

I, 2, 3, 4, 5 . . . 43: Justice! Ay! Ay! Ayotzinapa: A Challenge for New Critical Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative Inquiry

1–19

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Dedicated to

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Jorge Antonio Tizapa Legideño

Miguel Ángel Mendoza Zacarías

Marco Antonio Gómez Molina

Cesar Manuel González Hernández

Julio César López Patolzin

Abel García Hernández

Emiliano Allen Gaspar De la Cruz

Dorian González Parral

José Luis Gonzalez Parral

Alexander Mora Venancio

Saúl Bruno García

Luis Ángel Abarca Carrillo

Jorge Álvarez Nava

Christian Tomas Colon Garnica

Luis Ángel Francisco Arzola

Carlos Iván Ramírez Villarreal

Magdaleno Rubén Lauro Villegas

José Luis Luna Torres

Jesús Jovany Rodríguez Tlatempa

Mauricio Ortega Valerio

José Ángel Campos Cantor

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Cutberto Ortiz Ramos

Everado Rodríguez Bello

Jonás Trujillo González

José Eduardo Bartolo Tlatempa

And their loved ones . . .

Just Few Words. Or Numbers? . . . Just 43 +

César A. Cisneros Puebla, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Iztapalapa, México

Here are 27 interventions performed by world citizens who wanted to participate in a special panel at International

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Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (ICQI) 2015 to honor 43 disappeared students from Mexico. This special panel was called upon by César A. Cisneros Puebla to gather reflections during a period of 6 months about the Ayotzinapa massacre. Beginning in the first days of November 2014, an exchange of information and messages began among the colleagues whose reflections are displayed here and others who could not participate for diverse reasons. On Friday May 22, 2015, at 8:00 a.m., these 27 interventions were performed in room Union 314 A of the Illini Union Building at University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. Interrogation into a new critical qualitative inquiry provided the backdrop for this exercise of collective participation, one where these qualitative researchers shared their intimate thoughts, feelings, and imagination based on what they had read, watched, and discussed about the news on such a senseless human tragedy. On September 26, 2014, 43 Ayotzinapa teacher education students disappeared in Mexico's southern state of Guerrero and a very sensitive combat for political and social transformation began.

In those days, some other human tragedies occurred in our convulsed world. Making sense of what was going on around the Ayotzinapa case was our focus for defining the scope and even the nature of our feelings and thoughts. An invitation was issued to watch documentaries such as "The Monster in the Mountains" (<http://video.newyorker.com/watch/a-reporter-at-large-guerrero-the-monster-in-the-mountains2>) and read brief profiles on the disappeared students (<http://ayotzinapasomostodos.com/en/los43/>) to provide some sensitive and pertinent information to the participants.

It was our interest to write up these pieces as a collaborative document to be recognized as a large and permanent process of "creative subversion." The urgent demand for social justice and human rights regarding **forced disappearances** such as the ones occurring nowadays in Mexico has gained momentum worldwide, not just for the more than 26,000 people who have disappeared but also for the more than 150,000 who have perished needlessly in recent years.

The creative subversion exercise that we held that Friday was very moving and touched the hearts of the audience. We performed our acts as a tribute to these young students in the context of international solidarity with their families.

Regardless of the evolution of the political and transformative process begun by these heinous events in Mexico on September 26, 2014, we qualitative researchers pulled together our thoughts, feelings, and experiences to write these 27 short pieces as a way to show how a sort of collective memory is leading us to reflect on what we feel, think, and do every single moment of our lives. We prepared our tribute to the **43 young students who disappeared by force** as a way to explore the possibilities of collaborative writing (Davies & Gannon, 2012) and to produce relevant knowledge and horizons for the new critical qualitative inquiry connected to social justice and social movements.

Humanizing the numbers and giving face to the pain is vital. 43 is not a number. 43 are human beings of flesh and

blood. 43 were taken alive, and we want all 43 back alive. Alive you took them! Alive we want them!

The Coverage of the Disappearance and Slaughter of Mexican Students in the U.S. News

Kathy Charmaz, Sonoma State University, USA

When César first extended the invitation to participate in this very special session, he asked us to keep records of the information we found about the missing students. After I received César's invitation, my local newspaper changed its coverage about the students' plight. What happened? An eerie silence followed what had been sporadic short reports. We knew earlier that the students had disappeared. The news reported that the students had been kidnapped—stolen, spirited away. But where? Why? How could student teachers pose so great a threat that someone wanted them to disappear?

A few short reports followed, confirming that an investigation was being conducted and the students' parents hoped for their safe return. Then unverified rumors surfaced that they were dead. Next, a matter-of-fact statement reported that the students were killed soon after their disappearance. All the reports I saw had little detail. The reports treated the students' disappearance and probable murders as just passing events, just news stories to be noted and filed. These bland reports captured none of the shock, horror, outrage, and dread that the students' families and friends experienced or the devastating effect on the Mexican people. Ruben Martínez (2014), however, headlined his November 20th article with "Mexico Reels, the US Looks Away." He wrote that the students' disappearance "caused a political earthquake the likes of which Mexico had not seen in generations—perhaps not even since the revolution of 1910." While an outpouring of rage and sorrow occurred in Mexico, the United States paid scant notice.

What does it take for the news media to record the spiraling consequences of these events? What will it take for the students' disappearance and deaths to live on in the consciousness of the Mexican people? What will it take for North Americans to understand the magnitude of these events? How can we join together to honor the students by creating a just world where people are free?

Keeping the Candle Lighted

Francisco Alatorre, New Mexico State University, USA

There are as many guns as people in the United States, about 310 million. This aids and abets mass shootings. The U.S. averages one mass shooting every ten days, and accounts for more mass shootings than all other nations combined. Notorious U.S. killers include Charles Starkweather, Richard Speck, Charles Whitman, James Huberty, Patrick Sherrill, George Hennard, Colin Ferguson, Jonathon Doody, Mark Barton, Jiverly Wong, George Soldini, Jared Loughner, James Holmes, and many others. These have gained a national mass media audience, whereas many other smaller scale shootings are known in local communities.

School shootings have been especially atrocious and painful. In 1999, Dylan Klebold (age 17) and Eric Harris (17) killed 15 and wounded 23 at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. In 2007, Seung-Hui Cho (age 23) killed 32 and wounded 17 in his mass shooting at Virginia Tech University. In 2010, Amy Bishop shot and killed three of her professors at the University of Alabama, Huntsville campus. In December 2012, Adam Lanza shot and killed 26 (plus his mother) at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Sandy Hook, Connecticut. And in May 2014, Elliott Rogers killed seven and wounded 13 at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in Santa Barbara, California.

All of these school shootings produced great pain, and victimized hundreds if not thousands of family members, friends, and colleagues. All of these produced great outrage among the public in the mass media as well, and all were followed by constructive law or policy changes. While this did not produce any significant change at the national level, arguably because of the political lobbying of the National Rifle Association (NRA), at the level of the individual states or local communities, there were many positive changes. In Connecticut, for example, organized citizens were successful in pressuring state legislators to pass several laws, which restricted large (or “super size”) ammunition magazines for rifles or handguns, even though this idea could not gain sufficient support in the U.S. Congress. Perhaps a more appropriate comparison would be Tasmania and Scotland. There were school shootings in Tasmania and Scotland in 1986, and the outraged citizenry acted swiftly to pass laws to restrict, diminish, or eliminate such shootings. The result? There has not been another mass shooting in Tasmania or Scotland since 1986.

The shootings of the Ayotzinapa students are horrific, and it is important for each of us to make a commitment for justice, for the long time period, to keep alive their memory and inspiration. We owe this to ourselves.

Indigenous Indignation

Sophie Tamas, Carleton University, USA

When I look at what we have lost in Ayotzinapa, I see a gallery of beautiful young men and boys raised by peasants and bricklayers and farmers, who speak indigenous languages and went to the rural teaching school so they could train to become teachers, so the rural kids would have teachers from their communities, not urban imports who don't understand their way of life.

I've never been to Mexico; I know nothing about the particular context in which it became possible to see their lives as disposable. So I speak from a place of ignorance.

But when I read about these young men, I think about my dad, setting up distance education programs in the Yukon in the 1980s, because the indigenous students who left their villages to get an education had trouble with racism and loneliness and poverty in the city, and had trouble fitting in back home once they'd been gone, and the White professionals never stayed.

I think about the violence indigenous bodies encounter when they enter urban spaces, how the city is marked as a White zone of privilege and indigenous bodies are confined to what Sherene Razack describes as zones of degeneracy. The largest indigenous communities in Canada are urban. And while there is a growing indigenous middle class for many moving from the reserve to the city still means getting tuberculosis in Winnipeg, breaking into houses to steal food in Regina, being dropped off by the cops to freeze in a snowbank at city limits in Saskatoon, or being killed as a sex worker in Vancouver.

The mobility of indigenous bodies, their existence in cities built on unceded indigenous territory, makes the colonizers nervous. Indigenous people in Canada are seven times more likely to be murdered and six times more likely to be incarcerated. The gallery of faces in Ayotzinapa makes me think of the gallery of 230 unsolved cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada, recently compiled by the Canadian Broadcasting Company, after years of indigenous activism and government complacency.

The young men of Ayotzinapa were killed because they went to the city to protest against the oppressive practices of colonial institutions their communities. A couple years ago, at the height of the Idle No More movement for indigenous rights in Canada, in a mid-sized city about 1,000 km north of here, a woman walking to the grocery store was shoved in a car, driven out of town, sexually assaulted, and left for dead by two White men who said, “you Indians deserve to lose your treaty rights.”

Activism is dangerous, especially for oppressed peoples. I benefit from the racist colonial structures that are responsible for their oppression, but I'm not here, and I don't teach about indigenous issues in my classes out of obligation. I do it because I now live and work in a world where I rarely get to hear the voices and knowledge of rural, poor, indigenous people, and I miss them.

Remembering and Cherishing

Judy Davidson, University of Massachusetts, USA

For several years now, I have taught a course called “Understanding Education.” It is designed for students in the undergraduate minor who are considering becoming teachers. I taught it this semester. There were 19 students enrolled in the course. Most were sophomores and juniors, 19 or 20 years of age. They were eager to learn about the topic of teaching as they imagine themselves going out into classrooms.

My group of 19 included women as well as men, but in so many other aspects, they seem so similar to the pre-service teachers in Ayotzinapa. Both were groups of young people heading into their twenties. The members of both groups were trying to understand—what is teaching? How do you teach? And, both were sure that by being teachers, they would make a difference in the lives of others.

Some of my students have faced considerable challenges in their lives, but they are excited to be entering teaching. They feel they have “made it.” I assume this is like many of the aspiring teachers from Ayotzinapa.

I think of my class and say their names to myself—Matthew, Courtney, Melissa, Christiana . . . —and I remember their faces and personalities. I hear their voices describing their desires to teach. I cannot imagine anyone doing harm to them.

But my group of students in the United States are alive, and the 43 pre-service teachers in Mexico are most probably dead. My group can still make choices, explore possibilities, become excited about the challenges of teaching. The 43 in Mexico now have—no choice, no further possibility on this earth—except the memories we honor. How many lives would 43 teachers have touched in a teaching career? Hundreds? Thousands? This is an incalculable loss on so many fronts.

A Massacre of One

John M. Johnson, Arizona State University, USA

On the day I began this brief statement about the horrific massacre of 43 students from Escuela Normal Rural Raul Isidro Burgos in Ayotzinapa, my local newspaper reported an article that summarized the terrible massacres in Nigeria, where Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International report the mass killings by Boko Haram in the northeastern part of the country; about 300 killed in Gamboro Ngala, 500 in several villages in Borno State, 120 killed in Kano, and more than 150 killed in Damaturu. Human Rights Watch estimates that 2,000 or more were killed in the first 6 months of 2014. We are and should be outraged and horrified by such brutality, but those who closely follow international news can be partly desensitized by such frequent reports. The 20th century was a time of extraordinary violence, and experts estimate more than one hundred million civilians were killed in many horrific events, with sixty million killed in World War II, and lesser numbers of civilians massacred in the Holocaust, the Soviet famine in Ukraine, the second Congo war, Cambodia, Vietnam, Rwanda, and many other proper names we now associate with massacres of civilians and innocents, on either a grand or petite scale.

Numbers desensitize, and larger numbers desensitize more. What is horrific about the 43 innocents killed in the State of Guerrero? Is it the number 43 that makes it horrific? Would it be less horrific if it were ten? Or more horrific if it was one hundred? Each one of the Ayotzinapa students is sacred as an individual, and each was embedded in a much larger family and community. Each Ayotzinapa student was a son, a brother, a grandson, a nephew, a friend, schoolmate, or colleague. Multiply all of these sentient relationships by 43, and the number of those victimized by the violence easily ascends into the thousands. But the loss is even greater than that. The Ayotzinapa students were studying to be teachers, and as such they represented and carried our hopes for the future, a brighter future that would further extend the arc of justice, compassion, and love. Such a loss cannot be quantified. It is not diminished by the promises of politicians, or proposals for new laws or policies of enforcement. The Ayotzinapa students were our future, and now it is important for all of us to express their voice of justice

and righteousness. We can use these tragic events to make stronger our commitment to justice for each and all, to transform our own heart while we struggle for justice for all of our brothers and sisters throughout the world. Each one of us has the power to transform the heart, and in this process create a world with greater justice, compassion, and peace.

Ayotzinapa

Gresilda A. Tilley-Lubbs, Virginia Tech, USA

October 2, 2014

My husband Dan and I arrive in Aguascalientes, Mexico, Unaware that anything is amiss.

No idea about anything out of the ordinary going on in Mexico.

October 4, 2015

My friend and colleague Silvia Bénard picks me up from the hotel.

We greet each other, then get into the car, headed for the university.

Radio blaring
Silvia leaning forward
Intense expression
Furrowed brow
Listening with total absorption.

I speak Spanish,
But radio newscasters leave me behind,
Whether in Spanish or English.
My Appalachian ears don't listen that fast.

No usual catching-up conversation.
Just listening.
Finally Silvia turns to me.
"Have you heard our horrible news?
I stare blankly at her.
"No. What news?
"43 *normalistas* are disappeared in Iguala."
I still stare, uncomprehending.
"*Normalistas* are kids studying to be teachers at the normal schools.
Most are in their late teens, early 20s."

Silvia's words take my breath.
Why was this not on U.S. news?
Had I just been so wrapped up in my own academic world
That I didn't think about anyone outside my own world?

Maybe.

When we told people we were going to Mexico for a couple of weeks
We heard lots of cautions about danger—
About the *narcotráficos*

Organized crime—

But nothing—

Nothing

About disappeared kids.

The university sent me the usual warning/alert letter from the U.S. State Department.

“Do not fraternize with the following”

Followed by a 10-page list.

Also cautions about how to avoid being kidnapped.

But nothing—

Nothing

About kids who are *desaparecidos*.

Disappeared.

No trace

No notes

No ransom

No nothing.

But at that time with Silvia,

I knew nothing.

Not like the Virginia Tech Massacre.

4/16/2007.

The news broadcast all over the world.

No matter where in the world I am

When I am introduced as being from Virginia Tech

Someone assumes a concerned expression and mentions

The massacre,

Which the university prefers to call the shootings.

That massacre had a shooter

With a face

With a name.

The kids in Iguala

Just disappeared.

Their families left not knowing.

Their mothers' hearts heavy with grief.

Kidnapped doesn't feel the same.

Kidnapped implies a ransom.

Hope.

These kids are disappeared.

Gone.

Pain(less) for Ayotzinapa Students

Silvia Bénard, Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, México

September 27

I hear the news on the radio: forty some students from a rural normal school have disappeared, another one was killed together with people who were on the scene . . .

The following day

The student who was killed was also flayed!

I'm paralyzed!

I see their faces: those students are kids!

They will appear, they will . . . they have to.

Parents start to organize: yes, I would do the same if I were one of those parents.

Students in my university start to organize: that is very unusual.

People in different parts of the country begin to get out on the streets.

I keep thinking: They will appear, they will! The government is being forced to find them.

I am paralyzed and I can't feel anything.

People get killed in Mexico every day, every day. How bare this is if not denying the pain!

They have to appear!

Days pass, people are protesting in different parts of the country.

The students don't appear.

The government says nothing but that they are investigating.

They don't appear!

I'm in a conference in Chihuahua city:

In the central plaza, at night, I hear a bunch of kids, mostly women, talking loudly back and forth, as if they were loud praying. What is that?—I think as I continue talking to someone.

Then one of them comes by with a can asking for support . . . I do not put the entire scene together until we are walking away. This was one of the rural normal schools students in Chihuahua, manifesting and asking for support for disappeared students from Ayotzinapa!

What made me realize it? The hatred looks on her eyes, as I do not react on time to her demand.

Then the government comes out with the news: The students were burned in a garbage collector with the heat of car and truck tires.

I publish it in my face book! They are dead but they found them. This will help parents start to heal.

News start questioning the government's version: That fact account is impossible.

I feel . . . embarrassed.

It has been almost 8 months and I cannot feel the pain still.

A couple of weeks ago, I went to a meeting in New York City, where some of the parents were talking to the crowd: They are angry. They look very angry.

I cannot feel the pain . . . still.

If I allow myself to feel it, I would not be able to bear the absence of my son and my daughter. They both will move away from home to continue their studies next fall. I need to hold my feelings to be able to let them go.

Are the Desks Gone?

Miguel Angel Soto Orozco, Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, México

My University has set up a memorial for the 43 students who went missing on September, 26th and 27th, 2014: 43 blue school desks, almost all of them bearing the photograph of one of the students, a few of them lacking a photograph and having only a name. At first, this memorial struck me as a powerful reminder of pain and injustice, and each time I walked by the desks, deep feelings of anger and sadness awoke within myself. At first.

But . . . Not too long ago, I caught myself thinking, “I haven’t seen the desks for a while, I’m pretty sure the University has removed them.” And I was pretty sure, but

decided to take a look. As I walked by the memorial, everything was in the same place: the desks, the pictures, the names. Inside of me, the memories of the 43, the feelings of anger and sadness, the sense of injustice and loss.

Deeper pain grew on my chest, a deeper sense of injustice. Why did I think the memorial was gone? Was I really that fast to make it become just part of the scenery? And then I started to ask myself, “How many students, how many academics, how many people have made this memorial part of their everyday background, and have sent the memories of the 43 and the injustice into oblivion, just like I did?” The pain was deeper as I felt responsible for being absentminded, for turning away from the injustice that was happening before my eyes, the injustice that could be happening to any of my loved ones.

And so, for me, the question is not just “How many more (will disappear)?” My own question is “How many of us will have the real courage to stop the other disappearance from happening, to stop the 43 from disappearing from our own minds?” And I ask myself, “Will we be brave enough to speak up against injustice and to make sure that not only the desks and the memories remain, but to also make sure that injustice ends?”

I ask myself, and I want to share my question with you.

The Disappeared

Patti Lather, Ohio State University, USA and Tanya Long, Texas State University, USA

(Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgPGwSYZOTQ>)

43 rural teacher college students
so much hope—

handed over by police to drug cartels
so much corruption—

to be killed and burned
so much loss—

for parents and a country to mourn and protest
so much despair and anger—

still demanding answers
so much frustration—
so much violence and poverty—

burn a small bus
stop the elections

help us find our sons
-so much desperation

104 arrested
-too late

The Disappeared
ICQI 2015 Presentation

Patti Lather Tanya Alyson Long

2015

**José Luis Luna Torres. Origin: Amilzingo, Morelos
Situation: Disappeared**

Sandra L. Faulkner, Bowling Green State University, USA

José Luis reached Normal Ayotzinapa from Amilzingo, Morelos, “and we call him Pato, because he looks like Donald Duck, and his voice is squeaky, his friends laugh when one of them remembers that detail—He is 20 and is serious, quiet, always speaks well, is cool, but is quiet . . . ie: does not like to party much. (from <http://ayotzinapasomostodos.com/en/los43/>)

Not another student
not safe at school—
the state killings
your children, my child, our child.
Worry that never ends,
there is not enough rage
to show our love:
the state’s blood splattered,
on our children’s collars
no one can wash it out.

My reactions to Ayotzinapa

Leslie Pourreau, Kennesaw State University, USA

A permanent hole has been torn in the fabric of the education profession, one that cannot be repaired. That hole bears a name: Alexander Mora Venancio. According to his father, Alexander dreamed of nothing more than being a teacher. He wanted to give back to the community that had raised him by educating its children and helping them prepare for their futures. Those hopes and dreams were taken away from him permanently at the young age of nineteen. I have a connection with Alexander’s parents because I, too, have an Alexander in my life. He is but nine years old, but he already has dreams of becoming an ichthyologist and studying his favorite tropical fish. He said to me, “Mom, there is just so much cool stuff out there to learn about fish and to share with others about them. I just have to do it.” I feel so deeply for his parents, because I know what it feels like to have an Alexander with hopes and dreams about how he will contribute to and change the world in which he lives. I cannot imagine the pain and anguish that they are feeling knowing that their child was taken from them, knowing that they will never have the chance to watch him live and grow and inspire change and dreams in others. As a mother, I hope that I never have to endure that pain and loss. So we stand before this gaping hole in our profession, a raw, dark, gaping void in our educational fabric that speaks to us of lost dreams and a passion for education that will forever go unfilled. Vivos los llevaron y vivos los queremos. Vivos los llevaron . . . tal vez callados pero nunca olvidados.

The Ayotzinapa Tragedy: Reversing Chronological Time

Serge F. Hein, Virginia Tech, USA

After accepting the invitation to participate in this session, I thought for quite some time about how best to respond to the Ayotzinapa tragedy. What I was certain of from the outset,

though, was that in the face of such a loss of human life and potential, it was essential that I say something life affirming. Eventually, I decided that the best way to achieve this would be to draw on a major theme from Martin Amis’ (1991) book, *Time’s Arrow*, a novel in which chronological time runs backwards. In such a world, events occur in the opposite direction of normal, chronological time. Moreover, the reversal of cause and effect results in a moral inversion, wherein all that is bad is transformed into good. Thus, the forward movement of dying is inverted into a process of giving life—a life-affirming miracle. In a world in which chronological time ran backwards, the events associated with the Ayotzinapa kidnappings and murders would unfold in the following way:

The students would come to life as their bodies materialized from the fire pit at the dump near Cocula, the bullets leaving their bodies and the wounds healing instantaneously.

The students would then be transported in trucks from the dump to the rural community of Pueblo Viejo, where they would be handed over by the criminal organization, the United Warriors, to the Cocula police.

The students would then be transported from Pueblo Viejo to the police in Cocula, who in turn would send them to the police station in Iguala, Guerrero.

The students would depart the Iguala police station in police cars and later leave the vehicles near Iguala, having broken free from their captors and dispersed.

The students would then board three buses, which pick them up as hitchhikers.

The buses would then chase after Iguala police cars, with bullets leaving the areas inside and outside of the buses and entering the police officers’ guns.

After the Iguala police cars had disappeared, the students would get off of the buses in a place near Iguala, engage in protest activities, and then travel to the Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural Teachers’ College of Ayotzinapa, in Tixtla, Guerrero.

At the Teachers’ College, the students would engage in their studies, happy and fulfilled.

World is Connection

Reiner Keller, University of Augsburg, Germany

In early December of 2014, German newspapers reported that the guns used in the killing of 43 Mexican students in Iguala had been produced in Germany. They were exported illegally by a German arms manufacturer (as has happened before and was known for quite some time without any consequences for ongoing trade). Events around the globe are part of the same world, more than ever.

This is to say that this sad and cruel carnage is not just something that happened far away, on the other side of the world. This is to say that today we live in a fully interconnected world. Weapons travel, drugs travel, people travel, ideas travel, ideologies travel—hopes, rights, and freedoms might also travel. The German sociologist Ulrich Beck called this the cosmopolitan condition, or the ongoing process of cosmopolitanization. We have for quite some time

been not distant others, but human beings around the globe that are closely related to each other in many aspects of life, and are increasingly becoming even more so.

This is certainly a challenge to (critical) qualitative inquiry today: doing justice to complexities and interconnections without falling into the trap of fixating on small, localized phenomena as self-evident units of research.

There is a further and equally tragic example of interconnectedness to point out as a case of violence against education. Consider the girls and women kidnapped by fundamentalists (such as Boko Haram) and terrorists in Nigeria, Pakistan, and around the world during the last years just because they have been asking for education. Access to education for all seems to become a major issue in violent conflicts and targeted killings around the world. We, as academics, should be intensely aware and be concerned about this.

Statement-Poem for the Students of Ayotzinapa

William K. Rawlins, Ohio University, USA

An image of a black hole haunts me.

On October 4, 2014, only 8 days after the students' disappearance, www.latintimes.com reports, "Random mass graves have been found with approximately 38 bodies, and authorities have reported that at least 30 of the cadavers do not belong to any of the missing students."

On April 24, 2015, almost 7 months after the students' disappearance, CNN reports, "24,748 people have disappeared or gone missing in Mexico since 2007, and almost half of them during the current administration of President Peña Nieto."

Words are evading their meanings for me. I seek definitions for locutions that are gutted and swallowed by this cauterized abyss . . .

I unearth three definitions of disappearance: First, to pass out of sight, to vanish; Second, to cease to be seen, to be missing, to be unfound; Third, to cease to exist . . .

How can a hole in the ground be darker than death?

A black hole [stained beyond recovery], the charred remains of a crude and vicious cover-up—a searing insult to any pretense of civilized consciousness

An abhorrent rending of the fabric of humans and nature—a goring of the earth for the purpose of containing the remains of murdered and incinerated young human beings—students—striving to be teachers, taking issue with government corruption, violence, crime, impunity . . .

This glimpse of hell haunts me—the concave cup of a craven catapult—flexed with springs of the worst possible provocation and spent to release killers from questions—mothers and fathers from answers—a government's inhumanity from any semblance of conscience or accountability

The removal of a young person's face—How can these words be uttered? What perversion could possibly warrant stringing them together in the execution of a sentence?

Insertion of void—assertion of sheer emptiness, nothingness—erasure of life and then erasure of death—erasure

of traces—Meta-silencing—[silence the students, then silence the country—and worldwide protests using caricatures of testimony]

The horrific graves these young student teachers are *not* in, the hopeful, demanding voices that are *not* heard

Gaping absence, yawning negation—an attorney general's lament, "I'm tired already."

How to name such self-sealing—such disappearing, other-effacing violence?

Horrifying image—a black hole—ashen residues of incomprehensible, wretchedly obvious, concerted, and distributed activities of annihilation—of brutalizing and burning, defacing humanity

The slaughter of innocents, of hope, desire to learn, justice

I am struggling to find words to mime unimaginably vicious actions that never should occur

The unspeakable must never be inexpressible.

Disappeared

Robert E. Rinehart, University of Waikato, NZ

for Dorian González Parral, and the others

They are more
present, if possible,
than before. Those
with souls

will regret this injustice.

"Disappear" means
"without a trace,"
yet tracings
like atomic
shadows

will haunt them for eternity.

A Noble Interruption, Mr. Nobel!

Anne Ryen, University of Agder, Norway

It says, "The Nobel Peace Prize 2014 was awarded jointly to Kailash Satyarthi and Malala Yousafzai *"for their struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education."* http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2014/

The committee says they *"join in a common struggle for education and against extremism."* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014_Nobel_Peace_Prize

When Adán Cortez held the Mexican flag in front of Nobel Peace Prize winners, we read that a "Mexican Student Interrupts Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony . . ." (Zero, 2014)

"Please, Malala, they're killing us. Don't forget Mexico," the young man reportedly said to the newly awarded Nobel laureate. "Viva Mexico!" he shouted as he was being taken away by security. <http://thinkmexican.tumblr.com/post/104906747417/mexican-student-protests-for-ayotzinapa-at-nobel>

Peace?
 Ceremony?
 Interruption?
 Whose peace?
 Whose ceremony?
 Whose interruption?

"On September 26th and 27th, 2014 in Iguala, Guerrero, Mexico, 43 young students from Normal Rural de Ayotzinapa "Raúl Isidro Burgos" went missing while being in the custody of Iguala's police force."

Interrupting the police force? Malala? The Nobel Prize committee? The ritual?

Normative systems, rationality, an iron cage of concertive control (Barker, 1993, Weber, 2006). Utube, Ervin, u c them there, the "Interaction rituals" (Goffman, 1967), "Deference and demeanor" (1967: 47). Cemented to the stage by obligations and expectations? Rules and "accountability," my friend, Harold says (Garfinkel, 1994). They will be held "accountable for their actions" (Heritage, 1998, p. 180 in Roberts, 2006, p. 90). Whose actions? Sensemaking. "Any setting organizes its activities to make its properties as an organized environment of practical activities detectable, countable, recordable, reportable, tell-a-story-aboutable, analyzable—in short, accountable" (Garfinkel, 1994, p. 70).

43 students. "The world is my campus," says Kanye West (2015) in his honorary speech at School of the Art Institute of Chicago, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRSjRFmN90E> (see also Safartabar, 2015).

Our students. Our campus.

Adán Cortés Salas applied for asylum. Application turned down. He interrupted.

We shall join you, Adán, "in a common struggle for education and against extremism."

Duo Performance Ethnography

Yvette Castañeda, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA

Dolores Castañeda and Doris Hernández, La Villita Chicago, Ill., USA

(Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBcGYJu0AHs>)

Vivos los llevaron

Names Spoken:

Bernardo * Felipe * Benjamín * Israel * José Ángel * Marcial * Jorge * Miguel Ángel * Marco * César * Julio * Abel * Emiliano * Dorian * José Luis * Alexander * Saúl * Luis * Jorge * Christian * Luis * Carlos * Magdaleno * José * Jesús * Mauricio * José * Jorge * Giovanni * Jhosivani * Leonel * Miguel Ángel * Antonio * Carlos * Israel * Adán * Abelardo * Christian * Martin * Cutberto * Everado * Jonás * José *

Vivos nos llevaron

Yo soy *cuarenta tres*

I am *forty-three*

I am *a teacher*

I am *a student*

I have *inquiry*

I am *learning*

about me

about you

About humanity

The world is our campus!
We shall interrupt!
Always!

Who Will Organize Against Them?

Jane Gilgun, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, USA

The people who committed the murders of these young men thought they were doing something good. They did not think about these young people as human beings with dignity, worth, hopes, dreams, and full of joy and potential. They saw them as trouble-makers, like gnats, mosquitoes, and no-see-ems. These young people were annoying, making them look bad. Swat them, like mosquitoes or other vermin. Rub them out. That will stop them. That will teach others a lesson, too.

Don't make us look bad. Don't threaten us. We will wipe you out. We are big. You are little. You have to do what we say. If you don't, you know the consequences. Fifty-six thousand people have disappeared. One hundred and fifty thousand have died in the last six years. You could be next.

The people who did the murders are a vast alliance who have grown rich and powerful by rubbing out those who threaten them. Their brutality frightens others into submission. These people are super well-organized because what they gain through coalitions means so much to them.

We who oppose them have to understand their thinking, motivations, and sources of power. Then we have to become more organized than they are. This takes organizing on the local, regional, national, and global level. Who will lead this effort?

<i>Rights.</i>	<i>We believe</i>	<i>We have . . .</i>	
	<i>We believed</i>	<i>We had</i>	<i>options.</i>
<i>Voice.</i>		<i>We hoped</i>	<i>to participate.</i>
<i>Mexico.</i>	<i>?Are you looking for me?</i>		
		<i>?Did you find my body?</i>	
		<i>?Did you find my bones?</i>	
<i>World.</i>	<i>?Do you still remember me?</i>		
	<i>?????Momma wants to know?????</i>		
<i>Mami.</i>	<i>?Will you fight for me?</i>		
	<i>Mami,</i>	<i>I'm looking for you.</i>	
		<i>Someone fight for me.</i>	

—

*Mother walks into scene:*Mi alma **duele**,**duele** porque no te puedo verMi **corazón** está
doliendo porque me dicen que estás **muerto**Y YO
no puedo entender

—

?Will you speak for me?—

—

Siempre he
luchado por
tiYO
no puedo entender
que
TU
estas **muerto**YO se
que
TU
estas vivome mienten
YO se
que
me mienteme dicen
me dicen queque
encontraron
TU

cuerpo

me
entregaron
TU

cuerpo

Y
no era
TuYo

Y YO
no lo entiendo

*Voice
is leaving
my body,*

Will you be my hope? and

*I
am
Invisible
Never go silent?*

YO
siempre
voy a
luchar por
ti

YO
voy a
estar en frente

YO
voy a
descubrir donde están
donde están todos

porque esa es
mi
lucha

YO
te quiero

mi
corazón está
temblando

mi
corazón cada día
esta ardiendo
por saber de
que

TU
no estas

te voy a buscar

te voy a encontrar
y se
que
te voy a encontrar

mi
corazón sabe
que
TU
no
estas
muerto

estas vivo

no puedo aceptar
lo que
la television dice
lo que
el periódico dice:
que
TU
no
existes

pero
YO
se
que
TU
estas respirando

Mi alma duele

No es un dolor físico
que mi mente pueda controlar,
es en el alma un angustia
que la medicina no puede remediar.
No son las sombras de la muerte
las que me hacen sentir en soledad
es más bien la tristeza de no verte
ni escuchar más tu respirar.

Es algún incongruente:
Vivir con el profundo dolor de no tenerte,
saber que dentro de mi
tengo una herida latente,
que sangra cada vez
que otro joven inocente,
tiene un encuentro con la muerte.

Y aunque mi alma
no pueda expresar su aflicción,

It's not a physical pain
that my mind can control,
it's in the soul an anguish
that medicine cannot remedy.
It's not the shadow of death
that deepens my solitude
it is the pain of not seeing you
never to hear the tune of your breath.

It's something incongruent:
To live with this profound pain of not having you,
to know that inside of me
I have this beating wound
that bleeds each time
that another innocent youth,
has an encounter with death.

And although my soul
cannot express its affliction

mis labios desconsolados
repiten a cada instante
te agradezco Señor
aunque mi alma,
este muriendo de dolor.

Este sentimiento doble
en que actualmente me encuentro,
es inhumano y paradójico,
sentir que mi alma duele
y que tenga que aceptar
que la muerte de mi hijo
fue vana para esta sociedad,
pero que en última instancia
el se haya mil y mil veces
mejor donde esta.

Alen and Allen: A Tale of Two Teachers

Mitchell Allen, Publisher, Left Coast Press, Inc., USA

Emiliano Alen Gaspar de la Cruz, known as Alen, was 23 years old in fall 2014 (P. Martínez, 2014). That summer, he had enrolled in the Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural Teachers' College in Ayotzinapa, Mexico, to become a teacher. There is another Allen, Elena Allen. She was 24 years old in fall 2014. She had enrolled the previous year in the teacher education program at University of San Francisco in California to become a teacher.

Alen was said to be quiet and intelligent and was nicknamed Pilas, the Pile, because of his solid, unshakable personality. He was passionate about becoming a teacher, having turned down a position at tannery school to do so. The other Allen was equally passionate about teaching from her middle school years on. She had tutored, student taught, taken graduate education courses as an undergraduate. She too was the solid backbone of her suburban California friends, the one who went out in the middle of the night to pick up someone who had had too much to drink at the prom.

Alen's commitment to social justice was unquestioned. He was one of 100 students who traveled to Iguala on September 26, 2014, to protest unfair educational hiring practices of the state of Guerrero. Allen, an exchange student in Chile in 2011, became actively involved in student demonstrations against the inequities in the Chilean educational system while there.

Although there were more lucrative options elsewhere, Alen wished to stay in Ayotzinapa to teach and to help his father harvest crops. While Allen had multiple options as a woman bilingual math teacher, she chose to stay in San Francisco and teach recent immigrant students in underfunded public schools.

Alen disappeared on September 26, 2014, likely murdered by a combination of government and organized crime action. His dreams of teaching in his local town will never be achieved. His parents mourn his loss. Allen graduated with a teaching credential from University of San Francisco (USF) in June 2015 and accepted a position teaching in a

my lips without consolation
repeat at every instant
I thank you Lord
although my soul
Is dying of pain.

In this mixed feeling
in which I actually find myself,
its inhumane and paradoxical
to feel as if my soul pains
and that I need accept
that the death of my son
was in vain for this society,
but at that final instance
that he may be a thousand and thousand times
better where he is.

new immigrant program in a public high school in a rough part of San Francisco. Her parents are elated.

Alen is one of the Ayotzinapa 43. Allen is my daughter.

The Power of Testimonio

Sharlene Hesse Biber, Boston College, USA

Testimonial texts, or *testimonio* is a powerful discourse that allows those torn apart by this tragic event to bear witness to and make public the tragic ending of the lives of forty-three young male students from the Ayotzinapana Normal School who were murdered on September 26, 2014.

Abel Garcia Hernandez's grieving mother's letter asks all of us to bear witness to her deep loss and her overwhelming need to connect to her missing son.

Letter to my son: Able Garcia Hernandez.

"Now that you are not with me. I feel a pain so big that I cannot express it with words.

I feel like my heart is getting smaller, and little by little,

I feel like it's tearing inside of me."

Testimonio galvanizes political activism against those in power who promote a climate of fear and violence. This letter gives a public voice to those at the margins and can be an important catalyst for re-scripting the history of this tragic event.

Emotion and Commotion

Gabriela Rubilar Donoso, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile

Last week two young Chileans, Exequiel Borvarán and Diego Guzmán, were murdered. Yesterday, Thursday May 21st, Rodrigo Avilés Bravo was in critical condition after the Chilean police used excessive force at a student protest.

Along with repudiating this situation, I would like to emphasize that these acts of violence were executed by citizens who thought held their own interests above the aspirations and ideals of the youth who were assaulted and assassinated.

Today I would like to reflect about youth, violence and social justice, specifically about how we have transmitted a polarized idea between public and private spaces throughout generations, and that right that one has over others, especially those considered “dangerous” or “undesirable,” and therefore disposable.

The social networks have let us feel this polarization. Some react with indignation and call for youth to mobilize themselves and take to the streets in different cities throughout the country; others emit declarations and public commentaries valuing their solidarity with the victims’ families.

Others raise their voices to “justify” the actions of those who carry out violence, displaying wariness and fear that wash over their neighbors when marches and protests may come close to what they consider their own “private” spaces, in need of protection and safety.

The three youth I have mentioned today represent and illustrate the type of society that as a country we have constructed over the last few decades; instead of respect and care for others, our current lifestyles are continuing to grow focused on individualism, abuse, and personal benefit at any cost, to the point of justifying actions such as those described in this performance.

A society that is not astonished and does not react to these type of events in Ayotzinapa or in Valparaíso on May 14th and 21st, is a society that needs to rethink its social, ethical, and political projects.

1, 2, 3, . . . 43 Ayotzinapa: Emiliano Alen Gaspar de la Cruz

Adriana Espinoza, Universidad de Chile, Chile

I would like to present a piece of the last poem of Victor Jara, called *We are 5 thousand*. He was a Chilean poet, singer, and songwriter. This poem was written on September 15, 1973, at the Chile stadium, turned into a concentration camp after de coup d’état in Chile. He was killed and disappeared at the time. His body was found some time after,

We are five thousand in this small part of the city.
We are five thousand.
How many are we in all the cities and across the country?
Only here, ten thousand hands that work the land
and make the factories work.
How much humanity!
with hunger, cold, panic, pain,
moral pressure, terror and insanity?
Six of us were lost in the space of the stars.
One dead, one beaten like I never thought
you could hit a human being.
The other four wanted to end their fears,
One jumped into the void,
another beating his head against the wall,

but all of them with the fixed stare of death.
How horrific is to see the face of fascism!
They carry out their plans with precision.
Regardless of anything.
Blood is medals for them.
The killing is an act of heroism
God, is this the world you created?
For this you had seven days of work?

41 years later, the rage runs through our continent once
again,

43 young people disappeared, vanished into thin air,
and among them, **you**, but you are not just a number, you
are

Emiliano Alen Gaspar de la Cruz,

How difficult it is to speak about someone one doesn’t
know,

when the sadness and the rage mix.

You were not just one number,
You were an intelligent, quiet and organized young man
I wonder what would you think in your quiet moments?

How did you imagine your future life?

What kind of dreams did you have?

But, someone stopped these young people’s dreams
the reasons, unimaginable
the justice, unachievable

And I wonder what are WE DOING ABOUT IT
When did we stop protecting the lives of our young
people?

When did we stop caring for their dreams?
Have we lost our dreams as well?

¡Canto que mal me sales
cuando tengo que cantar espanto!
Espanto como el que vivo
como el que muero, espanto.
De verme entre tanto y tantos
momentos del infinito
en que el silencio y el grito
son las metas de este canto.

Lo que veo, nunca vi,
lo que he sentido y que siento
hará brotar el momento . . .

Unfinished poem by Víctor Jara, Estadio Chile,
Septiembre 1973

Ayotzinapa and Heroin Demand in the U.S.

Gabriel Ferreyra, Texas A&M University Corpus Christi, USA

What are the similarities between the United States and Iguala, Guerrero, where the 43 Ayotzinapa students disappeared? Both places suffer from either trafficking of heroin or its raw material: Adormidera or amapola (poppy). Now, what are the differences between Iguala, Guerrero and the

United States? Iguala—Mexico for that matter— pays the price of heroin addiction in the United States with violence, killings, disappeared, and human rights violence while the United States suffers an epidemic of heroin abuse and overdose but no blood is spilled, no kidnappings occur, no disappearances happen, no street violence unlike Mexico. In a nutshell, none of the horrors of the war on drugs take place in the United States.

What happens is that there is an epidemic of heroin addiction (Khazan, 2014) throughout America and some of that heroin comes from the mountains of Guerrero state where these students were kidnapped. Mexican drug cartels have learned to produce high quality heroin similar to the one coming from Afghanistan: white heroin instead of the black tar that used to be sent to the United States (Bonello, 2015). Unlike cocaine that it is a derivative of coca leaves from the Andean region in South America, heroin is made from poppy that is widely available in many regions in Mexico. Thus, Mexican cartels do not have to depend on third parties to produce, traffic, and profit from this illegal substance (Miroff, 2015).

A combination of factors has led to the current heroin epidemic. First, the huge rates of drug addiction in the United States; second, the successful U.S. government's crackdown on prescription drugs that pushed many pill addicts to find a cheaper and more accessible option such as heroin. And finally, the new aggressive approach of Mexican drug cartels to do business from the unlimited supplied of poppy in Mexico and the insatiable demand for drugs in the United States.

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has compiled enough evidence to indict some gang members of "Guerreros Unidos" (United Warriors), the drug trafficking cell that allegedly kidnapped and disappeared these 43 Ayotzinapa students in Iguala, Guerrero in late September 2014 (Padgett, 2015). The correlation is there and is strong: The U.S. government and U.S. society share some indirect responsibility in the disappearance of 43 Ayotzinapa students. In other words, drug addiction in the United States and prohibition in particular has contributed to the brutal violence and murders in Mexico. Ya Basta Carajo! Enough is enough! Let's change the paradigm of prohibition and stop future "Ayotzinapas."

Listening

Sarah Amira de la Garza, Arizona State University, USA

Listening, we hear . . .

inside the silence
the sounds of the hidden, the forgotten
omniscient sounds

listening, we hear . . .

the sound of a braking bus
laughter, singing, and silenced conversations
screams of horror, terror, helpless screams
the rhythm of 43 beating hearts
waiting . . .

listening, we hear . . .

the sound of military boots
phones ringing, unanswered
gunshots and blows
voicemail lost in virtual spaces
never received
never heard

listening, we hear . . .

the mourning of mothers and families
rhythms of lost lives
the absence of our voices
the words of useless news reports
impotent governments
empty prayers

listening, we hear . . .

the sound of a civilization ringing
full of noisy contradictions
lies, strategies, betrayals
and the terrorism of daily voices
voices that don't resist—they are so civil
so just
so educated

listening, we hear . . .

the sound of innocent voices
forty-three souls with no lives
no longer heard
yet we continue forever—
hearing them . . .

they are forever alive.
Escuchamos
Escuchamos

Dentro del silencio,
se oyen sonidos de lo oculto, lo olvidado
sonidos omniscientes

escuchamos . . .

el sonido de un autobús frenando
de rizas y cantos y pláticas silenciadas

de gritos de horror, terror, sin auxilio
el ritmo de 43 corazones vivos
esperando . . .

escuchamos . . .

el sonido de botas militares
de teléfonos que suenan sin respuesta
de disparos y golpes
de recados en buzones, ubicados en espacios virtuales—
jamás recibidos
jamás escuchados

escuchamos . . .

las madres y familias en luto
el ritmo de vidas pérdidas
la ausencia de nuestras voces
de reportajes inútiles,
de gobiernos impotentes,
oraciones vacías

escuchamos . . .

el sonido de la civilización que suena
llena de las ruidosas contradicciones
las mentiras, las estrategias, las traiciones
y el terrorismo de las voces cotidianas
las voces que no resisten por ser tan civiles,
tan justas
tan educadas

escuchamos . . .

el sonido de las voces de inocentes
cuarenta y tres almas sin vidas
que ya no se oyen
por más que las seguiremos
escuchando

siempre vivas.

Remembering Ayotzinapa

Vanessa Jara Labarthé, Universidad de Tarapacá, Chile

The act of remembering is an act of resistance,
an act of rebellion against the state, against those who have
their hands stained,
against the promoters of forgetting,
them, those who were and those who are,
those who want us to believe that 43 is just a number,
that they are not anymore,
that they are invisible,
that they do not exist.

Remembering is also shouting out loud: They are still here
with us! They are not gone!

Each of them, every face, every story, are present in our
struggle for justice and truth,
a struggle that belongs to them and that compels us to not to
be silent,
because every time we raise our voices, we break the imposi-
tion of forgetting.

Remembering is an act of love. Remembering is hope.
You can always choose between remembering and forget-
ting . . . I choose the first.

A Poem From the Silence: A Poetic Tribute to 43 Missing Students of Iguala, Guerrero

Luis Felipe González Gutiérrez
Universidad Santo Tomás, Colombia

1.
In this land
a Sun dies every day.
The sun of absent eyes.

2.
One, two, three . . . forty-three.
The astros fall into my arms:
pain is just the beginning.

3.
Pain of conscience.
Pain of closed lips.
Pain of loneliness.

4.
Then, I read my silence
It is a river of ink
as your silent lips.

5.
One, two, three . . . forty-three,
the astros are red
and the silence is death.

6.
Love, meanwhile,
Sleep in foreign arms.
The skin is unnecessary.

7.
Skin without memory,
skin without touch,
skin alien.

8.
One, two, three . . . forty-three.

The astros are insensitive
and life is an illusion.

9.
But the word it's here.
The voice, the strength of the embrace.
The desire is now fate.
- 10.

Fate for the hands,
fate for the hearts,
fate for the brave.

11.
One, two, three . . . forty-three.
The astros are now the rhythm
For the joy and hope.

12.
The Word creates the reason to believe
and the world is now a real option.
Eyes open to the world.

13.
Strong eyes
that you slide the pain
a corner.

14.
One, two, three . . . forty-three.
The astros are infinite,
look at me with their orbits
and their daily silences.

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