

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It's a sign of mediocrity when you demonstrate gratitude with moderation.
Roberto Benigni

My graduate school experience was about intensive learning not only in the field of computer science but also in many other aspects of life, and now I'm a different (hopefully wiser and more mature) person as a result of this experience. As is the case with any large endeavor, many people have contributed to the success of this dissertation.

First of all, I would like to thank my family for their support, encouragement, and unshakable faith in my abilities during the course of my studies. Without their support, inspired by tradition and the belief of the European intelligentsia that nothing is more valuable and important than education, I may not have persevered in my studies.

Regular telephone conversations with my mother saved me a fortune in psychotherapy costs. Whenever I felt dejected or doubtful due to diverse factors such as making slower than expected progress in my research, learning that one of my papers was rejected, having no personal or social life whatsoever, or imagining the life I could have had, had I chosen to continue my professional career in the "real world," my mother would assure me that pursuing a Ph.D. was the right thing to do and that the pleasures of normal life could wait. My family has exhibited such incomprehensible pride about my pursuing a doctorate degree that I have always felt like I had no choice but to carry on and successfully complete my studies.

I would like to thank my advisor Yannis Smaragdakis and all the members of my committee: Mary Jean Harrold, Doug Lea, Santosh Pande, and Karsten Schwan.

Meeting my advisor Yannis Smaragdakis solidified my intent to pursue academic research training. He gave me the opportunity to work on problems that I found exciting and gently guided me through the challenges of mastering the intricacies of the research trade. His explanation that the only worthy reason for getting a Ph.D. is to become a “fully trained Jedi Knight” seemed just barely convincing five years ago, but it makes perfect sense to me now. His knowing exactly when a hands-on or hands-off management approach was most appropriate helped me immensely in my development as a researcher. His pointing out the differences between analytic and synthetic abilities and his advice that I work on improving the former helped me focus my efforts and achieve maximum benefits. Yannis has never failed to amaze me with the depth of his analysis and insight, and I can only hope that I’d be as effective an advisor for my future students as Yannis was for me.

I was fortunate to have an office on the same floor as that of Mary Jean Harrold, whom I worked for as an RA for one semester. I quickly learned that the only way to get to work earlier than Mary Jean was to stay in my office all night. I have learned so much by observing Mary Jean interact with her students, and I can only hope that some of her incredible work ethics, dedication to her students, and passion for academic work have rubbed off on me.

I was also fortunate to have Doug Lea as the external member of my committee. Every interaction with Doug was a learning experience of such high quality that I felt compelled to take notes whenever I was talking to him. I find Doug’s dedication to science and work ethics somewhat intimidating—I could not imagine that a researcher of his stature and with such a busy schedule would not only read all my dissertation documents but also provide multiple insightful comments and suggestions.

The support and encouragement that I received from Santosh Pande have greatly contributed to the success of this dissertation. His advice to “hold my ground” proved to be invaluable. In addition, he contributed interesting ideas for future work directions of this dissertation.

Karsten Schwan firmly declared, after he had known me for just a few weeks, that I appeared to be “a systems person” and that I should pursue research in systems. His uncanny intuition about the area for which I was most suited at a time when I was oblivious to my proclivity or talents in that particular research area helped guide my studies. His guidance was invaluable, but more importantly, his encouragement and appreciation of my work greatly boosted my confidence and helped me succeed throughout my experience at Tech.

The exchange Masters students from the University of Stuttgart, Marcus Handte and Stephan Urbanski, greatly helped me in creating the infrastructure for my research. Marcus built the J-Orchestra GUI and contributed to the code base, and Stephan implemented most of the GOTECH framework. I also would like to acknowledge the help of other Masters students: Austin Chau, Nikitas Liogkas, and Dean Mao. Nikitas was a major contributor to the Kimura case study.

I’d like to thank all the members of the INCITE Lab: Idris Hsi, Vernard Martin, Jochen “Je77” Rick, Patrick Yaner, Dave Zook, and others, for engendering an atmosphere of intellectual vitality, exchange, and collegiality in our lab. Listening to and participating in their discussions on various matters provided me with an opportunity to engage in intellectual discourse beyond my disciplinary boundaries. Thanks to them, I’m a more well-rounded thinker than I used to be.

I'd like to thank all the present and former members of Mary Jean Harrold's Aristotle research group: Taweessup "Term" Apiwattanapong, George Baah, Jim Bowring, Pavan Kumar Chittimalli, Jim Jones, Donglin Liang, Maikel Pennings, Saurabh Sinha, and others. I can't imagine a better bunch of people as grad school colleagues! Being able to walk across the hall at any time and engage them in meaningless conversation while preventing them from doing their work helped me maintain my sanity. Also, competing with and invariably losing to Term in trying to lift a bigger percentage of one's weight during our regular workouts did not just keep me in shape but also helped me tremendously in dealing with the stress of graduate school.

I'd like to thank all the SPARC faculty: Pete Manolios, Alex Orso, Spencer Rugaber, and Olin Shivers for generously sharing their wisdom with me, as well as the SPARC students: Christoph Csallner, David Fisher, Shan Shan Huang, Lex Spoon, and others for being a receptive and critical audience on which I could try out my research ideas.

I'd like to thank Deborah Mitchell, Barbara Binder, and Jennifer Chisholm for making all the administrative matters a cinch to deal with.

Because of a freak accident that put an end to my career as a professional musician, my experience with computers started quite haphazardly. This experience would not have been as successful without the fine instruction, helpful advice, and strong encouragement I received at Pace University in New York. Among the many fine professors that I had the pleasure of interacting with as a student at Pace, Carol Wolf and Joseph Bergin are the two to whom I'm particularly grateful. Dr. Wolf was my first professor of programming, and because of her exceptional teaching, I have not only mastered the fundamentals of computer science but also gained confidence in my abilities as a computer programmer and in

my future success. By distinguishing me as a student with strong potential for becoming a good researcher, Dr. Bergin gave me the confidence necessary to pursue a doctorate degree. Furthermore, his personal involvement in the application for admission process was instrumental in my admission to Georgia Tech.

Finally, I'd like to thank the faculty at Virginia Tech for giving me a job!