Acknowledgements

“There is a language in the world that everyone understands... it is the language of enthusiasm, of things accomplished with love and purpose, and as part of a search for something believed in and desired”

Paulo Coelho, The Alchemist.

A thesis is the culmination of years of planning, working, and interacting with a wide cross-section of people, some of whom you are very happy to know and some whom you wish you had never met! The same holds true for me, but at the fag end of my PhD life, I am quite happy to say that the former heavily outweighs the latter. This is but a small token gesture of appreciation that I would like, at this stage, to extend to all those to whom I am indebted for helping me, in every little way, to go through the five years of frustration, tedium, aspirations and enthusiasms that comprised my PhD life!

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"There isn't much better in this life than finding a way to spend a few hours in conversation with people you respect and love. You have to carve this time out of your life because you aren't really living without it."