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# Proving Reachability in B using Substitution Refinement

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## Abstract

This paper proposes an approach to prove reachability properties of the form  $AG \psi \Rightarrow EF \phi$  using substitution refinement in classical B. Such properties denote that there exists an execution path for each state satisfying  $\psi$  to a state satisfying  $\phi$ . These properties frequently occur in security policies and information systems. We show how to use Morgan's specification statement to represent a property and refinement laws to prove it. The idea is to construct by stepwise refinement a program whose elementary statements are operation calls. Thus, the execution of such a program provides an execution satisfying  $AG \psi \Rightarrow EF \phi$ . Proof obligations are represented using assertions (ASSERTIONS clause of B) and can be discharged using Atelier B.

*Keywords:* B Notation, proof, reachability, CTL, refinement calculus

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## 1 Introduction

Reachability properties frequently occurs in information systems and security policies. For example, in a library system, a typical property is that a member should always be able to borrow a book. If the book is available and the member hasn't reached his loan limit, he can proceed immediately and borrow the book; if he has reached his loan limit, he can return one of his borrowed book and then borrow the book. If the book is already borrowed by another member, then he can make a reservation and wait for his turn to borrow the book. In this description, we see that the specifier must take into account several cases when proving such a property.

Such reachability properties are expressed in CTL [5], because one only need to show the existence of a path; LTL [9] is inappropriate, because it states properties that must be satisfied by all execution paths. A reachability property is expressed in CTL as  $\text{AG } \psi \Rightarrow \text{EF } \phi$ . This formula denotes that there exists an execution path from each state satisfying  $\psi$  to a state satisfying  $\phi$ . In the context of proving CTL properties for classical B abstract machines, an execution path is a sequence of operation calls. One way to prove a reachability property is to provide a program  $p$ , whose elementary statements are operation calls, which are combined with some operators, and to show that  $\psi \Rightarrow [p]\phi$ . Operator “[ ]” is the traditional substitution semantic operator of the B theory, which is the same as Dijkstra's weakest precondition operator, noted  $wp(p, \phi)$ . This statement essentially states that  $p$ , when started in  $\psi$ , is guaranteed to terminate in a state satisfying  $\phi$ . By proving this statement, one proves the existence of a path from  $\psi$  to  $\phi$ . If one uses B substitutions to construct  $p$ , then the B theory can be used to prove this statement.

Existing tools like Atelier B cannot directly handle an expression like  $\psi \Rightarrow [p]\phi$ , but such an expression can easily be translated into an assertion, using the laws of “[ ]”. One can then use traditional tools like Atelier B to prove it. However, the proof obligations generated from  $\psi \Rightarrow [p]\phi$  can be huge, so hard to prove. This paper describes how to prove these statements using the refinement calculus of Carroll Morgan [8] in a B context, in order to obtain smaller proof obligations.

## 2 Proving Reachability using Substitution Refinement

Morgan has proposed a number of refinement rules to develop sequential programs in a stepwise fashion. He introduced the notion of *specification statement*, noted  $w : [pre, post]$ , that specifies a computation which, when started in a state satisfying  $pre$ , must terminate in a state satisfying  $post$ , by modifying variables  $w$ . To avoid any confusion with “[...]” of the B notation, let us write Morgan's specification statement as  $\text{Spec}(pre, post)$  and consider it as

a new B substitution. We eliminate  $w$  from the notation, because it suffices for our purpose to implicitly let  $w$  denote all variables of a B machine. Its wp-semantics is defined as follows:

$$[\text{Spec}(pre, post)]Q \Leftrightarrow pre \wedge (\forall w \cdot post \Rightarrow Q)$$

One can prove the refinement of a specification statement by a substitution  $S$  as follows:

$$\text{Spec}(pre, post) \sqsubseteq S \Leftrightarrow (pre \Rightarrow [S]post) \quad (1)$$

Thus, the problem of proving a CTL reachability formula  $\mathbf{AG} \psi \Rightarrow \mathbf{EF} \phi$  can be formulated as finding a program  $S$  such that  $\text{Spec}(\psi, \phi) \sqsubseteq S$ . We will show how to conduct these proofs using refinement laws proposed by Morgan in [8].

As a first example, let us consider a B machine which describes the behavior of a library system, and show that a member can always borrow a book (see [Appendix A](#)). Thus we want to prove the following:

$$\mathbf{AG} \ me \in \text{member} \wedge \text{bo} \in \text{book} \ \mathbf{EF} \ \text{bo} \mapsto \text{me} \in \text{loan}$$

The B machine variables *member*, *book* and *loan* respectively denote the set of members, books and loans of the library. All the variables of this CTL formula are implicitly universally quantified. In the sequel, we will use the following abbreviations:

$$\begin{aligned} \psi &\triangleq \text{me} \in \text{member} \wedge \text{bo} \in \text{book} \\ \phi &\triangleq \text{bo} \mapsto \text{me} \in \text{loan} \end{aligned}$$

Thus, we must find a program  $S$  such that  $\text{Spec}(\psi, \phi) \sqsubseteq S$ . We will construct  $S$  by stepwise, algorithmic refinement (*ie*, B substitution refinement, not B machine refinement) using Morgan's laws. The execution path that  $S$  will follow can be summarized as follows: i) if the member has reached his loan limit, return one book borrowed by the member; ii) if the book is borrowed, return it; iii) if the book has reservations, cancel them. This is a brute force strategy in terms of path. Other paths corresponding to more probable scenarios could also be proved. We shall come back to this discussion at the end of the section. For now, this brute force strategy is sufficient to prove our CTL formula.

The first step is to decompose the specification in two parts: the first part will establish a condition  $C_1$  sufficient to satisfy the precondition of operation **Lend**; the second part will start from  $C_1$  and establish  $\phi$ , and we will then show its refinement by a call to **Lend**. So our first refinement step is the following:

$$\text{Spec}(\psi, \phi) \sqsubseteq S_1; S_2 \quad (2)$$

where

$$\begin{aligned}
S_1 &\triangleq \text{Spec}(\psi, \psi \wedge C_1) \\
S_2 &\triangleq \text{Spec}(\psi \wedge C_1, \phi) \\
C_1 &\triangleq C_2 \wedge C_3 \wedge C_4 \\
C_2 &\triangleq \text{card}(\text{loan} \triangleright \{me\}) < \text{MaxNbLoans} \\
C_3 &\triangleq bo \notin \text{dom}(\text{loan}) \\
C_4 &\triangleq \text{reservation}(bo) = []
\end{aligned}$$

Refinement (2) is immediately proved using law 3.3 of [8]:

$$\text{Spec}(pre, post) \sqsubseteq \text{Spec}(pre, mid); \text{Spec}(mid, post) \quad (3)$$

We can refine  $S_2$  by an operation call to **Lend**.

$$S_2 \sqsubseteq \mathbf{Lend}(me, bo) \quad (4)$$

This refinement can be proved using (1).

$$S_2 \sqsubseteq \mathbf{Lend}(me, bo) \Leftrightarrow (\psi \wedge C_1 \Rightarrow [\mathbf{Lend}(me, bo)]\phi)$$

This proof can be discharged by rewriting  $[\mathbf{Lend}(me, bo)]\phi$  using standard B axioms, which results in the following formula that can be proved by adding it as an assertion in the Library machine.

$$\begin{aligned}
\psi \wedge C_1 \Rightarrow & me \in \text{MEMBERID} \wedge \\
& me \in \text{member} \wedge \\
& bo \in \text{BOOKID} \wedge \\
& bo \in \text{book} \wedge \\
& bo \notin \text{dom}(\text{loan}) \wedge \\
& \text{reservation}(bo) = [] \wedge \\
& \text{card}(\text{loan} \triangleright \{me\}) < \text{MaxNbLoans} \wedge \\
& bo \mapsto me \in \text{loan} \triangleleft \{bo \mapsto me\}
\end{aligned}$$

We have now solved  $S_2$  by refining it into a substitution whose elementary statements are operation calls. We will solve  $S_1$  in three steps.

$$\begin{aligned}
S_1 &\sqsubseteq S_3; S_4 \quad (5) \\
S_3 &\triangleq \text{Spec}(\psi, \psi \wedge C_2) \\
S_4 &\triangleq \text{Spec}(\psi \wedge C_2, \psi \wedge C_1)
\end{aligned}$$

We can again prove (5) using (3). We can solve  $S_3$  using an IF statement.

$$S_3 \sqsubseteq \text{IF } \neg C_2 \text{ THEN } S_5 \text{ END} \quad (6)$$

where

$$S_5 \triangleq \text{ANY } bo' \text{ WHERE } bo' \in \text{loan}^{-1}[\{me\}] \text{ THEN } \mathbf{Return}(bo') \text{ END} \quad (7)$$

We can prove (6) using (1) and B axioms for “[IF]”, generating the appropriate proof obligation. We can solve  $S_4$  in a similar fashion using an IF statement and a loop.

$$S_4 \sqsubseteq S_6 ; S_7 \quad (8)$$

$$S_6 \triangleq \mathbf{Spec}(\psi \wedge C_2, \psi \wedge C_2 \wedge C_3)$$

$$S_7 \triangleq \mathbf{Spec}(\psi \wedge C_2 \wedge C_3, \psi \wedge C_1)$$

$$S_6 \sqsubseteq \text{IF } \neg C_3 \text{ THEN } \mathbf{Return}(bo) \text{ END} \quad (9)$$

$$S_7 \sqsubseteq \text{WHILE } \neg C_4 \quad (10)$$

DO  $S_8$

INVARIANT  $\psi \wedge C_2 \wedge C_3$

VARIANT  $\mathbf{size}(\text{reservation}(bo))$  END

$$S_8 \triangleq \text{ANY } me' \text{ WHERE } me' \in \text{ran}(\text{reservation}(bo))$$

THEN  $\mathbf{Cancel}(me', bo)$  END

We can again immediately prove (8) using (3). We can prove (9) using (1) and the B axiom for “[IF]” to generate a proof obligation.

The WHILE statement of (10) is not a syntactically accepted WHILE statement in the B notation, because its loop body does not use implementation substitutions, but the semantics and rules of the WHILE statement are valid for any substitution, so we can use them to generate proof obligations. We can prove (10) using law 5.5 of [8], provided that we discharge the following proof obligations.

$$\psi \wedge C_2 \wedge C_3 \wedge \neg C_4 \Rightarrow [S_8]\psi \quad (* \text{ loop body preserves the invariant } *)$$

$$\psi \wedge C_2 \wedge C_3 \wedge \neg C_4 \Rightarrow [n := V][S_8](V < n) \quad (* \text{ loop body decreases}$$

the variant  $V \triangleq \mathbf{size}(\text{reservation}(bo))$  \*)

$$\psi \wedge C_2 \wedge C_3 \wedge \neg C_4 \Rightarrow V \in \mathbb{N} \quad (* \text{ the variant is a natural number } *)$$

Note that there is no proof obligation for the initialisation of the loop, since the loop refines  $S_7$ , whose precondition is the loop invariant.

We have added as assertions the proof obligations that we manually generated from (4), (6), (9), and (10). They are provided in the Library specification of [Appendix A](#) in the ASSERTIONS clause. These assertions generate 14 PO; 10 are automatically proved and 4 are easily proved with the interactive prover.

Figure 1 provides the program obtained by piecing together the leaves of this refinement tree. By transitivity of refinement, this program refines  $\mathbf{Spec}(\psi, \phi)$ , itself representing the CTL formula  $\mathbf{AG} \psi \Rightarrow \phi$ . This program

```

IF  $\neg C_2$  THEN
  ANY  $bo'$  WHERE  $bo' \in loan^{-1}[\{me\}]$  THEN Return( $bo'$ ) END
END;
IF  $\neg C_3$  THEN Return( $bo$ ) END;
WHILE  $\neg C_4$  DO
  ANY  $me'$  WHERE  $me' \in ran(reservation(bo))$ 
  THEN Cancel( $me', bo$ ) END
  INVARIANT  $\psi \wedge C_2 \wedge C_3$ 
  VARIANT  $size(reservation(bo))$  END;
Lend( $me, bo$ )

```

Fig. 1. The program which refines the reachability property “a member can always borrow a book”

executes operation calls, thus it provides an execution path from  $\psi$  to  $\phi$ . Other solutions could explore more probable scenarios. For instance, the user could make a reservation when the book is borrowed; a loop over operations **Take** and **Return** or **Cancel** would empty the list of reservations and allow the member to ultimately borrow the book. These alternative solutions should also be devisable by stepwise refinement.

### 3 Discussion and Conclusion

We have shown how to prove a reachability property using substitution refinement. We construct by stepwise refinement, reusing Morgan’s specification statement and laws, a program whose elementary statements are operations calls. Thus, the execution of this program provides a path to prove the reachability property. Such a program is not written in B0; we take the liberty of freely combining all substitutions offered by the B notation, since our purpose is not to built an executable program. Our only constraint is that elementary substitutions are operation calls.

We could have used machine refinement, instead of substitution refinement, to conduct this reachability proof. The idea is to write an abstract machine that includes the library specification, and that contains an operation specifying the reachability property, *ie*, an operation that describes the same behavior as  $\text{Spec}(\psi, \phi)$ . One then refines this machine into an executable program similar to the one of Figure 1, except that it must satisfy the syntactic restrictions of the B notation for implementations and use only concrete expressions and substitutions. It has the advantage of letting Atelier B generate the proof obligations. On the other hand, one has to go through the trouble of implementing the abstract variables of the library specification and it would generate significantly more complicated proof obligations. Stepwise

substitution refinement allows the specifier to work with abstract variables and manage the size of proof obligations by properly decomposing the proof into several small steps.

The automation of our approach could be quite simple. The specifier would provide the refinement steps under the form of a list of refinement inequations and definitions, as illustrated in this paper, and provide a reference to a database of refinement laws (*eg*, Morgan’s laws in [8]) to justify each refinement step. The tool could syntactically check the call to refinement laws, generate the proof obligations and insert them as assertions in the B abstract specification. These assertions could then be proved using a tool like Atelier B.

There were other attempts at implementing Morgan’s refinement calculus. The Refinement Calculator [3] uses HOL to formalize the refinement calculus and conduct proofs; PRT [4] uses Ergo. By reusing a B tool, we avoid to formalise the theory of refinement; we instead reuse the theory of B.

In a companion paper [7], we outline an alternative approach to prove reachability properties. We propose an algorithm that, given a *path expression*, generates proof obligations for  $\text{AG } \psi \Rightarrow \text{EF } \phi$ . A path expression is an angelic choice between basic paths. A basic path starts with a precondition and includes operation calls or loops on operation calls. The generated proof obligations are slightly more complex than those obtained by the approach proposed here, but the specifier does not have to go through a stepwise refinement process. On the other hand, stepwise refinement provides greater freedom in constructing a program showing the existence of a path.

Abrial and Mussat [1] introduced the *leadsto* modality of UNITY for an ancestor of Event B. UNITY’s *leadsto*, noted  $\psi \rightsquigarrow \phi$ , is defined in LTL as  $\Box(\psi \Rightarrow \diamond\phi)$ . This modality is proved by showing that a set of events decrease a variant  $V$ , pretty much like the while loop rule 5.5 of [8] which we have used. In [1], events have a guard, which is refined by strengthening it, thus potentially eliminating some execution paths. To ensure that execution paths are preserved by guard refinement, one must also prove that the disjunction of the guards is not strengthened. Because we use classical B with preconditions for operations, substitution refinement directly preserves the existence of a path from  $\psi$  to  $\phi$ , so we do not have this additional proof obligation. This also means that any implementation of a B abstract machine will also satisfy our reachability properties.

The work of [1] is extended in [2] by adding UNITY’s *ensures* modality as well as weak fairness and minimal progress. We do not take into account fairness in our work, because it is not relevant in information systems (IS), since an IS user is never forced to invoke an action. However, we must take into account progress in the context of while loops. Additional proof rules for *ensures* and *leadsto* are proposed in [12]. Pnueli *et al* [6,10,11] have proposed

a number of rules to prove CTL\* properties, also taking into account fairness and justice. Their strategy is to reduce CTL\* formula into basic formula which can then be proved using elementary rules. We plan to investigate how to adapt these rules to a refinement context, in order to deal with more complex patterns of CTL formula.

A weaker notion of progress is sometimes required in IS properties. For instance, one would like to ensure that when a reservation is made for a book, it will be served provided that the IS users take appropriate actions. Moreover, an IS user has no control on the operations executed by other users, in interleave. Thus, to avoid interference by other users, no operation should delay (*ie*, move backwards) the reservation of a member in the reservation queue of a book. This notion of progress could potentially be proved by finding a variant  $V$  and by partitioning the set of operation calls in three parts:  $PR$  (progress),  $NI$  (non-interference) and  $CA$  (cancellation). In our example, the variant  $V$  is the position of the member in the reservation queue of the book. Let  $\psi$  denote states where the request is pending, and  $\phi$  denote states where the request is served. An operation  $pr \in PR$  must progress towards the goal, decreasing the variant  $V$  and preserving  $\psi$  or establishing  $\phi$ :

$$\psi \wedge pre(pr) \Rightarrow [n := V][pr](V < n \wedge (\psi \vee \phi)) ,$$

where  $pre(pr)$  denotes the precondition of  $pr$  (*ie*,  $[pr]\mathbf{true}$ ). An operation  $ni \in NI$  must be non-interfering; it must preserve  $V$  and  $\psi$ :

$$\psi \wedge pre(ni) \Rightarrow [n := V][ni](V = n \wedge \psi) .$$

Operation calls of  $CA$  cancel the request that was to be served, thus no special temporal constraint is imposed on them. Finally, one must prove reachability using a WHILE loop on variant  $V$ :

$$\text{Spec}(\psi , \phi) \sqsubseteq \text{WHILE } \xi_1 \text{ DO } S \text{ INVARIANT } \xi_2 \text{ VARIANT } V \text{ END}$$

This refinement holds when

$$\begin{aligned} \psi &\Rightarrow \xi_2 \\ \xi_1 \wedge \xi_2 &\Rightarrow [n := V][S](V < n \wedge \xi_2) \\ \neg \xi_1 \wedge \xi_2 &\Rightarrow \phi \end{aligned}$$

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## Appendix A The B Specification of the Library System

**MACHINE** *Library*

**SETS** *MEMBERID; BOOKID*

**ABSTRACT\_CONSTANTS** *MaxNbLoans*

**PROPERTIES** *MaxNbLoans*  $\in \mathcal{N}$

### DEFINITIONS

$Index(bb, mm) == ((reservation(bb))^{-1} (mm));$   
 $phi == ((bo \mapsto me) \in loan);$   
 $psi == (me \in member \wedge bo \in book);$   
 $C1 == (C2 \wedge C3 \wedge C4);$   
 $C2 == (\mathbf{card}(loan \triangleright \{ me \}) < MaxNbLoans);$   
 $C3 == (bo \notin \mathbf{dom}(loan));$   
 $C4 == (reservation(bo) = [])$

### ABSTRACT\_VARIABLES

*loan, member, book, reservation*

### INVARIANT

$member \subseteq MEMBERID \wedge book \subseteq BOOKID \wedge loan \in book \leftrightarrow member \wedge$   
 $reservation \in book \rightarrow \mathbf{iseq}(member) \wedge$   
 $\forall mm. (mm \in member \Rightarrow \mathbf{card}(loan \triangleright \{ mm \}) \leq MaxNbLoans)$

## ASSERTIONS

/\* PO (4) : Lend refines S2 \*/

$$\forall (bo, me) . (psi \wedge C1 \Rightarrow ($$

$$me \in member \wedge bo \in BOOKID \wedge bo \in book \wedge bo \notin \mathbf{dom}(loan) \wedge$$

$$reservation(bo) = [] \wedge \mathbf{card}(loan \triangleright \{ me \}) < MaxNbLoans \wedge$$

$$bo \mapsto me \in loan \triangleleft \{ bo \mapsto me \} ));$$

/\* PO (6) Refinement of S3 \*/

$$\forall (bo, me) . ( psi \Rightarrow ($$

$$\neg (C2) \Rightarrow ($$

$$\forall bop . (bop \in loan^{-1} [\{ me \}] \Rightarrow ($$

$$bop \in BOOKID \wedge bop \in book \wedge bop \in \mathbf{dom} ( loan ) \wedge psi \wedge$$

$$(\mathbf{card}(\{ bop \} \triangleleft loan) \triangleright \{ me \}) < MaxNbLoans))))$$

$$\wedge$$

$$(C2 \Rightarrow (psi \wedge C2))));$$

/\* PO (9) Refinement of S6 \*/

$$\forall (bo, me) . ( (psi \wedge C2) \Rightarrow ($$

$$\neg (C3) \Rightarrow ($$

$$bo \in BOOKID \wedge bo \in book \wedge bo \in \mathbf{dom} ( loan ) \wedge psi \wedge$$

$$(\mathbf{card}(\{ bo \} \triangleleft loan) \triangleright \{ me \}) < MaxNbLoans) \wedge$$

$$(bo \notin \mathbf{dom}(\{ bo \} \triangleleft loan))))$$

$$\wedge$$

$$(C3 \Rightarrow (psi \wedge C2 \wedge C3))));$$

/\* PO (10) Refinement of S7 \*/

$$\forall (bo, me) . ($$

$$(psi \wedge C2 \wedge C3 \wedge \neg (C4)) \Rightarrow$$

$$\forall mep . (mep \in \mathbf{ran}(reservation(bo)) \Rightarrow ($$

$$mep \in MEMBERID \wedge mep \in member \wedge bo \in BOOKID \wedge$$

$$bo \in book \wedge bo \in \mathbf{dom}(reservation) \wedge$$

$$mep \in \mathbf{ran}(reservation(bo)) \wedge$$

$$\mathbf{size}(reservation(bo) \uparrow (Index(bo, mep) - 1)) \frown$$

$$(reservation(bo) \downarrow Index(bo, mep)))$$

$$< \mathbf{size}(reservation(bo))))))$$

**INITIALISATION**

$$loan := \emptyset \parallel book := \emptyset \parallel member := \emptyset \parallel reservation := \emptyset$$
**OPERATIONS**

**Lend** (  $member\_$  ,  $book\_$  ) =

**PRE**

$$member\_ \in MEMBERID \wedge member\_ \in member \wedge$$

$$book\_ \in BOOKID \wedge book\_ \in book \wedge$$

$$book\_ \notin \mathbf{dom} ( loan ) \wedge reservation(book\_)=[] \wedge$$

$$\mathbf{card} ( loan \triangleright \{ member\_ \} ) < MaxNbLoans$$
**THEN**

$$loan ( book\_ ) := member\_$$
**END ;**

**Reserve** (  $member\_$  ,  $book\_$  ) =

**PRE**

$$member\_ \in MEMBERID \wedge member\_ \in member \wedge$$

$$book\_ \in BOOKID \wedge book\_ \in book \wedge$$

$$member\_ \notin \mathbf{ran}(reservation(book\_)) \wedge$$

$$book\_ \mapsto member\_ \notin loan \wedge$$

$$( book\_ \in \mathbf{dom} ( loan ) \vee reservation(book\_)\neq [] )$$
**THEN**

$$reservation := reservation \Leftarrow$$

$$\{ book\_ \mapsto ((reservation(book\_)\leftarrow member\_)) \}$$
**END ;**

**Return** (  $book\_$  ) =

**PRE**

$book\_ \in BOOKID \wedge book\_ \in book \wedge$

$book\_ \in \mathbf{dom} ( loan )$

**THEN**

$loan := \{ book\_ \} \triangleleft loan$

**END ;**

**Take** (  $member\_ , book\_$  ) =

**PRE**

$member\_ \in MEMBERID \wedge member\_ \in member \wedge$

$book\_ \in BOOKID \wedge book\_ \in book \wedge$

$book\_ \notin \mathbf{dom} ( loan ) \wedge$

$\mathbf{card} ( loan \triangleright \{ member\_ \} ) < MaxNbLoans \wedge$

$\mathbf{size}(reservation(book\_)) \neq 0 \wedge$

$\mathbf{first}(reservation(book\_)) = member\_$

**THEN**

$loan ( book\_ ) := member\_ ||$

$reservation := reservation \triangleleft \{ book\_ \mapsto \mathbf{tail}(reservation(book\_)) \}$

**END ;**

**Cancel** (  $member\_ , book\_$  ) =

**PRE**

$member\_ \in MEMBERID \wedge member\_ \in member \wedge$

$book\_ \in BOOKID \wedge book\_ \in book \wedge$

$member\_ \in \mathbf{ran}(reservation(book\_))$

**THEN**

$reservation(book\_ ) :=$

$( reservation(book\_ ) \uparrow ( Index(book\_ , member\_ ) - 1 ) )$

$( reservation ( book\_ ) \downarrow Index(book\_ , member\_ ) )$

**END**

**END**