## Is Chess the Drosophila of AI?

Computer Games as Experimental Technologies


Nathan Ensmenger
University of Pennsylvania


# If one could devise a successful chess machine, one would seem to have penetrated to the core of human intellectual endeavor. 

Herbert Simon (1958)



## Chess Metaphors



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE HUMAN MIND
translated ey Deborah Klosky


THE AUTOMATON CHESS PLAYER.


Automaton Chess Player

1770

## A History of Computer Chess



QJ PERFORMANCE EVERY EVENING. ©D DN SATTTRTDAT, TMAT 7 T 1834
There will be two Exhibitions, one commenceing at $4 . c_{\text {. }}$
M. 12. at the usual time.-Doors open half anhour pren. ub.

Doors open at half-past 7 o'elock. Performance to commence at 8 prech


## Invented by DE KEMPELIN, Impraved by J. MAELZEL.

The Chess Player has withstood the first players of Europe and America, and excites universal admiration. He moves his head, eyes, lips, and hands, with the greatest facility, and distinetly pronounces the word "Echec," (the French word signifying "Check") when necessary. If a miss-move


1821
Charles Babbage

1770

## A History of Computer Chess



Edgar Allen Poe


1770
A History of Computer Chess


## I <br> 1836

1770

## A History of Computer Chess



1836
1770

## A History of Computer Chess

Plate 1.


Plates.


Plate 2.


Plate 1.


1836

## A History of Computer Chess

## Leonardo Torres y Quevedo



1770
A History of Computer Chess

## Alan Turing



1770
A History of Computer Chess

## Los Alamos "MANIAC"



A History of Computer Chess


## Herbert Simon

## 1957

 1770

## 1956

A History of Computer Chess


## John McCarthy



1946


1770
A History of Computer Chess


A History of Computer Chess


A History of Computer Chess

## Are the man

## to command electronic giants?

From the recent advance of electronic digital computers has emerged an exciting new job-creating instructions that enable these giant computers to perform logical operations for a variety of tasks in business, science and government.
You could be eligible for a position in computer programming. Because it is a new and dynamic field, there are no rigid qualifications. Do you enjoy algebra, geometry or other logical operations? Can you do musical composition or arrangement? Do you have an orderly mind that enjoys such games as chess, bridge or anagrams . . . finally, do you have a lively imagination?
If you do, you can qualify. You will receive training (at full pay) and work at IBM's Engineering Laboratories-among the most modern in the world. For more information, write to: G. W. Woodsum, Dept. 203, International Fusiness Machines Corp., Research Laboratory, Poughkeepsic, N. Y.


## Are

From the recent advance of electronic digital computers has emerged an exciting new job-creating instructions that

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INTERNATIONAL. BUSINESS MACHINES CORPORATION



## If chess is the

 drosophila of AI, what is Drosophila the drosophila of?


## Thomas Hunt Morgan

2 whites, and not the usual 3:1 Mendelian ratio. Yet, as will be shown later, the result is in entire accord with Mendel's principle of segregation.


Fig. 35. Diagram showing a cross between a white eyed male and a red eyed female of the fruit fly. Sex linked inheritance.



## 8088038060



00000 eeee


Fig. 64. Scheme to illustrate a method of crossing over of the chromosomes.



MANIAC Computer, Los Alamos (1958)
how a computer sees a chessboard





P-K4


P-Q4

ply 1: white to move

ply 2: black to move

ply 3: white to move



## the limits of computation




# average number of moves per game of chess 



## average number of plies per game of chess


average number of plausible moves per ply

average number of moves to be examined per game

average number of moves to be examined per game


# average number of moves to be examined per game 



## $10^{18}$

## total number of seconds since the origin of the universe



## $10^{75}$

## total number of atoms in the universe



## $10^{6}$

## number of moves evaluated by <br> Deep Blue every second


total number of moves calculated if every atom in the universe was a chess computer as powerful as Deep Blue and had been running since the beginning of time until the end of the universe
minimax

construct the decision tree


## apply the evaluation function









$+1 \quad+0$
$+4 \quad+4$
$-2$
$-7 \quad+0$
$-4$

ply 3: white to move

ply 3: white to maximize

ply 3: white to maximize

$+4 \quad+4$
$+0 \quad-4$


ply 2: black to move

ply 2: black to minimize


P-124
P-Q4
$+1$

## P-124 P-Q4 <br> +1

ply 1: white to move

## P-KK <br> P-Q4

+1
$-4$
ply 1: white to maximize

ply 1: white to maximize

ply 2: black to minimize

ply 3: white to maximize



## is the

minimax algorithm the drosophila of AI?

## why chess?



# Daring ideas are like Chess men moved forward. They may be beaten, but they may start a winning game. 

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The chess pieces are the block alphabet, which shapes thoughts; and these thoughts, although making a visual design on the chessboard, express their beauty abstractly, like a poem.

Marcel Duchamp

# Chess is like war on a board. 

Bobby Fischer




## 1. d4 Nf6 <br> 2. c4 e6

algebraic chess notation

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 c5 4. d5 exd5 5. cxd5 d6 6. Nc3 g6 (Benoni Defense, A61) 7. Nd2 Nbd7 8. e4 Bg7 9. Be2 O-O 10. O-O Re8 11. Qc2, NH5 12. Bxh5 gxh5 13. Nc4 Ne5 14. Ne3 Qh4 15. Bd2 Ng4 16. Nxg4 hxg4 17. Bf4 Qf6 18. g3 Bd7 19. a4 b6 20. Rfe1 a6 21. Re2 b5 22. Rae1 Qg6 23. b3 Re7 24. Qd3 Rb8 25. axb5 axb5 26. b4 c4 27. Qd2 Rbe8 28. Re3 h5 29. R3e2 Kh7 30. Re3 Kg8 31. R3e2 Bxc3 32. Qxc3 Rxe4 33. Rxe4 Rxe4 34. Rxe4 Qxe4 35. Bh6 Qg6 36. Bc1 Qb1 37. Kf1 Bf5 38. Ke2 Qe4+ 39. Qe3 Qc2+ 40. Qd2 Qb3 41. Qd4 Bd3+


| Partie <br> Partie <br> Game <br> Partida <br> Партия | Nr <br> No <br> No <br> No <br> No | the Zug <br> Votre coup <br> Your move <br> Su jugada <br> Ваш ход | Nr <br> No <br> No <br> No <br> No | Mein Zug <br> Mon coup <br> My move <br> Mi jugada <br> Мой ход |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |


| Turner | Nr |
| :--- | :--- |
| Tournor | No |
| Tournament | No |
| Torneo | No |
| Typmep | No |

Ihr Zug ist unklar Votre coup n est pas clar Your move is not clear Jugada maldefinida Herchain 10 A

Ihr Zug ist unmoglich Votre coup est impossible Your move is impossible Jugada imposibile
Невозможный ход

| Ihr Poststempeldatum <br> Votre date de la poste <br> Your postmark date <br> Su fecha postal <br> Дata вашего почтового штампа |  | ihre Bedenkzeit <br> Votre temps <br> Your time taken <br> Tiempo consumido por Ud <br> Bawe время |  | Tage Jours Days Dias Дия | Thre Zett insgesamt <br> Votre temps total <br> Your total time <br> Su tiempo total <br> Bawe obuee врема |  | Tage Jours Days Dias Днн |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Emplangen am Recule <br> Received on <br> Recibudo el dia <br> Получено |  | Meine Bedenkzelt <br> Mon temps <br> My time taken <br> Tiempo consumido por mi <br> Мое время |  | Tage Jours Days Dias Дna | Meine Zet insgesamt <br> Mon temps total <br> My total time <br> Mi tiempo total <br> Moe oбшее время |  | Tage Jours <br> Days <br> Dias <br> дин |
| Beantwortet am <br> Repondule <br> Replied on <br> Contestado el dia <br> Отвечено |  | Partie <br> Partie <br> Game <br> Partida <br> Партин | Ich biete Remis Je propose partie nulle I offer Draw Otresco tablas Предлагаю нкчкю |  | - Ich nehme an <br> - J'accepte <br> - I accept <br> - acepto tablas <br> - cornащаюссь на ничию |  | ничиен |
| Urlaub Vacances Holdays Vacaciones von du from del or bis au to hasta ao | Otnych |  | Gruße Sa | urs | rely | C npus |  |

## preprinted correspondence chess postcard




IBM 360/195, Rutherford Labs (1974)


## Thursday, October 6, 11



## Detroit World Computer Chess Championship (1979)



# FI 

Mitchell Denies Any Link to Bugging
Mitchell Denies Any Link to Bugging

## p

Stocks Jump NEW YORK (?-The ntock mark-
et sent Wall Streeters off on their
Labot Day weekend in a sood mood, staging a rally amid light trading. The Dow Jones
6.32 at 970.05 .

Details in Part ; Page 1 ?
$\$ 1$ Billion U.S. Soles Accord Reached by Nixon, Tanaka HONOLULU (at-President: Nixon kuel Tanaka today pledzed joint efforts to bring trade between the two countries into better baiance. In a compaaion aniouncement, the governments disclosed Japaneze
pians to purchase $\$ 1$ billion-plus of


Can an American chess computer beat the Soviet Chess Champion? A Confrontation between American space-age technology and a Soviet psychological weapon.

The Soviet Union regards chess as a osychological weapon, not just a game it is a symbol of communism's cultural struggle with the West.
So when Russian Anatolı Karpov competed against the Russian Defector, Victor Korchnoו, te had the entire Soviet Union's resources at his disposal, including a hypnotist and neuroosychologist
Thursday, October 6, 11
look several moves ahead to determine its next move When we first designed it, it played five levels of chess Levei one was for beginners and as you played against the computer, you could increase its level of difficulty until the computer became more of a challenge. Level five was quite a challenge
We thought we had the ultimate unit with five levels, until we developed our most soohisti-
space-age products-further assurance that your modest investment is well protected
We suggest you order a JS\&A Chess Computer on our 30 day trial perıod Play against it Raise or lower the level as you play and watch how the computer's personality can change right in mid-game-from a tough competitor to a push over.

## why minimax?

    MOVE list[MAXMOVES];
    int i,n,bestvalue,value;
    if(checkwin(p))
        \{
        if (p->color == WHITE)
                return -INFINITY;
        else
            return INFINITY;
        \}
    if(depth == 0)
        return evaluation(p);
    if (p->color==WHITE)
        bestvalue \(=\)-INFINITY;
    else
        bestvalue = INFINITY;
    n = makemovelist(p,list);
    if( \(\mathrm{n}==0\) )
        return handlenomove(p);
    for \((i=0 ; i<n ; i++)\)
    $\{$


Peter Jennings, Microchess (1976)





| \# | \#\#\#\#\#\# | \# \# | \#\#\#\#\#\# |  |
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| \# \# | \#\#\#\#\#\# | \# ${ }^{\text {¢ }}$ | \#\#\#\#\#\# | $10=2$ |




## Microchess, Radio Shack TRS-80 (1979)




The Classic Game of Chess Will Never Be the Same.

## $\alpha \beta$-pruning







## game over?



Kasparov vs. Deep Blue
Game 6, May 11, 1997

# If one could devise a successful chess machine, one would seem to have penetrated to the core of human intellectual endeavor. 

Herbert Simon (1958)


John McCarthy, Stanford University (1967)

Computer chess has developed much as genetics might have if the geneticists had concentrated their efforts starting in 1910 on breeding racing Drosophila.

We would have some science, but mainly we would have very fast fruit flies.

John McCarthy, AI as Sport (1997)

If you can't beat your computer at chess, try kickboxing.

## do algorithms have politics?

## The programmer, like the poet, works only slightly removed from pure thought stuff.

He builds his castles in the air, from air, creating by exertion of the imagination.

Frederick P. Brooks, The Mythical Man-Month (1975)



| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

knight moves (black)

| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

knight moves (black)
[00000000 00000000000000000000000001010000100010000000000010001000$]$

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| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

knight moves (black)

| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

all pieces (white)
[00000000 00000000000000000000000000000000000000000010110000000100$]$

| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
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| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |


| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
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all pieces (white)
knight moves (black)
[00000000 00000000000000000000000001010000100010000000000010001000$]$ (AND, OR, NOT, XOR)
[00000000 00000000000000000000000000000000000000000010110000000100$]$

