

Diversity Statement

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I am a granddaughter and niece to post-war expellees from the Ukraine, and a first-generation college student. My father, the only person in his family born in the US, struggled with his identity as a disabled German-American in a postwar, rural town in Iowa, and did not fully learn to navigate the language that was spoken in his home. As a late teen, I believed pursuing tertiary education a wise investment for myself—one through which I could gain access to knowledge that might help me understand and address transgenerational trauma. More important, however, going to college meant adventure—an unexplored realm and a really exciting way to rebel. But I also knew it was a serious privilege (one never afforded to my parents) and believed it would secure for me credentials that would abate financial precarity.

I am also an educated, white, cis-woman. In this place of knowing, I recognize my privilege and responsibility. In the academy, this responsibility means to actively learn about my student's lives, and do anti-racist and anti-ableist work to transform the conditions that create privilege. More specific to a German Studies context, this responsibility means prioritizing ways to connect my research with my teaching. I seek to do this in two ways: first, by staying informed on anti-racist pedagogies and decolonization work going on in the field, and second, by making interventions in my area of specialization so as to not pass on the dominant white, abled, cis-heteronormative narrative of German Studies I inherited throughout my formal education. Teaching works outside of the canon is one intervention I enjoy. Avant-garde literatures and art resist, challenge and subvert the status quo, as they are most often dissenting, queer, and crip forms of aesthetic practice and expression.

Now, with terminal degree in hand, serving in multiple staff and non-tenure-track positions within the CU system, I understand those promises higher education offered decades ago may not be fulfilled today. Nevertheless, the knowledge I have cultivated has value and I seek opportunities to dedicate my intellectual work in German Studies to promoting diversity and self-cultivation. This is another place I know from, and one that informs my activism.

Connecting activism with teaching and research is a priority. My post-doctoral research examines how resistance toward capitalism's temporal bullying is performed in contemporary art. This work, situated at the intersection of German Studies, art, and disability justice, seeks to address the relationship between creativity, institutions, and empowerment, by exploring aesthetic presentations of resistive temporalities. Non-normative or crip temporalities intentionally performed as resistance are often enabled through interdependent care networks. Especially now, amidst the debilitating effects of neoliberalism and the pandemic, disability justice provides a nuanced point in conversations on anti-capitalism. A care ethic that claps back at the idea of self-optimization and fiduciary endurance amidst economic regimes of exploitation is necessary.

The academy is in crisis; our [students](#) and colleagues in contingent positions need compassion and concrete support. Agitating for change in the institution is today an incredibly overwhelming activity. Mutual aid networks, however, create solidarity and can serve as a valuable means to help offset precarity. My work as one of the facilitators of the [DDGC Mutual Aid Network](#) seeks to address the basic needs of our community. We are hopeful that the project will develop to offer a model for what care work in academia can look like in the fight for equity.