

Acknowledgments

Writing this book has been an incredible journey, one that has been supported by many people. It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge those people, communities, and institutions that made it possible to make this project happen. I have been fortunate enough to find very many passionate and generous supporters who have aided me during my struggles and who challenged me to consider the questions that reside at the heart of this book even more deeply. I can only express a fraction of the gratitude I hold with these words.

I would like to thank the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC) as well as the International PhD Programme “Literary and Cultural Studies” (IPP) in Gießen, Germany for the fellowship support that gave me the time and resources I required to work on the doctoral thesis that formed the basis for this book. I would also like to extend special thanks to my supervisors, Ansgar Nünning and Michael Newton, for their constructive, helpful advice. They have been instrumental in shaping my ideas and in conceptualizing my argument. Without their aid, I never could have explored the uncanny depths of Gothic fiction as I have.

I have been especially fortunate in having received assistance from a variety of inspiring researchers: Stephanie Lotzow, Melissa Kaufler, Greta Olson, Teona Micevska, Michele Brittany, Nicholas Diak, and essentially the entire working group “AG Game Studies” of Justus Liebig University – they have all been valuable interlocutors. This book is better because of their inspiring commentary and challenging questions. I am particularly grateful to Madeline Kienzle, who did me the honor of

reviewing drafts of the book and who offered invaluable editorial feedback at the later stages of the writing process. This intellectual network proved to be one of the most fruitful resources for my own research, sharpening my ideas and extending my scholarly horizon every step of the way.

The most fortuitous thing, perhaps, is that I enjoyed the friendship of numerous people both inside and outside of academia throughout the entire process. These were individuals who would take my mind off things and who would often inadvertently provide a spark of inspiration – as it turns out, a single keyword can unexpectedly spin a research project in a wholly different direction. Berit Beckers, Daria Jansen, Madeline Kienzle, Kristin Karl, Julia Hamborg, Jonas Feike, Stefan and Sybille Ottersbach, and many others provided the heartwarming support that made this monograph possible.

I also extend a special thank you to my family. Without my parents, Gaby and Rudi Schmitz, my academic endeavors would not have been possible. Not only did they pave the way for my future studies, but they fostered my love of (scary) books already long before that. My siblings, Rebecca Grauer and Guido Schmitz, and their families always knew how to make me laugh and to inspire me; so too did my second family, the Beckers clan.

One person has been particularly patient down through the many years in which I was working on this project. My deepest gratitude belongs to my most treasured companion and significant other, Berit Beckers, to whom I dedicate this book. You have been my accepting, generous, and unshakable partner throughout the entire journey. Without you, I would not be the person that I am today.