

Preface

After receiving my M.Sc. degree in Leiden, I faced the pleasant choice between becoming a Ph.D. researcher in Leiden and becoming a Ph.D. researcher in Maastricht. After some thought I decided to go to Maastricht, a choice I have never regretted. I was inspired not only by the beauty of Maastricht, but also by many persons, whom I want to acknowledge here.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Jaap van den Herik. His critical attitude towards my research always kept me going. Furthermore, he taught me valuable lessons on doing research and on writing scientific articles. Next, many thanks go to Jonathan Schaeffer. Talking to him always made me enthusiastic, and his experience in the domain of game playing was of great benefit. Also, his suggestion to shift my attention towards computer games, giving my research a new impulse, proved very valuable. I thank Jos Uiterwijk for the daily supervision. We had many fruitful discussions, and without his help the thesis would not have been what it is now.

Further, I want to thank Patrick Hudson for reading this thesis. His suggestions for correcting my English writings were helpful. Patrick, I promise never to fax you that many pages again. I thank the late Bob Herschberg for scrutinizing some parts of the thesis in an earlier stage, improving the text considerably.

I would like to thank my colleagues at the Department of Computer Science for making me feel comfortable. Of all the room-mates I have had in the past few years, I especially want to thank Victor Allis for his ever-present enthusiasm. I thank Patrick Schoo, Maarten van der Meulen and Jo “de la Hiti” Beerens for their technical support. Many thanks go to the administrative staff of the Department of Computer Science. Sabine, iech bedaank diech veur d’ne relativerende kiek op ’t promovere en veur ’t frisse winsje in de vakgróp. Joke, bedankt voor de kritische grapjes en voor het helpen met de crypto’s.

I thank my chess pals Harold “Liebe” Bekkering and Gerrit “Big-Love” Verhagen for always being there when I needed a good friend to talk to (or to drink with on the OLVP). Further, I will never forget the good times I had with Hans “Hmpf” Hoornstra. Finally, the visits of Cees “Bebi” Beekhuis made my stay in Maastricht even more pleasant than it already was.

Ik wil in het bijzonder mijn ouders bedanken voor de mogelijkheden die ze me hebben geboden om me te ontwikkelen. Helaas is mijn vader te vroeg overleden om mijn promotie mee te maken, maar ik weet dat hij trots op me zou zijn geweest.

Acknowledgements

The research reported in this thesis is supported, in part, by the Foundation for Computer Science Research in the Netherlands (SION), with financial support from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) (dossier code 612-22-306).

Part of the research has been performed in the framework of the SYRINX project (SYnthesis of Reliable Information using kNowledge of eXperts), a joint research effort of IBM and the Universiteit Maastricht (project code 561553). The research has been carried out under the auspices of SIKS, the Dutch Research School for Information and Knowledge Systems.

Dennis Breuker
Amsterdam, August 1998