Towards an Anthropology of Agency
Performativity and Community

TANAKA Masakazu
The Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University

Dualistic modes of thought that polarize society and individual are deeply rooted in social science. Is there any way to go beyond these oppositions convincingly? Here I examine the concept of agency as a step towards answering this question. The discussion initially covers the body of theory on ritual stimulated by the central concept of performativity in J. L. Austin’s theory of speech acts as developed by Tambiah, Ahern, and Bloch. Then, on the way to conceptualizing the subject/agent, I discuss Althusser’s concept of the subject and Butler’s arguments on “interpellation” or performativity in everyday life. Finally, after clarifying problems arising from the concept of “community of practice,” I advocate the alternative idea of “community of performativity.”

Key words: agent, performativity, community of practice, ritual, Butler

Anthropology has been deeply concerned with the relationship between society and the individual. In modern Western thought, the individual has been generally understood as an in-dividual, an ultimate given that cannot be divided any further. The individual, possessed of free will, is able to judge situations rationally and choose what action to take. A strong current of thought views society as an aggregate of such indivisible, atomized actors. Those who hold this view tend to argue that social reform depends on changing the individual. Others assert that the priority given to individuals (social nominalism) and the promulgation of the individual as a rational being with free will is merely the dominant ideology (individualism) of Western society. Indeed, from a cross-cultural perspective such a view of the individual seems very peculiar indeed. Even so, contrary approaches, such as assertions that individuals are shaped by the societies in which they are born and raised, or that human relationships are ruled by system such as economics that are beyond the influence of individuals, are generally found to be even more lacking in plausibility. Confronted with other non-individualized modes of social being, rather than relativizing the values of their own native thought, using such characterizations as the “tyranny of the group” for non-Western societies, Western thinkers have emphasized the significance of the collectivity. These thinkers developed a native model

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that opposed "us Westerners," who sensibly put individuals first, to "those non-Westerners," who are dominated by community. Scope for individual action is still widely seen in the West today as the source of Western superiority. Meanwhile, anthropology became the discipline for studying groups of people who were regarded as legitimate objects for study because "they" were assumed to be bound by social rules and customs. As a result, individuals, free will, and even history were largely excluded from anthropological reports.

Besides the methodological problems that this emphasis on social ties caused, the default presence of a social determinism that assumed that society determines cognition was an even more serious issue. If society determines the view of the world, how is it possible for a non-individualized society (or political system) to change? How can an individual come to question the social conventions and the customs that legitimize the social order, decide that change is needed, and take action?

Eventually, theories of subjectivity derived from French social philosophers, from Louis ALTHUSSER to Michel FOUCAULT, came to influence anthropological thinking by suggesting ways of overcoming such dualistic schemas as "individual versus society" or "us versus them" that had characterized anthropological discourse. These theories grew from recognizing a subject (sujet) that is, at the same time, subject to (sujet à) something. If society is what the subject is subject to, the individual is assumed to recognize the authority of the social but, in becoming a "subject," there is reciprocal recognition of the subject by society. Thus, the source of individual subjectivity is society (power, ideology). This starting point has ultimately led both to elaborate theories of anti-social nominalism and thoroughgoing theories of social determinism that cannot accommodate even the possibility of social change. Thus, the so-called individual who has been erased — this need not be a rational individual — has to be smuggled back in-between the cracks of rigorous theory. Thinkers came to seek the "individual" that had been erased by determinist theories of subjectivity either in scientific thought (ALTHUSSER) or in Greek Philosophy (FOUCAULT). Others have resurrected the individual in a more complex way as the agent (BUTLER). Even so, have the old dualities been resolved?

In what form does the perennial problem of society versus individual appear today? What are the implications for anthropological thought? What direction should anthropological thought take after understanding the implications? With such considerations in mind in the context of anthropology, this article discusses the pertinence of BUTLER's ideas which have attracted much attention in feminist philosophy. Furthermore, it advocates analyzing scenes of everyday negotiation rather than paying biased attention to ritual, as in theories of subjectification and identity formation. On the way, it touches on the problems of previous work concerned with conversation and learning.

First, I consider the various theories of ritual that have attempted to accommodate the central concept of performativity derived from J. L. AUSTIN's speech act theory. After reviewing ALTHUSSER's theory of the subject, I consider the possibility of constructing the subject/agent by applying BUTLER's arguments on "interpellation" or performativity in everyday life. Finally, after clarifying the problems raised by the concept of "community of practice," I propose that a
viewpoint that starts with a "community of performativity" composed of agents is more useful.

**From Ritual to Everyday Practice**

**Ritual as Seen from Speech Act Theory**

Maurice BLOCH (1974) has focused on speech acts used in ritual. After observing that the spells, songs, and various other speech acts that are used in ritual are highly formalized, he concludes that formalized speech differs from everyday conversation in that it provides restricted choice and, above all else, does not provide the capacity and freedom or scope for imagination to discuss real events. Consequently, when formalized speech is used, it is almost impossible to argue with another person or criticize an opponent. Because it excludes criticism, formalized speech is closely associated with the maintenance of traditional authority, which denies change and emphasizes continuity from the past. In instances where formalized speech predominates, the meeting is an occasion that merely confirms authority and ignores negotiation. The formal characteristics of rituals and the restricted codes used in them means that rituals operate as devices for legitimizing traditional authority.

Furthermore, BLOCH (1974) considers, as one of the sources of this ritual effect, the performative force or illocutionary force that was postulated by AUSTIN. He suggests that as performative force increases, the propositional force that is present in everyday conversation decreases.

Elsewhere, BLOCH (1977) has attempted to compare ritual communication (ideology), which brings about and supports authority, with communication (cognition) that is born from direct interaction with the environment which includes both people and nature. This dualism corresponds that between formalized speech and non-formalized speech. In BLOCH's formulation, the former conceals and the latter reveals the reality of unequal social relations.

Stanley J. TAMBIAH and Emily AHERN have maintained a similar viewpoint, but reach conclusions that are critical of BLOCH's theory of ritual. TAMBIAH also tries to incorporate AUSTIN's speech act theory and argues as follows:

Ritual is a culturally constructed system of symbolic communication. It is constituted of patterned and ordered sequences of words and acts, often expressed in multiple media, whose content and arrangement are characterized in varying degree by formality (conventionality), stereotypy (rigidity), condensation (fusion), and redundancy (repetition). Ritual action in its constitutive features is performative in the Austinian sense of performative, wherein saying something is also doing something as a conventional act; in the quite different sense of a staged performance that uses multiple media by which the participants experience the event intensively. (TAMBIAH 1985: 128)

Having ascertained that ritual is performative, TAMBIAH introduces the following distinction by J. R. SEARLE, who proposed two forms of rule that dominate everyday life (custom): regulative rules and constitutive rules. Regulative rules are rules about such things as rice
farming or eating, actions which are independent from the rules made for them and thus possible to execute without rules. By contrast, constitutive rules bring about (constitute) actions that are not independent of the rules. For example, it is not possible to participate in games or sports without knowledge of the rules that govern them. In games, actions necessarily follow rules. Rituals may be regulative or constitutive: those related to subsistence, such as agricultural rituals, are regulative, in the sense that crops grow even without rituals, whereas rites of passage are constitutive because the status transitions are constituted in the ritual.

AHERN (1981), who conducted research in Taiwan, reached a similar conclusion. She observed that there are two types of divination: one based on an undeniable causal relationship; and the other based on negotiation with gods and other unseen beings. Because the code controlling communication with unseen agents is restricted compared with everyday speech, what SEARLE regards as constitutive rules can be found therein. Restriction, in this context, refers to the number of words and topics used.

In accounting for the effects of ritual following the theories of AUSTIN and SEARLE, both TAMBIH and AHERN focus on the constitutive nature of ritual acts. They differ from BLOCH, however, in their reluctance to reduce the effect of ritual to political function.1 For them, ritual is not practiced with the sole aim of legitimizing authority and concealing real power relationships: indeed, resistance, exposure of reality, and other non-legitimating effects may also ensue.

The Constitutive Nature of Ritual

Although, when discussing rituals in general, it is hardly prudent to view them as having a single political function: it is equally unwise to neglect analysis of any political function that they may have.2 Thus it is necessary to acknowledge the political aspects of the constitutive acts in the types of ritual to which TAMBIH and AHERN have drawn attention. For example, in the coronation analyzed by TAMBIH and other rites of passage, the ritual surely brings about the person’s social identity and constitutes the person as a particular class of social being. In fact, BLOCH has tried to analyze ritual from this point of view in From Blessing to Violence (1986).

BLOCH observed that, among the Merina people in Madagascar, male circumcision is a very important ritual that transforms boys into adult male subjects who are full members of society. Through circumcision, both the bodies and minds of the boys are symbolically bifurcated into masculine and feminine elements. After violently deleting and excluding the feminine, the boys emerge as men. Excised by circumcision, the foreskin represents femininity and during the ritual process, women are belittled and abused in several ways. The act of circumcision thus becomes a means for denying the female aspect and turning boys into complete men. Subsequently, the emergent men are accepted as members of the decent groups that are the

1 See also KRAIT (1994: 25–36).
2 For BLOCH’s own response, see BLOCH (1989).
basic units of Merina society. BLOCH's analysis of this ritual reiterates the political aspect of ritual in terms of its constitutive nature. Here, BLOCH also recognizes what ALTHUSSELL calls "interpellation" at work in the constitutive function of ritual, and ends up suggesting that ritual is an Althusserian Ideological State Apparatus.

**Everyday Life as a Site of Interpellation**

In his article called "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," ALTHUSSELL argued that the existence of society – in other words, a social system or particular power structure – requires both apparatuses of violence, such as the military and police (the state's means of suppression) and apparatuses of state ideology, such as schools, churches and families, which legitimize continuity. The state apparatus functions through violence and the State Ideological Apparatus functions through ideology. "Ideology interpellates individuals as subjects" (ALTHUSSELL 1971: 160).

According to ALTHUSSELL, interpellation is the central effect of ideology: it is the means by which we are made into subjects. "Ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all)" (ALTHUSSELL 1971: 162–3). Interpellation is the actual effect of ideology and it can take the concrete form of hailing a person: "Hey, you there!" After so doing,

The hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a subject. Why? Because he has recognized that the hail was "really" addressed to him, and that "it was really him" who was hailed (and not someone else). (ALTHUSSELL 1971: 163)

Without interpellation, there can be no subject. Since this subject is dependent on interpellation, however it is a subject which is subservient to the Subject (with a capital S) that interpellates. As ALTHUSSELL puts it:

In the ordinary use of the term, subject in fact means: (1) a free subjectivity, a centre of initiatives, author of and responsible for its actions; (2) a subjected being, who submits to a higher authority, and is therefore stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting his submission. ... [T]he individual is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e. in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection, i.e., in order that he shall make the gestures and actions of his subjection "all by himself." There are no subjects except by and for their subjection. That is why they "work all by themselves." (ALTHUSSELL 1971: 169)

In this passage, the first view of the subject is conventional, but the second is the more suggestive "subjected subject," a concept that found application in FOUCAULT's theory of power (1979), which comprehends power as that which brings about the subjected subject (i.e., identity).

Bearing this in mind, let us reconsider how the circumcision ritual of the Merina transforms boys into recognized men. Becoming the subject "man" involves subjection (to the
authority of Merina society, ancestors, etc.). Boys who have not yet been circumcised and females who do not qualify are differentiated as incomplete subjects. According to Bloch, many rites of passage bring about the bipolarization of the body and mind of the novice to achieve subjectification by excluding undesirable elements, thus enabling transformation. This bipolarization and exclusion involve violence, and it is ritual itself that makes this violence possible. In this way, Bloch goes beyond previous theories of ritual that focus on inherent formality and finds that ritual, in its constitutive nature, is politically endowed.

For Althusser, however, rather than something such as circumcision that happens only once in a lifetime, interpellation constantly occurs in scenes of everyday interaction. Althusser may have often had in mind a religious context in which God calls on a devotee (Moses), and indeed he frequently refers to ritual actions such as the Catholic mass. In the example of hailing, however, in which the subject is formed by the act of turning around in response to a police request, no ritual or religious context is necessary. So, while Bloch's theory of ritual is useful for indicating a model for subjectification through ritual, we may overlook the importance of subjectification in everyday life if we are overly concerned with the creation of subjects in ritual.

Let us go back to origin of the concept of performativity. What Austin's writings presupposed — and although there are many examples of speech acts in ritual contexts, these are not rituals per se — was that speech acts function in everyday situations. The concept provides a means for understanding the multi-layered nature of action in unexceptional situations. If we privilege ritual, we run the risk of underplaying the workings of everyday performativity and the constitutive rules it entails.

To seek the constitutive nature of subject formation only in ritual would be to give undue emphasis to effects of ritual and would lead to neglect of face-to-face workings of power in everyday life. While acknowledging that ritual obviously does create subjects, we also have to take account of subjectification as an ongoing process in the broader context of give and take in everyday life. At issue is Bloch's distinction between ritual communication and practical communication that involves negotiation with the environment. As it involves interaction with the other, non-ritual or practical, communication provides a frame in which power and subjectification are at work, as discussed below. At the same time, during practical communication, subjectification may be evaded, subverted, ridiculed or otherwise resisted.

Until recently, examinations of everyday interaction which focus on an interactive pair, from Erving Goffman to more recent works on conversation analysis, have largely neglected the workings of power. Consideration of everyday interaction as a site of interpellation, and placing face-to-face negotiation alongside ritual as a field in which subject construction takes place, would likely enable us to counteract the impression of one-sided and perfect subject

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3 By distinguishing ritual and everyday life, it can be said that Bloch tries to maintain the possibility of ideological critique in the latter. By contrast, Tambiah and others have argued for the possibility of ideological critique in ritual as well.
formation that ritual analysis has so often given.\(^4\) Moreover, it also opens up the investigation of the possibility of there being an "unsubjected subject," a question to which there was no decisive answer in ALTHUSSER’s theory of the subject. Below, we will consider BUTLER’s arguments, which grapple daringly with this *aporia*.

**Performativity and Interpellation**

**The Constructive Nature of Gender Identity**

BUTLER employs the concept of performativity in postulating that gender is inherently constructive.\(^5\) Let us quote at length two passages from *Gender Trouble* that show clearly her constructionist position:

The appearance of an abiding substance or gendered self, what the psychiatrist Robert Stoller refers to as a "gender core," is thus produced by the regulation of attributes along culturally established lines of coherence.... *[G]ender* is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free-floating attributes, for we have seen that the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. Hence, within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed. ... There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender: that identity is performatively constituted by very "expressions" that are said to be its results. (BUTLER 1990: 24–5)

Gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*. The effect of gender has produced the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self. This formulation moves the conception of gender off the ground of a substantial model of identity to one that requires a conception of gender as a constituted *social temporality*. (BUTLER 1990: 140–1)

Here, BUTLER repeatedly emphasizes that gender, which at first sight seems to be an attribute based essentially on difference of the body, is actually constructed through everyday performative actions, which may include speech acts. The concept of performativity, which originated in speech act theory, is here more than just the active element of neutral speech acts brought forth by interaction. BUTLER claims in the above quotation, "the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled." Performativity brings about identity, which has gender at the core: subjectivity (in the general sense presupposed by speech act theory) is not to be found behind action.

BUTLER extends the argument beyond gender and heterosexuality:

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\(^4\) Of course, this is an idealized image of ritual. In practice, a ritual changes each time it is repeated.

\(^5\) In this article, I have avoided reference to commentaries on BUTLER, e.g. SALIH (2002), many of which place her work in the context of feminism. A review article by MORRIS (1995), however, was very helpful in tracing links from BUTLER to anthropological studies of gender.
[T]he judge who authorizes and installs the situation he names invariably cites the law that he applies, and it is the power of this citation that gives the performativity its binding or conferring power. And though it may appear that the binding power of his words is derived from the force of his will or from a prior authority, the opposite is more true: it is through the citation of the law that the figure of the judge’s “will” is produced and that the “priority” of textual authority is established. Indeed, it is through the invocation of convention that the speech act of the judge derives its binding power: that binding power is to be found neither in the subject of the judge nor in his will, but in the citational legacy by which a contemporary “act” emerges in the context of a chain of binding conventions. ... Where there is an “I” who utters or speaks and thereby produces an effect in discourse, there is first a discourse which precedes and enables that “I” and forms in language the constraining trajectory of its will. Thus here is no “I” who stands behind discourse and executes its volition or will through discourse. On the contrary, the “I” only comes into being through being called, named, interpellated, to use the Althusserian term, and this discursive constitution takes place prior to the “I”; it is the transitive invocation of the “I.” (BuTLER 1993: 225)

This passage pulls together strands from the philosophy of language deriving from AUSTIN and elements of social theories of power deriving from ALTHUSSER. In her analysis of everyday life, BuTLER achieves the integration that BLOCH attempted in his theory of ritual. She proposes that what AUSTIN calls the performativity of language inherently executes the everyday interpellation and “acts” that make us subjects. Here we have superseded the presuppositions of the GOFFMAN-style analysis of face-to-face interaction in which two persons behave strategically as “subjects” with, in the classical sense of the term, free will.

From Subject to Agent

Unlike ALTHUSSER, BuTLER did not consider performativity or interpellation as bringing about a uniformly “subjected subject.” In her early works, Gender Trouble (1990) and Bodies that Matter (1993), she repeatedly discusses the existence of the transvestite, represented by drag queens, as a disturbance to gender norms. For BuTLER (1990: 137), while transvestitism emphasizes the existing gender norms because it is imitative and realized through performativity, it also exposes the fact that gender is not something natural. The constructed nature of gender is revealed by the performance of the drag queen.

Considering transvestitism as parody, BuTLER emphasizes the potential of parody as a form of critique. Parody, however, is not the sole challenge to the naturalized state of gender.

The abiding gendered self will then be shown to be structured by repeated acts that seek to approximate the ideal of a substantial ground of identity, but which, in their occasional discontinuity, reveal the temporal and contingent groundlessness of this “ground.” The possibilities of gender transformation are to be found ... in the possibility of a failure to repeat, a de-formity, or a parodic repetition. (BuTLER 1990: 141)

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6 This point is discussed in more detail in Chapter 1 of Excitable Speech (BuTLER 1997b). Moreover, the influence of DERRIDA cannot be ignored.

7 For this point, see LLOYD (1998, 1999) for details.
Here, in addition to parody, lack of repetition and de-formity are mentioned as possible sources of gender transformation. BUTLER later emphasizes the importance of failure to repeat in *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997a) and *Excitable Speech* (1997b) as, from a more general awareness of the problems involved, she develops arguments about the limitations of performativity.

Briefly, BUTLER basically holds that a subjected subject is not formed through Althusserian interpellation (performativity), for what arises through performativity is not merely just another stable subjected subject. Rather, BUTLER sees the subject as a dynamic agent that has the power of speech.

To bridge the Austinian and Althusserian views, one would need to offer an account of how the subject constituted through the address of the Other becomes then a subject capable of addressing others. In such a case, the subject is neither a sovereign agent with a purely instrumental relation to language, nor a mere effect whose agency is pure complicity with prior operations of power. (BUTLER 1997b: 25–6)

Regarding ALTHUSSER's interpellation, BUTLER (1997b: 135–9) points out that the subject becomes a talking subject on the condition that some things cannot be talked about and that what is not talked about, that is to say, what is excluded, is the very basis for the creation of the agent. In essence she argues that power/law that constitutes the subject also creates the rudiments of an agent. In the effects of power, there is scope for criticism of the allocation of power and a field of play for a resisting agent. BUTLER (1997a: 14–5) says, "[T]he subject is itself a site of this ambivalence in which the subject emerges both as the effect of a prior power and as the condition of possibility for a radically conditioned form of agency." What is important here is BUTLER's assertion that everyday performativity, that is, interpellation, does not automatically bring about the subject/subjection. Apart from transvestitism and other exotic cases, there is scope for a critique of power. Inevitably, performativity constantly fails, bringing about the conditions in which agents are created. Performative acts of subjection are not necessarily successful, and even when they are, they create conditions for the emergence of agents.

What form, then, does the agent/agency take in opposition to the subject? BUTLER does not clarify this point, but it is clear that she sees it operating as a force of resistance against the power which makes the subject/subjection possible: "agency may well consist in opposing and transforming the social terms by which it is spawned" (BUTLER 1997a: 29). Despite the assertion that this agent is, of course, not a modern individual with a free will (BUTLER 1997a: 17; 1997b: 139) because BUTLER's agent is characterized by solitude, the conceptualization of the agent still seems unnecessarily shackled to the conventional idea of the individual. Community is not incorporated into her theory of agency. This is hardly surprising, given that the methodology adopted in *The Psychic Life of Power* is literally psychic (psychoanalytic). To break with individualism, it is necessary to consider the "social life of agents."8

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8 Even in *Excitable Speech* (BUTLER 1997b), which discusses in detail the relationship between performativity and agent, these issues are not resolved.
As in "real estate agent," "travel agent," and "federal agent," the idea of "agent" often includes the sense of "proxy" or "substitute." In the sense of "acting as a go-between," the agent, then, acts at sites created by communication networks, so that agency in a broad sense would be equivalent to communicative ability.\textsuperscript{9} I make this suggestion to emphasize communicative ability as the basis of community. In doing so, I reject the necessity of considering other sites such as "my unique body" and existential phenomena such as "pain and happiness that only I can understand," and other feelings. This approach renders irrelevant all the things that tend to be presupposed when the individual is emphasized. I think that it is more fruitful to pay attention to the relationships that make connections with others possible. So, an agent, rather than being the puppet of others, is a communicating being along with others in a community of communicating beings. The existence of the self is embedded in its relationship with others, but not in the type of one-sided relationship characterized as that between master and servant. Even when communication takes place on an individualized or one-to-one basis, a mutually negotiated site – community – is created. Agency is the power that endows such a site, creates and, moreover, transforms the character of this space. At the same time, this site is where the agent itself undergoes transformation. Any site in which an individual participates as an agent is multi-layered, and sometimes a certain agent becomes the figure and the others the ground. It is possible that the relative positioning changes and can be made to change. These types of changes are transformational. Shifting the focus from the supposedly free autonomous individual to the individual with the emphasis on agency may seem a paradoxical way of discovering a new concept of community or networking, but BUTLER's arguments lack any intimation of this kind of communal space. What would be the features of a community comprised of this type of agent?

Community of Performativity

Problems with the Concept of "Community of Practice"

The last part of this article closely examines the concept of "community of practice" that was proposed in Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LAVE and WENGER 1991). This concept was put forward in an attempt to understand the learning process in terms of participation in a particular community and as part of acquiring identity. It was developed in opposition to pedagogical theory based on individualistic and content-oriented presuppositions that reify the knowledge and techniques that are supposed to be acquired, and to school education that generally attempts to dole out the commodity of knowledge. In concrete terms, the idea of community of practice is employed to promote consideration of a system of

\textsuperscript{9} Even though their framework is based on a sociological dualistic tradition of structure/agent, in considering the concepts of agent and agency, I have found the work EMIRBAYER and MISCHE (1998) very stimulating. The concept of agent in sociology is commonly introduced to enable individual free will when social determinism threatens to overwhelm. BARNES (2000) is an example of this approach.
apprenticeship that exists to pass on skills.

Their attempt to situate learning, however, has wider implications for conceptualizing the relationship between the community and the formation of individual identity. For example, in the case of occupational groups in Africa and India, where there is a close connection between being identified as a member of a primary group, determined by birth, and the acquisition of skills, there is no point in restricting the argument to apprenticeship in the narrow sense of the term. In other words, the concept of community of practice can be extended to refer to society in general. For example, the authors suggest that identity/subject formation takes place gradually through a form of learning that they call "legitimate peripheral participation." Moreover, participation in the community and achievement of the appropriate group identity involves the acquisition of body etiquette and language ability in the wide sense. Linking this with BUTLER's arguments, if gender comprises knowledge and techniques that can be objects of learning, participation in a gendered group is what enables the acquisition of gender identity.

Interpreted in this way, it can be said that LAVE and WENGER, focusing on practice instead of interpellation, are discussing a process that gives rise to a perfect subject (identity). Thus here again we face the *aporia* found in ALTHUSSER's theory of interpellation: how can a subject born through interpellation become oppositional? To state the conclusion first: this *aporia* cannot be resolved by analyzing situated learning based on practice. Focusing on the success of acquisition or participation does not theoretically address the possibility of change or creativity. Even though they tend to ascribe it to generational conflict and external change, LAVE and WENGER do allow for transformation in the community. They also have a clear awareness that learning and community of practice are products of history. Even so, the argument generally remains superficial and does not present any theoretical explanation of how learners who acquire identity through practice in the community can, at the same time, change the community. In other words, LAVE and WENGER's account of change does not go beyond the level of common sense. The main process they describe proceeds smoothly and harmoniously from peripheral to full participation, but their analysis of the community of practice is regrettably insensitive to the operation of power. Consequently, although LAVE and WENGER, by employing concepts such as participation and situated learning, succeed in describing membership in the community of practice as a process, they do not sufficiently theorize the potential for change that is inherent in the community itself.

Such issues regarding the community and the practices therein also imply that there has been a lack of social scientific rigor in the conceptualization of learners and how they participate in the community of practice. For example, there is no theoretical specification of exactly

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10 In the introduction to the volume, HANKS suggests, a little sarcastically, that when the community of practice becomes larger, the community reproduces itself through the formation of apprentices and also changes at the same time (HANKS 1991: 16). Legitimate peripheral participation cannot explain such changes, but shows that these things inevitably arise. In fact, the concept of community of practice has been enthusiastically welcomed in the field of learning and company management. Perhaps the reason for this is usefulness of the concept for teaching and learning and its ineffectiveness as a force for change and reform.
what these learners are: LAVE and WENGER rely on our common sense to give substance to the features they describe.

**Power in the Community**

The static equilibrium inherent in LAVE and WENGER's approach to learning or transformative processes becomes clear when compared with the approach, informed by FOUCAULT and BUTLER, that was employed by SHILDRIK and PRICE (1996) in an analysis of a self-help group for women suffering from myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME). They observe that while recently disabled people have to constantly deal with the forceful institutional normalization of their handicap, at the same time there is potential for mutually negotiable performativity to bring about moments that resist the power of normalization.

The medical gaze seeks to establish an empirical, material "broken" body but ... the individual is incited at the same time to become an instrument of that ever-extending gaze. She turns it on herself, carrying out her own self-regulation, thus becoming complicit in the process of constituting herself as embodied subject. (SHILDRIK and PRICE 1996: 108)

In this way, the handicapped person is transformed into a being that, instead of accepting the authoritative gaze of the doctor, observes itself. Meanwhile, through repeated dialogues, the self-help group becomes a locus for critique of the medical gaze. The identity of a handicapped person, created and modified within the group by language practice regarding illness and disability, is not restricted within the field of medicine (SHILDRIK and PRICE 1996: 104). The group enables resistance to the construction of the medical subject.

To remedy the shortcomings in a concept of "community of practice" which cannot accommodate self-generated reform and which overlooks the significance of speech acts, I would suggest replacing it with a concept of "community of performativity" which may generate a better explanation. The idea of performativity enables us to see the members of this community as agents. Then, as was previously pointed out, if "community of practice" is acceptable as a concept that is applicable beyond particular skilled groups, its replacement with "community of performativity" entails a genuinely new vision of society and everyday practice. Although people are exposed to the workings of power and acquire identity (subjectification) in everyday life, this process, at the same time, gives birth to agents who can both resist and knowingly accept. From this perspective, everyday life can be envisaged as a space where constant negotiation takes place. The tendency to presuppose that oppressive power, be it the state, colonial government or medical and other authority, is somehow located outside of everyday life, opens the way to making "the masses" a sacred cow and "everyday life" a personal fetish. To counteract this tendency, while keeping in mind a community framework that includes the concept of agency, we need to focus on power as it operates in everyday life.

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11 This problem can be rephrased as one involving the validity of the two concepts of practice and performativity.
Conclusion

In summary, here are the arguments presented above. The concept of subjectification was proposed to resolve dissatisfaction with classical concepts of “society” and “individual.” Subjects are formed in response to power. Anthropologists initially grappled with the constitutive nature of ritual by importing speech act theory, which helped to elucidate how typical subject formation might work: people become “the people” through ritual. The constitutive rules put forward by SEARLE were applied, along with ALTHUSSER’s concept of Ideological State Apparatus. Shortcomings stemmed from the limited application of speech act theory, which was originally intended for the analysis of everyday conversation, not of ritual. Moreover, ALTHUSSER did not limit the theory of subjectification to ritual.

BUTLER proposed starting with the construction of the subject in everyday life and emphasized the constructionist nature of gender identity by skillfully bringing together the concepts of performativity in speech act theory and Althusserian interpellation. Furthermore, she undertook a critique of ALTHUSSER’s theory and its inability to allow for a being that is capable of criticizing and changing society. The result was a useful conceptualization of agent, which does not refer merely to an autonomous individual. A social conceptualization of agent presupposes location in a network of performativity with others and, moreover, is assumed to be susceptible to, and to be able to assert, influence. In short, performativity is both the exercise of power (subjectification) and the practice of empowerment (“agentification”) at the same time. The community of performativity, as proposed towards the end of the discussion above, is a dynamic social context comprised of agents. It is neither a world made up of individuals having free will nor one consisting of people blindly following rules. It is space where subjection, community, and resistance intertwine in a complex manner. It is not the world represented by ritual (at least not in the way in which ritual has generally been interpreted) where one-sided order and authority dominate and are accepted. The community of performativity is a world of negotiation.

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