

Title:

Human-made Monsters

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Summary:

Humans made monsters by inhuman treatment abound in literature.

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Humans made monsters by inhuman treatment abound in literature. In "The Man Who Laughs", published in 1869, the French author, Victor Hugo (1802-1885), described the comprachicos thus:

"The comprachicos (child buyers) were strange and hideous nomads in the 17th century. They made children into sideshow freaks. To succeed in producing a freak one must get hold of him early; a dwarf must be started when he is small. They stunted growth, they mangled features. It was an art/science of inverted orthopedics. Where nature had put a straight glance, this art put a squint. Where nature had put harmony, they put deformity and imperfection. The child was not aware of the mutilation he had suffered. This horrible surgery left traces on his face, not in his mind. During the operation the little patient was unconscious by means of a stupefying magic powder.

In China since time immemorial, they have achieved refinement in a special art and industry: the molding of living man. One takes a child two or three years old and puts them into a grotesquely shaped porcelain vase. It is without cover or bottom, so the head and feet protrude. In the daytime the vase is upright, at night it is laid down so the child can sleep. Thus the child slowly fills the contours of the vase with compressed flesh and twisted bones. This bottled development continues for several years. At a certain point, it becomes an irreparable monster. Then the vase is broken and one has a man in the shape of a pot."

The Kyrgyz writer, Chingiz Aitmatov (or Aytmatov) (1928 - ) recounts in "The

Day Lasts More than One Hundred Years" (1980) the legend of the Ana-Beiit cemetery and the zombies known as "mankurts".

According to tradition, the nomad Zhuan'zhuan, shaved the heads of the younger and more fit prisoners of war and wrapped their skulls in raw camel hide. The prisoners were then left to shrivel in the desert's scorching sun, without food or water. As the caps shrank around their heads, they perished in terrible agony. The survivors completely lost their memory. Their subsequent submissiveness and loyalty made them ten times more valuable than a regular slave and three times as precious as a free man (in terms of pecuniary damages when accidentally killed).