

London School of Economics  
Monographs on Social Anthropology  
No 60

*The Social Practice of  
Symbolization*

*An Anthropological Analysis*

IVO STRECKER



THE ATHLONE PRESS  
LONDON and ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS, NJ

# Contents

<i>Foreword by Stephen Tyler</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>1 Ritual and Symbolism</i>	10
1.1 From the symbolic product to the principles of symbolic production	10
1.2 Symbols, ritual and the analysis of social systems	11
1.3 An improved analytical use of ritual: Gluckman and Turner	15
1.4 Towards a theory of ritual symbolism: Turner	18
1.5 Symbolic effect without a cause: a critique of Turner	22
<i>2 The Cognitive Basis of Symbolization</i>	27
2.1 Symbolism as a cognitive mechanism (Sperber)	27
2.2 A closer look at focalization and displacement (Magritte)	35
2.3 From evocation to implicature (Grice)	43
2.4 Irony – a test case of symbolization (Sperber)	50
<i>3 Symbolization as a Social Practice</i>	58
3.1 Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness	60
3.2 Symbolization within the strategies of politeness	69
3.2.1 Super-strategy I: Bald on record without redress	70
3.2.2 Super-strategy II: Positive politeness	71
3.2.3 Super-strategy III: Negative politeness	96
3.2.4 Super-strategy IV: Off-record strategies	114
3.3 Towards a modification and extension of Brown and Levinson's model	154
3.3.1 The strategy of switching strategies	156
3.3.2 The patterns of strategy distribution reconsidered	162
<i>4 Symbolization and Social Domination</i>	171
4.1 Speaking and social domination in Hamar	173
4.2 Domination within the strategies of politeness	184
4.2.1 Bald on record without redress	185

4.2.2 Positive politeness	186
4.2.3 Negative politeness	190
4.2.4 Off-record strategies	192
<b>5    <i>Symbolization and Ritual</i></b>	<b>203</b>
5.1 Back to the problem of symbolism in ritual	203
5.2 A Hamar rite of passage explained by the theory of symbolization	205
5.3 Limits to the explanation of symbolism: the problem of displacements	212
<i>Epilogue</i>	226
<i>Bibliography</i>	227
<i>Index</i>	233

### *Figures*

1 The field of problems in symbolic theory	4
2 Possible strategies for doing the FTAs	64
3 Factors influencing strategy selection	64
4 Chart of strategies: positive politeness	72
5 Chart of strategies: negative politeness	97
6 Triangulation	103
7 Use of Geshoa as honorific	105
8 Chart of strategies: off-record realisations	116
9 Structure of an internal metaphor	143
10 Diagram of a Hamar proverb	147
11 <i>A priority</i> factors influencing strategy selections	155
12 Sequencing of strategic switches	160–161
13 Super strategy of sequencing switches	161
14 Genealogy: conflict between Baldambe and Surrambe	178
15 The rain-bringing moon	199
16 Semantic aspects of the displacement of sand	218