The Functional (or Task) Decomposition Design Pattern

A good example of this is the kid’s computer game SimPark.

How is this different from Data Decomposition (such as the OpenMP for-loops)

- This is done less for performance and more for programming convenience.
- This is often done in simulations, where each quantity in the simulation needs to make decisions about what it does next based on what it and the other quantities are doing right now.
- Each chunk takes all of “Now” state data and computes a “Next” state.
- The biggest trick is to synchronize the different quantities so that each of them is seeing only what the others’ data are right now. Nobody is allowed to switch their data states until they are all done consuming the current data and thus are ready to switch together.
- The synchronization is accomplished with barriers.

The Functional Decomposition Design Pattern

Credit: Maxis (Sim Park)

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The Functional Decomposition Design Pattern

void Watcher()
{
    while (<< how to know when finished? >>)
    {
        // do nothing
        WaitBarrier(); // 1.
        // do nothing
        WaitBarrier(); // 2.
        << write out "Now" state of data >>
        << advance time and re-compute all environmental variables >>
        WaitBarrier(); // 3.
    }
}

void Animals()
{
    while (<< how to know when finished? >>)
    {
        int nextXXX = << function of what all states are right Now >>
         . . .
        WaitBarrier(); // 1.
        NowXXX = nextXXX; // copy the computed next state to the Now state
        WaitBarrier(); // 2.
        // do nothing
        WaitBarrier( ); // 3.
    }
}

You Might Have to Make Your Own Barrier Function

You can’t use #pragma omp barrier?
The Functional Decomposition is a good example of when you sometimes can’t.

There are two ways to think about how to allow a program to use a barrier:
1. Let the barrier happen at a specific location in the code
2. Let the barrier work after a specific number of threads have gotten there
   - g++ allows both #1 and #2
   - Visual Studio requires #1
   - The Functional Decomposition shown here wants to have #2, because the barriers need to be in different functions

The WaitAtBarrier() Logic

omp_lock_t Lock;
int NumInThreadTeam;
int NumAtBarrier;
int NumGone;
void InitBarrier( int n )
{
    NumInThreadTeam = n; // number of threads you want to block at the barrier
    NumAtBarrier = 0;
    omp_init_lock( &Lock );
}

void WaitBarrier()
{
    omp_set_lock( &Lock );
    {
        NumAtBarrier++;
        if ( NumAtBarrier == NumInThreadTeam ) // release the waiting threads
        {
            NumGone = 0;
            NumAtBarrier = 0;
            // let all other threads return before this one unlocks:
            while ( NumGone != NumInThreadTeam - 1 );
            omp_unset_lock( &Lock );
            return;
        }
    }
    omp_unset_lock( &Lock );
    while ( NumAtBarrier != 0 ); // all threads wait here until the last one arrives …
    #pragma omp atomic
    // … and sets NumAtBarrier to 0
    NumGone++;