

# Synchronous Languages—Lecture 10

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*SyncCharts*

## The 5-Minute Review Session

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4. How does the netlist-based compilation work? Pros/cons?
5. How does the control-flow-graph based compilation work?  
Pros/cons?

# Overview

## SyncCharts (Safe State Machines)

Comparison with Harel's Statecharts

Simple Automata, Hierarchy, Concurrency/Parallelism

A Tour of SyncCharts

From Esterel to SyncCharts

From SyncCharts to Esterel

# Statecharts

Statecharts proposed by David Harel [1987]



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In a nutshell: Statecharts = Mealy Machines  
+ hierarchy (depth)  
+ orthogonality  
+ broadcast  
+ data

## Harel-Statecharts vs. SyncCharts—Similarities

SyncCharts are made up of elements common to most Statecharts dialects:

- ▶ States
- ▶ Initial/terminal states
- ▶ Transitions
- ▶ Signals/Events
- ▶ Hierarchy
- ▶ Modularity
- ▶ Parallelism

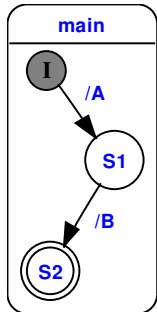
## Harel-Statecharts vs. SyncCharts—Differences

SyncCharts differ from other implementations of Statecharts:

- ▶ Synchronous framework
- ▶ Determinism
- ▶ Compilation into backend language Esterel
- ▶ No interpretation for simulations
- ▶ No hidden behaviour
- ▶ Multiple events
- ▶ Negation of events
- ▶ No inter-level transitions

## Simple Sequential Automaton

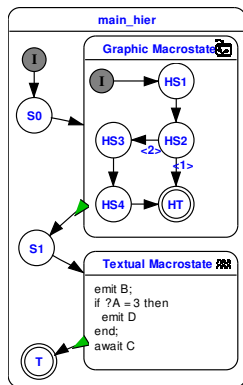
SyncChart:



Elements:

- ▶ States:
  - ▶ Regular state (circle)
  - ▶ Terminal state (doubled circle)
  - ▶ Hierarchic state (box with rounded edges)
- ▶ Transitions:
  - ▶ Arrows with labels
- ▶ Connectors:
  - ▶ Colored circles with single letters

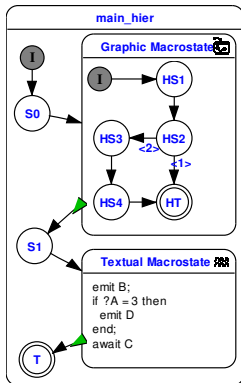
## Hierarchical States



SyncCharts know four types of states:

1. **Simple States:** Carry just a label.

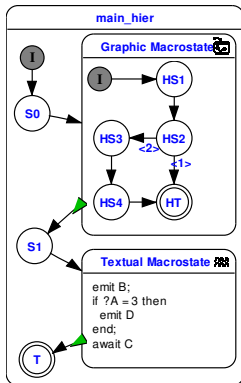
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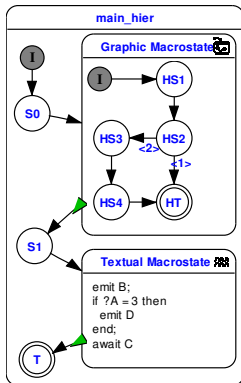
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## Hierarchical States



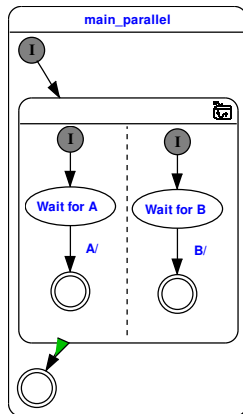
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3. **Textual Macrostates:** Contain statements of the Esterel language. They are executed on entry of the state.
4. **Run Modules:** Include other modules.

Transitions are **not** allowed to cross the boundaries of graphic macrostates. This is in contrast to other modelling tools.

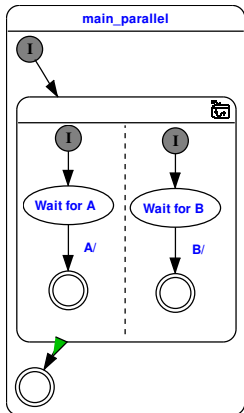


## Parallel States



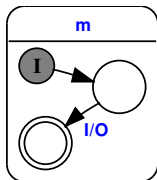
- ▶ Dashed lines (horizontal or vertical) separate parallel executed states inside a graphic macrostate.
- ▶ Each segment may be segmented into further parallel segments, but iterative segmentation does not introduce additional hierarchy. All parallel segments in a graphic macrostate are at the same level.

## Parallel States



- ▶ A transition outside the graphic macrostate with normal termination is activated, when all parallel segments have reached their terminal state.
- ▶ If just one segment does not have one or if it is not reached, then the normal termination transition will never be activated.

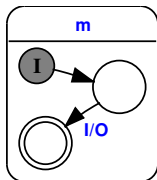
## Modules



A module like this with an interface:

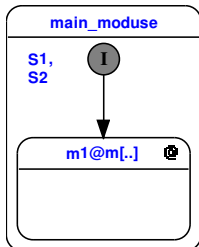
```
input I;  
output O;
```

## Modules



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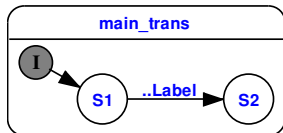
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```



... can be used as a **Run Module** with these signal bindings:

```
signal S1 / I;  
signal S2 / O
```

## Syntax of Transition Labels



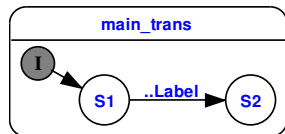
Informal syntax of a transition label between states S1 and S2, all elements are optional:

```
# factor trigger {condition} / effect
```

Basic activation and action:

- ▶ **trigger** is an expression of signal presence like "A or B"
- ▶ Enclosed in braces is the **condition**. It is a data expression over signal values or variables like "?A=42"
- ▶ Behind a single "/" follows the *effect*' as a list of emitted signals if the transition is executed. Multiple signal names are separated with ",".

## Syntax of Transition Labels



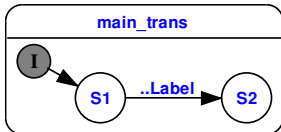
Informal syntax of a transition label between states S1 and S2, all elements are optional:

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Extensions:

- ▶ “#” is the flag for an immediate transition
- ▶ “factor” is the (natural) number of ticks a transition must be active before it is executed. These active ticks does not need to be consecutive, but S1 must be active all the time.

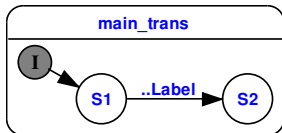
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The following label examples belong to the transition originating at S1 and leading to S2:

▶ A/B

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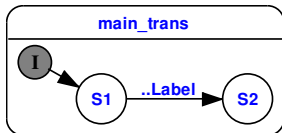
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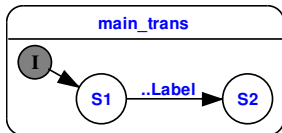
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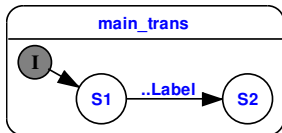
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- ▶ /B  
After enabling S1, B is emitted in the next tick and S2 is entered.

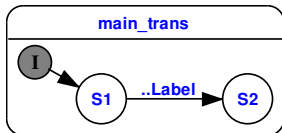
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The transition is executed, if S1 is active consecutively and signal A is present for 3 times.

## Transition Labels: Examples

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Logical combination of signal presence.

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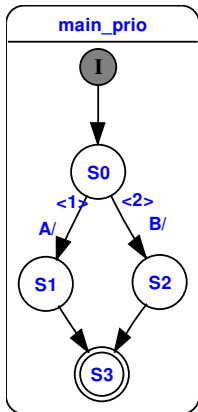
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Logical combination of value tests.
- ▶ /A(2), B(4)  
Emission of multiple valued signals.

## Transition Priorities

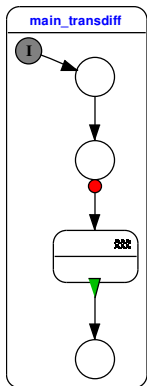


- ▶ When more than one transition departs a state, an automatic (but editable) priority ordering is established.
- ▶ The transition labels are evaluated according to their priority.
- ▶ The first label that succeeds activates its transition.
- ▶ Low numbers mean high priority.



## Transition Types

SyncCharts feature four different types of transitions: They are differentiated by a symbol at the arrow root:



1. Initial connector: **Initial arc**

Initial arcs connect the initial connectors of the chart with the other states.

2. No symbol: **Weak abort**

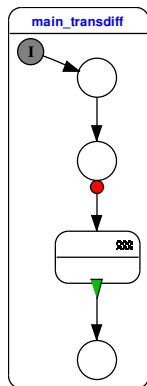
When the trigger/condition of the transition is enabled, then the actions of the originating state in the current tick are executed for a last time, then the transition action, and the entry action of the new state.

In other words:

The old state can “express it’s last will” .

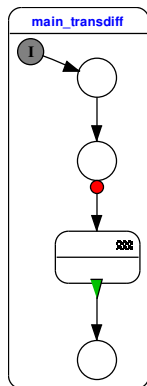


## Transition Types



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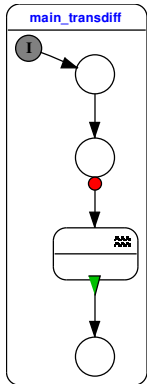


3. Red bullet: **Strong abort**  
The action for the current tick of the old state is not executed. Only the transition action and the entry action of the new state is executed.
4. Green triangle: **Normal termination**  
This transition can be used to exit macro states. It is activated when the macro state terminates.

All these transition types must not be confused with “immediate” or “delayed” evaluation of the transition label (label prefix “#”).

## Transition Types and Labels

Some transition types have restrictions on their labels:



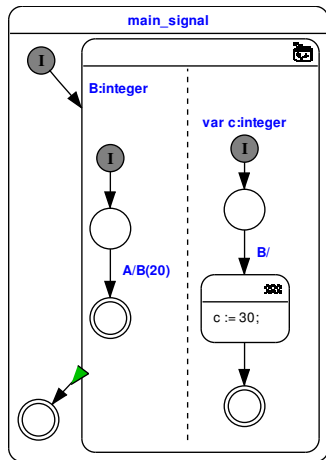
- ▶ Initial arc:  
These are always “immediate,” therefore the additional flag “#” is not needed.
- ▶ Weak abort: No restrictions.
- ▶ Strong abort: No restrictions.
- ▶ Normal termination:  
They support no triggers or conditions because they are activated by the termination of the originating state. The immediate flag is not used either.

## Transition Types and Priorities

The type of a transition interacts with it's priority:

- ▶ Strong abort: Highest priority
- ▶ Weak abort: Middle priority
- ▶ Normal termination: Lowest priority

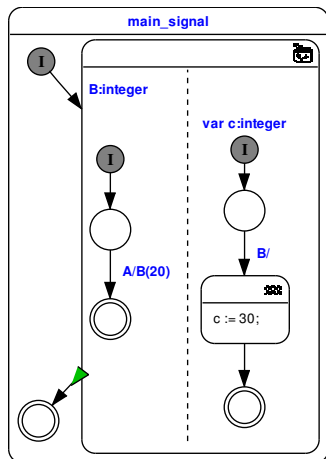
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### Local signals

- ▶ Defined in the body of a graphical macrostate
- ▶ Shared between parallel threads

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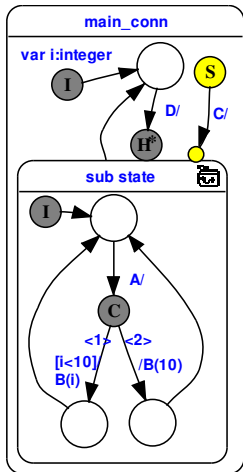
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- ▶ Shared between parallel threads

### Local variables

- ▶ Not shared

## Connectors

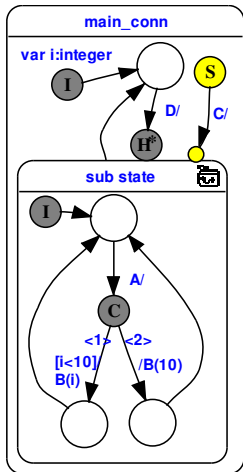
This (artificial) SyncChart demonstrates all four connector states:



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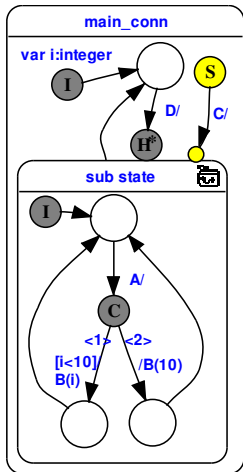


- I** **Initial connector**
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- C** **Conditional connector**
  - ▶ All departing transitions are “immediate”
  - ▶ One departing “default” transition without condition must be present.



## Connectors

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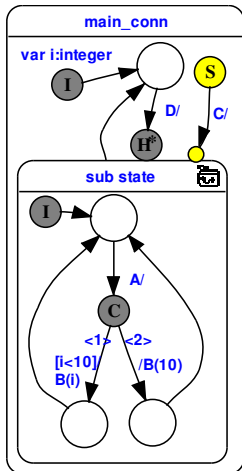


### **S** Suspend connector

- ▶ The suspend state is always active.
- ▶ Only one departing transitions is permitted.
- ▶ The transition can only hold a trigger expression.
- ▶ The “immediate” flag can be enabled on demand.
- ▶ When the transition is activated, then the target state is (strongly) suspended.

## Connectors

This (artificial) SyncChart demonstrates all four connector states:



### **H<sup>c</sup>** History connector

- ▶ This connector is directly attached to macrostates
- ▶ Only incoming transitions can connect.
- ▶ The previous state of the macrostate is restored when it is entered through a history connector.

## Equivalence of SyncCharts and Esterel

- ▶ Esterel and SyncCharts look different
- ▶ However, underlying model of computation/semantics are equivalent
- ▶ Both are based on synchrony hypothesis
- ▶ Can translate one into the other

# Overview

## SyncCharts (Safe State Machines)

### From Esterel to SyncCharts

- Step 1: Transform Esterel to SyncChart
- Step 2: Reduce to Fully Graphical SyncChart
- Step 3: Optimizations

### From SyncCharts to Esterel

## Motivation

- ▶ Can transform Esterel projects into SyncCharts
- ▶ Better visualization of the behavior of Esterel projects
- ▶ Combine benefits of textual editing and graphical viewing (see KIELER project)
- ▶ Didactical purposes

## From Esterel to SyncCharts

Step 1: Transform Esterel program into SyncChart with textual macro states

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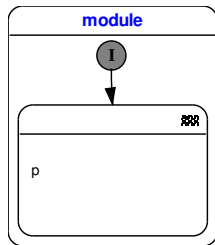


## Step 1: Transform Esterel to SyncChart

```
module mod_name:  
  input  $I_1, \dots, I_n$ ;  
  output  $O_1, \dots, O_m$ ;  
   $p$   
end module
```

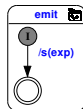
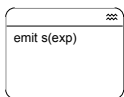
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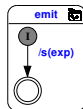
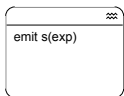
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Signal emission



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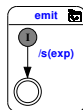
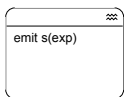
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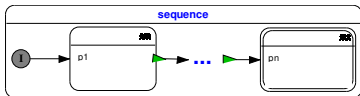
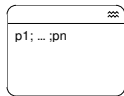
Sequence

## Step 2: Reduce to Fully Graphical SyncChart

### Signal emission

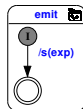
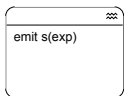


### Sequence

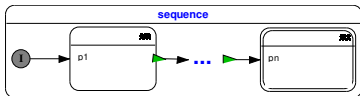
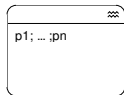


## Step 2: Reduce to Fully Graphical SyncChart

### Signal emission



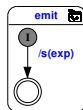
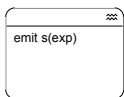
### Sequence



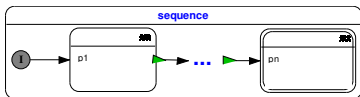
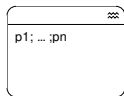
### Signal awaiting

## Step 2: Reduce to Fully Graphical SyncChart

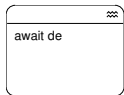
### Signal emission



### Sequence

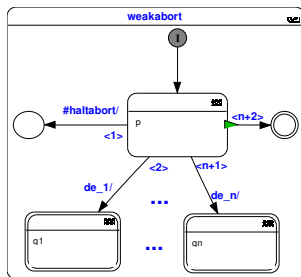
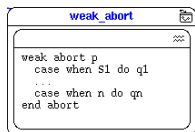


### Signal awaiting



## Step 2: Reduce to Fully Graphical SyncChart

### Weak Abortion



+ 19 additional rules

Translation of traps not trivial—see [Prochnow et al. 2006]



## Example: ABRO

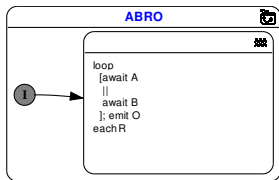
Applying Rule (module)

```
module ABRO:  
  input A, B, R;  
  output O;  
  loop  
    [  
      await A  
      ||  
      await B  
    ];  
    emit O;  
  each R  
end module
```

## Example: ABRO

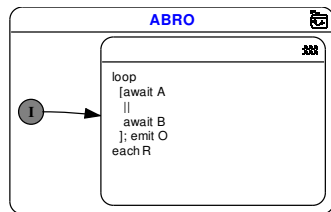
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end module
```



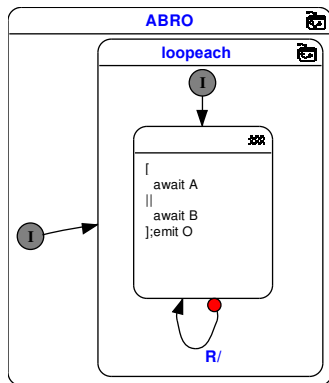
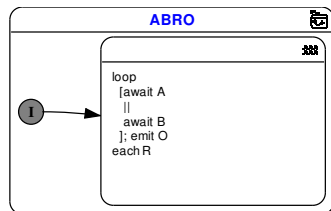
## Example: ABRO

Applying Rule (loopeach)



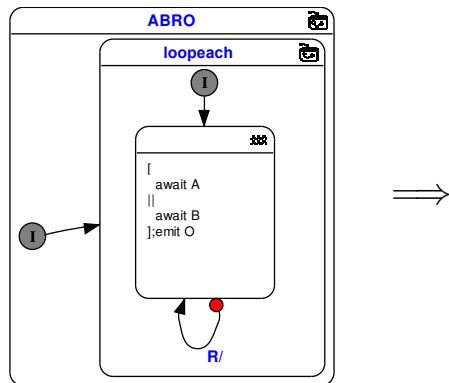
## Example: ABRO

Applying Rule (loopeach)



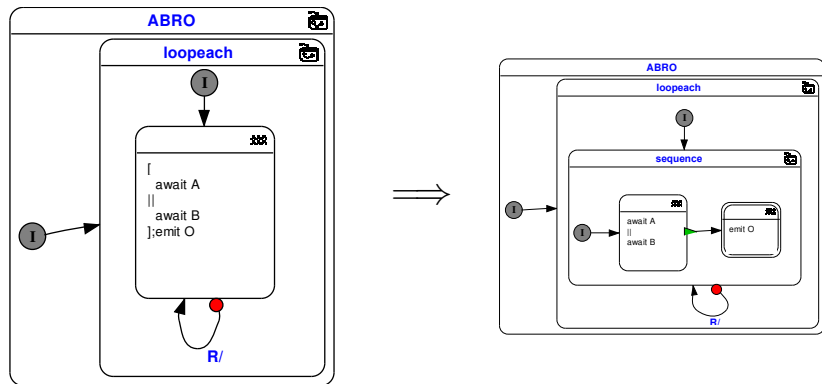
## Example: ABRO

Applying Rule (sequence)



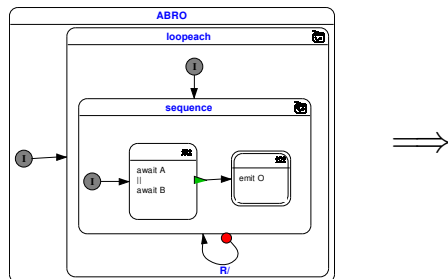
## Example: ABRO

Applying Rule (sequence)



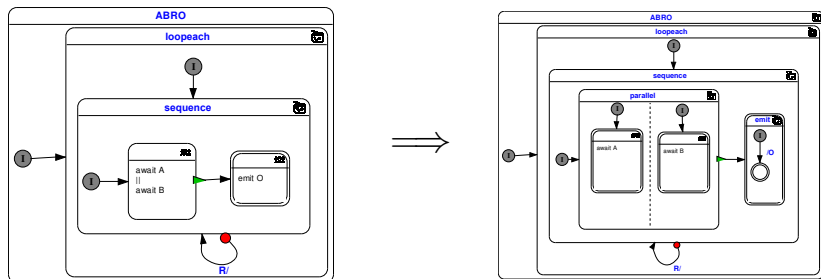
## Example: ABRO

Applying Rules (parallel) + (emit)



## Example: ABRO

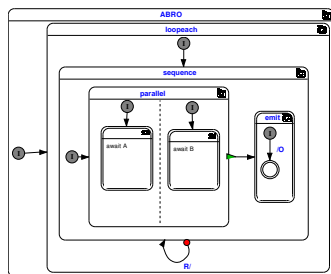
Applying Rules (parallel) + (emit)





## Example: ABRO

Applying Rule (simple await)





## Step 3: Optimizations

### Motivation

- ▶ Automatic synthesis produces “verbose” modules
- ▶ However, also human modelers (esp. novices) may produce sub-optimal models

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### Motivation

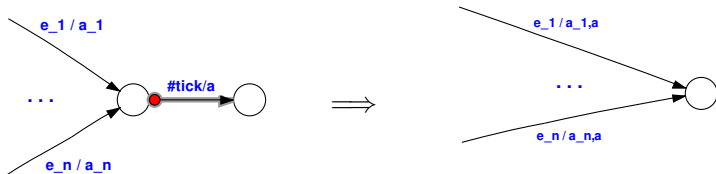
- ▶ Automatic synthesis produces “verbose” modules
- ▶ However, also human modelers (esp. novices) may produce sub-optimal models

### Notes:

- ▶ It may be a matter of style/opinion what “optimal” means
- ▶ However, consistency in style is desirable in any case—and standardized optimization rules help to achieve this

## Step 3: Optimizations

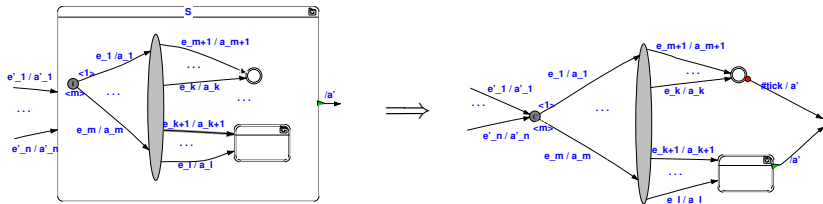
### Removing Simple States



Precondition: State must be transient

## Step 3: Optimizations

### Flattening Hierarchy



#### Preconditions:

- ▶ no abort originates from S
- ▶ S has no local signals

+ further rules to remove conditionals, combine terminal states, remove normal terminations

# Overview

SyncCharts (Safe State Machines)

From Esterel to SyncCharts

From SyncCharts to Esterel

- Examples

- Structural Translation

- Ordering States

# From SyncCharts to Esterel

## Motivation

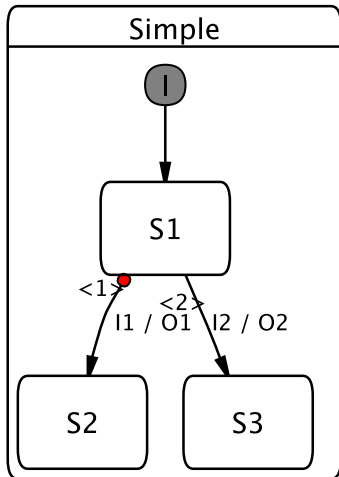
- ▶ Intermediate Step from SyncChart to C-Code (or VHDL, ...)
- ▶ This is what Esterel Studio does
- ▶ This translation is one possibility to define the semantics of SyncCharts.
- ▶ The following description of the translation is based on [André 1996] and the synthesis actually done by Esterel Studio (excluding the optimizations done by Esterel Studio)



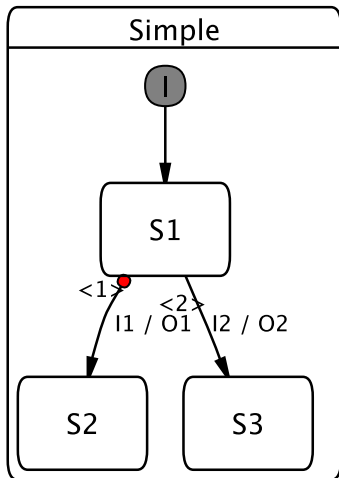
## Basic Idea

- ▶ Structural Induction on SyncChart
- ▶ Simple-States become `await`
- ▶ Macro-States become `abort`
- ▶ Parallel stays parallel
- ▶ Problem: How to order states?

## Simple Await

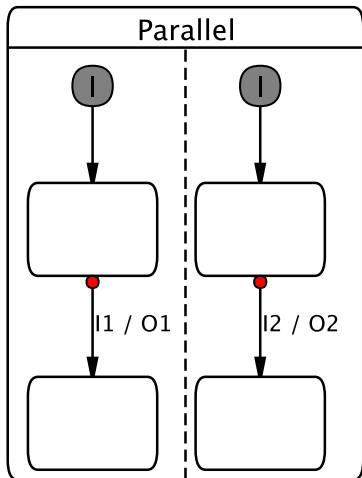


## Simple Await

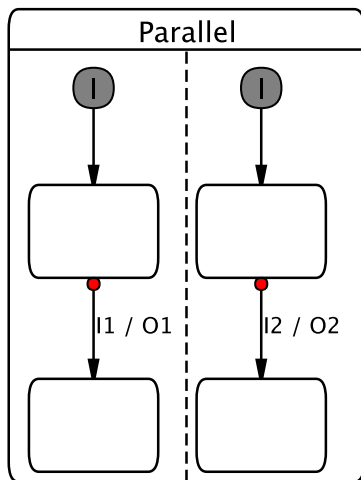


```
nothing;
% state S1
await
case (I1) do
  emit O1;
  % state S2
  halt
case (I2) do
  emit O2;
  % state S3
  halt
end await
```

## Parallel

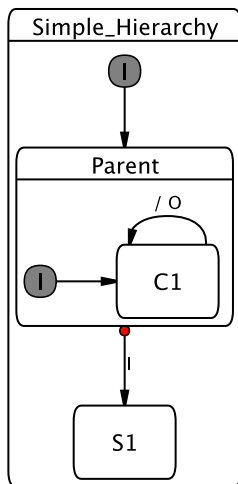


## Parallel

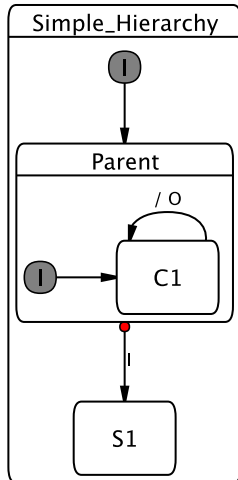


```
nothing;  
await case (I1) do  
  emit O1;  
  halt  
end await  
||  
nothing;  
await case (I2) do  
  emit O2;  
  halt  
end await
```

## Simple Hierarchy

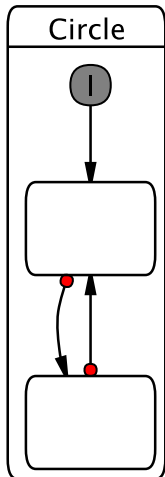


## Simple Hierarchy



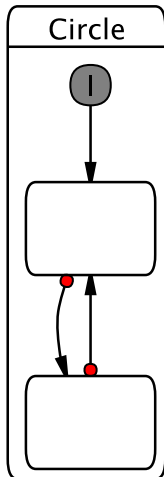
```
nothing;
% state Parent
abort
  nothing;
  loop
    % state C1
    await case (tick) do
      emit 0
    end await
  end loop
when (I)
do
  nothing;
  % state S1
  halt
end abort
```

## Simple Circle



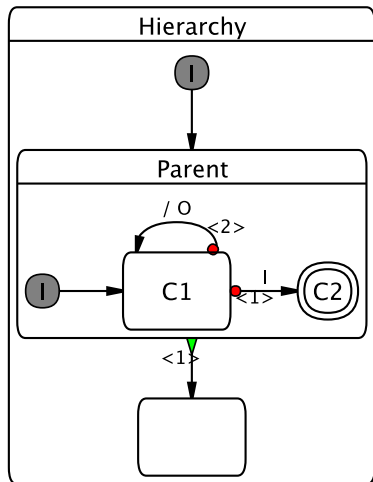


## Simple Circle

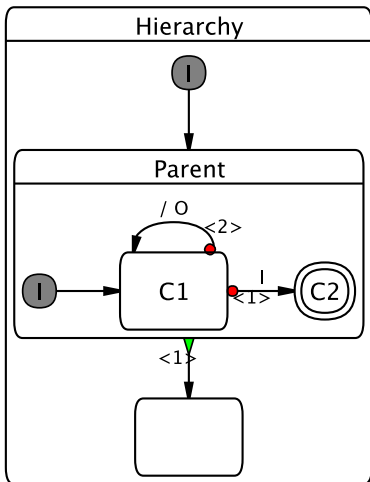


```
module Circle:
input I1, I2;
output O1, O2;
nothing;
loop
  await case (tick) do
    nothing;
    await case (tick) do
      nothing
    end await
  end await
end loop
end module
```

## Not-so-simple Hierarchy



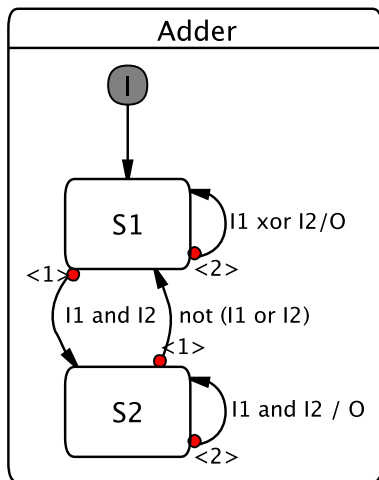
## Not-so-simple Hierarchy



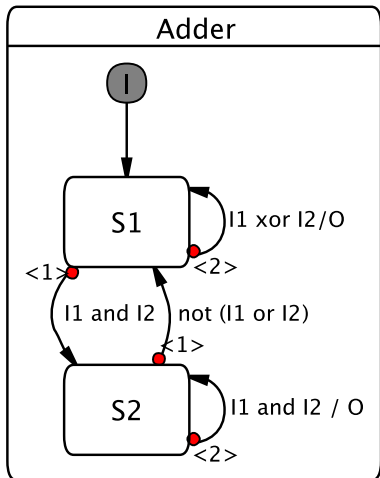
```

nothing;
% state Parent
trap sc_end_automaton1 in
  nothing;
  loop
    % state C1
    await
    case (I) do
      nothing;
    % state C2
    exit sc_end_automaton1
    case (tick) do
      emit 0
    end await
  end loop
end trap ;
nothing;
halt
    
```

## Not-so-simple Cycle



## Not-so-simple Cycle



```
signal sc_go_35_S2 in
loop
  if (sc_go_35_S2) then
    await % state S2
    case (not (I1 or I2)) do
      nothing
    case (I1 and I2) do
      emit 0; emit sc_go_35_S2
    end await
  else
    await % state S1
    case (I1 and I2) do
      emit sc_go_35_S2
    case (I1 xor I2) do
      emit 0
    end await
  end if
end loop
end signal
```

## Components

The translation is performed on a variant of the And-/Or-Tree

- Reactive Cell
  - ▶ State + Outgoing transitions
  - ▶ State can contain macrostate
- Region
  - ▶ Multiple connected Reactive Cells
- Macrostate
  - ▶ Nonempty set of Regions

We have to introduce new signals and traps

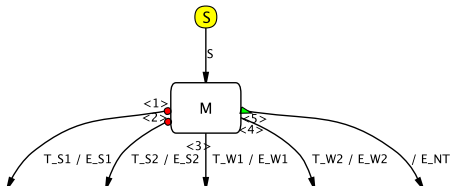
- ▶ trap `end_automaton` for normal termination
- ▶ signal `goto_s` for each state `s` in a region

## Macrostate



```
[  
  run Region_1  
  ||  
  ...  
  ||  
  run Region_n  
]
```

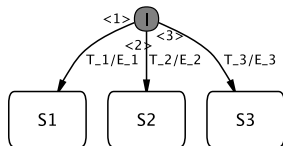
## Reactive Cell



```
module Cell
output trans_1 ... trans_5
abort
  weak abort
  suspend
  run M;
  emit E_NT;
  emit trans_5;
  when S;
  case T_W1 do emit E_W1;
              emit trans_3;
  case T_W2 do emit E_W2;
              emit trans_4;
  end abort
  case T_S1 do emit E_S1;
              emit trans_1;
  case T_S2 do emit E_S2;
              emit trans_2;
  end abort
```

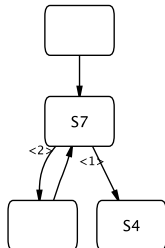


## Region Initialization



```
present
  case T_1 then emit E_1;
                emit goto_1;
  case T_2 then emit E_2;
                emit goto_2;
  case T_3 then emit E_3;
                emit goto_3;
end present
```

## Region Continuation



```
signal goto_S1, ..., goto_Sn in
trap end_automaton
  loop
    trap L in
      ...
      present goto_S7 then
        signal  $\alpha$  in
          emit  $\alpha$ ;
          run Cell17[goto_S4/trans_1,...];
          exit end_automaton % for terminal states
        present  $\alpha$  else exit L end present
      end signal
    end present;
    ...
  halt
end trap
end loop
end trap
end signal
```

## How to order the states of a Region?

- ▶ A state can be entered and left in the same tick
- ▶ Thus several states can be active in the same tick
- ▶ All immediate reachable states have to be later in the loop
- ▶ Could forbid immediate transitions
- ▶ This would make modeling more difficult

## How to order the states of a Region?

- ▶ A state can be entered and left in the same tick
- ▶ Thus several states can be active in the same tick
- ▶ All immediate reachable states have to be later in the loop
- ▶ Could forbid immediate transitions
- ▶ This would make modeling more difficult
- ▶ All transitions form a dependence graph
- ▶ Remove all delayed abortions from this graph
- ▶ **Note:** normal terminations might be immediate
- ▶ This graph has to be acyclic!

## Summary

- ▶ SyncCharts can be translated to Esterel, and vice versa
- ▶ Translation of SyncCharts to Esterel:
  - ▶ Structural induction of And-/Or-Tree
  - ▶ Macrostates, regions and reactive cells are translated separately
  - ▶ **Challenge:** unstructured control flow

## Summary

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- ▶ Translation of SyncCharts to Esterel:
  - ▶ Structural induction of And-/Or-Tree
  - ▶ Macrostates, regions and reactive cells are translated separately
  - ▶ **Challenge:** unstructured control flow
- ▶ Translation from Esterel to SyncCharts:
  - ▶ Structural induction on Esterel code
  - ▶ Resulting SyncChart has to be optimized to become readable
  - ▶ **Challenge:** traps

## To Go Further

- ▶ David Harel, Statecharts: A Visual Formulation for Complex Systems, *Science of Computer Programming*, 8(3), June 1987, pp. 231–274
- ▶ Charles André, Semantics of SyncCharts, Technical Report ISRN I3S/RR–2003–24–FR, I3S Laboratory, Sophia-Antipolis, France, April 2003, <http://www.i3s.unice.fr/~andre/CA%20Publis/SSM03/overview.html>
- ▶ Steffen Prochnow, Claus Traulsen, and Reinhard von Hanxleden, Synthesizing Safe State Machines from Esterel, *Proceedings of ACM SIGPLAN/SIGBED Conference on Languages, Compilers, and Tools for Embedded Systems (LCTES'06)*, Ottawa, Canada, June 2006, <https://rtsys.informatik.uni-kiel.de/~biblio/downloads/papers/lcts06.pdf>
- ▶ Ulf Rüegg, *Interactive Transformations for Visual Models*, B.Sc.-Thesis, Dept. of CS, Kiel University, March 2011, <https://rtsys.informatik.uni-kiel.de/~biblio/downloads/theses/uru-bt.pdf>