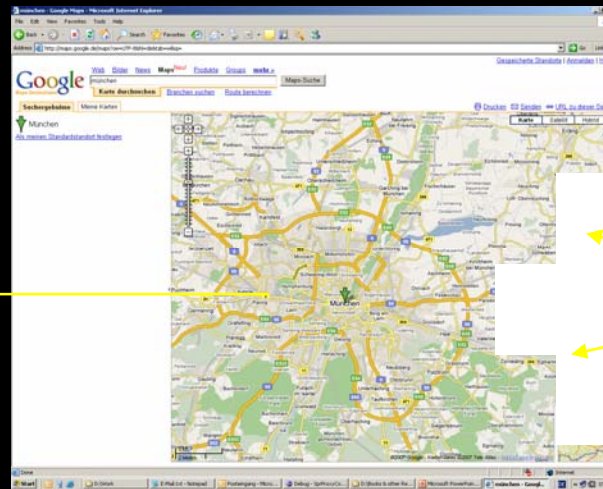
- in the mid 90ies
  - no or insufficient support of threads, multi-core unknown
  - threads used to structure programs –  
not to achieve more throughput
- since then
  - trend to asynchronous and parallel computing –  
to increase throughput
  - asynchronous I/O
    - 1.4 socket, 5.0 sockets + SSL, 7.0 sockets + file system
    - eliminates "one thread per socket" problem, more complex program structure
  - messaging (JMS) introduced 2001
    - no more sequential remoting (via RMI)
    - effect: EJB got *message-driven beans*

# architecture history (cont.)

- general example:
  - AJAX (**A**synchronous **J**avaScript and **X**ML)
  - means: **user** interaction **decoupled** from **HTTP** requests
  - traditionally
    - you select a link / push a button / etc. , and
    - a new page gets loaded into your browser
  - AJAX example: Google Maps

**user interaction**

**e.g. pull the map  
to the left**



**map elements are  
asynchronously  
pulled from the server  
via Javascript**

## more AJAX

- more asynchronicity: **HTTP push** via Ajax
  - signal an asynchronous event in the browser
    - e.g. incoming telephone call
- solutions boil down to "long-lived" HTTP request from browser
  - persistent communication / **long polling** / hybrid polling:
    - request lives, until event (= response) or timeout (5-10 minutes) occurs
    - new request to poll the next event
  - comet style / **HTTP streaming**:
    - request lives, until the client goes away
    - all events are sent as part of the same response

## a small problem

- traditional servlet programming
  - one thread:
    - receives HTTP request, processes it and sends a response
- does not work well with long-lived HTTP request
  - occupies a thread per request
    - until event occurs or client goes away !
- need asynchronous web servers
  - that decouple request from response
    - Jetty 6 Continuation
    - Tomcat 6.0
    - Servlet 3.0 Java standard for asynchronous web server
- underlying concept: **asynchronous I/O**

# more and more asynchronicity

- not only web server – other servers too
- SOA (**s**ervice **o**riented **a**rchitecture)
  - service -> service -> service ...
  - you don't want to have a waiting thread in each of the servers
    - asynchronous handling of the request
    - MOM (**m**essage **o**riented **m**iddleware), means often JMS in Java
- all this means:
  - you need **multiple threads** and some **synchronization** for them to tie the external asynchronous channels to your program

# agenda

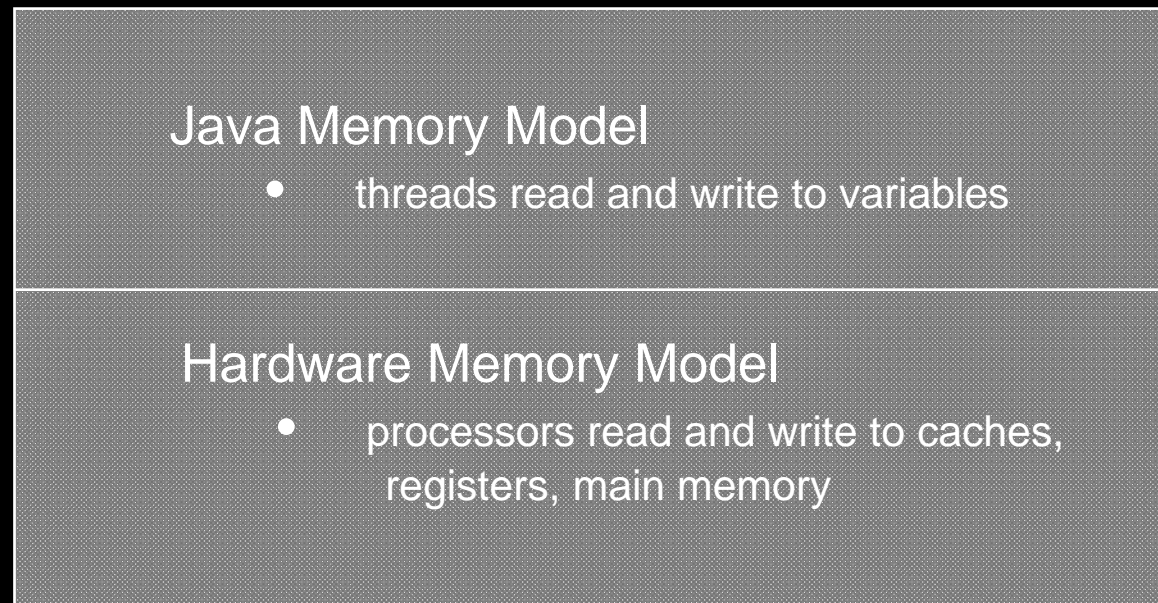
- history of concurrency & concurrency trends
- **synchronization and memory model**
- fight the serialization – improve scalability
- future trends

## motivation - why does JMM matter?

- JMM = **J**ava **M**emory **M**odel
- understanding JMM reveals errors in existing programs
  - undetected errors might pop up
  - multi-core + caching uncovers synchronization problems

# Java Memory Model (JMM)

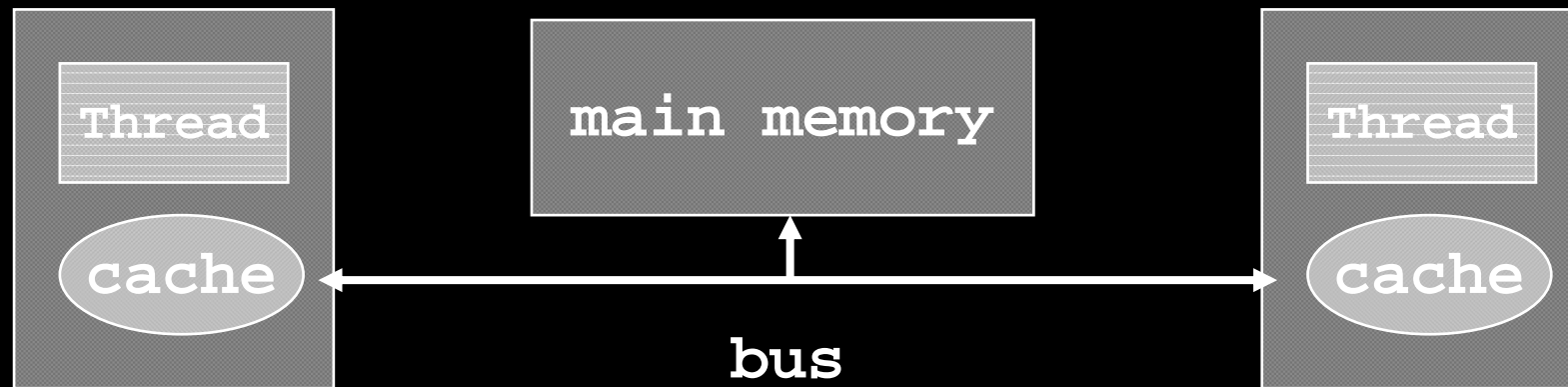
- specifies minimal guarantees given by the JVM
  - about when writes to variables become visible to other threads
- is an abstraction on top of hardware memory models





# Java memory model

- JMM resembles abstract SMP (symmetric multi processing) machine
- key ideas:
  - all threads share the main memory
  - each thread uses a local working memory
  - flushing or refreshing working memory to/from main memory must comply to JMM rules



# Java memory model

JMM rules address 3 intertwined issues:

- atomicity
  - which operations must have indivisible effects ?
- visibility
  - under which conditions are the effects of operations taken by one thread visible to other threads ?
- ordering
  - under which conditions can the effects of operations appear out of order to any given thread ?

"operations" means:

- reads and writes to memory cells representing Java variables

# hardware memory models

- JVM maps JMM to hardware memory model
  - in shared-memory multiprocessor architectures:
    - each processor (or processor core) has its own cache (or even several layers of caches)
    - cache is periodically reconciled with main memory
    - cache strategies vary among architectures

=> *hardware memory model*

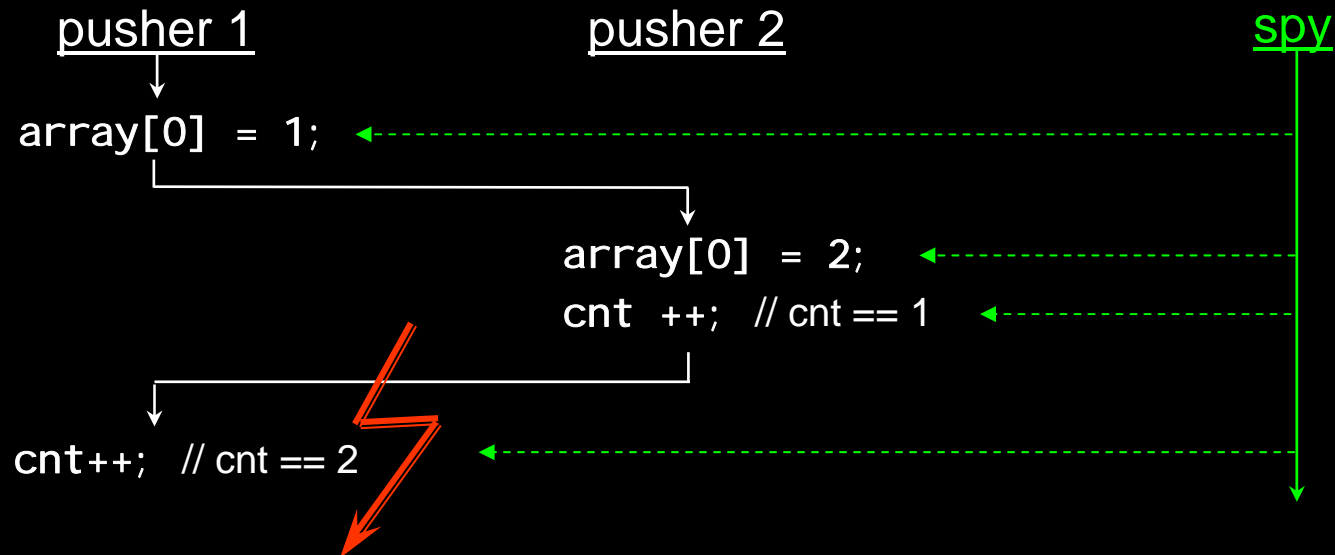
- *memory barriers or fences*
  - JVM uses special instructions for memory coordination
    - to implement the JMM rules
    - to shield developers from hardware differences

# sequential consistency

- *sequential consistency* is a convenient (yet unrealistic) mental model:
  - imagine a single order of execution of all programm operations (regardless of the processors used)
  - each read of a variable will see the last write in the execution order

# sequential consistency - example

```
private int[] array;  
private int cnt = 0;  
...  
public void push(int elm) { array[cnt++] = elm; }  
public int pop()          { return(array[--cnt]); }  
...
```

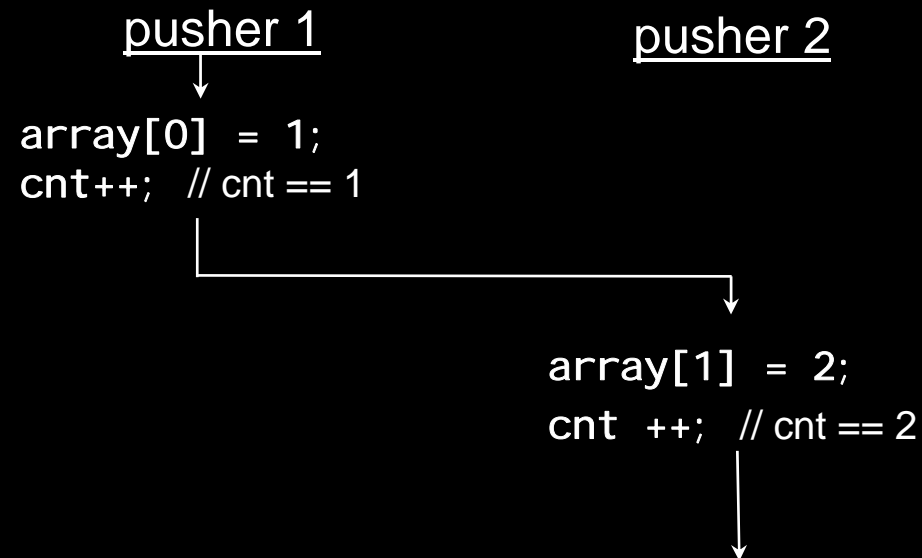


# NO sequential consistency

- JMM does NOT guarantee sequential consistency
  - reordering is generally permitted
  - specific rules for
    - synchronization,
    - thread start / join,
    - volatile variables, and
    - final fields

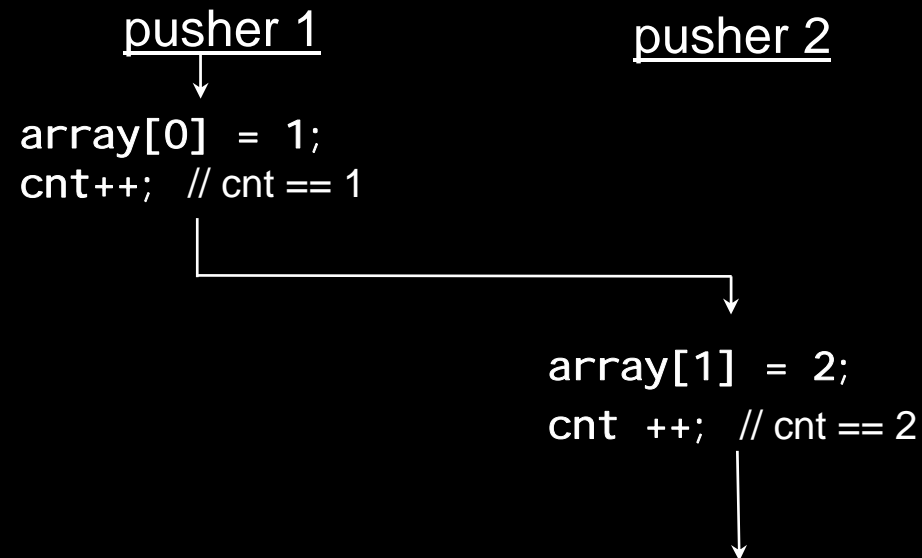
# memory effects of synchronisation

```
private int[] array;  
private int cnt = 0;  
...  
public synchronized void push(int elm) { array[cnt++] = elm; }  
public synchronized int pop()         { return(array[--cnt]); }  
...
```



# atomicity & synchronization

- execution of operations in a **synchronized** block appears atomic to other synchronized blocks (using the same lock)
- same for operations between acquisition / release of **explicit lock**





## atomicity of unsynchronized access

- access to **primitive** type (except long/double) is atomic
- access to **references** is atomic (does *not* include object access)
- access to **volatile** variables (including long/double) is atomic
- access to **atomic** variables is atomic
  
- common misconception
  - atomicity means we get the **most recent value** - wrong!
  - atomic access to a variable just means:
    - we will *not* get some jumble of bits

# agenda

- purpose of a memory model
- atomicity
- **visibility**
- reordering
- volatile
- final

# need for visibility

```
private int[] array;
private int cnt = 0; ← must be volatile
...
public synchronized void push(int elm) { array[cnt++] = elm; }
public synchronized int pop()         { return(array[--cnt]); }
public int size()                       { return cnt; }
...
```

- access to cnt is atomic
  - no synchronization in size() needed
- visibility problem
  - writes performed in one thread need not be visible to other threads
  - i.e. modification of cnt in push()/pop() need not be visible to size()
- volatile is needed not for atomicity, but for visibility

# visibility issues

- visibility not a problem *within* the same thread
  - when values are passed across methods in the same thread
- visibility is a problem *across* threads
  - not even any guarantees for related fields
  - example:
    - object has two fields + both are altered by thread A
    - thread B might see:
      - one field has initial value and
      - other field has updated value

# visibility guarantees

- changes made in one thread are guaranteed to be visible to other threads under the following conditions:
  - explicit synchronization
  - thread start and termination
  - read / write of volatiles
  - first read of finals
- note:
  - visibility is only an issue in case of unsynchronized access

# explicit synchronization

- releasing a lock forces a flush
  - the releasing thread flushes its working memory to main memory
- acquiring a lock forces a reload from main memory
  - the acquiring thread refreshes its working memory from main memory
- matches our expectation
  - at a synchronization point the effect produced by one thread become visible to the other thread

# thread start and termination

- thread start forces a reload from main memory
  - starting thread fills working memory from main memory
- thread termination forces a flush to main memory
  - terminating thread flushes working memory to main memory
- matches our expectation
  - `join()` is guaranteed to see the effects produced by the other thread
  - how about `sleep()` and `yield()`, `wait()` and `notify()` ?

## read / write of volatiles

- reading a volatile forces a reload from main memory
  - the reading thread fills its working memory from main memory
- writing to a volatile forces a flush to main memory
  - the writing thread flushes its working memory to main memory
- matches our expectation
  - modifications of a volatile field produced by one thread are visible to other threads
  - ... what does that mean for volatile references ... ???



## first read of final

- end of construction forces a partial flush
  - the constructing thread flushes any finals (including any dependent values) from its working memory to main memory
  - final is transitive
- first access of a final field forces a partial reload
  - the reading thread loads the final (including any dependent values) from main memory
  - afterwards the values need never be refreshed again, since they are constant

# agenda

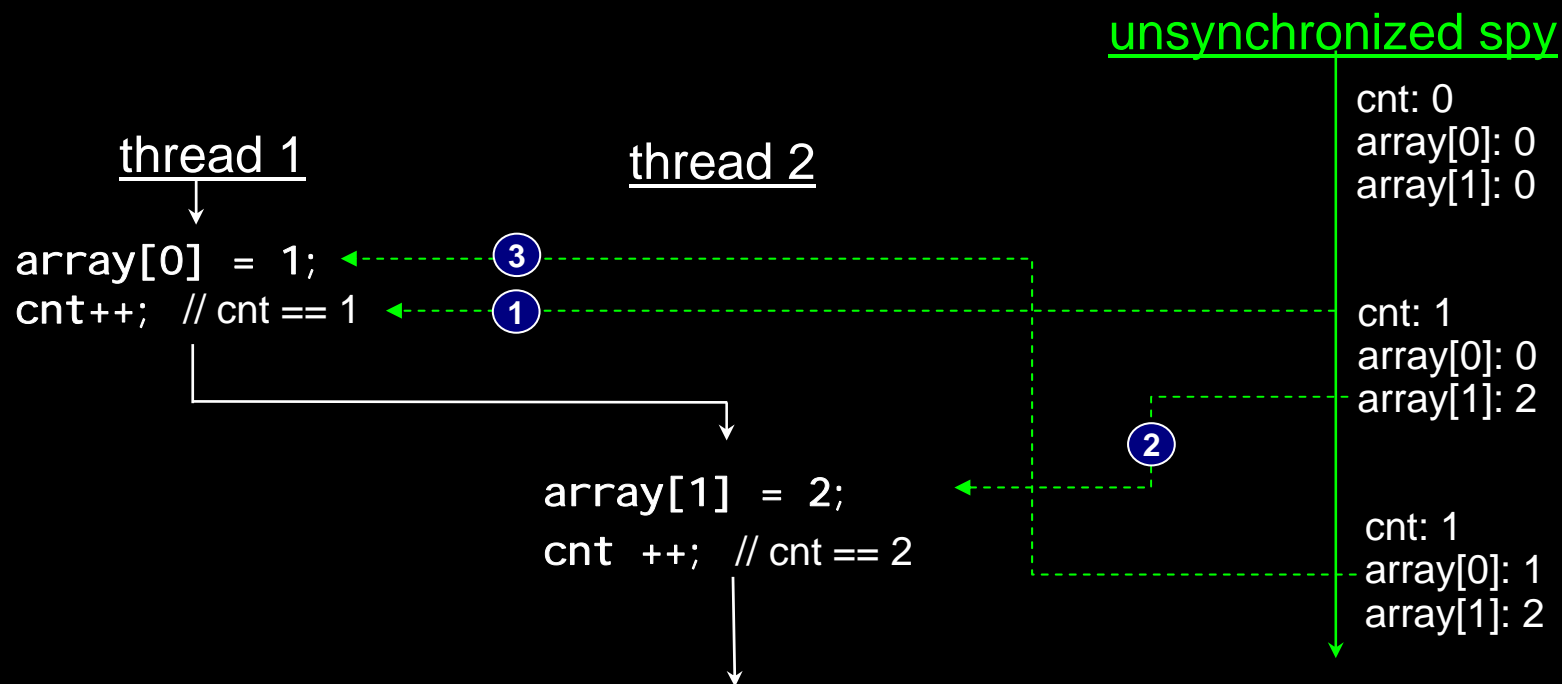
- purpose of a memory model
- atomicity
- visibility
- **reordering**
- volatile
- final

# ordering

- ordering is closely related to visibility
- JMM is specified in terms of *actions*
  - e.g. reads and writes to variables, locks and unlocks of monitors, starting and joining threads
- JMM defines "*happens-before*" rules
  - **partial** ordering on actions
  - if there is **NO** happens-before ordering between two actions, then the JVM is free to reorder them

# reordering - example

```
private int[] array;  
private int cnt = 0;  
...  
public synchronized void push(int elm) { array[cnt++] = elm; }  
public synchronized int pop()          { return(array[--cnt]); }  
...
```



# ordering

- ordering rules have two aspects:
- within thread
  - thread performing actions in a method perceives instructions in normal **as-if-serial** order
- between thread
  - other thread ‘spying’ on this thread (without synchronization) might perceive instructions in **arbitrary** order

# ordering guarantees

- ordering of synchronized blocks is preserved
  - actions in one synchronized block happen (i.e. effects become visible) *before* another thread acquires the same lock
- ordering of read/write of volatile fields is preserved
  - effect of last write to a volatile is visible to all subsequent reads of the same volatile
- ordering of initialization/access to final fields is preserved
  - all threads will see the correct values of final fields that were set by the constructor

# agenda

- purpose of a memory model
- atomicity
- visibility
- reordering
- **volatile**
- final

# visibility guarantee for volatile

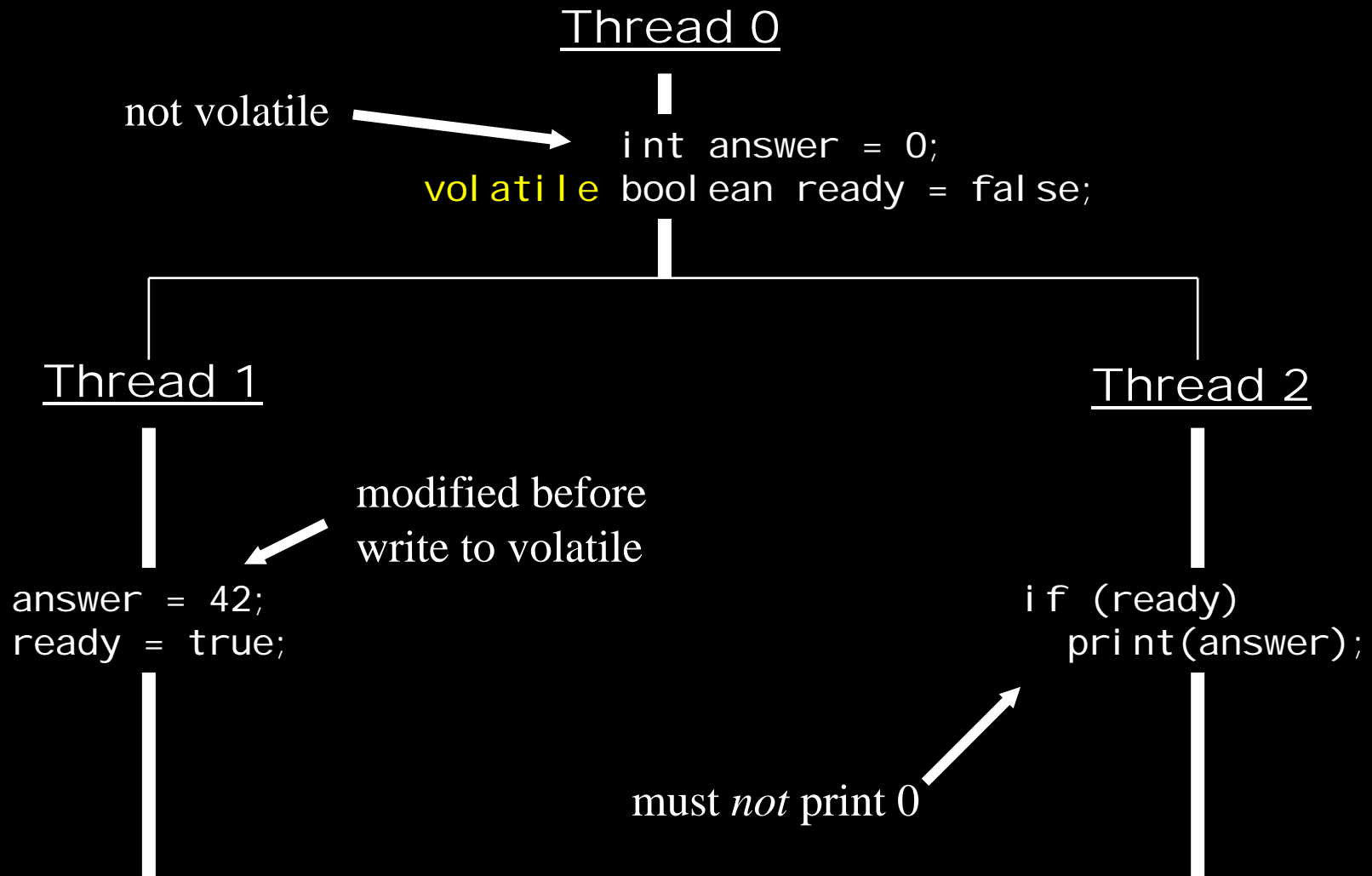
- write to a volatile acts as a flush
- read of a volatile acts as an refresh

When a thread reads a volatile, then all writes are visible that any other thread performed prior to a write to the same volatile.

- not just the volatile becomes visible
  - but all memory modifications made by writing thread prior to the volatile write
- read and write access must match
  - must read same variable that has been written
  - otherwise no visibility guarantee



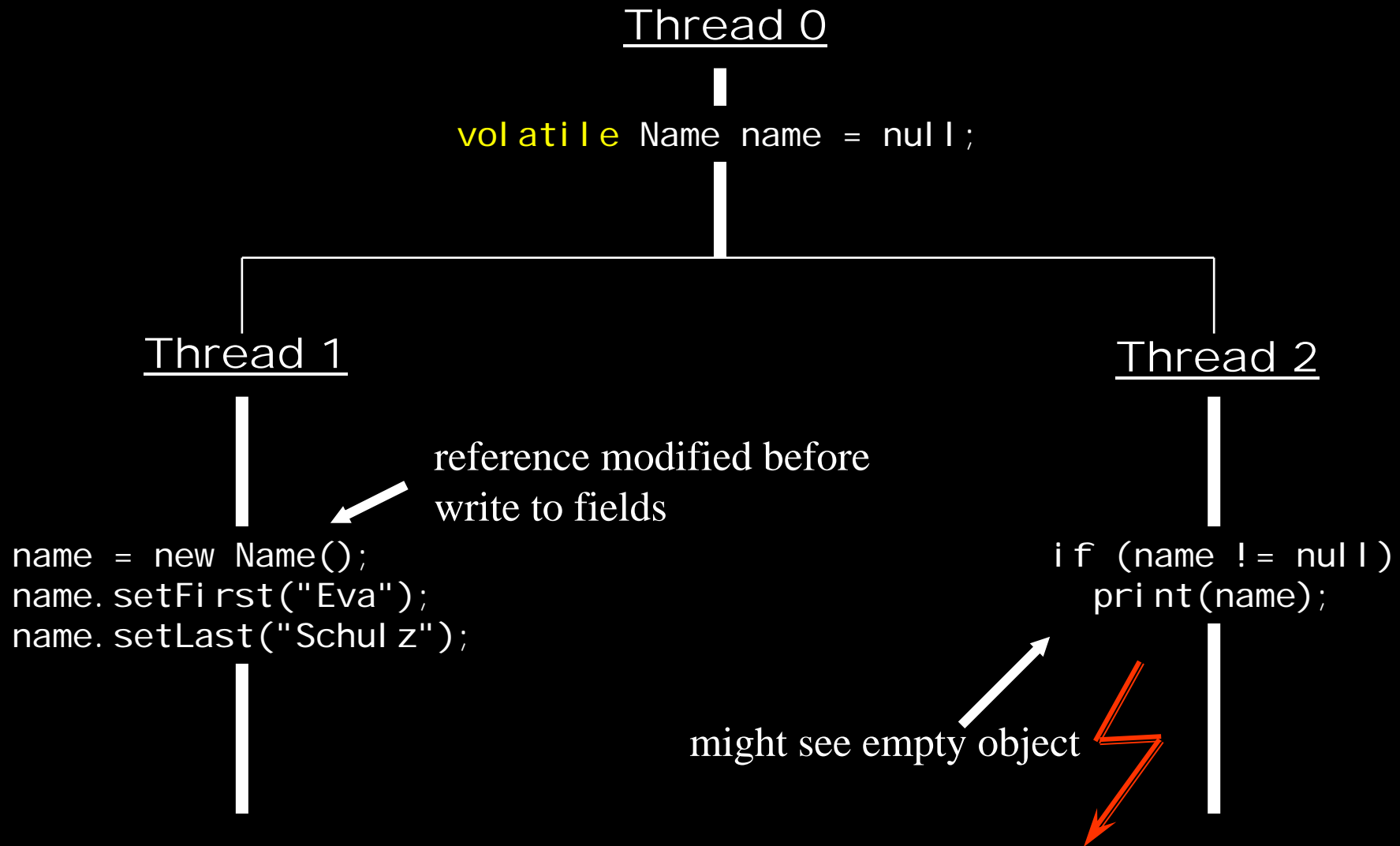
# volatile - example



# volatile references

- volatile guarantees affect a volatile reference
  - but NOT the referenced object and its fields
  - volatile is NOT transitive

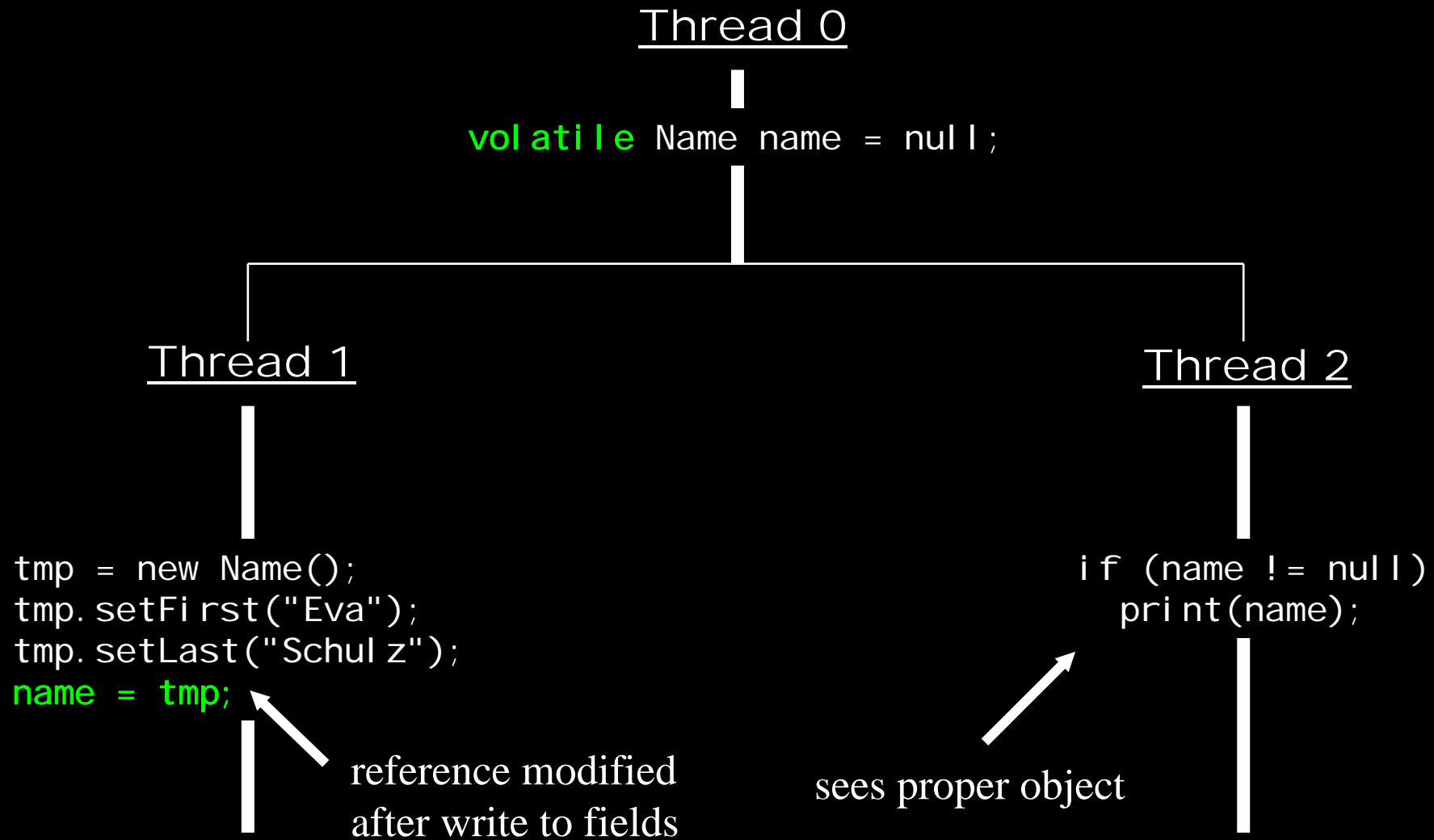
# volatile reference - example



# volatile references

- what do we do to also make the modified object visible?
  - make all fields of referenced object volatile
    - problem for arrays: array elements cannot be declared volatile
  - modify fields before assignment to volatile reference
    - all changes made prior to writing to the volatile are flushed
  - use explicit synchronization
    - viable fallback, at the expense of synchronization overhead

# volatile reference - example



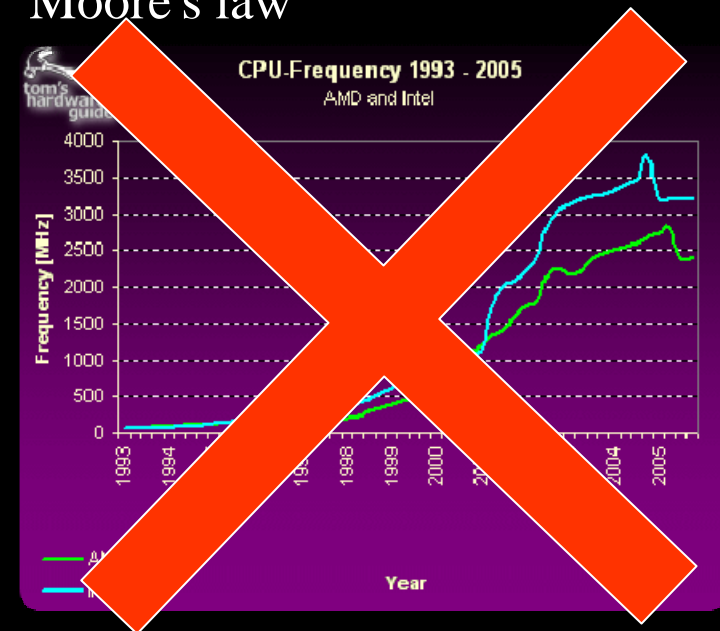
# agenda

- history of concurrency & concurrency trends
- synchronization and memory model
- **fight the serialization – improve scalability**
- future trends

## performance wise

- cannot buy a faster CPU to speed up the program
  - or hope for a faster CPU six/twelve month from now
    - when you program feels slow during development
- software must be designed so that
  - it can take advantage of the additional cores / CPUs
  - can scale with additional cores / CPUs

### Moore's law



# Amdahl's law

- named after computer architect Gene Amdahl
  - "Validity of the Single Processor Approach to Achieving Large-Scale Computing Capabilities", AFIPS Conference Proceedings, (30), pp. 483-485, 1967.
  - Gene Amdahl has approved the use of his complete text in the Usenet comp.sys.super news group FAQ which goes out on the 20th of each month
- used in parallel computing to predict the theoretical maximum speedup using multiple processors

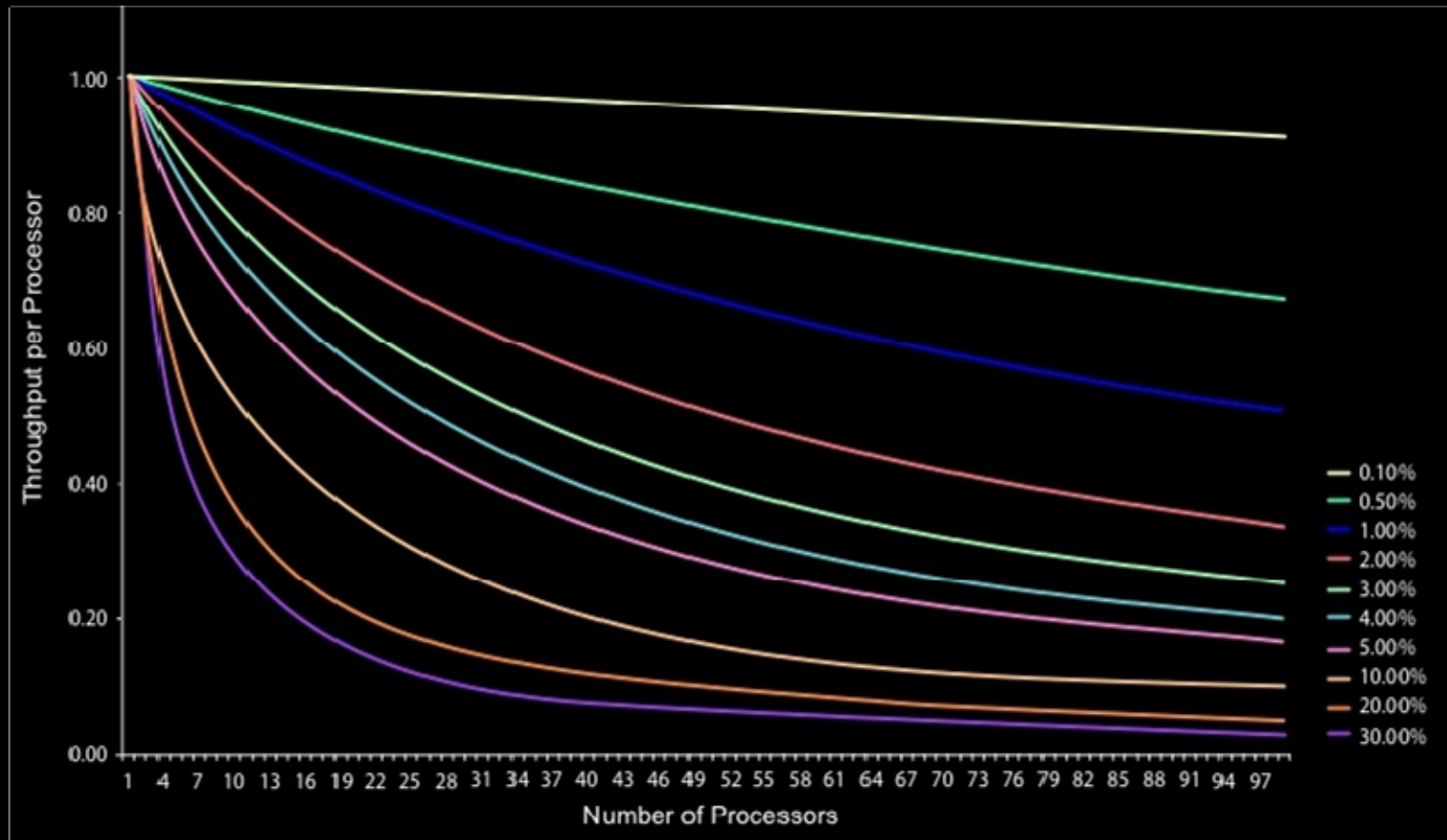


(cont.)

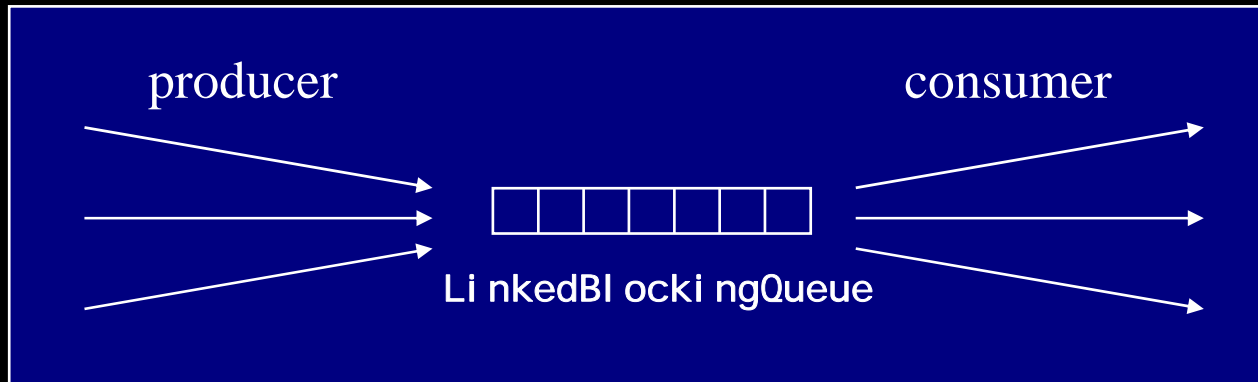
- idea: divide work into **serial** and **parallel** portions
  - serial work cannot be sped up by adding resources
  - parallelizable work can
- Amdahl's Law:  $\text{speedup} \leq \left( F + \frac{1 - F}{N} \right)$ 
  - F is the fraction that must be serialized
  - N is the number of CPUs
- with  $N \rightarrow \infty$ , speedup  $\rightarrow 1/F$ 
  - with 50% serialization,
    - your program can only speed up by a factor of 2 (with:  $\infty$  CPUs)
- naïve idea: from 1 to 2 CPUs = factor of 2 ?

(cont.)

- fight serialization to improve performance



# example



- looks highly parallelizable
  - (if producers are slow increase their thread pool)
- 0% serialized ?
  - no!
    - need synchronization to maintain the queue's integrity

# LinkedListBlockingQueue.offer()

```
public boolean offer(E o) {
    if (o == null) throw new NullPointerException();
    final AtomicInteger count = this.count;
    if (count.get() == capacity)
        return false;
    int c = -1;
    final ReentrantLock putLock = this.putLock;
    putLock.lock();
    try {
        if (count.get() < capacity) {
            insert(o);
            c = count.getAndIncrement();
            if (c + 1 < capacity)
                notFull.signal();
        }
    } finally {
        putLock.unlock();
    }
    if (c == 0)
        signalNotEmpty();
    return c >= 0;
}
```

(cont.)

- Doug Lea did an excellent job with the implementation
  - highly optimized
    - split lock: put / take
    - `count` guarded lock-free
    - stack-local variables to speed up the execution inside the critical region
    - ...
- structural problem
  - serialization of offering threads (producers)
  - similar serialization of getting threads (consumers)

# serialization

- where/when threads demand concurrent access
- often hidden
  - in frameworks / third party abstractions
- other area: asynchronous service architecture
  - example: `java.nio.channels.Selector`
    - section on concurrency in the respective JavaDoc
  - management to send back the result asynchronously
    - Jetty continuation

# fight the serialization ...

... try to reduce lock induced serialization

- smallest critical region possible
  - synchronized block vs. synchronized method
    - or use explicit locks
  - speed up execution inside the critical region
  - replace synchronized counters with `AtomicInteger`
- lock splitting / striping
  - guard different state with different locks
  - reduces likelihood of lock contention

## fight the serialization ...

... try to eliminate locking entirely

- replace mutable objects with immutable ones
- replace shared objects with thread-local ones
  - e.g. make a copy before passing it to a concurrent thread
- lock-free programming



# agenda

- history of concurrency & concurrency trends
- synchronization and memory model
- fight the serialization – improve scalability
- **future trends**

# trends

- lock-free programming
  - CAS (compare-and-swap) operations supported since JDK 5.0
    - › `java.util.concurrent.atomic`, and
    - › Concurrent collections in `java.util.concurrent`
- transactional memory
  - neither supported in Java nor in any popular programming language at the moment
- actors
  - avoid share mutable state + pass messages between thread
- they have in common:
  - avoid locking to avoid serialization

## wrap-up

- a trend towards concurrent, asynchronous computing
  - MT initially for better structure
  - today to overcome synchronicity (messaging, AJAX, ...)
- multicore architecture might reveal yet undetected bugs
  - due to memory model issues (atomicity, visibility, ordering)
- multicore architectures need scalable software to be useful
  - avoid serialization - increase concurrency - Amdahl's law
- a gaze into the crystal ball
  - lock-free programming is already in use (by experts)
  - transactional memory might ease concurrent programming some time in the future

# authors

Angelika Langer

Training & Consulting

Klaus Kreft

SEN Group, Munich, Germany

<http://www.angelikalanger.com/Forms/Contact.html>

# Java Programming in a Multicore World

Q & A