1969

An analysis of the psychozoological tales of Rafael Arévalo Martínez

Ricardo Cortez Costello

University of the Pacific

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE PSYCHOZOOLOGICAL TALES
OF RAFAEL AREVALO MARTINEZ

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Inter-American Studies
University of the Pacific

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Ricardo Cortez Costello
August 8, 1969
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. This paper will identify and analyze the literary phenomenon of the preponderance of the transfer of dumb animal traits, including mannerisms, instincts and brute social behavior to human beings as found in the prose of Rafael Arévalo Martínez of Guatemala. This literary phenomenon has been called zoomorphism and psychozoology.

Importance of the study. To the knowledge of this writer, no exhaustive study has been made of the unique tales which Rafael Arévalo Martínez has created, that is, of the psychozoological tales. Owing to the absence of such a study and to the originality of the author under investigation, it would appear that such a study as is proposed here would be justified. Another justification for this study is the dearth of English writing about the author. Rafael Arévalo Martínez is considered to be one of the greatest living authors in Guatemala. He is so esteemed in Guatemala that he receives a pension from his government. Yet, despite his fame and honors, he remains an obscure author in the United States. The writer of this paper was
personally made aware of the obscurity of Arevalo Martinez. In his conversations with at least six college and university professors of Spanish, he mentioned that he proposed a study on Arevalo Martinez. Their rejoinder to this statement was either, "Didn't he recently receive a Nobel Prize?" or "Didn't he write El señor presidente?"

This is an important author in his native country and in Latin America and he merits more exposure in the United States. In examining this one facet of his prose, the animal tales, this study will be emphasizing that area which has brought him to the attention of critics and anthologists.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Animal. Because Arevalo Martinez sees Man as an animal, but of the highest hierarchy, the term "animal" may cause ambiguity in its use in this work. The writer of this paper will use the term to refer to those creatures of the animal kingdom which lie outside the genus and species of Homo sapiens.

Short story. The psychozoological tales of Arevalo Martinez do not clearly fall into the category of the novel or of the short story. In this work these tales will arbitrarily be called short stories. This classification seems appropriate because of their singleness of theme, their
relative brevity, their intense treatment of one main character, and because of their exclusion of any sub-plots. As will be seen, critics seldom, if ever agree in their classification of these works.

**Psychozoological tales.** The main elements of these tales are given in the "statement of the problem." In addition to those elements, the tales are characterized by their protagonists' having such an overabundance of animal traits that at times, the protagonists seem more like animals than like men. Those stories which are considered to comprise the psychozoological tales are "El hombre que parecía un caballo," "El trovador colombiano," "Las fieras del Trópico," "La signatura de la esfinge," "El hechizado," "Nuestra señora de los locos," and "El señor Monitot." Why only these stories are included in the group of psychozoological tales will be explained in Chapter II.

**III. BACKGROUND**

Many times the life of an author and a picture of the times in which he lived hold the key to the sources of inspiration for certain characters and events in the writings of that author. It therefore seems necessary to include the biography of Arévalo Martínez and a brief historical sketch of the period in which he lived in Guatemala. In looking at the life of the author we find a clue to the introspective nature of his
writing. In the political background to the life of the author one finds a possible model for the caudillo in one of the psychozoological tales. These tales belie the deep political interest of the author. The reason for this is that when the tales were written there happened to be a repressive government in power. During times of freedom of speech and of the press, Áreavalo Martínez criticized dictatorship and bad government. Thus he has managed to survive under dictatorships and under a democracy and has remained an esteemed figure in the eyes of the people of Guatemala.

Biographical background. Rafael Áreavalo Martínez was born in Guatemala City, Guatemala, on July 25, 1884. He has written poetry, short stories, essays, novels and drama. His father was Rafael Áreavalo Arroyo and his mother was Mercedes Martínez Pineda. He attended his first primary grade at the Escuela de Primeras Letras de doña Concepción Aguilar. This was in 1890. The he attended the Colegio de Luis Castellanos the following year. From 1892 until 1902 he was enrolled at the Colegio de Infantes. In school he developed a love for reading. In Una vida he tells of reading Zola and Balzac when he was ten years old. He also tells of reading during recesses at school and of reading while eating at home, sometimes being unaware of what he was eating.

After receiving his degree in 1902, he worked at two different money exchange offices. From 1903 until 1904 he
worked at the Banco Agricola Hipotecario. From his comments in the autobiographical works Manuel Aldano and Una vida one gathers that the author found work in the business world distasteful. Two maladies contributed to this dislike. One was myopia. This, coupled with neuasthenia, a debilitating disease, made daily work almost impossible for the author. He then turned to teaching and to journalism as a means of making a living. In 1912 he became editor of the newspaper La República and the next year he edited the magazine Juan Chapín. The following year he taught at the Escuela Práctica de Señoritas de Quetzaltenango. In 1916 he taught at the Escuela Práctica de Varones de la Ciudad de Guatemala. He also became editor of El Nuevo Tiempo that same year. From 1915 until 1918 he was editor of the magazine Centro Americano. In 1920 he visited Los Angeles, California. He returned to Guatemala and taught from 1921 until 1925. From 1926 until 1945 he was the director of the National Library of Guatemala in Guatemala City. Then in 1945 he was named ambassador to the Pan American Union in Washington, D. C. The following year he returned to Guatemala and was publicly honored and was given a lifetime pension of three hundred dollars a month.

Arevalo Martínez is still alive and continues to write. In these last few years he has limited himself to writing essays and short stories. He resides in Guatemala City.

Political background. A large part of the life of
Arevalo Martínez in Guatemala has been spent under political dictatorships. The first of these dictatorships was that of José María Reina Barrios, who ruled from 1892 until 1898 when he was assassinated. He was immediately followed by Manuel Estrada Cabrera, perhaps the cruelest of all Guatemalan caudillos. Estrada Cabrera jailed political foes, held executions without trials and intimidated the press. Under his rule there was a slight improvement in public education, public health and in the expansion of the railroad. In 1920 the people rose up against him and drove him into exile.

Between Estrada Cabrera and the next dictator there were six presidents. Carlos Herrera succeeded Estrada Cabrera, but he lost the presidency within a year as a result of a revolt. General José María Orellana followed Herrera and he stabilized the nation's faltering economy. He stemmed the rising inflation and paid most of the international debts of the country. He was also responsible for the updating of the penal system in Guatemala and for the improvement of schools and sanitation. Orellana was followed by another able administrator, Lázaro Chacón. In 1930 Chacón died in office and was succeeded by Baudillo Palma who was overthrown after being in office for only two years. Within a year two more men rose to the presidency and then lost it. They were Manuel Orellana, the cousin of General Orellana, and José María Reina Andrade.

In 1931 Jorge Ubico was elected president and remained president until 1944. He was the last of the caudillos to
reign during the lifetime of Arevalo Martínez. Before becoming president he was an army officer. He demanded honesty from everyone except himself. He posed as a friend of the Indian, but in reality he helped to maintain the low status of the Indian by initiating two laws. One was the Vagrancy Law which obliged the Indians to work at least 150 days a year, thus putting them at the mercy of the landowners. The other law required the Indians to give two weeks of free labor to their government each year in highway construction. Despite these two laws, the Indians firmly believed Ubico to be their friend and patron. They affectionately called him "tata" because in many instances he took their side. For instance, he abolished the debts of a very great number of them and also he put pressure upon judges in order to give the Indians favorable decisions in court. He insisted that his public officials be honest and he spent much time investigating public records in order to insure that there was no dishonesty in public expenditures. It is said that public officials lived in fear of being investigated by Ubico and his team of accountants. By 1944 the people had tired of Ubico and there followed agitation by the university students and by the military. Ubico sensed that he was about to be overthrown, and in June, 1944, he turned the government over to Juan Federico Ponce. There followed a revolt in October and then free elections in which Juan José Arevalo, the nephew of the author, was elected president. It has never been proven that Arevalo was a communist, but it is
a fact that the communists entrenched themselves in Guatemala during the term of office of Arevalo. They gained control of the labor unions during this period.

The political program of Juan José Arevalo was called social spiritualism which to him meant that there existed a social contract between the people and the government. It was the duty of the government to bring a spiritual uplifting to the people and the duty of the people to cooperate with the government for the good of the nation. Under the leadership of Arevalo the Indian made social and economic gains. The Indian laborers were allowed to form labor unions and they were included into the social security system. Also their rents were lowered and more schools were built for them.

When Arevalo left office in 1950, the country was almost fully in control of the communists. Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán, the following president, courted the favor of the communists, although he never openly admitted that he himself was one of them. Arbenz initiated an agrarian reform law which gave to the Indians a large share of the nation's uncultivated land. Much of this acreage belonged to the American-owned United Fruit Company. Not only did Arbenz appropriate United Fruit Company land, but also he denounced the company and also the United States. The military, feeling that Arbenz was following the communist party line too closely in word and in deed, asked him to denounce the
communists. He refused to do so and there followed a revolt. The anti-communist Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas invaded Guatemala from Honduras in June of 1954 with a small force and unseated Arbenz. As the result of a plebiscite, Castillo Armas was made president. He immediately outlawed the communist party and returned to the United Fruit Company the land which had been seized from it. In 1957 he was assassinated. The following year Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes took power and ruled until 1963. He cooperated with the United States but because of this, he lost popularity with the people. The military did not believe that he was combating communism effectively. In 1963 the military, led by Colonel Enrique Peralta Azurdia seized power. Peralta ruled under a military government until 1966.

Julio César Méndez Montenegro was elected president in 1966. He faces many of the problems of his predecessors. He must bring the Indian into the main current of Guatemalan life. He must end the exploitation of the Indian by the Ladino, the non-Indian. He must diversify the economy of his country--Guatemala must become more than a two-crop country. Finally he must improve communications and transportation.

Having stated the problem in this chapter and also having given a brief sketch of the life of Arévalo Martínez and of the political climate in which the author lived, the writer of this paper will, in Chapter II, review the
literature which comments upon the author and upon the psychozoological tales.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Three points stand out in the literature which comments upon the unique type of short story of Arévalo Martínez. One point is that the tales of Arévalo Martínez cannot be classified unequivocally as being either short stories or novels. Another point is that writers of literary criticism find points of contact between the characters of Arévalo Martínez and other characters in world literature. This comparison leads to the third point which is that although the critics do find similarities, they agree that the literary characters of Arévalo Martínez are unique and original.

I. CONTROVERSY IN CLASSIFICATION

The first striking issue which one encounters in investigating the literature dealing with the psychozoological tales is that these stories are evasive in regard to literary categorization. These works are on the periphery of both the novel and of the short story. Critics seldom if ever agree as to their classification of the tales. Arturo Torres-Ríoseco calls them novelettes.¹ Enrique Anderson Imbert classifies

them as short stories.² R. Amilcar Echeverría B. calls them short novels.³ In 1953 Luis Alberto Sánchez called them novels, but eleven years later he had second thoughts about them and reclassified them as short stories. He wrote:

Rafael Arevalo Martínez is not, clearly, a novelist, as many of us have classified him, among them Torres-Rioseco and I. He is a short story writer.⁴

Seymour Menton calls these works short stories and gives excellent reasons why they cannot be considered novels. He writes:

For their brevity as well as for their focus concentrated on one single theme without complications, they can in no way be considered novels.⁵

Another critic who considers these stories as novels is Pedro Henríquez-Ureña. He refers to Arevalo Martínez as a "novelist of the most unusual type."⁶ Thus, one can see


that the classification of the psychozoological novels is a moot point.

Perhaps this confusion of labels would be cleared up if there were agreement as to which the psychozoological tales are. Arevalo Martínez himself in 1922 named the following as being his psychozoological tales: "El hombre que parecía un caballo," "El trovador colombiano," "Las fieras del Tropico," "Nuestra señora de los locos," "La signatura de la esfinge," "El hechizado," and "El señor Monitot." In 1956 Alberto R. López added to this list El mundo de los maharachías. To these eight works García Prada has added Viaje a Ipanda. In this work, only those stories cited by Arevalo Martínez in 1922 will be considered to be the psychozoological tales. The reason for this is that the last two works mentioned do not fit the pattern of the previous works. They are not artistic studies of people who resemble people in a psychological way. They contain no air of mystery. Seymour Menton sees these last two novels as vehicles which express the political

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7 Rafael Arevalo Martínez, El señor Monitot (Guatemala: Sánchez & de Guise, 1922), p. 59.

8 Alberto R. López, "Rafael Arevalo Martínez y su ciclo de animales," Revista Iberoamericana (February, 1942), p. 324.

II. COMPARISON TO OTHER LITERARY CHARACTERS

The issue which unifies the critics of the psychozoological tales is their effort to find literary parallels to the unique characters of Arévalo Martínez. All allow that these are unique and original creations, but they still try to find similarities between characters in world literature and the characters of Arévalo Martínez. Alberto R. López is prolific in his comparisons. He has found similarities to the protagonist of "El hombre que parecía un caballo" in Dorothy Parker's Miss Wilmarth in the short story "Horsie." He also finds points of contact with the man-animal of Linares de Rivas in El caballero lobo and with a similar protagonist in Rostand's Chantecler. Another creation who resembles the protagonists of Arévalo Martínez is Gregor Samsa in "Metamorphosis" of Franz Kafka.

Graciela Palau de Nemes also finds a literary parallel to Mr. de Aretal of "El hombre que parecía un caballo." She sees a close resemblance between Mr. de Aretal and the metamorphic characters in the play Rinoceros by Eugene Ionesco. To her the characters of both authors are closely related because they have betrayed the moral values of their

10Menton, op. cit., p. 321.
11López, op. cit., p. 324.
civilization which, in varying degrees, has dehumanized them and has turned them into animals.\textsuperscript{12}

Another parallel to the psychozoological characters has been found by Luis Alberto Sánchez. He finds a similarity between the monkeys of the Popol-Vuh and all the creations of the psychozoological tales. He reasons that the monkeys in that work were destroyed because they were not men of speech. They would not speak, that is, they would not communicate. In a way, the characters of Arévalo Martínez are similar. Like the monkeys, they are not quite men because something in their make-up does not fully allow them to communicate with other men. Therefore, being less than men, they are animals.\textsuperscript{13}

This effort to find a likeness between the characters of Arevalo Martinez and the characters of other authors leads to the next point, that of originality.

III. ORIGINALITY

The third aspect of the tales of Arévalo Martínez which is very often mentioned by writers is the originality of these tales. These stories are a new genre within the


\textsuperscript{13}Luis Alberto Sánchez, La tierra del quetzal (Santiago: Ediciones Ercilla, 1950), p. 173.
short story. They are like animal fables, like legends or folkloric tales, like the horror tales of Poe, but they are clearly something else. They are stories in which human protagonists react, at times, physiologically, psychologically, and socially as animals while maintaining their human forms. This literary phenomenon is unprecedented. There have been tales of half-men and half-beasts, such as the myths of the centaurs and sphinxes. Also there have been tales of beasts being turned into men, such as the story of "Juan Darién" by Horacio Quiroga. There has been a story the opposite of this, that is, of a man being turned into an animal. That story is "Metamorphosis" by Franz Kafka. In the same vein, there have been stories of talking animals and of men who were able to talk to animals, such as the tales of Rudyard Kipling in his Jungle Books. Yet there had never been, until the publishing of the psychozoological stories, a tale in which the human mind and soul were pre-empted by the minds and instincts of beasts, while, at the same time, the body of the person who took on these animal traits maintained its human form. Therein lies the originality of these tales and of the characters.

Almost without exception, the critics who write about Arévalo Martínez make reference to his originality, that is, to the originality of these tales. For example, Luis Alberto Sánchez writes:
It was thought for a long time, and not without reason, that Rafael Arévalo Martínez (n. 1884), personified the most authentic and original motivator of fantastic literature in America.¹⁴

Arturo Torres-Ríoseco also comments upon the originality of these stories. He writes that they contain:

... an evident thematic originality since these comparisons among different animal classifications were unknown in our literature.¹⁵

Arturo Uslar-Pietri calls Arévalo Martínez "One of the most original narrators in Hispanic-America."⁶ Agustín del Saz, another critic, says this about Arévalo Martínez and his stories:

In Guatemala RAFAEL AREVALO MARTÍNEZ, with great originality, applied themes of animal psychology to persons.¹⁷

The critics here mentioned, along with many others, are unanimous in one respect, that Arévalo Martínez is the creator of a new, unique and original type of tale.


¹⁵Arturo Torres-Ríoseco, "El extraño caso de Rafael Arévalo Martínez," Revista Cubana, IX (July, 1937), 72-73.


LITERARY INFLUENCES UPON THE AUTHOR

Although critics cite modernists, philosophers, mystics, and others as being influential upon the writings of Arevalo Martinez, there are three main influences which are of paramount importance in his psychozoological tales. They are Edgar Allan Poe, Friedrich Nietzsche, and the Popol-Vuh. What is meant by the Popol-Vuh is the legend, mystery, and magic held in popular belief by the Guatemalan Indian and partially recorded in the Popol-Vuh.

INFLUENCES

Critics, the stature of Arturo Torres-Rioseco, Fernando Alegria, Luis Alberto Sanchez, and John Englekeirk name the following writers as exerting the greatest influence upon Arevalo Martínez: Rubén Darío, Edgar Allan Poe, Santa Teresa de Ávila, San Juan de la Cruz, Jean Lorrain, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Arthur Schopenhauer. Luis Alberto Sanchez also cites the Popol-Vuh as being of major importance as an influence. The mystics Santa Teresa and San Juan, the modernist Rubén Darío, and the philosopher Schopenhauer did indeed influence the writings of Arevalo Martínez, but only slightly or not at all in the psychozoological tales. The three great influences here were Edgar Allan Poe, the Popol-Vuh, and Nietzsche.
Edgar Allan Poe. It was Rubén Darío who made the first authoritative comparison between Edgar Allan Poe and Rafael Arévalo Martínez. After reading "El hombre que parecía un caballo," Darío declared Arévalo Martínez to be of the same cut of genius of Poe, Nerval, and of himself.18

The likeness which Darío saw between Poe and Arévalo Martínez was not one of organic structure, but one of technique. So also does John E. Englekirk see this similarity of technique. One similarity is that the stories are told in the first person. Another is that Arévalo Martínez, like Poe, italicizes those words which are important for effect.19 For instance, in the tale "Nuestra señora de los locos," the author writes, "Only I knew that she was dying of anxiety."20 This technique of underlining important phrases is followed throughout in these tales of Arévalo Martínez. A third similarity between the two authors is their respective repetition of important lines.21 In "La signatura de la esfinge" one finds an example of this. On page twenty the author


19Ibid., p. 376.

20Arévalo Martínez, El señor Monitot, p. 52.

21Englekirk, loc. cit.
writes, "What they called masculinity was merely force." 22 Then again the line is repeated on the next page. The author writes, "That little cat believed masculinity to be force and lack of femininity to be power."

Englekirk sums up the likeness of Arevalo Martínez to Poe in this way:

There is no base imitation of Poe's subject matter or plot in the prose of Arevalo Martínez. It is rather in the style and technique of the short story, and in particular in the endeavor to render a more intelligible and more expressive analysis of the power the mysteries of the human mind, wherein the similarities to Poe's genius lie. 23

One other influence which is not mentioned by Englekirk is that of Poe's singleness of effect theory. To an extent, Arevalo Martínez has made use of this theory in the psychozoological tales. Poe stated that everything in a short story should lead towards the creation of a single effect. The short stories of Arevalo Martínez are written in this vein. Arevalo Martínez exercises an economy of words. Each sentence is essential to the total effect of the story. Each sentence is necessary and many times significant in itself. From the theory of Poe, Arevalo Martínez has gleaned the virtues of precision and exactness of expression.

22 Rafael Arevalo Martínez, La signatura de la esfinge (Guatemala: Sánchez & de Guise, 1922), pp. 20-21.

23 Englekirk, op. cit., p. 379.
How can one be sure that Arevalo Martínez was even cognizant of the existence of a singleness of effect technique which he could emulate? There is evidence in the short story "El hombre verde" to support the claim that Arevalo Martínez did indeed have knowledge of this theory. In "El hombre verde" Arevalo Martínez criticizes a short story within the short story which he is writing in this way:

"The Green Man" is worthy of being signed by Hoffman or Poe. . . What sobriety and discretion of lines. Nothing lacks and nothing is left over, like the work of a good sculptor.24

Thus, from the reference to Poe, to sobriety, to the perfection of the ingredients which neither adds nor omits anything which is not essential to the total effect of the story, the writer of this paper is led to believe that Arevalo Martínez did indeed know of the existence of this theory. Though the author might have known about the theory, still he did not utilize it in every one of the psychozoological tales. He did use this technique in "El hombre que parecía un caballo," in "La signatura de la esfinge," and in "Las fieras del Trópico." But in "El trovador colombiano," "El hechizado," and "El señor Monitot" he did not use this technique. In the latter tales the author digresses

24Rafael Arevalo Martínez, El hombre que parecía un caballo y otros cuentos (Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria, 1951), pp. 89-90.
greatly. For instance, in "El trovador colombiano" the author drifts into such areas as the poor state of the National Library in Guatemala City, his dislike for fat men, Mirabeau's two dogs, and a classification of dogs. The digressions in this and in the other two stories distract from the plot and from the fluidity of the story. Indeed, his friend Carlos Wyld Ospina has written of these stories, "He writes loosely, fragments of souls and lives and happenings." This criticism by Carlos Wyld Ospina very well applies to the three latter stories mentioned, but it is an invalid criticism of the former three stories which are nearly technically perfect short stories.

Two things are clear with regard to the theory of the singleness of effect and Arévalo Martínez. One is that Arévalo Martínez knew of its existence, and the other is that he elected to apply the theory at times.

The Popol-Vuh. The second literary influence upon Arévalo Martínez in his writing of the psychozoological tales is the Popol-Vuh. Luis Alberto Sánchez has written that Arévalo Martínez belongs to the orbit of the Popol-Vuh. He makes this statement in reference to the possible influences

25Carlos Wyld Ospina, "Rafael Arévalo Martínez," Revista de Revistas, XIV (July, 1923), 22.

26Sánchez, op. cit., p. 173.
upon Árévalo Martínez in his writing of El mundo de los Maharachías. What he is saying is that the Popol-Vuh symbolically embodies those Indian-like traits which Árévalo Martínez has culled from his Mayan homeland. It symbolizes the myth, magic, legend, and mystery which still exist in a country which is still primarily Indian and agricultural. The Popol-Vuh is seen by Fernando Alegria as the vehicle which represents that which is magical in the Guatemala of today. In reviewing Miguel Ángel Asturias' Hombres de maíz he writes:

Hombres de maíz represents an epic intent to interpret the magic of the Popol-Vuh which lives even today in the subconscious of the rural population on Guatemala.27

This Indian element, which Alegria says lives in the subconscious of the Indians, is the spirit of the Popol-Vuh. It is a marked element in the tales of Árévalo Martínez. Seymour Menton has noted this proclivity in Árévalo Martínez and in other Guatemalan authors. He feels that Guatemalan writers, in their contact with the indigenous population of Guatemala, have absorbed from the Indian the quality of fantasy.28 In affirming that Árévalo Martínez possesses this quality of fantasy and other Indian qualities, Fernando Alegria calls up the image of the eyes of Árévalo Martínez.

28Menton, op. cit., p. 323.
One eye allows him to see the world through the eyes of an Indian, to see the magic and mystery of things. The other eye, the eye of a philosopher and scholar, allows him to put what he sees into a rational perspective.\(^29\)

Alegría is also helpful in suggesting a concrete Indian influence, a legend, which could have been the germ for the creation of the psychozoological tales. He sketches the legend thus:

> The Indians of his country believe that every man possesses a double which accompanies him, visibly or invisibly, throughout his entire existence and that that double—an animal—participates in the very essence of his life.\(^30\)

Thus, in reality, it is the spirit of the *Popol-Vuh*, not the book itself, which is the real influence upon the writing of the author. It is the mystery, imagination, fantasy, and legend which are associated with the *Popol-Vuh* and with Guatemala itself which have been a deep influence upon Arévalo Martínez.

**Friedrich Nietzsche.** Besides the influence of Poe and of the *Popol-Vuh*, there is one remaining strong influence upon Arévalo Martínez in his writing of the psychozoological tales. That influence is the philosopher Nietzsche. This influence is manifested in a negative

\(^{29}\)Alegría, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-132.

\(^{30}\)Ibid., p. 131.
manner; that is, the narrator of the tales becomes a type of anti-hero, and the protagonists of the tales are almost all possessed of the Nietzschean will to overcome, but the protagonists are undesirable characters. Only the protagonists of "El trovador colombiano" and of "El señor Monitot" are not Nietzschean heroes, and even then the trovador is an anti-hero, and Mr. Monitot possesses a super-humanity and an unusual gift for leadership. Thus the protagonists of these tales are Nietzschean heroes or the antithesis of the Nietzschean superman.

Furthermore, Arevalo Martínez is generally grouped with the modernist school of writers who, according to Ángel Flores, considered themselves to be supermen and who regurgitated the concepts of Nietzsche and of Carlyle. But, in fact, Arevalo Martínez does not fit the mold of a modernist in respect to Nietzsche. He is exactly the opposite in this regard. He is an anti-hero in his literature and in his real life. He makes himself appear weak and humble in his writing and in real life he belittles himself. The general impression that he projects of himself in the autobiographical work Manuel Aldano is one of a weak, myopic, timid, emaciated dreamer. Carlos Wyld Ospina gives an

example of this typical self-belittlement of Arevalo Martínez. He tells that once a person asked about the author. The person received the answer, "He's around, as ever, depreciating himself."32 Yet although in life and in literature Arevalo Martínez projects the image of the anti-hero, he is nevertheless attracted to the person with the strong, Nietzsche-like personality. It must be added, however, that ultimately he finds fault with this strong person. Yet despite the ambivalence of dislike and attraction, he seems instinctively and necessarily drawn to that person. In "La signatura de la esfinge" we find an example of this attraction for and dependence upon a strong person. In this story the narrator admits to Elena:

But you took me like a lioness takes with her mouth a lamb which cannot offer her any resistance. You were stronger than I.33

In the same story he again admits to Elena:

Because then, you understand, I already felt an irresistible attraction for you. You made me prisoner of a mysterious spell.34

In "El hombre que parecía un caballo" the narrator describes how he followed the protagonist home:

32 Wyld Ospina, op. cit., p. 23.
33 Arevalo Martínez, La signatura, p. 28.
34 Ibid., p. 29.
And when he got up to go, I followed him subjugated and prisoner like a lamb which the shepherdess tied with cords of roses.\textsuperscript{35}

From these examples one can see that the author prostrates himself before these superior people and acknowledges his inferiority to them and his dependence upon them. It is only after a careful analysis, in which he finds these persons to be more animal-like than man-like, that he can break the spell which they hold over him. It seems safe to say that Arévalo Martínez has an admiration and a type of reverence for the person who possesses the qualities of the Nietzschean superman. Yet, for Arévalo Martínez to assume the role or the attitude of a strong-willed or superior-acting person would be incongruous in the light of his meek and retiring personality.

In review of the three main influences upon Arévalo Martínez in respect to the psychozoological tales, one can make the following generalizations. From Poe, Arévalo Martínez received enlightenment and inspiration in the area of technique. From the Popol-Vuh he received inspiration in the areas of plot and theme. In Nietzsche he found the philosophy and rationale which made his characters believable. The three influences working together have made the tales of the author unique, mysterious, and powerful.

\textsuperscript{35}Arévalo Martínez, \textit{El hombre que parecía un caballo}, p. 10.
CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF THE WORKS AND CHARACTERS

Having identified the psychozoological tales and having reviewed the criticism about them and about their author, the writer of this paper will now analyze these tales. The analysis is twofold: story analysis and character analysis.

I. STORY ANALYSIS

The short story is divided, generally, into three parts: plot, character, and setting. The short stories of Arévalo Martínez are, in general, lacking in plot and setting. They are character analyses, stories calculated to create character. Max Henríquez Ureña typifies these tales in this way:

In the writing of Arévalo Martínez, the merely episodic is dismissed: there are no incidents, there is no action. There are only observations and dialogue, and from that there results the dissection of character.¹

Because of the scarcity of plot and setting, very little can be said about these two elements. Insofar as plot, one might characterize the plot of these tales with

the term "episodic." The tales are all narratives told in the first person, and any action which takes place does so within the framework of episodes. These episodes are manifestly seen as manipulations utilized to demonstrate the "animalness" of the characters. The plot in all of the tales is secondary to character development.

Just as the plot of these stories is secondary, so also is setting. Setting seems grudgingly included only as a necessity, because the characters need a place in which to perform. The stories almost all take place within hotels or other buildings. Even in "Las fieras del Trópico" the setting is unimportant, except as a background against which one may see animals performing in their habitat.

More important than plot and setting in these tales is mood. A certain atmosphere or mood prevails throughout the psychozoological tales. That mood is one of mystery. As will be seen in the section entitled "symbolism," mystery

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This story takes place in the city of Heliópolis in the mythical republic of Orolandia. The narrator, Mr. Ardens, is a liquor salesman who is a passenger on a train which is boarded by the governor of the state, José de Vargas. Mr. Ardens decides to remain in Heliópolis to eat with Vargas. In a series of episodes Vargas shows himself to be tiger-like. He reminds one of a tiger by his cruelty, by his movements, and by his dress. Ardens is alternately terrorized by the ruthlessness of Vargas and is dazzled by his quickness and grace of body. After a few days of playing "cat and mouse" with Ardens, Vargas allows him to leave the city.

As Ardens safely leaves the city by train, he sees Vargas perched on a stair watching the train's cars go by. There the author leaves Vargas, in charge of his kingdom of animals in this sleepy tropical town.
is a manifestation of symbolism. Mystery was evoked by the French symbolists and by Arevalo Martinez to show that there is a reality beyond that which is obvious to our senses. Arevalo Martinez achieves this air of mystery in these tales by using the following techniques: first person narrator, suggestion, and the use of powerful similes and metaphors. By using a first person narrator the author in these tales creates a mood of helplessness by setting up a relationship of one man against the elements or one man against other men or one man against certain forces. Unless that man is a very strong person, the reader feels about this relationship, "What can one man do?" This mood of helplessness and aloneness is precisely the mood in these tales primarily because of the type of narrator utilized by the author. Because the narrators of these tales are naive, unsophisticated, impressionable, and highly subject to suggestion, more mystery and terror are created. Mystery and helplessness are both seen in "La signatura" when the

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3 This story is narrated by Professor Cendal who is a close friend of Elena. Elena has just had two personal setbacks: she has divorced her husband and she has had a terrible fight with her best friend Romelia. The narrator sets about to tell her why these two incidents have happened. He explains to her that she has the mark of the lion upon her. People possessing this mark are violent, preying, and are dominated by their passions. At first she had impressed the narrator as a sphinx, but later he decided that she was a lioness. Cendal explained that she was attracted to her husband because they were of the same species, felix, but that she was a lioness and her husband was of a lesser
narrator admits that he is as powerless as a lamb being carried off by a lion. Another example of helplessness and mystery is found at the conclusion of "El hechizado." In the final scene of this story we see the soul of the narrator being carried away in the fangs of the lioness. All of the protagonists, except León Franco in "El trovador colombiano," order. She was superior to him. He could not dominate her and so the marriage failed. So also had her relationship with her friend Romelia failed because Romelia was only a cat, and thus inferior to Elena, but jealous of her. The story ends with Elena, whose happiness and salvation hinge upon her finding a male counterpart of herself, asking Cendal, "Is there a lion left upon the face of the earth?"

"El hechizado" is a continuation of "La signatura." In this story Cendal recounts how he had met Miss Incognita (Elena, in reality) in Los Angeles, California, and later, when she had come to Guatemala, how he had fallen in love with her. Love had fulfilled both of them. It had inspired them both. He became a famous writer and she received greater inspiration in her art. Cendal felt that this love for Elena was now inspired by fear. He feared that without her he would lose his creative inspiration. He felt bewitched by her. He needed her, but did not want to feel captive to her. Finally he broke off with her, and as a result he became despondent. One day, while talking to a friend on the street, he saw Elena pass by in her car. This sight made him faint away into the arms of his friend. He had seen her smile cruelly at him. Elena, the night huntress, who captured her victims in the twilight, was going off into the open spaces with his shredded soul between her bloody fangs!

León Franco is the protagonist of this tale. He is dog-like. He looks like a dog, plays like a dog and he hangs about the narrator in the manner that a dog would hang about his master. He is as friendly and as playful as a puppy. Like a domesticated dog, he owes his meals to the charity and kindness of other people. He is horrified by the thought of work. His friends decide that he should leave Guatemala since he is getting to be a liability. He could earn a living by singing. His friends raise money for his ticket to Puerto Lobos where he has been booked for a singing concert.
are able to carry off the impressionable young narrators. The narrators of all of the tales, except "El trovador," are persons who are easily impressed by stronger people. They are unsure of themselves, easily scandalized, and frightened. Having such a narrator as has been described, to wit: a weak, timorous, romantic, and dependent person, a short story would have in this person, an excellent vehicle for creating a mood of mystery.

Another technique which Arévalo Martínez has utilized in creating mood is the inclusion of strong similes and metaphors. These similes and metaphors have the effect of removing the reader from the plane of the real and of transporting him to the plane of fantasy, to a plane between the natural and the supernatural. Upon reading a passage containing these figures of speech, especially when used in the formation of symbols, one wonders what actually is happening in that passage. At the conclusion of "El hombre que parecía un caballo," one finds such a passage. The narrator relates:

After Franco leaves, the narrator says that Franco lives on in his memory. Franco has gone in search of a different or imagined master.

In this story the narrator meets Mr. de Aretal who fascinates him by his horse-like looks and behavior. De Aretal stretches his neck like a horse, walks like a horse, and turns his head like a horse when he wants to look at someone who is not directly in front of him. Later, the narrator finds that de Aretal resembles a horse in other ways. He is amoral, like a horse which allows itself to be ridden by any spirit. His relationships with women are
With a swift kick, he cast me away from himself. I felt his hoofs on my forehead. Then a swift martial gallop, scattering the sands of the desert. I turned my eyes towards where the Sphynx in her eternal repose of mystery was, and I did not see her. The Sphynx was Mr. de Aretal who had showed me his secret, which was the same as the Centaur's.  

There is an equally mysterious simile in "El hechizado." Elena, like a lioness, is seen running off into the open spaces with the shredded soul of the author between her fangs. These are but two of many similes and metaphors which closely bind men and animals in such a way as to dazzle the mind and create mystery.

The third technique which Arevalo Martínez uses for mood creation is that of suggestion. In "Nuestra señora de los locos" one finds an excellent example of suggestion. The first hint that Reinaldo is snake-like is oblique. The animal-like. He has no solidarity in his relationships with men. He lacks modesty with women, and he has no respect for the law. When the narrator last sees him, de Aretal is galloping off into the distance. De Aretal now has the face of a man, but the body of a beast.

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7Arevalo Martínez, El hombre, p. 25.

8The narrator in this story meets Reinaldo at the home of Ema. Ema resembles a dove. She dresses in white and has the tenderness and innocence which is attributed to a dove. Reinaldo, on the other hand, resembles a snake. His eyes are hypnotic and so also is his speech. Reinaldo captivates Ema and they become engaged. None of the children who adore Ema like Reinaldo. They sense that he is evil. On their wedding day, after they are married, Ema flees from Reinaldo and never sees him again. But twenty years later, Ema is pictured as the ideal mother of one child. It appears that the snake had seduced the dove.
author states that he is hairless. His body seems to have two bulges, his head and his stomach. Then Ema, the dove seems hypnotized by Reinaldo's large eyes. Here, by suggesting that Reinaldo looks like a snake, the author begins creating a mood of mystery. Later, when the author realizes that Reinaldo is indeed snake-like, this phenomenon becomes more believable because of other details and incidents. Mystery is necessary for credibility in these stories. The author, by putting out hints here and there, that is, by suggesting various possibilities, leads the reader into a state of believing, yet not understanding. By giving only scant details, that is, by suggestion, the author is able to create a mood of mystery.

Another mood which prevails throughout the tales is that of the closeness of men to animals. This closeness is ever-present because Arévalo Martínez chooses figures of speech which contain animals. This constant animal comparison sets the stage for the revelation of those persons whom they resemble. By using animals as one part of a simile or metaphor, the author is ever keeping the image of animals before the reader. Notice how the following examples would help to keep the man-animal relationship and mood:

She deceives naturally, as the beasts breathe.9

9Arévalo Martínez, La signatura, p. 25.
Also:

Like an invisible dove my soul would come to eat from your hands grains of illusion and daydreams. ¹⁰

And:

Like those bees or ants who allow themselves to die if inferior species do not serve them, I would let myself die if they did not serve me. ¹¹

It is clear that similes and metaphors, such as those above, help to keep that close contact with the animal world, a contact which is vital to the credibility of these tales. These metaphors and other figures of speech play a very important role in maintaining the proper mood for these tales.

Intention. As so often happens with literature of a symbolic and allegorical nature, critics, scholars, students, and others attempt to ascribe significance to the literature and intention to the author. Accordingly, one finds countless interpretations of such works as Moby Dick, The Trial, The Bible, and "The Lottery." The psychozoological tales, because of their suggestive and symbolic nature, closely approach the above-mentioned works. As of now, very few critics have attempted to divine the intention of Árvalo Martínez in his writing of the tales. Fernando Alegria is

¹⁰Ibid., p. 51.
¹¹Árvalo Martínez, El hombre, p. 33.
one person who has attempted to ascribe an intention. He feels that Arevalo Martínez damns certain persons who do not live up to his standard of perfection. These persons, either intentionally or because of their lack of perfection, torment him. Alegría expresses his idea in this manner:

In the man who torments him, and about whom he writes, he sees an animal of apocalyptic proportions. He sees him converted into a monster, after prodigally having abused the qualities with which God adorned him. His men have lost the gift of creation. The artists search to be fulfilled. The rest are reflections of other beings, generally, vile and perverted beings.¹²

According to Alegría, these people who torment the author perish. It should be added, however, that these people perish within a context of humanity, that is, they lose their humanity, their quality of soul and conscience. They do not physically die, but humanity dies within them. They become more beast-like and less man-like.

Another person who has attempted to find intention in a work of Arevalo Martínez is Graciela Palau de Nemes. She sees "El hombre que parecía un caballo" as part of the "literature of the absurd." She feels that Arevalo Martínez and Eugene Ionesco (in Rinoceros) have attempted to demonstrate that a person who betrays his moral values and the values of his society ultimately becomes an animal. She

¹²Alegría, Breve historia de la novela hispanoamericana, p. 132.
concludes:

In these works, Ionesco and Arévalo Martínez occupy themselves with moral values of great importance both yesterday and today, and they denounce the corruption of these values, bringing their themes to focus from the strange and almost irrational point of view. The characters betray their human condition because, as highly gifted and ultracivilized human beings, they act in disagreement with the concepts of humanity that today constitute the moral base of our civilization. And as these characters demonstrate their lack of true ideals they change into beasts before the eyes of the audience (or reader), and without any magic spell.\textsuperscript{13}

It seems to the writer of this thesis that to ascribe to Arévalo Martínez motives of personal criticism or of social criticism, as the above-mentioned critics have done, is to read too much into these tales of the author. These stories constitute an early stage in the development of Arévalo Martínez as a writer. In other works, the novels which followed these stories, the author did indeed turn his attention to society and to the government of it, but he did it patently. In \textit{El mundo de los maharachías} and in \textit{Viaje a Ipana} he created a utopian world. In \textit{Nietzsche el conquistador} and in \textit{La oficina de paz Orolandia} he criticized world powers and power politics openly. These four works are political works and the animal tales are artistic works. What seems reasonable is that these tales are merely an expression of the author's desire to put his unique point of

\textsuperscript{13}Palau de Nemes, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 6.
view into literary form. This unique vision of the author was fed by a childhood rich in fantasy and imagination. In his two short autobiographical novels, Manuel Aldano and Una vida, the author gives many indications that his early life was spent in reading and in living in a world of fantasy. He writes of himself:

At age five or seven there existed for me hidden inhabitants of the planet who alternated with men. My sight, my short myopic sight, would pause for hours on end observing a centipede or a snail.\textsuperscript{14}

Also he writes:

As a precocious child, I needed the opium of the fable to live in this world. Since then, fiction has been necessary to me like alcohol to a drunkard. Since then uninterrupted reading began to create within me a second, extra-human nature, false and deformed.\textsuperscript{15}

These two citations, along with many other similar statements found in the autobiographical novels, indicate that Arévalo Martínez, as a child and as a young man, lived a sheltered and monastic life, a life spent, in great part, in the imaginative world. It seems natural and plausible that the author would want to give expression to those ideas which had been building up in his super-active imagination. The writer of this thesis feels that the combination of the

\textsuperscript{14}Rafael Arévalo Martínez, Una vida (Guatemala: Imprenta "Electra," 1914), pp. 24-25.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., pp. 14-15.
highly developed imagination of Arévalo Martínez, along with his encounter with certain rare and bizarre people gave inspiration for the psychozoological characters and that it was the sole intention of the author to present his impressions, his unique way of looking at people, in print.

**Symbolism.** The mark of the French symbolists is apparent in these tales, not because of the symbols which the author uses, but because of his compliance with their literary aims. Some of these aims are to enhance art by means of suggestion, to open up new vistas by exploring those vague areas which are beyond the ken of the exact sciences, and to explore the unknown regions of the mind, thereby creating mystery and a new reality.\textsuperscript{16}

The symbols of Arévalo Martínez are not simple. They are, for the most part, when applied to the psychozoological characters, three-part symbols artistically drawn. The first two parts of his symbol are created by his finding the essence of an animal and then making a symbol of this. The next step is the making of the relationship between the animal, the essence, and the man. Many times the symbol transcends the natural plane and approaches the moral plane; for example, there is the symbol containing the elements of

the horse, amorality, and Mr. de Aretal.

In "La signatura de la esfinge" the author divides the human race into four categories. Three of these divisions are represented by animals which symbolize certain human traits. The key by which we can type a person by his animal essence is called "signature" or "mark." Arevalo Martínez states his theory in this manner:

Signature is the primary division of the human race into four large groups. The type of the first mark is the ox: persons of instinct and in whom the passive aspect of nature predominates; the type of the second mark is the lion: violent persons, predators, in whom passion predominates; the type of the third is the eagle: intellectual people, artists in whom the mind predominates; the fourth and final is man, superior people, in whom will predominates.17

Aside from this division of people and its comparison to the three animals, the author has not worked out a scheme for the animal kingdom which would suggest a hierarchy of animals or a scheme of cross reference between animals and people. There is no cosmological scheme to his animal kingdom. He has, however, selected the essential qualities of certain animals and has typified these animals by their essential qualities.

The writer of this thesis has compiled a list of the animals found in the tales and the qualities which are representative of the animals.

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17Arevalo Martínez, La signatura, p. 12.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horse</td>
<td>Noble, obsequious, amoral</td>
<td>&quot;El hombre&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>Faithful, obsequious</td>
<td>&quot;El trovador&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elephant</td>
<td>Good, noble, strong, mysterious</td>
<td>&quot;Monitot&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat</td>
<td>Ignoble, jealous, small</td>
<td>&quot;La signatura&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dove</td>
<td>Clean, pure, weak</td>
<td>&quot;Nuestra señora&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eagle</td>
<td>Artistic, intellectual</td>
<td>&quot;La signatura&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lion</td>
<td>Violent, preying</td>
<td>&quot;La signatura&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bear</td>
<td>Dangerous</td>
<td>&quot;El hechizado&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serpent</td>
<td>Seductive, prudent, persuasive</td>
<td>&quot;Nuestra señora&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ox</td>
<td>Passive, sad</td>
<td>&quot;La signatura&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mule</td>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>&quot;El trovador&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiger</td>
<td>Cruel, violent, clean</td>
<td>&quot;Las fieras&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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In the short stories which lie outside the psycho-zoological tales, the above relationships remain between the animals and their essences and between the animals and men.

**Point of view.** It has already been seen that the tales are told from the point of view of an author-narrator. Also it has been demonstrated that the author-narrator has shown himself to be young, dependent, timorous and impressionable. What remains to be seen is the author-narrator's conception of the world about him. This conception is important in view of the later writings of the author wher
he earnestly sets about to formulate a complete philosophy. In 1953, he expounded a rather complete philosophy in the essay "Síntesis de mi filosofía."\textsuperscript{18} The work encompassed cosmology, ethics, and aesthetics. A year later he wrote Concep\c{c}ión del cosmos which is not nearly as well organized or as clear as the former work. A survey of the writings of Arevalo Martínez would show that he is intensely interested in philosophy. He has read the philosophers which range from St. Thomas Aquinas to Nietzsche. Just as he progressed from philosopher to philosopher, so also have his religious beliefs progressed through his life and his literature. He has gone from one end of the philosophical and religious spectrum to the other. He confesses that at one time he was a saint for a whole year. In 1953, as seen in his "Síntesis de mi filosofía," he approaches the other extreme, when he denies the existence of soul and when he cannot affirm or deny the existence of God. In this work, he goes on to say that he sees no purpose in the universe and that good and bad are, at best, relative.

It is interesting to contrast this last, relativistic philosophy with the philosophy which he espoused in the psychozoological tales. In these tales Arevalo Martínez shows himself to be an absolutist. God, nature, knowledge, 

truth, and beauty are static in these tales. The manifestation of this absolutist philosophy is in the dicta which abound in the tales. Notice the finality and absolute nature of the following dicta. In "El trovador" he writes:

Because there is but one love, just as there is but one Great Lord who fills everything.19

In "La signatura" we find:

In every woman there is a perpetual deceiver. She was born to deceive. It is part of her office. She deceives as naturally as animals breathe.20

In "El hechizado" we see:

Just as the union of a man and a woman is necessary for the birth of a child on the physical plane, however momentarily uncertain it may seem, in the same way, for a work of beauty to emerge—the child of the spirit—the joining of two souls of different sexes is also necessary. And without this union, no artistic work can reach the ineffable life of art.21

In "El hombre" the author makes this absolutist statement:

This is the man whom you awaited; this is the man for whom you searched in all the unfamiliar souls, because your intuition had already assured you that some day you would be enriched by the coming of a unique being.22

These, and many other dicta found in the tales, were his personal observations and beliefs which he held at the time of the writing of the tales. They indicate a point of

19Arévalo Martínez, El hombre, p. 27.
20Arévalo Martínez, La signatura, p. 25.
21Ibid., p. 50.
22Arévalo Martínez, El hombre, pp. 9-10.
view which sees the world in absolute terms. This absolutist view is a contradiction when one considers that the author was also a symbolist. On the one hand, he points out fixed truths in the manner of an absolutist, yet on the other hand, he conjures up ideas and realities which are beyond truth and reality as a symbolist, as a relativist. This is one of the incongruities of the tales.

II. CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Development of the psychozoological characters. The psychozoological characters are so deftly and so artistically drawn that they turn from humans to animals before one's eyes without one noticing this symbolic metamorphosis. The technique which Arevalo Martínez utilizes to accomplish this is recognizable. It is fourfold. In order to imbue his humans with animal qualities he follows this technique:

1. Visual resemblance between man and animal.
3. Socio-psychological resemblance.
4. Farewell to man who now possesses the animal essence.

In most of the tales the author suggests or directly states at the very beginning of the story that the protagonist resembles a certain animal. In "El hombre," the author calls up the image of the horse in this manner:
But my impression that that man resembled a horse through some mysterious way, was not obtained then, except in a subconscious manner.23

Similarly, in "El trovador," the author brings up the image of the dog in the first paragraph. In almost all of the stories, the first relationship drawn between the man and the animal is one of a physical resemblance.

After presenting the visual relationship between the man and the animal, the author presents a motor impression which links the man and the animal. Accordingly, Mr. de Aretal stretches his neck like a horse and walks with the gait of a horse; León Franco tries to ingratiate himself to people by jumping and barking like a dog; Peinaldo speaks as a snake might speak, that is, by not moving his lips when he speaks and by speaking in a sweet monotone; Mr. Monitot24 walks balancing himself on one leg and then on the other, in the cumbersome way that an elephant would walk; and Elena plays chess in the manner that a lioness would, that is, by

23Ibid., p. 9.

24"El señor Monitot" is the story of the man-elephant. The narrator meets Mr. Monitot at a meeting of the Theosophic Society. This group is a gathering of fifteen people who are looking for God. They are undisciplined in their manner of searching until Mr. Monitot becomes president of the group. Like a true elephant he takes charge. He symbolically dips his trunk into the pool of the knowledge of life and sprays the group with the mist of knowledge. He speaks of the desirability of goodness and virtue and of the futility of greed, egoism, and sensuality. He leads the people closer to Catholicism. Then he dies. The narrator is ever grateful to Mr. Monitot for having led him to a better understanding of life and of God.
pouncing on a chess piece, like a lioness would snatch at food. This is the most graphic of the four stages. It is here that the author uses a generous amount of similes and metaphors.

The third stage of character development is that of making the psychological relationship between the man and the animal. By the time the story has reached this stage, it has already been established that the man looks like and moves like the animal with which he is being compared. It remains to be shown that the man reacts inwardly as an animal. It is at this point that men lose part of their humanity and take on the essence of animals. It is now that Arévalo Martínez analyzes his subjects. At the completion of this stage, the reader feels that the subject is truly animal-like, both inwardly and outwardly. Let us look at some representative analyses. Mr. de Aretal is analyzed thus:

What is the true spirit of Mr. de Aretal? I answered quickly. Mr. de Aretal, who had an elevated mentality, did not have a soul, he was amoral. He was amoral like a horse which allows itself to be ridden by any spirit.25

In "La signatura," Elena is found to have the essence of a lioness. She is analyzed in this way:

You are the female, I repeat, but the female lion. What they called masculinity was nothing else but

25Arévalo Martínez, El hombre, p. 20.
strength. You cannot truly be a female, except to another lion. For the rest you will be the dominator, the Lady, the Queen. You cannot have lovers, only slaves or dominators. You need a lion so that all of your awesome femininity may appear, but lions are scarce.26

In "El trovador," we find the analysis of the stray dog. This stray dog is León Franco. The author writes of him:

He was a good dog. What a dog's soul! What a soul of a lazy, vagabond dog! He thought nothing and wanted nothing. He had mated with females in passing, fruitful or not, always forgotten. No notion of family or home. Veneration for superior beings, a desire to gratify them; a putting of his fangs and paws at their service, a submissive acceptance of beatings, a begging for tenderness and for bread.27

Reinaldo, in "Nuestra señora," is analyzed and is found to have those traits which people apply to snakes. The author writes of him:

From his conversation I deduced that that sensual man was prudent, wary, and coldly provident, like a serpent.28

In "Las fieras," the protagonist is not directly analyzed. The narrator analyzes his feelings towards Vargas. He feels Vargas to be cruel, violent, and a slave to his instincts. Mr. Monitot is excluded from analysis. Mr. Monitot is unique in these stories because he is the only

26Árvalo Martínez, La signatura, p. 19.
27Árvalo Martínez, El hombre, pp. 43-44.
28Árvalo Martínez, El señor Monitot, p. 37.
protagonist who has no vices.

In the final stage of development, the characters now seem more animal-like than man-like. They are now fully possessed of their particular animal essence. They make their exits much in the same way as animals would. Either they go off into the wilderness or remain in the jungle—all except Mr. Monitot, who runs contrary to most of the general rules of these tales. As has been said, these characters go off as animals would: Mr. de Aretal gallops off into the desert, Elena runs off into the plains, León Franco moves off to another street, Vargas remains in the wilds of the tropics, and Reinaldo, like a snake, is scared off and is never seen again.

It should be noted that Arévalo Martínez does not condemn these characters for their lack of humanity. He seems to understand that they must follow their instincts. In the farewell, the characters are neither happy nor unhappy. They are like animals, who obeying their natural instincts, have no concept of good or bad. This idea of non-condemnation is well expressed by Torres-Riöseco who writes:

Here perhaps lies Arévalo Martínez' greatest power—not in his richly worked style or in his Poe-like gift of evoking mystery, but in his human sympathies and his strangely intuitive and compassionate understanding of his fellow-man. He feels a sort of Christian pantheism that makes all created things one; and like a literary St. Francis he experiences a true affection for Brother Tiger,
Brother Horse, Brother Serpent, and Sister Dove. The total effect of these four technical stages which have been pointed out is the creation of a totally believable character in each story. Besides this verbal sleight-of-hand, one other factor makes these characters credible. It is that most of them are taken from real life.

**Identity of the psychozoological characters.** The three strongest characters of Arevalo Martínez are de Aretal, Elena, and Vargas. Coincidentally, these three characters have been identified by the author and by critics as being caricatures of famous persons.

In an article entitled "Como compuse 'El hombre que parecía un caballo,'" Arevalo Martínez states that Porfirio Barba Jacob (1888-1942) was his model for Mr. de Aretal. Barba Jacob also used his true name, Miguel Ángel Osorio, and the name Ricardo Arenales. He was a poet of the Modernista movement. He was a dazzling person and poet. Like many of his fellow modernists, he drank heavily. He was a good friend of Arevalo Martínez.

In "Las fieras del Trópico," we meet the second great creation of Arevalo Martínez. He is José Vargas, the tiger. The title for this short story is probably taken from a poem which is found at the conclusion of Manuel Aldano, written in 1914. In the poem we find the lines:
A creole race does lick,
The boots of a hydropic despot,
and tragically pass by the beasts of the tropic.30

The dictator Manuel Estrada Cabrera, who ruled Guatemala from 1898 to 1920, was undoubtedly the main inspiration for Vargas in "Las fieras." There is reason to doubt, though, that Arevalo Martínez was consciously aware that he was using Estrada Cabrera as his model because he naively planned to include "Las fieras" in the work El hombre que parecía un caballo y otros cuentos which was published during the dictatorship of Estrada Cabrera. The friends of the author counseled him against including this short story in the work for fear that Estrada Cabrera would see himself as Vargas and would then seek to revenge himself upon the author. Arevalo Martínez explains this near-catastrophe in El señor Monitot.

As has been written often, Vargas could be the caricature of almost any South American dictator. He does not necessarily have to be Estrada Cabrera. However, there are two indications which strongly suggest that Vargas was indeed Estrada Cabrera. Both indications are found in Honduras, a novel written by Arevalo Martínez. One hint is that Estrada Cabrera personally interviewed anyone in the country who was accused of homicide. He seemed to get a sort of perverse pleasure from this. Vargas did this very thing with Madriz

30Rafael Arevalo Martínez, Manuel Aldano (Guatemala: Talleres "Gutenberg," 1922), pp. 147-148.
in "Las fieras." He rewarded Madriz for giving a detailed account of the manner in which he (Madriz) would kill. The second indication that Estrada Cabrera and Vargas are the same person is a passage in Honduras wherein the author sees a tiger and is instantly reminded of Estrada Cabrera, thus making the relationship or tie of the tiger, Estrada Cabrera, and Vargas. The passage reads:

Alfonso recalled in the act the tiger which he saw pass cautiously among the tall plants in one of the wildest places in San Marcos; that tropical afternoon he had the wind going away from him, which is probably what saved him from an attack of the animal; that same impression of the distant tiger is what Cabrera gave him.31

To say that Vargas in real life was Estrada Cabrera would be too large a claim. The writer of this thesis has never seen a statement written by the author saying that Vargas was Estrada Cabrera. What could safely be said is that Estrada Cabrera was the primary model for the creation of Vargas.

The third character whose identity with a real person can possibly be related is Elena. There are circumstances which tie in Gabriela Mistral with the stories "La signatura" and "El hechizado." One circumstance is that the author did actually, as is recounted in "El hechizado," serve as the official guide of the government of Guatemala for Gabriela Mistral while she visited Guatemala. That is one

31 Rafael Arevalo Martínez, Honduras (Guatemala: Editorial del Ministro de Educación Pública, 1949), p. 63.
similarity between real life and fiction. Another coincidence is the presence of a poem of gratitude and praise for the author written by Gabriela Mistral which appears in the introduction of "La signatura." One wonders about the significance of the presence of a poem written by a female artist in the introduction to a piece whose protagonist is a female artist. The third and strongest indication which links Gabriela Mistral with Elena is a revealing statement by Carlos García Prada, a statement which strongly suggests that the poetess did possess a lion-like personality. García Prada writes:

The sublime Chilean poetess passes before the public as a pure and religious woman, worn out with tenderness towards children, the poor, and the disinherited of the earth. That is what is inferred from her prose and poetry, from the image before the crowds which heard her and acclaimed her. But those who dealt with her intimately know that at times she would wound her friends and admirers with haughty words and feline claws, subduing them and humiliating them for pure pleasure. She was cruel, and for some she held something of the "witch" which does not detract from the quality of her verses nor her prose, the glory of Hispanic letters.32

From the evidence which has been presented above, it would seem that Gabriela Mistral was the person after whom Elena was fashioned.

In review, this chapter has analyzed both the stories and the characters of the psychozoological group. This group

of stories has very little plot and very little setting. The stories are ones of character and of mood and they are replete with symbols. The symbols are generally three-part, involving the animal, its essence, and the man. There seems to be no intention to these stories, other than the author's wanting to express his unique point of view. The point of view of the author is a contradiction. At times he leads us to believe that there is a relative reality, a world which alternates between the real and the fantastic, and then in his dicta, he leads the reader to believe that reality and the universe are fixed, static, and absolute. In analyzing the characters of these tales, it was seen that the author followed a fixed technique which has four stages in character development. Finally, it was seen that the author created his characters from real life. There are strong indications that three models for his characters were Porfirio Barba Jacob, Manuel Estrada Cabrera, and Gabriela Mistral.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY

The psychozoological tales are stories which are set in a mood, an atmosphere of mystery. In the tales the protagonists take on the essential inner qualities of animals. Being possessed of the inner or psychological qualities of animals, the protagonists react in such a way as to graphically act like the animals whom they resemble inwardly. They not only take on the mannerisms of the animals but also seem to take on the appearances of the animals.

Measured by present and past standards, the tales would most appropriately be classified as short stories. In the introduction to "Las fieras del Trópico," Arévalo Martínez himself calls these tales short stories and then lists those tales which he considers to be the psychozoological tales. He lists the following: "El hombre que parecía un caballo," "El trovador colombiano," "Las fieras del Trópico," "La signatura de la esfinge," "El hechizado," "Nuestra señora de los locos," and "El señor Monitot."

In reviewing the literature about Arévalo Martínez we find two themes. One is that writers want to compare the psychozoological characters to other characters in world literature. The other is that the characters of Arévalo
Martínez are original. The critics are unanimous on this one point of originality.

Some possible literary influences upon Arevalo Martínez are Rubén Darío, St. John of the Cross, St. Theresa of Ávila, Jean Lorrain, Friedrich Nietzsche, and St. Francis of Assisi. The influences which are most apparent in this group of stories are those of Poe, the Popol-Vuh, and Nietzsche. The influence of Poe is seen in the technique of Arevalo Martínez; the influence of the Popol-Vuh is noted in the subject matter; and the influence of Nietzsche is seen in the motivation of the characters of Arevalo Martínez.

In analyzing the short stories, one finds that they are almost all totally lacking in plot and setting. They are stories of character and of mood. There seems to be no apparent intention to these stories other than the desire of the author to express his unique way of seeing people.

The animal symbol in these stories is three-part. The essential qualities of the animals symbolize the animal which, in turn, symbolize the man. To achieve this symbolism, the author takes the character through four stages in the story: visual resemblance between man and animal, motor resemblance between man and animal, psychological resemblance between man and animal, and farewell to the man who is now an animal inwardly.

The psychozoological characters which are sketched most powerfully and which play more than a provincial part
in the stories are modeled after actual persons. Porfirio Barba Jacob, Manuel Estrada Cabrera, and Gabriela Mistral can be seen as prototypes for these powerful characters.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Attitude towards men and animals. Rafael Arevalo Martínez shows a Christ-like love for all living things in these tales. This love of his for all creatures is reminiscent of St. Francis of Assisi. In "El trovador" are found excellent examples of this universal love. The story is written with tenderness and understanding. In "El trovador," the author writes:

I met also the poor soul of a street dog, of León Franco; the poor soul of a dog without a master, sad and crippled like the animals which the good Jesus called to his sorrow. Because it is necessary that you notice that the good Jesus called two crippled to his sorrow: an ox and a mule. Two animals which could not know love in its form of physical attraction, which is one manifestation of Divine Love, because there is but one love, just as there is but one Great Being who fills everything.¹

Also, in the same story he writes:

Oh noble muzzle of a dog, muzzle which was a hand and a kiss for its master! How must the Good God love the mouth of dogs when He made it a hand at the same time! Humble muzzle which picks up food from the ground without feeling humiliated.

¹Arevalo Martínez, El hombre, p. 27.
Muzzle which was a hand with which to seize, and which was a hand with which to woo the female; horn or hoof with which to defend itself; and lips with which to kiss, and mouth, after all, sanctified for the passage of food taken from the ground.\textsuperscript{2}

Árêvalo Martínez has not only found the essential qualities of animals, but he has been able to find goodness in the animals. In the horse he has found nobility. He tells de Aretal, "Never have I loved horses as much as I do now. I understand the nobility of the horse: it is almost human."\textsuperscript{3} He found the elephant strong and also noble. In the tiger he found the saving grace of cleanliness. In the dove he found purity. In the lioness he found strength and motherliness. Even in the snake he found a type of goodness. He could not condemn the snake for what it was by instinct, and he could not feel repugnance towards it. To him, the snake was voluptuousness in its purest form. Árêvalo Martínez could find something, even in the lowliest creature, to love and to admire.

\textbf{Vision.} Vision plays an important part in the psychozoological tales. It will be recalled that the first indication that a person resembles an animal is a visual indication. One critic suggests that the eyes of Árêvalo Martínez,

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 29.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., p. 24.
impaired by myopia, caused him to see people as animals, thereby being a primary influence in the creation of the psychozoological characters. There is a slight indication that this is true in "El trovador" when the author compares himself to El Greco. He says:

In this way Domenico Theotocopuli must have seen the world. I also see everything elongated, as if a moon eternally projected its shadows upon my spirit.\(^4\)

Also in "La signatura," and in other works outside the psychozoological tales, Arévalo Martínez makes reference to El Greco. There is little doubt that he likens himself to the great painter.

In his autobiographical writing, the author has made much of his illness, neurasthenia. Besides weakness, lethargy, and sleeplessness, one other symptom of this disease is visual disturbance. This last symptom, coupled with myopia, could be a definite influence upon the tales in regard to inspiration. Vision is an important influence in the tales. It may be that the author is a literary El Greco who gives his readers a distorted view of reality by putting down on paper what he sees with his unique vision.

**Critique of the works.** "El hombre que parecía un caballo" has received the highest praise from such leading

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 30.
literary figures as Rubén Darío, José Santos Chocano, Federico de Onís, and Gabriela Mistral. This writer agrees with these writers and he feels that "El hombre" is the masterpiece of Arevalo Martínez. It has just the right amount of mystery, symbolism, and story line to make it enjoyable, provocative, and interesting. It is a high in Hispanic letters.

"El trovador colombiano" mirrors the sublime love of Arevalo Martínez for all living creatures. It is a beautiful exposition of dogs. León Franco is more fully developed even than Mr. de Aretal. Franco is the best-developed psychozoological character. On the other hand, the story is weak in regard to structure. It is too rambling and has too many digressions. Also, once the author has established that León Franco is a dog, he superfluously keeps using the simile "like a dog" repeatedly. The constant use of this simile shows a lack of subtlety and of art. Moreover, like "El señor Moniot," this tale lacks one essential quality of the psychozoological tales--mystery. Structurally, this is the worst story, but in character delineation it is the best.

"Las fieras del Trópico" contains the most awesome character of this genre, the dictator Vargas. Vargas is also the most believable character, perhaps because his type, the animal-like caudillo, is or was so common in
Latin America. Within a few pages, the author has captured the cruelty, vanity, violence, craftiness, and omnipotence of a caudillo.

The mood which permeates this story is masterfully created. It is one of oppression and of helplessness. Vargas dominates all, and it is only by his choosing, whim, or fancy that anyone can exercise the slightest bit of self-expression. This mood, together with the omnipotence of the dictator, makes this story a must in the study of dictators and of caudillos.

In "Nuestra señora de los locos," one sees the attempt to create two psychozoological characters in the same story. This is both unique and nearly disastrous. The result of this attempt is that both characters are poorly defined, by the standards of the preceding characters. Very little goes into the creation of Ema. We know that she is a dove because of the whiteness of her dress and because of her docility. Reinaldo, the snake, is defined better. The outstanding element of this story is mood. It is one of impending doom and of terror. This story contains quite a lot of action in comparison to the other stories. The setting of the story changes at least six times. It seems that because Arévalo Martínez has included more plot and more setting in this tale, the character development has suffered. This is a good story. It has balance in respect
to plot, character, setting, and mood. Yet, insofar as being a psychozoological story, a story with major emphasis upon character, it results weaker than most of the other psychozoological tales.

"La signatura de la esfinge" contains the most powerful character, Elena. Elena, the lioness, is the queen of the jungle menagerie. She is strong-willed and dominates everyone with whom she comes in contact. No person whom she has met has been able to dominate her. The psychological analysis of Elena by the author is superb and is second only to the analysis of Mr. de Aretal. There is one weakness in this story—its ending. The closing sentence is a powerful one, but it is not enough. The story ends much like one would imagine an analytic session between a psychiatrist and his patient to end. It is not a typical psychozoological ending and it makes the story seem incomplete. The story is incomplete because it is continued in "El hechizado."

"El hechizado" is a story which simply goes back in time to fill in some of the details of "La signatura." It relates how the author-narrator met Elena, why the marriage of Elena failed, and it goes into detail about a trip which the author and Elena took. The story also goes deeper into the analysis of the personality of Elena. The saving feature of this tale is its ending. This is the ending
which should have been used in "La signatura." This story is simply an epilogue to "La signatura."

"El señor Monitot" signals the end of a period for Arevalo Martínez. One can see that the psychozoological idea has manifestly spent itself with the writing of this tale. The author has made very little effort to create a character. He has included no mystery. Mr. Monitot is the weakest character in regard to verisimilitude. Almost half of the story is a recording of one of the discourses of Mr. Monitot. The story reads like an essay rather than like a short story. This story lacks the mystery which has been the hallmark of the psychozoological tales. The thought content of the story is the redeeming quality of this work. It calls for virtue and for goodness for their own sake. Perhaps the author used this tale as a vehicle which summarized the philosophy which permeates all of these tales.

Taken as a whole, these tales are enjoyable reading. They contain philosophy, mystery, tenderness, and understanding. They are, in a sense, didactic. They subtly suggest a super-Christianity, a Christianity which advocates a love for all created things, a love which can find some good in the most abject of God's creatures.

Rafael Arevalo Martínez has brought innovation to Guatemalan letters. As Seymour Menton has observed, he was
the first in his country to write an introspective novel. He is unique and original in creating the psychozoological tales. He has brought originality, sensitivity, and tenderness to Hispanic literature. He has brought fame to his country and has brought glory to himself.

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