Concurrent Algorithms (Overview)

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In short

This course is about the principles of robust concurrent computing

Today

- *Logistics*
- *Motivation*
- *Content*

WARNING

- This course is different from the course **:** **Distributed Algorithms**

- shared memory vs message passing

- It does make a lot of sense to take both

This course

- *Theoretical but no specific theoretical background*
- *Exercices throughout the semester*
- *Mid term + Final exam + Bonus project*

New York Times, 8 May 2004: Major chip manufacturers announced what is perceived as a major paradigm shift in computing:

Multiprocessors vs faster processors

Major chip manufacturers have announced a major paradigm shift:

Intel … [has] decided to focus its development efforts on «dual core» processors … with two engines instead of one, allowing for greater efficiency because the processor workload is essentially shared.

The clock speed of a processor cannot be increased without overheating

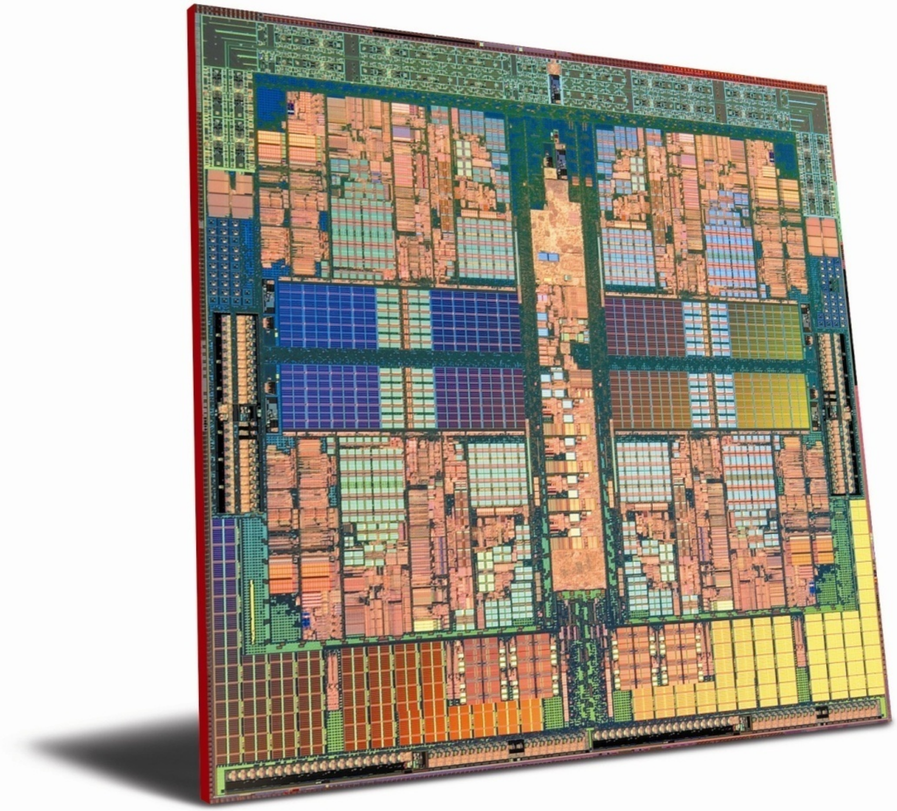
But

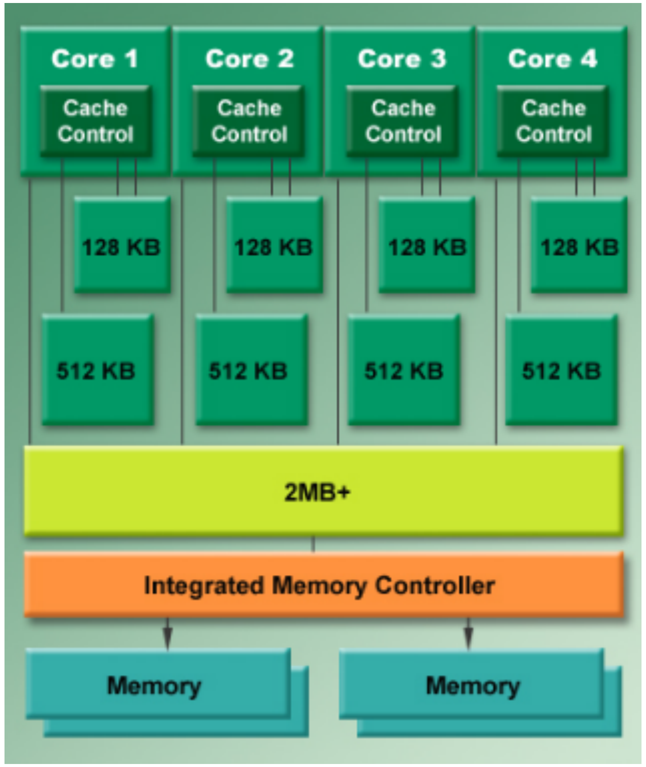
More and more processors can fit in the same space

Multicores are almost everywhere

- Dual-core commonplace in laptops
- Quad-core in desktops
- Dual quad-core in servers
- All major chip manufacturers produce multicore CPUs
  - SUN Niagara (8 cores, 32 threads)
  - Intel Xeon (4 cores)
  - AMD Opteron (4 cores)

AMD Opteron (4 cores)



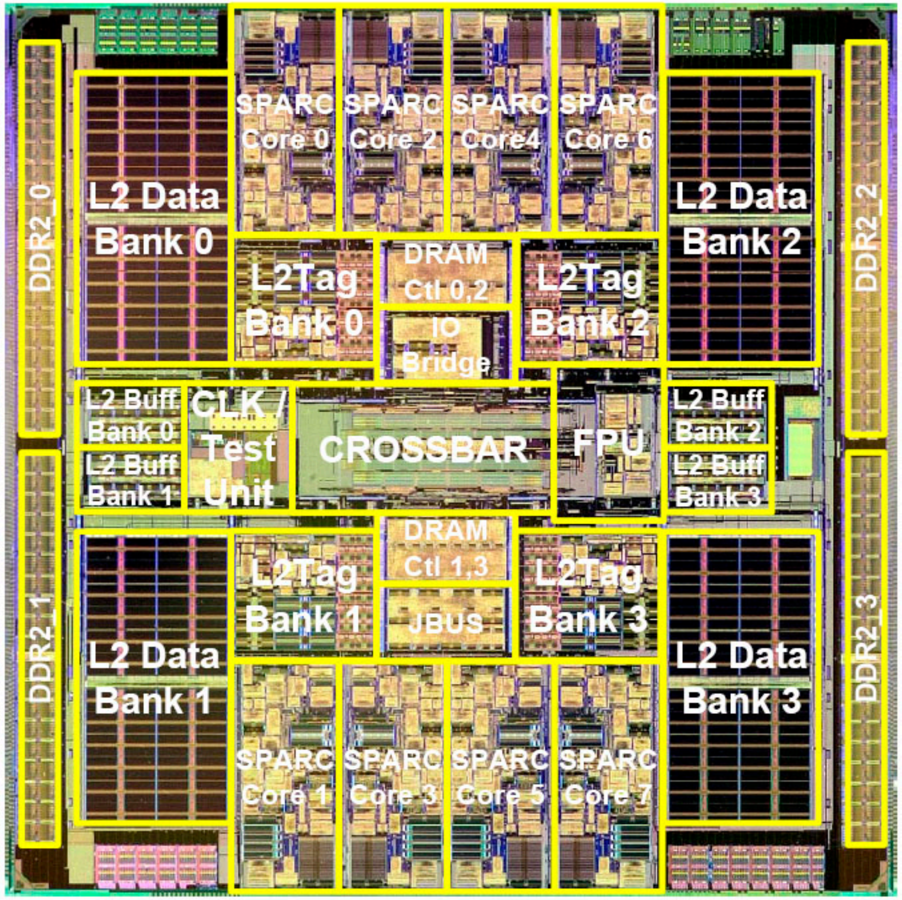


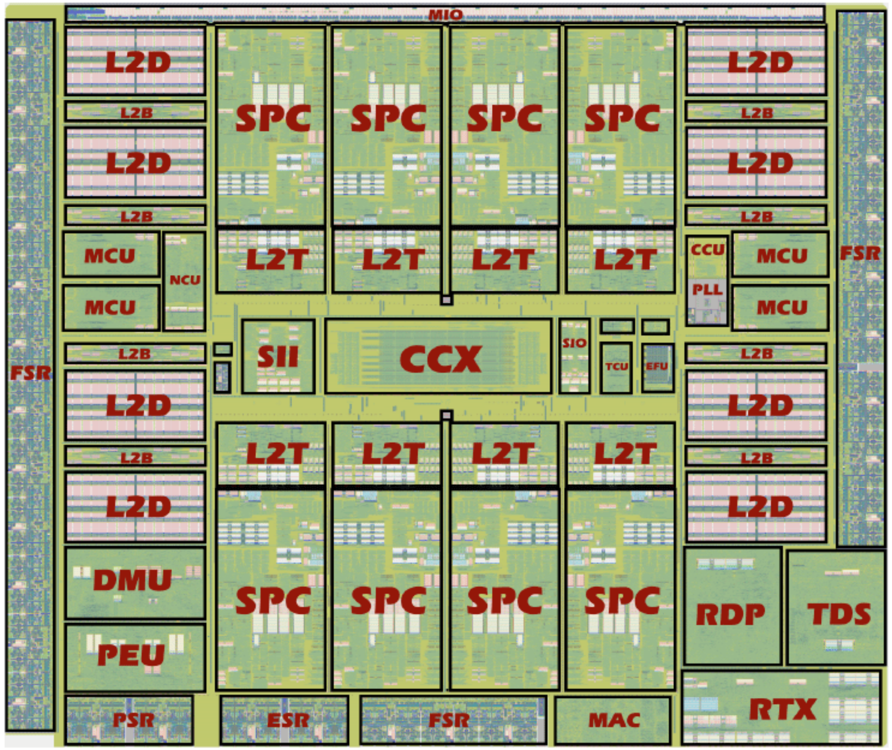
L1 cache

L2 cache

L3 cache
(shared)

SUN's Niagara CPU2 (8 cores)





CCX – Crosssbar
CCU – Clock control
DMU/PEU – PCI Express
EFU – Efuse for redundancy
ESR – Ethernet SERDES
FSR – FBD SERDES
L2B – L2 write-back buffers
L2D – L2 data arrays
L2T – L2 tag arrays
MCU – Memory controller
MIO – Miscellaneous I/O
PSR – PCI Express SERDES
RDP/TDS/RTX/MAC – Ethernet
SII/SIO – I/O data path to and from memory
SPC – SPARC cores
TCU – Test and control unit

Multiprocessors

- Multiple hardware processors: each executes a series of processes (software constructs) modeling sequential programs

- Multicore architecture: multiple processors are placed on the same chip

Principles of an architecture

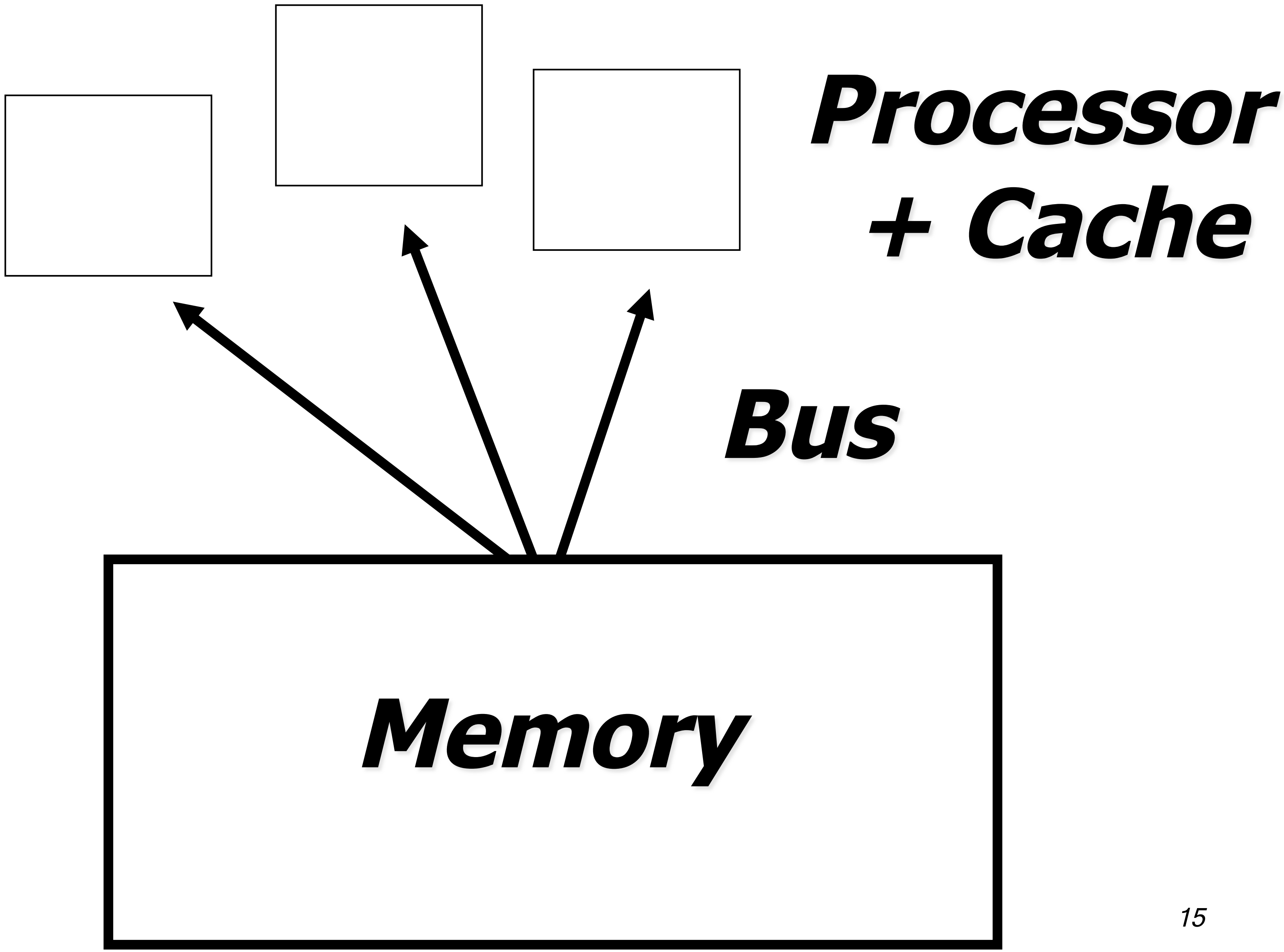
- Two fundamental components that ***fall apart***: ***processors*** and ***memory***

- The Interconnect links the processors with the memory:
- - ***SMP*** (symmetric): bus (a tiny Ethernet)
- - ***NUMA*** (network): point-to-point network

Cycles

- The basic unit of time is the *cycle*: time to execute an instruction
- This changes with technology but the relative cost of instructions (local vs memory) does not

Simple view



Hardware synchronization objects

- The basic unit of communication is the *read* and *write* to the memory (through the cache)

- More sophisticated objects are typically provided and, as we will see, necessary: C&S, T&S, LL/SC

The free ride is over

- Cannot rely on CPUs getting faster in every generation

- Utilizing more than one CPU core requires concurrency

The free ride is over

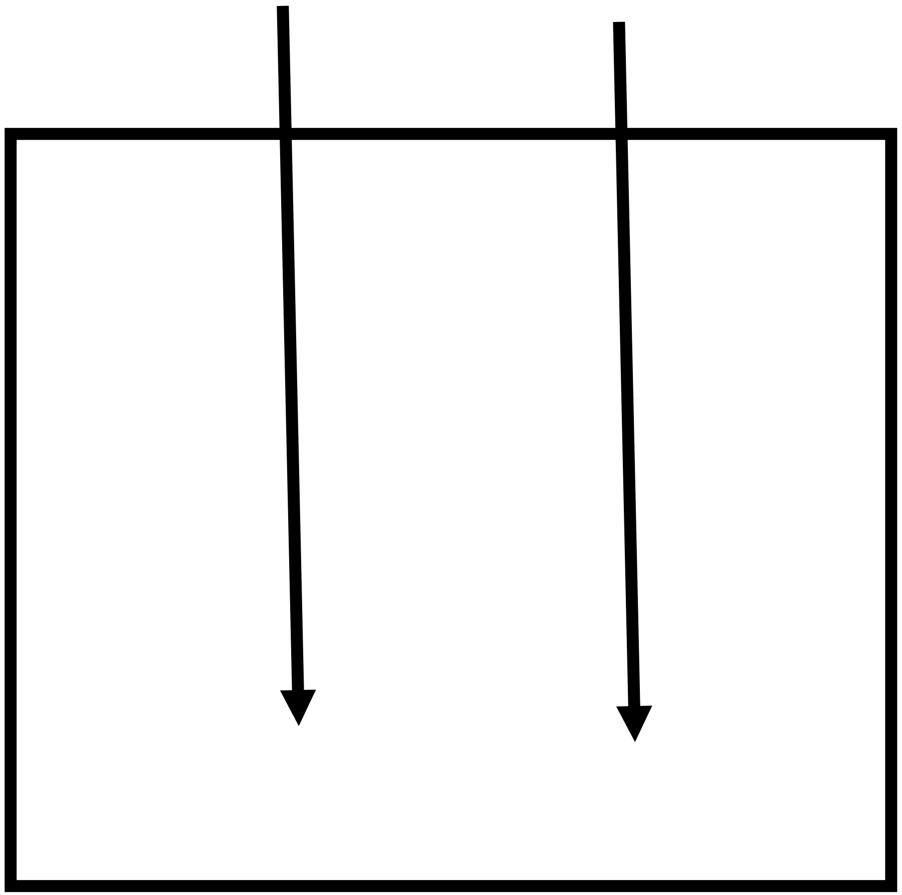
- One of the biggest future software challenges: exploiting concurrency
  - Every programmer will have to deal with it
  - Concurrent programming is hard to get right

Speed will be achieved by having several processors work on independent parts of a task

But

the processors would occasionally need to pause and synchronize

Concurrent processes



Shared object

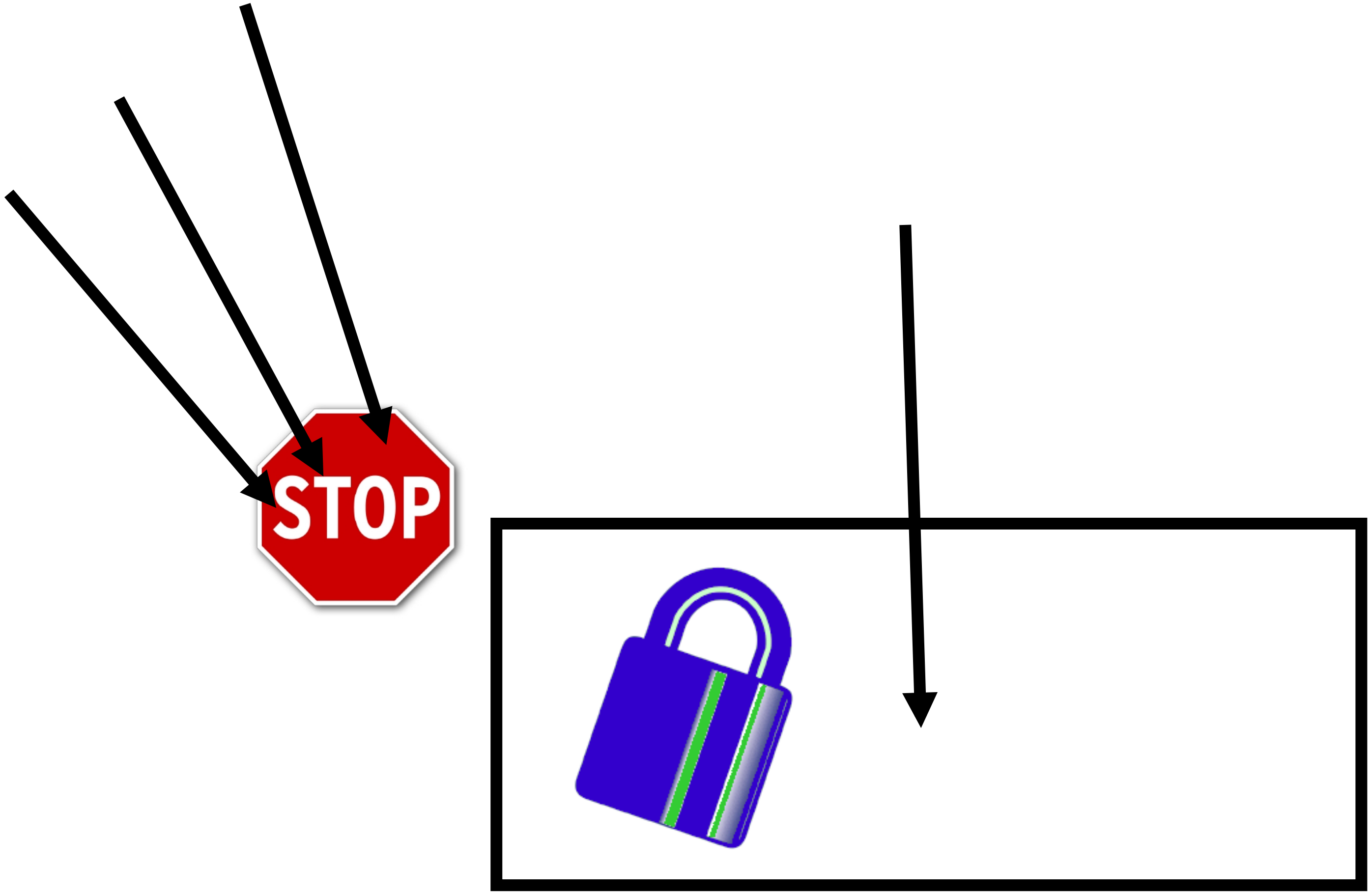
Counter

```
public class Counter

private int c = 0;

public long getAndIncrement()
{
return c++;
}
```

Locking (mutual exclusion)



Locked object

Implicit use of a lock

```
public class SynchronizedCounter {
    private int c = 0;
    public synchronized void increment() {
        c++;
    }
    public synchronized void getAndincrement()
{
        return c++;
    }
    public synchronized int value() {
        return c;
    }
}
```

Locking with compare&swap()

- A ***Compare&Swap*** object maintains a value x, init to ⊥, and y;

- It provides one operation: ***c&s(old,new);***

✓Sequential spec:

- c&s(old,new)

{y := x; if x = old then x := new; return(y)}

Locking with compare&swap()

```
lock() {
repeat until
unlocked = this.c&s(unlocked,locked)
}

unlock() {
         this.c&s(locked,unlocked)
     }
```

Locking with test&set()

- A ***test&set*** object maintains binary values x, init to 0, and y;

- It provides one operation: ***t&s()***

  ✓Sequential spec:

  ✓ t&s() {y := x; x: = 1; return(y);}

Locking with test&set()

```
lock() {
repeat until (0 = this.t&s());
}

unlock() {
        this.setState(0);
    }
```

Locking with test&set()

```
lock() {
while (true)
 {
 repeat until (0 = this.getState());
 if 0 = (this.t&s()) return(true);
 }
}

unlock() {
        this.setState(0);
     }
```

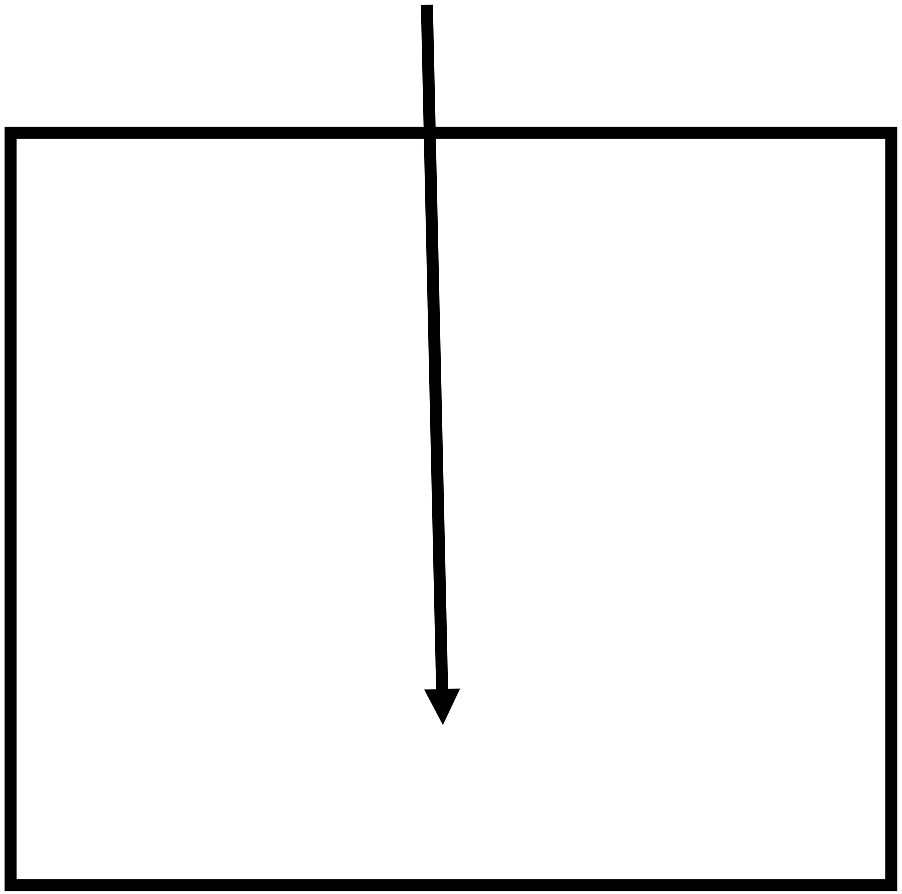
Explicit use of a lock

```
 Lock l = ...;
     l.lock();
     try {
// access the resource protected by this lock
     } finally {
         l.unlock();
     }
```

Locking (mutual exclusion)

- ***Difficult:*** 50% of the bugs reported in Java come from the mis-use of « synchronized »
- ***Fragile:*** a process holding a lock prevents all others from progressing
- ***Slow:*** the act of locking itself impacts performance

Locked object



One process at a time

Processes are asynchronous

- *Page faults*
- *Pre-emptions*
- *Failures*
- *Cache misses, …*

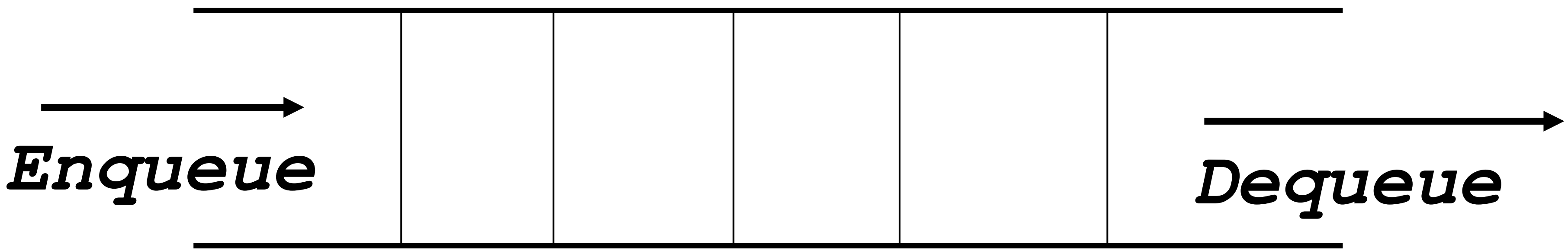
Processes are asynchronous

- A cache miss can delay a process by ten instructions
- A page fault by few millions
- An os preemption by hundreds of millions…

Coarse grained locks => slow

Fine grained locks => errors

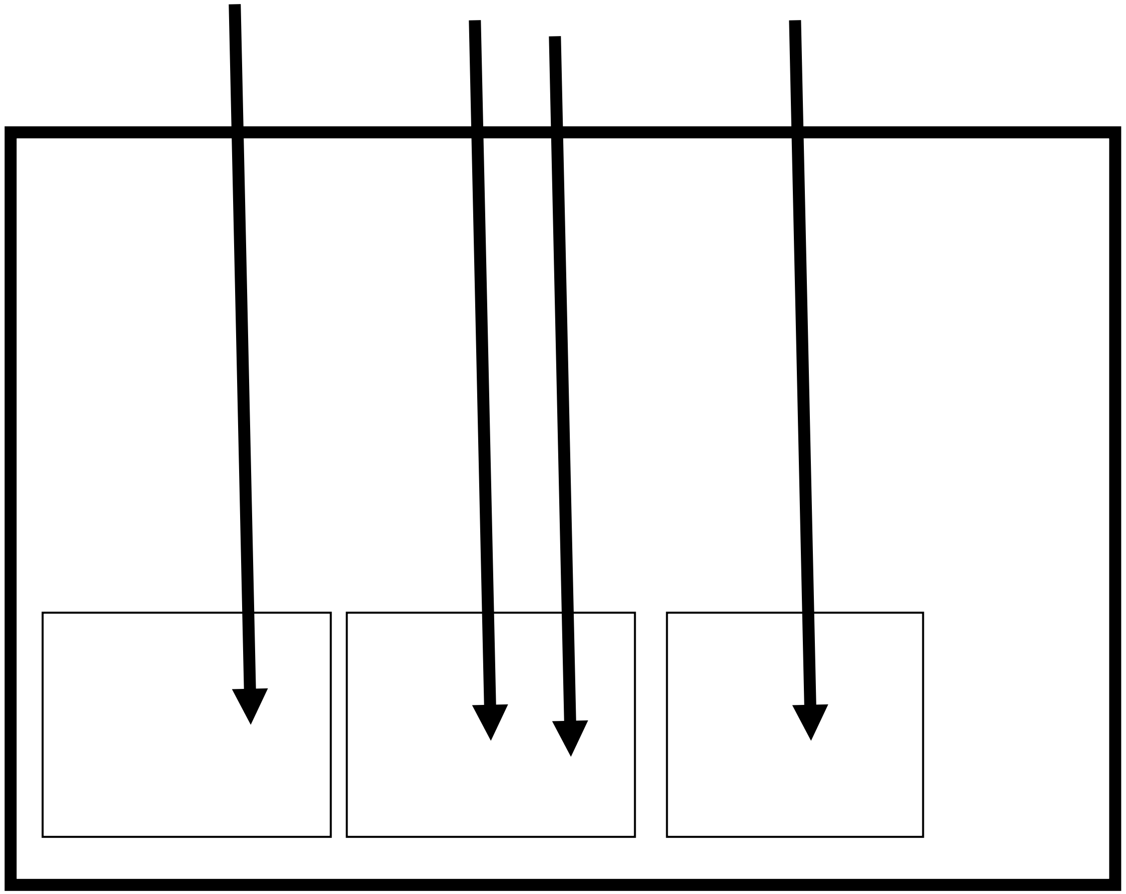
Double-ended queue



Processes are asynchronous

- ***Page faults, pre-emptions, failures, cache misses, …***
- A process can be delayed by millions of instructions …

Alternative to locking?



Wait-free atomic objects

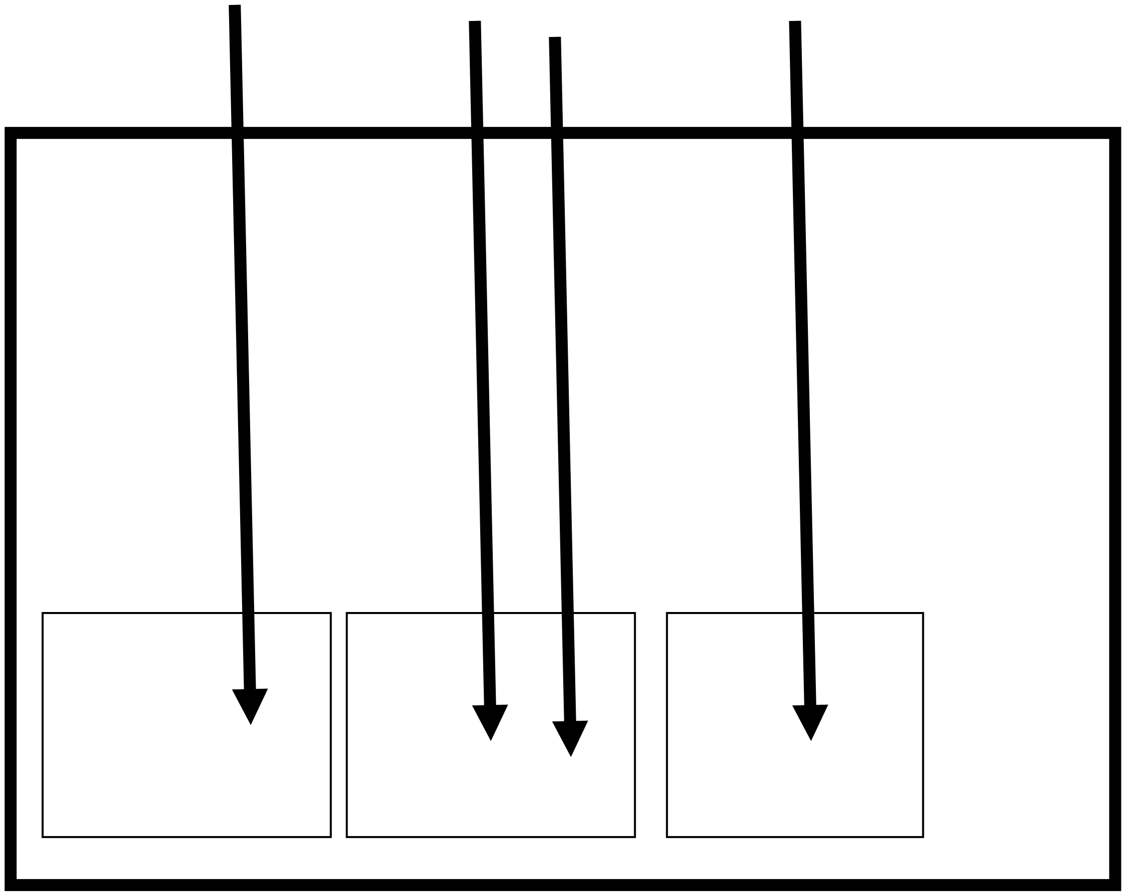
- ***Wait-freedom:*** every process that invokes an operation eventually returns from the invocation (robust … unlike locking)

- ***Atomicity:*** every operation appears to execute instantaneously (as if the object was locked…)

In short

This course shows how to
wait-free implement high-level
atomic objects out of primitive base objects

Concurrent processes



Shared object

Roadmap

- *Model*
  - *Processes and objects*
  - *Atomicity and wait-freedom*
- *Examples*
- *Content*

Processes

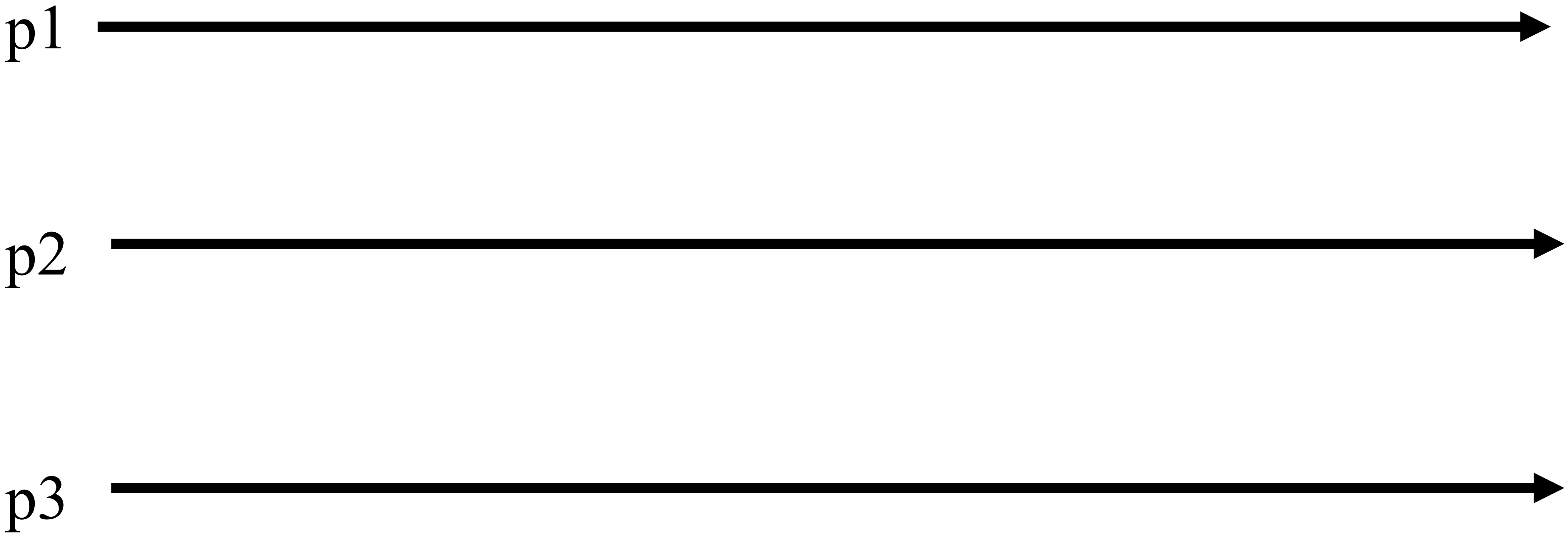
- We assume a finite set of processes
- Processes are denoted by p1,..pN or p, q, r
- Processes have unique identities and know each other (unless explicitly stated otherwise)

Processes

- Processes are ***sequential*** units of computations

- Unless explicitly stated otherwise, we make no assumption on process (relative) speed

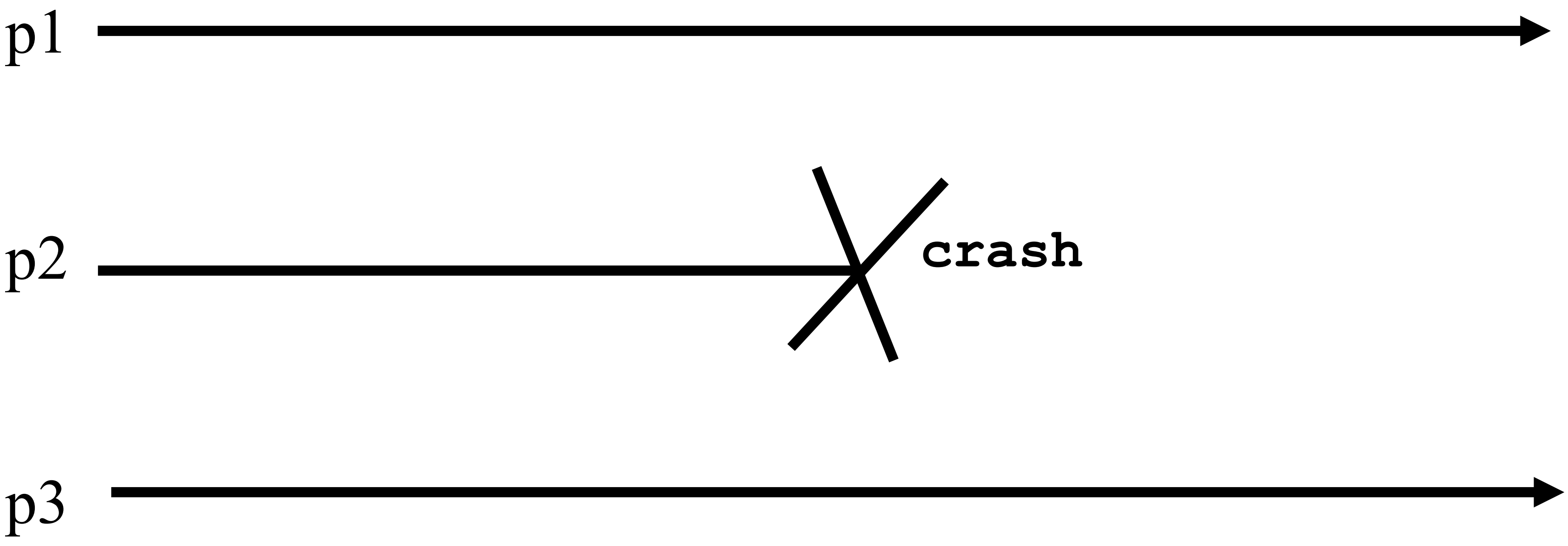
Processes



Processes

- A process either executes the algorithm assigned to it or crashes
- A process that crashes does not recover (in the context of the considered computation)
- A process that does not crash in a given execution (computation or run) is called correct (in that execution)

Processes

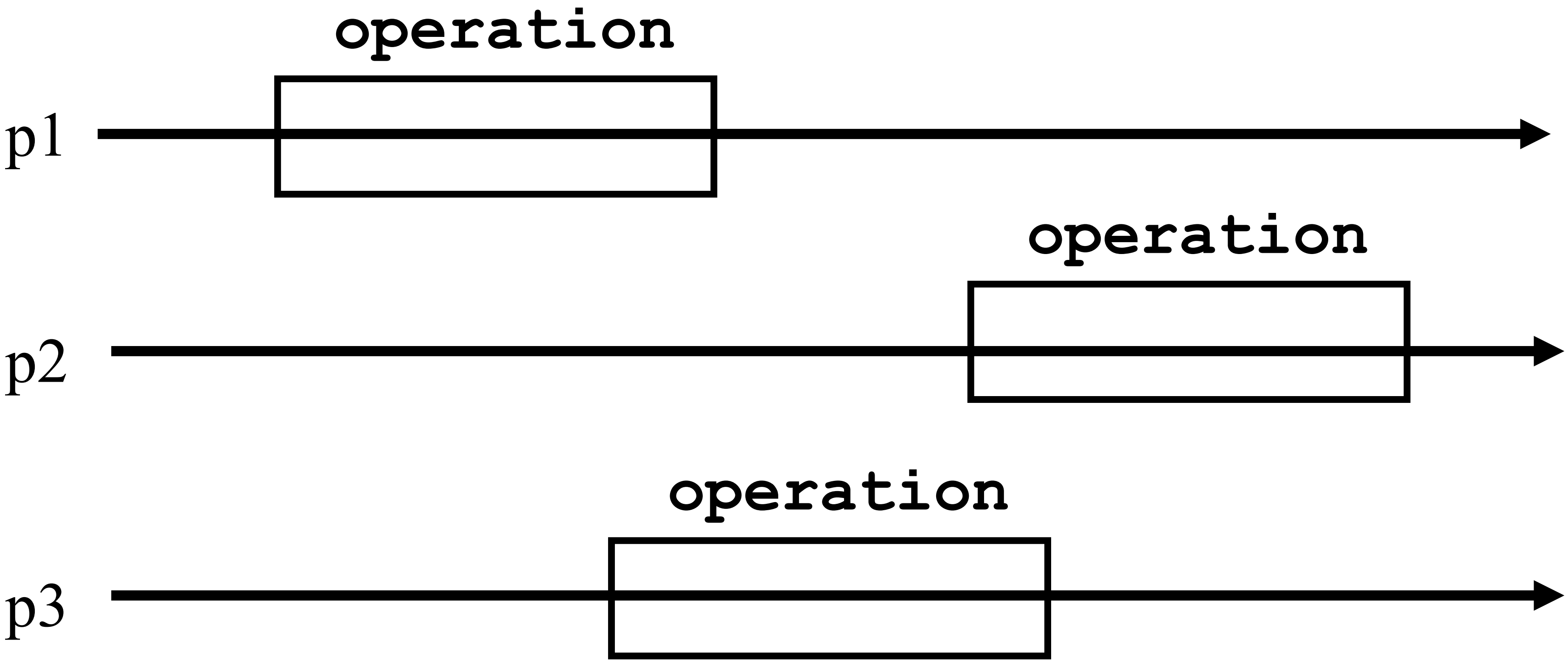


On objects and processes

- Processes execute local computation or access shared objects through their ***operations***

- Every operation is expected to return a reply

Processes

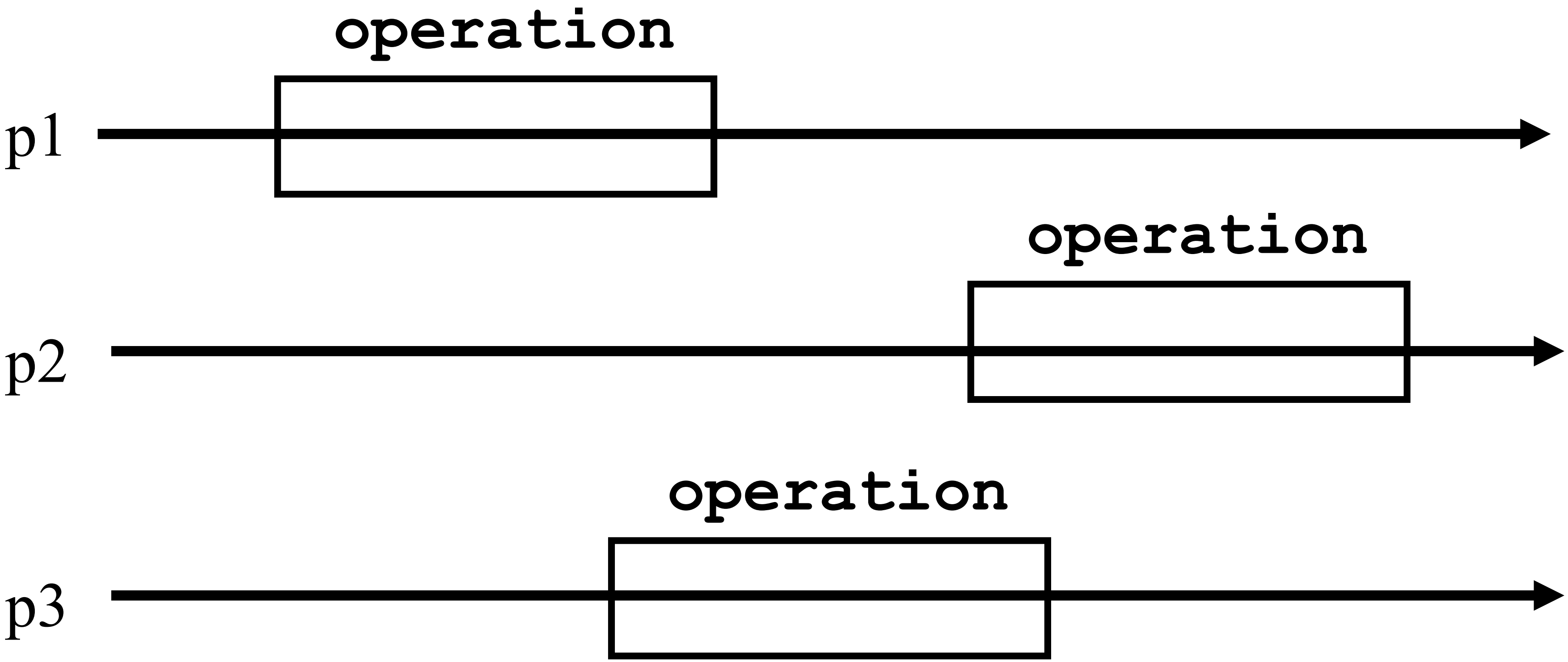


On objects and processes

- ***Sequentiality*** means here that, after invoking an operation op1 on some object O1, a process does not invoke a new operation (on the same or on some other object) until it receives the reply for op1

- ***Remark***. Sometimes we talk about operations when we should be talking about operation invocations

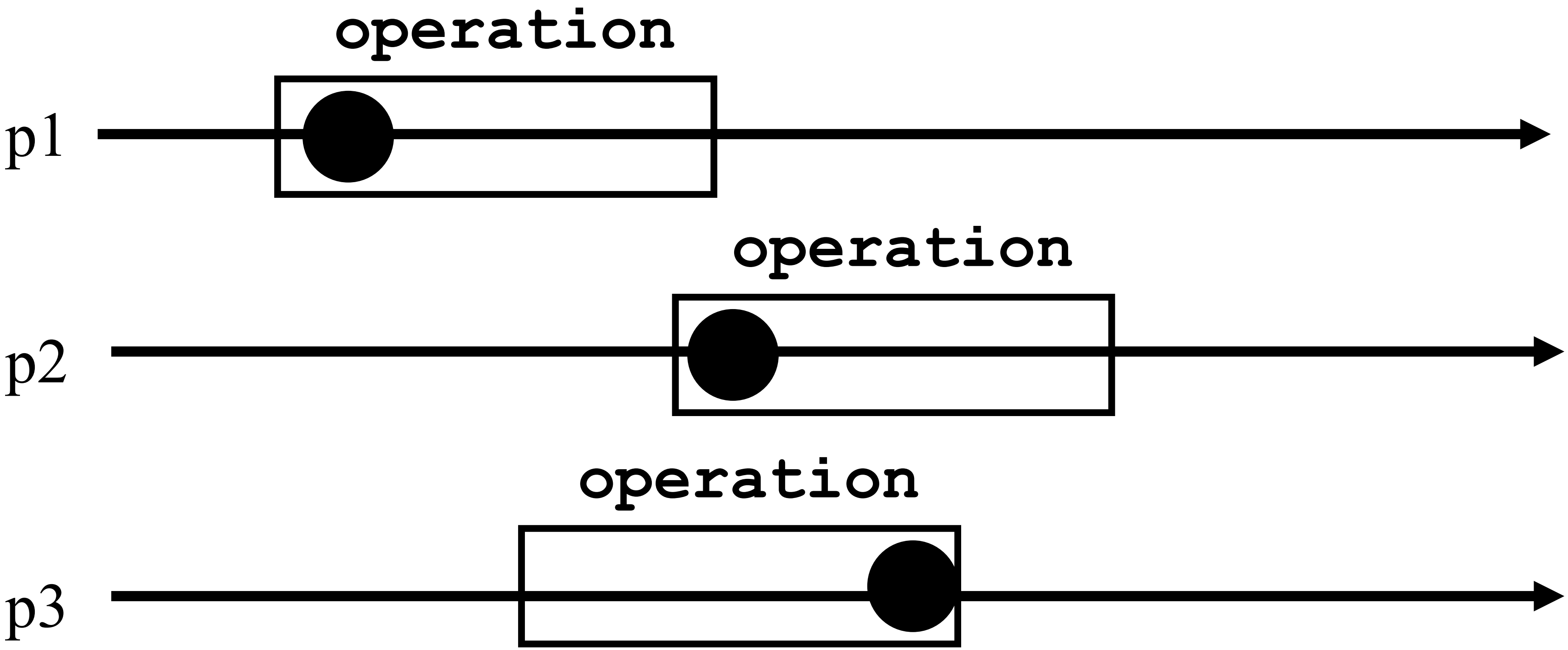
Processes



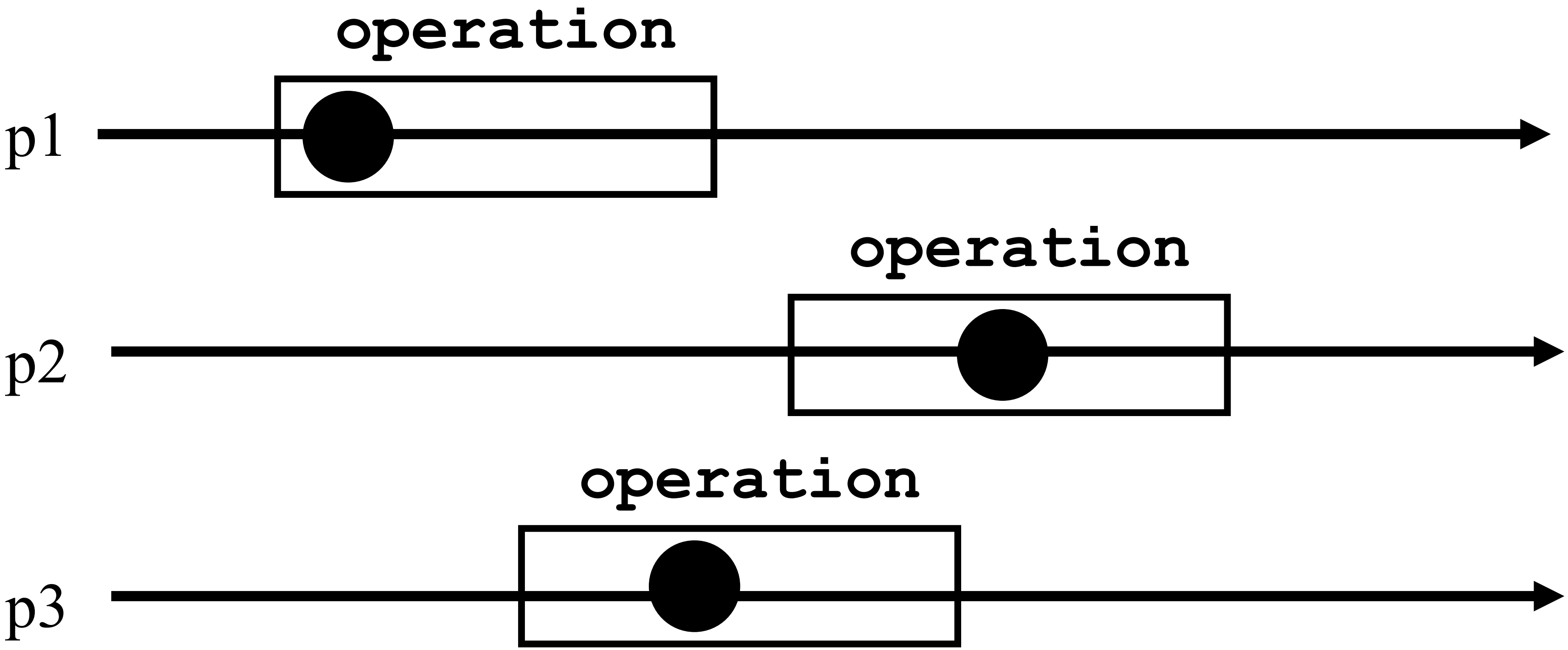
Atomicity

- Every operation appears to execute at some indivisible point in time (called linearization point) between the invocation and reply time events

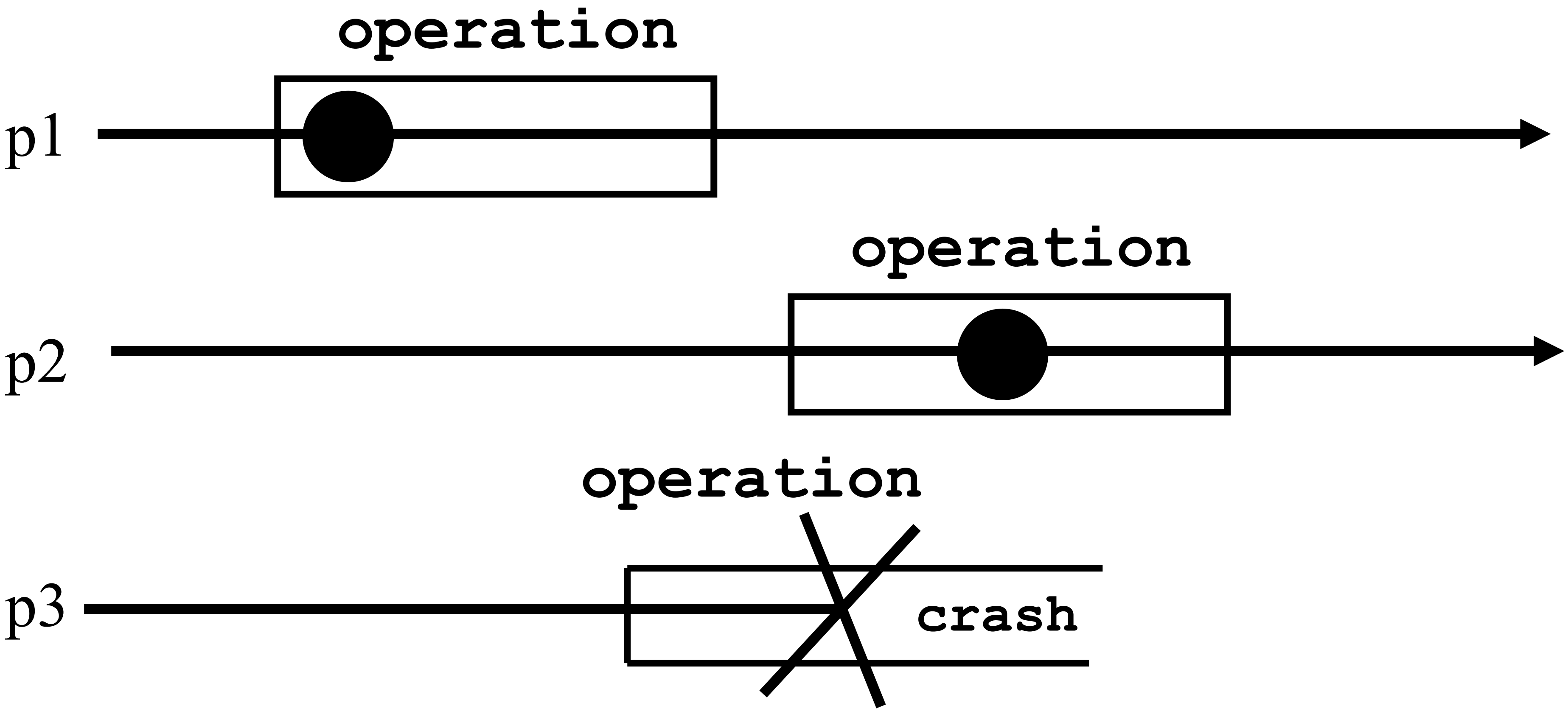
Atomicity



Atomicity



Atomicity (the crash case)



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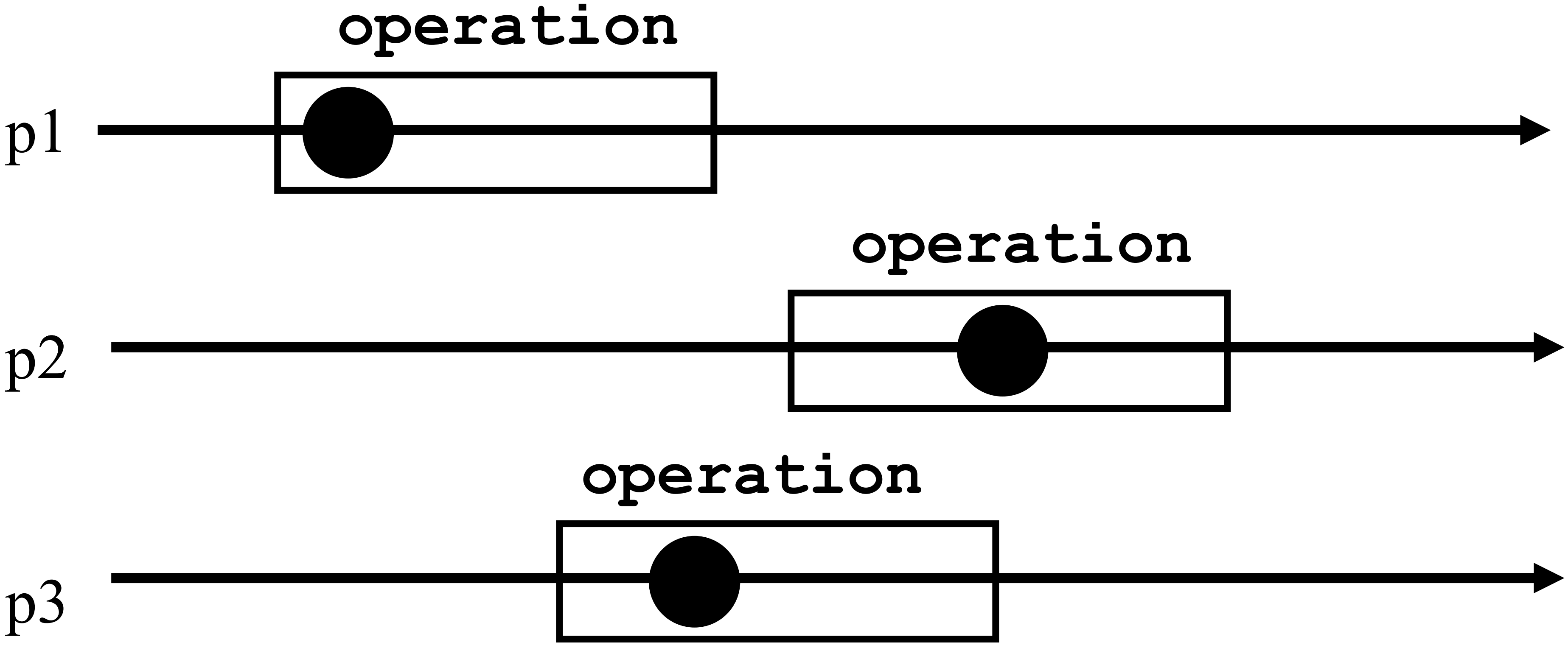

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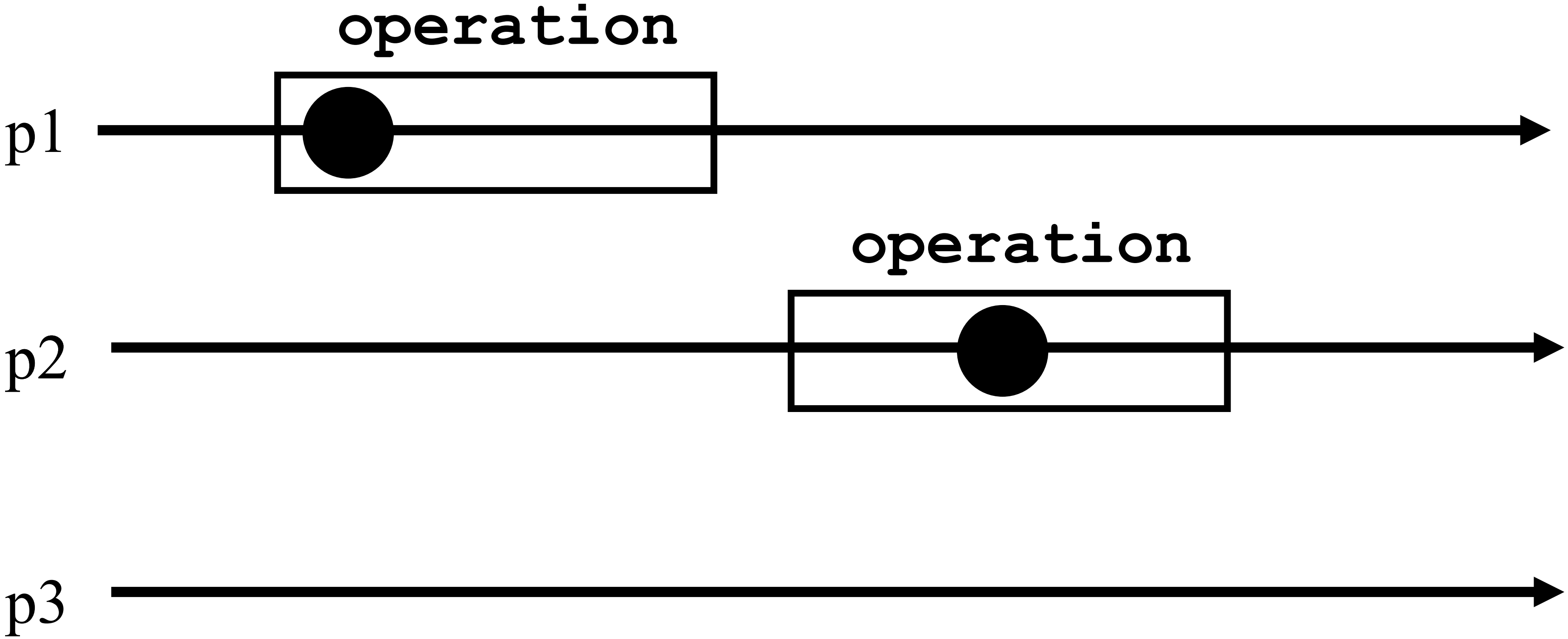
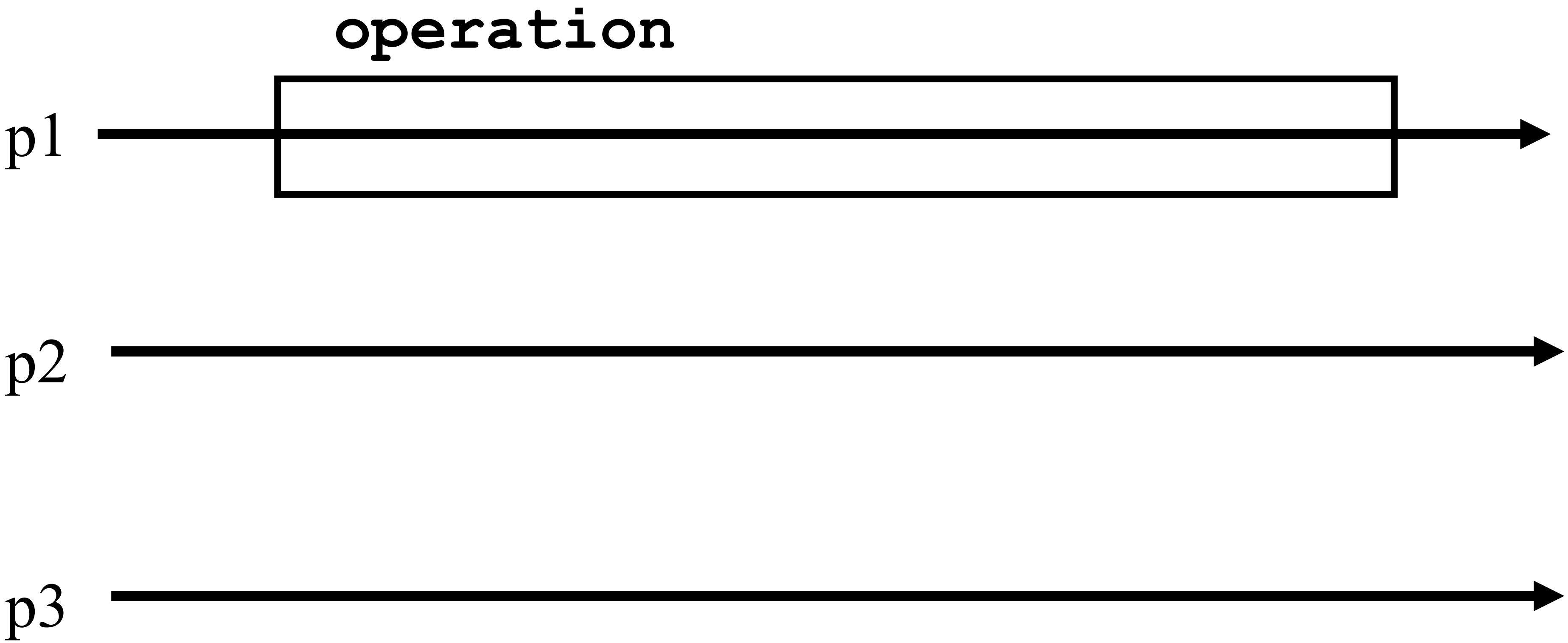


Wait-freedom

- Any correct process that invokes an operation eventually gets a reply, no matter what happens to the other processes (crash or very slow)

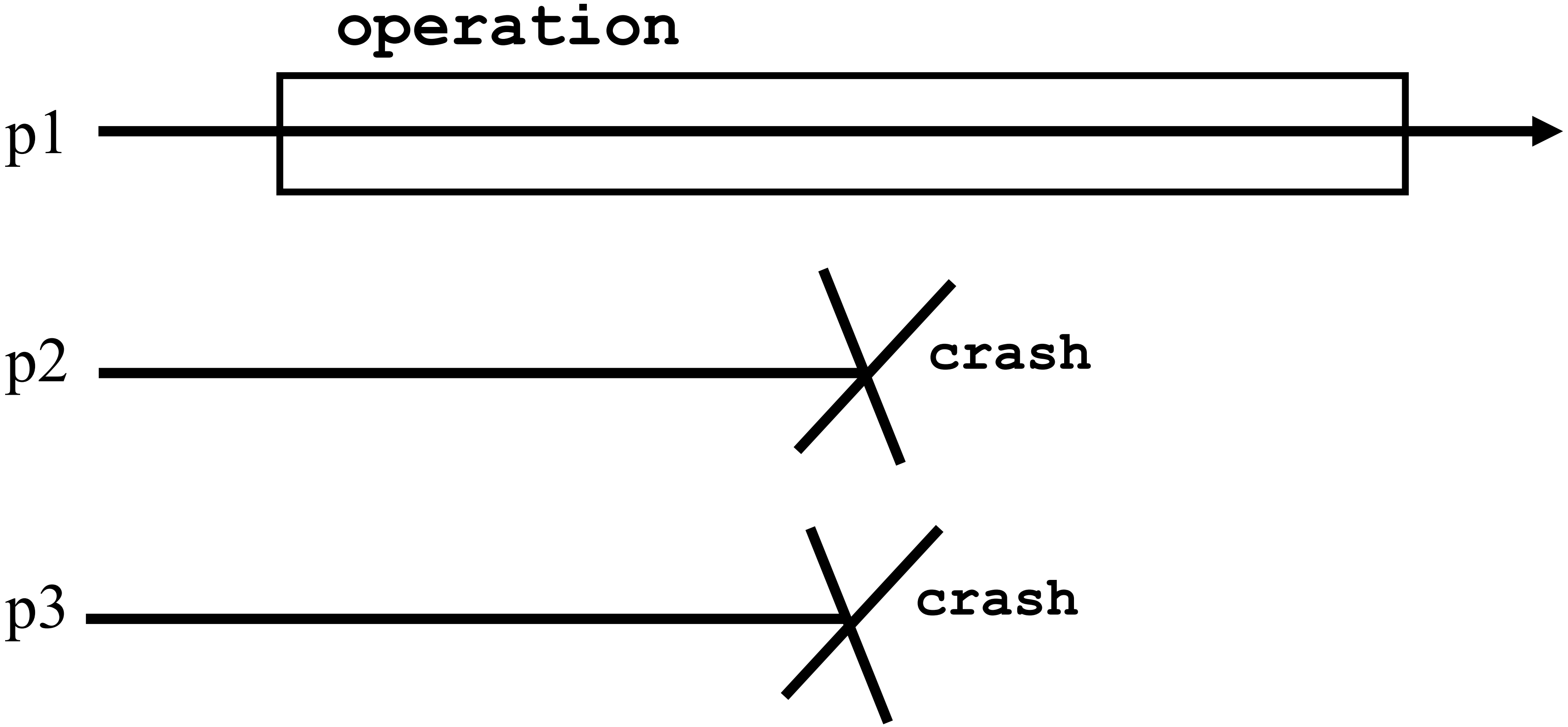
Wait-freedom



Wait-freedom

- Wait-freedom conveys the robustness of the implementation
- With a wait-free implementation, a process gets replies despite the crash of the n-1 other processes
- Note that this precludes implementations based on locks (mutual exclusion)

Wait-freedom



Roadmap

- *Model*
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Motivation

- Most synchronization primitives (problems) can be precisely expressed as atomic objects (implementations)
- Studying how to ensure robust synchronization boils down to studying wait-free atomic object implementations

Example 1

- The reader/writer synchronization problem corresponds to the ***register*** object
- Basically, the processes need to read or write a shared data structure such that the value read by a process at a time t, is the last value written before t

Register

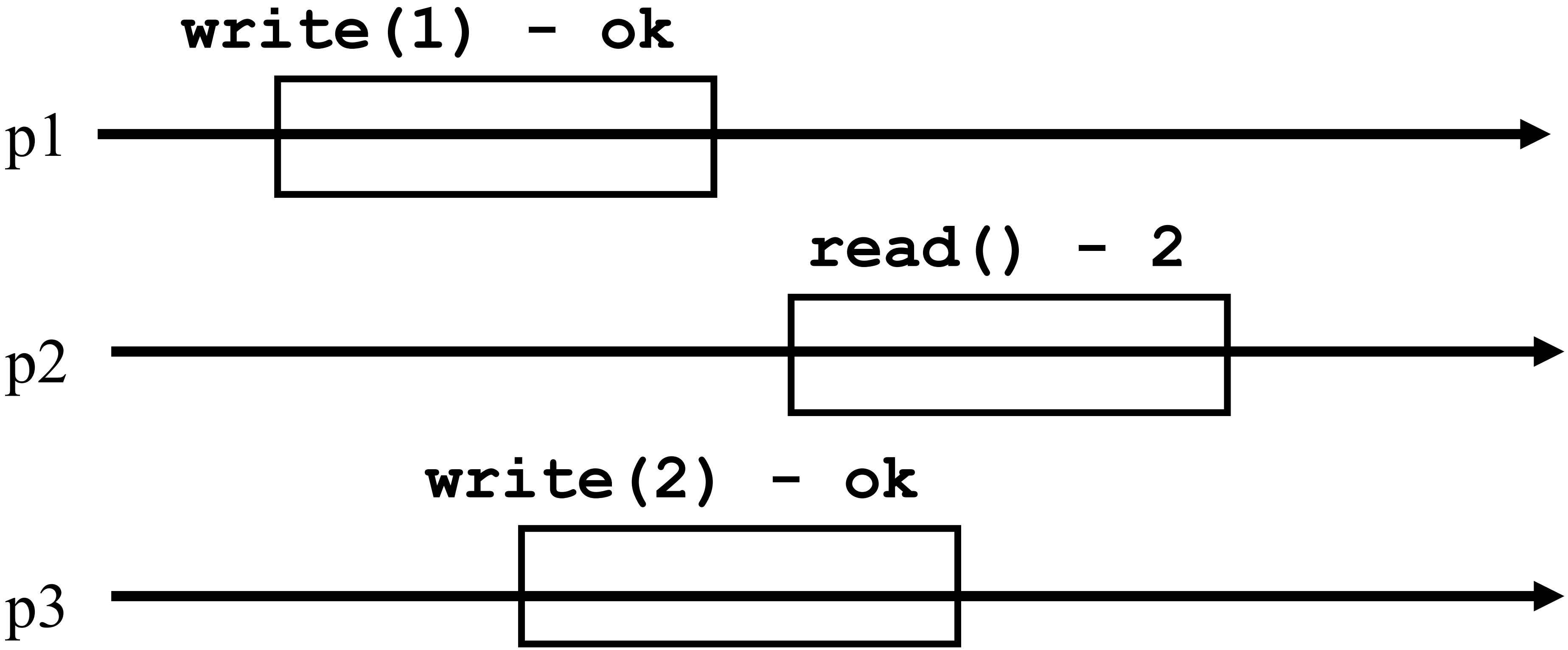
- A ***register*** has two operations: ***read()*** and ***write()***

- We assume that a ***register*** contains an integer for presentation simplicity, i.e., the value stored in the ***register*** is an integer, denoted by *x* (initially 0)

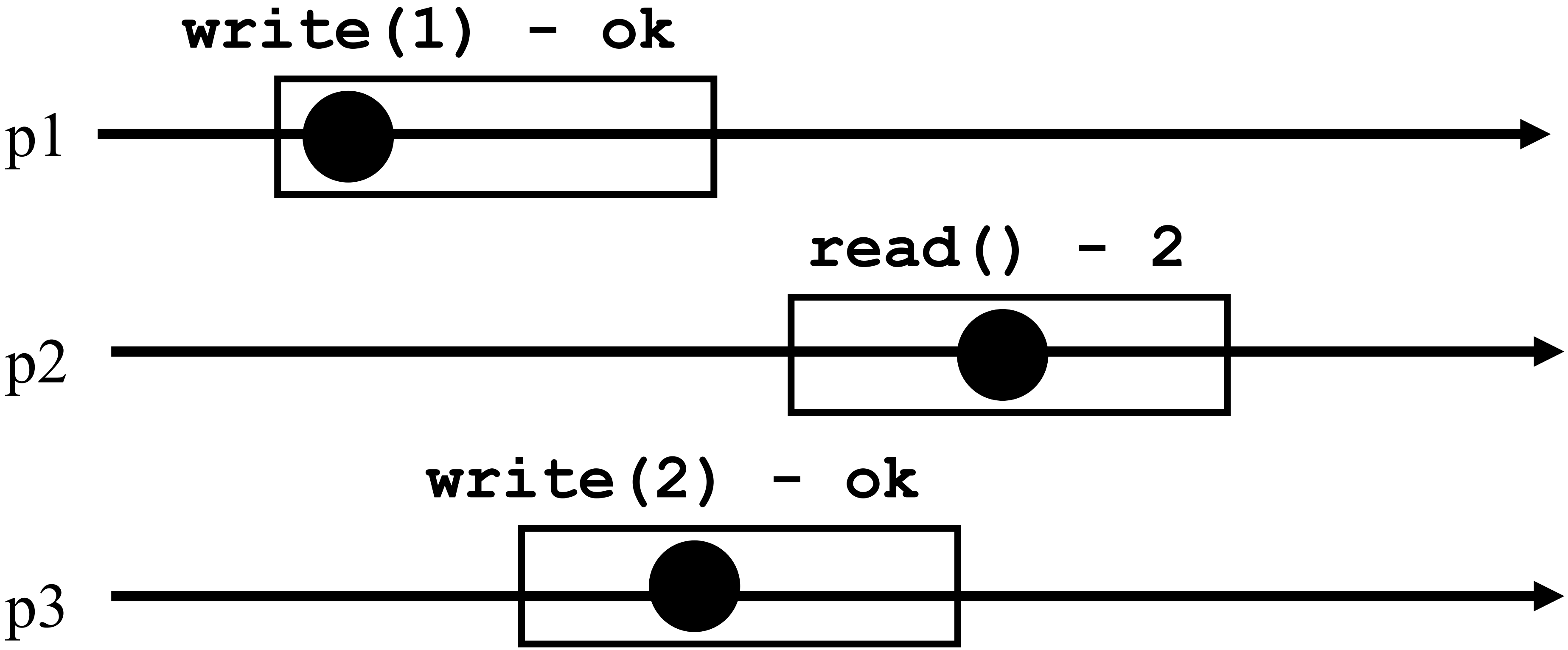
Sequential specification

- Sequential specification
  - ***read()***
    - return(x)
  - ***write(v)***
    - x <- v;
    - return(ok)

Atomicity?



Atomicity?



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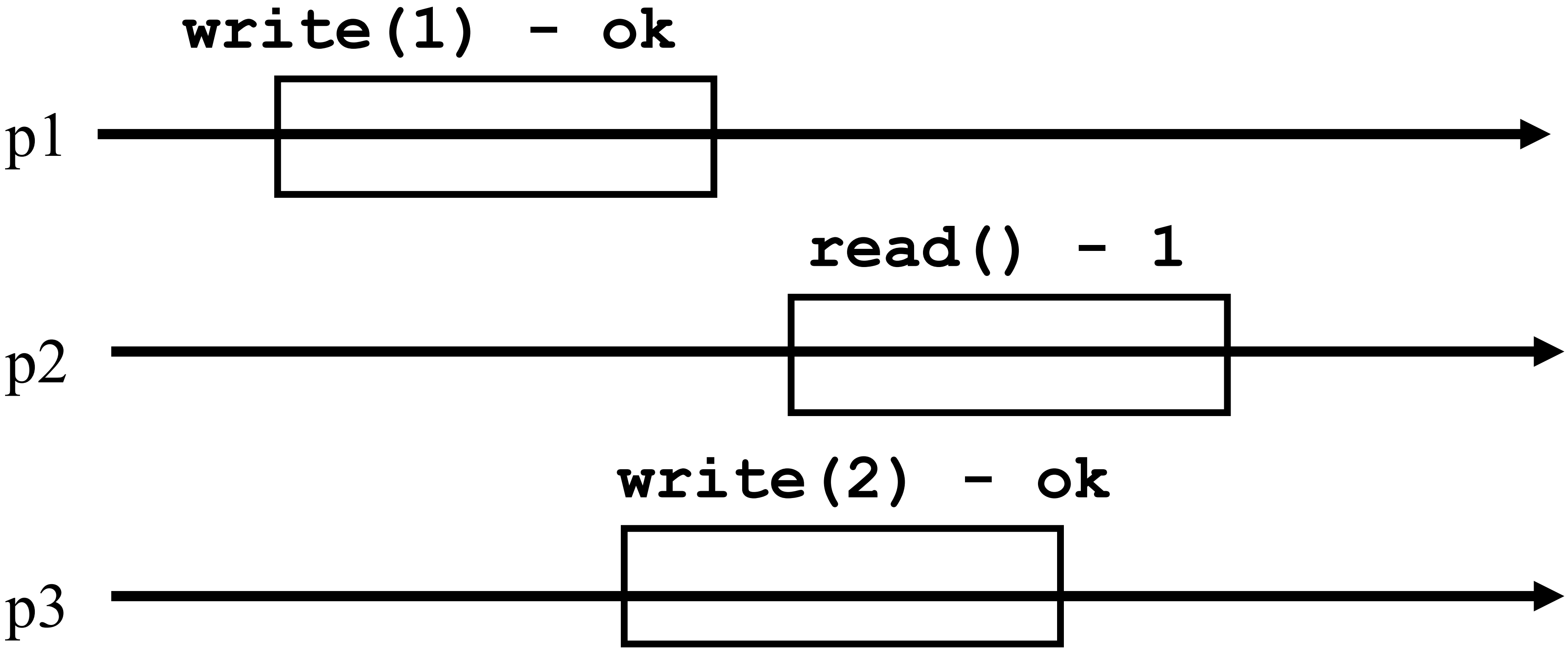

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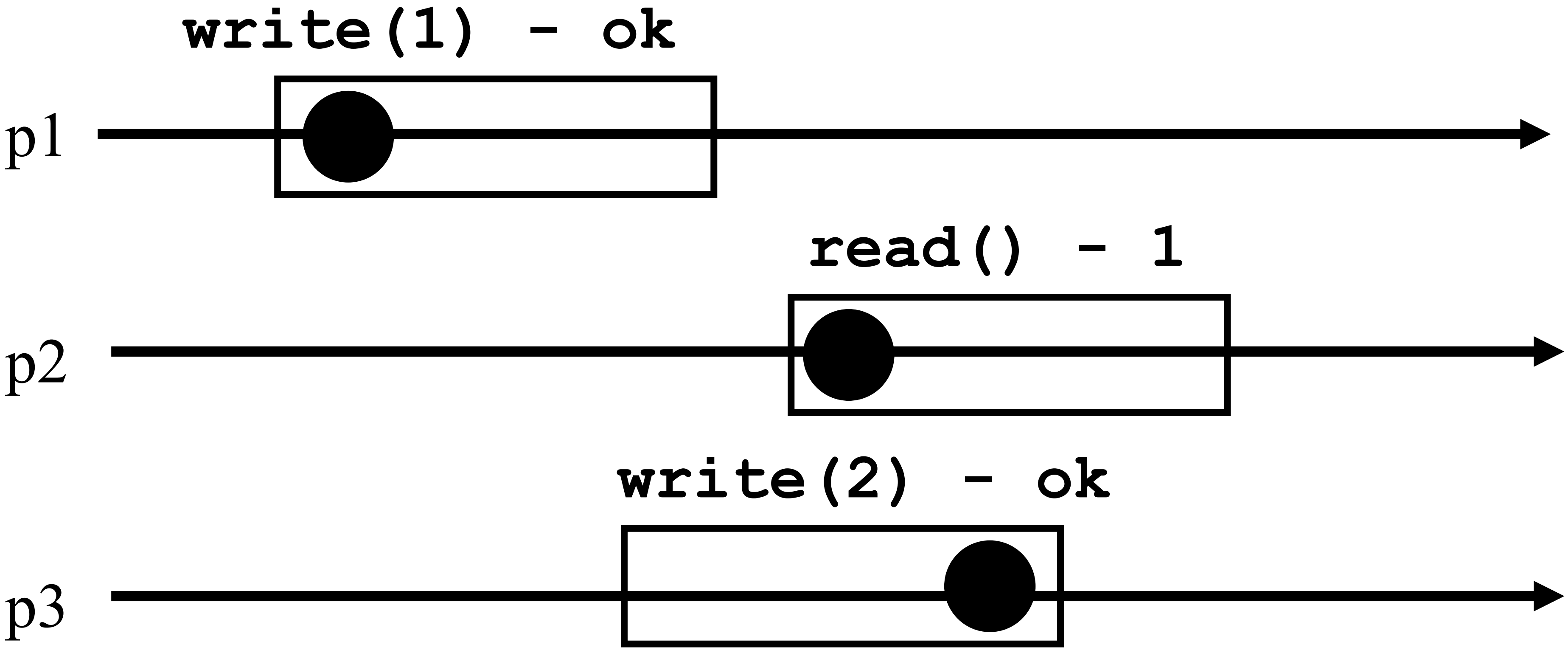

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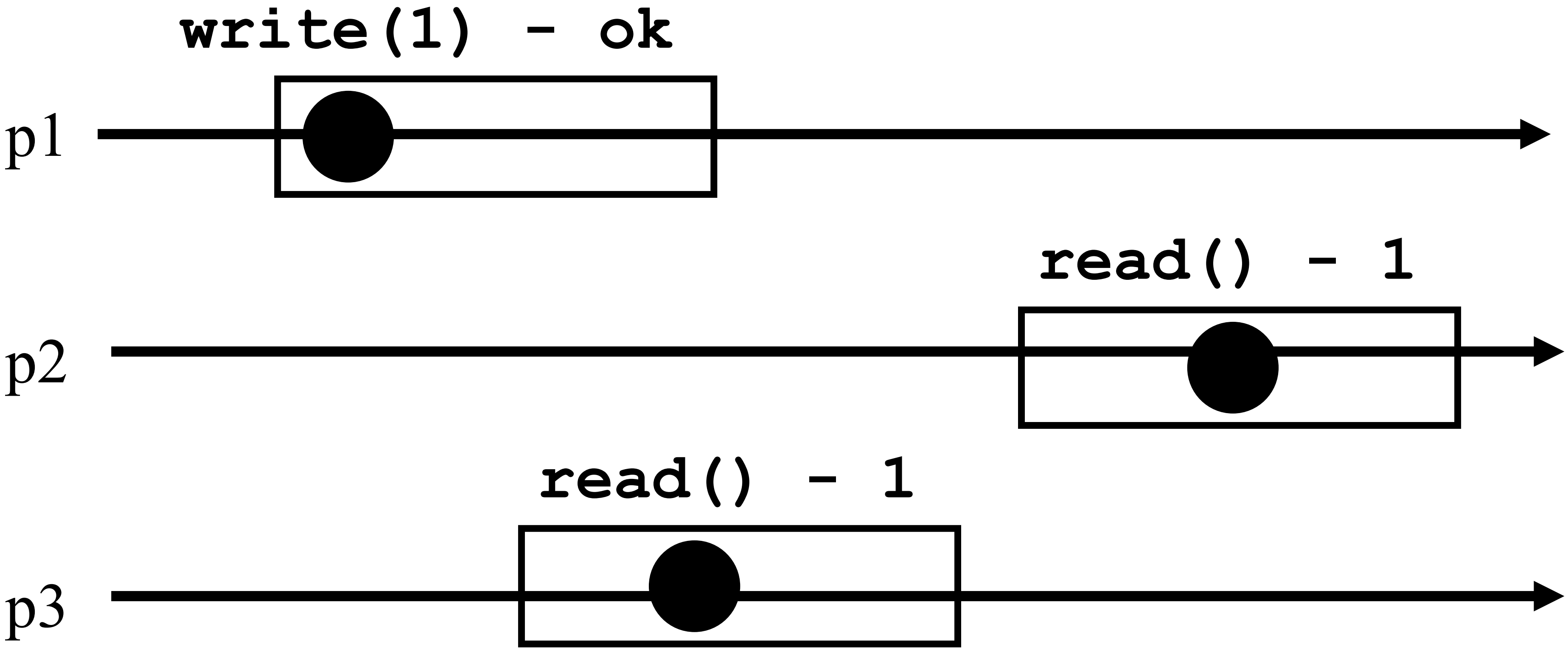

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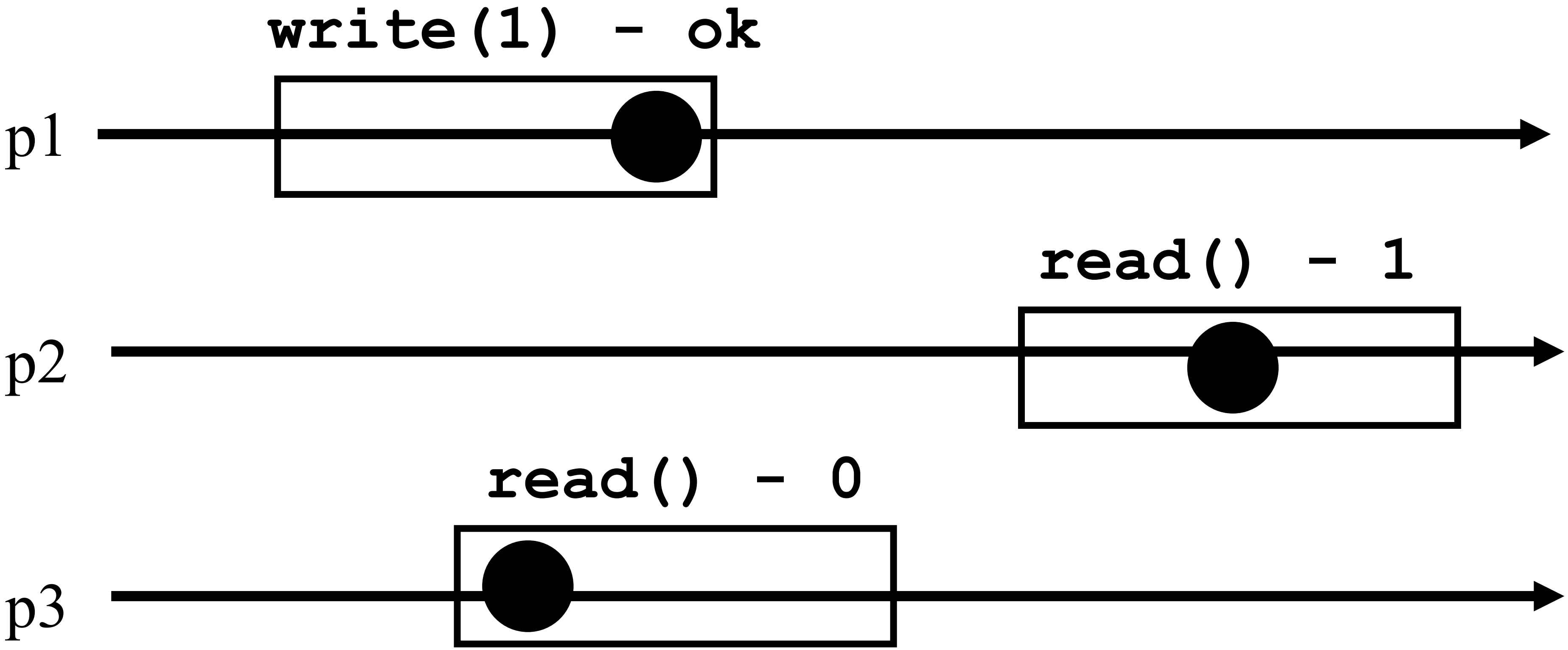

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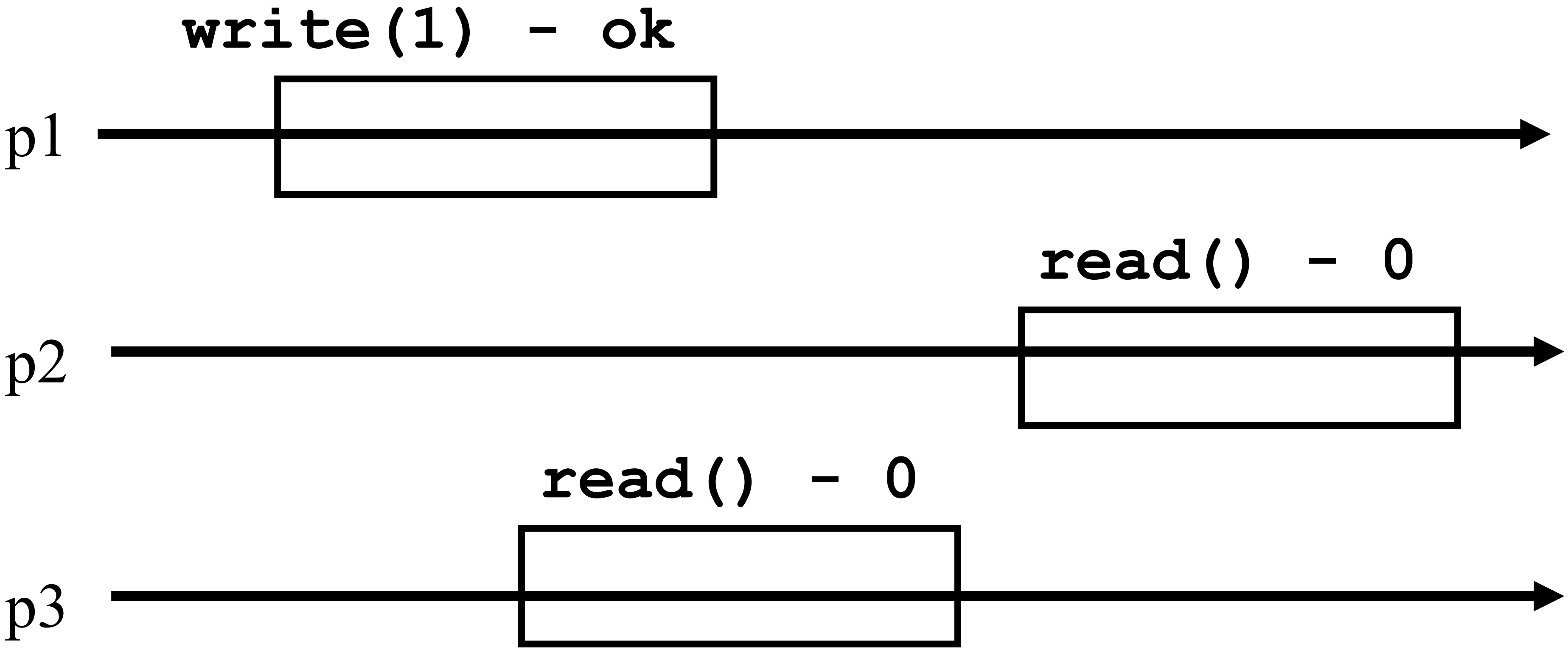

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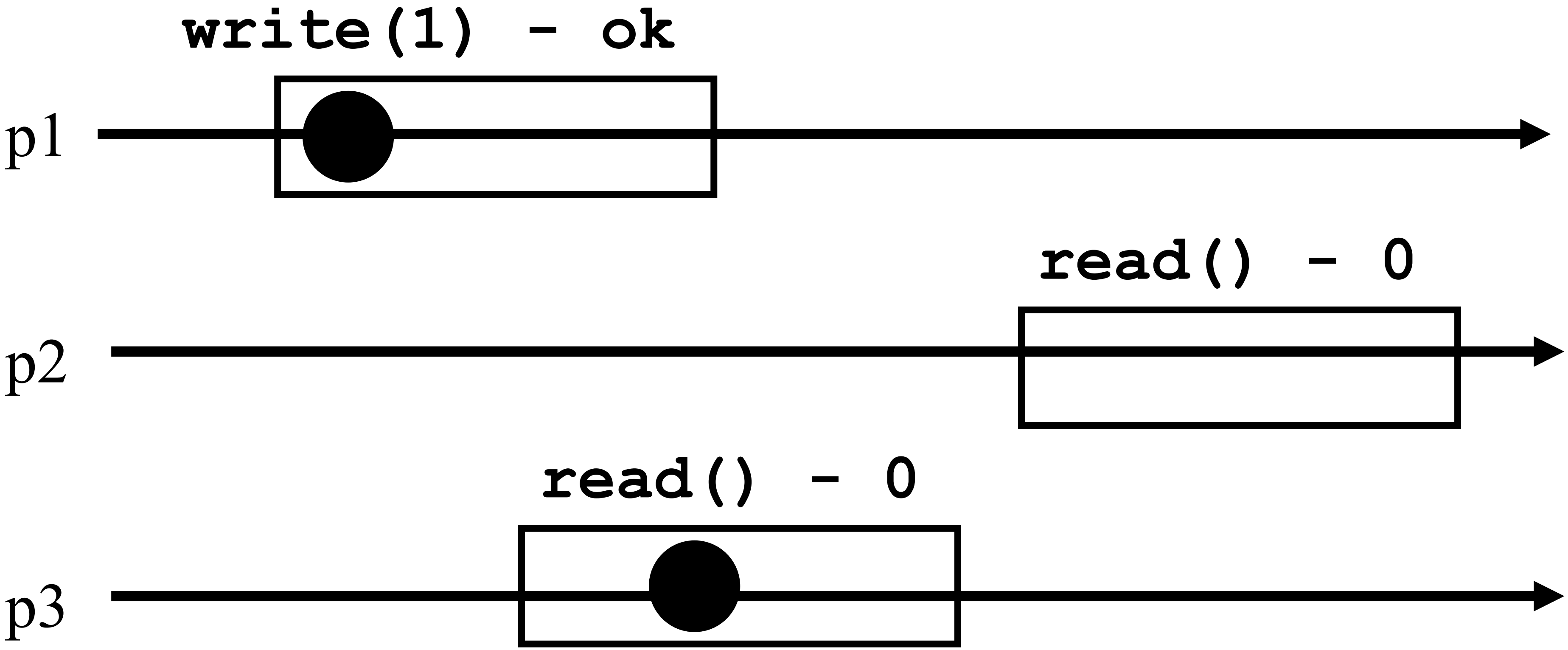

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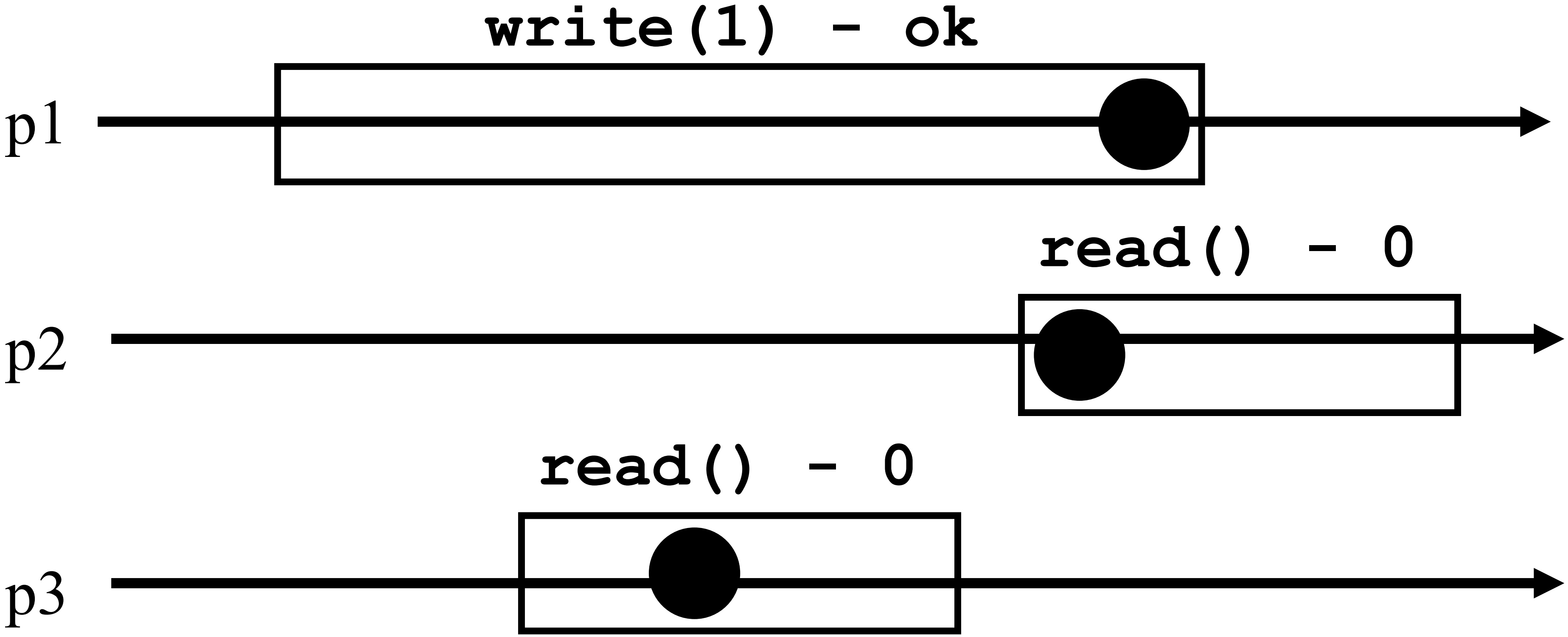

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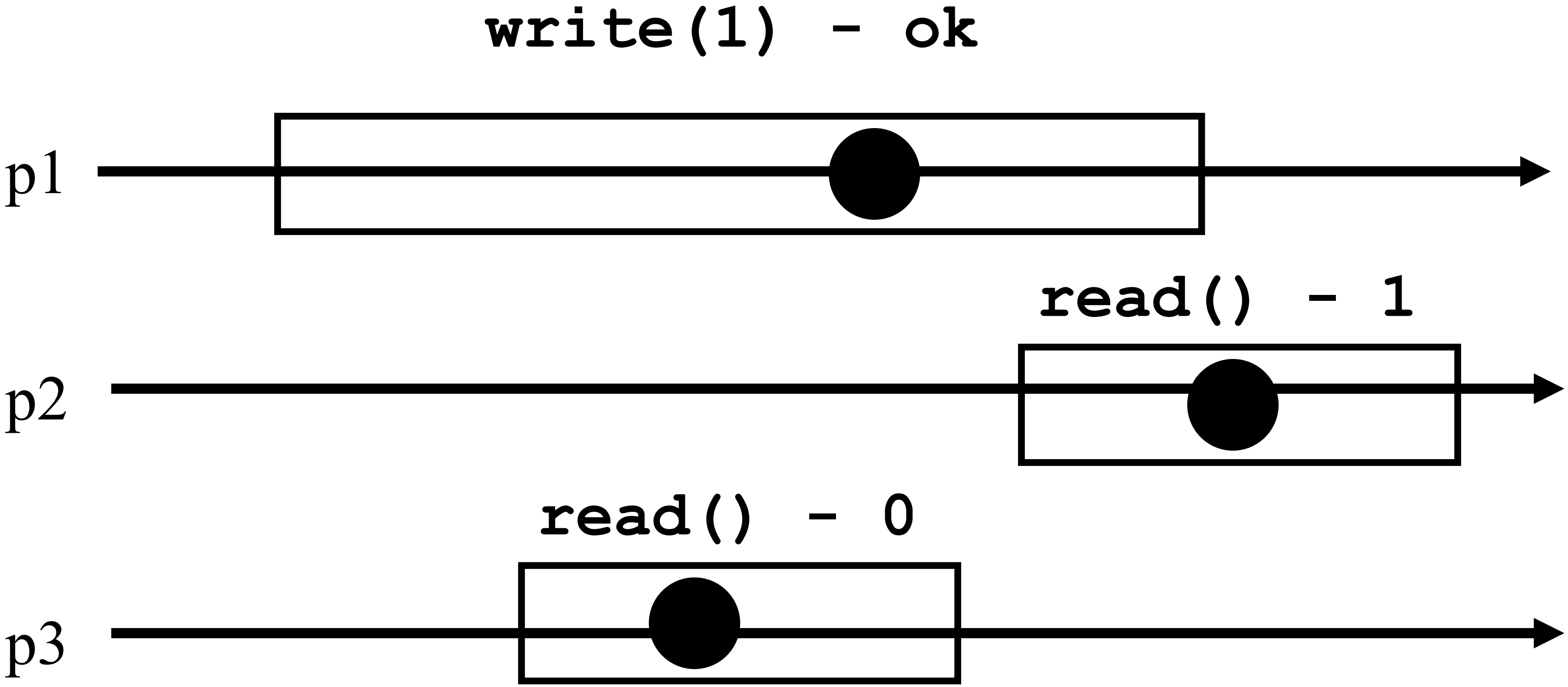

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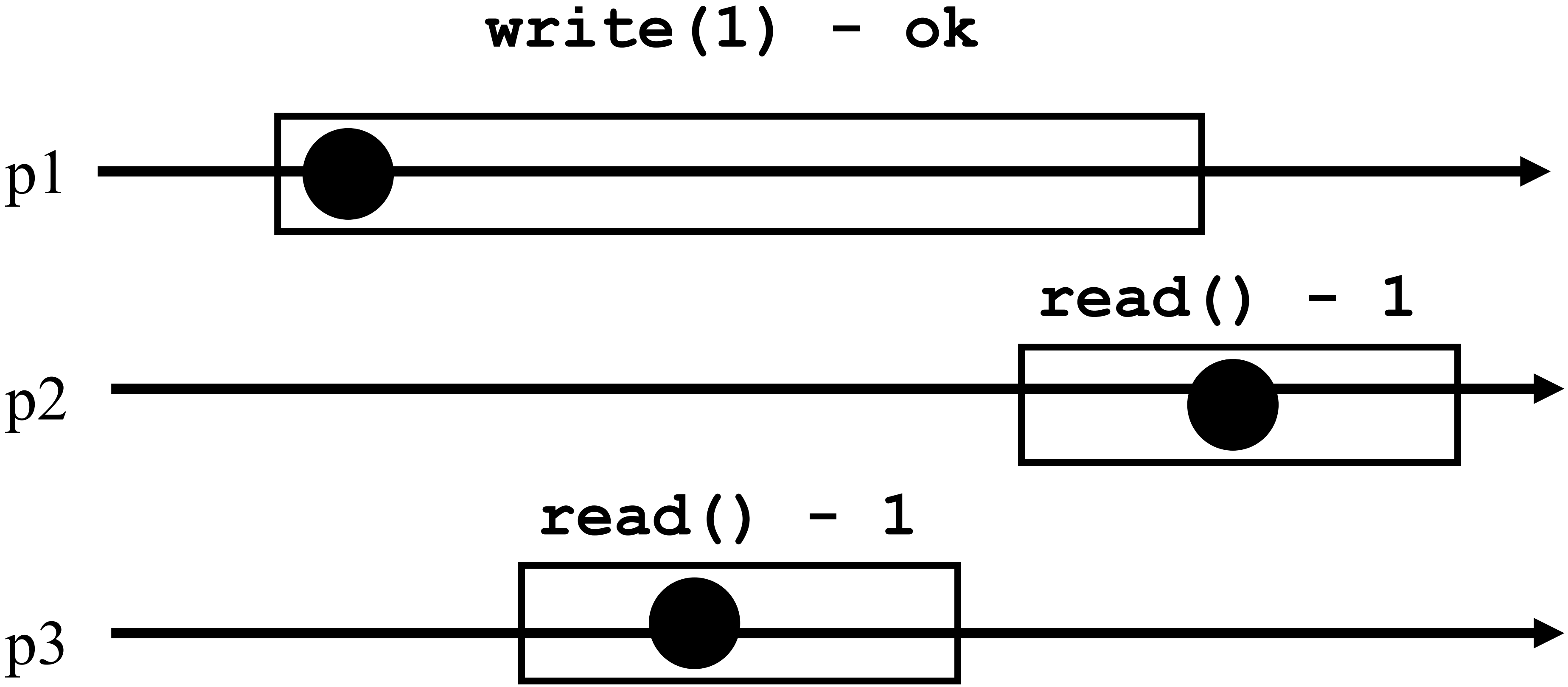


Example 2

- The producer/consumer synchronization problem corresponds to the ***queue*** object
- Producer processes create items that need to be used by consumer processes
- An item cannot be consumed by two processes and the first item produced is the first consumed

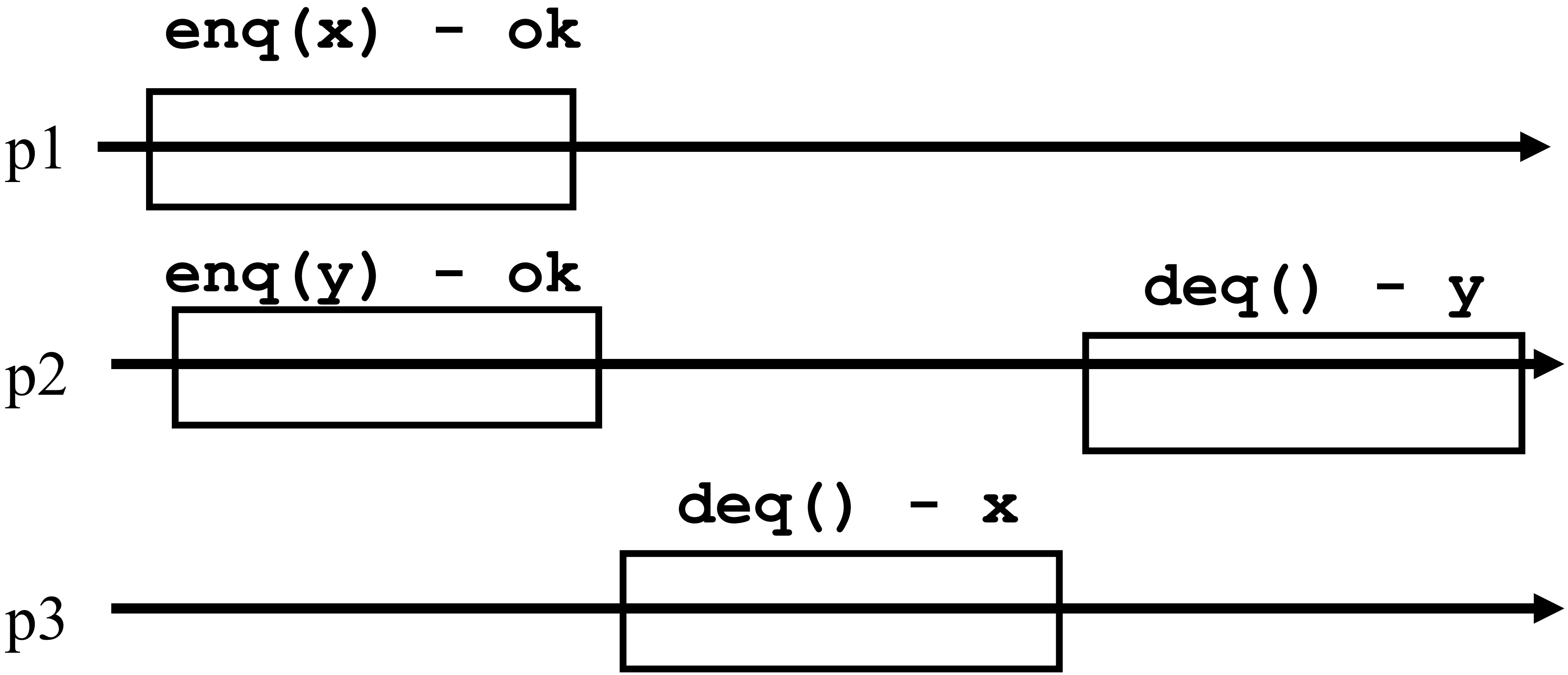
Queue

- A ***queue*** has two operations: ***enqueue()*** and ***dequeue()***
- We assume that a ***queue internally*** maintains a list *x* which exports operation *appends()* to put an item at the end of the list and *remove()* to remove an element from the head of the list

Sequential specification

- ***dequeue()***
  - if(x=0) then return(nil);
  - else return(x.remove())
- ***enqueue(v)***
  - x.append(v);
  - return(ok)

Atomicity?



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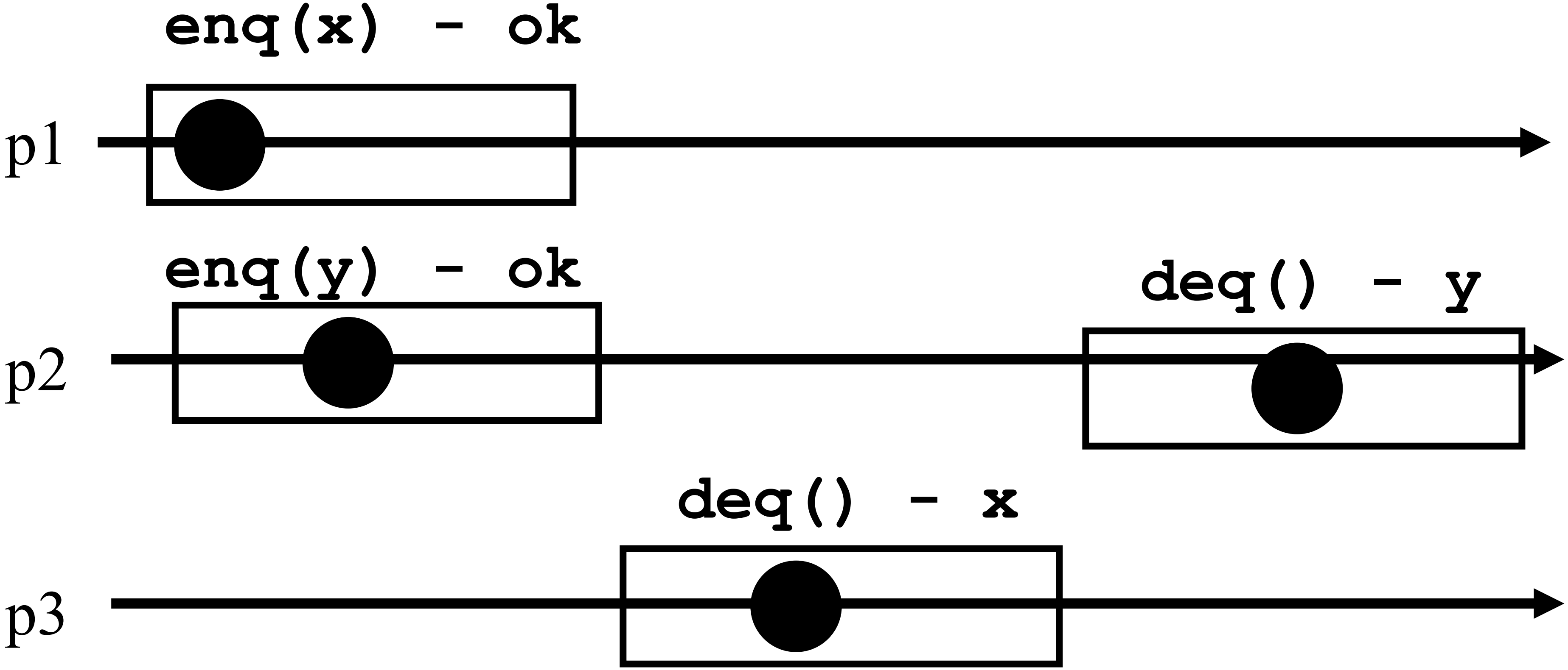

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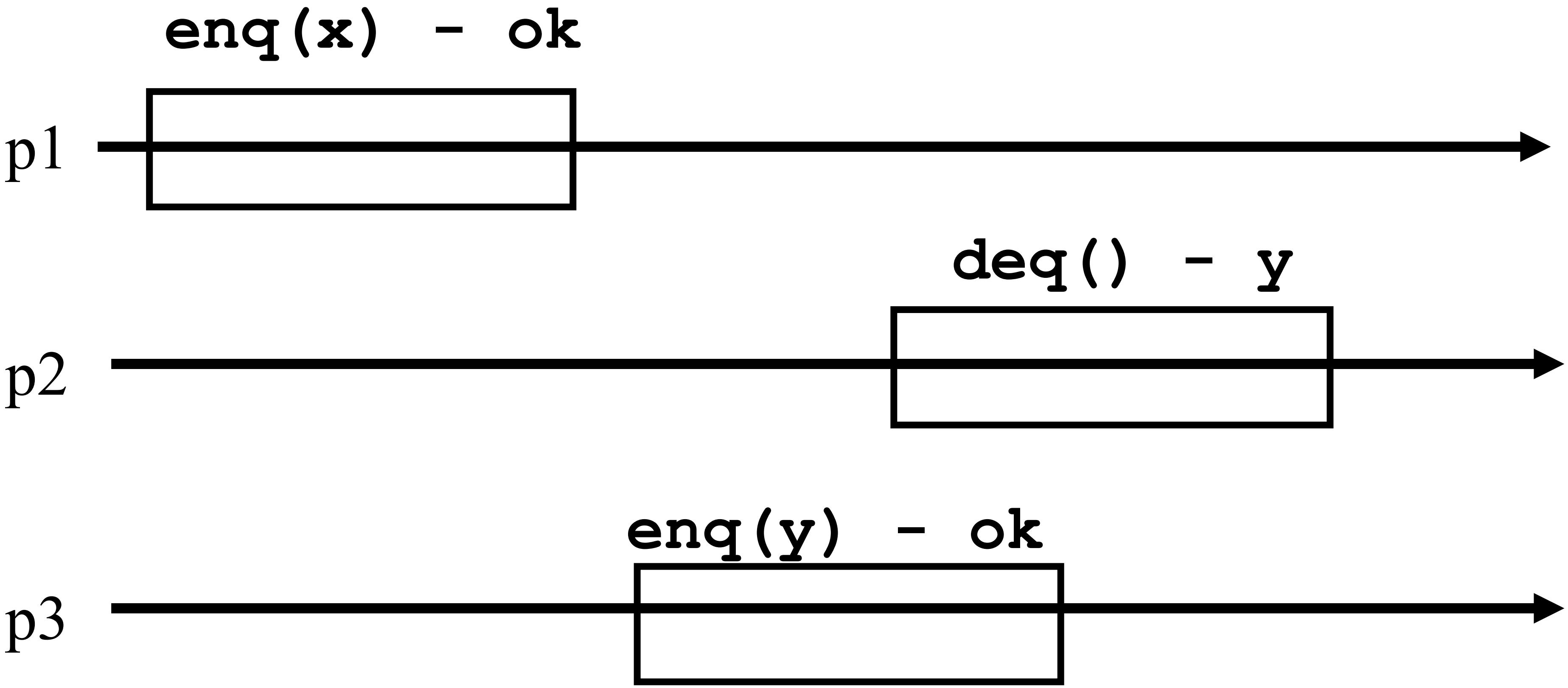

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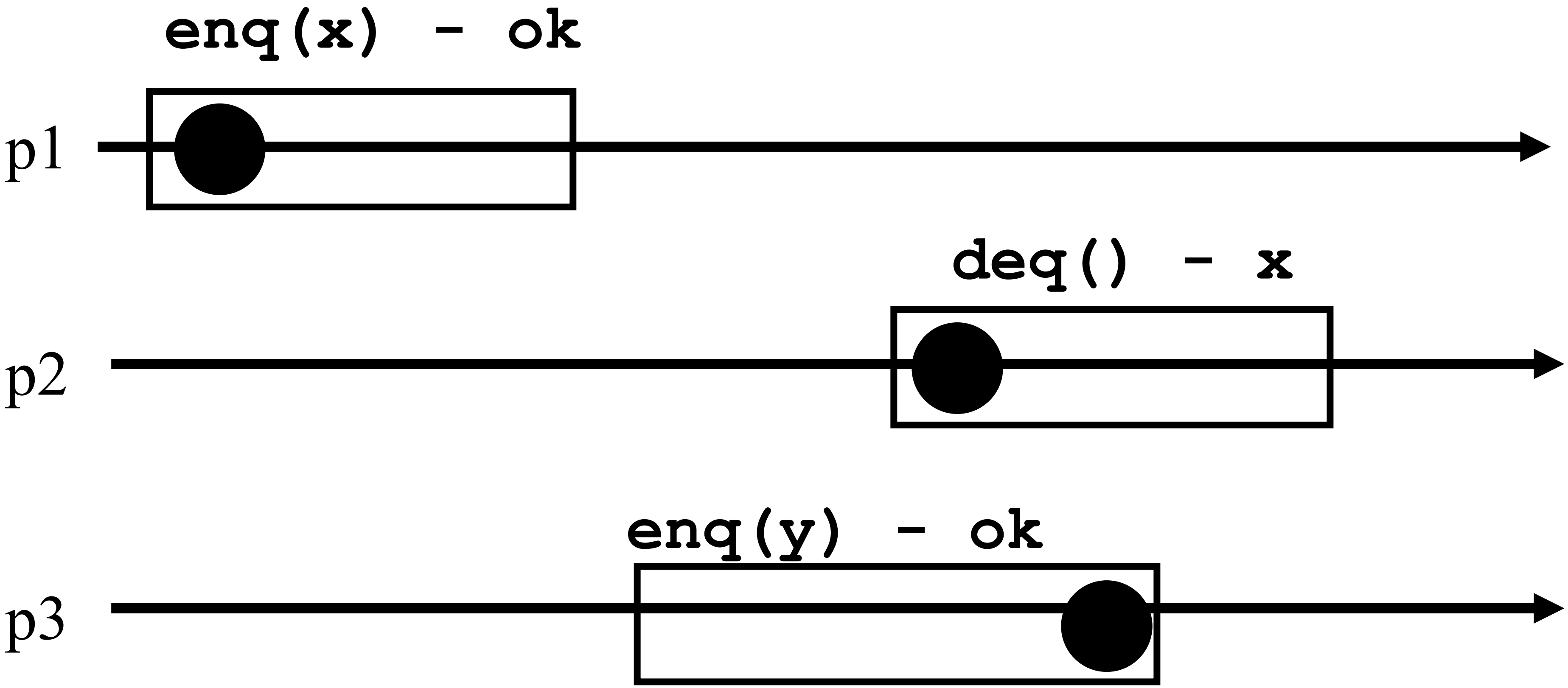

Roadmap

- *Model*
  - *Processes and objects*
  - *Atomicity and wait-freedom*
- *Examples*
- *Content*

Content

- (1) Implementing ***registers***
- (2) The power & limitation of ***registers***
- (3) ***Universal*** objects & synchronization number
- (4) The power of ***time*** & failure detection
- (5) Tolerating ***failure*** prone objects
- (6) ***Anonymous*** implementations
- (7) ***Transaction*** memory

In short

This course shows how to wait-free implement high-level atomic objects out of basic objects

Remark. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, objects mean atomic objects and implementations are wait-free