

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude first to Prof. Andreas Deutsch for the advices, support and freedom I have enjoyed during these years that allowed me to follow my interests and points of view. I also would like to thank him for trying to put some order in my innate tendency towards chaos.

I also would like to extend my gratitude to Arnaud Chauviere for all the infinite discussions and the development of new ideas that have contributed so much to this thesis - ok...he could have been a better play maker but he was the only one available. Moreover, i would like to thank David Basanta for his contribution to the maturation of my ideas concerning tumor evolution and for the thousand coffees that we have drunk together - hopefully he will give out the secret of his diet and i will loose some weight. Special thanks to Fernando Peruani for sharing with me his interesting ideas and his idealistic perspective about science - i hope he is going to learn not to foot on sea urchins. I would like also to thank Sebastiano De Franciscis for working together and his critical view - and also express my support for this poor Napolitan "alien" in Germany. Finally, special thanks to Marco Tektonidis for his valuable collaboration and for his friendship - and i wish him to stop changing apartments each two months.

I would like to thank my medical collaborators Prof. Carlo Schaller and MD Dr. Matthias Simon for introducing me to tumor biology and to the "fabulous" clinical world. In particular, it was a great - and at the same time shocking - experience to attend a brain tumor surgery.

Particularly, i would like to express my gratefulness to Prof. Dieter Wolf-Gladrow for reviewing my thesis and for his valuable comments. Moreover, i would like to thank Prof. Dietmar Ferger and Dr. Anja Voss-Boehme for accepting reviewing this thesis. I thank also Kathrin Padberg for reviewing and correcting my thesis.

I would like to express my thanks to Gustavo Sibona, Luca Barberis, Simona Faini and Subrata Nandi for their collaboration and the time that we spent together. To Joern Starruss, Tobias Klauss, Michael Kuecken, Lutz Bruschi, Joachim Peter, Christian Hoffmann, Carsten Mende, Peggy Thiemt, Ronny Zschitzschmann, Perla Zerial, Niloy Ganguli, Michael Wurzel and Edward Flach for their helpfulness and creating such a pleasant atmosphere.

Last but not least, i would to thank my family for their support and love all these years. I would like to dedicate this thesis to them. Specially, i would like to thank them for teaching me how to stand directly after falling and finding always the bright side of life. Finally, i would like to finish with my life's motto:

Carpe Diem