Preface

It was as an undergraduate student majoring in English literature that I became aware of the 'magical quality' of the stage, and how the dramatic text became altogether a different thing once performance took over. The 'felt-life' of the stage, the tangible 'bonding' between the actor and the spectator and the sense of heightened significance of communication between the two, are cited often enough in books on drama / performance theory: it is 'live performance' that sets apart this literary genre.

Having continuously struggled to reconcile to the idea of drama as text (not performance) to be read (not seen), I tentatively decided to make this the subject of my thesis and explored the problem more thoroughly. Dr. G.P. Sarma, Professor, Department of English, Gauhati University, my then prospective guide, agreed, and sounded quite interested in the project, asking me to start preliminary work on it. My first trip to the Indo-American Centre for International Studies, Hyderabad (formerly the American Studies Research Center) provided me with confidence in so far as academic material availability was concerned. It was there that I prepared my report and Professor Sarma agreed to become my supervisor, and I registered myself for the Ph.D. degree.

I acknowledge with immense gratitude the very special role played by Professor G.P. Sarma in the completion of this project. Without his constant patience, encouragement and support, I would never have been able to bring this study to its culmination. His extremely valuable suggestions along with his minute reading and re-reading of each chapter helped me put my own ideas
into perspective and give final shape to this work. He allowed me ample space
to try out my arguments, after sounding them out with intensive discussion. I
shall always remain indebted for his help.

Dr. Nandana Dutta, Reader, Department of English, Gauhati
University; my former teacher, now a colleague, has over the years, generated
intensive discussion on varied issues (the drama paradox being one of them). I
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Dr. Hirendranath Gohain, former Professor, Department of English,
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various ways. I am thankful to them.

My thesis includes a student-response survey that showed very
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I am grateful to the staff and Librarian of K.K. Handiqui Library,
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I would also like to record my thanks to Martinet Computer, Jalukbari, Guwahati, for taking great pains in giving final shape to this thesis.

My husband often had to prop up my sagging morale and the completion of this thesis is a credit to him. Manav, my little son shall always be my inspiration.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to the memory of Dadaji my grandfather. Mr. B.S. Kuthari to whom I owe my entire education.

Asha Kuthari