7 Concurrent and Distributed Systems (RNW)

This question is with respect to an operating system that supports multi-threaded processes using the POSIX threads (pthreads) API. Assume that each call to printf prints its output atomically, that thread scheduling is non-deterministic, and that threads are allocated unique and sequential integer IDs starting with 0.

(a) Some program state is per-process, and some is per-thread. How many instances of each of the following will a 2-thread process have: virtual address space, executable program, register file, scheduling state (e.g., RUN, SLEEP), and stack? [5 marks]

(b) A programmer adds printf s to a concurrent program to debug a race condition, but the symptoms vanish. Explain why this might have happened. [2 marks]

(c) thrprint accepts as arguments the current thread’s unique ID and a debug message to print. If each thread calls thrprint exactly once on start, how many possible interleavings are there with n threads? [2 marks]

```c
void thrprint(int threadid, char *message) {
    printf("Thread %d: %s\n", threadid, message);
}
```

(d) ordered_thrprint attempts to print debug messages ordered by thread ID. Describe three ways in which the synchronisation in this implementation is incorrect, and provide a corrected pseudocode implementation. [6 marks]

```c
int next_thread_id = 0; // Next ID to print
pthread_mutex_t ordering_mtx; // Lock protecting next ID
pthread_cond_t ordering_cv; // next_thread_id has changed

void ordered_thrprint(int thread_id, char *message) {
    pthread_mutex_lock(ordering_mtx);
    if (thread_id != next_thread_id) {
        pthread_cond_wait(ordering_cv, ordering_mtx);
    }
    next_thread_id = next_thread_id + 1;
    pthread_mutex_unlock(ordering_mtx);
    printf("Thread %d: %s\n", thread_id, message);
}
```

(e) This approach to implementing ordered_thrprint suffers a substantial performance problem: if lower-numbered threads are slow in starting, then higher-numbered threads will also be delayed. Describe an alternative strategy, paying particular attention to synchronisation, that maintains ordered output while allowing greater concurrency. [5 marks]