The image of the teacher in rural Colombia : an inquiry into themes, metaphors, and implications for education.

THE IMAGE OF THE TEACHER IN RURAL COLOMBIA: AN INQUIRY INTO THEMES, METAPHORS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

A Dissertation Presented

by

HALEH ARBAB

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Approved as to style and content:

David R. Evans

David R. Evans, Chair

David Kinsey

David Kinsey, Member

Arturo Escobar

Arturo Escobar, Member

John C. Glidewell

Bailey W. Jackson, Dean
School of Education

To my mother Forough Arbab

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ABSTRACT

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FEBRUARY 1995

HALEH ARBAB, B.A., BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

M.A., UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Ed.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor David R. Evans

This dissertation explores the meaning the rural inhabitants of the North of Cauca region in Colombia make of the rural primary school teacher. It examines the themes and metaphors used by rural teachers, community members, and youth to describe the teacher's present image, their perspectives on the possible changes, and the implications of these perceptions for future educational interventions.

The themes and metaphors that emerged alluded to two general images. The researcher has named these the portrait of the teacher as a hero and as a ordinary human being. The first, she proposes, is an ideal image that comes from people's collective memory. The second, she attributes to their real life experiences. The heroic image of the teacher is depicted through metaphors such as that of an apostle, a pillar of society, a second parent, and a community catalyst. The real image refers to the short-comings of

teachers to fulfill this heroic image. The point of reference for the heroic image is the teacher's archetype that comes from a glorified perception of the past. It contains symbols, archaic images, and motifs that are embedded in people's collective memory. The researcher suggests that the teacher's true image is neither its ideal and heroic image nor its real and descriptive one but an amalgamation of both.

She recommends the incorporation of this complex and dual image in teacher training programs. She suggests that, beginning teachers be ecouraged to reflect on their own impressions of the teacher figure, to analyze the sources of these perceptions, and to situate their viewpoints in the cultural context in which they are embedded. This process of critical reflection allows teachers to become aware of their own contradictions and prepares them for the complex reality of their profession.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Teacher Image in a Changing World

Throughout the history of humanity, education has had the universal purpose of preparing well trained men and women to serve society. The content and form of education, of course, has varied from age to age and from culture to culture depending on the predominant values and world views of each human group. Today, however, as the social, economic, and ecological problems of humanity increase, the education of modern men and women who are expected to respond to the needs of the present society becomes a more complicated task. Conscious of the need for better and more appropriate educational programs, decades governments and international organizations have allocated more resources to education during the past decades, specifically in those areas that are known as the developing world. Evaluations of the experiences of the past decades, however, show that although education has been one of the greatest and most costly branches of activities, in the majority of these countries formal and nonformal educational programs have made very insignificant contributions to development (Faure, 1972; Freire, 1990; Simmons, 1980).

Educational problems, of course, are complex and should be analyzed and resolved within the context in which they function. Many scholars engaged in analysis of educational practices have mapped out and described a wide spectrum of difficulties and problems shared by these societies. Such issues range from general questions such as educational disparities between the more industrially advanced sectors and those that have less access to economic and technological advancements to more specific problems concerning the form and content of education. They also cover difficulties such as the inappropriateness of the schools' curricula to the needs of the society, the inadequacy of teacher training programs, and student learning deficiencies.

Parallel to the above mentioned criticisms, those who analyze recent educational problems within the framework of "liberating education" (Brandao, 1989; Freire, 1990) or "critical pedagogy" (Giroux, 1983; 1988; Apple, 1989) suggest that education be examined in its more philosophical sense. They describe the conventional perception of education as one of domination rather than liberation. This approach, they believe, influences both the content of education and the way children, youth, and adults are acculturated by the formal and nonformal educational institutions. The advocates of such philosophies suggest that attention be paid not only to questions that refer to

the subjects taught in schools, the forms of instruction, the micro-objectives of each class, or the evaluation of the students, but to the relationship between what goes on in the classroom with the socioeconomic and cultural processes of society (Giroux, 1988). This new approach to education questions the nature and function of the hidden curriculum. This includes the messages and values conveyed silently to students through the selection of specific forms of knowledge, the establishment of specific classroom relations, and the characteristics of the school's organizational structure (Giroux, 1988, p. 4). Critical pedagogists, therefore, propose the development of the critical capacity of the teachers and their students as the main purpose of education.

In response to the many criticisms and challenges to education, and within a critical framework for change and transformation, many educators and social activists are engaged in changing the formal and nonformal educational systems at local, national, and international levels. Different world-wide endeavors for change in the educational system include modifying the content, changing the teaching and learning conditions, and re-training the formal and nonformal educational agents. And, thus, many national and local innovative educational programs are being established around the world. However, as scholars and practitioners analyze the difficulties that surround the implementation of

the educational programs that include innovative elements, they continuously highlight the role of the teacher in the educational process (Bullough, 1991). Suggesting that the teacher be placed at the core of education is based on the fact that the information and concepts that are embedded in any educational program are finally left in the hands of the teachers, who influence the content and form of education with their attitudes and world views. Within these proposals for change, some also suggest that the teacher should be viewed not only as a mere transmitter of information but as a transformative intellectual (Giroux, 1988, p. xxxiv). This surpasses a conventional perception of the teacher as an instrument who receives packaged educational programs and conveys them to the students to the image of the teacher as a creative agent who participates in and catalyzes a population's collective process of transformation.

Recent discussions about teachers, their training programs, and their performance in schools have led to the emergence of new questions and themes in relation to the role of teachers in society. The question of the teacher's image is without doubt one of these emerging themes. If a new critical pedagogy is proposing alternative principles and criteria for teaching, and if teachers are expected to become active participants in a new pedagogical movement, it

is urgent to analyze and understand the image that society in general and teachers in particular hold of the teacher.

Although it is necessary to reach an understanding of the teacher's image in many parts of the world, this need is much greater in the developing countries where the role of teachers is not restricted to their actions in the classroom, but also includes a great deal of participation in those activities that are related to the process of development. Studying the teacher´s image is even more urgent in the rural areas of these countries where teachers who for ages have occupied a very special place in the community are losing their status exactly at the moment where their active participation is mostly needed (Tovar, 1989).

In this dissertation I have, therefore, focused on studying the image that teachers and community members hold of the primary school teacher in a rural area in the Cauca Valley in Colombia, South America. Colombia is a country that reflects many of the characteristics of the Latin American developing world: a rapidly growing industrialization process that has moved large rural populations to the urban slums; a vast economic, social, and cultural gap between the traditional and modern sectors of the society; and an educational system that struggles to respond to the country's increasing social, economic, and cultural problems. In addition to these characteristics, the

Colombian society has its own peculiarities: the country is permeated by a latent climate of violence, perpetuated by the country's different forces of right, left, or narcotraffic, that frequently threatens to turn into a civil war (Helg, 1984).

Teacher Image in Colombia

During recent years much has been written about Colombian teachers, their training programs, their working conditions, their status, their self-image, the image that others hold of them, and their performance in schools that operate in distinct social and economic contexts. In addition to these themes, recently, in the light of the country's acute and widespread problem of violence, some sociologists have turned their attention to the role that the school plays in the conservation and expansion of this violence (Parra, 1992). Obviously, in their analysis of the character of the school as a preserver and transmitter of the culture of violence, these researchers have also examined the role of the teacher as the primary agent for the transference of this emerging culture.

The majority of these studies, whether those that look at the teacher's role in the Colombian society, those that focus on teacher training programs, or the research that highlights the relationship between the teacher's attitudes

and behavior with the perpetuation of violence, suggest that one of the greatest problems of Colombian teachers is that they have been assigned different missions and in many cases contradictory roles within the context of the country's changes of the past four decades (Parra, 1992). While Colombian teachers are expected to be agents who facilitate the integration of educated youth into the country's recent modernization processes, they are often considered to be to a certain degree guilty of the loss of cultural identity and the national values of a country that is rapidly walking the path of economic and industrial growth. These change processes, of course, have brought the Colombian society economic, social, and cultural crises, within which the role of the teacher as the sustainer and representative of the country's educational institutions is constantly being questioned.

If the Colombian society is expecting its teachers to on one hand be the forerunners of change and on the other hand the preservers of its traditions, its expectations from its rural teachers is much higher. Rural teachers, who in their everyday life experiences live the country's contradictions and gaps that exist between the extremely advanced modern sectors and its economically deprived traditional areas, are expected simultaneously to promote two opposite processes. They, who have to educate the rural youth with the rural and traditional values that are

necessary for the society's cultural preservation, also have to make sure that these youth (many of whom come from different ethnic backgrounds) know how to speak and write good Spanish, master the economic values of a new market, and learn to survive in the new urban areas in which they are finally expected to reside. It is not an exaggeration to say that from among all the teachers who work in the country, the rural teacher suffers the greatest consequences of the crisis of the teaching profession, a crisis that is growing in the very core of teaching. This crisis, among many other things, has manifested itself in the loss of the teacher's identity, a phenomenon that results from the difficulties teachers face in fulfilling those functions that correspond to their profession and to the deterioration of the status of teaching (Parra, 1986).

Thus, a country that has lost a high percentage of its rural inhabitants to its urban centers during the past four decades, is urged to look for answers to profound questions related to the role of its rural teachers, their self-image, their identity, their connection with the country's rapid and abrupt social, economic, and cultural changes, and the relationship of all these phenomena with the image that people hold of the rural teacher. Are the modern Colombian rural teachers fulfilling their role as educators of new citizens for peace and democracy? Are they receiving an adequate education that trains them for this role? Are these

teachers being affected by the economic and social crisis of the country? Are they really going through an identity crisis? Has the rural teacher's status deteriorated over time? If there is evidence of deterioration in the teacher image, what are its possible causes? Which of these causes are related to external factors, and what portion is a result of the teacher's own acts? This work intends to take a first look at these questions that are of great importance for the rural teachers of Colombia and their future.

Purpose of Study

In spite of all that is written about teacher status, image, and identity, and those factors that influence them, rarely have researchers looked at the problem from the point of view of the rural teachers themselves or of the local community members. Seldom have we been able to hear the voice of rural teachers who talk about the way they perceive the teacher figure or that of the elderly of a community who speak of the changes that have occurred in the image of the teacher.

The purpose of this study has thus been to gain insight into the way rural teachers and community members perceive the rural teacher, an approach that is necessary for a much clearer understanding of the meanings that these subjects make of their own reality. The basic research questions of

this study have, therefore, been divided into three categories. The first category includes those questions that have to do with describing the situation: How do rural teachers perceive themselves and their role in society? What kind of an image do community members hold of the rural teacher? What kinds of difficulties do they think surround teaching? What kinds of benefits or satisfactions do they relate to the profession?

The second set of questions is meant to discover the changes that teachers and community members think have taken place in the teacher image over the years, and what they feel are the causes or the factors that influence the rural teacher's present image. In what ways do they think that the teacher image has improved? If people feel that there is a decline in the rural teacher's position over the past years, to what do they attribute such deterioration?

The third set of questions has to do with what teachers and community members think can be done to improve the teacher's image and who they think can participate in such actions.

Unlike many traditional research studies, the purpose of this study is not to discover causal relationships between teacher image or status and training, income, or teacher commitment to the profession, but to explore the meanings that community members and teachers make of the phenomenon and what they consider to be its causes. My

purpose, however, in using research to help people express their perceptions, of course, goes beyond the mere utilitarian goal of informing non-rural or academic audiences of how rural populations perceive their own reality. One of my objectives has been to engage teachers and community members in a self-reflexive knowledge generating process that can lead to future activities oriented towards change. Very much aware of my own time and economic restrictions and the limitations of this thesis, I have confined the purpose of this study to the description of some of the initial thoughts and ideas about change generated by the participants of this inquiry, hoping that future studies can be dedicated to a follow-up of the kinds of activities that can emerge from this kind of research.

Methodological Considerations

My understanding of and approach to research in this study has been influenced by a set of philosophical and theoretical perspectives from the following traditions: (a) critical and emancipatory research, (b) feminist research, (c) participatory research. From feminist research I have borrowed the idea that the way a group of people view the world needs to be understood from their own perspective (Anderson and Jack, 1991, p. 15; Reinharz, 1992, p. 52). Critical and emancipatory research has influenced my

understanding of the purpose and use of research in terms of the empowerment of its subjects (Lather, 1991, p.3). Participatory research has served as my guide for considering the implications of research in terms of social change (Borda and Rahaman, 1991).

I have chosen a qualitative approach to research for the purposes of this study. The main characteristic of qualitative inquiries, and one that has made this method appropriate for this study, is that they permit the researcher to study and understand complex situations that cannot be comprehended through quantitative indicators. Patton (1990) describes qualitative research as the kind of approach that allows the inquirer to

> study selected issues in depth and detail. Approaching fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth, openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry.... qualitative methods typically produce a wealth of detailed information about a much smaller number of people and cases. This increases understanding of the cases and situations studied but reduces generalizability (p.13-14).

In a qualitative approach to this study, I have primarily used interviewing. I have used multiple interviewing techniques that include the combination of short surveys and long open ended interviews with rural teachers, youth, and adult community members. A total of twenty two rural teachers, sixty adult community members, and forty youth were interviewed during this research.

Through the process of having the participants of this inquiry tell their stories, give their opinion about teachers, and comment on possible changes, I have identified certain metaphors and themes that can provide us with more insight into the meaning that teachers and community members make of their own reality.

Role of Researcher: Reasons for Interest in Topic

I must be explicit about my assumptions, my reasons for choosing the region, and my relationship to this study. These factors, I believe, very much influence the significance of this study and some of the uses that I can personally give to it in the future.

My relationship with the north of Cauca region, where this study has been undertaken, goes back twelve years in time. I have been employed during these years by Fundaec, Fundacion Para la Aplicacion y Ensenanza de las Ciencias, to work in their educational and community development programs. For the past three years, I have been coordinating Fundaec's latest project which is known as "Licenciatura en Educacion Rural." This is a teacher training university program whose aim is to prepare teachers for the rural areas of the country.

The program is based on the assumption that the country's present teacher training programs that have been

conceived in terms of urban teaching do not respond to the needs of the rural populations. The main objective of this program, therefore, is to create a new curriculum that prepares teachers for the rural reality. These teachers are, however, expected to expand the meaning of teaching from the activities that are realized inside the classroom to a whole set of actions undertaken within the community.

This program is presently functioning in a physical plant known as "El Centro Universitario en Bienestar Rural" (University Center for Rural Well-being), situated in Perico Negro, a village which is about ten kilometers away from Puerto Tejada, one of the bigger urban centers of the region. I have chosen to do this study in this zone because of my work relationship and emotional ties with the region, and because of the relevance that a study of such nature has to a program that is training rural teachers.

I became interested in the theme as I began to observe the attitudes and ideas of the students who entered the program. As I observed a certain unexplainable apathy, insecurity, and lack of conviction in these students, I decided to talk to some of them about their reasons for entering the program. It appeared to me that the majority of them had come with some fixed ideas about teachers of which they seemed not be conscious. Some of them liked this image, and were, therefore, content with their choice. Others seemed to dislike it. The latter group tried to justify

their nonconformity with the profession by criticizing the program for not having enough courses on agronomy and agriculture. No matter how much we emphasized their roles as rural educators, to them rural meant production, and for that they believed they needed to study more agriculture. Those who were happy with becoming teachers were afraid that they were not being trained well enough to hold the chalk appropriately or to stand in front of the blackboard.

What kind of an image do these students have of the teacher? How does it coincide or clash with the program's vision? What is there about the image of the teacher that, although not clear, gives them a frame of mind from which they cannot escape? How can this image become explicit? Can it be changed? Should it be changed? These were the kinds of questions that I began to ask myself as I interacted with these students. As I read some of the literature on beginning teachers and their dilemmas, I realized that others (Bullough, Knowles, and Crow, 1991; Lortie, 1975) were raising similar questions in relation to beginning teachers and the image they hold of themselves and of the profession. But how could I examine this issue in such a way that it could both be useful to the inhabitants of the region and could help my students with their doubts and problems?

I therefore decided to undertake a qualitative inquiry that would, on the one hand, make it possible for the

participants of the study to become aware of their own thoughts, beliefs, and contradictions about the teacher, and on the other hand, be useful for the students of the program. Throughout this process, I have viewed my efforts as an exploratory inquiry that can initiate further research on the theme. I have, therefore, involved a few of my students and colleagues from the region in this research. These people have participated in the preliminary discussions of the study, the selection of communities, short interviews, and analysis of the data. I believe that by participating in this study, they have become interested in the theme and will somehow pursue it in the future.

As I advanced in my research and read some of the literature that I found relevant to my question, I realized that the word "status" is widely used in great part of what is written on teachers and their position in society. Influenced by those who have written on this matter, I initially began my research by examining the teacher's status. At that point I was mostly influenced by the work of Linda Dove (1986). Her definition of the teacher status she has borrowed from the 1966 UNESCO recommendations on teacher status. It says:

> both the standing or regard accorded them, as evidenced by the level of appreciation of the importance of their function and of their competence in performing it, and the working conditions, remuneration and other material benefits accorded them relative to other professional groups." (p. 97)

Based on this definition, Dove discusses teacher status under three headings: personal, occupational, and professional. Personal status is

> the regard, appreciation or esteem which teachers as individuals earn from those who know them- pupils, parents and community.....Personal status depends on the unique relationship which a teacher, as a personality and character, establishes with others. (p. 98)

According to her, occupational status is inter-linked with personal status. Occupational status today depends largely on what rewards those engaged in the occupation can command. It includes an analysis of the comparative rewards, pay, and other benefits of teaching (p. 99). Professional status, for Dove, depends on the professionalization of teaching which she considers to be one of its greatest goals. This depends on both the pressure by teachers and their unions for better pay, conditions of service, working environments and promotion prospects, and the improvement of the quality of teaching. The latter implies improvements in the way teachers teach (p. 108).

According to such definition, therefore, the teacher's status includes many of the different aspects of the profession. It even involves the very initial question of its acceptance as a profession. It was with such understanding of the word status that I approached my first informants. My first findings, however, that confirmed my conviction that the question of teacher status had to be

examined from the perspective of rural teachers and community members, was related to the very use that local people gave to the word "status." Although status as used in the literature and as defined by Dove explains both the economic and social position that the teacher held in society, for the members of the rural communities that I interviewed status was a concept that was most directly related to the teacher's economic position.

My basic question, however, was not limited to the economic position of teachers. I was more interested in the image that rural populations held of the rural teacher, an image that included many different aspects. These aspects although encompassing the economic and the social, mostly had to do with the local people's holistic mode of thinking in relation to the teacher. The rural teacher to whom I was referring was a figure or an archetype. She could be anyone and at the same time no one to whom people could refer personally. I had to find a word that would convey this meaning. I struggled through my first interviews looking for the correct word until finally, after talking to a few people, the word and the concept of image appeared.

Using the word "image" not only enabled me to convey my message to the participants but also facilitated gaining a more holistic understanding of the existing perceptions of the rural teacher and opened a whole new perspective on related concepts, themes, and metaphors. The word image

refers to a more universal concept that, in addition to alluding to the way a people define a person, a position, or a figure, can involve visual or religious images, symbols, and even myths. These usually take their roots in people's history and consciously or unconsciously permeate their everyday lives.

The versatility of the use that can be given to the word image, therefore, allows one to explore a large number of areas in which people's perceptions of teachers are reflected. It is possible, for example, to gain insight into the different images that a people have of the teacher figure by studying their myths, their legends, and their stories; or by analyzing their art and their music. In this research, however, very much aware of all these possibilities as well as of my own limitations, I have had to restrict my data to more verbal and descriptive images expressed by people in regards to the teacher figure.

I hope that this research can be useful in the following ways. First, at a more general level, the findings of this inquiry can be useful in verifying, correcting, and changing the program's analysis of the situation of the rural teacher and in providing it with a basis for future interventions. Second, on more immediate terms, the findings and the methodology employed in this inquiry can be used for the organization of a participatory course for the students on the theme of the teacher image. Third, I expect that some

of my students, colleagues, and community members who have participated in the research will hopefully continue to analyze further with the communities and to put into action some of the themes and suggestions that emerged in the study. And fourth, I hope that the mere act of participating in research of such nature has helped the teachers and community members who collaborated with this study clarify some of their thoughts and contradictions in relation to the teacher image.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation consists of eight chapters that are organized in the following manner:

Chapter II presents the context of the study. It includes a description of the region and its educational institutions.

Chapter III introduces examples from the literature relevant to this study. Here, I have intentionally focussed on specific studies undertaken in Colombia in relation to the rural teacher's image.

Chapter IV describes the research design, the methods, and procedures utilized in the study.

Chapter V contains a presentation of the themes and metaphors that emerged during the research as people talked about the rural teacher.

Chapter VI is a discussion of the findings in relation to the changes that teachers and community members perceive in the teacher image over time and the factors that they consider responsible for this image.

Chapter VII, which I have named Voices, contains a presentation of two case studies. The first is an account of an interview with two community members, and the second is the life story of Yolanda, a rural teacher from the region.

Chapter VIII discusses conclusions. Here, I talk about the changes that the participants consider necessary for the improvement of the rural teacher image and the implications of this study for future educational interventions.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH SETTING AND ITS EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with some general knowledge about the social and economic conditions of the north of Cauca region where this research was undertaken. I also expect this description to contribute to a better understanding of the educational context within which the region's schools function.

The Region

Colombia is the fourth country in Latin America in population and level of industrialization and fifth in size. It occupies a strategic place between Central and South America. Geographically, it consists of a mountainous central region with high Andean savannas and valleys in which most of its population resides. It has one thousand five hundred kilometers of coast along the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea; vast plains in the north and tropical forests in the east. Although Colombia is representative of Latin America, it has its own original characteristics. It has a relative political stability with two traditional parties: the Conservatives and the Liberals; the country,

however, has a latent climate of violence which frequently threatens to turn into a civil war (Helg, 1984).

The Cauca Department is located in the southwestern part of Colombia. On its north is the Department of Valle, from the south it shares boundaries with the Department of Narino, on its east is the Department of Huila, and on its west, the Pacific Ocean. The capital of the Cauca Department is Popayan, which economically and culturally influences the southern part of the Department. The municipalities that are located in the north of the department are commercially and culturally integrated into the department of Valle with its center in Cali.

The north of Cauca region that is located at the southern end of the large Cauca Valley, 250 km. long and 15-40 km wide, covers a total of 3658 km2 and has a population of 226,591. The valley extends from Cartago to Caloto and is surrounded by the occidental and central branches of the Andean Mountains. "Norte del Cauca" consists of ten municipalities --Caloto, Corinto, Miranda, Padilla, Puerto Tejada, Santander de Quilichao, Suarez, Buenos Aires, Toribio, and Caldono.

The north of Cauca region is divided into two geographical areas: flat lands and mountainous. The flat lands, that is the area on which this research has focussed, consist of 100,000 hectares which is 17% of the total area of the whole region. These lands are fertile and apt for

commercial agriculture. The population that resides in the flat lands is mostly from African descent, whereas most of the residents of the mountainous areas belong to indigenous tribes. Like the majority of the population of the nation, in both areas inter-racial marriages among the indigenous, black, and white populations has been very common.

The indigenous group that resides in the region is known as the Paez. During the past years the Paez have recuperated their lands, and are organized in independant reservations known as "resguardos." The Paez have been able to preserve their language and many of their traditional customs. They practice pre-capitalistic forms of production that are oriented more towards consumption than marketing. They share their labor in community working groups known as "mingas." The "resguardos" have their local governments known as "Cabildos." These are elected annually by the local indigenous community. The Cabildos are accepted by the ministry of government as autonomous and valid forms of local government.

The inhabitants of the flat lands of the north of Cauca region are the descendants of the African populations who were brought through Cartagena as slaves to work in the plantations and mines. These flat lands include populated urban or semi-urban areas such as Ortigal, Santander, Padilla, Puerto Tejada, Guachene, Villa Rica, Timba, Honduras, Asnazu, and Suarez and their surrounding rural

villages. Puerto Tejada and Santander are the two biggest and most dynamic urban centers in the region. Many of the inhabitants of these communities have chosen their last names based on the African communities their ancestors have come from: Carabali, Angola, Ararat, etc.

The Region's History

Michael Taussig, an Australian anthropologist who has collected part of the history of the region under the pseudonym of Mateo Mina (1975), mentions the following three registered stages in the region's history: The first stage begins with the Spanish conquest and lasts 300 years. During this time the Spanish brought African slaves in order to replace the labor that they were losing as great numbers of indigenous groups either died of contagious diseases such as small-pox or refused to work for them. The second stage begins in 1851 with the abolition of slavery when the black population began to cultivate along the Palo River, a major river of the zone. The third stage starts after the turn of the century, around the 1900's. It is during this stage that agrarian capitalism was intensified in the valley. This process brought with itself the displacement of the farmers, for their land was taken away from them by the bigger producers. This land was first used as pasture and later for the cultivation of sugar cane. The displacement of the

black farmer is a process that continues up to the present. The small farmers of the region are still selling their land and working as wage workers in the sugar cane industry or in the big "haciendas."

The Cauca valley is well known for its fertility. The original indigenous groups who lived in the region lived on fishing and hunting. They also cultivated cotton and extracted salt (Dolmatoff, 1965). Shortly after the year 1600 when the Spanish began to bring African slaves through Cartagena, what is known as the triangular commerce was established (Mina, 1975). European ships would leave for Africa with cotton clothes, jewels and other goods, that would be exchanged for African slaves. The slaves who were brought to America were exchanged for gold from Peru, Mexico, and Colombia and sugar from the Caribbean islands.

The majority of the slaves who were brought to Colombia were from three areas from the coast of Africa: Senegal, Guinea, and Angola. A good number of these slaves managed to run away as soon as the ships reached Cartagena. These slaves formed what is known as "Palenques," small fortresses made of bamboo, in the mountains. They established their own government and laws in these areas.

The majority of the population of the flatland of the north of Cauca region are descendants of the slaves who came to this region to work in the mines and on the big farms of famous landlords such as the Arboledas. The slaves were

obliged to accept the Catholic religion because the owners believed that this would make them more obedient. Many, however, believe that the Africans only pretended to accept the white man's religion. They rather mixed it with their own (Taussig, 1980).

During a major part of the past century, the Cauca Valley was isolated from the principal commercial centers of the zone. The rich managed to open a road to Buenaventura, a port by the Pacific Ocean, in order to have access to water. While many who had become rich through the slave business were struggling to maintain their big plantations, a new kind of businessman emerged in the area. One of these businessmen was Santiago Eder, a North American citizen, who managed to have access to outside markets. Eder worked as an intermediary exporting goods out of Colombia. By the end of the 1860 decade, Eder had more than 1000 hectares of land, and had established one of the most modern sugar plantations in the Cauca valley (Mina, 1975).

The first part of the twentieth century was thus a very important time for the Cauca valley. Although the region began to improve economically as it adopted the capitalist mode of production (Cabal, 1978), the average inhabitant of the North of Cauca became more oppressed. The few who had land sold it to the rich. The black inhabitants were totally excluded from the commercial processes and activities. Even

the region's stores were owned and run by white immigrants from other regions of the country.

North of Cauca and its Present Conditions

The Zone

The flatlands of the north of Cauca are mainly used for the cultivation of sugar cane. Sugar cane covers around 45000 hectares of this zone's land. The land is controlled by three big sugar cane industries. Another 20000 hectares are dedicated to pasture for cattle. About 5000 hectares are planted with sorghum or soybean on medium size farms. The remaining 10000 hectares belong to a group of about 5000 families who live in the zone. These families generally use one hectare for the cultivation of permanent crops such as coffee, cacao, plantain, and some fruit trees, in what is known as the traditional "finca." The other hectare is used for the production of non-permanent crops such as cassava, corn, and soybean. A very small part of the land is left for small animals such as chickens and pigs.

The Population

The family unit consists of six or seven members. This usually includes of five or six persons from the nuclear

family and one or two from the extended family. The additional member could be a grandmother, a grandfather, or a nephew or niece. The father is usually in charge of the farm. The mother combines her domestic activities with animal husbandry. The children eventually participate in some of the agricultural activities. The farm is not the only source of income for the family. The father and the older sons alternate their work between their own farm and the sugar cane industries or the cattle raising ranches of the zone.

The total population of the flat zone of the region is approximately 120,000. The majority of the houses have electrical power. The people's income, however, is relatively low. One specific farm, a "finca" produces around $600.00 per year, and the area that is dedicated to transitory crops produces around $800.00. This low income urges people to migrate to the city in search of better paying jobs.

Forms of Community Organization

The zone is divided into small villages that consist of approximately one hundred families (around 500 or 600 people). These villages that are not very far from one another are known as "veredas." Each village has a political unit known as "Junta de Accion Comunal," community action

junta. This is the community's representative body. The Junta, however, is criticized by many for having become an instrument of the propagandist politics. Presently there is some hope that this may change with the new plans for the decentralization of power around the country. Besides this kind of organization, the extended family continues to have a great amount of economic and social power in the zone.

Services and Infrastructure

The villages that are located on the Panamerican Road that runs south from Cali obviously have more access to services and have better infrastructures. The villages that are away from the road have difficulty with transportation. There are local cars that travel from these villages to the larger centers of the zone. The majority of the villages have access to telephones. These are located in the central telecommunications office of each village. We can, therefore, say that in these villages there is approximately one telephone per 500 inhabitants.

In comparison to the other areas of the region, the northern zone of the Cauca Department has better health services. In each village there exists a health post that is connected with the hospitals that are located in the municipal centers.

The Village School

Each village has a primary school. Each school normally has four or five teachers. The number of students who attend these schools ranges from fifty to a maximum of one hundred. Since almost all villages have their own schools, the majority of the students either come from the community where the school is located or from very close neighboring communities. The teachers who work in a given village school may not live in that particular community, but usually belong to the region. Many of them live in the regions's bigger urban centers (Santander de Quilichao, Puerto Tejada, or Caloto) and commute to their schools daily.

The primary village school functions half day, usually in the mornings. Many of the schools of the region are using an innovative program from the Ministry of Education known as the New School, "Escuela Nueva," Program. This program has been especially developed for the rural areas. It is based on a personalized approach to education and on participatory principles. Students form groups of five or six. The groups sit around small tables, and the students study their booklets at their own pace and with the help of their fellow students. The children who participate in this program are more expressive, read better, and participate more in the school's different activities. The "Escuela Nueva" Program proposes that one teacher can manage children

from different age groups. This cuts back on the number of teachers per school and helps resolve the problem that some remote rural areas have with the availability of teachers.

In spite of the positive aspects of the program, the "Escuela Nueva" has been criticized for not fulfilling its objectives. There are some problems with the availability of materials for the rural areas. The teachers are not well prepared to teach the program. Some teachers reject the program because it makes their work load heavier. In the north of Cauca this program has not been fully adopted. Most of the schools combine the materials from the "Escuela Nueva" with other educational materials, and the number of teachers per school has not yet been cut down.

The villages do not have a secondary school. Students who finish elementary school have to go to the bigger urban centers in order to attend high school. Some students commute everyday from their own community to these towns, while others spend the school week with relatives who live in the town. The urban centers of the region are becoming highly populated. These towns have inadequate services. One of their greatest physical problems is the lack of water and adequate systems for the recollection of garbage.

The youth of the region share many of the problems of other rural youth who are being uprooted. The majority of them end up rotating from schools in the bigger towns to some kind of a temporary job in Cali or in Popayan and back

to their family farms. In spite of the material poverty that is seen in the region, the greatest problem of these youth is not so much the lack of economic resources, but the loss of their identity and their self esteem. The following testimony given by a young woman is an example of the lack of confidence that many youth from the region have in what they are, what they know, and what they do.

> In our land we had a few ducks, but no one knew how to take care of them, so they died. Our neighbor built a wall there. It was so badly built that it fell. We lost our corn this year because our farming techniques are no good. I would like to study so that maybe I can get out of this ignorance. (Arbab, 1991. p. 72)

The Region's Rural Teacher

The reality of the rural teachers who work in the zone, the training they receive, their salaries, and their aspirations have to be studied in relation to the context of the Colombian society.

Training

In Colombia, like in many developing countries, during the past four decades the accelerated demand for education has implied a great need for an increase in the number of teachers. This has led to the expansion of the functioning "Escuelas Normales" (high schools that lead to teaching

certificates), in the number of pedagogical universities, and in the sum of diverse training modules offered to improve the academic level of the existing teachers. In spite of the expansion of the number of teacher training institutions, which in turn has led to a growth in the number of trained Colombian teachers, the country is presently suffering great educational problems. One of the biggest issues the Colombian society is facing is related to the inappropriateness of the training that teachers receive for the country's different socio-economical contexts (Parra: 1986).

Rodrigo Parra Sandoval, a Colombian sociologist who studies the sociological aspect of Colombian education, notes that within the country's two basic socioeconomic contexts: rural and urban, there exists a great variety of economic forms. Within the urban area, Parra makes a distinction between industrialized urbanization and the un-industrialized marginal urban sectors. In the rural areas of the country, he refers to three types of economies: a) small farming economies that produce for self-sufficiency or for the consumption of urban populations, b) commercial economies that produce prime materials for the industry, and c) economies that are based on agricultural exports such as coffee (Parra: 1986a p. 17).

In regard to education, Parra concludes that, in spite of the diverse educational necessities of each one of the

above mentioned sectors, Colombian universities train teachers who can only perform in the more economically advanced sectors. Regions that do not represent industrial economies have no opportunity to express their knowledge or to transmit it to the country's homogenized formal educational system. Parra relates the country's uniform educational curriculum to three historical facts: a) in the history of a country like Colombia with such cultural diversity there has always existed a need for national integration, b) at the same time there exists at the national level a lack of understanding and recognition of the particular regional dynamics, and c) there also has existed a political and economic need to assimilate every diversity into the general programs based on the criteria set by the more economically and politically dynamic sectors (Parra: 1986 p 18).

It is not surprising, therefore, that in Colombia education is considered that instrument which facilitates the integration of the country's diverse identities, a process that in many cases has led to the assimilation of many cultures into the more dominant one. To fulfill such purpose, the country's teachers, no matter what region they come from, receive a unique training in order to transmit a uniform message to all Colombian students. The first law in favor of uniform teaching in the country was passed in the year 1912 (Parra: 1986 p. 21). As a consequence of this law

and similar policies, the country's educational system continues to train one kind of teacher who has difficulty in responding to the needs of a society that, in addition to its cultural differences that are gradually being eliminated by its homogenizing mass media, is suffering the devastating consequences of the uneven economic growth of the past few decades.

Teaching Echelons and Salaries

The Ministry of Education has established fourteen categories for the teaching echelon. The first seven correspond to primary school teachers and the others to secondary teachers. When teachers graduate from a teacher training high school, "escuela normal," they enter the third category. A teacher's raise is usually based on two criteria. One is the years of service and the other is the number of extra courses in which the teacher participates. Depending on the course, they receive credit that adds up to points.

In order to reach the highest category, the teacher must either have a graduate degree or write a book. Within the government's plans for the professionalization of teachers, all teachers should gradually have a university degree. According to the new law of education that was approved in 1993, teachers who are "normalistas," those who

have only attended teacher training high schools, have five years to enter a university. A teacher with a university degree is automatically placed in the seventh category.

Teachers and Politics

There are three ways to nominate a teacher, through the municipality, through the department, or nationally. According to the new law for administrative decentralization, the economic resources will be given to the municipalities, who will also nominate their own teachers. For a teacher to be nominated, they have to define their political affiliation. The teaching candidates are recommended by municipal, departmental, or national politicians. This is why, in many cases, not the best candidates are presented but the ones who have the best political recommendations. The influence of the politicians on teachers is even higher in the most remote areas, whereas in the bigger urban centers academic merits may be more important.

There are temporary and permanent positions for teachers. The person who is nominated on a permanent basis cannot be removed from their job unless they do something terrible. There, however, exist other kinds of positions that are open on a temporary basis. These are also managed by the politicians.

Teachers are affiliated to FECODE, la Federacion Colombiana de Educadores. This is the national syndicate for teachers, which is very strong. They organize teacher strikes and fight for more benefits for teachers. The different departmental federations form the national federation. For example, the last education law that was passed had to be negotiated with FECODE. They control the entrance of other professionals into the national teaching echelon. People who come from other professions, in order to enter the echelon, have to take a number of courses on education and pedagogy.

FECODE particularly fight for the improvement of the teachers' salaries that are considered low. Teachers' salaries range from $150.00 a month in the case of the rural teacher who is at the lowest category to $1000.00, in the case of the teacher who is at the highest level.

This is the reality within which the teachers of the region function. These teachers are either trained in the urban universities of the country or are graduates of the escuelas normales. Although the majority are from the region and from rural families, the education they receive is purely urban. Their aspirations are to move up the teaching echelon either through courses or years of service for better salaries. And, today with the new law of education those who do not have a university degree need to find a way to receive university education.

CHAPTER III

IMAGE OF THE TEACHER IN RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Reviewing the conventional trends of research that are pertinent to this study, there exist two areas, each with its own theoretical framework, where the teacher image has been traditionally addressed. The first is within the field of sociology in the study of established professions and the second is formed by works that, based on the anthropological tradition, are directed towards the study of the school as the core component of the educational institution.

Recently, however, scholars are becoming more aware that, in spite of the initial perspective from which the teacher image is addressed, be it from that of the school, the profession, or social relations, the role of teachers in society and their image should be studied in relation to the social environment in which teachers operate or from society's attitudes towards them. In almost all societies, no matter what their cultural, economic, or political differences, as Linda Dove (1986) states:

> the social environment in which teachers operate influences their educational roles. Society's attitudes towards teachers affect their conduct and status and, in turn, teachers' relationships with society affect society's expectations of them. (p.27)

Thus, in Colombia, like in many other places, the teacher's image is being addressed from more than one perspective. This multi-disciplinary approach to the theme, which has brought historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and educators together, has led to the creation of a rich body of knowledge about the teacher image. From among all the different approaches to this theme, some have touched the teacher image as they have engaged in the evaluation of teaching institutions, and others have looked at the theme in their efforts to historically reconstruct the country's pedagogical practices from the Colonialization Period up to the present (Zuluaga, 1978).

The most pertinent studies to this inquiry, however, are those that have examined the theme as a component of a set of social relations that function in and around educational institutions (Parra, 1978; 1986a; 1986b; 1989). The findings of this last group have particularly demonstrated the need for an inter-disciplinary orientation. These studies show that any work that tackles the question of the teacher's image needs to break away from the limits of one given discipline and from the restricted ranges of concepts such as "the school", "the community", and "the society" to a more holistic approach that uses tools from different disciplines and examines the interrelations that exist among all the different social components.

It is within this inter-disciplinary approach that I have organized the overview of the literature that is relevant to this study under three major themes. The first looks at the relationship between education and development, particularly in rural Latin America. The second is an overview of some questions around teaching as a profession and the role of teachers in society. The third basically focuses on the teacher image in Colombia.

Development and Education in Latin America

In Colombia, like in many other countries that are categorized within the developing world, it is impossible to study the teacher's image without a thorough analysis of the relationship that exists between education and what over the past forty years has been known as development. Most of the national, local, governmental, and private plans and activities of the developing world, which obviously include their plans for education, have been highly influenced by the development and modernization theories of these decades. In most countries, however, education has not only been influenced by the theories of change; it has also been used as a vehicle to promote development.

If we look at the discipline known as development, we can observe that in spite of all that is said and done in this field, it has been difficult for development theorists

and practitioners to create a universal definition for development. Consequently, the research undertaken in the field has suffered from a lack of appropriate levels of analysis. Economists have seen development in terms of application of technology and control of resources; sociologists have been concerned with the process of social differentiation that characterizes a society as it moves forward in its path of development; demographers and students of human population have described modernization in terms of the patterns of settlement that accompany urbanization and the impact on population size; political scientists have concerned themselves with the different aspects of government and nation building (Holsinger, 1985, p.3395).

It is apparent, however, that in spite of the economic, sociological, political, or cultural emphasis that different groups put on development, the majority agree that people should be placed at the core of the process. Those who claim that individuals, who in the long term participate in change processes, be considered the center of development do not negate the importance of social, economic, and political structures. Individuals are considered part of the different processes that are set forth in a country. What specifically links them to the larger patterns of change is the educational system. This includes the school, all its

apparatus, and the nonformal channels through which people learn to become social and productive beings.

Thus, over the past decades, many Third World countries, particularly in Latin America, have sought the improvement of their educational systems. Their plans and activities have been supported both by the almost eternal conviction that education has played and continues to play a crucial role in the progress of mankind and by the distinct development trends advocated by the theorists of the field. Some consider education as the means for the formation of human resources for economic growth. Others follow the early advocates of the theories of modernization (Inkeles, 1974; McClelland, 1969) and view education as a perfect instrument for the modification of attitudes and promotion of change.

In the case of Latin American countries, directing development efforts towards education has implied great changes in the educational structures and content of the school. During the 1960's, with the hope to raise the number and level of the national professionals who would create and pursue the different development plans of each country, almost all Latin American countries copied the North American pattern of academic organization in higher education. The Latin universities, that were criticized as humanistic and pre-scientific centers oriented towards traditional careers, were slowly replaced by the new universities that were to produce a rationalistic elite,

bearer of the values of the industrial society and prepared to undertake development as their enterprise (Florander, 1985, p. 1363).

The policy makers of Latin American countries have also expected the advancements in higher education to lead to the improvement of the quality of their teachers. Over the past decades almost all countries have adopted plans for the establishment of a high number of teacher training programs, the creation of schools in rural and marginal urban sectors, and in the mobilization of great numbers of people to participate in national literacy campaigns (Peresson, Mariño, and Cendales, 1983).

Despite all the actions undertaken to improve the educational systems of these countries, the reality of the Latin American school is still different from its theoretical image. Education in most countries fails to take into account the socio-cultural diversity of each society. It only prepares teachers for one sector, the modern urban sector. In the majority of these countries, therefore, there exists no rural education. Rural students study text-books and interact with teachers who are completely foreign to their rural reality. Even teachers from rural backgrounds prefer to teach in urban areas where they may receive more administrative support from the government and can have more comfortable lives (Parra: 1989).

Educational conditions, therefore, are far from favorable in most countries. In spite of the increase in the number of teacher training programs, in most places, specifically, in the rural areas, the number of teachers per school is considerably low. In Peru, for example, theoretically, there exists one teacher for a group of 35 children, and 4 teachers per each educational center. In reality, however, many Peruvian schools have sixty students per classroom, and half of the country's rural schools only have one teacher. The schooling of many of these teachers surpasses that of the students only by one or two years (Tovar, 1989). In Colombia, statistics from the Ministry of Education show that there are 27,212 primary and secondary schools in the rural areas, 1,590,576 students, and 61,000 teachers. Nonetheless, very few children from the rural areas complete five years of primary school. 12.3% of the children between ages 6-12 do not attend school. From every 100 children who are in first grade, 20 are repeating the year (MEN, 1987, p. 3).

The Latin American Rural World

To know the Latin American rural teacher requires some understanding of the rural world in which this teacher moves. The following characteristics shared by most rural Latin American populations provide us with some

understanding of this general environment. Most communities give importance to the participation of children in agriculture, which means that children, very early in their lives, learn to work and to sustain themselves. Many are in charge of domestic animals when they are around three years old. When they turn five, they directly participate in agriculture or help their mothers in domestic chores. A seven or eight year old male child begins to make money by working for his neighbors (Borsotti, 1984).

For many indigenous populations learning Spanish is a traumatic experience. Children usually speak no Spanish until they enter school. In the school they are introduced to a new language that implies a new way of perceiving the world and of relating to others. Young indigenous children are often scolded and punished for speaking their mother tongue at school, for all children are expected to speak Spanish at all times (Yanez, 1987).

Thus, the school is the point where two completely different cultures clash, and the rural child is the one who suffers the consequences of this traumatic encounter. The school and its main agent, the teacher, educated under a modern perception, see the world differently from children and their parents. Time, work, and learning, have different meanings for each culture. For the indigenous, the individual is part of a whole which includes both the community and nature, and for the modern each person is a

separate being who has to advance in life through his/her own hard work.

Consequently, the child's culture and that which permeates the modern school each have different perceptions of children and what they are supposed to do. The school considers the child a student whose only responsibility is to study. According to the child's parents and their culture, children have many obligations and studying is only one of them. The difference between these perceptions is responsible for the disparity that exists between the reality of rural children and the conditions, expectations, and possibilities of a school created for a completely different social, economic, and cultural context.

In addition to this gap, there exists a disarticulation between the reasons for which rural parents send their children to school and the goals of education. For rural parents, sending children to school implies great effort. Although most parents do not pay for the education of their children, school is not free. School means that children no longer produce economically for the family's sustenance. It also means books, uniforms, and shoes. Unlike urban students, the rural child is not sent to school to learn a useful occupation, to cause less trouble at home, to stay away from bad friends, to be aware of laziness, or to finally get to the university. In most rural areas parents make great efforts and send their children to school so that

they can learn basic reading and writing skills. They, therefore, do not stimulate their children to learn anything more than these basic skills, and often find no use in obliging them to assist school when the child has other more important obligations at home (Borsotti, 1984, p. 82).

In spite of these disparities and gaps, education is highly valued and demanded by the rural populations. The following are some of the possible reasons for such demand:

a. For the rural populations, formal education in itself is an end. The Aimara farmer of the highlands of Bolivia, for example, desires that his child be educated because it is always good to have some kind of formal education. Education is also important because it means preparation for an urban job since agriculture as a profession is providing the population with fewer possibilities (Borsotti, 1984, p. 85).

b. For rural parents, formal education is a source of prestige. It is a path towards more status and more possibilities for the family. Prestige, of course, comes from some kind of linkage to the outside world, and one of the best ways to make connections with this world is through education (Tovar, 1989).

c. Formal education is a way to integrate into the urban world, which in most cases is not only synonymous with development and progress but also with civilization. The rural families believe that the school will provide their

children with sufficient knowledge about the nation and its political and economic structures so that they can actively participate in the country's economic processes. This gives them self-confidence and self-esteem, something that the rural populations have lost during the past years (Parra, 1989).

The Rural Teacher

Although there is no particular prototype for the Latin American rural teacher, a study undertaken by UNESCO in 1977 states the following characteristics as common denominators for the region's rural teachers. The majority of the region's rural teachers are women. A high percentage of these teachers are older than 35 years and have worked over 15 years. These teachers are usually less receptive to change than the fewer younger ones who respond positively to educational innovations. Rural teachers come from the middle and lower levels of the middle class. Their fathers are usually small or medium size property holders either in the urban or rural centers, or low employees of the public or private sector (Parra, 1978; Rivero, 1979).

The Latin American rural teacher's work market is mostly defined by the government. Teachers who rank higher in the teaching echelon are evenly distributed in the urban and rural areas, whereas the majority of those who belong to

more inferior categories are placed in the rural areas. In some countries all teachers have to begin their work in the rural areas, a law that shows that they would not be willing to do so otherwise.

Frequently the aspirations of the teachers are much higher than continuing to teach in the rural primary schools. Many wish to work in middle or high schools of the urban areas (Parra, 1986). Such aspirations and attitudes cannot be separated from the following physical and economic conditions of the rural teachers: (a) they receive low salaries, a reality that impels them to search for other jobs; (b) in most countries the non-existence of a regular and objective regime that promotes, names, and qualifies the teachers is very apparent; (c) rural teachers have very little participation in educational orientation and educational reforms; (d) there is an absence of any kind of reward for innovation in education and a lack of liberty for the teacher's behavior; (e) there exists an incongruence between a weak and stereotyped professional formation and the complexity of the educational and social tasks that need to be undertaken in the rural area (Borsotti, 1984, p. 130).

Teaching as a Profession and the Teacher's Role in Society

The literature that examines teaching as a profession, one way or another, touches different aspects and areas that

form part of and at the same time influence teaching. Authors examine the role of teachers in society, their position, their social and economic status, and the way they perceive themselves and are perceived by others. In many cases, in descriptions of the teachers' position in society the word "status" replaces the concept of "image" used in this study. Status refers to the way teachers are perceived by society in relation to other professions, a perception that is greatly linked to the economic possibilities that the profession offers.

Within this general literature, there exists a long discussion about the legitimacy of teaching as a profession. According to Olive Banks (1968), if the criteria that define professions are applied to teachers, no group of teachers except for university professors can be said to have a profession. These criteria are a long period of specialized training, a defined field of knowledge, a set of ethical principles, and control over entry and degree of autonomy in the practice of the profession. According to Banks the criteria that is most difficult to apply to teachers is that which is related to the high degree of self determination. Teachers, she argues, particularly in the United States have very little control over many aspects of educational policy.

Linda Dove (1986) questions the characterization of doctors and lawyers as professionals according to these criteria. "Whilst they are certainly specialists," she

writes, "it is not the case that their working practice is based solely, or even securely, on guidelines derived from research and theory" (p.109). In spite of her opposition to such characterization, she affirms that

> at present, the practice of teaching is based as much on rule of thumb, working experience, common sense and guesswork as on research-based theoretical knowledge. Many teachers have no training at all, let alone long periods of high level training. (p. 110)

Dove, therefore, addresses questions related to the need for teachers seeking a model for professionalisation in the older professions? She, however, believes that under the contemporary socioeconomic conditions teachers cannot hope to attain the autonomy and the high social status and incomes of doctors and lawyers. She also emphasizes that

> teaching is unlike the service rendered when a doctor treats a wound or a lawyer solves a case. These professionals provide a service but do not share their specialist knowledge. They do not have to engage in any direct relationship with the client as a person. Even a psychiatrist is only concerned with treating specific conditions. Teachers, in contrast, have to be concerned with enabling learners to develop to their full potential as human beings. Their ultimate aim is to pass on their specialist understanding and skills and to teach people how to learn. (p. 111)

This observation for Dove, however, does not imply that teachers are born and not made, nor that they do not need a theoretically-based training. Dove questions the criticisms made by people like Illich against professionalisation as "disabling" and a means for monopolizing knowledge by

specialists (Illich, 1971), Dove proposes that full professionalisation be "the goal which governments and teachers themselves jointly pursue, as fast and far as is possible within the cost constraints." For her, this "is an important goal. Failure to move forward is to prejudice the quality of teaching and learning in modern education systems" (p. 108).

In spite of the arguments presented by people like Dove in support of professionalisation, the criticisms of Illich continue to influence many lines of thought. For Illich (1971) the teacher's professionalisation does nothing but reinforce the school's oppressive system (p. 46). His proposition to de-school society also implies a big change in the role of teachers and their conventional image as custodian, as moralist, and as therapist (p. 45). He explains his objections to the teacher's professionalized role in the following manner:

> The safeguards of individual freedom are all canceled in the dealings of a teacher with his pupil. When the school-teacher fuses in his person the functions of judge, ideologue, and doctor, the fundamental style of society is perverted by the very process which should prepare for life. A teacher who combines these three powers contributes to the warping of the child....(p.45)

In addition to these kinds of discussions about professionalization, there exists recent evidence about the relationship between professionalization, education, and teacher status. Research undertaken in the United States

shows that although over the past years North American teachers have reached higher educational levels, their status has not risen, for the educational level of other professions has also risen considerably. Teachers have been able to maintain their status, but have not necessarily improved it. It is also clear that many attempts towards the professionalisation of teachers have not led to more autonomy over their profession, more self determination, or control over their jobs during the past decades (Apple, 1989; Giroux, 1983).

Thus the ambiguity to which Banks referred in the 1960's is present in the role, image, and position of teachers in modern North American society. This ambiguity, according to her, rises from the attempt to bring unity to a profession, which has in the past been divided in terms of function, social origin (teacher of the rich or of the poor), qualifications, and experience, and becomes stronger as teaching is compared to other better paid and more autonomous professions, a comparison that brings down the status of the teacher, and contributes to a growing confusion over the institutionalized teaching role (Banks,1968). Some, however, claim that this ambivalence is highly related to the teacher's role in society, which in itself is a vague and ambivalent concept. This proposition is also found in the words of Provenzo et al. (1981) who write:

> It would appear that the conception of teaching as a profession in its own right is unclear. This lack of clarity (meaning) in both the profession and the [educational] system may be a significant factor in the difficulty many teachers have in finding for themselves a clear role or place in the system. The profession is unclear as to the authority, responsibility, and freedom teachers have when they teach, while the system is unclear as to what authority, responsibility, freedom society has given it. (p. 569)

Teacher Image, in Relation to Roles

The image that exists of teachers, be it their self-image or the picture others hold of them is a complex concept that consists of the configuration and interaction of various elements. Gertrude McPherson (1972), in her ethnographic study of a small rural community school in New England, the Adams school, and its teachers, proposes that the teacher's self-image and the community's perception of teachers be studied in term of the role teachers play in society. The teacher's role consists of and is influenced by different elements, one of which is the role-set. This includes role expectations and role anticipations. The concept of role sets has been best elaborated in the sociological works of Robert Merton (Merton, 1957). According to him the role set is "that complement of role relationships which persons have by virtue of occupying a particular social status" (p. 369). McPherson uses this framework to examine the role set of teachers in terms of the relationships they have with numerous role partners,

their expectations of the teacher, and the teacher's expectations of these partners and of herself. The role-set is no unified, smoothly functioning guide for performance, but rather a cluster of changing, often conflicting pressures to which teachers must try to adapt (McPherson, 1972, p.9). She thus proposes that in order to understand teaching as a profession, it is important to focus on these conflicting pressures, their causes, and the ways in which the teacher handles them. Role expectation is what the teacher is expected to do, or what she should do. Role anticipation is what she thinks she is going to do. The teacher's role behavior can either coincide with her role anticipation or role expectation (p.9).

A person's final image is constructed through a process of role learning that goes through a fluid and changing pattern. This includes the modification of expectations through contact with reality, the adaptation of personality to status and status to personality, and the pressure that comes from conflicting expectations. One factor, of course, that influences the shifting between idealistic and realistic expectations is the operation of stereotypes or rigid anticipants (Newcomb, 1950), what one predicts about a person as an occupant of a position. For a person to play any role over time requires more than simple imitation. As the role is learned and played, it becomes to some degree part of the person, and the person acts in accordance with

its internalized definitions and meanings. Thus, the teacher's picture of herself is a combination of expectations, anticipations, obligations, and rights. This picture, however, goes through constant change as the person passes through different experiences and conditions (McPherson, 1972, p. 10).

Although the teachers' role expectations and obligations vary to a certain degree from one culture to another, there exists a series of obligations and expectations, many of which come from past traditions, that are shared by many cultures. One of these expectations, for example, has to do with the purpose of teaching. In many parts of the world to teach is almost synonymous with to serve. The purpose of teaching, unlike many other professions, is not merely to make a living, but to serve society by serving its future generations. In many countries, thus, the image of teachers is equivalent to that of "martyred public servants" (McPherson, 1972 p. 30), and one of the greatest actual problems of teaching has to do with the social and economic changes that are affecting this image.

In relation to role sets and social change, it is pertinent to look at Dove's work (1986) about the present position of teachers in the context of social change. Dove affirms that one of the traditional role expectations of teachers has been to introduce new values, ideas, and skills

to society. She refers to the early days of Islam and Christianity where school-teachers preached new religion values and were often responsible for converting whole communities (p. 27). She states that

> teachers are limited, in terms of their effectiveness in introducing innovations in schools, by society's readiness to accept them. And society's readiness is in turn, determined by its perceptions of the relevance and usefulness of the changes to its members." (p. 29)

According to Dove, however, "society today is ambiguous in its attitude towards teachers. It expects them to be agents of both tradition and change" (p. 29). Such ambiguous expectations held by society for its teachers evidently create certain incongruencies in the definition of the teacher's role. Modern teachers are expected to create a disciplinary climate to preserve traditions while, at the same time, they have to introduce their children to new skills that will enable them to find good modern jobs.

Another change that Dove perceives in the role that teachers play in society, and their particular function in social change, has to do with the emergence of new sources of assistance in the communities. "Teachers are no longer the sole source of assistance to the community since there are many other educated people and social welfare agencies to which to turn" (p. 36). For her, this kind of change in the teacher's role also implies that teachers are less inclined to participate in politics, which according to Dove

means that "the days of the entrepreneurial teacher politician are probably gone" (p. 36).

She also mentions a change that is being observed around the world in regard to the teacher's relationship to the community. Most teachers are strangers to the communities where they are posted; this unfamiliarity with the local communities inhibits them from participating in the life of the community and provokes local criticism. She even mentions how the teacher's strangeness to the community has provoked many to call teachers "tourists," who visit the community every once in a while (p. 39).

Using the case of a typical teacher, Dove demonstrates part of the complex relationship that exists between the teacher and the community. The typical teacher that Dove describes comes from a farming community, and has up to twelve years of schooling and possibly a year of teacher training. He hopes to be a school principal before he retires. Although his salary has improved, he cannot cater to his family's needs.

> When he first became a teacher he was posted far away but after many visits to the local education office he managed to get a transfer home. He has about four miles to walk from his home to the school. During the monsoons the paddy fields become waterlogged. Then he stays at home. He has crops to tend and he coaches the children of the local Union Parishad (Council) Chairman. These supplements to his income are welcome. They help to feed and clothe his eight children and other members of his household who have no paid jobs. (Dove, p. 40)

Dove mentions that although the teacher and his family are under constant surveillance of the community and he is constantly blamed for the performance of the students, he prefers to stay close to home, where he can keep his extra income, not spend extra time and money visiting his family, and avoid having to learn another local dialect.

The question, therefore, that Dove raises is whether with all these changes in the teacher's role set which includes its expectations, anticipations, and obligations, the status of teachers has risen or fallen in society. She defines status in the restricted sense of the esteem, respect or honor in which people are held by others. This, she says, depends partly on the position a person has in society and partly on their relationships in the community in which they work.

For Dove, teachers today may derive their status in three different ways. First, some teachers combine teaching with their work as priests, Gurus, and religious leaders and thus derive their status from the worth which society places on the religious values which they represent. Second, there are those who at one point entered politics and brought positive changes to their communities, and therefore, managed to gain high status in society. And third, teachers who participate in community activities are much more respected than those who separate themselves from the community (Dove, 1986,p. 42).

The previous discussions about role sets, role expectations, and anticipations, and their relationship with status lead us to a complex theme that many refer to as the image of a profession. It is this image that gives a profession "its social meaning, dignifies it, and gives it a code of conduct within which its specific activities are developed" (Parra Sandoval, 1986, p. 116). This image, however, is much stronger in those professions that by their nature play key roles in the social division of work and that bring with themselves the notion of service to the society. Professions that fall within this category include the priesthood, military careers, medicine, and teaching. These kinds of professions promote an ideal ethical image that is strongly internalized by its members as the central ideological pillar of the profession. It is the image that highly influences both the moral conduct of the professionals affiliated to the career and the results of their work.

It is, obviously, difficult to study a profession's image without a series of theoretical and methodological tools. One of these tools for approximating the teacher's image used by different scholars has precisely been the study of role sets and expectations, a theme we previously discussed. The concept of image can also be studied by

looking at a combination of symbols, myths, and beliefs that exist within a people's tradition. There of course exists a strong and dynamic relationship between the two because, like all social phenomena, role expectations are clearly influenced by images that come from a people's collective memory and traditions, while a people's culture is continuously affected by the changes that take place in its role sets.

One way to approach the teacher image is through the study of the motifs, images, and representations identified through the dreams, expectations, and ideas of modern men and women. One example of such approximation is the study undertaken by Robert Bullough and his colleagues (1991). This group of researchers in their book Emerging as a Teacher suggests that one way to gain insight into the meanings that teachers form of themselves and their profession is to explore and analyze the metaphors, similes, and the images they use to explain their experiences. This recommendation is partly based on the growing recognition that human thought is primarily metaphorical. These authors borrow this idea from Lakoff and Johnson (1980), who propose that, on the one hand, metaphors are used by human beings in the search for commonality of experiences when they speak to other people, and, on the other hand, they are sought by each individual to make coherent his/her past and present

activities, dreams, and hopes and goals. According to Lakoff and Johnson, therefore,

> a large part of self-understanding is the search or appropriate metaphors that make sense of our lives. Self-understanding requires un-ending negotiation and re-negotiation of the meanings of your experiences to yourself...It involves the constant construction of new coherences in your life, coherences that give new meaning to old experiences. (Bullough, 1991, p.7)

Such approaches, however, can be expanded if they are combined with another way of looking at metaphors and symbols, namely the examination of a people's collective myths and stories. This second area is a territory that requires more examination. Scholars such as Jung, Eliade, and Henderson, within their explorations into ancient myths and symbols, have looked at images and motifs such as the hostile brethren (Jung, 1964 p.58), the hero and rescuer, and many others (Jung, 1964, p. 61).

There is still, however, a great deal that can be learned from studying the image of the educator and its origins and myths. Although there exist, within the literature that looks at the teacher image, certain allusions to the connection between the sacred image of the teacher and that of Christ as a Divine Educator, or between the teacher and early Christian apostles (Tezanos, 1986; Lortie, 1975), no study has examined these relationships in depth. This whole area of exploration into the collective myths and images related to the teacher that exist in the

unconscious of the modern man and woman, specifically in the case of the rural areas, is open for future studies.

Teacher Image in Colombia

In Colombia there is a series of studies that have directly looked at the question of the "image of the teacher." (Parra, 1986a, 1986b, 1989; Vera Gil & Parra, 1989; Baacke, 1985; Tezanos, 1986) This kind of research that has been pioneered in the country has the general purpose of exploring new perspectives for sociological research in education. By examining the conceptual category of the teacher image and its different dimensions in rural communities, these studies have created some theoretical and methodological paths for more indepth research on teacher-student, and teacher-community relationships.

These studies all propose that, in order to study the teaching profession, we have to make reference to the way teachers perceive themselves and the image that is culturally and socially assigned to them. It is clear that during the past years the image of the teaching profession has gone through certain changes. The growing urbanization processes, the crisis in the training of teachers, and the deterioration of the quality of education have led to the loss of the teacher's status (Baacke, 1985). In the past the small village teacher was a figure whom people consulted and

respected intellectually. The teachers considered themselves like apostles who shared their practice with the priest. Nonetheless, the struggles of teacher unions, the contractual perception that teachers have come to have of their job, and the massification of education have contributed to the creation of a new image, that of the teacher as a wage worker (Vera Gil & Parra, 1989).

Today, therefore, in Colombia the teacher image seems to fluctuate between two poles: one which represents a mystical and traditional image of teachers as community leaders who dedicate themselves to service, and who do not expect to be rewarded for this. This image has also been called a "sacred image" as opposed to the modern "secular image." A sacred perception of a profession emphasizes the altruistic function of teaching as a service that is undertaken as a mission that permeates the person's whole life. This kind of an image gives a very high status to teaching, one which is very similar to that of the priesthood.

The secular image defines teaching as a professional occupation with specific obligations. Its limits, however, do not surpass the classroom. The secular image reduces the integrated notion of the profession to the role of teachers as professionals with defined working hours who expect to be paid for all the hours that they work. The perception that today's teachers have of themselves, therefore, can be

initially explored by observing the point at which they find themselves in the possible transition between the sacred and the secular (Parra Sandoval, 1986b).

The sacred image of the teacher comes from the traditions of a pre-industrial Colombian society, where the teacher, based on the country's socioeconomic conditions, could maintain the role of a community leader. The rapid economic and industrial growth of the country and the strong tendencies towards urbanization have contributed to the creation of a gap between the teacher's knowledge, image, and the practice of teaching. The following are some examples of the kind of social change that the Colombian society is going through and the effects on teachers as described by Parra Sandoval (1986a).

(a) The nature of the different national development processes has been such that it has led to a rapid process of urbanization, which has greatly influenced the relationship between the teacher and the community in all sectors of the society. It is almost impossible for the teacher to be a community leader in the marginal urban areas of the country where there exist mixed, ambiguous, and contradictory feelings towards the school as an institution. These feelings, of course, mostly manifest themselves in attitudes of rejection towards the teacher and the school. Meanwhile, in the rural areas, being a community leader has lost its traditional meaning and significance as local and

traditional knowledge is constantly being replaced by modern knowledge and technology.

(b) Within the social change processes that permeate Colombia, the appearance and expansion of economic or social institutions has affected the teacher's image. The teacher can no longer be considered one of the few people with the adequate knowledge and capacity to respond to the needs of the community. Different institutions (development organizations, cooperatives, agricultural extension programs, political organizations) have come to replace the teacher in the communities.

(c) The expansion in teaching methodologies and techniques both in formal and non-formal education has led to a substantial change in the role of the teacher. This change has mostly affected the teacher/student relationship, in the case of correspondence education programs, and the teacher/community relationship, in the case of non-formal education programs.

Today, as a result of reflections on the essence of teaching, pedagogical movements around the country are trying to replace the modern image of the teacher as wage worker and its traditional image as an apostle by that of a "worker for culture." It seems that in spite of the emergence of the more recent images, the image of the teacher as an apostle is the one that persists the most. This is supported by a series of studies undertaken by

Tezanos, Vera Gil and Fransisco Parra. The two latter researchers have interviewed 190 pre-school, primary, and secondary teachers in schools in an urban area in the Department of Huila. These teachers were asked questions in regards to their self image, the reality of their job, and aspects related to their training. 68 percent of the interviewees confirmed the image of the apostle, 21.7 percent said that the teacher was perceived as a wage worker, and 10.3 percent spoke of the teacher as a cultural worker (Vera Gil & Parra, 1989, p. 14).

The researchers conclude that many teachers have a general perception of themselves as guides, friends, instructors, and people who give specific orientations. The authors, however, note that the majority of the teachers who were interviewed had not reflected on their position and their image as much as they should have. They thus propose that the theme of teacher's image be one of the recurring themes in short or long term teaching training programs.

Other researchers also state that in spite of all the unpleasant social and economic conditions of teaching, the sacred image of the teacher continues to permeate the profession. Teaching appears with a magical-religious halo which seems to be totally separate from the real conditions of teaching praxis (Tezanos, 1986). It is a magical image because no one can explain or rationalize its existence, and it is religious because it is deeply connected to the

concept of the teacher as an apostle. This religious source of teaching can be traced back to the Christian perception of Christ as the great teacher. Teaching has been a very honorable profession within the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, those who define their work in terms of an expression of their religion connect it with their deep personal beliefs. This is what gives teaching its basic force (Lortie, p. 1975).

According to Tezanos (1986), however, the reality of teaching practices shows that in spite of the sacred, magical, and religious halo that surrounds the profession, the present economic and social conditions have turned it into a profession that is only used as a means to enter better paying and more prestigious jobs. Teacher training high-schools are perfect programs for those whose family resources do not permit them to enter the university. Individuals receive a degree with which they can work as a teacher while they gain some money to pay for a better education (p.68).

Although the Colombian society continues to hold high expectations for its teachers, certain changes in the society have greatly influenced the teacher's role behavior and role anticipation and are affecting the modern teacher's job expectation. Colombian teachers, therefore, are going through a difficult period of making adjustments between their traditional role expectations and their actual role

behavior, which is a consequence of their social and economic possibilities. This is how they are participating in the creation of a new image of the modern Colombian teacher.

Another difficulty faced by Colombian teachers is related to maintaining a balance between the two basic objectives of their profession: an efficient transmission of knowledge, and the formation of the child as a good citizen. Although both objectives play an important role in the formation of the teacher's self image, and in their minds the two are not separate from each other, teachers consider the second as the central objective of teaching. They, thus, try to maintain a mutual interaction between the two purposes of teaching which prevents them from having to face conflictive situations (Parra, 1986b).

The relationship between teacher's image and the training they receive, the curriculum, and the way teachers interact with their students is quite strong. The teacher image, therefore, is influenced both by a series of internal and external factors. The external factors have to do with the conditions of training and teaching whereas the internal ones are related to the performance of teachers. Myriam Henao, in her article titled "towards the formation of an academic culture" (1991) speaks of a deterioration and an isolation in the school culture and teacher image. This she attributes to two factors: the teacher and the curriculum.

In the case of the curriculum, she claims that although the recent curricular reforms have focussed on improving the pedagogic and methodological aspects of teaching, no significant improvement can be observed in the content of education. These programs, according to Henao, show inconsistencies that range from basic errors in presenting certain themes to erroneous understanding of scientific concepts. On the other hand, she notes that it has been difficult to put any innovative program into practice. This she attributes to administrative, financial, technical, and academic obstacles.

According to Henao, the other internal factor that influences the deterioration of the teacher's image is the teacher's lack of initiative. This is observed in the teachers' relationship with children, and their lack of interest in learning. Henao also relates this to too much dependency on the curriculum which is provided from above. She writes:

> The teacher's social image and his self-image have deteriorated; the teacher appears as a professional with no identity; and there exists a certain fatalism associated with the lack of capacity to change education that contributes to this. Meanwhile, the introduction of new forms of temporal contracting with no social benefits and low professional requisites contribute to the deterioration of the teacher's image. (p.16)

Henao suggests that in order to recuperate the teacher's image, identity, and position in society, the teacher's work needs to be centered on its pedagogical

aspect. This includes the establishment of a series of proceedings for the selection of those who apply to the universities in order to assure the participation of students with a teaching vocation (p.18).

School Ethnography

One of the most efficient methodological tools for studying schools and their teachers is ethnography. There, of course, exists more than one ethnographic approach to the study of schools. Some ethnographic studies of schools can be placed within the camp known as "micro-ethnography" (Tezanos, 1981). Here the ethnographer observes the verbal or non-verbal interactions that occur within the classroom. The interpretation of the recorded information in these studies is usually done under the theoretical matrix of socio-linguistics. The basic assumption that underlies these studies is that culture determines the different communicational styles of everyday life. In cases where teachers and students come from different cultural contexts, a whole series of communicational interferences inhibit communication. Interpretations done within such theoretical grounds have to a certain degree explained the failure of schools in some economically marginal social groups (Rist, 1978; Bernstein, 1971).

Such ethnographic studies have, on one hand, contributed to the understanding of the school as an instrument for the transmission of cultural values, and on the other hand, indicated that quantitative data on school efficiency, teacher performance, and student learning does not describe effectively the school and the different relationships that construct it. In spite of all the contributions of micro-ethnographic studies, many propose that ethnographic research that is only directed towards the study of the school in itself is not sufficient. Schools should be studied in relation to the general social context within which they function, for the root causes for what goes on in the classroom can only be found in the more general context of the society (Ogbu, 1980; Parra Sandoval, 1986a; 1986b).

Ethnographic studies that look at the context of education have specifically taken into account the other social institutions to which the school is linked. They have intended to show and interpret how more global social structures including beliefs and values relate to the conduct of both teachers and students. These studies describe models for interaction between teachers and students, the types of skills and knowledge that the students acquire in the school, and the informal socialization that occurs in the school and reinforces the social origin of the students. Their purpose, therefore, is

to describe and interpret the models of transmission of culture in structural terms. Ogbu (1980) proposes the integration of micro and macro ethnography into what he calls "ecological-cultural." This kind of studies according to him should apply to a school system the same categories used for studying a community: ecological environment, language, economy, social organization, political organization, system of beliefs, folklore, etc.

In the case of Colombia, Parra Sandoval (1986b) proposes the following five levels of analysis, that integrate these different approaches, for the study of the school:

1. From a sociological point of view, the starting point for studying the school is through an institutional analysis. Within this context the different functions of the Colombian school can be studied in terms of its different characteristics. These are marked by regional differences that imply the coexistence of distinct forms of production and the establishment of interregional linkages marked by an unequal interchange.

2. The second is a contextual analysis, in which the Colombian society should be seen in its diversity where simple divisions between urban and rural should not be considered sufficient. Within the urban areas there exist different contexts such as industrialized and un-industrialized urbanization. Such characteristics indicate

the existence of urban economies that are highly differentiated in terms of the division of work, the way in which their inhabitants integrate in predominant forms of production and the role that education plays in these activities.

3. The third viewpoint from which the school can be analyzed is in relation to the cultural capital. The social distribution of knowledge, expressed in inequality, which is conditioned by the social context that it brings and by the social origin of the individuals, is defined in terms of cultural capital. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron bring this concept into their analyses of the school pedagogy and into the cultural reproduction. According to them cultural capital takes three forms: (a) incorporation of the individual through the habits and through the pedagogical action and the socialization process; (b) objectified in terms of cultural goods, books, magazines, machines that imply not only knowing how to use the cultural objects but also to buy them; (c)institutionalized through titles and grades (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, p. 75).

In the case of the rural school, however, it is important to note that both from the point of view of instruction and formation it is only rural because of its physical location. Its contents, its methodology, and the education of the teacher are all urban. They all proceed

from an economic, social, and cultural reality that is different from the reality of the rural world.

4. The fourth vantage point is language and its relationship with the construction of social reality. Language in itself is cultural capital and is learned in the school. It turns into an element that links children to a larger society and that differentiates them from their community and the process of primary socialization. Bourdieu, Passeron, Peter Berger and Basil Bernstein give great importance to language within such processes with its double nature as a channel for socialization and for the transmission of contents. Bernstein affirms that when a child learns a language, or learns the codes that determine his/her verbal acts, s/he learns simultaneously the demands of the social structure in which s/he exists (Bernstein, 1975, p. 65).

Using these different levels of analysis, researchers can gain a better understanding of the teacher's image and the way they conceive their pedagogical practice. Parra Sandoval's own ethnographic research undertaken in two rural schools describes two types of teachers who portray two general images. These he identifies as the traditional and the modern.

The two schools chosen for his study were far from urban areas and only offered the first three years of elementary school. The traditional teacher, as defined by

Parra and personified by the teacher whom he describes, is immersed in her work, knows and understands all the members of the community, knows their problems, and identifies with them. The center of the professionalized teacher's activity, however, is the classroom. This teacher pays a lot of attention to the cognitive learning of the students and establishes minimum relationship with the community. S/he conceives knowledge as something absolute that cannot be changed. This teacher tends to hold more of an authoritarian attitude towards the students than the teacher who understands the relativity of knowledge and the different forms of social organization (Parra, 1986b).

Sandoval's cases demonstrate some of the problems that exist around the professionalization of teachers. Although the professionalized teacher is better trained and is prepared with educational theory and the pedagogical tools, she has learned to measure everything in terms of time and money. This teacher, therefore, is not a very effective teacher, for she is willing to give much less to her students and her community.

These studies also demonstrate that almost all teachers, even those who can be categorized as professionalized, are constantly becoming more conscious of the importance of expanding their classroom activities to the students' families. They add presentations on nutrition and health, family relationships, and sex education to their

teaching programs. As teachers become more aware of such needs, they also become more conscious of their own shortcomings and lack of training in each of these areas, an awareness that leads to distinct attitudes in different teachers. Some teachers tend to reinforce the traditional mystical image of the teachers, as others show different grades of professional apathy. These contradictions, on one hand, reinforce the teachers' frustrations, and on the other hand, strengthen their "sacred" and "traditional" image (Parra, 1986, p. 119).

Parallel to the cycle that perpetuates teachers' low self image and society's perception of them, Parra Sandoval identified in the rural areas an attitude that is shared by those who in one way or another are in contact with schools: parents, teachers, and community members. This attitude he has called "the ideology of sacrifice" (Parra, 1986b). Teachers feel that by having agreed to work in rural areas where working conditions are not as favorable as the urban centers, they are constantly making economic and spiritual sacrifices; Parents believe that they are poor rural inhabitants who can hardly make enough money to survive. Sending their children to school, they feel, implies great economic sacrifices for them. Other community members who are involved in school activities think that dedicating time to the community school means sacrificing their personal needs. Working in an environment where every single step

taken towards the implementation of a plan or the accomplishment of a goal holds the connotation of "sacrifice" is obviously not a pleasant experience for teachers, parents, or students.

Thus, many researchers, teachers, and community members claim that the biggest challenge today's teachers face is to surpass the obstacles of teaching in order to maintain the teacher's traditional sacred image (Parra: 1989). This, however, seems to be a struggle that as Martinez Boom et al. state is part of the Colombian teacher's history. These authors make a historical journey into the life of a simple teacher whose advertisement for work they find in the newspaper archives in Bogota. They, thus, suggest that the Colombian teacher has always had economic problems and a low status in the society. For them, the only thing that has kept this teacher alive has been the illusion of being an intellectual who has the moral obligation to educate (Martinez Boom et. al, 1989).

Ethnographic Studies of Schools within Different Colombian Contexts

In order to grasp some understanding of the different contexts within which rural schools and teachers function and to gain some knowledge of the different factors that affect the rural teachers in Colombia, I close this chapter

with a few ethnographic descriptions undertaken by different researchers and compiled in a book with the title of Escuela Violenta (Parra et al., 1992).

The Story of Adriana, Rural Teacher, in Guerilla Zone. Colombia is a vast country with different cultures, ecological settings, and socio-economic and political conditions. Certain mountainous rural zones of the country are presently dominated by the guerilla forces. In these areas the local communities have developed a whole series of coping mechanisms in order to survive between the demands of the guerillas and the exigencies of the military forces. The rural school, the students, and the teacher, of course, are also very much affected by this new culture of violence.

An ethnographic study of the school in a guerilla zone allows us to listen to Adriana's story. Reading Adriana's case permits us to see how larger social, economic, and political forces affect the teacher's performance in school and his/her image.

The only job that Adriana can find after receiving her teaching certificate is in a remote and insecure rural area. Adriana, who is desperate for a job, agrees to work in the village without having much information about it. Once she arrives, she realizes that the people who live there are extremely poor, and that the school has been without a teacher for three years. Adriana, thus, has to resolve a

whole series of problems that range from the physical reconstruction of the school to the children's undernourishment and lack of clothes and shoes without much assistance from the parents, who have little confidence in her.

Like many rural teachers, Adriana lives in the village during the week and travels to the town on Fridays in order to attend the university. Although Adriana tries to live up to the expectations that exist for her, be a "good" teacher, show love and affection to her students and help them with their personal problems, and participate in the community activities, Adriana's school cannot be separated from the social, economic, cultural, and political system of the zone.

Adriana describes the school as violent, as a place where all the students' family and community problems are reflected. Most parents gain their living by cutting trees, which is illegal. The trees are cut down during the night, and the children, of course, participate in these activities. These children, who are physically tired from the hard work, live in an environment where everyone yells at everyone, where the mother is beaten by the father, and where they are beaten by both parents. When they come to school, these children bring with them what they experience at home. Adriana explains how the children, who are used to being called names, make fun of her when she treats them

nicely, and how they come to school with so much anger that she has to send some of them out to hit a plantain plant in order to get rid of some of their anger.

And, of course, Adriana tells us how the guerillas do not leave the school out of their activities. Adriana is visited one day by a guerilla commander who sits in her class for the whole day and begins to discuss with her what she teaches and her methodology. She is finally invited to join the guerilla forces because the person considers her a dedicated and good teacher. Adriana's response is negative, an answer that itself brings a whole series of risks. People are found dead every now and then in the area. The students try to protect Adriana by not leaving her alone for a couple of days. Adriana, of course, is not safe anymore because she has had contact with the guerilla. The military may suspect her as a guerilla contact. The community does not support her because they don't know to which side she belongs. The number of Adriana's students goes down from fifty two to seventeen. She has to visit the parents one by one in order to convince them to send their children to school. This is how Adriana works as a rural teacher in this zone (Parra et al., 1992, p.p.73-83).

The Stories of Santiago "Alicorado", Ciceron "Ausentista", And Jorge "Ladron". "Alicorado" (liquored), "Ausentista" (Absent), and "Ladron" (thief) are titles given

to these teachers by the ethnographers because of their attitudes and actions. The three cases show how the behavior of some teachers which results from their lack of morality, does harm to the teacher's image. All three teachers teach in a technical middle school in the Department of Quindio, and unfortunately, in spite of all the knowledge that exists about their behavior, they have been able to survive in the school by manipulating the law, the other teachers, or the community members.

Santiago Alicorado is 56 years old, has a university degree in educational administration, and has taught for 29 years. He comes to school drunk every day, and for a while, he even formed his own drinking group with other teachers. The different school directors have sent him various letters to all of which he has responded cunningly. He accepts some of his errors, but justifies them using the legal and cultural language that protects him. Some teachers worry about his activities since he is destroying the teacher's image in front of others. People may think that all teachers in the school are drunkards like Santiago. Others directly or indirectly support him. The students think that, being their teacher, he should give them the right example, which he obviously is not doing.

Ciceron Ausentista is 37 years old and has been teaching for 15 years. Ciceron continuously misses his classes; from there comes the title of the Absent. One time

he was seriously reproached because of his absenteeism, and he managed to get away by using the support of other teachers. Ciceron's case has been in process ever since, and nothing has been resolved.

Jorge Ladron is 32 years old, and has been teaching for 12 years. He came to occupy his teaching position because of his political contacts. His case is represented by the student who constantly asks Ladron to give back his calculator and finally gives up, other teachers who are tired of reminding Ladron that he owes them money, and students who claim that they have never seen the materials for which he collected money. Jorge's case has also become a cause for the writing of a series of official letters from one official to another, letters which until now have had no effect (Parra et al., 1992, p.p. 124-147).

Conclusions

This rapid overview of the literature related to the teacher image demonstrates the complexity of the theme and alludes to the different angles through which the teacher image can be studied. At the same time, it shows a whole range of possibilities for research that can be undertaken in terms of the teacher's past and present image.

The majority of the Colombian researchers propose that the status of Colombian teachers, both rural and urban, has

deteriorated, a phenomenon which they find related to the loss of the teacher's identity. From among the many different factors that influence and are simultaneously influenced by this loss of identity and the deterioration of the teaching profession, these researchers have emphasized the following general economic, social, cultural, and educational conditions:

1. Colombian educators, like other Latin American teachers have very low salaries. In order to compensate for their low salaries, a great number of them simultaneously with their teaching careers work at other jobs. Many continue their studies in order to rise in the teaching echelon or to achieve better paying jobs. A great majority chose teaching because they have no possibility to enter better paying or more valued careers such as engineering or medicine. These kinds of teachers, of course, do not have the necessary commitment to the profession; teaching is merely an alternative to survive through the present economic crisis. Even in those cases where teaching has been chosen because of the person's love for the profession or for children, teachers, whose low salaries hardly permit them to survive in society, are obliged to look for alternative ways to increase their income.

2. In a world where an individual's social status is highly dependant on their income, teachers, due to their low salaries, have difficulty entering high social circles.

Therefore, not many people with opportunities for other professions choose to become teachers; those who do, teach for a short period while they surpass some crisis or have the chance to adopt a better paid profession.

3. Although Colombia, in comparison to other Latin American countries such as Peru and Bolivia, has greatly accelerated the process of cultural homogenization, there still exist diverse cultures in the different regions of the country. Many Colombian teachers who come from rural sectors are torn throughout their profession between contradictory cultural codes. Trained in urban educational centers and familiarized with modern cultural codes, these teachers live the daily dilemma of choosing between their original cultural values and those promoted by the modern society. Many end up rejecting a great part of their rich cultural heritage in preference for their newly acquired norms. A high percentage of those who work in the rural areas reside in the larger cities. They commute from their urban homes to their work places every day hoping that they can finally find opportunities for better city jobs.

Teachers, therefore, who are expected to be carriers and transmitters of culture, torn between contradictory values, do not know which culture to hold or to transmit, the modern, which in itself is a amalgamation of many cultural codes and values, or the traditional, which has somehow been lost and dissolved in all the different

contacts it has had with the modern ways of knowing, seeing, and acting.

In addition to the above mentioned conditions, many researchers who have particularly looked at the problems of the Colombian rural teacher (Parra, 1986a; 1989b; Tezanos, 1986) find the following factors responsible for the existing low teacher status: the inadequacy and inappropriateness of the country's teacher training programs and the unfamiliarity of the teachers who are trained under these programs with the rural conditions, their lack of motivation and inferior performance in schools, and their poor relationship with other community members.

All these elements, of course, are added to the more universal problem of teaching that is common to many countries: teaching is perceived as an extension of child-care and thus a feminine profession, a fact that does not give it a very high status in most societies that give preference to professions that are undertaken by men (Apple, 1989). These factors have thus created a vicious cycle, where one factor such as inadequate training may lead to another, namely, low motivation, which in turn gives way to poor relationships with the community, all of which directly or indirectly influence the teacher's image. A generalized negative perception of the educator obviously influences the self image of teachers, which consequently affects their performance.

As we have observed, from all the knowledge that is generated around the theme, the most illustrative cases have come from those studies that have focused on the reality of schools and their teachers from the grassroots. It has been precisely the awareness of the existence of such great need for more research of the kind, and the conviction that the question of the rural teacher image has to be studied from the perspective of the local teachers and community members, that have propelled me to examine the rural teacher image from the viewpoint of rural teachers and community members.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE INQUIRY

The Research Approach

The approach used in this inquiry has drawn its principles from what is known as new paradigm research. This approach to research is proposed by people from different fields in the social and behavioral sciences who question the traditional paradigm for social and human studies borrowed from the natural sciences. New paradigm research criticizes the conventional assumption that social reality is factual and can be totally understood and described through the use of certain methodological procedures and tools. It also questions the constant search for causal relationships between different phenomena, which is based on the belief that the classification of facts can only lead to an explication of the phenomena that are being studied through the existence of a sound and well stated hypothesis (Hempel, 1973).

Those who, under the premises of alternative or new paradigm research, criticize the basic assumptions of traditional ways of doing research are trying to stretch the boundaries that define what is done in the name of science. Such approaches attempt to displace behavioral sciences

governed by adherence to methods and standards developed in the natural sciences by "a science of philosophers" (Harland, 1987, p. 92). The purpose of the new approach is to make emerge a "narrative, semiotic, particularistic, self aware" science, and "to reorient and redirect theoretical, methodological and empirical aims and practices" across the human sciences (Van Maanen, 1988, p. 125).

For the new, which borrows many of its premises from the philosophy of the forerunners of critical theory, Horkheimer, Adorno, and Habermas, social phenomena are surrounded by a whole series of events, objects, and ideas that cannot be so easily defined. According to them, neither the determinants nor the dependents of a social phenomenon can be clearly identified. Often, during the different phases of inquiry the researcher may begin to observe some causal relationships that in the long run turn out to be mere appearances.

The purpose of such research, therefore, is to surpass the appearances which are often embedded in our knowledge of the parts and to reach a more profound and holistic understanding of the phenomena. This understanding can only be achieved through a historical construction of the object through a search for the contradictions and identities that exist within what appears and what is at the very essence of the object. This knowledge can only emerge as a critical and

reflexive process is initiated inside the social context of the object that is to be studied (Tezanos, 1986 p. 33).

This conception of new paradigm research leads us to the purpose and use of social inquiries. The purpose of most investigations done under the premises of traditional research has been to generate information that can be added to an accumulated body of knowledge known as science, the content of which is usually available to a very few who belong to this scientific community. The tradition of doing research on human subjects, who never have any access to the results of research, is most visible in a field such as anthropology. Here outside researchers study a community, whose customs are unknown to them, and write and publish the results of their research for others from their own culture to read. In these cases, the local populations who should be the subjects of research, turn into the objects of other people's inquiries.

The advocates of alternative research propose a change in the purpose and use of research. (Reason and Rowan, 1981). Concerned with social injustice and change, those who promote new research propose the kind of inquiry that in the long run leads to some kind of transformation in the lives of the oppressed populations. For them, the purpose of research should be to turn those who have for many ages been the objects of numerous studies into its very subjects by facilitating their participation in the different research

phases. The kind of knowledge that is being generated within this new paradigm should be used for the empowerment of the populations who have been at social, political, or economic disadvantage. This empowerment can be achieved when participants are led to theorize about their worlds, through the initiation of processes of self reflection and critique that enable them to become aware of their own contradictions, and to decide to take action towards their transformation (Lather, 1992).

This research can, therefore, be considered one of the so many endeavors that are being undertaken in different fields in the search for new paradigms for research. In this study I have neither looked for causal relationships, nor have I attempted to come up with a generalizable and universal theory about the teacher's image. In regards to the causes of the existing image, I have only tried to grasp what those I have interviewed think are its causes, while throughout my research and at the moment of its systematization, I have made an effort to make my personal values and the values of those who have participated in this research quite explicit.

Throughout the research process, I worked with a de-briefing group which was formed by people from the region. This group plans to continue similar activities in the region. Meanwhile during the interviews, I tried to establish a dialogue with the teachers and community members

around the purpose of the research and its future uses. Although, due to the shortage of time, I was not able to identify tangible indicators of transformation or change in the individuals who participated in the research or in their activities, the interest that the de-briefing group has shown in continuing the research and comments made by individual participants are signs of the initiation of the process of self reflection that may lead to future change oriented activities.

In this study I have used a qualitative methodology which has consisted of short and long interviews. I have used survey research to put the theme of the teacher's image on the map and to provide a perspective of the teacher's situation in a larger population. I have done open-ended and in-depth interviewing in order to grasp a more profound understanding of the meaning people make of the issue.

Combining survey research with open-ended interviews, provided me with what many feminist researchers call a dual vision (Reinharz: 1992, p.94). This is an insight that, on one hand, opens a window to particularistic and idiosyncratic experiences of individuals, and, on the other hand, provides information about the theme that is under question in a larger population.

Identification and Selection of Communities and Participants

The study has focused on the black population who reside in the flat lands of the North of Cauca region. The inhabitants of this zone, as I stated in the description of the region in Chapter II, are relatively homogeneous in terms of race, and social, economic and cultural background and conditions. The majority of the inhabitants of the region depend on an economy which is a mixture of subsistence farming and wage work in the sugar cane industry or in the few agricultural or animal farms of the region.

For the selection of my participants, I used the guidelines given by Patton (1990) for sampling in qualitative research. He distinguishes between the logic that undergirds the sampling approaches used in quantitative research from those applied in qualitative inquiry. Qualitative research, in order to garner information rich cases, focuses in depth on relatively small samples (even single cases) selected purposefully. Purposeful sampling, used in qualitative research consists of various strategies that can be used according to the purpose of each inquiry (p. 169).

For the objectives of this research, whose main goal was to gain insight into the different perceptions that exist in the region of the rural teacher rather than the discovery of generalizable information, purposeful sampling

has been the most appropriate. In order to generate meaningful information about the rural teacher's image, and to reveal different aspects of reality, I have gathered different types of data and have employed more than one sampling strategy during the different data gathering stages.

In selecting my sample, I was looking for the following participants: active primary school teachers who could talk about their personal experiences; parents with children in the school; adult community members who belong to local institutions; elderly people with at least some educational background who could talk about the past and make comparisons with the present; youth between the ages of eleven and twenty.

A total of 100 adult and youth community members and 22 teachers were interviewed. From the teachers who participated in this inquiry, 18 were female and 4 were male. My adult community member sample consisted of 40 women and 20 men. A total of 24 female and 16 male youth were interviewed. The occupation of the adults ranged between housewife, a farmer, and wage laborer. The majority of youths whose ages ranged from eleven to twenty, were presently studying. Others were working at different odd jobs. Appendix A includes information about the distribution of the sample in terms of age, gender, and occupation.

Rather than choosing my participants randomly from all the villages of the region, I decided to select them from five communities. I chose to use the community as a basic unit of analysis mainly because of the following two reasons: (a) having a group of people from a community involved in the research increases the possibility of future actions in that community; and (b) taking the community as a unit allows the researcher to become familiar with the school and its teachers and gain more insight into the dynamics of that community.

The five villages were selected through the application of the "criterion sampling" technique (Patton, 1990, p. 176). I used the following criteria to make my selection: (a) communities with whom there had been some kind of contact either personally or through the institution where I work. This kind of contact I, believe, facilitates the researchers interaction with the participants. (b) the openness of one or all of the following groups to take part in the research: teachers, school directors, or members of the community. (c) the willingness of one or more of these groups to continue with the kind of activities to which this research could lead.

All five selected villages fit the general description of the villages of the region. Each village counts with a population of approximately two hundred families. Each village primary school has four or five teachers. For

purposes of confidentiality, I have kept the names of some of these villages secret, others I have changed.

In each village, a total of twenty community members, of which approximately eight were youth and four or five teachers, depending on their number in each school, were interviewed. The names of all the teachers and community members who participated in this study I have changed.

Data Collection and Management

Data Gathering

The study consisted of the following four stages for the gathering of data:

First Stage, Preliminary Discussions and Site Visits

The initial month of this study was spent on meetings with a de-briefing group that consisted of two community workers who work with me and who belong to the region, and two students from the University Rural Teacher Training Program. In these meetings we discussed the purpose of the study and the criteria for choosing the communities that would suit the purpose of this research. By the end of these meetings, we had a list of eight communities that we thought fit our criteria. After visiting these communities, five

were chosen. Although all eight villages fit the general criteria for selection, these five communities were basically chosen because their teachers showed more interest in the research and its continuation.

Second Stage, Preliminary Interviews

With the help of my colleagues, who have great knowledge of the communities, and using the snowballing technique for sampling, I chose and interviewed four adult community members from each village. In this original group of four, I looked for an elderly person from the community, a parent, an informant who would be involved in community activities, and a rural youth. I also interviewed two teachers from each village school. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. This exploratory phase provided me with more insight into the way rural people perceived the theme, presented me with information to modify some of my initial questions, and gave me information to create a shorter survey to be applied to a larger number of people. Appendices B, D, and F include an English translation of the interview questions directed towards each group: adult community members, teachers, and youth.

Third Stage, Short Surveys

The third data gathering stage consisted of the application of shorter survey questionnaires, that I developed on the basis of my initial interviews, to the rest of my sample. The purpose of this stage was to gain general information about the characteristics and conceptions of a larger population. Two members of my collaborative group, who have experience and training in interviewing, participated in undertaking some of these short surveys. The respondents were chosen randomly from among those who fit the criteria for selection. Appendices H, and J include the English translation of these questionnaires. For the youth who were interviewed in this stage, I used the same questions from the second interviewing stage.

Fourth Stage, In-Depth Interview

As I analyzed the data gathered during the last two phases of the research, and as themes, metaphors, and contradictions emerged, I chose a total of five people. These people, who consisted of two community members and three teachers, seemed to have richer stories that could provide me with more information about the theme. With these participants, I engaged in in-depth interviews. I taped

these interviews, transcribed them, and later analyzed them.

Data Analysis

Both in the case of the long interviews and the shorter ones, I designated an interview sheet for each participant. For both the long and short interviews done by myself, I wrote the answers, my comments, and impressions from each interview on each participant's interview sheet. My collaborators who did the shorter interviews were also asked to do the same. Although they have much experience in interviewing, I accompanied them in their first interviews in order to make sure that we were using the same interviewing criteria.

After five or six interviews, I transferred the information from the questionnaire to a long sheet which contained the themes and questions that appeared on the questionnaires. For each community, I had three kinds of sheets. One had the information on the teachers, the other contained the content of the interviews with the adult community members, and the third had the information on the community's youth. In addition to these information sheets, I had descriptive sheets where I noted the issues, observations, and possible interpretations in regards to the community and its participants.

In the case of the shorter interviews undertaken by my collaborators, I went through the answers from each questionnaire with the person who had done the interview. We would pass the information to the long sheet together, and would add the person's comments and impressions to the more descriptive sheet.

After having all the information from the interviews on my long sheets, I began to look for common themes and metaphors. As I went through my information sheets and back to my individual questionnaires, I wrote down these emerging themes and metaphors. I would then discuss these themes with my collaborators, and make note of the issues I thought needed more clarification. These questions I incorporated into my in-depth interviews.

In my in-depth interviews, influenced by the works of feminist scholars who collect women's oral narratives as they inquire into women's perceptions of themselves, their roles, and their relationships with other individuals or the community as a whole, I tried to listen to people's inner voice (Anderson and Jack, 1991 p. 15). I listened to the meaning my participants made of their experiences without trying to find elements for generalization, for my goal was not to gather information, but to help the person unfold their point of view.

By taking an interactive stance and listening to the voices of my participants, I was able to ask for

clarifications on many of the questions that I brought with myself from my previous interviews. I could, therefore, make note of those comments that fit into the themes and metaphors that had emerged from the previous interviews, and those that did not fit the major themes.

Having organized my data in themes, metaphors, and patterns, I have presented them in this dissertation under two basic topics: the first has to do with the image of the teacher, and the second is related to the changes people believe this image has gone through. From the five in-depth interviews, I chose two for inclusion in this document. One I have presented as the narration of the interviewing process, and the other, as an oral history piece.

Issues of Validity

> In qualitative inquiry the researcher is the instrument. Validity in qualitative methods, therefore, hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing fieldwork. (Patton, 1990, p. 14)

In addition to improving the skills of the researcher, the validity of qualitative data can be increased through the use of multiple data gathering techniques and sources. This is exactly how I have approached the question of validity in this research.

The use of both open-ended interviews directed towards a small group of people and shorter survey questions for a

large number of participants, some of which are quantifiable, and the juxtaposition of the findings has been one way through which I have been able to check the validity of my data. The comparison of the data gathered through these instruments with the individual case examples has also been one strategy to test this validity.

One way to test the validity of qualitative research that is proposed by Patton is to identify and to consider the instances and cases that do not fit within the trends and patterns that have been identified through the research. "These may be exceptions that prove the rule. They may also broaden the 'rule,' change the 'rule,' or cast doubt on the 'rule' altogether" (Patton, 1990, p. 463). In the analysis of my data, I have often looked for such cases. The case study presented in Chapter VII, as "Change and Progress in the North of Cauca, the point of view of two elderly women," is an example of such a situation. This case confronts and questions some of the general trends that emerged from the data in regards to the teacher image and its relationship to the past. These contradictions, thus, demonstrate the complexity of the theme that is under question. This has precisely been the purpose of this research: to gain insight into the theme, to make a descriptive analysis of the different points of view in regards to the question of teacher image, and to look for those themes that need further research.

Limitations

I believe that time has been my greatest limitation in this research. This restriction has mostly influenced the possibility of completely sharing the information with the participants. I was able to discuss and share the themes and patterns that emerged with my collaborators and the three teachers with whom I did the in-depth interviewing, one of whom has already proposed meetings with the community for the discussion of some of the predominant themes of this research. I am, however, expecting to share this with a greater number of people, and hopefully, with the help of my group, I will be able to do it during this coming school year.

It seems that the best way to do this sharing is by inviting people to participate in group meetings and discussing some of these themes. I expect these kinds of discussions to generate some interest in the participants for the initiation of activities that they may find appropriate in regards to the teacher image or the relationship between teachers and the community.

CHAPTER V

THEMES AND METAPHORS IN THE TEACHER'S IMAGE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the themes and metaphors that emerged in this study in regards to the image that exists of the rural teacher. In this discussion I make use of the information that was gathered both through short surveys and from the long open-ended interviews with the following ten participants:

Omar - a forty year old male teacher. He decided to become a teacher ten years ago because of the urge he felt to teach others what he knew. Ever since he became engaged in teaching, he has had to face many difficulties. Villagers seem not to quite accept him as an accredited teacher although he has made a special effort to go to the university and get his degree.

Ana Maria - a white woman in her late 40s. She is the director of a village primary school. She has received her university degree from a private university in Cali. She lives in Puerto Tejada and commutes every day to the village school where she works.

Aracelly - a twenty five year old woman who lives with her mother and her two sons in Puerto Tejada. She teaches

first grade in a nearby village. She has finished high-school and is looking for a way to enter a university teacher training program.

Adriana - a thirty six year old teacher with fifteen years of teaching experience. She teaches fifth grade. It takes her half an hour to get to the school where she teaches from where she lives with her husband, who works at odd jobs, and her three children.

Don Manuel - a fifty year old farmer who lives in a small village near Puerto Tejada, where he was born and has lived all his life. He and his wife are in charge of three of their grandchildren who study in the village primary school. Two of these children belong to don Manuel's oldest daughter who works as a maid in Bogota. The youngest, who is in first grade, is his youngest daughter's son. She just left for Cali looking for a job as a maid.

Dona Genoeva - a sixty year old woman who participates in most of the community activities of her village. She takes care of her farm that produces plantains, bananas, and some coffee. She highly depends on the extra income she receives from the sale of the chickens she breeds on her farm. Although she has no small children in the school, she participates in school meetings and activities.

Nidia - a twenty year old woman who is not sure what kind of job she wants to pursue. She would like to become a nurse, but has only studied up to ninth grade. She lives

with her family in the village, and takes care of her two year old boy.

Arbey - a seventeen year old man who is presently cutting sugar cane. He has worked as a mechanic in Popayan and as a security guard in Cali.

Liliana - a thirty year old woman who works as a secretary in an office in Puerto Tejada. Her husband has gone away to work in the "llanos" [the flat lands of Colombia]. She lives alone with her three children, Paola, Maria, and Veronica, fourteen, eleven, and seven years old.

Consuelo - a forty five year old woman farmer who lives alone with her seven children ever since her husband left her for another woman ten years ago.

This chapter is basically organized around two major questions. The first has to do with the way teachers and community members perceive teachers and teaching, which also includes what they see as the difficulties and benefits of teaching, and the second is a comparison between the rural and urban teacher.

The Teacher's Image

The descriptions of teachers and teaching, presented by both community members and teachers, fall into one of the following categories: First, at a very abstract and idealistic level, the participants talk about the heroic

image of the teacher and the expectations they believe people hold of her. At this level of normative comments people talk about how they think the ideal teacher should behave. The second is a more realistic level of analysis which is based on their more tangible experiences. Here, at a more concrete and descriptive level, both teachers and community members talk about the problems teachers have to face in their endeavors to live up to this ideal image.

The Teacher's Heroic Image

Teachers and community members used a series of metaphors and symbols to make meaning of their own thoughts and beliefs about teaching, its importance, and the teacher's role in society. They used these analogical devices to describe an abstract and ideal situation, where the teacher is viewed as a hero. Metaphors such pillar of society and second parent were continuously used by parents and teachers throughout the interviews. Many referred to the teacher as "el motor de la comunidad," a metaphor that I have translated to community catlyst. I have given the title of teacher as an apostle to a whole series of comments made by people about the teacher's mystical and religious image. The heroic image of the teacher, which is shown through these metaphors, is also associated with the different missions that people have collectively attached to teaching

throughout history. These metaphors are reflections of missions such as organizing and leading the community, preserving society's traditions and values, and catalyzing a progressive process of change.

Teacher as an Apostle

The use of the metaphor of an apostle to describe teachers is not unique to the participants of this study. Many other researchers (Vera Gil and Parra, 1989; Tezanos, 1986) have also highlighted the image of the Colombian teacher as an apostle. The way the participants of this research speak of this apostolic image, however, provides us with more information about the meaning that they make of this metaphor. Both teachers and community members find at the heart of the apostolic image of the teacher the concept of sacrifice. Sacrifice and responsibility are often mentioned as the two basic characteristics that distinguish teaching from other professions.

Dona Genoeva speaks of teaching as a profession that "unlike many others requires a great amount of sacrifice," and says:

> When you choose to become a teacher, you accept a great amount of responsibility because as I said teaching is not just like any other profession. You can be an engineer, and it doesn't matter if you want money, but a teacher is different; the teacher is like the priest. She has to sacrifice a lot.

Aracelly elaborates more on the meaning of sacrifice in terms of giving up certain economic benefits and its relationship to the teacher's apostolic image:

> You see I am not getting paid much to teach, but I like it. I love children, so I know I have to sacrifice many material things in order to be a teacher. It is the same with the other teachers. They must see this. Teachers are like doctors and priests. They must work because they love their job and not because they want to become rich. They have to give a lot of themselves.

The apostolic image that the teacher shares with the priest and the doctor suggests sacrifice on the one hand and personal gratification on the other. When people talk of the sacrificial component of teaching, they refer to the teacher's contentment with a minimum amount of money not only because the government pays them low salaries, but also because they are supposed to be compelled by their love for children rather than by their greed and desire for the accumulation of wealth. Sacrifice, however, brings with itself a certain satisfaction. This is the internal joy of knowing that one is engaged in a worthwhile cause that has great effects on society. Ana Maria speaks of the internal satisfactions of teaching:

> Teaching is a hard and arduous task that requires a great deal of sacrifice and implies great responsibility. It is, however, worth all the sacrifice once you see the results of your work. For example, I feel great satisfaction when I see that these children start high-school, or that one of them, maybe, goes to college.

Adriana describes the gratification that she receives from teaching as an inner satisfaction at the level of sentiments and emotions. She refers to teaching as a way of showing love to students and of receiving love from them. She says:

> I feel such joy, such happiness when I see that the children love me and that what I give to them they receive with gratitude. Children are so pure and loving. It is so sad to see so many of them suffer, though. This is why I am happy that I can at least help a few of them. This is my gratification in life.

Community members, like teachers, are very much aware of the relationship that exists between sacrifice and satisfaction in teaching. Consuelo speaks of this relationship from her point of view as a mother of seven, who has observed her children's teachers for many years:

> I like teaching. I think it is an important job. Teachers should be proud of their profession. You must feel very happy to see that your students are learning. It is worth all your sacrifice. I would have liked to be a teacher. I think I would have made a good teacher because I love children. With my education though, this will never be possible.

And finally Don Manuel elaborates more on the apostolic image of the teacher when he talks of teaching as a "sacred job." He says:

> You see teaching is a sacred profession. What else was Christ but a teacher? This is the kind of image that our teachers have to live up to, the image of Christ as a sacrificed teacher. He gave his life for humanity. He was the ultimate teacher.

Teacher as a Pillar of Society

Liliana calls teachers "initiators of learning;" Nidia speaks of them as "those who have the future of society in their hands;" and Adriana speaks of how society could never exist without teachers. Omar, however, uses a metaphor that brings all these images together. He refers to the teacher as the "Pillar of Society." He says:

> Teaching, together with agriculture and medicine are the pillars of society. In the same way that agriculture provides the physical means for human subsistence, and medicine allows the continuation of the human race by protecting it against diseases, teaching is a profession that takes care of the spiritual aspect of humanity. It prepares people to live in society as human beings.

At another point he says:

> You know I decided to become a teacher and went for it because I love this profession. I think I have what they call a vocation for teaching. I realized this when I became aware of how teaching is the foundation of society.

The metaphor of the pillar of society gives teaching the image of being a solid foundation upon which the rest of society is built. If the pillar moves, the rest of society also begins to shake. The pillar has to be strong and powerful. Teachers, therefore, have to be strong too; they have to have strong values and be well-prepared for their job. Don Manuel elaborates on this concept:

> I think our society is in trouble because its foundations are shaking, and one of these foundations is the teacher. Our teachers are not

> as strong as they used to be. Their values are not as well-defined as before. They follow everyone else when they are the ones who have to set the values for the rest of us.

Aracelly also speaks of teaching as one of the basic institutions of society. She comments on the reasons why she decided to become a teacher:

> I started to teach because I love children, but also because I think teaching is an important profession. What would we do without teachers. Teaching is an institution like the family. Why do you think we have so many problems today? I think it's because these two institutions are becoming weak.

Aracelly's comparison of teaching to the family takes us to the other metaphor that was used to define the teacher, that of the teacher as a second parent.

Teacher as a Second Parent

The school and the family are viewed by the majority of my respondents as the two basic institutions that prepare the coming generations and make humanity's future possible. Placing the school and the family at the same level also implies that teachers and parents are given the same importance in terms of the role they play in the lives of children. Parents are in charge of children when they are at home, and teachers have to make sure they take their place during the hours children spend in school. Saying that the teacher is a second parent to the child means that

teachers have to respond to a series of expectations. The following statements made by teachers and community members speak of some of these expectations:

Love. The first thing that makes the teacher a second parent is the fact that she truly loves the children, and both community members and teacher agree on this point.

Genoeva: I don't care if the teacher knows nothing about the pedagogical advancements of teaching. What is important is that she love the child. Teachers are like second parents to our children. They have to show love to their students. If not the child will never learn anything.

Arbey: I don't remember much of what I learned in school. I don't even remember many of my teachers. I only remember those who were nice to us, those who truly loved us. The rest is totally out of my memory.

Nidia: For a while there I did want to become a teacher, and that was because I had a teacher who was like my mother. I really loved her because she took care of me.

Ana Maria: You know, we are actually like second parents to these children. Plus today the families are disintegrating. Some of these children have no one to take care of them. Their fathers are gone, their mothers leave them with the grandmother, an aunt, or even a friend, and no one actually cares about them. The teacher has to replace the parent. You have to give them love and care for them. But, what do you do with all their physical needs? They sometimes come to school hungry, with no clothes, and no shoes. Which teacher can take care of that?

Physical Care. Ana Maria's comments point to us that to love children is not enough. They have other needs that their parents have to take care of. They need to be fed and to be kept clean, and apparently teachers feel that their image as a second parent is also putting this expectation on them. Aracelly elaborates more on this point:

> I love my first graders. I would do anything for them. There are things, however, that are out of my hands. I can't feed them. I can't dress them. I am their teacher and not their mother. Parents seem to expect us to do all this. I have children who come to school hungry. With some of them I know its because they don't have anything to eat. But most of the time it's because their parents neglect them. Even if you are really poor, but care about your children, you can find a way out. You can somehow take care of them. I really don't understand these people.

Adriana doesn't mind the expectations people have of teachers. She wishes she had enough money to take care of some of her students. "Some teachers have become insensitive to all these problems. It seems that they don't care any more." she says. On another occasion she comments:

> I only wish I had enough money. I would feed them. I would bring them home and bathe them. I feel so sorry for some of these kids. I really can't understand their parents. I understand some of my colleagues even less. They seem not to see how these children suffer. I think a good teacher should care about her students, and I really care about them.

Discipline. Another thing that people expect parents to do is to discipline their children, and teachers as second parents are also supposed to discipline their students. Many refer to this discipline as "urbanidad", a

word that implies discipline and good behavior. Consuelo speaks of this expectation: "You see teachers have to teach students "urbanidad", and this is how it used to be." It is natural for Manuel that a teacher as a second parent should discipline children: "Even if it takes a little beating up to straighten a child, I think the teacher should feel free to do it." Dona Genoeva presents a less radical position: "I think you can discipline a child through love without having to hit them. I have rarely beaten my own children." Aracelly thinks there is no simple answer to the question of discipline. She feels that teachers should be given the liberty to do what they feel is correct at a given moment. "If you are a good teacher, you know what is right and what is wrong. You really don't need people to tell you what to do." Omar, however, who has had a bad experience with disciplining his students, presents a different point of view:

> I tell you, as much as I like to teach, it is not such an easy thing this business with discipline. I had a terrible experience this past year. You know parents expect you to teach their children how to be social beings. They expect you to be like a second parent to them and all. But how are you supposed to do all this if they are constantly watching you. Discipline to me means being able to hit the child every once in a while when they do something real bad. I beat my own children when they mis-behave. But the teacher is not supposed to lift his hand on the students. If you do, everyone turns against you, and if you don't, I don't see how you can really educate them. This is what happened to me this year. I hit a child, and the story is around. Everyone has been commenting on it. It is really sad.

Teacher as a Community Catalyst (El Motor de la Comunidad)

People also used the metaphor of the motor of the community to describe the teacher image. The motor metaphor implies that the teacher helps move the community in the same manner that the car's engine makes the car move. This movement, however, mostly refers to organizing the community towards specific activities that may lead to well-being. Although the English word catalyst does not completely grasp the meaning of this image, it alludes to its inner meaning that describes the teacher as an agent of change who does not limit her activities to classroom teaching but who is also engaged in community organization.

According to my respondents it has been in the organization of the community where teachers have traditionally gained their position as community leaders. Dona Genoeva says:

> The teacher has always been a leader in the community. Teachers have more knowledge than the majority of our community members. The teacher is expected to be present in all community meetings. They are supposed to lead the community in all its aspects.

Ana Maria uses her own personal teaching experiences to explain this concept of leadership and organization. She says:

> A teacher, I think, is not only a teacher, but a community worker, a leader. She has to know medicine because sometimes she needs to act as a doctor. She needs to know about animals because

> she has to help farmers with their animals. I remember very well one day a student of mine came to me and said: 'Teacher, please help me find this medicine for my mother.' I had to go to many stores to find the medicine. If it weren't for me, how would this girl have solved her problem? This is how our traditional teachers were. They were there to help people. We have to learn from their examples.

Omar expands on the concept of leadership:

> You hear people talk of the teacher as a leader, and you sometimes wonder if they are exaggerating. But, no, it is all true; teachers are leaders. You have to lead the community in many things. Sometimes it is health, another time it is production. Whatever the problem, the teacher needs to get involved and help people solve it. This is what a true leader does, show people the way, and walk it with them.

Leadership for Aracelly means "being there when people need you." She believes that the children and their parents should feel that they can depend on the teacher for anything that they need. She says:

> This is what I understand by leadership. A leader is there when people need him. This is why he becomes a leader. If you are never there, if you have no idea what people need, then you cannot be a leader. This is how teachers have been leaders.

The Teacher's Real Image

As teachers and community members were asked to speak of some of the difficulties of teaching and what they knew about the relationship that exists between the community and its teachers, the heroic image of the teacher was replaced by a more realistic image. Both teachers and community

members expressed ideas such as people do not respect teachers, teachers have a much lower status than other professionals, and teachers have low salaries. The two major themes that people believe affect the teacher's real image I have named the **economic conditions of teaching** and **society's lack of gratitude towards teachers.**

The Economic Conditions of Teaching

In spite of all the positive descriptions presented by teachers and community members about teaching's high rank in society, all, when asked to compare it to other professions, said that teaching's status was much lower than that of most occupations. Many related such low status to the teacher's low salary. Teachers, of course, find this situation very unjust. Aracelly says:

> It is so true that we live in an unjust world. Take the case of the teacher. All that we work, all that we do for society, and look at our salaries. We really receive nothing in comparison to all that we give. Teachers are really poor in comparison to other professionals.

Teachers believe that the relationship that exists between low status and low salary is just another manifestation of the present value system that governs society. These values imply that the most prestigious occupations are those that generate more money. Omar elaborates on this relationship:

> Money is becoming more important everyday. People look up to you only if you have money. Poor people are at the bottom of society, and it really doesn't matter how much they know or how good they are. And you know that teachers in general don't get paid much.

It is, however, not clear whether teachers truly question this value system or not. They undoubtedly believe they should be paid more, not only because they want more prestige in society, but also because they think they deserve better pay and because they need more money to live on. "It is so difficult to live on this salary," says Ana Maria. "Things are getting more expensive everyday, and our salaries seem to stay the same," states Adriana. "Your buying capacity seems to become less and less everyday," comments Aracelly.

It is interesting, however, to listen to the voice of the community members who also comment on the teacher's economic conditions. Although many, at one point, speak of the teacher's low pay, at another point, they refer to teaching as an economically secure job. It is clear that those who comment on the security of teaching are comparing it with other work possibilities that are available in the rural areas. Teaching, when compared to agriculture that depends on external factors such as climate, crop diseases, and the market is a secure profession. Don Manuel says:

> You see the farmer has the hardest kind of life. You depend on so many things. One year, it rains and all your crops are gone. Another year a dry season kills everything. Teachers though have a

secure job. They know that some money is coming in every month.

Consuelo says:

> Once a teacher is nominated by the Ministry of Education, and posted at a specific school, it is really difficult to move him from there. Some of them, no matter how bad they are, stay in a place until they retire. This is why I say it is a secure job.

The same community members who commented on the economic security of teaching as one of its positive aspects spoke of its low pay. They said that although they believed teaching was a difficult job and required a great deal of sacrifice on the part of the teacher, teachers in comparison to other professionals have low salaries and hold a much lower status in society. Don Manuel makes the following comments:

> It is true that teaching is a secure job because you receive your monthly pay, and at least know that you will never starve to death. But look at others who go to the university and study just like teachers. They come out and people call them "ingeniero" (engineer), or "doctor." And, of course, they must get paid a whole lot of money to come and look at your land and say you need to put this on it or do this to it, things that you already know. The teacher, however, is just a "maestro" (teacher), with a low salary.

Dona Genoeva says:

> They say teachers have low salaries. This is what everyone says. I have no idea how much they get paid. It must be low in comparison to other professionals. They also say other professionals are respected more because of their pay. This I have seen myself. People respect doctors and engineers more than teachers.

These statements about the economic conditions of teaching allude to a situation where the three components of low status, low pay, and lack of respect affect and are influenced by one another. It is within this complicated relationship of non-linear inter-connectedness that the theme of society's lack of gratitude towards teachers emerges.

Society's Lack of Gratitude towards Teachers

Both community members and teachers seem to consider the ungratefulness of parents, students, and community members as one of the major components of the teacher's reality. Statements such as "teachers are not valued by society," "teachers are not supported by the government," and "teachers only receive complaints in return for everything that they give" are examples of how people express this sentiment.

Teachers seem not to mind their economic condition, nor do they complain about the difficulties of their job. They are proud of belonging to the sacred and noble profession of teaching. They have chosen teaching because they love children and because they feel an urge to serve society. What upsets them the most, however, is when others do not acknowledge their efforts and sacrifices. Omar says:

> You see it is not easy to be a teacher. You work so hard for your students to learn and to become

> someone in life. You have to struggle with their learning difficulties, their problems, and their frustrations, and what do you get in exchange? Nothing. If children happen to learn something, parents say it is the child who is intelligent; if the student learns nothing, it is the teacher's fault.

Ana Maria seems to agree with Omar's point. She says:

> I don't mind the bad pay because I knew all about it when I decided to become a teacher. What really gets to me is how no one ever thanks you for what you do for their children. It seems that the teacher no longer receives the same kind of respect anymore.

Liliana says:

> I decided to become a secretary not because I don't like to teach but because I don't think teaching is worth all the effort that it demands. Teachers receive nothing for all that they give. People don't respect teachers like they used to anymore.

Nidia states:

> I like nursing more because you see the results of what you do right away. You take care of the sick, they get better, and they thank you. People are never grateful of teachers. Students never appreciate their teachers, and parents always complain because they think teachers are not doing what they consider correct. I guess this is why they say that people no longer respect the teacher.

Respect and gratitude seem to mean similar things to people. "If you are grateful to someone, you respect them," says Ana Maria. And it seems that teachers too feel they are not being respected these days. Both teachers and community

members, however, believe that this lack of respect and gratitude is somehow related to the teacher's performance. "People in general think of teachers as mediocre," says Aracelly, "and I guess they are often right. Teachers no longer live up to their image." Adriana comments further on this topic. She says:

> People must see how some teachers just come to school to teach and leave as soon as they can. They very well know that these teachers are not committed to what they are doing. Teaching has become a job just like any other one.

The fact that teaching today is very similar to other professions seems to be a significant phenomenon for our participants. For teaching to have become just like any other profession, it has had to lose part of its sacredness, for not all professions are sacred. "Today, teaching has become another job like any other job," says Consuelo." And, again, many hold teachers responsible for the shattering of this sacred image. "Teachers have lost 'su mistica profesional'" (professional mystique), says Don Manuel. This is why Dona Genoeva thinks teachers are somehow responsible for people's lack of respect for them. For teachers, however, teaching has not lost this sacredness. Although they believe that they deserve a much better treatment from society than what they are actually receiving, and they partly hold themselves responsible for such treatment, they feel proud of belonging to the sacred institution of teaching. As Omar says: "We can fortunately

still claim that the honor that accompanies teaching has not yet been destroyed by those few who do not live up to the image of the teacher as a spiritual guide."

The Urban and the Rural Teacher: A Comparison

The purpose of asking the interviewees to make a comparison between rural and city teaching and between the rural and urban teacher was to facilitate the emergence of certain themes for the depiction of a more descriptive and realistic image of rural teachers. This I expected to achieve by stimulating people to highlight the differences they found between the urban and the rural contexts. In this process a whole series of themes that can be categorized under three major areas appeared. The first area has to do with the differences people find in the quality of the teachers who work in the two areas. The second consists of themes that tackle the differences in the physical conditions of teaching in the two contexts. The third area has to do with the differences in the kinds of relationships that the urban and rural teacher establish with their students, their families, and other members of the community.

The teacher's quality, in terms of her knowledge and the pedagogical methodologies that she uses was a recurring theme in the comparison between the urban and rural teacher. There was no consensus, however, among the teachers and community members in regards to whether the urban or the rural teacher was a better teacher. Many community members said they believed urban teachers were better because they received better training. Others said that they saw no difference between the two teachers. Both were receiving equal training and were equally capable. According to them all teachers today have the opportunity to go to the university and get trained.

Some people, however, believe that receiving the same kind of education is not enough. Rural teachers do not know how to educate children so that they can live in the villages. Children are being educated to go to the urban centers. Consuelo says:

> I don't want my children to go to the city. I don't think there is much out there for us. Look at all the people who have finished high-school, and can't find a job in the city. I wish someone would teach my children things that were useful for their life right here.

Don Manuel expresses the same opinion:

> You know teachers are trained to teach children things that are not useful for rural life. I wish they were more prepared to teach children things about our region, about becoming better farmers,

> and about not losing our land. The way we are all going all of us will end up in the city slums.

Adriana also agrees with these ideas. She says:

> I think universities don't prepare you for the rural reality. They teach you general things. My reality is quite different from the reality of a teacher in Bogota or even in the North coast. I need to be trained to work in this region with my people. This is why I am participating in a group that is working on developing our own curriculum. We are receiving assistance from the University of Valle on this project. We are drawing on our own history and customs for the creation of this new curriculum.

The participants in this inquiry are, therefore, describing a situation where although both rural and urban teachers receive the same kind of training, the rural teacher is not prepared to perform adequately in the rural area. This, therefore, according to many, is one of the factors that affects rural teaching's quality. The quality of rural education, of course, according to them, is also highly affected by the physical conditions of the rural schools.

Physical Conditions

Most people, including teachers, believe that the physical conditions of city schools make urban teaching superior. These physical conditions include better teaching materials, more adequate classrooms, and better teaching aids. Rural teachers, however, have to deal with problems

that range from leaking roofs and lack of drinking water to inadequate teaching materials. Some teachers work hard to convince local politicians and the sugar cane industries of the region to provide the schools with the economic resources to improve these conditions. Ana Maria talks about what she and the other teachers from her school did to build new classrooms and get new desks for the children:

> All this is new. The classrooms, the desks, the blackboards. We had to struggle a lot to get all this. We talked to the mayor. We went to the sugar cane industry. We got help from anyone that was around. This is how we finally built this place.

Omar has had a similar experience. He says:

> You see all these desks were donated by the sugar cane industry. But you have to work for it. You have to move around, talk to people, and go to meetings. I am lucky because this community helps me alot. Other teachers do not receive so much help from the community. We formed a committee that was in charge of improving the school's physical conditions.

It is understandable that the negative aspects of the physical conditions of these rural schools should affect the image that exists of rural education and rural teachers. In fact in many cases it affects the teacher's self-image and the community's perception of her. Aracelly says:

> Many parents prefer to send their children to urban schools because they have more facilities. They are bigger and prettier. For them this also means better teachers. I don't know if this is true. Maybe urban teachers are better teachers because they have more facilities. This is what most people believe.

Such conditions are both a demonstration of the state's lack of presence in the rural areas and a reaffirmation for the rural people of their marginality. This awareness of being marginalized from the benefits of a larger society one way or another has psychological repercussions that manifest themselves in feelings of inferiority, impotence, and helplessness. We can also say that a state of physical well-being usually brings with itself a general sense of satisfaction. Teachers who work in comfortable classrooms and have adequate teaching materials are definitely much more satisfied with their job than those who have to worry about the most minimal physical problems. It is possible that this lack of satisfaction with the existing infra-structures of schools may stimulate teachers such as Omar and Ana Maria to work harder for the improvement of these conditions, but it can also have negative effects on other teachers. Dona Geneova speaks of teachers who she thinks find the physical conditions of the rural schools undesirable and do nothing to change it. She says:

> I have known teachers who just simply don't care about their schools. They just let go of everything. They come, teach, and go home. The roof may be falling, and they do absolutely nothing about it. Well, maybe they are not to be blamed either. The government should take care of these schools. Isn't it their responsibility after all?

To many teachers who have to work under such conditions and the outsiders who observe them, these physical

discomforts speak of the difficulties and the undesirability of being a rural teacher. Many of the youth who were interviewed said they were not interested in becoming teachers because teaching was a difficult job. When asked to elaborate on the meaning of difficult, in addition to the difficulty of dealing with children and having to study a lot, many spoke of the difficulty of teaching under inappropriate physical conditions.

Relationships with Students, Parents, and Community

> One of the biggest differences between the rural teacher and the urban is that the rural teacher knows the child's family and frequently visits them. The teacher knows when a child misses school. She even helps the family if the child is sick.

The above statement made by Ana Maria summarizes the difference people see between the rural and the urban teacher in terms of the teacher's relationship with students, parents, and community members. The rural teacher is supposed to be closer to the community. She is expected to know her students and their parents quite well, for she is part of the small rural community where she teaches. The urban teacher, due to the very conditions of urban life, has a more distant relationship with students and their families. Both teachers and community members consider this closeness to the community one of the positive

characteristics of the rural teacher. Many, however, believe that rural teachers are losing their contact with the community as they tend to live in larger urban areas. (This is one of the major themes that emerged in this study as people compared today's teacher with the traditional one; it is treated extensively in the next chapter.)

In addition to the general impression that people have of the teacher's connection with the community, many commented on the relationship the rural teacher has with the child's parents and its difference with the urban teacher. Based on the value that people put on the intervention of parents in their children's schooling, there seem to exist two positions.

The first praises the interest that parents show in their children's learning experiences, and the second considers the involvement of parents in schools a problem for teachers. Interestingly enough, the first position is held by teachers, and the second by community members. Teachers say it is easier for urban educators to teach because they can count on the support parents give their children. They believe that urban parents, who have a higher level of education than the rural populations, pay more attention to their children and are more interested in their children's studies. Rural parents, however, lack adequate education, economic means, and interest in schools. Rural students who cannot count much on the moral and academic

support of their parents obviously do not feel motivated to learn. Rural teachers find the parents' lack of support a limitation to their work. Aracelly says: "I think it would be much easier for us rural teachers if parents could help out with the students' studies." Adriana states: "Some of these children really need to be motivated at home, and this of course never happens." Ana Maria who has the same point of view comments: "It is much easier for teachers who deal with students from the city. The majority of these parents at least read and write." Omar tends to elaborate more on this theme. He says:

> Of course people who live in marginal city neighborhoods must be similar to rural parents. They must not have much education. They probably don't intervene much in their children's education either. It's always good to count on the parents, but sometimes it's better that they don't get too involved because parents can give you a hard time if they want to.

Many community members consider parent intervention in children's studies a difficulty for the teacher. "It must be difficult for teachers to deal with parents. Some of them cause many problems. They have their own opinions about things and expect teachers to follow their rules," says Dona Genoeva. "One of the greatest difficulties for teachers is children's parents," states Don Manuel. "There are so many different people with different opinions that it must be very difficult to please all parents." says Consuelo.

Why do community members consider parent involvement in their children's school an obstacle for teachers? Why do teachers ask for more involvement? Although the data do not provide us with direct answers to these questions, I believe there is some relationship between the intellectual inferiority some community members feel as they compare themselves to more knowledgeable teachers and their comments about parent involvement in schools. Rural parents think they lack the kind of education that enables them to participate effectively in the affairs of the school. This may be why they say that their comments and opinions, instead of being helpful, can be an obstacle to teachers. Teachers, however, feel that they need a great amount of help in accomplishing their teaching task. Parents seem to be the only people who can assist them in this enormous responsibility.

Conclusions

In this chapter we have looked at some of the themes and metaphors that emerged as people talked about the rural teacher in this inquiry. The figures and symbols that appeared, however, reflect a paradox about the teaching profession and the rural teacher's image. Almost everyone referred to teaching as a profession without which "the society could not exist," "no future could be constructed,"

and "one of the best and the most important professions that can exist." Parallel to this discourse of positive descriptions, which refers to the heroic image of the teacher, we have also observed a series of doubts about teaching and teachers. This I have called the teacher's real image. It is the portrait of the teacher, who in spite of her ideal representation as an apostle, a pillar of the society, a second parent for children, and a community catalyzer, is a regular employee of the Ministry of Education. This teacher, in a real life situation, neither responds to this apostolic image nor receives any recognition from students, parents, or the government for all the sacrifice that she makes for her students.

Although we can claim that this double image describes teachers in general, we can observe that the participants of this study believe that the rural teacher's image is even more ambiguous than that which is held by the urban teacher. Although many affirm that presently rural teachers have access to better education, they believe that the rural context, which includes bad teaching facilities, lack of access to economic goods and services, and very few possibilities for personal and professional advancement, makes rural teaching much more difficult. Even if the image of the urban teacher contains many contradictions, urban teaching conditions are believed to be more appropriate, parents are supposed to be more aware of the educational

needs of their children, and the advantages of modern life are expected to be accessible to a larger number of people. This makes urban teaching more desirable, a factor that may possibly contribute to the concentration of teachers in the urban centers of rural regions, and their gradual migration to the urban areas.

Thus much of what our respondents have said alludes to the difficulties of rural teaching. This is not only in terms of fulfilling a mission, responding to a set of goals and objectives, or accomplishing a series of teaching tasks, but also in relation to living up to the heroic image of the teacher as someone who is expected to give, to sacrifice, and to be content with what ever she is given in exchange for her service. The teacher who accomplishes all this is worthy of belonging to a sacred profession.

Unfortunately, however, people sense a tendency towards the secularization of teaching. "Teaching is becoming a profession just like any other profession," they say. And, according to many, including teachers, this is dangerous for the teacher's image. Such comments lead to the emergence of a series of contradictions and ambiguities between what is and what is supposed to be. These contradictions, of course, are again very much related to the teacher's real and her ideal image. How can we gain more insight into the subtleties that underlie these contradictions? I believe that looking back at the past can

provide us with some instruments for the understanding of the teacher's reality. Has the teacher's image changed over the past years? Have there been any modifications in teaching conditions? Has the teacher's behavior changed? A whole range of themes began to emerge as people expressed in more 'detail their opinions about these questions. These themes that connect the present to the past also open up a vision for the future. They will be treated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

TEACHER FIGURE, PAST AND PRESENT

Introduction

At the end of Chapter Five, I commented on the tight relationship that exists between the image of the teacher that comes from the past and her present image. This connection to the past has made it difficult for those who participated in this inquiry to separate what they knew as the past from what they saw as the present and its implications for the future. Particularly the adult community members referred to a combination of past and present images as they talked about the teacher figure. In their descriptions of the teacher they would automatically refer to the educator they thought they knew as she was portrayed in their collective memory. This teacher was worthy of reverence because her attitudes and deeds invited children and parents truly to respect her. When this ideal image of the teacher, which is based on some kind of a romanticized perception of the past, was contrasted with the way today's teachers are and act, both teachers and community members expressed disillusionment. They all somehow believe that teaching today has lost its significance because teachers have become just like any other professional.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to compare these two images by juxtaposing what people express as the ideal image of the traditional educator with the concrete portrait they depict of the modern teacher. This I have done by organizing the chapter around the different themes that emerged as people spoke of the traditional teacher. These themes I have called **the traditional teacher as an organic community member, the traditional teacher as a true educator**, and **the modern teacher's dependence on politics.**

The Traditional Teacher as an Organic Community Member

> Before, the teacher held together with the priest and the doctor a high, a very special place, in the community, but now the teacher is no longer there.

This statement of Dona Filomena a 65 year old woman, who has lived in El Paraiso all her life, captures the essence of what men and women expressed when they were encouraged to talk about the teacher image and its relation to the past. Almost all those who were interviewed agreed that the image of teaching has declined during recent years. Teachers have lost their authority and children's respect; people no longer ask the teacher for guidance or advice; before, the most beautiful future for a young woman was to become a teacher, yet today parents have lots of doubts about teaching.

One of the major themes that people associated with this decline was the teacher's absence from the community. This image of the absent teacher becomes stronger as modern teachers are compared to the traditional teacher who is perceived as what I have named an organic community member. This describes the kind of relationship that rural people, including teachers themselves, believe traditional teachers had with the communities. They usually came from the village, lived in it, participated in its collective life processes, and played a key role in catalyzing its activities as an organic community member. This organic and active association is today being replaced by a distant and indifferent relationship, where the teacher is viewed as a mere outsider.

This distance in the relationship between teachers and community members is both physical and emotional. The physical distance is explained in terms of how the teacher no longer lives in the community where she teaches. Dona Genoeva explains:

> You see teachers used to live in the community where they taught. This meant that they were always present. They were close to the community. Today they don't live there anymore. The majority of them live in Puerto Tejada, Santander, or Guachene; some may even live in Cali. They come, teach, and go home.

In a very natural way, which makes the separation of causes from effects difficult, Don Manuel refers to the

emotional distance that exists between today's teacher and the community in the following manner:

> Teachers used to belong to the village; they were known by everyone; they slept there; they drank the same water; they shared the same problems; now they come and go; they no longer belong. They are obviously not loved or respected by people like they used to be either.

In many aspects the understanding that teachers have of this distance is not that remote from that which is held by the community. Aracelly synthesizes in one sentence the distance to which Don Manuel and Dona Genoeva have referred. She says:

> Before teachers were more concerned about 'knowing' the place where they worked. It seems that this no longer matters to them. All they are concerned about is to teach and to go home.

To say that it is important to know a place implies to integrate physically and emotionally with the location and its people, to see life from their point of view, and to feel their problems in order to guide them and their children. Knowing implies understanding the reasons and the possibilities for change. It is in such meaning of the verb "to know" that the traditional teacher knew the community. Consuelo speaks of some of the implications of the teacher's knowledge of the community for the children and their parents. She says:

> Before teachers worried about how poor the child's family was, and did not constantly bother people asking for books, uniforms, and pens and pencils. Today all they do is ask and ask.

Adriana elaborates further on this issue from the point of view of a teacher and says:

> I believe in what everyone says about the traditional teacher. She really belonged to the community, and was, therefore, part of it. She knew every single person who lived in the community and was friends with the majority of them. That was where she received her support from, the community.

As Adriana mentions, the closeness of the teacher to the community and her awareness of the community's reality have great implications for the teacher's sense of security. The traditional teacher must have continuously received the community's support. It is precisely this support from the community that some of the teachers who were interviewed in this study miss. As one teacher said:

> Before, the teacher was not alone. She was part of the community. She received support from her students' parents...., and this is precisely what today's teachers miss.

Many teachers view this distance from the community as a result of the teacher's concern with her own affairs. They find the same general desire for personal progress and advancement that urges teachers to concentrate on their own affairs (and therefore separates them from the community) also responsible for the lack of a common culture in their schools. The same way that the sharing of certain traditions, norms, ideals, and rituals with a larger group of people under the banner of culture creates a sense of belonging in the individual, for our teachers the sharing of

certain goals, ideology, values, and rituals with a small group of people known as co-workers, co-learners, teachers, or students promotes a sense of meaning and belonging. It seems, however, that teachers have no time for the creation of this common culture and vision. One teacher describes the situation in the following manner: "What our school lacks the most is a common goal, a common vision, something that all of us teachers would work for." Aracelly explains why she believes the creation of this common vision is so difficult at her school:

> We only think about ourselves. No one really worries about the children. We are always in a rush; we can't wait until we send them home. Some of us run to attend our university classes, others are in a rush to get to their second jobs, and many have to go home to cook and take care of their own children. It seems that there is never enough time for getting together and creating a vision for our schools and our students.

Community members also seem to be aware of this atmosphere. "I never see these teachers. One moment, they are closed up in their classrooms, and another moment they are gone," said one community member. Another person mentioned, "I don't think they even talk among themselves. They are mad at everyone, the children, their parents, and themselves." One elderly woman spoke of what she considered a lack of concern for the children:

> Our teachers constantly look for a reason to send the children home early. One day they say they have a special meeting, another day they say it is because it is raining too much. I don't know what it is that they have to do that is so important.

This concern for their daily lives and affairs, in terms of getting trained, making more money, or taking care of their basic family needs, in addition to inhibiting the creation of common goals and visions, seems to be, according to our teachers, one of the main reasons for the shortage of more permanent bonds of friendship and camaraderie among teachers. Ana Maria says:

> I wish we were more supportive of each other. I wish each one of us would begin to care more about the others. If one of us has a problem, no one wants to get involved. We are only concerned about our own problems.

Adriana attributes these problems to what she calls egotism and competition. She states:

> Our work as teachers would be much easier if we felt that other teachers were our friends and not our competition. I think this whole concept of competition is new. Before people were less egotistical. There existed more solidarity and friendship, not only among teachers, but also with the community.

If today's teachers complain about the non-existence of a supportive school culture with an atmosphere of camaraderie and friendship, how lonely should the traditional teacher of the unitary school have felt? We know that these schools were small with one teacher who would be in charge of various grades. What kind of school culture could have existed in these schools? From whom did this teacher receive support and strength? People's answers to these questions seem to be quite simple. The traditional

teacher belonged to the community. As Aracelly says, "she received all her support from the community."

Our teachers and community members do not attribute the inadequacy of the school's culture to fulfill the teacher's needs for a common goal, a sense of belonging, and a feeling of solidarity and friendship only to the negative attitudes of the teachers themselves. Many believe that the disappearance of many of the local support systems are the natural consequences of the loss of a great part of the region's history. This general loss includes the loss of those rituals and traditions that existed in the region's schools and the disappearance of many of the stories that existed around the teacher heroes of the region. The following are some accounts of these past traditions that people believe are being lost. We shall begin with some comments made by different participants about the region's teacher heroes whose stories definitely portray the image of the teacher as an organic community member.

> Domingo Lazo was his name. A great man he was, a great teacher, a true hero. I learned a lot from him. He was an honest man, dedicated to his profession. He worked hard for the community. He fought against leprosy. He helped clean the dirty waters that ran through the village, and visited people's houses one by one to teach them how to maintain their pigsties clean. You see he was not just a teacher, but a community organizer, a true leader, a hero.

> Many people have forgotten the story of Domingo Lazo. The new generations have not even heard of him. People should learn from his life story. His dedication to teaching and the progress of the

> community should be an example for every teacher in the region.
>
> I think one of the problems of our new generations is that they do not know about our past heroes. We should recuperate the stories of these heroes. We should write them in books and teach them in our schools. Every teacher should read the stories of Domingo Lazo and Enesia Mina.
>
> Enesia Mina was a special person, a great woman, a true teacher. She taught with her example. Of all things in this world, she hated hypocrisy the most, and you know me too, I hate hypocrisy more than anything else in this world."

In regards to the region's traditions related to the schools, many elderly people referred to the annual final examination period which in itself was an important ritual for both teachers and students. One elderly community member explained:

> You know I think that the seriousness of the exam period made us give importance to school. It is true that the students had to work hard to pass the exam, but our teachers too had to prove to the whole community that they had been good teachers. If the students did poorly in these final examinations, it meant that our teachers had been bad teachers."

Many also spoke of the importance of the examination ritual, which apparently included days of festivities, in terms of an event that united the members of the community and brought the school and community closer to each other. One elderly man mentioned:

> The period of oral examinations brought everyone together, teachers, parents, and students. I

> remember the fear of being tested by an outside inspector, but also the excitement and joy of passing the exam. My mother and our neighbors prepared food for this day, and came to the ceremony with their best clothes. Our teachers used to prepare us for this event from the first day we started school. I think this is exactly what we need these days. Some kind of an event, a ceremony that can bring us all together.

These comments allude to what some researchers have called the cultural feature of the school. This feature is generally created by the cultural norms and values that permeate a particular workplace. (Johnson, 1990, p.22) The remarks made by our respondents, however, also refer to the linkage that exists between this cultural feature of the work place with the cultural context of the region in which schools and their teachers function. We can see that the way schools were organized in the past, their norms and values, and the relationship that existed between the school and the community created a strong school culture. Today's culture, however, is going through great transitions. The new emerging culture is struggling to create new relationships and conditions in order to respond to the rapid social and economic change processes through which the whole region is passing.

Obviously in their descriptions of these changes, and the relationship that they find between them and the attitudes of teachers and their image, our participants seem to assume a nostalgic outlook that romanticizes the past. We have gone through comments that speak of the good

relationship that existed between the teacher and the community, of the commitment and dedication of teachers to their profession, and of the rituals, norms, and values that are believed to have given more meaning to teaching and learning. Are these comments close to reality? Was the past as glorious as many people have depicted it? Were all teachers similar to the hero teachers about whom our interviewees talk? It is obviously quite difficult for us to find precise answers to these questions. Romanticizing the past, however, seems to be a constant in all the comments made about the traditional teacher. It is within this same mode of thought that glorifies the past, that the theme of the traditional teacher as a true educator emerges.

The Traditional Teacher as a True Educator

As I listened to people's comments about the traditional teacher and went over the transcriptions of the interviews and survey material, the theme of the true educator began to emerge. What does it mean to be a true educator? What does a true educator do? What kinds of attitudes does this person have? What kind of an understanding do those who speak of the true educator have of education?

As I searched for answers to these questions and talked to a larger number of people about them, I became more aware of the distinction people make between education in terms of instruction and what they call "formacion." (A literal translation of this Spanish word into English is formation. It has a connotation of shaping or molding). The concept of "formacion," thus refers to the holistic education of a child. It has to do with shaping their personality. People tend to view education as a narrow concept. "Formacion" is much broader, for it surpasses mere instruction and enters the realm of character formation. Don Manuel made the following comments when I asked him to make this distinction clear for me:

> There is a difference between teaching a child how to read and write or to add and subtract and "forming" a child so that he has the necessary qualities. Now any teacher can easily teach a child how to read and write, but only a true educator can "form" a child.

It seems that the use Don Manuel gives to the word education is more at the level of the development of skills whereas the concept of "formacion" also includes the development of attitudes. Dona Genoeva affirms this distinction. She says: "To form, means to educate the child in all aspects, not only in the mental or physical, but also in the spiritual."

How is a true educator supposed to "form" a child in order for the child to develop the right qualities and attitudes? Arbey has some ideas about this. He says:

> I think there are teachers who care and those who don't. So if you care, you are on top of everything. You are always there, in the class. You correct your students; you talk to them; you tell them when they did well and when they were wrong. Let me explain this to you. I have had teachers who come to class and teach, but are not there. Where are they? I have no idea. They come because they have to, but they really don't care if children learn or not. All they want is for the day to be over, so that they can go home, or wherever it is that they go.

It seems that according to Arbey one of the most important things that a teacher is supposed to do is to really care about her students. This caring becomes apparent when the teacher takes the time to talk to students and to correct them. It is in the sense of such caring that many of my respondents began to talk about the importance of discipline in what they considered true education. Consuelo elaborates on how she thinks the traditional teacher contributed to the child's education in the following manner:

> From what I have been told about the teachers of the past it seems to me that they cared about the child's whole character. They corrected the child. They taught children discipline and respect. It seems to me that today children have no discipline. They don't respect anyone either. Not even the teacher. This I think is because their teachers have let go of them.

So it seems that traditional teachers were closer to the image people have of a true educator because they, on

the one hand, were more concerned about what their students learned and, on the other, contributed to the formation of their character by demanding discipline and respect from them. The following short comments made by different people allude to this concept.

> -Before, there was more discipline in the schools; teachers were more strict; children were forced to make more effort.
>
> -In the past children were taught 'urbanidad.' {citizenship; the word refers to manners and good behavior.} This is not true these days.
>
> -Before teachers worked all day which meant they spent more time with the children; now they only teach four hours a day; they do their job and are gone; how are children supposed to learn in such few hours? how are they supposed to really love and respect their teachers?
>
> -It's possible that teachers did not teach a whole lot before, but they taught better, children learned more, and that's why they were more respected.
>
> -But its not all the teacher's fault, today's children are different too. They don't respect the grown ups. They are difficult to manage. They watch too much T.V.
>
> -But at the same time the teacher has to take care of his image. They should not get drunk in public, they should not fight among themselves, they should try harder, be more responsible, and serve as examples for the children."

What do teachers think about true education? What are their feelings about discipline and respect? What kinds of ideas do they have about the image of the traditional teacher as a true educator? They seem to find themselves torn between what they are expected to be and to do and the

new values that they believe in one way or another take away certain freedoms from them. Traditional definitions of authority, discipline, and respect no longer respond to society's present needs. The teacher is, therefore, challenged to re-define such concepts in the light of more democratic values that include notions such as participation and organization, and in finding new methodologies for their application. Ana Maria elaborates on this concept:

> You see, it is sometimes so frustrating for us teachers. We don't know who to listen to. On the one hand you hear every one say how teachers today don't discipline children and how they don't teach them respect. On the other hand teachers are not supposed to raise their voice or their hand on children.

Aracelly says:

> I think it was much easier for the traditional teacher because people agreed about things. Both parents and teachers had the same understanding of education, discipline, and respect. Today there are all these new ideas and all these new theories. You really don't know who to follow.

From among the many ideas and notions that need to be re-defined today, that of authority and autonomy stand out. According to more traditional notions, teachers demonstrated their authority when they made decisions and were in control of different situations. This implied that the teacher was almost always right, and could, therefore, tell children what to do and what to think. This kind of unquestionable authority makes teaching much easier for the teacher. When this kind of authority is taken away from teachers and they

are expected to function only within certain boundaries, it becomes very difficult for them to fulfill the objectives of what people consider a "true education." Omar's comments are very useful for understanding this point of view. He says:

> Of course in the past it was much easier for teachers to do what they were supposed to do, first because it was much clearer to everyone what it was that they were supposed to do, and second because no one tried to take their authority away from them. People respected the teacher because he was supposed to know what was wrong and what was right. Parents never contradicted their children's teachers. Today, the teacher is no authority. No one really respects him.

Another notion that needs re-definition, together with authority, is that of autonomy. Teachers feel that their dependence on other agents and institutions, which implies their lack of autonomy both in the school and in the whole educational context, is an obstacle for the accomplishment of their teaching objectives. In regards to this matter, Omar comments the following:

> The governor appoints us, the nation pays us, the pilot experimental center trains us, the Ministry's section in charge of the teaching echelon watches over us, and the municipality who economically supports us cannot interfere with our jobs. What kind of control do you think we as teachers can have over any matter?

In this hierarchy of power and control as it is described by Omar, where even the municipal authorities suffer the consequences of lack of autonomy, teachers, who are most responsible for teaching, are the ones who have the

least voice in those decisions and plans that directly affect them and their students.

This lack of autonomy, as it is perceived by teachers, reaches its culminating point in the pedagogical realm. Educational materials are designed and written at the national level. "Rural areas have their particular characteristics and need special materials for the education of their children and youth for the rural reality," says Aracelly. "Rural teachers see how the materials that come from the Ministry of Education do not respond to the specific conditions within which they have to teach, but we are not trained to design new materials," adds Adriana. The powerlessness teachers feel in developing educational materials is not so much the result of the government's interference and control, but of the teachers' lack of training in designing materials.

It is interesting how teachers who work under the new rural elementary education program, "Escuela Nueva", which is supposed to be written for the rural areas, complained the most about the lack of preparation. They said that although they have participated in short courses on how to teach these materials, they neither think that they have mastered the content of the program nor consider themselves capable of developing new materials. They mentioned how in many cases the introduction of the program in the rural schools and the teachers' lack of training have highly

contributed to the deterioration of the quality of teaching and people's perception of the teacher.

What People Expect from Universities

Preparation, training, or "capacitacion," (the word that is often used in Spanish for training) is a theme that recurred many times as teachers and community members talked about the teacher's role as a true educator and the differences in how the traditional and the modern teacher live up to this image. Both teachers and community members spoke of the double and somehow contradictory role that training plays in the way today's teachers are perceived. The first contradiction seems to lie in the belief that modern training is not preparing better teachers, a conviction that certainly contradicts the basic assumption that education improves quality. Liliana expresses this idea in the following manner:

> Today's teachers are better trained, and yet they are not better teachers. The majority of the teachers of the past had no access to university training; the highest degree that most teachers could obtain was a high-school diploma. They knew nothing about psychology or pedagogy. Today they learn about all the advancements in such fields, and yet they are much worse teachers.

When asked why they thought that teachers today were worse, people repeated the following reasons: Teachers do not care about what children learn; they do not correct

their behavior; they are not concerned with the children's problems. In other words, what teachers lack today are the correct attitudes for teaching, and according to our community members, training programs are not giving teachers such attitudes.

The second contradiction of training is related to access to education. Again, people in general hold a basic assumption that values access to education and implies a positive correlation between availability, access, and better teachers. The contradiction rises when this assumption which is often accepted as a fact does not describe people's reality. "You would think that teachers would receive a better education with all these new programs that are available to them," said one respondent, "and this is not true at all." Omar describes this situation. He says:

> Many university education programs are being created for teachers. The government wants to professionalize them. In a couple of years only those who have a university degree can teach. The rest will be sent home.

What does the fact that teachers are being professionalized mean to people? It definitely has some positive connotations. They all consider the existence of a large number of teacher training programs that are available to the population an accomplishment. "Education, no matter for whom it is, is good and important," says Don Manuel. Even so, people believe that availability and access also imply that many, even those who lack the appropriate

attitudes for teaching, what people call "Vocacion" for teaching, can enter these programs. The fact that every year these programs graduate a good number of trained teachers does not guarantee the quality of these teachers. People believe that in the past, only those who truly loved the profession and had the correct teaching attitudes would become teachers. Today, many trained teachers have chosen the profession because it is one of the few alternatives that are available to them. Dona Genoeva says:

> They say that to get into a program such as medicine, law, or engineering, you need to have a high ICFES score. (The national high-school exam that is also used as a university entrance exam) The education programs apparently do not require such high scores. This is why they say it is much easier to get into these programs.

Nidia also affirms this idea. She says:

> You see I know people who have gone to study education because they can't enter other programs. Many of them don't even like teaching. This is why so many people graduate as teachers, and yet they don't like what they are doing. Many of them would have preferred to study something else.

Arbey confirms Nidia's statements. He says: "Before, people became teachers because they loved children and wanted to serve; today many are teachers because it's there and it's a way to gain a living."

When asked which they thought was easier, teaching in the past or teaching today. Many claimed that in the past it was much easier to become a teacher because people did not need university degrees in order to teach. Today you have to

spend money and make special efforts to get the necessary education.

Teachers, when asked to explain further about the university and on-job training opportunities that are available to them, demonstrated a critical attitude towards their co-workers. They said that the Ministry of Education and other entities such as the state university or nongovernmental organizations offer training programs for the teachers of the region. The content of these trainings is good and useful, they said; many teachers, however, only participate in them if they are given credit to move up the career echelon, the "escalfon," These teachers, they said, are neither interested in the content of training nor in whether what they learn helps their teaching activities; all they are interested in is promotion and higher salaries.

The Modern Teacher's Dependence on Politics

From among the comments made by people about the differences between the teachers of the past and the modern teacher, a whole series of expressions that encompasses political and governmental issues emerged. In contrast to the two previous themes, where many of the positive features of teaching were connected to the traditional teacher, people's comments in regards to the relationship of the modern teacher with politics seemed to be more descriptive

than evaluative or judgmental. It seems that what most people are saying about politics is that it is there, that they all need it, and that they just hope that politicians would do a lot more for them than what they actually do.

Relationship with Local Politicians

Like many other participants, Don Manuel finds nothing wrong with teachers' involvement in politics. For him politicians are there to respond to people's needs, and therefore it is fine for them to support the rural teacher. He says:

> I don't know when all this started, but today for teachers to be able to find a teaching position and remain in it, they have to support a political leader. This of coarse is not that bad because it is through politics that we get what we need in our village. The most important thing is for the teacher to fulfill his obligations as a teacher.

If Don Manuel believes that there is nothing wrong for teachers to work with politicians then why does he emphasize that it is important that they fulfill their obligations? What is there in the relationship between teachers and politics that makes politics such an important component of teaching? What elements make this relationship good and make it possible for the teacher to fulfill his obligations and what can have negative effects on it? It was difficult to find clear answers to these questions. It seemed that many of my respondents repeated certain statements about teaching

and politics without having thoroughly thought them through. In some cases people made statements that even contradicted their previous comments.

Arbey explained this relationship to me in the following manner:

> You see it is not so easy for a teacher to be posted somewhere as an official teacher. You can go and teach in a private school in the city if you want, but to be put on the government's payroll, you need to be named by someone. These someones, of course, are usually local politicians, who can name a certain number of people, and they name the people that they know or like. These people are either their relatives or have done certain favors for them. This is how many teachers need to get hooked up with local politicians who can name them.

It, therefore, seems that what teachers have to do is maintain good relationships with the local politicians in order to be named, posted, and kept in the right place. Dona Genoeva says:

> I don't know much about politics or how teachers relate to it, but I know that teachers today need politicians to get better positions. If you have no connections, you may end up having to go to the mountains.

What does maintaining a good relationship with the politicians mean? What are you supposed to do? What happens if a teacher decides not to support a certain politician? Nidia explains:

> Well the first thing you have to do is never contradict them. If there is a certain decision to make, or something to vote for, or any thing of the kind, you have to make sure what you say is the same as what they have said. I mean nothing

> bad happens to you. You do not get fired right away. You may even stay there for a long time. It is only that things get a little difficult.

Arbey says:

> For example, let us say you are a teacher and there is no politician who supports you. First of all it is very difficult for you to be named as an official teacher. Let us say you teach somewhere and the municipality pays you something, and there is an opening. Who will get this opening? It is probably not you because the politician probably has someone else in mind.

What are teachers supposed to do to be supported by a politician? "Not much," says Arbey, "It is quite easy. You just say yes to everything, and that is it." In another occasion he says:

> You don't have to do much at all. That's why it's not that bad either. All you need to do is be named and posted in a good place, and from then on you pretty much do what you want to do and no one can do anything to you. So actually all this question about teachers and politics is not such a big deal. The principle I guess is what is wrong.

Some people think that no matter how important politics is, teachers should not get involved in it. All they have to do is teach. According to these people, teachers did not get involved in politics in the past. "I don't see any reason for a teacher to become involved in politics, and I don't remember it to be like this before," said one woman. "Although I don't like this, it seems that this is the way it is," said another one. "Teachers should be allowed to teach and not be bothered with politics," said another

community member. "If politicians want to get involved, they should help teachers improve the material conditions of our schools, but today all they want is people's votes," said a youth. "But it's also the government's fault, they pay teachers badly, they treat them badly, and don't worry about their needs," stated another youth.

Unionism, Teaching's Internal Politics

There seem to be different and often contradictory ideas about the role of teacher unions in Colombia and in the region. In a certain way, we can say that there exists a certain feeling that unionism, that has been very strong in Colombia and has gained much power in the teaching profession, has contributed to the deterioration of the teacher's image. To obtain benefits, unions organize strikes in which all teachers even those who prefer not to are obliged to participate. Although people in general identify with the teacher and understand her reasons for going on these strikes, they reject such pauses in children's education as an instrument for pressure. Such disapproval is grounded in the repercussions that strikes have on the children's studies and on the lives of their families. Consuelo summarizes this position in the following statement:

> I know that it is important for teachers to have their union. If the government does not respond to

> their needs, they have to get together and put some pressure on it. I just don't think it is fair to the children to be left out in the streets. What are they supposed to do when there is no school? How are they going to learn what they are supposed to learn?

Although people seem to be quite aware of the economic needs of teachers, they somehow tend to view teacher unions as a sign of the drive teachers have for economic benefits. "It seems that they are no longer concerned about our children; what they mostly care about is their own pocket." said one respondent. "Today teachers are only motivated by self interest." Said another one. Dona Genoeva says:

> I think that all this importance that we put on money today is responsible for the urge teachers show for money. They go on strikes to raise their salaries and improve their benefits. Of course, today, you are only someone if you gain a lot of money, and with what the government pays, teachers are considered no one.

We can, therefore, see that the teachers' efforts to gain more benefits through organization have in one way or another been responsible for the way people view the teacher as one who is only motivated by self interest and not concerned about the lives of the children. This has been one of the elements that have contributed to the deterioration of the teacher's image.

What is the opinion of the teachers? What do they think about their relationship with politics? What is their opinion of teacher unions? How do they think that all these factors have affected their image? It is possible to say

that, in their analyses, the teachers of my sample demonstrated a critical attitude towards their situation that propelled them to in one way or another blame themselves for what they considered to be the main causes for the deterioration of their image. Most of them, however, seemed to be describing a situation and a series of circumstances where teachers themselves have lost control.

At the simple grammatical level when they talked about teachers, their image, and their performance, they took themselves out, and referred to the "traditional teacher," and "today's teacher" as if they identified with neither one of the two. They made comments such as traditional teachers were more concerned about what children learned; before, teaching and politics were two different things; teachers entered the profession because of a natural inclination towards teaching. In such amalgamation of causes and effects, where these teachers considered themselves part of and separate from the problem, they expressed their feelings about the deterioration of the teacher's image over the past years. They spoke of the traditional teacher as someone with power, control, and leadership and referred to the modern teacher as an ordinary employee of an institution that every day moves farther from the community. They spoke of teacher unions as an indispensable element of their job, and yet affirmed that they had lost a great deal of credibility in

the community because of all their affiliation with the union.

Effects of External Politics on the Teacher's Security

Since security is one of the basic components of the physical feature of a workplace that make a profession desirable for those who participate in it (Johnson, 1990, p.22), it is almost inevitable to talk about teachers, their workplace, and their image without referring to the theme of security. Furthermore, it is fairly difficult to discuss any social phenomenon in a country like Colombia with all the social, political, and economic changes that it is going through without having to in one way or another refer to the question of violence and its impact on the country's national security. In Colombia, the lack of security is a process that has been perpetuated by the generalized violence that permeates the whole Colombian society. This violence, that during the last decades has taken over the country's rural areas, has tremendously affected the security of the Colombian rural teacher. These professionals, who are quite visible in the rural communities, are threatened by the antagonistic forces that operate in these areas. Besides such forces that include the organized leftist groups, armed counter-revolutionary civilians, and those involved in the drug business, teachers

are also exposed to the common delinquents whose number, due to social and economic problems, has considerably risen during the past decades.

It is, therefore, not surprising that within such a general atmosphere of violence and fear, insecurity would be one of the major themes of the participants in this study. The following statements made by community members refer to the theme of insecurity, which many believe did not exist in the past:

> -The rural areas used to be safe in the past. Today it is much worse here than it is in the city. There is a lot of violence in this area. We, of course, never know where it comes from. It could be the right or the left or just any one. Before the rural teacher was much safer. Today, there is a lot of danger here.
>
> -I think it is much safer to teach in the city because you are just one of a thousand. Here people know you, and you are in more danger.
>
> -You hear stories about how teachers were killed here and there, and you ask yourself what all this means. It wasn't like this before.

People, in general, and rightist fanatics in particular, identify teachers with those intellectuals who question the system and the social injustices that it promotes. In conflict zones teachers are targets of the aggressive actions of rightist armed civilians, which does not mean that they are immune from the doubts of the leftist groups who may also harass teachers for something they specifically said or did. The teacher's situation is

obviously a reflection of the circumstances in which the Colombian rural populations live. Although the plain area of the north of Cauca region, the setting for this study, is relatively safe in comparison to other areas such as Antioquia, Santander, and even the southern part of the Cauca Department, there have been cases where teachers have been threatened by one or two of the above mentioned groups. In this region also teachers fear that they may be sent to serve in more dangerous and insecure areas of the department if they lack the support of their political patrons. Omar explains this situation in the following manner:

> You know how unsafe it is in this country, and our region of course is of no exception. Before if someone killed you, or you were kidnapped, people would say: he had probably done something wrong. Today people know that no one is safe. You don't have to do anything to be killed or kidnapped.

This generalized lack of security may not affect the teacher's image directly. It, however, greatly influences people's perception of the profession and its desirability. Not many people desire to become a teacher who may have to serve in remote rural areas. Those who have to work in such zones try to do everything possible in order to move to urban areas. Older teachers sell their teaching positions to the younger who prefer to stay closer to the city. Teachers who cannot get away from the remote rural areas try to spend the least amount of hours possible at their post. They go to work on Monday morning and leave at noon on Friday. The

attitude that these teachers show towards teaching affects the image of all teachers negatively. When people refer to the rural teacher, they emphasize how she is no longer interested in spending time in the community, how she looks for political connections to leave the rural communities, and how teachers trade positions among themselves. Ana Maria says:

> This is how they do it. An older teacher who is going to retire tells the younger one: 'Here, I have a post for you because I am going to retire.' He gets some money for it. The younger one goes and sees someone and everything is arranged so that the post is not lost. Desirable posts, of course, are those that are closer to the city.

Adriana has her own opinion about selling teaching posts. She says:

> Now I don't know if I can blame them or not. What would you do? Let us say you are in this remote village. In the middle of a war, where you really don't know who is your enemy and who is your friend. You are a teacher, and all you want to do is teach, but you know they won't let you. They will get you involved. What would you do? Would you not pay for a good position close to town? I think I would.

Under such circumstances where teachers move back and forth from the rural to the less rural to the more urban in order to avoid the unpleasant conditions of violence, insecurity, and physical difficulties, transportation becomes a great issue. Throughout their comments about teaching, teachers, and, their image, the participants of

this study referred to transportation as one of the major difficulties of rural teachers.

Community members made comments such as the following: "One of the difficulties with teaching in rural areas is transportation," or, "The difference between urban and rural teachers is that in rural areas you have bad transportation," or "If it weren't for transportation there would be no difference between teaching in rural and urban areas." Rural youth also referred to transportation as one of the major difficulties of rural teaching. They said: "It is hard for the rural teacher to travel back and forth because of the bad transportation we have."

Teachers themselves did not directly refer to transportation as a problem. It was, however, obvious from their attitudes, the anxiety they showed to end their sessions, and the emphasis that they put on making appointments at a specific hour where transportation would be available that for them, too, transportation had become an inseparable component of teaching. When I finally asked Ana Maria about her concern for leaving the school as early as possible, she said:

> Well, it is a long walk out of here, and it is hot. Sometimes you can catch the car that leaves for the main road, and sometimes you can't. Most of the time I walk out of here to catch the bus. And this is only half of the story. When I get off in Puerto I have a long walk waiting for me. I get home to cook and to clean. This is what I do every 'santo dia.'(an expression that means every single day)

Conclusions

What meaning do teachers and community members make of all the changes that have occurred in the region during the past decades? How do they think that these changes have affected the rural teacher's image? What differences and similarities do people find between the modern rural teacher's image and that of the traditional educator? What kinds of themes do people emphasize as they make such comparison? These have been some of the issues that were discussed and analyzed in this chapter.

We can say that almost all the teachers and community members who participated in this study agreed that the way today's teacher is perceived is very different from her traditional image. People believe that today's teachers have lost leadership in the community. People no longer respect them the way they used to. They have lost control over children. Teachers do not spend enough time in the community. Teachers today have less autonomy than they did in the past because they rely on many different institutions, which include the Ministry of Education, the children's families, and the teacher unions.

One aspect of people's perception of the teacher that can be highlighted is the way both teachers and community members glorified the image of the teacher of the past. The traditional teacher has been presented as a dedicated member

of the community and as a true educator. At this point it is almost impossible to determine the closeness of these standpoints to reality. Finding the truth about the past has not been the purpose of this inquiry. I have only searched for the different meanings that people make of the issue.

Furthermore, these comments only demonstrate the point of view of those who were interviewed for this study. There are, of course, other opinions and positions. It has been out of the possibilities and limitations of this study to explore further into all the different positions that may exist on the issue. Nonetheless, in order to provide the reader with a better understanding of the complexity of the question and a glimpse of some other ways of seeing and making meaning, I have chosen two cases from my indepth interviews. These cases are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VII

VOICES

Introduction

In Chapters Five and Six the reporting and analysis of the data included a discussion of the metaphors and themes that emerged around the teacher image from comments made by teachers and community members. Considering the main purpose of this study to be gaining insight into the meaning local people make of the teacher's image, and that one of the most powerful ways to reach such understanding is through case studies and life histories, I end the analysis of my findings with one example of each. The first is a case that provides some insight into the point of view of two elderly community members. The second consists of part of the life-story of Yolanda, a teacher who was born and raised in the region.

Change and Progress in the North of Cauca from the Perspective of Two Elderly Women

Introduction

The case that follows is an account of an open-ended interview with two elderly women from the region written in

a narrative form. The story of these women and their families is very similar to that of many of the inhabitants of the region, and many of their hopes and fears they share with similar people from their generation. I therefore hope that by presenting them, their families, and the social and economic context in which they function, I can provide the reader with a more concrete image of the inhabitants of the region, which includes the participants of this research.

Fidelina and Maria are two cousins, both in their late fifties, who grew up together in La Felicidad, a community near Puerto Tejada. Although these two women, who were born and raised their families in the region, describe the same reality depicted by many of the other participants of this study, for them nothing particular from the past deserves glorification. The cousins consider changes such as half day schools, lighter academic loads, more confidence between teacher and student -- perceived by many as negative factors -- as a sign of improvement. For them, what many called discipline set by the traditional teacher is a sign of the teacher's imposition and the student's fear. Today, there is more confidence between teachers and their students, teachers demand less from children, and life in general is much simpler and easier. This is why for Fidelina and Maria the actual changes which have occured in the region make life both for the teachers and students much more beautiful.

"In regards to your question in relation to the teacher," said Dona Fidelina's cousin, Dona Maria. "Yes," I said, "I have come to talk about the teacher. What kinds of changes have occurred in relation to the teacher? What kind of image do people hold of teachers here? How do people perceive the teacher today in relation to the past?"

This is how we started our conversation with Dona Fidelina and Maria, whose voices I was taping in my small tape recorder. Dona Fidelina is a 58 year old lady who had also participated in my shorter interviews. As I walked in the door at a quarter to ten, fifteen minutes earlier than our appointment, Dona Maria, her cousin who was visiting for a couple of days from a nearby town greeted me. "Please come in. Dona Fidelina Mina, someone is here to visit you." It did not take long for both Fidelina and Maria to be seated beside me in Fidelina's living room talking about their childhood memories.

Dona Fidelina's living room had many things in common with the other living rooms from the region where I had interviewed others. The living room which shares the same space with the dining room is a central part of the house. A big color television set, that during the day brings the family together around soap operas, football games, and the news, is usually placed in this area. Dona Fidelina's living

room had a cement floor, an improvement as many would say over mud floors. The recently painted walls were decorated with a few landscape pictures and a black and white picture of Dona Fidelina and her husband when they were young. From the red plastic seats where we sat, I could see Dona Fidelina's backyard, where one of her grandchildren was washing clothes. In the backyard Fidelina has set up her kitchen. She has also separated at the far end of this yard a space for a small bathroom which is covered with a hanging curtain. To my left were two entrances also coverd with hanging curtains. These were the entrances to the bedrooms. In the room to my right Dona Fidelina has organized her small home business. She has a big refrigerator for keeping soft drinks and ice cream. The room has a big window that opens to the road. From this window Fidelina sells her drinks and ice cream to her clients. Fidelina's house, which is made of brick with red painted steel windows, is located right on the edge of the main road that comes all the way from Cali and goes south.

Dona Fidelina's "finca", (a traditional farm where people cultivate crops such as Cocoa, coffee, beans, and fruit trees in association) located in the back part of her house, stopped producing about ten years ago. This was just before the death of her husband. A couple of years later Dona Fidelina sold her other piece of land to the sugar industry. On this land, together with her husband, they had

produced soya for a couple of years until the price of soya had fallen. She used part of the money to set up her small business; another portion she gave to her daughter to pay towards her debt to the Caja Agraria (an entity that gives credit to the farmers of the region. Many farmers have had to sell their land in order to pay back their debts to this entity). Now Fidelina's finca produces some fruit, oranges, bananas, and plantains, that are sufficient for her family's consumption. The coffee and cacao plants have been attacked either by disease, insects, or by the insecticides sprayed by the sugar cane industry. The sugar cane business owns the majority of the land that surrounds her "finca" . Although Dona Fidelina seems content with the actual state of her affairs, deep inside she still has hopes that maybe her youngest son who has gone to Cali to work as a mechanic will one day come and help her make the "finca" produce again.

Fidelina's two older sons are contracted by the sugarcane industry on a seasonal basis. They live in a neighboring village with their wives and children. Two of Fidelina's daughters live close to her with their husbands who, in addition to their small farms, work on other odd jobs. Fidelina's youngest daughter works in Cali as a maid. Fidelina takes care of her two year old grand-daughter during the week. The child's mother comes to visit her on the weekends. For Fidelina the best day of the year is Mother's Day. This is when all her family gets together in

her house to celebrate. Her sons and their wives, her daughter from Cali, and her two daughters with their husbands, all come with their children. Fidelina cooks a huge pot of Sancocho (a soup with chicken, cassava, and potatoes) for her family to enjoy. This reminds her of the old days when her husband was still alive, and her children were little. Fidelina, however, has no time for nostalgia. She has to work hard and move forward. She has a whole family to take care of, and they all need.

"Today, people have a positive conception of the teacher," said Maria, who seemed to be more enthusiastic about the interview than Fidelina, who had already gone through an hour of structured interviewing and who was probably afraid that she would have to repeat the same things over again. "Before students were afraid of their teachers; today they feel more comfortable with them. There is more confidence."

"Yes," confirmed Fidelina, "today, students have a closer relationship with their teachers."

"And, is this good?" I asked.

"Of course," said Maria, "it is wonderful. Teachers were too strict before. They did not allow children to get close to them. There was always a certain distance between teacher and student. Today, they talk with each other; they do things together. I think it is much better."

"As you know, my research is on the teacher's image. I am interested in how people perceived teachers and how they see them today," I said. "Can you tell me about some famous teachers from the region, teachers who may exemplify some qualities that you consider important?"

I was hoping that one of the two would make concrete references to a famous teacher from the region's history. Maybe this way, the ladies would explain more about why they believed the relationship between teachers and students is better today than before.

"Here, we have had good teachers," said Fidelina. At this moment a young man entered the house. "Good morning," he said in a loud voice. "Dona Isaura Mina and Dona Sara Cambindo," continued Maria. Fidelina pointed to the tape recorder and looked at the young man saying in a low voice: "Whatever you say is taped here."

"How long ago was that?" I asked as I indirectly invited them to ignore both the tape recorder and the newcomer.

"When my children were young," said Fidelina.

"Thirty years ago," said the newcomer who had managed to get out of the house and listen to our conversation from the outside. Both Fidelina and Maria, a little ashamed of their relative's comments laughed.

"And also," continued Fidelina, "there was a teacher from Patilla (a village which is about two hours south in

the Cauca Department). She was really nice. Her name was Elda."

"Tell me about her," I said, hoping to get some kind of information about what a good teacher would be for Fidelina.

"With her there was dialogue. We had a relationship. There was comprehension, good human relations. If something was wrong with the children she would call us. We even went to Patilla. The boys had a football team. She supported the team a lot, We went to her town for the boys to play. There was great friendship between the parents and her."

"And now," I said, "how is it now?" Afraid that they would feel inhibited to mention something against the teachers who taught in the school, I added: "I am not referring to any particular teacher. I mean how are teachers in general today?"

"Now they are also very good," answered Maria, who had been quiet for a while. "None of us, of course has school children anymore."

"Fernando, the teacher here. He has made great efforts. At first people did not accept him because he was not a trained teacher. He studied hard, and now he is in the university," said Fidelina.

Obsessed with the great heroes of the region, I felt I had to make sure that these two ladies, who were representatives of an older generation, told me something new, something important about the past. So, I insisted:

"Tell me about the heroes. Here in the North of Cauca there have been heroes, I know. But have there been hero teachers?"

"Not any more, there may be a few, but one has nothing to do with them. We have lost contact with them since we don't have children in school. Our daughters go to meetings. They say they are good meetings. Ilda Moreno was a good teacher who educated my children," said Fidelina. As she talked, one of her great grandchildren came and sat on her lap. "This one," she said, "is Angela's daughter, Elena's niece. She is my youngest great grand daughter, the most spoiled one, of course. She spends most of her time with me. I take good care of her."

Meanwhile, I could see three more children playing around Fidelina. Another ten year old girl said good morning as she went into one of the rooms. Attracted by all these little children who surrounded Fidelina, who claimed not to know much about schools and teachers anymore, I felt I had to go back to Domingo Lazo, the great hero I thought everyone, especially Fidelina and Maria had to know about.

"What do you know about Domingo Lazo?" I finally said.

"Domingo Lazo?" asked Fidelina.

"Domigno Lazo," said Maria, "isn't he the teacher from Dominguillo?"

"Ah," sighed Fidelina,"'Maestro' Domingo, of course."

"Do people talk about him?" I asked.

"Not anymore," said Maria. "These things become part of history."

"Was he still alive when you two were studying?" I asked.

"Yes," said Fidelina. "He was a good teacher. Children would go to Dominguillo to study with him. His students became doctors and lawyers."

Again, to my disappointment, the two ladies did not expand on Domingo Lazo's story. Neither Maria nor Fidelina commented about how Domingo Lazo had fought against leprosy by cleaning the roads and teaching people how to keep their pigsties clean, things others had mentioned in the other interviews.

"Where did you two study?" I asked.

"No, we only studied primary school," said Maria

"Here," said Fidelina.

"I finished primary school in Puerto Tejada," added Maria.

"How was school in those days?" I asked.

Maria sat back and tried to concentrate on the past. Fidelina, who preferred to let her cousin do most of the talking, became a little thoughtful, and said, "Maria Victoria was the name of one of our teachers, a great woman."

Maria continued: "She was very much concerned about our cleanliness. We used to sew, do embroideries, and knit. But,

of course, we worked hard on our reading and writing and arithmetic as well. We worked hard when we came home too. We had to clean the house and cook. It wasn't like now when children are told not to enter the kitchen because they have to do their homework. We did everything."

"And you know," added Fidelina, "we studied both in the morning and in the afternoon. If you studied in Puerto Tejada you would come home for lunch and walk all the way back again, it didn't matter if it rained or not."

"And was it better then?" I asked.

"Oh no," exclaimed Fidelina to my surprise, "it is much better now."

"Much better," said Maria. "Things are much more beautiful now."

"Half day of school, each teacher has their group. Before one teacher was in charge of three or four grades. It was too difficult for her. It's much better now for both teachers and students," added Fidelina.

"How many children were there in your school?" I asked.

"Forty," said Fidelina. "One teacher for forty, then they brought others."

"We used to live," continued Fidelina, "there in the back. I got married and moved here closer to the road. The old ones die and the new generations change. The school was across the street from where it is now. It was built with the cheapest materials. One classroom and one teacher. She

had to take one group out to work while the other stayed inside, and if it rained, well we were all in trouble. All of us had to stay inside. We would study all day. She would explain a lot on the blackboard. I tell you our primary school was the same as today's high school. They taught us a great deal. In high school though you have so many teachers, we only had one. When you finished primary school, you knew everything you needed to know. You could read, you knew mathematics, you could sew and do embroideries. You know, even the boys would do embroideries."

"Exactly," interrupted Maria. "We had to pass oral exams. They would last a whole day. We would go home to eat. We would come back and continue with our oral exams. It was like a fair. There was food outside. There was music. There were even fireworks. The classroom was beautifully fixed with all our works and our names written on each work. We would even try our new uniform on this day."

"And now?" I asked.

"Now," said Fidelina, "you don't know when they start school and when they finish. Before the jury came from other parts. From Puerto Tejada, from Santander de Quilichao. Even the mayor would come. You wouldn't know if you had passed the year or not until this day. They were the ones who would decide. We had to prepare all year for this special day."

Maria started to laugh. "Every thing has changed, hasn't it?" she said.

"Yes things have changed," I said, hoping that she would continue so that I did not have to ask my recurring question of "for better or for worse?"

Maria, who seemed to know what my next question would be, said: "This is why I say everything is much more beautiful today. It was too hard before. Too hard on us. It's better for the teacher, and better for the students. Now we have electricity, we have water. Before, we used to go to the Palo River to bring water. All this area was full of "fincas." We had orange trees, plantains, cacao, coffee, zapote, banana, tangerine etc. etc. etc. You would come home from school and you weren't hungry because from each tree you had taken one fruit. If you passed a banana tree, you would try to avoid it. You would bend down in order not to hit it because you knew you had so much at home. No one sold their fruit. It was not like today that you take fruit to sell in Cali. If you needed a lemon, you would say go to so and so and ask for a lemon. You wouldn't even say please. Now everything is more beautiful. You say please, if it is no trouble, I would appreciate it, and if the neighbor is not in a good mood, they say no because the sun is too strong" (farmers don't pick fruit from trees when the sun is strong because they believe that the tree can dry out).

Maybe I understood Maria's comments, and maybe our thoughts were too distant from one another. She, on the one hand, seemed to lament the loss of the abundance of the

past, and, on the other hand, was happy that it was over. For her, life is much easier today. I imagined the old single classroom school the two ladies had portrayed, and compared it to the new school building with four classrooms, toilets, and a water well. I pictured Fidelina and Maria walking back from the river with pots of water on their head. I envisaged the village during the night with no electricity, and each house with a few people sitting around a candle and talking while others slept. But I also imagined the abundance. I thought of the fruit that grew on every tree. To me it just seemed so wonderful that I could not hold myself back. "But this abundance was good!" I exclaimed.

"Yes," said Fidelina, "but before, we had to throw all the fruit away. No one took them to Cali to sell. We had twenty orange trees in my house."

Maria and Fidelina had described very well the past and the present. They had demonstrated how things had changed, but to my surprise, for them, things were much better today. Life was much more comfortable. They had electricity and water. They, their grand children and their children, and their teachers did not have to work as hard as they did before. Maria and Fidelina did not even regret the loss of the abundance of those days because although they had lots of fruit, they could not eat them all. They would throw their fruit away. Now, maybe, the fruit of one or two orange

trees can be turned into cash in the city. Money is probably more useful to them than rotten oranges. For the two cousins who had grown up side by side, had raised their families together, and who now lived an hour away from each other, life was much more beautiful today, in spite of all its changes.

I, of course, had one more question to ask, a question that for me the researcher from the outside was related to a whole issue which is called "gender." And this, too, seemed to have quite a different meaning for Maria and Fidelina.

"Were the teachers here mostly men or women?" I asked.

"Before, they were all women. Only now we have men," said Fidelina.

"Why?" I asked.

"I don't know," answered Fidelina, "they always used to send us females. We never had men teachers."

And again, I had to ask the question that demands comparison: "Which do you like better, male or female teachers?"

"I tell you, women are great, but when my children went to Puerto Tejada and had male teachers, it was better because they respect them more," said Fidelina.

"And are you thinking about starting a school?" asked Maria.

At this point I could see that both Maria and Fidelina were getting a little tired of my questions. They probably

had to cook for all the children, the sons, the nephews, and nieces who were coming home for lunch, and I was still there in Fidelina's room asking questions. Although I thought I had explained the purpose of my research to them in detail, I shortly described what I was doing, said goodbye and left Fidelina's house.

As I was walked towards the University Center that for Fidelina and Maria could be another sign of progress, I began to reflect on how the two ladies had truly presented a different perspective of a glorious past.

It is Hard to do What You Know is Right these Days: Yolanda's Story

Yolanda

I guided my interviews with Yolanda, a thirty-three year old teacher, a mother of two, and a student at the Licenciatura En Educacion Rural Program by asking her to talk about the images that she recalled from the different stages of her life in relation to teaching and teachers. In her comments I searched for the particular metaphors that she used to reconstruct those memories that have to do with how she as a student, a teacher, and a mother had seen and was perceiving the rural teacher. I was expecting that Yolanda's images and metaphors would provide me with certain

themes related to the teacher's image, themes that I would hardly be able to identify if I had used structured interviewing.

As I went through the transcriptions of Yolanda's remarks, I identified two recurring themes, what she calls good memories and the bad ones. It is not surprising that within the actual context of the Colombian society many of the impressions that Yolanda considers bad are images that are related to some kind of injustice, prejudice, or violence. These in many cases include occasions where she has been either the object of physical and verbal abuse or has found herself obliged to use either one to get out of an unpleasant situation. The good images, of course, are those pictures that refer to the existence of some one who helps her, who shows her love, and who protects her from all the negative circumstances of that particular stage of her life.

In Yolanda's memories, however, the two sets of images, the good and the bad, are not completely separate from one another. It seems that in her lifetime, the same as in her memories, these kinds of images co-exist. In her recollections of her past experiences whenever she speaks of violence, sadness, and fear, she remembers a figure who becomes the centerpiece of her good images, a figure that also represents her hope for a better future.

In a very natural and self confident manner, as she leans back into her seat Yolanda begins to unravel her story in chronological order.

"First the good ones. I am going to begin with the good memories," she says. She thus begins her narration with a confession that is very important to her, for it is a sign of her connection to the rural world. "I was actually born in a village." She says, and continues:

> In this village I received the first two years of primary school. I then went to the larger neighboring town to study. There I was expected to receive a much better education, the kind that would prepare me to live in the city. You see people still do this. They take their children out of the village primary school and send them to the town school for a year or two before the child enters high-school. They do this so that the child can get prepared for high-school and city life. They say they want their children to become more avispado (clever) for city life. My first two years in the village school were beautiful. My teachers were very special; they were like a mother to me. They made me feel good. The older students were also very nice to the younger ones. They took good care of us. They would give us food. They would hold our hands and walk us to a safe place close to our homes. For example, the school is on this side of the road, they would say: 'go straight from this side, and you will get home. Be careful.' During those years I felt good, loved, I felt <u>protected</u>.

Yolanda apparently began to explore the meanings of separation and isolation when her mother sent her to a school that was run by nuns in an adjacent town. Yolanda spent the week with a relative and came home on weekends.

She experienced the first injustice when she was obliged to repeat first grade just because she had come from a village school. She says:

> I remember, they said 'where do you come from? from such and such school? you need to go back to first grade.' I had to be in second grade. Later, the teacher said I was too advanced for first grade, and they sent me back to second grade.

In Yolanda's memories these first experiences are mixed with what she calls an "uncomfortable" feeling of being different. She says:

> When I went to the town school, I felt very uncomfortable because it was a different environment. The girls were different from me. I had my own habits, different from theirs. I felt very isolated although there were other students who came from the surrounding villages. I was new, and I was just beginning to get to know my environment.

Although separation, loneliness, and isolation are somehow normal consequences of change for Yolanda, those days also bring with themselves other negative images that she cannot forget. These images represent the school's power and the powerlessness of Yolanda and her other village friends. One is the image of a couple of eight or nine year old girls walking five kilometers every late Sunday morning under the hot sun to go home from mass. She says:

> All students were obliged to go to mass on Sundays. We, the girls from the villages, who had gone to visit our families on Friday, would take the bus to school early Sunday morning, but had to walk back five kilometers in the heat. That was one thing I really disliked about that school.

> And if one of us missed mass on Sunday, the nuns would have her sweep and mop those immense corridors on Monday morning.

She then continues:

> Of all the images and incidents of those days, I remember the bad ones. First, I am going to tell you the bad ones. Two students would sit at a desk. The town girls did not want to sit with us, the ones from the villages,..... One day the teacher said to one: 'why don't you sit beside Yolanda?' The girl said she didn't want to. She said she wanted to sit with her friends. I started to cry; she was being really mean, and I knew she was rejecting me because I was a villager. The teacher told her that she was making me cry. The girl said she did not care because she was not going to sit with me. There was no way that the teacher could convince her. She sat with someone else.

Yolanda's memories of those days take a better form as she remembers one of her teachers. She says:

> But in spite of all that, I had a teacher who was a very special nun. She was not so attached to their customs. When I saw her after some years she had left the convent and had gotten married, and had kids.

She also remembers an incident that she considers both "good and bad," an incident that could have influenced her feelings towards school and given her hope in being able to change things through the application of positive values. She says:

> This one is both good and bad. One day we were given a test, and I knew nothing. I copied all the answers from the person who was sitting beside me. The nun was there looking at me. She looked at me with so much love and affection. 'She must think I am a good innocent girl,' I thought. I felt bad about cheating. I stopped copying. When the exam

> was over, I said to her 'I really knew nothing. Everything you see here, I have copied.' She looked at me with affection, and said: 'Thank you for telling me. Now I know that I have to work more with you. It's alright, don't worry.' I was so happy that she didn't do anything to me. She didn't even get mad.

Yolanda's stories of sadness and joy, violence and love, separation and coming together continue as she begins to remember images from high-school. She affirms that her high school days have been very difficult for her because she has had to study away from her family, which for her means her mother. She says:

> Although the people there were very nice and helpful, I was away from my mother, and that was very difficult because it was actually she who took care of us much more than our father.

What strikes Yolanda the most here is the helplessness of poverty. She depends on the little amount of money that her mother sends her. She needs money to eat and to buy her school supplies. She says:

> There I did things that I shouldn't have done. Things that were really bad. I would take someone's pen, and they would be looking for it, and the strange thing is that I really didn't care. I thought I needed it and therefore deserved it. He could buy another one, and I couldn't. There I went hungry for many days. I lived with a family. Those days were very sad.

Remembering those days is difficult for Yolanda. Here the powerlessness of poverty takes over all the other feelings of separation and loneliness. As she talks about these days, she begins to cry, but she continues:

> One time, I didn't hear anything from my mother. I went through a whole month with no money. I had no money to eat. People would give me food and lend me money here and there. One of my teachers asked me what was wrong with me; when I told him, he gave me some money to eat and to go see my mother. When I got home, I found out that my mother was sick. She had typhoid fever. I stayed for a while, and helped my mother. We, then, got some money together, and I went back to school. I suffered so much those days that what I really want the most for my children is not to ever have to suffer the consequences of poverty.

Yolanda then speaks more about this teacher. She says:

> And then this teacher who helped me, I saw him. I was on the bus when I saw him. I got off. Yolanda, he said. He wasn't teaching there any more. I told him that I had two kids, and told him about myself. He talked about his work. He also was a lonely person. I had never heard him mention his family, or that he was going to visit them. I could see how happy he was because he had seen me again, and me too.

After all these stories of sadness and joy, why did Yolanda become a teacher? What kind of an image must she have formed of teachers and teaching as she went through all these experiences? Was she deeply touched by the teacher who gave her money to go and visit her mother? Did her good memories of the nun who had been different from everyone else compel her towards teaching? Was she affected by the pedagogical ways of the nun who did not punish her because she had cheated?

"I became a teacher because my mother wanted me to," says Yolanda. It seems that she shares her reasons for becoming a teacher, very practical ones, with many others.

Her becoming a teacher had to do with the economic stability of teaching, a practical alternative for a poor girl like Yolanda who did not have the money to go to university. She describes this situation:

> When I finished my second year of high school, my mother began to look for some kind of an alternative for me. The only alternative for me, because my mother couldn't send me to the university, was to become a teacher. She looked into different schools, and through a friend of hers, she found me a teacher training high school. I started with three other girls whom I knew. The four of us lived together. I was very obedient. I listened to whatever my mother said. Generally speaking, in those days, children were obedient. You would listen to your mother because she was almost always right. It wasn't that I did not like being a teacher. The teacher I remembered from my village school was very nice. Every one loved her, and I wanted to be loved one day like she was. But also, I was conscious of the fact that I needed to study something that guaranteed me a job. If I entered a regular high school, "clean high-school", as my mother used to say, it would be very difficult to find a job right away. But it wasn't like this, either, that I finished school and there was a job waiting for me, no. I finished in June, and stayed home all vacation without being able to find anything.

Up to this point the images and events that have been portrayed by Yolanda have been representations of her memories from her childhood and youth. Once she finishes her high school studies and becomes a teacher, she faces a new reality, the reality of a beginner teacher. Her perception of teachers and teaching change. She faces a new reality, the reality of a beginner teacher. She faces her first teaching challenge when she is not able to find a job. She finished school in June and went to Popayan (the

department's capital) many times to talk to the governor or to the Secretary of Education and no one helped her. She says:

> Each time I went to them they would say: 'yes there will be a job for you, but see this is too far; this one is no good.' So, September came, and I had no job.

Her efforts to find a job with the Ministry of Education were useless. She was totally disappointed and had even decided to go to Cali to work as a maid when she received a visit from someone who offered her a teaching job in her own village, where she would be paid partly by the municipality and partly by the community. She thus began to work with a low salary of 3000 pesos. (50 US dollars of the time, 1981, the equivalent to a maid's salary). She was soon nominated an official teacher by the municipality and her salary was doubled.

She says:

> And this is how it all started, until now after 12 years. The story was that this man went to my house on a Sunday afternoon, and told my mother that they needed a teacher for the school and they were told that her daughter could do it. I was really worried and upset because I couldn't find a job and my mother needed to pay back the money that she owed people. So I had decided to go and work in Cali as a maid. My mother had agreed because it was our only option to make money to pay our debts. I was lying down on my bed when I heard this guy. I jumped up and said yes of course, because all I needed was to work. He asked me to go the next day, and I was there early the next morning.

As Yolanda thinks about her first day as a teacher in the village school, she can think of nothing but tears. She says:

> I usually cry a lot; I also cried during my first day as a teacher. I didn't know what to do. Listen in school they tell you many things, about how you should hold the chalk, how you need to stand in front of the blackboard, but when you have to confront reality, it is quite different. It is really scary. This was in Paraiso. The director's name is Ismael, and he now works in El Sueno. When I got there, I said I am here because don Adolfo said you needed someone. They were going to divide third grade, so as soon as we walked in everyone said: 'I want to be with her, I want to be with her', because I was new and all children want to be with the new teacher. When I was left with my group, I started to cry."

Here, Yolanda feels the anxiety of facing a new situation. She has to stand in front of a classroom full of little children who look up to her. She is obliged to live up to the image of a teacher, who knows all the answers, is firm, and at the same time is loving. And all this scares her. But again there is someone special who helps her out. Yolanda continues her story:

> The director was there; he called me and said he understood, and that what I was feeling was normal. You see I was happy, I was very happy to see that I was finally a teacher and that I was going to teach, and that these were my students, my responsibility. I had always wanted this. I was arriving, I was going to know them, to ask them who they were. They were not so little. In the village schools the kids are much older than in the urban ones; I was young too. It was all this, all this that made me cry.

Yolanda thinks she has been lucky to begin teaching in a school where she could receive support from the director and the other two teachers. "Otherwise, I don't know what I would have done. I might have even stopped teaching. They situated me in reality", she says, and then continues:

> The training they give you in school does not prepare you for the classroom. In school the only practical thing you learn is how to prepare one or two themes and to present them to the class. But now it was different. This was my group. My first year as a teacher went well, of course, with the help of the director and the other two teachers. The second year they asked me to teach first grade. This was another problem because I think that the most difficult group to teach is first grade because everything is new for them, and you have to make sure you really know what you are doing. Otherwise you can ruin the child's academic life. The director helped me a lot, and then the government sent me to another school. There, I have worked more than anywhere else, almost ten years.

It was there, in el Jardin, Yolanda's second school where she became acquainted with the Escuela Nueva Program. She says:

> They gave us some courses, and had us try the program. The teachers were against this methodology and the community too. The program cuts back on the number of teachers per school. This teachers did not like because it means less jobs and more work for the teacher. The farmers thought that the government wanted their children to remain poor by bringing them a program that was only for the rural areas. With this kind of training their children could never go to work in the cities. I think the main problem was our lack of training. There are things in those books that I honestly did not know. How was I supposed to teach them with such short training? This lack of preparation, I think, did damage to the program and to the teacher's image.

At this point, Yolanda focuses on her recollections from the three school environments in which she has worked. For her, each school has had a different culture, and her relationship with the other teachers has varied according to her age and experiences. She divides them into three different periods:

> I have had three different experiences. In the first school they treated me like a little girl, they would make sure I was all right and had no problems. In the second school, there was a man who is a very good friend of ours. He helped me a lot. He was behind me in all meetings. Then, he left, and a new teacher came with whom I had many problems and difficulties. I was really tired of her. She would talk behind my back because she wanted to get rid of me. She did have good relationships with the local politicians. That was how she had so much power. There I understood why people complained about teachers who have all sorts of political connections. Then I came here and things are also very different here. I am not a young girl anymore; I participate equally with the others. When we talk, we talk about the students, about what is going on with ourselves. We are friends and support each other. It is not like the other school where the teacher would constantly talk behind other people's backs."

In spite of her contentment with her colleagues and her interest in teaching, Yolanda perceives many problems in the region´s schools. These problems are related to teachers, to students, and to the relationship that exists between the school and the community. She says:

> I feel that the older they get, the more the responsibility. I first said that for me it is difficult to teach first graders, but for different reasons. For first graders, the problem is how am I going to teach so that they can learn. But they can be taught. With the older ones it is

> a different question: it is much more difficult to relate to them, to understand them, to really change them. They are usually rebellious and rude, sometimes they are even bigger than you, which is scary. It is easier to relate to the smaller children. In the village schools those who are in fourth and fifth grade are usually too big. There are even problems there because they can't accept students who are above fifteen. These kids have to go to night schools, and the girls usually go to Cali to work as maids.

As Yolanda talks about these problems, her expressions change. Here, she does not demonstrate sadness, fear, or isolation, but a sense of powerlessness. She talks of how difficult it is for a teacher to influence the older village students.

> You see they are different today. They are a product of a different society. They are more violent. They are influenced by all these things they see and hear. And these are rural students who are supposed to be much better than the city ones. So, sometimes you think there is not much you can do as a teacher. You have to just leave them alone, and that is really sad because if you leave them alone, then why are you there?

Yolanda therefore refers to the emergence of a new type of student, who is a product of the social, economic and political changes that the region has gone through over the past years. This student is both a victim and a perpetrator of a new violence that permeates today's schools. In relation to these older kids and their attitudes, Yolanda tells a story about how she, out of helplessness and desperation, over-reacted towards a student. She says:

> I remember when I was working in El Jardin, something very ugly happened. There was a kid

whose name was Alejandro. Now he is a father, he was fourteen then. He was very naughty. He was terrible. All day long I was telling him be quiet boy, stay still boy, leave the classroom boy. One day he would stand up, get close to the wall, and throw a wall hanging down. All day long, I kept telling him to sit down and not touch the wall hanging, but he would continue. I got so mad that I hit him. I slapped him in the face. He was really mad at me, he looked at me with such hatred. I knew I shouldn't have done that, but I was so mad that I hit him on purpose. He packed up his books, and was about to leave. I was so scared because I knew that if he left, I would be in trouble. I didn't want him to leave. So, I said: 'listen Alejandro if you leave I will never accept you in my class again.' He stayed, but he looked at me with such mad eyes. After the class was over, I said: listen, I am sorry, but I really didn't know what else to do with you. I told the director about it. He said: what did you do? you are in trouble. What would you have done if he had hit you back?

Yolanda thinks what she experienced here was quite different from what a traditional teacher would have gone through in a conventional authoritarian school. She says:

> In the old schools the teacher could hit a child, and be even supported by the child's parents. Today, parents think teachers should not hit their children. The problem is not only the child´s parents, but as the director told me, the student could have hit me back, and no one would have been able to do anything.I was so scared that he would bring his mother to school, but she didn't come. On Teacher's Day he brought me a chicken as a gift, and said: 'My mother sends you this.'I was so relieved. If he had told his mother I would have been in deep trouble. There have been cases where terrible things have happened to teachers. I was really scared.

There was a great joy in Yolanda's voice as she remembered how she was saved. She laughed. Her laughter reflected the complex feelings she must have had when she

received the chicken: joy because the boy did not hate her as much as she thought he did, relief because the mother had not known about the incident, but also shame for what she had done. Yolanda's shame for having punished the student by hitting him is again mixed with a sense of helplessness. How can she fulfill her mission as a teacher, if the students don´t want to learn? How can she make them learn? She says:

> But you see, what can you do? These days there is no way to put pressure on children. It is really sad that you have to repeat a math topic for a whole week. On Friday you give them a quiz, and they don't know anything. You begin to doubt yourself. Are you doing something wrong? Are you a bad teacher? Then why is it that some of them learn and others don't? If you give them a bad grade, they rip off the page. The parents come and they don't care either. There is nothing that can hurt them. They could at least say I have to study because I don't want to be a loser or because I want to be someone. I remember when I studied, I used to work hard because they would hit me. The teacher would hit me if I didn't know the multiplication chart, or if I didn't do my homework, or did not study a lesson. And if I would go home and tell my mother, she would also hit me. So I had to study. Today this does not exist. If you scold a student, or send them out of the class, or hit them, you are in trouble. They don't understand that they have to study either. They don't understand that if they don't study they will have to cut sugar cane or sweep the floors. They won't be able to do this either if they don't finish primary school. I think we are going through a crisis. You have to teach children that they have to learn not for a grade or because they are afraid of being punished, but for their own sake. I have come to understand this myself now that I am studying at this university. When I was in high-school, I used to study for a grade. Here I have learned that if I haven't come here to study, I might as well not be here. If I don't go to a class, I have to find out what went on that day not because of the grade but because of what I need to know. Children should also learn that they have to learn not because they are afraid of being

punished, but for their own sake. This is, however, a long process.

Although deep inside Yolanda feels that the use of violence is inappropriate, she believes that sometimes it is necessary to make children learn. Even as a mother she has difficulties in educating her own children without having to hit them every once in a while. She gives the following example:

> The director of our school has an archaic teaching methodology. She is very strict with the children, and every once in a while she hits them with the ruler. But you know the children learn. My own son studied with her, and he learned. I used to feel so sad when I would see her with the ruler yelling at them, and yet my son really learned. These little children who forget to do their homework, she makes sure they stay in during break. You think they will ever forget their homework again? Never. You see these little first graders crying because they want to go out, and she says they can't unless they do their homework. These kids are like little soldiers. They take care of their classroom. There is not even one desk that they have written on. Each time my professors talk about modern pedagogical theories, I remember the director. What she does goes completely against what they say, and yet with her you can see the results.

Yolanda believes that her childhood experiences and sufferings and her being a mother often make her too sensitive to children and their feelings. She says:

> When I see them so weak and so little, I want to protect them, and sometimes I go overboard. The director has told me not to get so close to the students. But what can I do? There is an eight year old kid who comes and stands by my side during break near the table where teachers have coffee and bread because he wants something to eat or drink. I usually wait for the teachers to finish eating, and give whatever is left to the

> child because I cannot bear his pleading eyes. How could I not give him something? When I look at him, I see my own kids. The director has told me not to give him any more coffee, and especially not in our cups. She said I would be reinforcing his begging. I don't think so though. I think if he weren't hungry, he would not be there. Maybe she is right though. I have stopped giving him food.

Yolanda sympathizes very much with her students and suffers a great deal when she becomes aware of their difficulties. She says:

> I sometimes feel powerless because I cannot help them. I cannot give them money, food, or clothes. All I can offer them is what I know, and it seems that many of them do not even want that. Many of them have lots of problems. I think most of them eat before they come to school. I wouldn't dare say that they come to school hungry, but they probably eat rice soup that fills them up now and after an hour they are hungry again. They don't eat nutritious food. They come to school with shoes that have holes in them, old pants, and shirts that have no buttons. Many come with dirty faces. All this affects the children's studies. I have a student who is always tired, in the morning and in the afternoon. The girl has no desire to do anything. She falls asleep whenever she can. It's because she has a very unorganized life. Her parents don't live together. She lives with her aunt. Her mother, of course, thinks that her daughter is fine and needs nothing. I have tried to mention some of her problems to the mother, but it is totally out of her capacity to understand them.

Yolanda's sensitivity to her students' problems, their poverty, their lack of family life makes her inner contradictions much stronger. In the same manner that she is confused about the use of force as a teaching method, she is not sure about how permissive she should be with her

students, how much she should protect them, and how much of a mother she should be to them. She talks about another case that demonstrates these doubts:

> Another problem is the school uniform. This same girl who is always tired comes to school without a uniform. The director has told me many times not to accept her, to send her home. But I think that nothing will happen if I send her home. Her mother doesn't care, and her father, only God knows. The only one who will suffer is the little girl; she may even not finish primary school. So, I called the father and told him to buy the uniform. The father claimed to have bought the material, but when I told the girl to bring the material so that one of the teachers would make her the uniform, the girl said that the father had never bought any material. I finally had to promise the director to send the girl home in January if she doesn't come to school in her uniform. She will probably show up in January with no uniform, but what can I do? I will have to send her home.

At this point Yolanda, who has spoken as a teacher and as mother, speaks as a student. She has come back to study in the university after many years of being away from school. She, who has had to live up to the image of a teacher for all these years, is a student who has new university professors, some of whom she likes and some of whom she actually dislikes. She, who has had to tell children to sit quiet through her classes and not move, has to sit still for at least two hours and listen to her professors. Yolanda, who has felt the negation and the silence that her students have imposed on her, is now part of a group who is using the same mechanisms towards her

professors. Accepting all this and adapting to it has not been an easy task for her. She says:

> My classmates look at me as if I were the married woman of the class. They often want to tell a joke, and don't because I am there. Today, they wrote ugly things on the blackboard against the professor. I was really mad. I tried to erase it before he walked in, but he saw it. I thinks they should be more respectful of their teachers, and should pay more attention to their studies instead of complaining so much, and yet, many times, I feel that I am wasting my time by going to class. Some of the professors confuse me. The very moment that you think you understand, they mix everything up in your mind. Others, come to class with no preparation. I say to myself: I should be doing something else instead of sitting here and wasting my time in this class. I think of my students. How should they feel in my classes?

When Yolanda talks about her classmates, she says:

> I think, although enrolled in a teacher training program, these people do not want to become teachers. They are not interested in teaching. First, because teaching requires continuous studying, and most people are not up to it. Second, no matter what, people are always observing teachers, what they do, what they say, and how they act, and not that many people are willing to lead such kind of a public life.

And finally, after having talked about her experiences as a child, as a teacher, and a university student, Yolanda talks directly about the teacher's image. She says:

> During my years as a student the teacher's image, at the level of the students, parents, and the whole community was very good. The teacher was like the center around which many community activities rotated. People constantly turned to the teacher for advice. We believed that what the teacher said was the absolute truth. If someone said something against the teacher's ideas or comments, we would say 'no the teacher said so, and she knows more than anyone else. This has

> changed mostly because of the teachers themselves. Teachers gave a great deal from themselves to the community. They lived in the community where they taught; they knew the people whom they worked with; they were part of the everyday activities of the village. The teacher would talk to the parents and other community members in the evenings. Now she comes and goes. Also in the past teachers were the center of all activities because they knew a little about everything. The teacher knew how to give shots to people, how to produce, how to participate in all community activities. Today the teacher is a stranger who limits her work to giving classes, and this is why the teacher is rejected by the community. She does not have the same importance any more. People use derogatory terms to refer to the teacher. All this means that today's teacher has lost the people's respect.

To demonstrate this, Yolanda uses the following example:

> Before students would never use a bad word in front of a teacher. Today they do. Even if the teacher is there and the students are fighting, the teacher can easily get hurt. It has happened to me. I have been beaten up. Of course, it has not been on purpose, but I have gotten caught between two kids, and as I tried to separate them, they have beaten me. Once a child bit me. He did not want to bite me, but he did. He then began to yell saying that I had not let him do what he wanted to do. This child, of course, was not normal. His mother came to school. She was very mad. She began to beat him in front of everyone in school. But what good does that do?

Yolanda believes that this loss of respect is a result of the teacher's own behavior. She says:

> It is because of her lack of responsibility, the way she talks, the way she acts that people have lost respect for the teacher. You see I think that it may seem that parents expect teachers to break away from certain habits that come from traditional norms, such as not drinking in the public or being more responsible in one's sexual behavior, they at the same time resent teachers for having gone against the traditional moral codes of the villages. No matter what the parents

> themselves do, whether they drink in public or lead a promiscuous life, teachers are expected to transmit different values to their students. For example the teachers from my school claim that parents expect them to serve alcohol during special celebrations, so they do. I think that parents would have much more respect for the teachers if they showed the courage to refuse to serve alcohol in the school. The teachers themselves are looking for an excuse to celebrate and to get drunk. All you need to do is go to Puerto Tejada on Teacher's Day starting early afternoon, and observe all the half drunk people who are dressed up walking up and down the streets celebrating; they are teachers. This is how we have become. I know of two teachers who were fighting with each other over a man. These kinds of behaviors are responsible for the deterioration of the teacher's image.

And how does Yolanda perceive herself? What kinds of difficulties does she have? In regards to herself, she says:

> And teachers like myself, who are different, who think about things, who worry about the problem of violence, values, and being correct are considered strange. My colleagues think I destroy their fun because I begin to question these things. 'Leave Yolanda alone,' they say, 'she is going to start again.' There, however, are many teachers in the different schools in the region who do not agree with these things. There is a teacher in Puerto Tejada who is well known for his correctness, his beliefs, and his values. I was talking to one teacher about how his colleagues reacted to his comments about values and ethics. He said they never invite him to participate in the activities that they consider fun, but that whenever they have something important to talk about, they ask for his advice. So, I think they finally respect people who stick to their values, but it is very difficult for people like myself to live and work in this environment.

Although Yolanda feels that teachers themselves should be blamed for the deterioration of their image, she also believes that parents are responsible for some of these

problems because they do not have the courage to tell teachers what they do not like about their teaching in their face. She says:

> There is a great deal of backbiting going on here. People don't tell you what they think of you. All I tell you is based on my own experiences. I have been quite lucky because people have been nice to me, and this is not because I am such a great teacher. It is mostly because I am nice to them. I talk to them. I tell them how well their plants are growing. It is mostly because I am part of this environment. I really belong. In spite of all this, I think there are things that people don't tell me. One rainy day when I was not able to get to school on time. Two of my students began to fight, and the teacher in charge of the next door class sent the two students home. When I arrived, the father of one of the suspended children was there to complain about how I should have been there, of how the other teacher should not have suspended his son, and of how I could have gotten into trouble. I maintained my calmness throughout the whole thing, and finally apologized for not having been there. Apparently, everything is fine, but you never know what they are saying behind my back.

And finally, Yolanda finishes her story with the following comments about what she thinks can be done to improve the teacher's image:

> There is a lot to do to improve the teacher's image. One's whole life is reflected in one's work, so any kind of restructuring should be from the inside. You have to ask yourself where you are going and what you are doing; you need to know what the purpose of your life is. We have to get rid of this concept which says I do what I want to do, what gives me pleasure, or what I think is good for me because it is my life and I am only going to live it once. I think that every single person should make this change, but that the teacher has to change the most because teachers are special. Would you leave your child in the hands of just any one?

Yolanda's story has been valuable for the purpose of this thesis in many ways. By using her own words and based on her personal experiences, she has given us an insider's point of view of how a teacher sees herself and how she thinks she is perceived by others. Also, from her twelve years of experience as a primary school teacher, Yolanda has spoken to us of some of the dilemmas that teachers face as they decide to adopt a critical attitude towards reality and to change those parts of it that they consider inappropriate.

In her story Yolanda has alluded to the teacher's present image. This is a dual portrait of the educator. It, on one hand reflects the expectation that exists of the teacher as a role model, and, on the other hand, illustrates her as a product of the social and economic conditions in which she lives. It is an image of a teacher who is both one of society's major actors in the perpetuation of negative attitudes and customs and one of the greatest victims of its cultural disintegration.

Yolanda herself is an example of a person who believes in the apostolic image of the teacher. She identifies with those who look at the teacher as a public figure and hold her responsible for keeping this image. This is why it is painful for Yolanda to see that some teachers have begun to

reject this image in favor of a more private and comfortable life-style. Yolanda is a living example of those Colombian educators that, as Parra Sandoval describes, have the desire to change, to innovate, and to work more efficiently, and are yet constantly clashing with the culture that perpetuates the law of "least amount of effort" (Parra, 1992, p.19).

Her story has shown us how Yolanda has had to strive through poverty and despair to become a teacher. But it has also shown us how she still has to struggle through many other difficulties as she tries to live up to the image of the teacher that she wishes to be. For Yolanda, of course, this image is not only formed by how she perceives herself, but also by how she perceives others, for she very well knows that her being a teacher is part of what many others, some similar to and others very distinct from her, call being a teacher.

Maybe, this is why Yolanda's words reflect both hope and fear. Her hope for a better future is embedded in her inner conviction that every single individual can contribute to the construction of a better society. Her fear, however, comes from her doubts about the strength of those societal structures that perpetuate negative attitudes. Her greatest fear is of losing, of having to give in, and of having to compromise in order to survive.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND USE

In this concluding chapter I hope to further interpret and analyze the themes and patterns that emerged during the research. What conclusions can be drawn from examining the rural teacher's image? How do the themes, metaphors, and issues raised by community members and teachers provide us with more insight for understanding the question of teacher image? What have we learned from this study that can be useful for present and future educational interventions in the region and similar rural areas? And finally, what other questions were raised during this research that such interventions can address? In this chapter, some tentative answers to these questions are analyzed.

Teacher Image: the Heroic and the Real

One of the most important lessons learned from this inquiry is that the teacher's image is a complex question and that it cannot be reduced to simple dichotomies between sacred and secular; traditional and modern; unprofessional and professionalized. It is a multi-faceted issue that should not be narrowed down to any simplistic statement of cause and effect.

Looking back at the themes and metaphors that surfaced as people talked about the rural teacher in this inquiry, we can observe the emergence of a dual image. This I have called the image of the rural teacher both as a hero and as ordinary human being. The heroic image, a more idealistic perception, elevates teachers to the level of apostles, sacrificed beings, and individuals with super-human powers who can solve all kinds of problems. When people concentrate on the image of the teacher as an ordinary person, they begin to describe the reality of teaching and the teachers' short-comings. Teachers do not respond to their apostolic image; they do not sacrifice sufficiently; they do not fulfill their mission as a dedicated and loving second parent who can transform the most undisciplined and uneducated of children; teaching has become a job just like any other profession; teachers are not well-prepared for their job; they cannot establish a satisfactory relationship with the community; and on top of all this teaching is a profession that does not receive the recognition that it deserves.

It is here at the level of the teacher's real image that people's comments reflect some of the statements that we have encountered in the literature, of which the following are some examples: teachers in general and rural teachers in particular have low status because they have low salaries; the rural teacher's image has declined because

they are no longer committed to their profession; rural teachers have lost credibility because they do not reside in the rural areas nor do they participate in community activities; rural teachers have lost leadership as new professionals take their place in the community.

The teacher's true portrait, however, is neither its heroic nor its real image. It is an amalgamation of both. Teaching is a sacred profession and it is the pillar of society. Teachers are second parents to children; they are catalyzers for community action and organization. In spite of all the ingratitude that teachers receive from community members, parents, and students, teaching is a gratifying profession. Who would not feel an inner satisfication just by the mere knowledge of belonging to a sacred institution that is responsible for the education of the future generations? What would society do without its teachers?

If all this is true, then who or what can be held responsible for all the difficulties and problems that rural teachers face? In other words, can anyone be blamed for the continuous clash that occurs between the heroic part of the teacher's image and its real aspect? Can it be the government's fault because it pays teachers badly? Can the educational system be blamed because it is not training the teachers well enough? Can these problems be attributed to the social, economic, and political conditions of the country? Or should today's teachers be blamed for allowing

the human aspect of the teacher image to take over its heroic part? Again, it seems that no single one of these suppositions is the answer. In reality, people hold all these propositions as true. Sometimes they use one statement to explain their reality, and on another occasion, they refer to a different one.

No matter whom they hold responsible for the clashing of the real and the heroic aspect of the teacher image, both teachers and community members expect teachers to be perfect role models for their children. Meanwhile people are perfectly aware that teachers are a fruit of the social and economic conditions in which they live. They believe that it is precisely as products of their society that teachers end up being both perpetrators of the negative and positive aspects of their culture and victims of its disintegration.

What does all this mean to our teachers? How have they learned to deal with all these ambiguities? From where do they receive their inspiration? Have they given up their apostolic image and become content with what Vera Gil and Francisco Parra (1989) call the conception of the teacher as a wage-worker? Are they constantly fluctuating as Parra Sandoval (1986 b) says between their sacred and secular images? Or, are they, as he also claims (1992), merely acting according to the law of "the least amount of effort" (p. 19)? maybe they are caught up, together with parents and other community members, in what he calls "the ideology of

sacrifice" (1986 b)? Are teachers trying to reflect the magical-religious image whose source, as Tezanos (1986), says is the figure of Christ? Or are Colombian teachers merely living up to an image, which as Martinez Boom, Castro, and Noguera (1990) claim has never been anything but the teacher's illusion of being an intellectual who has the moral obligation to educate, an illusion that has provided teachers with the psychological satisfaction and the spiritual energy to continue with what they consider an arduous task?

Here again, there is no straightforward answer to these questions. The way the teachers who participated in this study have described their reality has repeatedly demonstrated the complexity of their situation. And in this complex situation, of course, there exists a whole series of contradictions and ambiguities. And it is precisely this ambivalence and vagueness that make the data rich and provoke the reader to make her own meaning from what the participants say. No matter what particular meaning we make of the thoughts, experiences, and stories that were presented in this study, we can make a few general statements about how our teachers perceive their reality:

The teachers of this study seem to suffer from the lack of clarity about what is right and what is wrong. It is as if the ground on which they stand were shaken, for the norms and values of the past no longer apply to today's reality.

This lack of clarity, for example, becomes more apparent when they talk about discipline, punishment, respect, and authority. The older definitions of these terms no longer apply to the modern world. What does authority mean in a society that is advocating democracy? What are the connotations of respect in a world where equality is cherished? What does punishment imply in an educational philosophy that condemns it? Here we can clearly see that our teachers, who are being trained under modern pedagogical theories, and are supposedly being prepared to deal with children and their problems, feel that many of these theories neither respond to their needs nor provide them with an alternative that suits their reality.

In spite of all the ideological and theoretical rhetoric that promotes values such as liberty, democracy, and peace and refers to the importance of individual rights, the schools in which our teachers work function within a reality to which many of these concepts are foreign. Our teachers speak of the poverty, hunger, and physical and emotional abandonment of their students; describe the generalized atmosphere of insecurity and violence that permeates the country; and refer to their own incapacity to deal with all the structural and institutional problems and injustices that permeate the society. They, therefore, reflect a sense of insecurity, for they do not knowing what

to do? How to react to these problems? Or which path to take?

We can also observe from the teachers' comments that they are seldom torn between adopting professional attitudes towards their job and becoming totally involved and dedicated to it. It often seems that the teacher's choice to establish a professional relationship, which implies a certain distance from the students and community members, is merely an act of survival. It is emotionally impossible for teachers to respond to all the demands and expectations that society puts on them, especially when societal problems are totally out of teachers' control. Many, therefore, decide to maintain a physical or emotional distance from their students and the community. Others, however, similar to Yolanda, still firmly believe in the apostolic image of the teacher. For them, it is difficult not to give, it is wrong to become only concerned with one's own life, and it is unethical to set aside the teacher's traditional moral codes and obligations.

Our teachers' words, therefore, do not describe a simple state of causes and effects or of clear cut dichotomies between good intentioned and egotistical teachers, but a complicated reality of educators who live and work in a society that is going through great transition. Where are the teachers of this changing society headed? Who are they supposed to look up to? Where do they

get their guidance from? It seems that many of these questions compel teachers and community members to look back to the past.

The Past: A Point of Reference for a Society in Transition

Both on an individual and a collective level, the past is always a yardstick which sets the criteria for critiquing the present and a basis for making future decisions. The most interesting part of this relationship to the past, however, is people' tendency to glorify it. It seems that in most memories the negative aspects of the past fade away and only the good ones remain. It is only when people are forced to recall the details of the past that some slowly remember the not so pleasant aspects. This longing for the past or what many call a nostalgia for the lost paradise (Eliade, 1989, p. 17), a recurring motif in most cultures, has undoubtedly been present through the comments of the participants of this research.

The themes and metaphors used by these participants to depict the teacher image have greatly demonstrated their attachment to the past. It is certainly clear that the heroic image of the teacher is not merely a product of people's imagination. It is based on the reminiscence of what in Jungian terms could be called the archaic image of the teacher (Jung, 1933; 1964). This heroic image is not a

product of the static transformation of the archaic image. It is a portrait that is continuously being influenced by images that come from the collective unconscious of humanity. This unconscious is formed by images and mythological motifs and their archetypes, tendencies to form representations and motifs (Jung, 1964, p. 58). The point of reference for the depiction of the teacher image, therefore, is nothing but the archetypical image of the teacher, for the archetype of the teacher, like that of many other figures, always remains the same while the motifs, representations, and particular images change over time.

Analyzing the teacher image and its relationship to the past in terms of archaic images, symbols, and archetypes rather than concrete and definable terminology, amplifies our understanding of the teacher figure. It allows us to comprehend the complexity of the diverse meanings that the participants of this study make of the theme, for we know that an image can have different meanings, many of which can even be contradictory to one another. This makes it difficult to translate images into concepts, for often it is the image that is true and not one of its meanings. "To translate an image into a concrete terminology, to reduce it to only one of its planes of reference, is worse than mutilating it; it is exterminating it, annulling in terms of an instrument of knowledge" (Eliade, 1989, p. 15).

The teacher image, thus, contains in itself a whole series of connotations, and should never be mutilated into one of its meanings. It is like a mosaic that depicts the archetype of the teacher by portraying a series of motifs and representations that may belong to different historical moments. What makes the image ambiguous and somehow contradictory is the overlap of these motifs and representations in certain areas. These ambivalences, however, are nothing but the natural nuances of the picture. The eye that has learned to perceive them for what they are can easily recognize such chiaroscuro.

There may exist a dominant bright picture of a glorious and dignified past with the traditional teacher as a dedicated and sacred being who selflessly serves the community. But adjacent to that there appears an image of the modern teacher who has been able to establish a closer relationship with children because she has gotten over the barriers of respect and authoritarianism. And right beside that, of course, one can see better physical facilities, less students, and fewer teaching hours. This is a picture of a more modern and comfortable life. On a parallel plane on our mosaic there is the image of a modern teacher who is contributing to the transformation of teaching from sacred to secular, together with that of the traditional teacher as an organic community member and a true educator.

In addition to all these nuances, ambiguities, and overlaps, there is one motif that is certainly present in all the representations, and this is the longing for a sense of community and togetherness embodied both in the symbol of rituals and ceremonies and in the personification of the past teacher heroes. This is the desire to recreate some of the lost elements of culture. This is a yearning for certain elements that can give the schools a vision, a purpose, something to pursue.

Some may wish for a ritual like the examination week that may bring back in to the schools the seriousness of studying. Others find it necessary to re-write the region's history, its struggles through slavery, and its joys and sorrows; this they believe will connect the people to their roots. Others ask for the recovery of the stories of the great heroes of the region: Domingo Lazo, Enesia Mina, and many others. The rituals and ceremonies are gone, however, and so are the great hero teachers of the past. "Heroes, ya no hay," [There are no heroes any more], many say, or "these things become part of history," as Dona Maria says. Traditions, rituals, and ceremonies can be binding. The region also needs to progress. Change is a necessary aspect of life.

Implications and Use for Study

In describing the philosophical underpinnings of the methodology adopted for this research, I stated that I situated this study within a new paradigm for research. I, on the one hand, grounded this claim on my basic philosophical and ideological stance in regards to research, and, on the other hand, to some of the concrete aspects of this study. The more tangible features of this research that I believe link it to new paradigm research have included my efforts to involve a number of community members and teachers in the research process, to establish a dialogue with the participants that can help them theorize about their own reality and to come up with some tangible solutions for change, and to facilitate the commencement of some concrete activities as the initiating steps towards such changes.

At the moment of the systematization of the findings of my research into this dissertation, I should state that many of my original plans for the participation of a large number of people in the development and expansion of the research and the unravelling of specific change oriented activities at the local level were not possible. This I mainly attribute to the shortage of time. I, however, consider this research an initial step towards the fulfillment of such aspirations. In the case of the North of Cauca, I

believe that this study has triggered enough interest in some teachers and community members for the initiation of more participatory activities with their own research questions.

I believe that in addition its contribution to the general knowledge on the theme, the more concrete use and implications of the research process and the findings of this study can be placed in three categories. Its first use is for the local participants of the North of Cauca region in their present and future activities for the improvement of the teacher's image and the enhancement of the teacher/community relationship. The second use that can be given to this study is in the training of rural teachers, particularly in the Licenciatura en Educacion Rural Program. The third way in which this research can be used is in the replication of some of the elements of research by the students of this program or other teachers in different communities for the improvement of the teacher image.

Changes for the Region: The People's Point of View

No matter how good or bad the teacher's image is, those who participated in this research from the North of Cauca believe that it can always be improved. The following is a list of things they said needs to be done to improve the teacher's image:

-The government must increase the teacher's salary.

-Universities should improve their training programs.

-Teachers have to develop more love and dedication towards their profession.

-Parents and community members must support teachers.

-Politicians should improve the facilities of the schools.

-The mass media should present teachers better.

The following is a summary of how people think these kinds of changes can lead to the improvement of the teacher's image:

If the teacher's salary increases, they will be more content with their profession. They will no longer be constantly looking for ways to make more money, and will hopefully spend all their efforts on educating the children and establishing better relationships with the community. Teachers with better salaries will also be able to rise in society's economic echelon. They will obviously have a better status and a better image in a society that highly cherishes money.

If the universities improve their training programs, the quality of the rural teacher will rise. This will happen if they prepare teachers who have love and vocation for their profession and who are also well trained to work in the rural areas.

If teachers replace negative attitudes such as lack of interest and care for children, mere concern for economic

gains, and the desire to move to the larger urban areas that are permeating their profession with love and concern for the children, self-sacrifice, and more participation in community activities, they can teach better and definitely be respected more by the community.

If parents support teachers by helping their children in their studies, by paying more attention to them, and by providing them with their basic material needs, teachers will be able to concentrate more on teaching. They will not have to worry so much about those aspects of a child's life that should be their parents' concern. It is also possible that if parents take their share in the education of their children and do not leave all the problems to the teacher, teachers will no longer be held responsible for every single difficulty that children face.

If politicians give more money to schools, and help improve their physical facilities, rural schools will no longer look inferior to the urban ones. This will help raise the prestige of the rural schools and will therefore improve the teacher's image. Teachers will also teach better in superior schools with more resources. They will have a better self-image if they work under better physical conditions. The task of the politicians, however, is not only limited to their participation in the improvement of the schools, they also have to improve the whole rural infrastructure. If they bring enough money to improve the

roads and the other physical conditions of the rural areas, teachers will no longer run away from the rural schools. Many will be willing to teach in these schools, for there will be no difference between urban and rural schools.

If the radio, the television, and the newspapers dedicate their efforts to elevate the teacher's image by promoting teachers, writing their stories, and talking about the importance of teaching, people will become more aware of the importance of teaching and teachers will feel proud of their profession.

Teacher Image as a Cultural Element

These seem to be simplistic solutions to a complicated situation. The participants' ideas about what is to be done reflect too closely the present situation; they seem to be more an accommodation to the present condition than the product of a more lasting critical refection on that condition. A more critical and substantial reflection requires a more prolonged period of time. These initial reflections, however, can be used as the grounds for more profound and lasting changes.

It is clear that rural life consists of a whole web of interconnected processes and to change one aspect of it both requires and implies variation in many of its other components. Furthermore, each one of the rural processes and

their totality is tremendously influenced by a series of external factors that are usually out of people's control. During the past decades, many of those who have been engaged in the process of change in rural communities have become quite conscious of this complexity. Change is not something that happens over night, it does not only occur in one aspect of rural life, and any small change in one element of a certain process has great repercussions in many other components. In addition, a genuine and durable change process can only be initiated and upheld by those who are directly influenced by it.

It is apparent that both the study and the triggering of any kind of change has to be done within a certain conceptual framework which also implies the creation of a series of methodological tools. For the study and stimulation of some of the changes suggested by the participants of this study, I propose a framework that basically looks at any process of change as the introduction of a series of modifications to a people's cultural practices. By culture, I mean a way of making meaning of the world and its different relationships shared by a group of people (Peacock, 1986). Culture as a whole, however, is built of different components. One component of culture, for example, is the way a people make meaning of education. The educational component of a culture, therefore, consists of a series of beliefs and practices shared by the people of that

particular culture. The image of the teacher, that in itself contains a whole set of conceptions and actions in regards to the teacher, is therefore one element of this cultural component. Genuine change, that which does not lead to abrupt ruptures in people's beliefs and practices, only occurs when a group of people study and analyze the way they make meaning of a particular cultural element such as the teacher image, and when they begin to slowly introduce new ways of perceiving and acting in regards to that cultural element.

In this study, we have observed that the teacher image as perceived by our participants is a complex issue. It brings with itself a set of positive aspects related to a heroic conception that comes from the past. At the same time, like many other phenomena, this image is being highly influenced by the great social and economic changes of the Colombian culture in general and that of the North of Cauca in particular. Which part of this image need to be changed? Which elements should be preserved? Although in this study we have touched on some of the answers to these questions, in order for these ideas to be taken to a more concrete level of action, they need to be analyzed much further by the people of the region. Teachers and community members need to get together, analyze the way they as a group make meaning of the teacher image, look for the origins of these meanings, decide what needs to be changed, and begin with

small activities that can slowly bring about the kind of change that they desire.

In the North of Cauca such conversations may require further research in the mythical and historical images that exist of the teacher figure in the black culture. This task can, obviously, be best undertaken by a group of teachers, community members, and students who may wish to look into their history, their folktale, their religious beliefs, and myths in order to identify the different images that have existed of the teacher figure. Such understanding of the past and the different meanings that have been given to the teacher figure, of course, can be useful for present and future collective decisions for change.

Implications for Teacher Training Programs

What does all this mean for training teachers? What do teacher training programs need to do in order to prepare teachers for their reality? I believe that many programs ignore both the complicated context in which teachers perform and the teacher's complex image. Many emphasize the teacher's sacred image as an abstraction, and create a whole discourse around the figure of the educator. This discourse idolizes the teacher as a special, dedicated, and selfless soul whose life should be a sacrifice for the future generations. Teachers memorize this rhetoric, not only

because they often hear it, but also because it is their only armament, the only element that gives them self confidence and identity. Do teachers really believe in the discourse that they prepare so well during their studies and on which they greatly elaborate during their life-time? From this study I have learned that as much as they would like for this image to be real, teachers do not agree with it.

Teachers usually become aware of the difficulty of their job only when they begin to teach. They see that the results of teaching are neither tangible nor measurable. The fulfillment of their purpose, the student's learning, does not depend on them, but on the desire and conditions of their students. Teachers observe that no matter how much they strive, if the child does not want to learn, the child will not learn. And to the outsider's eyes, this implies the teacher's inadequacy. Teachers, therefore, begin to doubt some of their beliefs about teaching. Maybe teaching is not such a sacred profession; maybe it is not as gratifying as it is supposed to be, or maybe it is because people do not know how to appreciate it. Teachers continuously address such questions during their life.

Many researchers have emphasized the need for beginning teachers to become familiarized with the teacher image. Many have observed that most beginning teachers enter training programs with partial, but often firmly held, conceptions of themselves as teachers, developed over years of life

experience including thousands of hours spent observing teachers as students (Lortie, 1975). For future teachers who enter with firm ideas about the teacher image and the role they are expected to play in society, learning experiences become a process of assimilation of those ideas, images, and role models that can be fit into their mental schemes. For those who enter lacking a clear conception of themselves as teachers, teacher education may provide the possibility to explore few alternative visions of teaching (Bullough, Knowles, and Crow, 1991). During the first years of teaching, therefore, beginning teachers engage in a complicated process of role negotiation. In addition to having to become familiar with the practical and real aspects of their job, they engage in a dynamic process where they define and re-define their role as teachers as they interact with parents, students, and other teachers (Bullough, Knowles and Crow, 1991).

The fact that teachers have to engage in role negotiation processes during their first teaching years is a normal process and is not meant to be avoided. An individual's initiation into a role where they begin to form a self-image and understand what is expected from them is an idiosyncratic and personal experience. To say that the formation of a conception of teachers and teaching is an individual process does not negate, however, the fact that cultures hold a whole series of shared meanings and

expectations around the profession and the teacher image. This, I believe, we have been able to observe in this study. A thorough discussion of such shared perceptions can, therefore, be included in teacher training programs, that in addition to focussing on the content of education and on the instruction of teachers, should as the advocates of critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1988) propose pay specific attention to the context where teaching occurs. For teachers, this context makes part of a world which holds an image of teachers, gives them a particular treatment, and has certain expectations from them.

In addition to an analysis of common conceptions and expectations, as Bullough, Knowles, and Crow (1991) state teacher training programs need to "help beginning teachers to come to a reasonably full awareness of the conceptions they hold of themselves as teachers and of the origins of the meanings they hold" (p. 190). For these authors helping teachers become aware of their own histories, the images they hold of themselves, the stories of other teachers, and the image their culture holds of teachers is a first step toward helping teachers become "actors" rather than "reactors". Teachers need to learn from the very beginning that to engage in an empowering and ongoing learning process, they need to analyze and understand the social context in which they enter, position themselves in relation to the different perceptions that are held of them, and

"recognize themselves as centers of meaning-making, as producers of legitimate knowledge that is worthy of being shared and deserving to be acted upon" (p. 190).

In the case of Colombia, this study has demonstrated the need for teacher training programs to replace the idealized image of the teacher as a hero and the modern teacher's perception as a wage worker with a new image that incorporates both the ideal and the real. It is clear the reality of the teacher neither consists of her ideal image as a hero nor of her image as a normal human being who is solely dependable on outside forces. It is an amalgamation of both the ideal and the real.

In the Licenciatura en Educacion Rural Program, we have for the past years emphasized the image of the rural teacher as a moral leader. I still consider this image a valid one, for it is important for teachers to raise above many of the difficulties of teaching by preserving its ideals. The tension between the ideal and the real is a tangible and somehow necessary tension. Although the ideal should not be rejected merely because of the constraints of everyday life, this study has taught me that our perception of moral leadership should not ignore its real implications in the tangible world in which the teachers function. Our students should become familiarized with the complex image of the teacher. They should learn how to deal with the real world that is waiting for them outside of their classroom walls.

In addition to its contribution to the restructuring of the program's perception of teachers, the most immediate use that can be given to this study and its findings is in the creation of a course. Here many of the questions and ideas discussed in this study can be used to help beginning teachers clarify their understanding of teaching and their self image as teachers. This course, which will incorporate a participatory methodology, will invite the students to reflect on their relationship with teaching and teachers, and their reasons for choosing a teacher training program. It will also provide them with the opportunity to read the stories of other teachers. I expect that this kind of course will to some extent help resolve one of the major problems of these teachers, namely, lack of knowledge and critical analysis of the image that is held of them, and facilitate their initiation into teaching.

I also expect the influence of the course on teacher image to go beyond its effects on beginning teachers. Using participatory research methods, the participants of this course can initiate activities in their communities. They can thus stimulate the involvement of local populations in an on-going dialogue about the teacher image. This may have greater implications for future change and transformation, a social process that although beyond the scope of this dissertation, can emerge from this initial exploration of the images that exist of the rural teacher.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION BY AGE, GENDER, AND OCCUPATION

Gender	Number
Female	18
Male	4
Total	22

Table A.1 Teacher Gender Distribution

Age	number
Between 20-30	10
Between 31-40	7
Above 40	5
Total	22

Table A.2 Teacher Age Distribution

Gender	Number
Female	40
Male	20
Total	60

Table A.3 Adult Gender Distribution

Age	Number
Between 25-40	30
Between 41-60	20
Above 60	10
Total	60

Table A.4 Adult Age Distribution

Occupation	Number
Housewife	30
Construction,farm wage, sugarcane worker	10
Farmer	7
Community worker, health promotor	5
Shop keeper	5
student	3
Total	60

Table A.5 Adult Distribution by Occupation

Gender	Number
Female	24
Male	16
Total	40

Table 6. Youth Gender Specification

Age	Number
Between 11-13	6
Between 13-16	24
Between 16-20	10
Total	40

Table 7. Youth Age Distribution

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ADULTS

Village
Name
Sex
Age
Educational level: Primary Secondary Other
Profession
Years lived in village
Relation to the school Parent Other
Number of children in schoool
Number of children studying outside of village
Organizations to which belongs

-What do you think of the teaching profession?
-Would you have liked to be a teacher?
-What are the benefits and difficulties of teaching?
-How do you think that teaching comares to other professions in terms of satisfactions, salaries, and social position?
-Do you find any difference between urban and rural teaching?
-Do you find any difference between the rural and urban teacher's social position?
-Describe a teacher whom you know and believe that all teachers should be like this teacher.
-Describe a teacher you know whom you think should have chosen another profession.
-Name six qualities that you believe teachers should have.
-Do you prefer a man or a woman as ateacher for your child?
-Do you think that rural teachers are well prepared?
-Do you think rural teachers have vocation for teaching?
-Do you know a teacher who feels proud of being a teacher?
-How do you think people in general percieve the teacher?
-How do people perceive the teacher of this village?
-What do you think of her?
-Do you think that the community supports the school's activities? why?
-What are the needs of this community?
-What are the needs of the children?
-What kinds of community activities do you have here?
-In what activities do teachers participate?
-What kind of relationship do teachers have with politics?
-How do you think this relation should be?
-What kind of training do the teachers of this community receive?
-Is it useful for their work?

-Do you think that the teacher's image has changed? why?
-Do you know of any famous teachers in the region?
-Why are they famous? what did they do? What was expected of them?
-What is expected of a teacher today?
-Do you think it is easier or more difficult to be a teacher today? why?
-Are today's children different? how?
-Are teachers different today? how?
-How do you think each one of the following people or institutions can help improve the teacher's image?
-The government
-The ministry of education
-The mass media
-Teachers
-Local leaders
-parents

APPENDIX C

ENTREVISTA CON ADULTOS

Vereda

Nombre

Sexo: F____ M____

Edad:

Nivel educativo
Primaria_____ Secundaria_____ Otro_____

Ocupación

Tiempo de residencia en la vereda

Relación con la escuela:
Padre de Familia___
otro_____

Cuántos hijos en esta escuela

Cuántos hijos estudiando afuera

Organizaciones a las cuales pertenece:
Junta de Acción com_____ Aso padres fam_____
Otra_____

-Qué piensa usted de la profesión del maestro?

-Le hubiera gustado a usted ser maestro? porque?

-Cuáles piensa que son los beneficios y las dificultades de esta profesión?

-Cómo piensa que esta profesión compara con otros como agronomia, medicina, enfermería en términos de sus obstáculos, satisfacciones, salarios, posicion social?

-Piensa que hay alguna diferencia entre la enseñanza en la ciudad y en el campo?

-Encuentra usted alguna diferencia entre la posición del maestro rural y el maestro urbano?

-Describa un maestro que usted conozca y que así deben ser los maestros

-Ahora cuénteme de algún maestro o maestra que usted conozca y que cree que debió haber escogido otra profesión

-Nombre seis cualidades que un maestro debe tener

-Preferiría hombre o mujer como maestro para su hijo/a? Porque?

-Considera usted que los maestros del campo están bien preparados?

-Considera que los maestros del campo tienen vocación? Porque?

-Conoce a un maestro que se sienta orgulloso de ser maestro y que haya ganado su posición?

-Cómo piensa que la gente en general percibe la profesión de maestro?

-Cómo miran los demás miembros de la comunidad al maestro de aquí?

-Cómo lo/la encuentra usted?

-Usted siente que la comunidad apoya las actividades de la escuela, porque?

-Cuáles son las necesidades más grandes de esta comunidad?

-Cuáles son las necesidades de los niños?

-Qué tipo de acitividaes comunitarias se realiza aquí?

-En qué actividades participan los maestros?

-Cómo se relacionan los maestros con la política?

-Cómo piensa usted que debería de ser esta relación?

-Qué tipo de capacitación reciben los maestros de esta comunidad?

-Les sirve esta capacitacion en su trabajo?

-Usted piensa que la imagen del maestro ha cambiado en relación con antes? a qué se debe esto?

-Conoce algunos maestros famosos en la historia de la región? en el país?

-Porqué son famosos? que hacían? qué se esperaba de ellos?

-Qué se espera hoy día de un maestro?

-Piensa que es más fácil o más difícil ser maestro hoy día? porque?

-Son diferentes los niños de hoy? cómo?

-Son diferentes los maestros de hoy de los de antes? porque?

-Cómo piensa que cada uno de las siguientes personas o entidades puede ayudar a mejorar la imagen del maestro:

El gobierno

El ministerio de educación

Los medios masivos

Los maestros

Los líderes locales

Los padres de familia

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

Village
Name
Sex
Age
Name of school
number of teachers grades total students
place of birth
residence
Studies: High school Teacher training high school
University
Title
place
-Who from your family has been a teacher?
-Where did you begin to teach?
-Years of teaching experience.
-Years working in present school.
-working situation: ministry of ed. community other
-New school Conventional school
-What grade do you teach?
-How many students?
-Kind of organization in which participate.
-How would you define the teaching profession?
-Why did you chose teaching?
-What kinds of satisfactions have you had as a teacher?
-What kinds of difficulties or obstacles have you had?
-How would you compare teaching and its social position with other professions?
-What are the differences between urban and rural teaching?
-Is there any difference betwee the urban and rural teacher's position?
-Describe a teacher you know and think that all teachers should be like this person.
-Tell me about a teacher who you think should have chosen another profession.
-Name six qualities that teachers should have.
-Do you think that rural teachers are well prepared? why?
-Do you think rural teachers have teaching vocation?
-Do you know a teacher who is proud of being a teacher?
-How do you think that people in general perceive the rural teacher?
-What do you think that community members think about you?
-Do parents and community members support the school?
-What are the greatest needs of this community?

-What are the needs of the children?
-What kinds of community activities exist here?
-In what kinds of activities do you participate?
-Do the teachers here have the opportunity to participate in training programs?
-In what area is the training?
-Do many teachers participate in these trainings?
-What are the contributions of Fecode to teachers?
-Do you think that the teacher's image has changed?
-Do you know of some famous teachers in the history of the region?
-Why are they famous? What did they do? What was expected from them?
-What is expected of the teacher today?
-Is it easier or more difficult to be a teacher today?
-Are today's children different? Are the parents different?
-How are the teaching conditions? work load, salaries, classrooms, etc.
-In what way can each one of the following help improve the teacher's image?
The government
The ministry of education
The mass media
Teachers
Local leaders
Parents

APPENDIX E

ENTREVISTA CON MAESTROS

Vereda

Nombre

Sexo: F M

Edad

Nombre de escuela

#profesores grados total estudiantes

Lugar de nacimiento

Lugar de residencia

Nivel de Estudio: Bachillerato_____ Normal_____ Universidad_____

Titulo obtenido

Lugar

Quien de la familia ha sido maestro?

Donde se inicio como maestro?

Tiempo de experiencia como maestro

Tiempo de trabajo en la escuela actual

Situacion laboral: ministerio_____ comunidad_____ otro_____
Modalidad: Escuela Nueva____ Convencional___

Grado o area que ensena_____ Numero de estudiantes_____

Tipo de organizacion a la cual pertenece: Comunitaria_____ Gremial_____ Otra_____

Observaciones:

-Como definiria usted la profesion del maestro?

-Porque escogio usted esta profesion?

-Cuales son las satisfacciones que ha recibido durante sus anos como maestro?

-Cuales han sido las dificultades o obstaculos?

-Como compararia esta profesion con otros como agronomia, medicina, enfermeria en relacion a obstaculos, satisfacciones, salarios, posicion social

-Que diferencias encuentra entre ensenar en el campo y en la ciudad?

-Hay alguna diferencia entre la posicion del maestro rural y el maestro urbano?

-Describa un maestro que usted conozca y que considere que asi deben ser los maestros.

-Ahora, cuenteme de algun maestro o maestra que usted conozca y que cree que debio haber escogido otra profesion

-Nombre seis cualidades que un maestro debe tener

-Considera usted que los maestros del campo estan bien preparados? Porque?

-Considera usted que los maestros del campo tienen vocacion? Porque?

-Conoce a un maestro que se sienta orgulloso de ser maestro y que haya ganado su posicion? cuenteme como es o ha sido este maestro.

-Como piensa que la gente en general percibe la profesion de maestro?

-Como piensa que los miembros de la comunidad la miran a usted?

-Usted siente que los padres y los demas miembros de la comunidad apoyan las acitividades de la escuela? como?

-Cuales son las necesidades mas grandes de esta comunidad?

-Cuales son las necesidades de los ninos?

-Que tipo de actividades comunitarias se realiza aqui?

-En que activiades ha participado usted durante el ano pasado?

-Reciben los maestros de la region capacitacion? Donde? que tan a menudo y organizado por quien?

-En que areas son estas capacitaciones? Son utiles para su trabajo?

-Participan muchos maestros en estas capacitaciones? Porque?

-Cuales son las contribuciones que Fecode hace a los maestros de la region?

-Que relaciones existen entre los maestros y los nucleos educativos?

-Usted piensa que el imagen del maestro ha cambiado en relacion con antes? A que se debe eso?

-Conoce algunos maestros famosos en la historia de la region? en el pais?

-Porque son famosos? que hacian? Que se esperaba de ellos?

-Que se espera hoy dia de un maestro?

-Piensa que es mas facil o mas dificil ser maestro hoy dia? porque?

-Son diferentes los ninos de hoy? los padres?

-Como son las condiciones de trabajo hoy en dia, el salario, las aulas, etc.?

-Como piensa que cada uno de las siguientes personas o entidades puede ayudar a mejorar la imagen del maestro?

El gobierno

El ministerio de educacion

Los medios masivos

Los maestros

Los lideres locales

Los padres de familia

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUTH

Village	Age
Name	Sex
School	Grade
Number of schools attended	
Number of siblings	
Number studying	
Youth Association affiliated with	

Observations:

-What would you like to do when you are older?

-What do your parents want you to do?

-Would you like to be a teacher?

-Who has been a teacher in your family?

-How do you think a teacher should be?

-What things should a teacher do?

-What do people say about the teaching profession?

-Are there teachers in your family? what is their opinion about teaching?

-What do your parents say about teaching/

-Do you think that teachers are paid well?

-What kinds of difficulties do teachers face?

-Who has a more difficult job, the urban or the rural teacher?

-What would like to see teachers do?

APPENDIX G

ENTREVISTA CON JOVENES

Vereda: Nombre:

Sexo: Edad:

Lugar donde estudia Grado en que estudia

Numero de escuelas donde ha estudiado

Numero de hermanos Cuantos estudian, y donde

Asociacion Juvenil en que participa

Observaciones

Que quiere ser usted cuando grande?

Que le gustaria a sus padres que usted haga de grande?

Le gustaria ser maestro?

Quien ha sido su maestro preferido y porque?

Como piensa que debe ser un maestro?

Que cosas debe hacer un maestro?

Que dice la gente de la profesion de maestro?

En su familia hay maestros? que dicen ellos de la profesion?

Que piensan sus papas de la profesion de maestro?

Usted piensa que a los maestros les pagan bien?

Cuales son las dificultades que los maestros enfrentan?

A quien le toca mas duro el maestro rural o urbano? porque?

Que le gustaria que los maestros hicieran?

APPENDIX H

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADULTS

Name Age
Village Ocupation
Sex

-What do you think of the teaching profession?

-What are its benefits and difficulties?

-Do you think there is any difference between rural and urban teaching?

-Would you prefer a male or a female teacher for your children?

-How do teachers relate to politics?

-How do you think that this relation should be?

-Do you think that the teacher's image has changed over the years? Why?

-Do you think it is easier or more difficult to be a teacher today in relation to before?

APPENDIX I

CUESTIONARIO PARA ADULTOS

Nombre: Edad
Vereda: Ocupacion
Sexo:

-Que piensa de la profesion del maestro?

-Cuales piensa que son los beneficios y dificultades de esta profesion y porque?

-Piensa que hay alguna diferencia entre la enssenanza en la ciudad y en el campo?

-Prefereriea hombre o mujer como maestro para su hijo?

-Como relacionan los maestros con la politica?

-Como piensa usted que debe ser esta relacion?

-Usted piensa que la imagen del maestro ha cambiando en relacion con antes? a que se debe esto?

-Piensa que es mas facil o mas dificil ser maestro hoy? porque?

APPENDIX J

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Name Sex
Village Age
Degree

-How would you define the teaching profession?

-Why did you chose teaching?

-What satisfactions have your had as a teacher?

-What obstacles and difficulies have you had?

-What are the differences between rural and urban teaching?

-How do teachers relate to politics?

-How do you think this relationship should be?

-Do you think that the teacher's image has change during the past years? If it has, how and why?

-Do you think it is easier or more difficult to be a teacher today?

-How are the working conditions for teachers today in relation to the past?

APPENDIX K

CUESTIONARIO PARA MAESTROS

Nombre Sexo
Vereda Edad
Nivel de estudio

-Como define usted la profesion de maestro?

-Porque escogio usted esta profesion?

-Que satisfacciones ha recibido como maestro(a)?

-Que obataculos o dificultades ha tenido?

-Que diferencia encuentra entre la ensenanza en el campo y en la ciudad?

-Como se relacionan los maestros con la politica?

-Como piensa que deberia ser esta relacion?

-usted piensa que la imagen del maestro ha cambiado en relacion con antes? A que se debe esto?

-Piensa que es mas facil o mas dificil ser maestro hoy dia?

-Como son las condiciones de trabajo hoy en dia en comparacion con antes?

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