

Processes for the Articulation of Meaning and Ritual Healing among the Northern Yaka (Zaire)*

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More and more studies in cultural anthropology are being directed towards the problems of symbolism: what it is, what we are to understand by special symbolic phenomena and how we are to go about studying it.

Both R. FIRTH (1973) and N. D. MUNN (1973) have given their own personal critical reviews of the different directions the study of symbolism has taken. V. TURNER's so-called cryptological approach to ritual symbolism and C. LÉVI-STRAUSS' structural analysis approach have recently been criticized by D. SPERBER (1974; 1975) for their lack of relevance in studying the meaning of ritual symbolism.

* My fieldwork among the Northern Yaka was carried out in my capacity as "Chercheur associé de l'Institut pour la Recherche Scientifique en Afrique Centrale" (I. R. S. A. C., Republic of Zaïre) and as "Aspirant van het Belgisch Nationaal Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek" (Candidate at the Belgian National Foundation for Scientific Research). The above study is based on a thesis, directed by Professor Dr. K. DOBELAERE and by Professor Dr. E. ROOSENS, and submitted for a doctorate degree in social science at the Sociology Department at the Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven. An extended study of the *khita* institution is being published.