A Lad Who Doesn't Like Work

A Huasteca Nahuatl Tale

MARY ANN THOMAS
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This story was recorded in May of 1967 in the village of Cuatenehuatl in the municipio of Huautla, Hidalgo. It is only one of a series of stories concerning young men who do not want to work. The teller of the story is Marcelo Hernández Martínez, a young man of about twenty years of age.

Huasteca Nahuatl is spoken in three states—Veracruz, Hidalgo and San Luis Potosí—by an estimated 100,000 to 150,000 speakers. There is some bilingualism in the larger municipios on the edges of the area; but in the smaller villages (such as Cuatenehuatl with 1000 inhabitants), only those who have been out to study or work are able to use Spanish.

SE TELPOCATL ICUENTO


ONE YOUTH HIS-STOREY

1. One youth no-he-want he-will work. 2. He-has two siblings maidens. 3. Already they they-work. 4. That man only he-finished-leaving-to-eat. 5. Not-truth he-go cornfield. 6. He-no-work. 7. She-


or do any work. His mother told him to go look for work. “Your sisters won't give you any more to eat,” she said.

The youth was angry when he had to go look for work.” “I better go look for work,” he said. So he went.

On the way, he came to a large forest where he rested from the heat. He was sitting in the shade when a horse appeared. “I shall mount that horse that I see,” he said. He tried to mount it, but when he got up he fell off again. “I don't know how to sit on it,” he said. “If I sit on the front, how shall I be able to see? Is it better on the rear,” he said. “I shall be able to see on the rear. I shall see where his tail is.”
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ONE YOUTH HIS-STORY

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Once there was a young man with two sisters who didn’t like to work. The sisters always worked but the lad just ate. He wouldn’t go to the cornfield.


or do any work. His mother told him to go look for work. “Your sisters won’t give you any more to eat,” she said.

The youth was angry when he had to go look for work.” “I better go look for work,” he said. So he went.

On the way, he came to a large forest where he rested from the heat. He was sitting in the shade when a horse appeared. “I shall mount that horse that I see,” he said. He tried to mount it, but when he got up he fell off again. “I don’t know how to sit on it,” he said. “If I sit on the front, how shall I be able to see? It is better on the rear,” he said. “I shall be able to see on the rear. I shall see where his tail is.”

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The first time he tried to mount he only fell off again. He couldn't mount the horse. He tried another time. Once again he fell off. He just couldn't stay on it. Then he mounted on the rear end, and watched as he rode facing back wards.

He arrived on horseback at the home of a Mexican, a carpenter who was making a door. "Do you have any work, sir?" he said to him.

"Yes, I have work. You can help me please," he told him. "Tie your horse there so that he can rest." He told him to stand his horse there.

The lad said to the man that it was almost night time, and he hadn't fed his horse grass. "I better give him bark," he said. He gave his horse bark but

truth he-it-ate as wood its-bark. 51. Not-truth he-it-ate that his-horse. 52. Better I-it-remained my-horse he-him-said that our-uncle. 53. He came right here he-it-remain-came on-road. 54. Already he-came-came until where he-it-removed. 55. There he-arrive-came that horse. 56. When another-time he-came he-him-said better I-will-go my-home. 57. I-it-dream he-sick one my-sibling he-him-says that youth. 58. Cond. you-imperative-take-to-her that food that your-mother. 59. You-imperative-take this plastic. 60. And you-arrive-going you-will-it-take-out-cause in your-bag then. 61. He-himself-will-stand one table. 62. Much there all he-himself-will-place plates and tortillas he-him-says. 63. Already he-him-said. 64. He-arrived that youth side-house. 65. Mama, you-imperative-come. 66. You-pl-imperative-eat. 67. Here I-it-bring that we-will-eat he-her-says. 68. Already she-came that our-aunt. 69. He-
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The lad said to the man that it was almost night time, and he hadn't fed his horse grass. "I better give him bark," he said. He gave his horse bark but

he didn't eat it because it was like wood. So he said to the gentleman, "I better return my horse," and he went and left it on the road where he had found it.

When he returned again the young man said to the carpenter, "I had better go home. I dreamed that one of my sisters is sick," the youth said to him.

So the carpenter said to him, "Take this food to your mother along with this plastic. When you arrive, take it out of your bag. Set up a table and place plates and tortillas there."
came that her-youth. 70. She-him-says good no-you-will-go where you went only you-us-deceive. 71. You-arrive-came. 72. You-imperative-look you-bring she-him-said. 73. She-it-took one club. 74. Well she-him-spanked club that youth. 75. He-went-already that youth also where he-works. 76. He-arrived his-home that Mexican. 77. Always she-itates your mother that you-them-to-them-took. 78. No only they-me-came-chasing with wood. 79. No-they-want they-me-will-see he-him-said. 80. Only I-them-deceive because we-it-saw nothing I-it-took he-him-said. 81. Another-time he-came-already. 82. In eight you-no-go. 83. Another-time he-it-dream another his-sibling he-sick. 84. He-him-said little-better I another-time I go my-home. 85. I-it-dream another my-sibling he-sick

When the youth arrived outside his house, he called to his mother, “Mama, come! Eat! I am bringing things so that we can eat.”

His mother came out and said to him, “You better not go where you went because all you do is deceive us. You came, and look what you brought,” she said to him. She grabbed a club and hit him.

Then the young man went to the Mexican’s home where he worked. “Did your mother eat that which you took to them?” asked the carpenter.

“No, they just chased me with a club. They don’t want to see me,” the boy replied. “I deceived them because we couldn’t see any of what I took,” he said.

he-him-said that youth. 86. Another-time he-came. 87. He him-said already it-is-becoming-night. 88. He-himself-remain-came in his-home one seat one cowboy his-home. 89. There he-takes-care-of it there cowboy. 90. There he-remained that youth. 91. No-you-me-give permission I I-will-remain here sir? 92. Who knows he-him-says. 93. You-imperative-sit. 94. Then here you-will-sleep he-him-says. 95. We-will-sleep. 96. That youth he-it-carries one walking-stick. 97. He-him-says it-fight. 98. Here I-it-will-stand this my-companion he-him says that youth. 99. There he-it-stood already. 100. He-it-for-him-remain cond. good they-sleep that cowboy with his-woman. 101. That walking-stick he-it-stood corner. 102. He-them-for-him-remain cond. good they-sleep that cowboy. 103. Then it-enter-went that walking-stick. 104. It-them-hit that cowboy and that his-woman. 105. All it-them-hit he-it-says.

Then he went home again. “Don’t go again in a week,” the carpenter had said. Then he dreamed that another of his sisters was sick. “I better go home again,” he told the carpenter.

He came again and again it was getting dark. He came to the home of a rancher. The rancher cared for the place. The lad stopped and asked, “Would you allow me to stay here, Sir?”

“Why not,” he answered. “Sit down. Sleep here,” he said. “Let’s sleep.”

The young man had a walking stick with him which fights. “I shall stand my companion here,” said the young man to the rancher, and he stood it up
nopa toahui. 69. Hualajqui nopa itelpoca. 70. Quitile- 
luiya bueno, axtiyas campa tiyajtsoya san sintehcaca-
yahu. 71. Tiajsico. 72. Xcantia tihualica quitileluiya.
73. Quitilanjqui se garrote. 74. Cuali qucuitlapan garrote 
nopa telpocati. 75. Yajquiy a nopa telpocati campa te-
quiti. 76. Ajsitoya ichaj nopa coyotli. 77. Siempre quic-
ucajqui monana tien tiqinhuiquil. 78. Axtle san 
nechhualtoacaquè ica cuahuili. 79. Axquinequí nech-
tasè quilljtoa. 80. San niquincajhayuampa tiquillita-
què axtleno niijnhuicac tlejtoa. 81. Sampa hualajquia. 
82. Ica chicueyi axtiya. 83. Sampa quitemiquí seyoc ñicni-
j mococoa. 84. Tlejtoa achicual na sampa niya nocha-
j. 85. Nijtemiquí seyoc niçni mococoa tlejtoj nopa

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telpocati. 86. Sampa hualajqui. 87. Tlejtoj ya tiayohu-
lico. 88. Mocahuaco ipan ichaj se asienta se vaquero 
ichaj. 89. Nopano tlamocuitlahuia nopano vaquero. 
90. Nopano mocajqui nopa telpocati. 91. Axteuchmaca 
permiso a nimocahuas nican siñor? 92. Quien sabe 
tlejtoa. 93. Ximosehui. 94. Huajca nica ticochis quit-
leluiya. 95. Ticochisè. 96. Nopa telpocati quhualica 
se baston. 97. Tlejtoa tlahuilana. 96. Nica niconquetzas 
ni nocompañero tlejtoa nopa telpocati. 99. Nopano 
quiquetquia. 100. Quinchahuil maj cuali cochicà nopa 
102. Quinchahuil maj cuali cochicà nopa vaquero. 
103. Huajca calaquito nopa baston. 104. Quinimagà nopa 
vaquero huan nopa isihuia. 105. Nochi quinimagatejqui

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105. If me-they-will-want-to-bite this my-walking-stick I-it-for-him-will-give. 126. Now he-them-will-kill he-it-says that youth. 127. Many jaguars he-it-chase-going. 128. He came that youth he-it-says. 129. He-came-stayed until near his outside-house. 130. Right-there he-come that door. 131. It-light-came-path until his-house. 132. Only he-came-stayed. 123. That jaguars no-they-it-ate. 134. He-came-came until his home. 135. Another-time now you-take this chicken he-it-him-says that carpenter that youth. 136. You-imperative-take. 137. You-imperative-tell-her-going your-mother-in-order-to two her-eggs it-throws one-time he-him-says. 138. This only you-will-stand-it-will-lay he-it-him-says. 139. Mama I-it-bring one chicken here. 140. Right-away it-will-lay only I-stand-it earth he-her-says. 141. He-it-will-stand earth. 142. She-throws two

The youth didn’t want to go. It was night, and he was very much afraid to go into the forest because of the many jaguars and wild animals. “I wonder if the wild animals will eat me. If they try to bite me I shall use my walking stick. It will kill them,” the youth told himself. And he chased many jaguars. He arrived home safely, a door lighting the path to his house. He arrived home without being eaten by the jaguars.

“Now take this chicken again,” the carpenter told the youth. “Take it and tell your mother that it lays two eggs at a time. You just have to stand it up and it will lay,” he said to him.

her-eggs that chicken. 143. Another-time she-it-grabs one wood that our-aunt. 144. Well she-him-chased that her-youth. 145. Now you-imperative-go. 146. Only you-us-stupid-see. 147. Only do-a-lot you-it-want. 148. You-us-will-deceive she-him-says that her-youth. 149. No mama truthfully I-it-brought one chicken he-her-says. 150. Now you-imperative-go. 151. If no-you-will-hit. 152. Another-time she-it-grabs went one wood. 153. Well she-him-chased that youth. 154. He-comes. 155. Now how she-you-said your mother. 156. He-it-go-with-past that you-it-bring-cause or no that you-it-brought-to her your mother-he-mimed that carpenter. 157. No another-time well she-me-chased my mother. 158. No she-it-want she-me-will-see he-him-says that youth. 159. No he-it-wanted you-imperative-eat-already he-him-says. 160. You-imperative-

"Mama, I brought a chicken. If I stand it on the ground it will lay right away." He stood it on the ground and it laid two eggs.

Again the woman grabbed a piece of wood and really chased the lad.

"Go on now! Do you think we are stupid? You just want to do a lot of things and deceive us," she said.

"No, Mama. I really brought the chicken," he replied.

"Get going now! I'll hit you if you don't," she said, and once again she picked up a piece of wood, and chased him. So the lad went back again.

"What did your mother say to you? Did she receive that which you brought or not," the carpenter asked the youth.


"No, my mother chased me again. She doesn't want to see me," the boy said.

"Do you want to eat?" asked the carpenter. "Sit down!" They put out a plate of food but the boy didn't want to eat from a plate. There was a filled cooking pot there, and he took that and ate from it.

When the Mexican and the boy finished eating, the carpenter said to him, "You always eat well. (He had finished the tortillas and the food.) You always eat a lot," he said. "Yes, I eat from this," the youth replied.

Then the boy went home again. "I shall go again," he said. "I dreamed again that she is very gravely ill."

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want-to-fight that continually. 182. Only already that you-will-put-it earth. 183. Right-now it-them-will-fight he-him-says. 184. Another-time it-is-became-night-to him his-house that cowboy. 185. No-you-me-give permission sir here I-will-stay I-became-to-him-night. 186. No-truth sir I-it-arise-already. 187. Well he-us-fought that which you-it-brought he-him-says. 188. Cond. no-you-plural-will-fight right-here. 189. I-it-will-tie that corridor he-him-says. 190. He-him-says no better you-imperative-go-already. 191. No-I-it-want you-imperative-sleep here. 192. Another-time it-fight that which you-it-bring he-him says. 193. No-he-it-let cond. he-sleep that youth there. 194. No-it-came his-home. 195. There corridor he-walked-sitting-down that youth with that his-walking-stick. 196. He-it-said he-them-to-him-stayed cond. all they-sleep that cowboy with his-woman. 197. All he-them-caused-removed their-clothes.

"Go then," the carpenter said. "Take your walking stick again. If he wants to fight just put it on the ground. It will fight them right away," he told him.

It was getting dark again when he arrived at the house of the rancher. "Will you give me permission, Sir, to stay here? It is night." "That thing you brought fought us," he replied.

"It won't fight you. I'll tie it on the porch," he said.

But the rancher said, "You better go. I don't want you to sleep here. The thing you have there will fight again," he said. He wouldn't let the boy sleep there.


198. That cowboy all his-pants he-him-removed-caused where he-slept with all blouse that his-woman all her-clothing. 199. He-him-removed-caused all with his-children. 200. He-it-said that walking-stick all he-it-brought much clothes. 201. He it-said there it-self-stay-came his-house that cowboy. 202. He-him-says that youth I cond. I-will-take all this clothes. 203. And also I-it-order-come-will that walking-stick cond. he-it-cause-go-climb in that chirimoya-tree he-it-says. 204. In one chirimoya-tree its-branch he-it-cause-climb-went that walking-stick one huge-pile cloth far. 205. No-he-able-climb that cowboy in-order-to he-it-going-lower. 206. He-it-sent one monkey cond. he-climb-look cond. he-it-go-fall that cloth. 207. He-it-fall-off where there are. 208. Tall he-it-got-stuck that walking-stick. 209. He-it-said when he-it-remove-

The boy didn't enter the house, but stayed on the porch with his walking stick. It remained there until the rancher and his wife were asleep. Then it removed the rancher's shirt and pants and the woman's clothing. It also removed all the children's clothes. It brought many clothes.

Then the boy said, "I shall take all these clothes. I will order the walking stick to climb the chirimoya tree," he said.

The walking stick took a huge pile of clothes up in the chirimoya tree. The rancher couldn't climb the tree to get the clothes down, so he sent a monkey up to get them. But the monkey fell down. The walking stick had stuck the
NUEVA INTERPRETACION DE LAS FIGURAS SONRIENTES, SEÑALADA POR LAS FUENTES HISTORICAS

DORIS HEYDEN

Al coordinar el estudio de las figuras arqueológicas con la lectura de las fuentes escritas, frecuentemente encontramos material para nuevas interpretaciones de los objetos prehispánicos.

Esto es el caso con las figuras sonrientes de Veracruz, identificadas como representaciones de Xochipilli, dios de la danza, la música y la alegría.1 Estoy de acuerdo con Aiedellín, Melgarejo Vivanco y Rosado Ojeda con esta ideneificación de Xochipilli, sobre todo porque el símbolo ollin que lleva muchas figuras sonrientes en su tocado está asociado con el sol, y—como señalan estos tres investigadores—una de las advocaciones de Xochipilli es su asociación con el sol.

Sin embargo, la mayoría de las esculturas de barro de este tipo no llevan el símbolo ollin. ¿Representarán a otros dioses? Creo que sí. Y creo que las figuras sonrientes representan a las semejanzas de los dioses más que a los dioses mismos: los hombres y las mujeres que representaban a las deidades en las fiestas mensuales y quienes fueron sacrificados durante estas fiestas. A cada semejanza o vívima se le daba el carácter del dios, “poniéndole sus aderezos y la tiara en la cabeza”.2 Era indispensable que no se pusiera triste esta aictima porque la tristeza traía mala suerte. Por lo tanto, se ejercía mucho cuidado en tener alegre a la semejanza, que can-

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