Re-animation of computer programs
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A THESIS is published under the name of one person. But others have influenced what is published here. In the first place, my promoter, Gerard de Zeeuw was responsible for shaping the form and significant content.

My colleagues formed a strong support system, acquainting me with the concepts they were working with and also the methods employed in their research. These were all new and strange to me as I came from another field of science, into the study of andragology. I was also fortunate enough to find a place in the research program “Support, Survival and Culture”, part of the “Centre for Innovation and Co-operative Technology” of the Amsterdam university.

Insofar as their ideas are used in this publication they, and their principal originators, are referenced in appropriate footnotes. It is difficult, if not impracticable, to make such references complete. At this point, I would like to express my gratitude to other members of the group, especially to Marjolijn Witte who always found the time to read my drafts and pinpointed what could be ameliorated. This thesis is also the result of many dialogues with her. My promoter encouraged me to emphasize the social implications of research of a mainly technical nature.

Beyond this circle there were computer users who also assisted. They provided unrestricted access to the source code of software they developed. Members of the computer community, in a conscious or unconscious way, helped by publishing source code. Programmers place themselves in a vulnerable position by doing so. Like writers, they expose themselves to public scrutiny in the way they think as well as the mechanisms they have created. It will become clear that my interest in the underlying research subject was largely determined by making available past programmers software.

Accessing these past efforts required developing a series of computer programs. These programs have been combined into a package that will be
referred to as MAchine LAnguage INvestigator (MALIN). It enables its
users to inspect machine code used on an earlier computer.

One of the intentions of this thesis is to show that a support system is a
mixture of the actions of people and mechanical contrivances. Today
these support systems are often dependent upon computer assistance. The
support system offered and discussed in this thesis is intended for those
interested in accessing old programs for purely historical purposes and
those using old programs in a new working environment.

This work is dedicated to those, often anonymous programmers, who
made it possible to develop MALIN.

Special thanks to the CWI library staff for their assistance, Lourens Blok
for his hard- and software support, Ed Mennuti for reviewing and cor­
recting grammatical errors and Chris Meeuwissen for the cover and book
design.