

Suffering Free Markets: A “Classical” Buddhist Critique of Capitalist Conceptions of “Value”

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I.

Given the public's affective responses to volatile global financial markets in recent years, one might expect "we" as a society to interrogate capitalist conceptions of "value." After all, if flows of abstract capital are untethered from tangible realities, as the 2008 collapse of global financial markets showed they can be, and if the supposedly concrete gains that people earn from their labors, such as pensions and salaries, remain vulnerable to the vicissitudes of this abstraction, then capitalism's promises might be thought to lose their appeal. Capitalist practices of value production work through anticipation, and the future of capitalism now appears to be bad for most people. Surely, one might think, "our" political and social institutions would explore alternatives.

However, Marxist theorists would call such expectations naive. The existence of publicly representative social subjects who might rationally reassess politically dominant assumptions is, they argue, tethered no more to material circumstances than the market value of a person's home or the compensation she gets for her work. The equal and reasonable social subjects of capital — "we-s" who might collectively choose, or not, to reform social practices — are no starting points for, or agents of, economic action, as capitalist ideology supposes, but are instead imaginary yet concrete effects of capitalist practices of value production. Because these selves of capital are imaginary *and* concrete, they are volatile, and no more potent or real than the wealth that middle class workers thought they had before the 2008 financial collapse.

Marx writes that abstract capital hinges on a sequence of substitutions between materially and uniquely worthwhile things and things of imagined, generic value, between phenomena that are handy and anticipations of exchange. Further, he contends, this sequence of substitutions is linked with the social subjects or selves that liberal capitalist democracies produce. In the following, we will look to the Dinnaga-Dharmakirti text tradition's "no-self" and "exclusion of the other" semantics to defend these Marxist denials of the subject of capitalist economics and associations of this illusory self with particularly modern kinds of social violence. In the process, through readings of Judith Butler and Dinnaga, we will take preliminary speculative steps toward a "classical" Buddhist account of the suffering of free market economics by distinguishing capitalism's "abstract sufferings of anticipation" from its "actual sufferings of exclusion" — two forms of suffering that champions of capital must enact to make abstract, nonexistent public selves seem manifest.

The value practices that Marx criticized have grown more socially entrenched since his nineteenth century intervention, to the point that, as at least one cultural observer has remarked, many today find it easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalist economic assumptions.¹ Nonetheless, capitalism's conceptions of "value" are again in crisis. As global markets digest an extended credit crunch, workers labor more for less, and do so under increasingly strict conditions of surveillance

¹ See Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (The Bothy, UK: 0 Books, 2009).

and standardization; conversely, executive salaries and corporate profits seem to grow without apparent limit, and the “work” of capital is subject to historically lax regulatory oversight. Middle class standards of living — which were always an exception and for most not an aspiration — cannot now be anticipated even for large swaths of those in “developed” capitalist democracies. A “classical” Buddhist critique of free market capitalism might cast light on this predicament, and help to equip intellectuals and activists to recognize alternatives to this historically specific way of conceiving of the meaning of “value.”

Of course, a Marxist reading of South Asian Buddhist semantics should seem something of a stretch. The Dinnaga-Dharmakirti *pramana* tradition principally addresses sense and significance. What, it asks, do people cognitively grasp when they perceive, learn from words, and infer? Marx addresses something apparently else entirely: how a historically specific political class, the bourgeoisie, creates economic value through practices that alienate the majority from the means of value production. To add to the difficulties that might seem to face any such comparative analysis, both text traditions, and especially contemporary Marxist analyses, are cautious about universalizing gestures that might be needed in any study of theories originating from radically different times, places, and circuits of concern.

Nonetheless, certain aspects of these schools’ theorizing seem to me to cry out for comparative consideration. Consider that:

- Both accounts of abstract, persistent value feature *anticipation* as a primary element. Marx writes that the pursuit of surplus value drives capitalist economies. In Buddhist semantics, grasping after empty, nominal concept-laden “things” propels knowledge at the conventional (*samvrti*), samsaric level of truth.
- Both traditions are critical of practices of value production that fail to distinguish merely nominal, fictional *things-in-general* from *unique, particular, actual things*. Marx emphasizes differences between “value” and “use-value,” while scholars in the Dinnaga-Dharmakirti tradition distinguish *samanyalaksana-s* (which are fictional, general, and causally inefficacious) from *svalaksana-s* (which are actual, unique, and causally potent).
- Within Marxism, surplus value and, within the Dinnaga-Dharmakirti text tradition, things-in-general are pursued yet deferred abstractions. “Profit,” for example, is not valuable innately and immediately, but only insofar as people can expect to make exchanges with it. Capital is never securely or positively possessed.
- Because both forms of value are cognitively deferred, exclusions and some potential for violence feature in each tradition’s theory of economic / semantic value determination. The value of capital and the conventional meaning of conceptual judgments can falsely manifest as concrete, unshakable, cultural facts only through practices that produce and exclude “others.” To clarify:

- According to Marx, capital wealth is both concrete and imaginary, and can seem concrete, and no mere empty fiction, only if a subset of actual people shows up as the money form of human subjectivity writ large. People can't appear this way except through practices that proliferate and alienate a growing proletariat class.
- According to the Dinnaga-Dharmakirti text tradition, heterogeneous phenomena can't appear to belong to one unitary, fictional class except through practices of *anyapoha*, or "exclusion [*apoha*] of the other [*anya*]." These exclusions do not passively happen, Buddhist semanticists contend, but are instead propelled by spatially, historically, and causally situated (*desakalavasthaniyata*) interests that condition the cognitive act that does the excluding. Further, elements of *duhkha* appear to be linked with these samsaric habits of conceptual determination. As we will see, in his *Pramana-Samuccaya* (*PS*), Dinnaga compares them to struggles among princes for the privilege of their father's crown.

There therefore appear to be enough initial resonances between these two quite different traditions to warrant some speculative yet hopefully useful extension of concepts in Buddhist semantics along paths that Marx forged in his critique of capital. This "classical" Buddhist critique of modern free market capitalism would not need to assume an objective, contextindependent field of analysis or to equate the purposes of classical Buddhist semanticists with those of Marxist political and economic theorists. But it would require some intellectual license to imagine this family of non-modern and non-capitalist philosophies of value as living, still relevant intellectual rivals to sets of modern assumptions (particularly capitalist ones) that now widely seem irresistible.

This request for space to imagine non-modern and non-capitalist intellectual traditions as still potent alternatives to modern capitalist practices of valuation is arguably not just rhetorical but addresses a challenge. As we will see, modern comparative philosophical readings of classical Indian Buddhist semantics sometimes leave unquestioned, and implicitly treat as unquestionable, a key assumption of capitalist modes of valuation — what Gayatri Spivak calls the "legal subject of socialized capital" (275). The Dinnaga-Dharmakirti text tradition is assumed to share this trust that normative, socially representative subjectivities supervene unproblematically on individuals' practical empirical contexts. However, because the thesis of the legal subject of socialized capital is a distinctively capitalist commitment, to assume that members of the Dinnaga-Dharmakirti tradition share it is to foreclose space wherein one might begin to imagine a classical Buddhist critique of capitalist value practices. Therefore, despite the resonances indicated above, the critique of the sufferings of free market economics to be developed here must also problematize some comparative philosophical readings of the Dinnaga-Dharmakirti school's semantics. In particular, we will question assumptions that Dinnaga and his successors share modern capitalist trust in an unproblematic continuity between unique, nonfungible, embodied *individuals* and generic, exchangeable, imaginary *subjects*.

II.

Dinnaga states the central thesis of the *PS* in the second sutra of the first chapter. The work will show, he states, that inference (*anumana*) and sensation (*pratyaksa*) are the only sources of knowledge (*pramana* -s). This conclusion follows, he says, because only two kinds of objects (*visaya*-s) are knowable, and these kinds are mutually exclusive and are divided between *pratyaksa* and *anumana*. Richard Hayes reconstructs and translates the relevant portions of the text as follows:

Sensation and reasoning are the only two means of acquiring knowledge, because two attributes are knowable; there is no knowable object other than the peculiar [*sva*-] and the general [*samanya*-] attribute [*laksana*]. I shall show that sensation has the peculiar attribute as its subject matter, while reasoning has the general attribute as its subject matter.²

Knowing uniquely is incompatible with knowing generically, and anything that is known is either uniquely characterized in one's thought or generically characterized. Dinnaga intends to show that, because *pratyaksa* and *anumana* are distinct and exhaustive of all means of knowing, they are the only *pramana*-s.

In contrast, the Dinnaga-Dharmakirti school's Vedic opponents insist that sensation and inference are not the only sources of knowledge, and claim that people sometimes know directly through words (*sabda*). In the *PS*, Dinnaga means to discredit this contention (and, by extension, the textual authority of the orthodox Vedic traditions) by specifying the kinds of cognitive content that a knowledge occasion can have. Because the generic form of an object thought through verbal understanding is not unlike the generic form thought through inferential understanding, but is unlike the unique form of objects grasped in sensory understanding, knowledge gained through words amounts to a kind of inference.

In classical Sanskrit logic's prototypical case of inference (*anumana*), a person sees smoke on a hill and infers the presence of fire. The hill is a directly sensed, word-independent phenomenon (*paksa*), the smoke on the hill is a sign (*hetu*), the inferred fire is the inference's intended object (*visaya*), and the inferred fire's property of being a fire is the sign's significance (*sadhya*). Seeing smoke on the hill prompts a person to recall that smoke has signified fire in other instances, and that smoke never happens

² Richard P. Hayes, trans. *Digndga on the Interpretation of Signs*. Studies of Classical India (London, UK: Kluwer, 1988), p. 133. Brackets inserted. *pratyaksam anumdnam capramdne... laksana-dvayam prameyam. na hi sva-sdmdnya-laksandbhydm anyat prameyam asti. svalaksana visayam hi pratyaksam sdmdnya-laksana visayam anumdnam iti pratipddayisydmah*. My preferred translation would be: "Sense perception and inference are the only *pramdna*-s because known characteristics are twofold. Indeed, nothing is known except through unique and generic characteristics. The object of sense perception is something characteristically unique while the object of inference is something characteristically generic. This is what I shall show." Subsequent references to the *PS* will be to Hayes' translation and commentary, and will use his pagination system.

without fire. That is, a person construes a unique occasion of smokiness as a *hetu* for the general property of a thing being a fire. Through this cognitive construal of a unique, word-independent presentation (the *paksa*) as a general sign (a *hetu*), the person comes to know of something on the hill verbally characterized as “fire.”

Dinnaga’s most important innovation, as Mark Siderits notes, was to argue that coming to know through words repeats this paradigm.³ When drivers see red hexagonal signs and reflexively judge, “Stop,” they first grasp some unique presentation through *pratyaksa*. They then judge that this particular is one of a class of things that has signified a command to stop in the past, and that never signifies things that are not commands to stop. Hence, through a threefold construal of unity (*ekatvadyavasaya*) with other instances, each determines that the thing before them is a stop sign.

Note, as Dinnaga does, that this model of conceptually loaded judgment implies that inferential and verbal cognitions are, unlike bare sensation, twofold.⁴ What is initially and immediately grasped — the *paksa* — is uniquely characterized (it is a *svalaksana*). However, what is mediately determined and named — the thing-in-general — is a generic representative of a class (it is a *samanyalaksana*). One might therefore say that, according to Dinnaga’s model, the semantic contents of conceptually loaded cognition are always *discontinuous*, with a characteristically unique *paksa* serving as sign and a characteristically generic thing-in-general serving as signified object. In concept-laden perceptual judgment, the given content is the unique sensation that provokes the judgment, “This is a stop sign,” and the inferred object is a generic token (*urdhva-samanya*) of a class.⁵ In paradigmatic inferential judgment, the given content is a unique, momentary construal of a generic token of a class, or a spatially, temporally, and causally specific nexus of provoked expectations, memories, and desires (a *vikalpa*).⁶ After directly grasping this *paksa*, one determines a type-universal (*tiryag-samanya*), e.g., stop signness, by construing the threefold conditions (a *hetu*).⁷ In both cases, the twin facets of inferential and verbal semantic values are discontinuous, with a directly sensed particular serving as inductive basis for a categorically different, merely anticipated thing-in-general. In contrast, *pratyaksa* (sensory) cognitions of unique, actual things show no similar discontinuity.

Obviously, very different questions from Marx’s motivate the philosophers who developed the Dinnaga-Dharmakirti text tradition’s semantics. Despite their dissimilar interests, however, and as indicated above, the two intellectual projects share some theoretical affinities. As with the theory of “labor in its directly social form” that Marx elaborates in Volume One of *Capital*, Dinnaga’s arguments in the fifth chapter of the

³ Mark Siderits, *Buddhism as Philosophy: An Introduction*, Ashgate World Philosophies Series (Ashgate, UK: Hackett, 2007), p. 214.

⁴ Hayes, *Dignaga on the Interpretation of Signs*, PS II 3.1.0.

⁵ Parimal G. Patil, *Against a Hindu God: Buddhist Philosophy of Religion in India* (New York, US: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 215.

⁶ Ibid, p. 254.

⁷ Ibid, pp. 256–261.

PS hinge on a dichotomy between cognitive elements that are characteristically unique (*svalaksana*-s) and elements that are characteristically generic (*samanyalakšana*-s). All objects of verbal cognition are generic, Dinnaga notes, while the cognitive contents of sensory episodes are unique. He further observes, as does Marx, that appearing in a way that is unique or non-fungible is incompatible with appearing in a way that is generic or exchangeable. Unique cognitive presentations are vivid while generic cognitive images are not. A unique particular is accessed simply “through the fact of its being seen” and is “not named through its essential property.” In contrast, generic, exchangeable “things” can be accessed only through some sign or essential property (*hetu* or *linga*).⁸ Dinnaga’s main charge against his Vedic opponents is that they can accept that words are an irreducible source of knowledge only by ignoring differences between the features of actual things, which are unique, and the features of imaginary things-in-general, which are generic. Meanwhile, Marx argues, capitalist practices of value production hinge on a sequence of equivocations between unique and generic forms of value, experience, and labor.

Further, both the Dinnaga-Dharmakīrti and Marxist text traditions hold that generically characterized things are strictly speaking never present to thought. Rather, they are only anticipated. Dinnaga argues that *anumāna* (inference) and *śabda* (words) both access their objects through a general designation, or universal (*jāti*), that serves as a *hetu* on some occasion. This *hetu*, or essential property, must satisfy three conditions. It must appear in a present subject (*pakṣa*) of thought, be understood to occur in further cases with some other property or general designation (the *sādhyā*), and be understood not to occur in instances that lack this other property. What one comes to anticipate through the *hetu* — the sign-feature that is putatively colocated with the *sādhyā*-feature — is the external object, or, members of the Dinnaga-Dharmakīrti text tradition say, the thing-in-general.

Somewhat similarly, Marx contends that, in capitalist modes of value production, generic, abstract value and shared social subjectivities are never immediately present to thought. Instead, they can only be anticipated. A specific, concrete money form, such as gold, sterling, or US dollars may seem for a time to embody value itself. Likewise, certain subsets of embodied people, such as the British in colonial South Asia, may show up for a while as the material exemplars of civilized society itself. Nonetheless, despite such temporary, shifting, fragile appearances of concreteness, “real,” imaginary value and human subjectivity are discontinuous with any such representatives. Concrete proxies can stand in only contingently for the value that allegedly inheres equally “in” all members of a class. Consequently, though a person’s senses may directly grasp materially unique substitutes or signs for value and social subjectivity, capital value and labor in its directly social form are generic objects of inference.

⁸ Hayes, *Dignaga on the Interpretation of Signs*, *PS* II 1.0.0 — 3.0.0.

III.

Arguably, a distinctive feature of capitalism is its posit of concretely obvious, normative, and representative public selves. Individuals are, among other things, workers, observers, thinkers, and judges. Institutions in modern liberal democracies assume that, for epistemological, political, and economic purposes, and in specifically constrained contexts (e.g., courts, hospitals, politics, etc.), these diverse individuals are sometimes equal and interchangeable — when they know and act, people observe, behave, think, or judge in generally equivalent, substitutable, and socially representative ways (or at least in ways that should be reducible to some such common ground) no matter who does the labor. In Volume One of *Capital*, however, Marx argues that this legal subject is the logical product of a distinctively capitalist theory of value. For the abstract, imaginary value of capital to seem concrete, a subset of different, heterogeneously embodied individuals must show up as the particular *representatives* (*Vertretungen*) of one uniform, abstract subjectivity that all individuals allegedly equally *re-present* (*darstellen*). However, Marx contends, these forms of representation are contrary, for one assumes particularity while the other assumes universality. Capitalist conceptions of “value” therefore demand a sequence of furtive, logically illicit, and inherently unstable equivocations, culminating in the ideal working selves that capitalism both assumes and produces.⁹

First, Marx argues, in capitalist value practices, “use-value becomes the form of appearance of its opposite, value.”¹⁰ The sort of unique and materially non-substitutable worth (“use-value”) that specific things produce “assumes the form of appearance of its opposite” — i.e., it takes the form of a generic, abstract value that other things are assumed to share, to present again, or to re-present. In other words, certain objects are privileged as concrete proxies for, or representatives of, an imaginary, abstract value standard. For instance, Marx writes, to measure the abstract “weight” of a thing like a sugar loaf, some materially non-substitutable particular, such as a piece of iron, will need to appear to substitute itself for that abstract quality that is purportedly re-presented in a quantitatively identical way “in” both items. Further, Marx contends, this first substitution cannot happen without a second substitution (which is where the economic and logical necessity of the legal subject of socialized capital begins to reveal itself). The materially specific experiences, pains, and enjoyments (“concrete labor”) that produce qualitatively non-fungible kinds of objects must appear to re-present one abstract kind of “common” experience, pain, and enjoyment (“abstract labor”) that

⁹ See Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 271–313. In this essay, which informs and guides my reading of *Capital*, Spivak portrays the processes that produce the concrete and imaginary legal subject of socialized capital as a sequence of equivocations between difference senses of “represent.”

¹⁰ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, The Pelican Marx Library, Vol. 1 of 3 vols (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, in association with New Left Review, 1976), p. 148.

generates quantitatively fungible products. For example, the phenomenally specific work of boiling, filtering, pouring, drying, etc, that turns raw sugar into sugar loaves would need to appear to re-present the same ambiguous, abstract “work” that produces paradigmatically “weight”-bearing iron nuggets. As Marx writes, “concrete labor becomes the form of manifestation of its opposite, abstract human labor.”¹¹ Otherwise, disparate, qualitatively unlike products could not form a unified market of quantitative labor exchange.

Commodity-based economic systems, Marx writes, therefore demand a third equivocation or “peculiarity.”¹² Those individuals whose materially different labors and longings seem to reproduce objects that bear different degrees of one abstract value cannot appear as the diversely embodied, fleshy, specifically related people they are (e.g., as materially unique and non-exchangeable individuals who either do or do not sweat in a kitchen, or who do or do not tend to be surveilled, researched, offered credit, foreclosed on, or policed), but must instead seem to re-present a singular abstract subjectivity that all in an economic context share. “Thus,” Marx writes, “the equivalent form has a third peculiarity: *private labour takes the form of its opposite, namely labour in its directly social form.*”¹³ To appear sensible, shared social subjectivity must be materially represented, like weight, by some range of non-fungible exemplars. Consequently, given a capitalist account of “value,” some subset of heterogeneous people must show up as the concrete *representatives* (*Vertretungen*) of the abstract, homogenous social self that all in a context allegedly re-present (*darstellen*). Only subsequently can all who work in a factory appear, regardless of their specific activities, as generic factory workers — as equal citizens under “the” law — each of whom is subject to one set of factory rules and is representative of one social identity, despite potentially extremely different material prospects of accessing and navigating the due processes that concretize this abstract, imaginary self. According to Spivak, those heterogeneous people who show up in capitalist economies as the concrete, obviously worthy representatives, or money form, of imaginary, normative, and homogeneous public subjectivity constitute the “legal subject of socialized capital.”

Foucault and others have shown how the subject of capitalism is historically specific, and cannot be separated from culturally unique institutions, such as modern prisons, sexualized bodies, and diagnoses of madness. A main aim of his work, Foucault says, is to “problemize” the subject of capital:

“It is true that my attitude isn’t a result of the form of critique that claims to be a methodological examination in order to reject all possible solutions except for the one valid one. It is more on the order of ‘problemization’ — which is to say, the development of a domain of acts, practices, and thoughts that seem to me to pose problems for politics. For example, I don’t

¹¹ Ibid, p. 150.

¹² Ibid, p. 151.

¹³ Ibid, italics added.

think that in regard to madness and mental illness there is any ‘politics’ that can contain the just and definitive solution... *But it is also necessary to determine what ‘posing a problem’ to politics really means.* R. Rorty points out that in these analyses I do not appeal to any ‘we’ — to any of those ‘we’s’ whose consensus, whose values, whose traditions constitute the framework for a thought and define the conditions in which it can be validated. *But the problem is, precisely, to decide if it is actually suitable to place oneself within a ‘we’ in order to assert the principles one recognizes and the values one accepts* Because it seems to me that the ‘we’ must not be previous to the question; it can only be the result — and the necessarily temporary result — of the question as it is posed in the new terms in which one formulates it.¹⁴

Michael Warner notes that the model of epistemological and political subjectivity which Marx associates with capitalism and Foucault’s work seeks to “problemize” has been “the dominant ideology of the public sphere, dating at least from the early eighteenth century.”¹⁵ This ideology assumes, first, that broadly objective (or intersubjective) social norms are (or should be) products of reasoned public discourse, debate, and consensus, as is seemingly exemplified, for instance, in modern fields such as medicine, science, and law, and, second, that these public contexts emerge seamlessly from “private” contexts of individual language use. According to this “continuum model of language,” to use Warner’s phrase,¹⁶ communally representative fields of normative linguistic behavior, experience, and judgment unproblematically show up out of heterogeneous, disparate, and non-representative contexts, ranging from “common conversation to PTA meetings, to parliamentary forensics, op-ed pieces, or critical essays.”¹⁷

WVO Quine, for example, exemplifies modern liberal commitment to this capitalist theory of subjectivity. In a frequently quoted passage, he writes:

For my part I do, qua lay physicist, believe in physical objects and not in Homer’s gods; and I consider it a scientific error to believe otherwise. But in point of epistemological footing the physical objects and the gods differ only in degree and not in kind. Both sorts of entities enter our conception only as cultural posits.¹⁸

As with his famous analogy of “radical translation,” in which the ordinary, communally representative reactions of individual representatives of an unfamiliar “Jungle”-

¹⁴ Michel Foucault and Paul Rabinow, “Polemics, Politics, and Problemizations,” *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), pp. 384–385. Italics added.

¹⁵ Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002), p. 143.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 137.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 143.

¹⁸ WVO Quine, “Two Dogmas of Empiricism,” *From a Logical Point of View: 9 LogicoPhilosophical Essays*, 2nd edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 44.

speaking people determine the accuracy of two anthropologists' translation manuals, and as with his paradigmatic case of language learning, in which an individual mother assesses her child's ability to approximate expressive habits that she shares with culturally representative adults, Quine's naturalized epistemology relativizes knowledge to supposedly collectively obvious, and conventionally normative, intra-communal habits of linguistic-empirical understanding (i.e., "conceptual schemes"). Unproblematically given *and* abstract communal subjectivities — "we-s" that, as Foucault says, are "previous to the question" — and not embodied persons, are his philosophy's primary epistemological agents.¹⁹

Warner seeks to disabuse people of any illusion that they, as individuals, are connected with modern social subjectivities. "Publics do not in fact work that way," he writes.²⁰ The continuum model "relies on a language ideology in which ideas and expressions are infinitely fungible, translatable, repeatable, summarizable, and restatable."²¹ However, he theorizes, the circuits of deliberation in actual societies are discrete and nonexchangeable. Embodied individuals, unlike subjects, navigate linguistic contexts that are shaped by particular, non-substitutable conditions, such as buildings, statutes, persons, biases, and bureaucracies. "Publics do not exist simply along a continuum from narrow to wide or from specialist to general, elite to popular," he argues. "They differ in the social conditions that make them possible and to which they are oriented."²² The Tenth East-West Philosophers' Conference, for instance, was unconnected, except in an only imaginary, anticipated way, with the institutional due processes that determine the economic policies and concepts that conference participants questioned. Rather than assuming that our gathering was unproblematically connected with APEC's institutionally authorized deliberations, it would have been more accurate, and honest, to acknowledge that most individuals who presented at the Tenth East-West Philosophers' conference are instead alienated from these sanctioned means of "value" production.

Judith Butler, whose academic genealogy, like Spivak's and Warner's, indirectly extends to Marx, also argues that individuals' experiences of public spaces should undermine any trust in their continuity with normative, socially representative subjects. People in public spaces are not acquainted with ordinary, generally representative peers. Instead, she insists, actual public experience is more like having an armpit forced into your face, or having a stranger's body pressed against you in a subway car; embodiment is characterized by vulnerability and exposure to peculiar, specific, odd, non-exchangeable others. "My body relates me — against my will and from the start — to others I do not choose to have in proximity to myself (the subway and the tube are excellent examples of this dimension of sociality)."²³ Embodiment, according to

¹⁹ See Lynn Hankinson Nelson, *Who Knows: From Quine to a Feminist Empiricism* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1990).

²⁰ Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, p. 143.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 147.

²³ Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 21.

Butler, demands that, before any understanding of an abstract, normalized “I” or “we” can emerge, an individual’s self be partially and immediately dispossessed in otherness and heterogeneity, not familiarity and homogeneity.

Textual analysis appears to suggest that Dinnaga would likely share — and support — Marx’s and contemporary queer and poststructuralist feminist theorists’ critiques of the sequence of equivocations that concretizes the imaginary subject of capital. In the fifth chapter of the *PS*, Dinnaga argues that words (*śabda*) and inference (*anumāna*) signify neither actual things (*svalaksana*-s), given classes of things, nor given relations between things and classes, and, because all facets of semantic value are either particular or universal, the objects of verbal and inferential cognition are cognitively vacuous or empty.

First, he says, a word such as “cow” signifies potentially infinitely many things, but people cannot comprehend this entire diversity every time they use the phrase. Further, concepts are fickle and unruly (*vyābhicāra*). They can designate one thing at one time, but fail to designate it at another. Therefore, words cannot present actual individuals or things to a person’s thoughts. However, nor can words inform persons of specific classes or relations. People in conversations do not think anything manifestly different when they cognize a class instead of a representative of a class, Dinnaga contends. People’s thoughts do not change when they think “red” instead of “red object.” However, if words submitted *samanyalakṣaṇa*-s or relations between *samanyalakṣaṇa* -s and *svalaksana*-s to people’s attentions, there would have to be some manifest difference between attending to a concept, such as “red,” and attending to an individual that instantiated that concept, such as “a red object.”²⁴

By extension, one might imagine Dinnaga arguing, with Marx, Spivak, Foucault, Warner, and Butler, that modern capitalist uses of “we” cannot submit specific sets of individuals, bodies, and behaviors to people’s thoughts, for a thinker would then have to keep an unmanageable number of particulars in mind during each occasion of use, and, in any case, this unmanageable number would vary. Moreover, if modern capitalist uses of “we” designated an abstract concept, there would need to be some manifest difference between cognizing an individual representative of a class, such as a socially conventional person, and cognizing the trait that supposedly represents itself in specific people, such as “social conventionality.” In practice, no such difference is found.

It could be, Dinnaga suggests, that general designations do not cause persons to cognize individuals, universals, or relations between individuals and universals, but instead present a state that all who belong to a class or who bear a certain trait happen to share. In that case, there would be no problem of wandering reference — a word would designate the same general feature or state-of-being on every occasion of use. And there would be no problem of inexhaustibly numerous referents, for a person could cognize a term’s “meant object” by attending to a single feature, rather than an

²⁴ Hayes, *Dinnaga on the Interpretation of Signs*, PS V 2.0.0 — 2.3.3.

indefinite diversity. Finally, the lack of discernible difference between conceptions of a type and its tokens would pose no problem, for, in any case, one would simply conceive of the state.²⁵

Diñnaga offers three counterarguments to this proposal, all of which appear, from the perspective that we are developing here, to further support contemporary critiques of the legal subject of socialized capital and the conclusion that the social selves of capitalism, and the values these selves produce, are imagined, anticipated, and cognitively vacuous.

First, if a word such as “cow” signified the state of bearing a particular universal (e.g., cow-ness), then universals would be grammatically subordinate to their instantiated states. The significance of a word such as “cow-ness” would be the state of being a cow. Similarly, the significance of modern uses of “we” (e.g., “we normal folk”) would be the state of re-presenting a particular kind of social self. However, Diñnaga contends, associations between concepts would then be unexplainable, for universals and their associations would be subordinate to their instantiated states. Every sign for a universal would signify a distinct state that could inhere in individuals, or not, regardless of conceptual associations. Hence, Diñnaga argues, much like “white” and “sweet,” all properties would be only accidentally concurrent, and it would no longer follow that, if it is right to call something a “pot,” it is also right to call it a “container.”²⁶ One would have no cognitive cause to expect, for instance, pots to be more solid than air, or to consider certain kinds of behavior socially representative and normal, or to judge other kinds of expressions socially unconventional and weird. Rather, the conditions of being a pot, or of bearing any linguistic designation, would be mysterious.

Second, Diñnaga argues, the notion that uses of general terms cause people to directly cognize distinct re-presenting states could at best make figurative sense, for each individual representative of a class (e.g., *this* cow) would then have to epitomize the quality that use of the expression signified. To say of something that it was a cow might be to say that it figuratively “represented” an abstract, re-presenting state of being a cow, but it would surely not be to claim that it exhausted the meaning of “being a cow.” If it did, then each uniquely embodied refinery worker would exemplify one uniform, abstract “refinery worker” identity.²⁷ At worst, this would imply that anyone who works is a model employee. At best, it would make just nominal sense.

Third, Dinnaga argues, general designations cannot even figuratively present such representing states to people’s minds. Figurative meanings demand resemblance, and resemblance can’t happen except through either a metaphorical or literal transfer of a notion. However, no understanding of a subset of property instances can metaphorically transfer to an understanding of the state of bearing a property, for metaphorical extensions of concepts require some awareness of difference from their literal uses.

²⁵ Ibid, PS V 4.0.0 — 4.1.1.

²⁶ Ibid, PS V 4.2.0 — 4.2.2.

²⁷ Ibid, PS V 4.3.0 — 4.3.1.

Calling a leader a servant works metaphorically, Dinnaga argues, only if you expect some difference of the leader. The leader can't be altogether servile. Yet no such difference appears when people think of re-presenting states instead of their particular representatives. When people talk of reality they don't mean something obviously different from the reality of a particular pot.²⁸ Similarly, when people talk of social conventionality, they do not mean anything obviously other than the social values of a particular, not re-presenting subset. However, Dinnaga continues, nor are people figuratively aware of representing properties, such as "social conventionality," through the literal, non-metaphorical transfer of their cognitions of individual representatives. For if they were, then figuratively apprehended re-presenting states would be the same as their specifically perceived representatives, and thus there would be as many re-presenting, recurring subjectivities as there were potential material, non-substitutable representatives. Everyone would then speak sequentially, Dinnaga notes, of "the white colour of a jasmine flower and a conch shell and so forth."²⁹ There could be a carpenter's concept of conventionally appropriate behavior, a householder's concept of conventionally appropriate behavior, a banker's concept of conventionally appropriate behavior, a female carpenter's concept of conventionally appropriate behavior, and so on, *ad infinitum*.³⁰

IV.

As suggested earlier, though articulated in obviously different contexts, Dinnaga's arguments for the emptiness of concept-laden objects resonate with Marxist, queer, and poststructuralist feminist theorists' critiques of the concrete-imaginary subjectivities of socialized capital. Both emphatically contend that re-presenting abstractions (significations) and material representatives (signs) are discontinuous. Yet in the contemporary field of comparative philosophy, scholars often appear to assume that members of the Dinnaga-Dharmakīrti text tradition share modern commitment to the legal subject of socialized capital, which, as we have seen, trades on their continuity. These readings therefore tend to foreclose non-capitalist readings of this historically not capitalist philosophical tradition.

Georges Dreyfus, for example, contends that Dharmakīrti believed that intersubjectively obvious linguistic habits should be epistemologically normative at the *samvrti*, conventional level of truth. A *vikalpa*, or conceptual construct, is for Dharmakīrti, he writes, "not completely nonexistent" because it "differs from the object of a dream or

²⁸ Ibid, PS V 4.4.0 — 4.5.1.

²⁹ Ibid, PS V 5.0.0 — 5.1.0.

³⁰ Much as some Marxist theorists say now occurs in "Late Capitalism." See Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

fantasy in that it is intersubjectively valid. It is a convenient fiction, a shared myth, that allows us to function in the world.”³¹ A *vikalpa*, he continues,

is a kind of public creation, a second-order reality, different from both the given of unmistakable perceptual experience and the purely imaginary realm of errors, dreams, and illusions. This intermediary realm of conceptuality is social; it is made of agreed on fictions, myths, and convenient labels, all of which are created in relation to language.³²

Notwithstanding the use of Dharmakīrti’s term for convention, *vyavahara*, in non-philosophical contexts to designate practices such as contractual agreements, it is of course possible to be influenced by the verbal habits of other individuals, as Dharmakīrti contends in his texts and as Butler stresses in her analyses of speech acts,³³ without implicitly or explicitly agreeing on the rules of expression that govern cultures, societies, or disciplines as re-presenting, enduring totalities. However, scholars such as Dreyfus apparently assume that individual language users are situated in environments constrained by already established, normative public subjectivities, rather than particular, vulnerable conditions of embodiment, and therefore attribute commitment to the legal subject of socialized capital to members of the Dinnaga-Dharmakīrti text tradition, arguably without sufficient textual grounds. In the process, they appear to read a historically specific, eighteenth to twenty-first century theory of publics and cultures — a theory premised on the system of value production that Marx criticizes — into the *samvrti* domain of the fifth to twelfth century Buddhist *pramanavadin*-s.

Mark Siderits, a headline panelist at the Tenth East-West Philosophers’ Conference, similarly suggests that the Dinnaga-Dharmakīrti text tradition shares modern capitalist commitment to the continuum model of language. While discussing a scenario that seems intended to evoke Quine’s paradigmatic case of childhood language learning, he writes, “What we want is for her [the child] to form a mental image [*vikalpa*] that she can use in the future to determine whether the word applies. She will do this by calling up that mental image and comparing it to what she is then experiencing.”³⁴ Quine’s behaviorism would of course not countenance talk of mental images. Nonetheless, Siderits frequently appeals, like Quine, to idealized parent-child interactions to explain how social norms are passed on and generally shared within societies, and how these interactions ultimately support a loose, vaguely definite set of normal, conventionally normative linguistic habits. Like Dreyfus and Quine, who write as if socially representative conventions unproblematically emerge from embodied contexts of language use,

³¹ Georges B. Dreyfus, *Recognizing Reality: Dharmakīrti’s Philosophy and Its Tibetan Interpretations*, Suny Series in Buddhist Studies (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), p. 145.

³² Ibid., p. 146.

³³ See, in particular, Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005).

³⁴ Siderits, *Buddhism as Philosophy*, p. 223.

the classical Buddhist *pramanavadin*-s, Siderits apparently suggests, hold that word meanings are practically enduring, or copied and repeated, cultural myths. Arguably, however, by assuming a continuum model of language, such readings do not adequately problematize modern capitalist selves, or, as Foucault would say, sufficiently pose a question to politics.

V.

We should now also note that, besides the formal, logical problem of equivocation between universal and particular senses of “represent” highlighted so far, many scholars who are sensitive to Marxist critiques of capitalist value practices associate capitalist social subjects with historically specific kinds of violence. As we will see, the Dinnaga-Dharmakirti tradition’s semantics can also be read in a way that bolsters their critique.

In *Undoing Gender*, for example, Butler points to the case of David Reimer, who committed suicide in 2002 at the age of thirty-eight. As an infant, Reimer’s penis was destroyed during a medical procedure. Subsequently, one of the more respected sexologists of the time, John Money of Johns Hopkins University, advised Reimer’s parents to raise their child as a girl. Trusting in the conventional authority of shared, generic conceptions of gender and sex, Money and Reimer’s parents prescribed a life-long sequence of disciplinary interventions on Reimer’s body, apparently to retrieve the child’s lost potential for a typical, happy life. Butler contends, however, that because the contours of culturally re-presenting and normative subjectivities, such as normally sexed and gendered bodies, are not obviously given to any person, but are instead abstract, anticipated ideas of communal sameness, these bodily interventions effectively functioned, not to help to suture Reimer’s ruptured continuity with a generally re-presenting kind of social self, but through surgical acts of negative marking of his/her present form as unthinkable, impossible, and illegitimate, to concretize an imaginary concept of shared “normal,” “natural,” not-queer, gender and sex. “When Brenda [Reimer] looks in the mirror and sees something nameless, freakish, something between the norms, is she not at that moment in question as a human, is she not the specter of the freak [the queer] against which and through which the norm installs itself,” Butler asks.³⁵

As a socially respected physician and scholar, Money presumably thought that his interventions would give the infant his best chance to overcome his otherwise stunted chances for a normal life, or to replicate the natural continuity that Reimer’s body supposedly would have had with normal, socially re-presenting subjectivity if not for one tragic, unthinkable, freak medical accident. According to Butler’s reading of Reimer’s case, however, such interventions are not primarily *ad hoc* responses to fluke crises; rather, these “crises” fuel and reveal a pattern of violence, of anticipating and then inflicting suffering, the reiteration of which is needed to make the imaginary, abstract

³⁵ Butler, *Undoing Gender*, p. 69. Brackets added.

subjects of global capital seem concrete. Similarly, to further foreshadow these twin aspects of the suffering of contemporary free market societies, today's respected economic and political leaders presumably intend the austerity burdens that they have heaped almost exclusively on the shoulders of the middle and working classes to help "our" societies to retrieve the capital values that they appeared to possess before the 2008 financial crisis. However, scholars such as Butler would instead argue, I believe, that such financial crises and the "hard choices" they provoke reveal the vacuity of prevalent conceptions of value and subjectivity and the peculiar violences that are needed to sustain these abstractions. "Crises" of exchange and equivalence seem jarring and catastrophic to certain people, not primarily because of tangible losses, but because they reveal psychologically obfuscated discontinuities between heterogeneous individuals and imagined, socially re-presenting / representative subjects. Further, given attachments to continuity, scholars such as Butler might contend, these crises of anticipated suffering provoke specifically interested drives to inflict suffering, to negatively mark and cast away "others," to "derealize" specific individuals from anticipated, not already determined fields of discursive intelligibility.

Butler points elsewhere, for example, to the bodily interventions that intersex children sometimes endure and that hardly differ from those that Reimer was subjected to. As a matter of institutional practice, these children's bodies are surgically altered, not because they are intrinsically weird (no actual person's body is more exchangeable), but, she argues, to limit the range of possibilities that expressions of sex and gender might intelligibly seem to range over, and to thereby help to define, and construct, what normally sexed bodies look like and do.³⁶ When epistemologies assume that concrete-imaginary public subjectivities adjudicate boundaries of sense and value, they cannot help, Butler suggests, but reiteratively mark certain bodies as material signifiers of impossibility, nonsense, and crisis. For without such acts of derealization, of retroactively casting manifest possibilities from anticipated fields of generic sense — of marking and excluding individuals as "other" (perversely) to retrieve an anticipated norm — concretely embodied, equally weird others could never begin to seem unproblematically continuous with an obvious yet fictional meaning of "us." This is "the knife of the norm," Butler writes. "Here the ideality of gendered morphology is quite literally incised in the flesh."³⁷

To begin to articulate this analysis of Reimer's surgical and social treatment into the terms of Dinnaga's *anyapoha* semantics: an unspecific, merely anticipated set of heterogeneous, not excluded individuals can be cognized as the unified, re-presentating meaning of a verbal designation, such as "us," only through *desakalavasthaniyata* acts of

³⁶ See Suzanne J. Kessler, "The Medical Construction of Gender: Case Management of Intersexed Infants," *Theorizing Feminism: Parallel Trends in the Humanities and Social Sciences*, edited by Anne Herrmann and Abigail J. Stewart (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001) for an interesting account of how expectations of capacity for penetrative heterosexual intercourse are used to distinguish infants' otherwise ambiguous penises/clitorises.

³⁷ Butler, *Undoing Gender*, p. 53.

exclusion (*apoha*) of the other (*anya*). Butler argues that the privilege and authority of an otherwise unspecific normative social class (e.g., in *Gender Trouble*, feminist subjects) can be concretized only through the production and alienation of a growing class of queers, including individuals such as Reimer. Meanwhile, Buddhist logicians argue that otherwise empty word meanings seem definite only through practices of *anyapoha*. Each historically distinct field of practice that these text traditions arguably problematize — capitalist productions of abstract value and subjectivity in the case of poststructuralists who are indebted to Marx, and conventional, Vedic *episteme*-s in the case of the Dinnaga-Dharmakirti tradition — inflict suffering through reiterative acts of exclusion of the other, and do so to assuage “anticipated sufferings” that appearances of discontinuity between unique, ineffable realities and abstract illusions of sameness provoke in individuals who assume their continuity.

VI.

Buddhist logicians variously elaborate Dinnaga’s fifth century contention that a word means what it does not exclude. Still, none apparently disagrees that, following an intelligible utterance, a person immediately grasps a *vikalpa*, or a momentary nexus of expectations, apathies, and aversions. This directly grasped and occasionally unique content then prompts a person to determine an external object, not by manifesting anything real and external to consciousness, but by construing an otherwise indefinite referent through some set of exclusions. Hence, the external object that one comes to know through a word is no actual thing, but is an “unspecific collection” of traits that one’s determining cognition does not foreclose. A thing-in-general is a nominal similarity class (*sajatiya*) that is constituted through exclusion from a specific dissimilarity class (*vi-jatiya*).³⁸

In the fifth chapter of the *PS*, Dinnaga writes that an utterance of “pot” does not exclude expressions of wider extension, such as “container,” words of narrower extension, such as “blue pot,” or terms of equal extension, such as “pot.”³⁹ Instead, it prompts one to indefinitely anticipate a range of terms whose extensions are narrower, wider, and equal. In some cases, Dinnaga argues, hearing a narrow term prompts a person to anticipate a wider term. For example, upon hearing “blue pot,” a particular individual might be caused to expect, or infer, a thing that is a pot. The ineffable given content (the *paksa*) does not itself determine the expectation, for hearing something interpretable as “blue pot” could also prompt an embodied person to anticipate a thing that is a vessel, manufactured, or breakable, etc., depending on the cognizer’s particular circumstances, background, and interests. Because the expression could lead people to expect various wider terms, it does not cause awareness of any specific one.⁴⁰ Narrow

³⁸ Patil, *Against a Hindu God*, p. 215.

³⁹ Hayes, *Digndga on the Interpretation of Signs*, PS V 25.0.0.

⁴⁰ Ibid, PS V 27.0.0.

terms that are not excluded by a wider term are also anticipated only indefinitely. Hearing “pot,” for example, might prompt an individual to infer an object that bears color, but leave the person unsure of the specific color it bears. Likewise, hearing “blue pot” might arouse one to anticipate a blue pot, but leave one uninformed about the specific shade of blue.⁴¹ Provoked anticipations of wider terms (e.g., “representative subjectivity”) are accompanied by doubt about which of many narrow terms obtain, as one should expect if the referents of concept-laden cognition are empty, or are never directly given to thought.

While hearing a word will cause different people to anticipate various, unspecific sets of terms, Dinnaga argues, it will also instigate specific oppositions or repulsions (*virodha*). A narrow term, he says, is unfriendly with other categories that are included within its genre. “Like the sons of a king,” he contends, “each expropriates their common property for himself. Therefore, they begrudge one another the property they have in common.”⁴² Hearing “*x* is a tree” and reflexively imagining a maple will repulse an individual from expecting *x* to be a willow, since the tree-ness of a maple is specific to maples, and the tree-ness of a willow is specific to willows. Similarly, the animality of a cow excludes the animality of horse, and, hence, hearing about an animal and reflexively assuming a cow will dispose an individual against expecting a horse. Metaphorically, each subtype wants to commandeer the wider imaginary type for itself, and to substitute itself as the class’ generic representative.

Unlike the semantics of Dinnaga’s Vedic opponents, this model of conceptual determination embraces referential opacity. After learning that a thing is real and not fantastic, various people can still wonder whether it is tangible and not abstract. After learning that it is tangible and not abstract, a person can still question whether it is solid, and not, say, liquid or gas. After discovering that it is solid, an individual can still not know whether it is a tree, rather than a pot or a cow. With the Dinnaga-Dharmakīrti tradition’s *anyapoha* semantics, uncertainty accompanies every increase of certainty. Nonetheless, just as uncertainty accompanies every verbal certainty, some set of certainties, or habitual repulsions, accompanies every uncertainty. Therefore, to doubt whether a real, tangible, solid thing is a tree, pot, or cow, a person must not doubt that it is neither liquid nor gas, or is “solid.” One must not doubt that it is not abstract, or is “tangible.” And one must not doubt that it is neither fictional nor fantastic, or is “real.” To know generically, through words and inference, is to have specific expectations,⁴³ and these anticipations, Dinnaga contends, are an embodied individual’s affective habits of exclusion of 44 the other.⁴⁴

By extension, it would seem that, according to Dinnaga’s *anyapoha* semantics, even before the accident that disintegrated his penis, David Reimer was neither a boy nor a girl, but was instead an aggregate of various actual, unique phenomena that were

⁴¹ Ibid, PS V 26.0.0.

⁴² Ibid, PS V 28.1.0.

⁴³ Ibid, PS V 12.0.0.

⁴⁴ Ibid, PS V 35.0.0.

gendered and sexed only in contingent, fragile, anticipated senses. He was “a boy” because the specific people whom he depended on and was vulnerable to reiteratively read his particular genitalia as a signifier for “boyhood” and “masculinity.” He was a boy because specific others around him happened to be habitually sure — reflexively averse to contrary possibilities — that his body was “male.” After Reimer’s accident, however, the specific individuals who were responsible for this child’s care, such as Money, no longer read his / her body as a sensible signifier of maleness. A crisis of anticipated suffering ensued, and the magnitude of this crisis, as with the 2008 financial crisis, was largely untethered from losses of actual potency or use-value. For instance, unlike the surgeries that he subsequently endured, the disintegration of the infant’s penis would not have foreclosed Reimer’s reproductive potential.

To restore their abilities to infer the infant’s continuity with a normalized and supposedly given “we,” and thereby rid themselves of worries that this infant would not fit in, feel normal, or survive as a subject, Money and Reimer’s parents made the infant suffer. The continuity they had imagined between this individual’s unique body and generic, abstract maleness had been ruptured. Consequently, Reimer’s caregivers worked to excise remaining signs of maleness and masculinity from his body and behaviors to again construct an illusion of continuity between this actual, unique person and the legal subject of socialized capital. As Buddhist *anyapoha* theorists might explain, provoked by specific, momentary *vikalpa*-s, Money and others worked through affective habits of exclusion of the other to make an opaquely conceived, generic “female” subject seem cognitively present. Like a prince driven to reclaim privilege that has been called into question, the term “male,” on the lips of Reimer’s caregivers, was antagonistic toward the penis-less maleness of the infant; over the next decade, this antagonistic drive to elevate heterogeneous, narrow, opaque, unrepresentative conceptions of sex and gender through hostility, *virodha*, to other present possibilities, played itself out along the scar lines of Reimer’s noncompliant and eventually suicidal body.

Suffering is not external to capitalism, members of the Dinnaga-Dharmakirti text tradition might argue, provided they do not share some comparative philosophers’ interpretation of the epistemological function of *vyavahara*. First, capitalism implies *abstract sufferings of anticipation*, pseudo-sufferings that capitalist structures incur when discontinuities between actual, unique phenomena and things-in-general inevitably reveal themselves. Another name for these sufferings might be *paranoia*. Free market constructions of representative / re-presenting value and subjectivity are both cognitively and logically unstable, but are assumed within capitalist ideology to be unproblematic. Consequently, capitalist societies are subject to regular bouts of abstract suffering, ranging, for example, from paranoia about declining American power to panic about transgender people in bathrooms and Reimer’s loss of his penis. Similarly, Dinnaga emphasizes that a gap, or discontinuity, always remains between present, actual phenomena and the anticipated, cognitively empty objects that these phenomena may seem to signify. Open-ended, unending suffering, Buddhist text traditions stress, is fueled in this space of anticipation, of grasping. And it is only if a person’s act of

grasping is not paranoid — if it directs one to phenomena that extinguish further anticipation — that, Dharmakirti claims, a person’s imaginings of things-in-general and their concomitant acts of exclusion should count, conventionally, as “knowledge.” Because capitalism expects discontinuous phenomena to be continuous, sufferings of anticipation are an unavoidable feature of capitalist psychology.

Second, members of the Dinnaga-Dharmakirti tradition might also stress, there are *actual sufferings of exclusion* that capitalist structures actively inflict on those they deem other. To make particular, heterogeneous, unrepresentative conceptions seem generic and representative, Dinnaga and others might explain, similarly narrow conceptions must be targeted and dismissed. For some vague, unspecific range of conceptions to seem obviously conventional, specific other conceptions must be actively derealized and suppressed. In Marxist theories, desires to privilege the legal subject of socialized capital alienate most individuals from the means of value production. Similarly, in Dinnaga’s *PS*, *anyapoha*-related practices appear neither as purely formal negations nor as socially given conventions, but as interested and affectively hostile drives for stable, generic understanding.

Since the beginning of the current economic crisis, capitalist policymakers have had to choose between privileging politically hegemonic yet abstract conceptions of value and subjectivity or prioritizing the needs of diverse, manifestly actual expressions of worth and personhood. For example, in the US, presidents Bush and Obama had to decide whether to bolster banks’ strained paper portfolios through public credit transfers, and thereby work to restore previous, anticipated capital values, or to take over the assets of banks that were technically bankrupt and, for instance, write down the principal balances of actual people’s and institutions’ debts. As the name of the country’s “Troubled Asset Relief Program” suggests, US economic and political representatives have favored the former, specifically capitalist course. What, however, have these decisions to re-concretize the social selves and values of global capitalism practically amounted to? As Dinnaga and contemporary Marxist theorists might have predicted, those whom practices of abstract value production do not alienate have cast present alternatives to these practices from anticipated fields of discursive intelligibility. With occasionally intense displays of anxiety and hostility, public representatives have stressed the need to restore troubled asset values by concentrating nominally public credit among an unrepresentative social class. They have backed this extension of credit to a select few by reducing resources and credit available to those in the middle and working classes, excluding the poor and subaltern from public spaces, services, and facilities, and excluding growing numbers of “others” from contexts of economic and political decision-making (e.g., though revocations of collective bargaining rights). In other words, in ways that are not wholly unlike the “care” that David Reimer received or the practices of conceptual determination that Dinnaga describes, today’s policymakers have operated on the public corpus through exclusion of specific others to concretize abstract, anticipated capital values and selves. Actual sufferings of exclusion, like abstract sufferings of anticipation, are inevitable in any philosophy that

locates political, economic, or epistemological agency in given, enduring, shared social selves, classical Buddhist semanticists might contend, and people will suffer them so long as capitalist conceptions of ‘value’ prevail without cognitive and affective resistance.

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