To my parents, my sister and Anu.
This thesis has certainly been a challenge. It was quite tricky to balance a full work schedule and then spend some nights and even weekends working on research. There were times I thought I should give up, especially in the Spring of 2004, when my machine crashed, and less than half my code could be recovered; I had to re-write most of it from scratch; and re-simulate most previous results. In the face of these setbacks, the people mentioned below truly deserve my deepest gratitude.

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