

A Man Becomes a Woolly Monkey.

English translation. Tod Swanson

In the beginning times this woolly monkey was human. In the time when he lived as a man this woolly monkey used to walk in the forest a lot. When he was out walking like that all the time going out hunting for meat, they say he found a tree. This tree was a wituj tree. Climbing up he used to take fruit from this tree, they say. Climbing up and gathering this fruit like that he picked it and grated it and in the same way used to put in a little charcoal. When he had put it in and grated it like that mixing it all together they say he used to rub it on his whole body and the same way on his face. When it dried like that his body, the entire person turned very black.

Turned very black like that he came [back] close to the house frightened. His wife didn't like to sleep with him [like that]. They say this woman asked her husband saying "How come you turned black like this?" When she said this [her] husband said: "Because I just felt like it, I took a fruit tree and rubbed myself with it," he said. "Rubbing myself like that, I turned very black" he said telling [what happened], they say.



Telling it like that, they say his wife said: "Why should only you live black?" they say she said. When his wife spoke like that, they say the husband said. " Lets go tomorrow to the forest."

When her husband spoke like that, they say the woman went with her husband. As they were going like that, when they had almost arrived they say that the woman said, "If you and I both turn black how will our children turn out? She said, this woman said, they say. When this woman talked like that, they say her husband said, "They will come out the same [as us]," they say he said. After that they arrived they say. Arriving like that, gathering and picking , grinding that fruit they say he gave it to his wife. They say this woman bathed her entire body [with it]. Bathing like that, in the same way [her] entire body turned black they say.

When both husband and wife turned black like that, they say that their relatives became angry and said. "Why did you turn black like that? They said. "You look very ugly," they say they said getting angry. When they got angry like that they say they cried. They say their relatives said "You are black looking like wooly monkeys" they say they said having become angered. When they got angry like that they say [the husband and wife] said, " What are we? Are we wooly monkeys?" When they spoke like that they say they became wooly monkeys at that [very] moment. Until now the wooly monkeys live [like that] very black.



A Man Becomes a Woolly Monkey.

English translation. Tod Swanson

Questions:

1. Who are the initial characters?
2. Why is it important that the action takes place in a relationship between a man and a woman?
3. What are the assumed gendered work contexts in which the drama unfolds? In other words, what kind of work was the man supposed to have been doing? What would the woman have been doing while he was gone?
4. What kind of an exchange ought to have occurred if the man had returned from a normal day of hunting?
5. What can you gather about the meaning of the huituc tree from other Quichua stories about the huituc (See “Manduru and Huituc,” and “Ilucu with the Moon.”)
6. Who are the secondary actors in the story?
7. Do you think they are man’s family or the woman’s family? Why?
8. What would the man’s kinship title have been in the context of his wife’s community?
9. According to Philippe Descola (1994) What is the kin title that Achuar hunters use for the woolly monkeys?