INTRODUCTION

Born on September 12, 1891, in Budapest, Hungary, Géza Róheim was to become, after Freud, the most important single contributor to the development of a psychoanalytic approach to anthropology and folklore. At the time of his death in New York City on June 7, 1953, Róheim had penned more than a dozen books and 150 papers, the majority of which represented applications of fairly orthodox Freudian theory to an impressively wide variety of topics and themes.

As an only child in a relatively wealthy merchant family, Róheim evidently enjoyed something of a pampered and protected childhood. According to Balint (1954:434), Róheim "had the good and bad luck to be born the only child of fairly well-to-do parents. Their house was well known throughout Budapest for its hospitality, excellent kitchen, and still more excellent wines, grown in their own vineyards." Thanks in part to the encouragement of a beloved grandfather, Róheim became avidly interested in folklore at a very early age (Muensterberger and Nichols 1974:xi).

During Róheim's teens, his father opened a charge account at one of Budapest's oldest bookstores which allowed the young folklore enthusiast to purchase books on mythology and ethnography. In this bookshop an old assistant, recognizing Róheim's appetite for folklore, gave him a helping hand in finding books on the subject (Balint 1954:434). Thus began Róheim's lifelong effort to compile a superb library and an encyclopedic knowledge of both folklore and anthropology. Róheim's library was once called "one of the largest private collections of folklorist studies ever assembled" (Nichols 1975:301). Much of it was eventually donated to the Downstate Medical Center of the State University of New York (Nichols 1975:388n31).

Even as a youngster, Róheim was so well read in mythology that while he was still a gymnasium [high school] student, he gave a lecture on "The Mythology of the Moon" to the Hungarian Ethnological Society (Lorand 1951:xi), which was more or less the equivalent of the American Anthropological Association or American Folklore Society. This was on May 19, 1909 (Verbélyi 1977:209), when Róheim was only seventeen years of age. He would later return to the subject (e.g., "Mondmythologie und

Mondreligion" in 1927). One should keep in mind that moon or lunar mythology was at the time one of several competing nineteenth-century mythological theories; advocates of lunar mythology challenged adherents of solar mythology. According to the tenets of the latter theory, all folk narratives represented primitive man's fascination with the rising and setting of the sun.

In 1911, at the tender age of twenty, the precocious young folklorist had already published his first paper, in Hungarian, entitled (in translation) "Dragons and Dragon Killers" which also appeared in German the following year. At this point, Róheim had not yet discovered psychoanalysis, which was emerging in nearby Vienna. In fact, the theoretical orientation of this early study of dragons appears to have been that of solar mythology (cf. Mogk 1914:248n1). Many years later, in 1940, Róheim would again consider "The Dragon and the Hero," but this time from a psychoanalytic perspective.

We are fortunate in that Róheim himself gave a personal account of some of the intellectual influences which shaped him. He was about eight years old when he read James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*. Although the book was lost and he could not remember the specific contents of the book, he remarked, "I know that I became an ethnologist because of reading it" (Köhalmi 1937:285, as quoted in translation by Verebélyi 1977:209n7). When Róheim was fifteen, he read E. B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man*, and Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*, pretty heady reading for a boy of that age. "What impressed me in Spencer were the great connections, the simplification of phenomena," Róheim reported. Then came James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough* "with its bold reasoning theories and dynamism: all true ethnologists felt its influence." "And at last came Freud, the *Traumdeutung*, the *Totem und Tabu*, the real keys to the mystery. Dead material comes to life, passive knowledge becomes active. And there is nothing else. Freud and psychoanalysis mean more than any other influence" (Köhalmi 1937:285, as quoted in translation by Verebélyi 1977:209n7).

As there were no chairs in anthropology or folklore in Budapest at that time, Róheim elected to go to Germany for graduate work, to Leipzig and Berlin. His actual academic degree, however, was awarded from the University of Budapest on May 16, 1914, in geography. Róheim's minor subjects were "ancient history of oriental peoples" and "English philology" (Verebélyi 1977:209). It was apparently during his time in Germany that Róheim discovered

the writings of Freud and his early disciples Ferenczi, Abraham, Jung, and Riklin (Balint 1954:435). So this is how Róheim first found his intellectual niche. Lunar and solar mythology were permanently abandoned in favor of the exciting new possibilities of applied psychoanalysis.

After his return to Budapest at age twenty-four, Róheim held a post as a member of the curatorial staff of the Ethnological Department of the Hungarian National Museum, which he held until 1919 when a counterrevolution in Hungary forced him to resign. One of the charges against him was that he propagated theories promoting the principle of communism in public and popular lectures (Verebélyi 1977:210). (Róheim was never overtly political—as even Robinson's chapter devoted to him in *The Freudian Left* (1969:75) admits.) It was during the years 1915 and 1916 that Róheim began a didactic analysis with Sandor Ferenczi, one of the most brilliant of Freud's early circle of pioneer psychoanalysts. Melanie Klein was analyzed by Ferenczi at the same time, which might account in part for Róheim's later adaptation of her useful notion of split mother imagos (good and bad mother) as well as her idea of the aggressive infant's attempt to tear out the body contents of the good mother (and her breast). Róheim would go into analysis again in late 1928 with Vilma Kovacs, shortly before he began his anthropological fieldwork.

In 1918, Róheim married his beloved Ilonka, his faithful lifelong companion. As one friend put it, "Their marriage was one of those which are inexplicable and incomprehensible to everyone except their most intimate friends. Géza and Ilonka quarrelled and disagreed all the time, but were inseparable. Their two lives were but one life, and although each was always critical and dissatisfied with the other, they could not do anything without one another" (Balint 1954:435). Róheim left most practical day-to-day tasks to his wife who not only looked after him, but also served as his chief field assistant. During their time in the field, she took photographs, interviewed women and children, and typed his manuscripts (Verebélyi 1977:212). When Ilonka died in 1953, Róheim was inconsolable. For the first time in his life, he stopped writing (Spitz 1953:327). He died just two months after she died.

Also in 1918, Róheim attended the Congress of the International Psychoanalytical Association held in Budapest where he met Freud for the first time (Lorand 1951:xii). In 1921, he won the Freud Prize for the best scientific paper in applied analysis. One must keep in mind that Róheim was not an M.D. but a Ph.D. and

to some extent, he was part of the continuing conflict within psychoanalytic ranks between medical and lay analysts. Róheim did practice psychoanalysis both in Hungary and later in the United States, but he was clearly a lay analyst.

By 1925, Freud cited Róheim and Theodor Reik as the two individuals who had done most to extend the psychoanalytic anthropological insights Freud had first articulated in *Totem and Taboo* (Freud 1959:68–69). Freud made these complimentary remarks in his essay *An Autobiographical Study*. Róheim, of course, was equally admiring of Freud. In his words, "To the writer, the answer to the question—what has Freud done for anthropology—is: *everything*. One may have his doubts about the collective unconscious, or the primal horde but this is not the point" (Róheim 1940c:254). Róheim did not blindly accept *all* Freudian concepts as dogma, such as the unprovable assumption that there was in primeval times a "primal horde." Róheim's position was clear ". . . I do not believe that psychoanalytic anthropology stands or falls with this view of human origins" (1936:76), referring to the hypothetical parricide committed by the "primal horde" sons acting upon oedipal impulse.

It was in 1928 that Róheim's career took a sudden critical turn that was to influence the rest of his life. After having immersed himself for many years in reading folklore and anthropology, and after having been analyzed by Ferenczi, Róheim wanted to test psychoanalytic concepts in the field. This was a novel idea at the time. Freud and his followers had not hesitated to apply psychoanalytic theory to so-called "primitive" peoples, but they did so from the safety of their armchairs and libraries, relying upon data gathered by anthropologists. Róheim wanted to gather his own data in order to test the cross-cultural validity of psychoanalytic theory.

To put Róheim's proposal in context, one needs to remember that a common criticism leveled at psychoanalysis (then and now) was that if it was relevant at all, it was only to European societies and not to non-Western cultures. One of the reasons Róheim was anxious to go into the field was to disprove this view. In his own words, "Of course, somebody might say that the evidence applies to European races alone. In this case psycho-analysts can reply either by collecting evidence from the customs and myths of non-European races, or by applying the psychoanalytic method of investigation directly and personally to the representatives of these

races. This is what I did when I was in the field . . ." (Róheim 1941:112).

One should also keep in mind that it was in the 1920s that anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski had claimed that he had indeed tested Freud's theories in Melanesia and that he had found the theories wanting. Malinowski attacked the psychoanalytic assumption that the Oedipus complex was universal. Malinowski believed that the Oedipus complex could only exist in a society with patrilineal descent and that the Trobriand Islanders with a matrilineal descent system (in which the senior male member of the family was a boy's mother's brother, not his father) simply could not have an Oedipus complex. Rather, when a Trobriand boy grows up, he is under the control and discipline of his senior maternal uncle, thus leading supposedly to what Malinowski called an "avuncular complex." The problem with Malinowski's analysis is that of course the mother's brother is no sexual rival for the boy's mother's affections and as Róheim scathingly noted, "Can a psychoanalyst seriously believe that until the child grows up it just waits and then in the prepuberty period suddenly develops an *avuncular complex*?" (Róheim 1940d:542). Róheim then finds myth texts in Malinowski's own field data wherein sons have intercourse with their mothers and kill their fathers (cf. Ingham 1963; Spiro 1982).

Malinowski also claimed to have "proved" the lack of a so-called anal stage among his Melanesian informants. In his book *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, first published in 1927, Malinowski asked, "How can we then explain why among savages there is no period of what Freud calls 'pre-genital,' 'anal-erotic' interest?" (1955:44). Róheim was sufficiently bothered by Malinowski's categorical statement that he asked Freud about it. "When I visited Freud before I left for my field work I repeated this passage. His reply was so characteristic that I quote it verbatim: 'Was, haben denn die Leute keinen Anus?' ['What! don't those people have an anus?'] Well, they have one." (Róheim 1950a:159). Actually, Róheim had already published an essay "Heiliges Geld in Melanesien" in 1923 illustrating the standard money-feces equation stemming from anal eroticism.

In the light of these events, it is easy to see why Freud might applaud Róheim's proposal to test psychoanalytic theory in the field. Malinowski, after all, was not an analyst. What was needed was someone really familiar with psychoanalysis to go into the field. Fortunately, one of Freud's patients and benefactors was

Princess Marie Bonaparte who generously provided the funds which allowed Róheim and his wife to go into the field for an extended time. (It was the same Marie Bonaparte who would later pay the ransom to the Nazi Gestapo in Vienna to permit Freud to leave Austria to flee to safety in England in 1939.)

According to Marie Bonaparte's son, Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, Róheim came to Paris to discuss the project (1975:1). His plan to visit the Australian aborigines and test psychoanalytic theories in the field with them resulted in a favorable response from Marie Bonaparte. Prince Peter remembered the Róheim interview in his parents' home in Paris very well, partly because it helped him decide to become a professional anthropologist. "I began to think, while Mr. and Mrs. Róheim were talking things over with my mother: 'Why should these people get my mother's money to carry out such work? Could I not do it myself—with her money?' It seemed more logical that way somehow, and there and then I decided I would take up psychoanalytical research work among 'primitive people' just as the Hungarian scholar and his wife were about to do" (1975:2).

The Róheims then went from Paris to London in that same year of 1928. In September, Róheim attended the Jubilee Congress of the English Folklore Society, which had been founded in 1878. His paper "Mother Earth and the Children of the Sun" was published in the Papers and Transactions of the Congress in 1930 along with Ernest Jones' paper "Psychoanalysis and Folklore," but unfortunately neither Róheim nor Jones may be said to have had any noticeable impact upon the direction of folklore scholarship in England.

At the end of 1928, the Róheims set out for Aden and Djibouti where they remained for a month (Peter 1975:2). One reason for this initial stop was that while in Budapest, the Róheims had interacted with a dance troupe from Somaliland asking psychoanalytically oriented questions. This fieldwork was continued in Aden (Verebélyi 1977:211). In February 1929, they went on to Australia where they did fieldwork with the Aranda and some Luritjas. In November of that year, they moved to Port Moresby, New Guinea, and to Normanby Island where they remained for nine months. In November 1930, they began the long trip home, sailing from Sydney to San Francisco from where they journeyed to Yuma to carry out two months' fieldwork with the native Americans.

While these various field visits were not long by today's standards, Róheim's polyglot linguistic talents enabled him to record

numerous folklore texts in all the areas he studied. Róheim's exceptional talent for learning languages is attested to by his mastery of a number of languages. "Besides his knowledge of Latin and Greek, he spoke German, English and French already at high school. In Australia he familiarized himself in a few months with several dialects. He could soon communicate with his Arunta [Aranda] and Luritja informants without an interpreter" (Verebélyi 1977:212). Years later whenever the Róheims wished to communicate secretly with one another in public, they would resort to the Aranda or Pitchentara languages (Balint 1954:436).

The field period from 1928 to 1931 provided Róheim ample data for a lifetime of publication. To this day, there have been relatively few analysts who have spent years in the field themselves gathering ethnographic data. It is not possible to exaggerate the importance of Róheim's unique position as a pioneer in psychoanalytic anthropology and folklore. No other analyst was initially trained in folklore and anthropology; no other folklorist or anthropologist at that time underwent analysis and then tried to test psychoanalytic concepts in the field. As one individual observed, "Róheim had the distinction of being the first scholar actively to pursue careers in both fields, psychoanalysis (including clinical practice) and anthropology (including detailed empirical fieldwork)" (Endlemann 1981:56). (For a fuller appreciation of Róheim's fieldwork in Australia, see Morton 1988.)

In the fall of 1938, the political developments in Hungary and throughout Europe forced Róheim to reluctantly leave his beloved homeland. He sought sanctuary in the United States and in that year joined the staff of the Worcester State Hospital as a teaching associate and analyst, remaining there until 1939 when he entered private practice in New York City, where he lived the rest of his life. In 1947, thanks to the support of the Viking Fund, at that time headed by fellow Hungarian Paul Fejós, Róheim carried out fieldwork among the Navaho. All during his final years in exile, Róheim never ceased to be the quintessential Hungarian. Even though he himself had written on nationalism and patriotism (Róheim 1950b), this in no way diminished his own love of his mother country. According to one source, "It had been his last wish to be buried wrapped in the Hungarian flag and those who saw that wish fulfilled felt that it was right" (Bak 1953:759).

It is one thing to say that Géza Róheim devoted his life and energy to the psychoanalytic study of anthropology and folklore; it is quite another to gauge his overall impact upon these two disci-

plines. Werner Muensterberger, a close friend of Róheim and later his literary executor, described Róheim as "a very independent thinker and in some sense a lonely man. Against all odds in the field of anthropology he alone fought for a psychoanalytic approach to a science of man" (1970:7). Just how were Róheim and his voluminous writings regarded by anthropologists and folklorists? The sad truth is that Róheim's numerous applications of psychoanalytic theory to anthropological and folkloristic data may be said to have fallen generally upon deaf ears. The pronounced anti-Freudian bias in both anthropology and folkloristics, especially the latter, has helped keep Róheim's brilliant readings of custom and folk narrative from the recognition they deserve. Most young anthropologists and folklorists have never even read anything by Róheim and they remain totally ignorant of his unique contribution to the serious study of symbolism and traditional behavior.

What little praise Róheim has received has come from a small handful of psychoanalysts and anthropologists. One such representative snippet is J. C. Flugel's line in his *A Hundred Years of Psychology* where he spoke of Róheim's "producing several large works distinguished alike by their erudition and their ingenuity (but also, alas, by their lack of clarity)" (1933:337). Marvin Harris in *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* did devote several pages to Róheim (1968:427–30) calling him "one of the most flamboyant figures in the history of the culture and personality movement," but his overall assessment was negative. Róheim was labelled by Harris as a Freudian purist and he complained, as so many critics did, about Róheim's strange writing style: ". . . Róheim's style was so thoroughly calculated to insult the majority of his anthropological peers that he gained few converts, and even those who were influenced by him preferred not to acknowledge his existence" (1968:428). A more positive evaluation is found in Philip K. Bock's *Rethinking Psychological Anthropology*. Bock remarked, "Outrageous as many of his interpretations first appear, his work contains a number of brilliant insights that are only now being appreciated by anthropologists. He had a knack for grasping the symbolic significance of words and actions" (1988:125).

While there have been a few scholars in France and Germany (cf. Valabrega 1957; Zinser 1977) who appreciated Róheim's blend of psychoanalysis and anthropology, the response in his own native country of Hungary has been almost nil. Gyula Ortutay, the leading Hungarian folklorist of his generation, had this to say about Róheim: "Of the western bourgeois doctrines, that of the

psychoanalytical ethnography was represented in Hungary by a scholar of European repute. He was the sole representative here of that school as he remained without followers, and as his teaching was either ignored or declined by the whole body of Hungarian folklorists. We are alluding to the essays and works of Géza Róheim . . . It does not seem necessary to offer here a criticism of Róheim's theories: the unhistoric character and the idealistic mistakes of the psychoanalytical school are notorious, and—as has been said—both the progressive and the conservative representatives of the Hungarian folklore [community] unanimously rejected his doctrines" (1955:53). The single-handed efforts of Hungarian folklorist Kincsö Verebélyi (1977, 1978–1979) to rescue Róheim from academic oblivion are surely to be applauded, although it remains to be seen how successful she will ultimately prove to be. Róheim himself was not unaware of the unpopularity of his approach. The introduction to his *The Gates of the Dream* begins with a somewhat poignant and revealing anecdote: "Some time ago I was invited to the house of one of my oldest friends. He was talking to a younger colleague and asking quite seriously: Is there such a thing as psychoanalytic anthropology? The younger colleague smiled and looked at me, and I thought: Has my life really been in vain? Not that I really believed it" (1953:vii).

Were folklorists any more receptive to Róheim than anthropologists? Róheim is not mentioned at all in Giuseppe Cocchiara's *The History of Folklore in Europe*, first published in Italian in 1952, nor were there any obituary notices in any of the dozens of folklore journals even though he had devoted a great portion of his life to the analysis of folklore. For the history of folkloristics, it is as though Róheim (or Freud, for that matter) had never lived. This is an important point. Although there have at least been occasional acknowledgments of Róheim's contributions to psychoanalytic theory or to psychoanalytic anthropology, there seems to have been virtually no appreciation of his significant research in folklore. This is surprising inasmuch as Róheim probably wrote more essays on folkloristic subjects than he did on any other single topic.

One of the very few to recognize Róheim's extraordinary studies in folklore was psychoanalytic anthropologist Weston La Barre who in his valuable 1958 survey "The Influence of Freud on Anthropology," pointedly remarked, "But without doubt the chief modern analyst of folklore is Géza Róheim, whose voluminous writings contain many analyses of folklore in psychoanalytic

terms" (1958:294). But La Barre is an anthropologist, not a folklorist. The late Richard M. Dorson, the doyen of American folklorists, did mention Róheim in passing in his survey of folklore theories (1972:28), but he was also honest enough to say, "The most speculative body of current folklore theory belongs to the psychoanalytical school that memorializes Sigmund Freud. This is also the school of interpretation most abhorrent to orthodox folklorists" (1972:25). Dorson was, clearly, an orthodox folklorist!

I would say that Géza Róheim was the first true psychoanalytic folklorist. He began his career as a folklorist—*all* of his early publications, written in Hungarian, were concerned with folklore. After he discovered psychoanalysis, he continued to be interested in folklore. His unending commitment to folkloristics is easily documented. In an extensive review essay written in 1922, he considered some sixty seven books and articles (including nine of his own) most of which were folkloristic in nature. During his fieldwork in Australia, Melanesia, and among native Americans, he never ceased to collect and analyze folkloristic data. After his emigration to the United States in 1938, he served as a member of the Council of the American Folklore Society for two terms, 1944–1946 and 1946–1948. Although Council membership was largely honorific, it does signal at least token recognition of his stature as a major folklorist of that era. At the very end of his life, he turned once again to folklore. *The Gates of the Dream* was published in 1953. This full-length treatment of mythology included data from all over the world, a veritable magnum opus, and was dedicated to the memory of Sandor Ferenczi. Róheim never saw it in print. A copy was brought to him in the hospital on the day of his death, but he was unable to open it (Spitz 1953:327). His final papers, several of which appeared posthumously (and which are included in this volume) were all concerned with individual European fairy tales. Géza Róheim had come full circle. He began his prolific career writing about folklore and he ended it deeply involved in an effort to discover the unconscious meaning of folklore.

How does Róheim's psychoanalytic approach to folklore differ from that of other psychoanalysts? Most psychoanalytic discussions of folklore are marked by parochial scholarship. Typically an analyst will use only a single version of a folktale as text (even though there may be more than one thousand versions of that tale type available in print). Moreover, as often as not, the single text used as a point of analytic departure is a literary, bowdlerized, reworked text, such as those in the Perrault or Grimm canons,

texts which are considerably removed from pure oral tradition. The Grimms, for example, did not hesitate to combine elements from different versions of the same tale, thereby creating a composite, synthetic conflation which had in fact never been recounted in that form by anyone. In contrast, folklorists are fully aware of the multiple existence of oral tales (and all folklore) and they understand the necessity of employing the comparative method. Róheim, thanks to his initial training in folklore, knew very well that the Grimm version of a folktale was but one version of a given tale type.

Róheim's comparative perspective was essentially worldwide in scope. He knew European folklore very well indeed, including both Western and Eastern European folklore (cf. Róheim 1954) but he also knew Australian aboriginal folklore from reading and from his own fieldwork. He was familiar, too, with native American folklore. Extremely erudite, Róheim drew from the folklore of the entire world whatever he felt was relevant to a particular discussion. This is why a discussion of a Hungarian folktale may suddenly without warning leap to an Australian aboriginal myth or to a native American folktale. All follklore was equally appropriate grist for Róheim's psychoanalytic mill.

Was it just an anti-Freudian bias that accounted for folklorists' failure to take Róheim's work seriously? No doubt that is the principal factor, but it is also true that Róheim's peculiar writing style did not help his cause very much. Granted that English was not his native language, that does not explain his unusual expository techniques. One critic called it "his more characteristic 'Hungarian' style of jumping from idea to idea while assuming his reader is already familiar with the data and theories he is employing" (Nichols 1975:308).

Róheim was not unaware of his difficult prose style. Once "when an anthropologist chided him for writing in a very undisciplined way, with illustrative examples not even in geographic or ethnic context, he acknowledged the justice of the criticism but said it was due to his day-long listening to patients' free associations" (LaBarre 1966:279). And it is the case that some of Róheim's sentence and paragraph structure appear to have the quality of his own free associations to a given folktale or myth.

One problem was that, as noted above, Róheim made few concessions to his readers. He really expected them to have the same extraordinary familiarity with folklore and the same sophisticated knowledge of psychoanalytic theory that he had. Passages in

Greek and Latin were left untranslated. Moreover, Róheim seemed somewhat impatient in his writing. After having presented various texts, he would make his analytic point with little fanfare. This tendency to bury his analytic statement within a maze of textual data surely discouraged most readers from trying to follow his web of psychoanalytic speculations about a particular piece of folklore.

Recalling Róheim's own statement of early intellectual debt to Frazer and Freud, one can easily see just how Róheim's style of presentation combines the two. Texts are adduced in a somewhat chaotic fashion à la Frazer whereupon without warning Róheim interpolates a psychoanalytic commentary on the texts. Then follows more textual data which may again lead to another psychoanalytic insight. Róheim felt absolutely free to mix materials from printed sources, materials from his own fieldwork, materials gleaned from his clinical practice, and materials comprising off-the-top-of-the-head musings. Sometimes even his most ardent admirers have to admit that it is not easy to discern the rhyme or reason in Róheim's order of data presentation. Nevertheless, it is also true that no folklorist in the entire history of folkloristics has ever tackled the demanding task of deciphering the symbolic elements of myth, folktale, and legend with more gusto and élan than Géza Róheim.

One reason, apart from Róheim's idiosyncratic writing style, why Róheim's work has had relatively little impact upon folklorists in that he unwisely tended to publish his essays in a variety of outlets. (In fairness, it is probably highly unlikely that conventional folklore journals would have accepted his essays for publication.) Few folklorists normally read the *Journal of Criminal Psychopathology*, or *Samiksa*, the journal of the Indian Psychoanalytic Society, or the *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*. One of the goals of the present volume is to bring together under one cover a dozen or so of Róheim's most important essays on folklore. In view of the fact that Róheim's first published paper had to do with dragons, it was decided to entitle this volume "Fire in the Dragon" from a paper of Róheim's published in 1950 and included in this selection of his folkloristic writings. Generally speaking, the papers have been placed in chronological order so that the reader can see the continuities and evolution of Róheim's studies of folklore. Although he wrote on folklore in Hungarian, German, and English, we have chosen to reprint only essays in English. One justification for this is that a number of the English-language essays

were in fact Róheim's own translations and revisions of earlier papers initially published in Hungarian. The English-language essays, the majority of which were written after Róheim emigrated to the United States, also represent his most mature thinking on folkloristic topics.

Although each essay may be read and understood independently, it may prove helpful to readers not so familiar with Róheim's brand of psychoanalytic theory to mention a few of his basic ideas about folklore. Róheim had a lifelong fascination with the possible relationship between dreams and folklore. He came to believe that many folk narratives were originally dreams dreamed by some individual and then passed on in oral tradition. (For a valuable discussion of Róheim's dream origin of myth theory, see Morales 1988.) Certainly, there are undeniable parallels between dreams and folk narratives, but Róheim's dream origin theory could be turned on its head. Instead of assuming that dreams are the source of folk narratives, one could reasonably argue that folk narratives are the source of dreams. That is, a person's dreams are in some measure structured by the folk narratives in that person's culture. Furthermore, the fact that dreams are "recounted" or "narrated" after the event might tend to make them seem more similar to narratives than they really are. Both dreams and folk narratives may rightfully be considered as products of the human mind without assuming necessarily that either one is logically prior to the other. In any case, the critical point is that one can accept Róheim's brilliant content analyses of folk narratives even if one does not find credible his dream origin theory, a theory articulated in most detail in his 1953 book *The Gates of the Dream*. The reader will see that throughout his writings on folklore, Róheim inclines towards a possible dream origin of folklore.

Another crucial basic supposition of Róheim's is the primacy of infantile conditioning. Because human neonates require months or years of parental care if they are to survive, a parent-child bond of unusual emotional strength is inevitably formed. For Róheim, folklore represents the results of "primary process" or id-directed thought. An infant who resents being weaned (and supplanted by a younger sibling) or who wishes to attack the contents of a mother's breast (and then later fears retaliation from a "swallowing" monster) or who is shocked by observing parental intercourse (the so-called primal scene) is reflected in folklore content, according to Róheim. Oral, anal, and genital motifs abound in Róheim's folklore universe. Sometimes these motifs are explicit; sometimes they

occur in symbolic disguise. Whereas some psychoanalysts have tended to take ego-psychology into account or to treat fairy tales solely in terms of adolescent oedipal struggles or in terms of maturation or individuation, Róheim invariably insisted that the roots of folk narratives were to be found in infancy and nowhere else.

Because Róheim's work is based on the premise of the infantile origins of folklore, it is difficult to replicate or validate his ingenious interpretations of various folk narratives. It is one thing to talk about child psychiatry and to interview adolescents about the content of dreams and fairy tales, it is another to presume to know the nature of the infantile unconscious. Róheim, however, was not particularly concerned with canons of proof. For him, it was enough that he had the insight. No doubt many readers will be greatly dissatisfied with Róheim's method of argument. But my view is that even if one remains somewhat skeptical about Róheim's various speculations about folk narrative content, there remains more in the way of illuminating and plausible insights into the content analysis of folklore in Róheim's writings than in those of any single folklorist.

His bold and sometimes startling interpretations of folklore have been an inspiration in my own research in the psychoanalytic study of folklore. Even when I disagree with him, I find his symbolic readings of myth, folktale and legend to be enormously stimulating. This is in contrast to most folklorists who feel terribly threatened by Róheim's analyses. This "resistance" is understandable to the extent that folklore represents primary process (id) fantasy materials which play out in disguised form the most basic human traumas. Such materials generally function to provide a socially sanctioned outlet for the expression of such taboo topics as Oedipal love or extreme sibling rivalry. Folklorists, like other academics, often choose an intellectual specialty as a form of escape from neurotic tendencies. Hence one can appreciate why non-psychoanalytically oriented folklorists (which means almost all folklorists) are not all that interested in plumbing the depths to explore the latent (as opposed to the manifest) content of folklore. Such knowledge might expose to the light of reason why folklorists became fascinated by the subject of folklore in the first place. (Is it not an obvious act of regression for a grown-up to devote his or her life to interpreting fairy tales?) This is why the vast majority of folklorists prefer to trace the path of diffusion of an item of folklore or to examine its formal qualities—e.g., its structure or the number of formulas or syllables contained therein. Any type of research is acceptable so long as one can avoid grappling with

problems of possible unconscious meaning(s). So it should come as no surprise really that folklorists as well as amateurs interested in folklore much prefer the "safer" mystical antirational readings of myth (as in the voluminous writing of C. G. Jung [1885–1961] and Joseph Campbell [1904–1987]) based upon some vague indefinable universal panhuman collective unconscious to the earthy analyses of Róheim which seek to show the infantile underpinnings of folklore. Incidentally, *all* the evidence available from two hundred years of folklore scholarship—e.g., the six volume *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature,* 2d ed (1955–1958)—shows that there are *no* universals in folklore; not one single myth or folktale is found among every single people on the face of the earth, past and present. Most folklore has very circumscribed empirically describable areas of provenance. Such facts, however, do not seem to bother those predisposed to blind faith in a universal collective unconscious.

There are others besides Róheim who have tried their hand at applying psychoanalytic theory to folklore. Otto Rank (1884–1939) and Bruno Bettelheim (1903–1990) are perhaps the only ones to rival Róheim in importance. However, the reputation of the latter's *The Uses of Enchantment,* first published in 1976, a Freudian analysis of a dozen favorite European fairy tales, has been somewhat tarnished by documented charges of plagiarism (cf. Dundes 1991; for a survey of the history of psychoanalytic studies of folklore, see Dundes 1987). If one reads through all the Freudian analyses of folklore ever attempted, one will see that Róheim really has no equal. He examined not only myth, folktale and legend, but also custom and belief—e.g., death customs (Róheim 1946) and wedding customs (Róheim 1954b)—from a psychoanalytic perspective. No other psychoanalytic folklorist has matched Róheim's mastery of genres or demonstrated Róheim's worldwide scope of inquiry.

For those readers who dislike Freudian theory, I do not recommend this volume. But for those readers who have not previously read Róheim and who have at least an open mind on the possibility of applying psychoanalytic theory to folklore, you have an exciting intellectual treat in store for you. Once having read Róheim, you will never be able to look at folklore again as you did before exposure to these remarkable essays.

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