

Advocacy Journey and Priorities for the Road Ahead

In response to an email I had sent her a month before, a former professor said, “your work is important,” and in the memo of a Zelle transfer, a friend had said, “keep on fighting.”

In both their words, there was the recognition that this work I do has impact beyond my self and body. There was an acknowledgment that there are hosts of people who look to my work as the difference between despair and hope.

I advocate for disenfranchised individuals (disenfranchised by several, often intersecting, factors like poverty, race, creed, sexuality, gender, immigration status, etc.) because I know, starting with my example in the world, how much positive power and influence the disenfranchised have in the world. How necessary our voices are in political spaces, on the board of Fortune 500 companies, in art galleries and on museum walls. I know how important it is for us to be included on bookshelves and in classrooms, on dollar bills and on Spotify playlists, gracing Broadway stages and occupying the writer’s room. We need to be everywhere.

I advocate for the disenfranchised because disenfranchised experiences are ugly realities, and even while we have philosophical and academic debates over the causes of these unsavory realities, these realities exist as they are and even deteriorate (in tandem with what some might call entropy).

I advocate for the disenfranchised because the only way to interrupt the persistence of unideal realities is through action. I advocate because I know my safety is multiplied when my neighbors are safe as well. I advocate because I want to live freely and abundantly with other kinfolk that are equally free and abundant.

I was once thinking on my life and how it might compare to the humans that came before me, and it became clear that I existed as part of the cohort of humans that could be called, ‘would-have-been-disappeared’. Here disappeared does not only refer to the euphemism for state-executed abduction and murder, but it also refers to the people whose wings were clipped at home at the command of an unsparred rod, those broken at school by instructors and bullies alike. Those that were institutionalized, criminalized, deemed legally unfit to have a say in their life. Those that were exiled, exposed to diseases with no cure or treatment; those that can say without irony that they would be a different person (that they think they might like more) if the policing forces in their life had given them more space to affirm who they would have rather been, safely.

‘would-have-been-disappeared’ doesn’t just describe the way history has treated people like me in the past, but it also highlights the fact that there aren’t too many individuals in communities I affiliate with that can serve as a sign of well-rounded success. We don’t only work to usher in a new world without the unnecessary over-policing of people, but we also work to show others how possible it is to live freely and abundantly while making an impact and not compromising on what we deem our most authentic selves.

I have known that this was the start of a long journey for a while now, but the events of the last few months have really brought me a new understanding of its length. This journey will proceed for as long as I have life; and God-willing, I will live long. I am now called to be even

more precise with my actions and appeals. That after spending larger part of my first few decades of absorbing, building, burning down and recreating a foundational base of experiences and knowledge, I am now in a place where I can start to work on the larger structures, on the more permanent fixtures, on leveraging the lessons I've learned in the classroom and in life to develop solutions that change and improve the quality of life of those whose free and bold existence in this world is still seen as an enigmatic occurrence.

We are involved in bringing forth a new paradigm and it is taxing work, but it is necessary. It is necessary to live in a world where stepping out of what is considered the norm, especially in circumstances where there is no victim, is not used as a reason for a person's dehumanization and disenfranchisement. Dag Hammarskjöld, a former Secretary-General of the UN is known for saying, "It has been said that the United Nations was not created in order to bring us to heaven, but in order to save us from hell." I would say that most social justice work holds this sentiment close to its core. We can't change the world and stop bad things from happening, but we can strongly affirm, with our words and actions, that even when bad things happen, it doesn't have to be God awful. It can merely be lacking and in need of positive attention.

The list of things I want to work on during my lifetime is truly inexhaustive, but here are some of my priorities for the next few months:

1. I want to continue promoting my self-publishing debut, *Shedding the Archive, For New Beginnings*. More on it here - <https://www.vasilisonwuaduegbo.com/shedding-the-archive-for-new-beginnings/shedding-the-archive>
2. Food: I am seeking collaborators with an understanding of –
 - a. African food traditions
 - b. pharmacology and the impact of chemicals, licit and illicit drugs on the body and on fabrics and fibers
 - c. potions, agbo-jedi-jedi and the related
3. Travel: I am looking for individuals interested in promoting travel –
 - a. between the world and the African continent
 - b. between the African continent and the world
 - c. to and fro Europe
 - d. to and fro North America
 - e. to these specific cities:
 - i. New York
 - ii. Los Angeles
 - iii. Washington, D.C.
 - iv. London
 - v. Paris
 - vi. Cork
 - vii. Dublin
 - viii. Athens
 - ix. Lagos

- x. Abuja
 - xi. Dakar
 - xii. Nairobi
 - xiii. Johannesburg
 - xiv. Accra
 - xv. Abidjan
 - xvi. Cape Town
 - xvii. Berlin
4. Film, TV and Theater: I am seeking filmmakers, TV producers, playwrights and play directors interested in supporting the creation of films, TV shows and plays in these locations –
- a. The US
 - b. The UK
 - c. France
 - d. Nigeria
 - e. Ghana
5. Music: I am in search of individuals that know how to –
- a. produce beats
 - b. produce songs
 - c. play instruments, namely the guitar, the piano and drums
 - d. write music for plays, for the screen (big and small) and for public/commercial consumption
 - e. top genres:
 - i. hip-hop
 - ii. rap
 - iii. afrobeats
 - iv. jazz
 - v. pop music
 - vi. theater music
 - f. top locations:
 - i. Lagos
 - ii. London
 - iii. Paris
 - iv. Berlin
 - v. New York
 - vi. Washington D.C.
 - vii. Los Angeles
6. Language Instruction and Cultural Competency Training: I am trying to foster richer global experiences by creating forward-thinking and immersive language learning opportunities. Languages of initial focus –
- a. French
 - b. English
 - c. Spanish

- d. Greek
 - e. Portuguese
 - f. Arabic
 - g. Igbo
 - h. Yoruba
 - i. Wolof
 - j. German
7. Law as an instrument: Here I want to harness the power of the law to support the other endeavors on this list, but also to make states more legally conducive for their nonconforming and, or most persecuted citizens and residents. The priorities here are region specific.
- a. Europe –
 - i. Mainly supporting immigrants, refugees, folks of African descent and queer individuals
 - b. North America –
 - i. Mainly supporting minorities, immigrants, refugees, queer individuals, and the poor (especially the homeless)
 - c. Africa –
 - i. Queer folk, the poor and other disadvantaged folks like orphans, individuals with disabilities (amongst others)
 - d. I need information about legal practitioners, law programs and clinics and the related that focus on these issues.
8. Business Development Support, Counseling and Consulting: I am looking to support individuals, especially those that were historically disadvantaged, as they engaged in local and cross-border enterprise. Specific priorities:
- a. fostering foreign investment and job creation in Africa (see my proposal to the Nigerian Embassy in Washington DC - <https://www.vasilisonwuaduegbo.com/proposal-to-the-nigerian-embassy>)
 - b. enabling Africans to conduct commerce with ease in Europe and North America
 - c. support with taxes and governmental compliance expectations
9. Education: I seek to support individuals as they seek to be educated in North America, Europe, or Africa. I also intend to advocate for education reform (in both admission and conduct), so it matches the needs to the next few quarters of the 21st century.
10. Project Management: I can act as an organized hand for hire to bring structure and new life to complex projects, especially projects concerning Africa (if emanating from North America and Europe) and projects concerning Europe and North America (if emanating from Africa).
11. Literature and Publishing: Obtain a literary agent and send my traditionally published debut, *Accidental Artist // An Interview with My Chi* to the world. More on that here - <https://www.vasilisonwuaduegbo.com/accidental-artist-an-interview-with-my-chi-query-letter>
12. PR, Social Media, Marketing and Copywriting: I can work on this in private industry, governmental organizations and in non-for-profits.

13. Research: Both academic and non-academic research work especially concerned with topics of interest like human rights, international politics, the social reality of human beings and the related.
14. Sex Worker Advocacy: Here I would like to convene with people brainstorming –
 - a. an age verification system for consumers and producers of sexually explicit material
 - b. a way to ensure that the majority of the publicly accessible explicit content also comes with pertinent information on the actors
 - c. a sexual health database for sex workers that respect HIPAA regulations and also maintains the dignity of the individuals in question
15. Event Planning and Support: this is related to my project management offerings.
16. Photographers for an exhibition of the male form and anatomy.
 - a. Cities of focus –
 - i. New York
 - ii. Los Angeles
 - iii. Washington DC
 - iv. London
 - v. Paris
 - vi. Lagos
 - vii. Accra
 - viii. Abidjan
 - ix. Dakar
 - x. Nairobi
 - xi. Johannesburg
 - xii. Cape Town
17. Engagement in Politics: Encouraging the youth and those historically maligned and disadvantaged to get involved in politics both as public servants and engaged citizens.