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Denotational Textuality and Demeanor Indexicality in Tibetan Buddhist Debate

This article examines the place of demeanor indexicality in Tibetan Buddhist "debate," a genre of argumentation practiced daily by monks of the Geluk sect in India. In debate, monks display forms of demeanor that parallel the operations they concurrently perform on the denotational content of their discourse. It is through the reciprocally reflexive relationship between demeanor indexicality and denotational textuality that debate is shown to achieve its core ideological effects. [debate, demeanor, indexicality, argument, Tibetan, social interaction]

With his charge that formal logic has "lost touch with its application," and with his turn toward "logical *practice*," Stephen Toulmin (1958:9) helped inspire what is now a burgeoning industry of interdisciplinary work on argumentation.[1] At first blush, Toulmin's turn to argumentation may seem congenial to linguistic anthropology and allied fields, especially if we consider anthropological interest in the varied " 'wranglings' of disputing talk" (Brenneis 1988:221), from presidential debates (Agha 1996) and children's disputes (Goodwin 1990), to courtroom arguments (Philips 1983) and labor-management deliberations (O'Donnell 1990). Yet the distance between these literatures is considerable. The linguistic anthropological literature has not had the same preoccupation with normativity (e.g., to promote "critical thinking" or caution against "fallacies" [Hansen and Pinto 1995; Walton 1995]); it has tended to motivate its claims from transcripts of actual discourse, not from intuitions about or *ex post facto* reconstructions of argumentation; and it has been open to a wider range of pragmatic effects in argumentation (e.g., "sociability" in Jewish argument [Schiffrin 1984])—to name only a few of the more immediate differences.

The disparity between the literatures is perhaps most acute when we consider the privilege that the argumentation literature continues to accord to logic's hallowed unit, the proposition, whose canonical linguistic carrier is the declarative sentence, and whose accompanying view of language is, as Duranti (1997:163) succinctly puts it, that of "an instrument for informing or describing the world" (cf. Silverstein 1976). When we turn to the anthropological literature on argumentative talk, this concern with propositionality all but vanishes. Though "taking alternative positions on the same issue" (Goodwin 1990:156) is sometimes deemed criterial to a "dispute," it is not "ethno"-logic that is of primary concern. That is, it is neither the group-relative

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standards of a well-formed propositional argument that are sought, nor the procedures used to craft one—though such standards and procedures are often noted in passing. Instead, qualities of the interaction command attention: "oppositional moves" (Goodwin 1990:141), "tropic aggression" (Agha 1996), "unruly" interaction (Haviland 1997).

In this article, I throw down a bridge between the argumentation and linguistic-anthropological literatures. The bridge provided is admittedly narrow, for it consists of an oft-neglected facet of argumentation—"demeanor indexicality" (cf. Goffman 1967). With Tibetan Buddhist "debate" (*rtsod pa*)[2] in India as the empirical focus, I demonstrate how displays of demeanor, which are signaled using diverse semiotic resources, parallel the operations that Buddhist monks concurrently perform on the denotational content of their discourse. This narrow bridge—demeanor indexicality—has far-reaching implications, however. (Post)-Enlightenment ideologies of language and knowledge, which privilege reference and predication and which normatively separate word from world, knower from known, have been much maligned in recent decades, but by those who seldom offer us the means to appreciate how discursive "rituals"—including rituals of argumentation like Buddhist debate—put referential and nonreferential processes into articulation. In Tibetan Buddhist debate, I suggest, concurrent processes involving denotational textuality and demeanor indexicality conspire to produce this discursive ritual's core ideological effects.

Denotational Textuality and Demeanor Indexicality

In his reflections on the contemporary argumentation literature, David Fleming notes that "[i]n the 20th century, the traditional definition of argument as one or more propositions in support of a further proposition has been called into question" (1996:16). Argumentation theorists turn increasingly to the pragmatic and interactional matrix within which propositional content is expressed and evaluated. Propositions and the utterances that convey them are often recast in pragmatic terms as "assertive speech acts" (e.g., Grootendorst and Eemeren 2004:63, et seq.), which are viewed, in turn, as building blocks of more complex events of argumentation. To account for the behavioral regularities of such speech events, argumentation theorists then try to specify the procedural presuppositions, "rules," or schemata that serve as principles for construing and conducting argumentation.

Despite their attempts to "situate" (Fleming 1996:16) arguments in their contexts of occurrence, propositional content, and speaker-based stances toward such content (e.g., epistemic modalization), still enjoy pride of place (e.g., Blair 1992; Cox and Willard 1982:xlv). Grootendorst and Van Eemeren, for instance, have developed an influential "pragma-dialectical" theory of argumentation wherein argumentation is defined as "a verbal, social, and rational activity aimed at convincing a reasonable critic of the acceptability of a standpoint by putting forward a constellation of propositions justifying or refuting the proposition expressed in the standpoint" (Grootendorst and Eemeren 2004:1). Here, as elsewhere, speakers purportedly express propositions to justify or refute other propositions.

Insofar as arguments are held to consist of at least two propositions (classically, "premise" and "conclusion"), or alternatively of "claims" and "support" whose utterances express propositional content (Fleming 1996:13),[3] they are *textual* objects, involving the "quality of coherence or connectivity" of signs (Hanks 1989:96; cf. Silverstein 1997). Yet they are textual objects of a specific kind, for their cohesiveness is evaluated strictly in terms of the way states of affairs are represented, what Silverstein (1997) refers to broadly as "denotational textuality." As anyone who sets foot on a Tibetan debating courtyard will attest, the noise is so deafening, the gestures so raucous, that to narrow one's eyes and let in only a sober propositional argument would be to miss much of what stops observers in their tracks.

The most visually arresting facet of this genre is the demeanor monks adopt as they argue. The debate genre features two primary roles: "challenger" and

"defendant." Though procedures vary slightly from monastery to monastery, only one monk typically inhabits the defendant role for the duration of a debate. And while only one monk initially serves as challenger, any number of co-challengers from the audience will typically join him. Together, challengers stamp their feet, hurl taunts, and deliver blistering claps as they argue, while the seated defendant maintains a demeanor of poise and unflappability. What is the significance of such provocations and the defendant's effort to remain unflappable? Challengers may not simply be trying to persuade their opponents, as if their forms of self-presentation could be reduced to means-ends rhetorical strategies (note how such attempts to explain the effectiveness of sign-behavior would neglect to explain why forms of self-presentation look the way they do); nor may defendants simply be trying to uphold a philosophical position. In addition, both may be indicating contextual facts about themselves—what Erving Goffman (1967) long ago analyzed in terms of "demeanor." That is, they may be publicly marking themselves as categories of persons with culturally valorized characterological attributes. To the extent that such signs regularly indicate or "index" contextual facts about the speaker, they can be termed "speaker-focal indexicals," or to preserve some of Goffman's original terminology, "demeanor indexicals."[4] The type of demeanor indexicality explored here concerns social personae and personae-attributes linked specifically to speech-event roles.[5]

In Buddhist debate, demeanor indexicality and denotational textuality are indissolubly associated. After an initial phase of consensus building, challengers begin to rend the interpropositional coherence of authoritative Buddhist doctrine while inciting the defendant with claps, taunts, and other provocations. The seated defendant, in turn, struggles to preserve interpropositional coherence while maintaining a demeanor of majestic poise and unflappability. I suggest below that the defendant unifies doctrinal tradition on the plane of denotational textuality and simultaneously enacts tradition's successful unification by way of his demeanor of unflappability. If the defendant is convincing, he performatively embodies how tradition ought to be: stable, coherent, whole.

Tibetan Buddhist Debate in India

Prior to 1959, Buddhist debate was the premier form of language socialization at the major monasteries of the Geluk sect, a sect that became a hegemonic force in Tibet beginning in the mid–17th century. Though the Geluk sect asserts that the consciousness of a Buddha is nonconceptual, it univocally states that conceptuality and intellectual analysis are integral to the path forged by Śakyamūni Buddha. It is through disciplined intellection that Buddhist subjects are to discern the nature of self and the phenomenal world. This "commitment to reason" (Hopkins 2002:20) is, officially at least, the *raison d'être* for the Geluk's heavy reliance on the propaedeutic discipline of debate. With Tibet's annexation in 1959, however, a traumatic era of destruction and displacement began. As the activities of the original Geluk monastic seats came to a grinding halt, exiled Geluk monks in India struggled to reconstitute themselves. In 1959, a plan was developed to transfer 1,500 monks to Buxa Duar in upper West Bengal to safeguard Tibet's religious patrimony. By all accounts, it was a mixed fate to be granted sanctuary at Buxa, a former British internment camp in an inhospitable location. In my interviews with monks about the Buxa years, their remarks cycled around certain themes, including ghosts, oppressive heat, suicide, lack of resources, soaring rates of tuberculosis, and of course, the acute mental anguish of not knowing when, or even if, they would return home. After a decade at Buxa, the Tibetan Government in Exile secured alternative sites in south India for this fragile and weakened monastic community. Geluk monks affiliated with Sera Monastery (a monastery founded in 1419 on the outskirts of Lhasa) were handed land in Byllakupe, Karnataka State where they remain today, and where I conducted fieldwork in 1998 and 2000.

The debate genre has enjoyed attention from Tibetologists and Buddhist Studies scholars. They have focused on the philosophical content about which monks wrangle, especially the content encoded in the monastic "textbook" (*yig cha*) literature and the primers that precede it in the Geluk curriculum (e.g., Onoda 1992; Perdue 1992). Though undeniably important, these works cannot, of course, suffice as an account of debate proper. The speech genre named *rtsod pa* in Tibetan has been glossed variously as "monachal disputation" (Sierksma 1964), "dialectics" (Liberman 1992), "debate-logic" (Tillemans 1989), and most often, "debate" (Perdue 1992). While I use "debate" herein, at least three senses need to be divested from the term. "Debate," firstly, suggests a method abstractable from its content; yet this debate genre has not been wrested from its Buddhist philosophical moorings. It has not been applied to extra-doctrinal subject matter, and remains instead an organic part of the Geluk philosophical curriculum (and of the curricula of other Buddhist sects, as well as the Bön order). Second, "debate" suggests a relatively infrequent event, but at sites like Sera Mey monastic college in India, it occurs twice daily for two hours per session. Third, the term implies a contest between individuals who are accorded equal discursive rights and obligations. The default participation framework of Tibetan debate is, in contrast, unapologetically asymmetrical, as we shall soon see. To appreciate the intricacies of an actual debate, a number of preliminaries are needed, including a discussion of a certain textual ideology that is presupposed in this genre.

Textual Ideology and Role Differentiation in the Debate Genre

An irony has been noted about how the Geluk sect treats its doctrinal corpus, which consists not only of the primary Buddhist scriptures but also of an immense wealth of Indian and Tibetan commentaries. Inherited doctrine, especially doctrine attributed to the historical Buddha and to lineage masters like Dzongkapa, the founder of the Geluk sect, is often treated as if it were flawless in its interpropositional consistency[6] (Hopkins 2002; cf. Cabezón 1994). Hopkins (2002) notes how this is conveyed when a teacher makes remarks such as this to his students: "It is amazing how there is not the slightest internal contradiction in all of the works of the Foremost Precious One [Dzongkapa]!" In a manner reminiscent of debate, the teacher then takes a chiastic, counterdirectional turn (cf. Silverstein 2004); he confronts the student "with an apparent inconsistency as if the student were the origin of the original proposition that there was no inconsistency" (Hopkins 2002:5). The teacher sunders interpropositional coherence and obliges the student to restore it. Like the defendant in debate, the student must uphold the textual ideology by performatively making manifest doctrinal consistency in the midst of dissension.

In broadest terms, challengers try to render incoherent the defendant's claims about inherited doctrine by exposing two primary types of denotational-textual inconsistency: inconsistency in respect of the denotational content of authoritative books reportable in debate, and of claims made by the defendant himself over his turns-of-talk. Challengers must problematize relentlessly, even if it means establishing something counterfactual. Defendants, in turn, must uphold the textual ideology. As one monk frankly put it: "There are many texts that don't agree, right?" "Likewise," he continued, "within texts, there are many things that don't agree, right?"[7] The defendant, he concluded, needs to show that "the meaning is the same"[8] and does this by erasing all signs of interpropositional noncongruence.

To induce inconsistency, challengers perform numerous operations on the defendant's discourse, including an often reported procedure termed "consequences" (*thal 'gyur*) which monks first encounter in their philosophical primers. Of the sample debates found therein, one of the most elementary is the "colors" debate initiated by a hypothetical opponent: "If someone says, 'Whatever is a color is necessarily red, [the challenger responds]', it [absurdly] follows that the subject, the color of a white religious conch, is red because of being a color" (Perdue 1992:222–223). Though transparently absurd, this debate is a vehicle through which

monks begin socialization into the genre. Consequences can be schematically represented as follows:

1. [. . .*a*. . .]$_{NP}$ *chos can* (TOP)	[the topic,] *a*
2. [. . .*b*. . .]$_{NP}$ *yin par thal* (be-NZR.LOC/DAT follows)	[it] follows that [it] is *b*
3. [. . .*c*. . .]$_{NP}$ *yin pa'i phyir* (be-NZR.GEN because)	because of being *c*

As Tillemans (1989) observes, *chos can* is a register-specific topicalizer. It marks the end of the topicalized segment (typically a noun phrase),[9] and is followed by an intonation break. When faced with a consequence, the defendant responds by evaluating it. Officially he may use only four canonical, response-types. If the challenger concludes his turn on a *thal*-clause, the defendant responds either affirmatively, with "[I] accept [it]" (*'dod*), or negatively, with "why?" (*ci'i phyir*). If he concludes on a *phyir*-clause, the defendant again has two choices. He may respond with "the reason [is] not established" (*rtags ma grub*) or "there is no pervasion" (*khyab pa ma byung*).[10] (Other, less frequent responses do exist [Onoda 1992]).

As for the example of the opponent who asserts, absurdly, that all colors are necessarily red, it is noteworthy that the challenger does not try to establish the antithesis. Instead, in an act of transposition, he inhabits the defendant's position. This is no gesture of sympathy or compromise, as we shall soon see, but a gambit to demonstrate just how unreasonable the defendant's premise is, a strategy that Onoda (1988; 1996) has branded, on analogy with Western logic and rhetoric, "reductio ad absurdum." Others Tibetologists (e.g., Lopez 1998) have compared consequences to enthymemes, syllogisms with an unstated premise (cf. Bitzer 1959).

When challengers utter consequences, they perform a visually arresting kinesic sequence that culminates in an explosive, open-palmed hand-clap:

> When the Challenger first puts his question to the sitting Defender, his right hand is held above the shoulder at the level of his head and the left hand is stretched forward with the palm turned upward. . . . At the end of his statement the Challenger punctuates by loudly clapping together his hands and simultaneously stomping his left foot. Then he immediately draws back his right hand with the palm held upward and at the same time holds forth his left hand with the palm turned downward. [Perdue 1992:29]

Though monks gloss the challenger's clap-sequence as benevolent (e.g., the foot stomp represents the trouncing of "pride"), its martial idiom—the fact that it resembles a physical strike—is difficult to pass over. Noninitiates are prone to misconstrue the challenger's clap-sequence as signs of vulgar (i.e., "literal," nonmetaphoric) aggression, as the monks I interviewed often noted. When I asked monks to recount their first impressions of debate, they often responded with laughter, followed by the admission that they too had been initially shocked. "It looked sort of strange," one monk confessed. "[I] sort of thought to myself, 'Why are they wrangling?' "[11] Doctrinally, consequences are said to spur learning in defendants, but the kinesic accompaniments iconically frame this procedure, not as coaxing, but metaphoric aggressivity.

To return to the color debate, a hypothetical opponent absurdly claims that if something is a color it is necessarily red. To induce incoherence, the challenger need only propose a color that isn't red, and assert that it (absurdly) must be red if the defendant's premise were upheld. While straightforward, a number of recurrent problematical topics exist—for instance, nonexistent phenomena like the "horns of a rabbit" (*ri bong rwa*)—which complicate philosophical matters considerably, and are hence excellent fodder for debate. Before challengers introduce such topics, they elicit claims from the defendant and then typically restate them. They thereby create a public record of the defendant's claims, preparing the ground for the charge of

Figure 1
Phases of clap-sequence demonstrated by Achok Rinpoche (Sera Mey, 2000).

inconsistency. These restatements are not always innocent. Challengers may, for instance, make denotational explicit what was only presupposed in the defendant's prior speech. Or they may transpose a claim from colloquial Tibetan into the less forgiving consequence format. Such transpositions are hazardous for the defendant, for they turn tentative lines into indelible claims (which partly explains why defendants frequently break register—shifting *into* rather than out of colloquial Tibetan—when they seem cornered). Skilful debaters, in short, alter the defendant's discourse during uptake to make it vulnerable to the charge of inconsistency. The operations noted above have a specific distribution in debate, however. The event begins not with problematization, but with consensus-building, as we can see by turning to an actual debate.

An Evening of Debate at Sera Mey

In July of 2000, Sera Mey monastic college began preparing for the annual *Rigchung* series of debates slated for August. *Rigchung* debates are intracollegiate and reserved for monks who have completed the roughly six-year philosophical course of study known as the "Perfection of Wisdom" (*phar phyin*). Unlike twice-daily courtyard debates, these enjoy a proud place in the monastic calendar, and obtaining candidacy is no easy feat. Only 16 candidates are permitted annually. Prior to the *Rigchung*, the candidates make rounds through the college's regional houses (*khang mtshan*) where they serve as defendants. This evening, a candidate from *Tshawa* regional house arrived at Gyalrong's prayer hall for two separate 45-minute debates, the first of which I consider here.

The evening's topic was "refuge" (*skyabs 'gro*), the foundational commitment that Buddhists cultivate toward the "Three Jewels" (*dkon mchog gsum*), that is, the Buddha, his teachings, and his religious community. In distinguishing the "distinctive refuge" (*skyabs 'gro khyad par can*) of a Buddhist from the "ordinary refuge" (*skyabs 'gro phal pa*) of a non-Buddhist, monks often ask: Is distinctive refuge to be posited in terms of an individual's commitment to certain *objects* of refuge (viz. the Buddha, his teachings or his community), or do subjective factors matter? Early in this debate, for instance, the challenger asks the defendant whether distinctive refuge should be posited by way of objective or subjective criteria. Are the "objects of refuge" themselves distinctive, he asks, and are they criterial for distinctive refuge? The objects of refuge are criterial, the defendant responds, but slips in a caveat. He adds that it is not "merely" *(tsam)* the objects of refuge that are criterial. He is wary to say that the objects of refuge alone are criterial because, to put it crudely, appearances can be deceiving. A case in point is that of Buddha manifesting as a Hindu deity. This is a problematical topic raised repeatedly in this debate. If one tries to posit distinctive refuge solely on the basis of the objects of refuge, then it would absurdly follow that non-Buddhists who take refuge in a Hindu deity would be Buddhists. The defendant, of course, anticipates this criticism, and makes space for subjective factors. He argues that it is on the basis of a cognitive state, "discriminating awareness"

(*'du shes*), that distinctive refuge should be posited, not the objects of refuge alone. But again, the defendant adds the caveat that distinctive refuge isn't "merely" *(tsam)* based on subjective criteria either, for if one were to hold that position—that only subjective criteria matter—one would lose sight of the Buddha, his teachings, and his community. Without some reference to the objects of refuge, distinctive refuge would make little sense. The defendant, in brief, tries to steer clear of objectivist and subjectivist extremes. In fact, the topic of Buddha manifesting in a non-Buddhist form preys upon a weakness in a claim to which the defendant committed himself early in the debate. The defendant accepted the position that refuge in any of the Three Jewels, the objects of refuge, is necessarily the distinctive refuge of a Buddhist. This claim says nothing—nothing explicit at least—about the relevance of subjective factors and thus begins to buckle and sway under the weight of this topic.

The Seat of Knowledgeability

With a sense of the philosophical issues, let us turn now to the actual debate, beginning with the space in which it is staged. Indoor debates unfold in semiotically overdetermined environments. Like other assembly halls at Sera, Gyalrong's prayer hall has parallel rows of crimson cushions. At its rear lies an elevated "throne"-like seat reserved for the defendant. A well-worn iconism of status augmentation is evident here: Relative seat height serves as a gradient icon for relative status. Behind this throne is an altar on which statues and images of Buddhas, saints, and other revered figures are arrayed. The defendant has the iconographic presence of "tradition" quite literally behind his back. His front-to-back bodily orientation parallels the figures on the altar behind him. He thus appears contiguous with tradition, though he stands out from this exalted assembly as if he were tradition's envoy—and in a sense, he is.

The defendant's fate cannot, however, be read off his statusful seat. The irony, lost on nobody, and certainly not lost on the defendant, is that his illustrious seat appears to have been prepared for a high-ranking personage. Homologous seating arrangements elsewhere suggest this. In Sera Mey's main assembly hall, for instance, altar, throne, and long rows of crimson cushions are arranged similarly, but, crucially, only the abbot or abbot emeritus would dare occupy the premier seat. And therein lies the rub. The monks at Gyalrong have reverently invited the defendant into the very nucleus of their prayer hall, as if he were an exalted personage—a veritable Buddha incarnate—yet he lacks the pedigree. It is this inconsistency, then, between the status of the seat and the status of the occupant that sparks dramatic tension. No coronation rite awaits him. Unlike the abbot seated in the main assembly hall, the defendant's knowledgeability is called into question as the debate unfolds, though it is not questioned immediately.

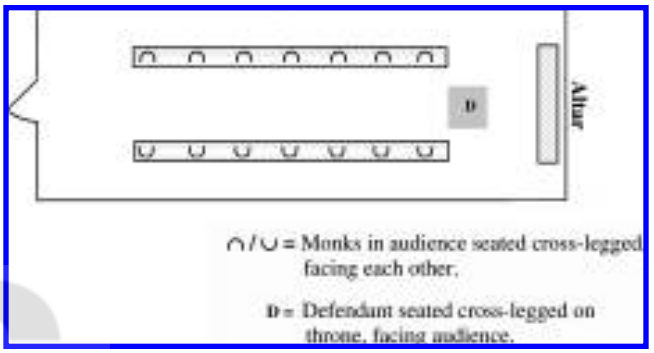

Figure 2
Seating configuration for the debate.

Consensus and Wholeness

Once the defendant mounts his seat, the debate begins. It begins in a hushed, delicate, and deferential manner, as the debates I observed typically did. In this debate, a lone challenger strides toward the defendant and then halts a few feet away; he delivers a mild clap and utters a formula monks use to start debates, yet with such ellipsis and reduction that what escapes his lips is only the last word, barely intelligible. Perdue explains the full expression using oral commentary:

> [T]he Challenger begins the debate with the statement 'Dhī̤ḥ! The subject, in just the way [Mañjuśrī debated] (*dhī̤ḥ ji ltar chos can*).' According to Denma Lochö Rinpochay, the meaning of this statement is: "Just as Mañjuśrī stated subjects in order to overcome the wrong views and doubts of opponents, so I with a good mind will do also." [Perdue 1992:29][12]

Glossed as such, the challenger interdiscursively frames the debate as a reenactment of Mañjuśrī's debates with opponents of old. With Mañjuśrī invoked, the challenger then presents the defendant with a sentence fragment; in this debate, he drew the fragment from Khedrup Denpa Dhargye's (1995) *General Meaning Commentary* on Maitreya's *Clear Ornament of Realization*, a textbook used during the Perfection of Wisdom course of studies. As is customary, the fragment consists of three syllables extracted from the end of a line of the challenger's choosing. As for the line's provenance, in this case he drew it from the chapter on refuge on which the defendant will debate in August. The defendant must now identify the clauses from which the syllables were torn and cite the complete line with fidelity. The line in the textbook reads:

> *dang po de med na / skyabs su 'gro 'dod kyi blo mi 'byung / phyi ma de med na skyabs yul log par 'gyur ba'i phyir* (mkhas-grub 1995:196–197) (framed text indicates trisyllabic sentence fragment)
>
> Since if [one] lacks the former, a mind desiring refuge will not arise. If [one] lacks the latter, [one] will end up turning away from the objects [of] refuge.

This line is part of a passage on how to rely on the Three Jewels. The two conditions alluded to in this line are (1) an awareness of how one suffers in cyclic existence, and (2) faith that the Three Jewels can protect one from such suffering. This is what transpires at the start of the debate (for clarity, textbook citations are underlined in the free translation column):

C: 1a	[*dhī̤ḥ, ji ltar*] °*chos can*°	[*dhī̤ḥ*, the] subject [just as
	chö̤̀öcɛn	Mañjuśrī debated it]
	subject	
1b	°'*gyur ba'i phyir zer*°	[the text says] "<u>because</u>
	ku-wɛɛ chī̤r-s	<u>one will come</u>"
	become-NZR.GEN because-QT	
D: 2	***'a?***	**ah?**
	ʔā	
	INT	
C: 3	°'*gyur ba'i phyir*°	<u>because one will come</u>
	ku-wɛɛ chī̤r	
	become-NZR.GEN because	
D: 4a	***'gyur ba'i phyir?***	**<u>because one will come?</u>**
	ku-wɛɛ chī̤r	
	become-NZR.GEN because	

4b	***log par 'gyur ba'i phyir yin da***	**[the line] is <u>because one will come to turn away</u>, so take note!**
	lo̲q-par ku̲-wɛɛ chr̄ yr̄taa	
	turn away-NZR.LOC/DAT become-NZR.GEN because P.FCT.DIR.ASR	
C: 5	*'m*	(minimal response)
	ʔmʔ	
	(minimal response)	
D: 6	***skyabs yul log par 'gyur ba'i phyir zer***	**[it says] "<u>because one will come to turn away from the objects of refuge</u>"**
	kʌ̄pyüü lo̲q-par ku̲-wɛɛ chr̄-s	
	refuge object turn away-NZR.LOC/DAT become-NZR.GEN because-QT	
C: 7a	°*skyabs yul log par 'gyur ba'i phyir zer*°	[it says] "<u>because one will come to turn away from the objects of refuge</u>"
	kʌ̄pyüü lo̲q-par ku̲-wɛɛ chr̄-s	
	refuge object turn away-NZR.LOC/DAT become-NZR.GEN because-QT	
7b	°*da ma yin par thal ya*°	now, it follows that it isn't
	ta̲ mʌ̄-yr̄-par thaa-ya	
	now NEG-be-NZR.LOC/DAT follows-NZR	<< clap >>
7c	*phyi ma de yog red pa?*	there is <u>the latter</u>, right?
	chr̄mʌ the̲ yɔ̲ɔ̀repaa	
	latter one DET GNM.CSQ	
D: 8	***'m=***	**(minimal response)**
	ʔmʔ	
	(minimal response)	
C: 9a	*= phyi ma de med na*	[it says] "<u>because if the latter is lacking</u>
	chr̄mʌ the̲ mɛ̲ɛ̲-na	
	latter one DET AUX-COND	
9b	°*skyabs yul log par 'gyur ba'i phyir zer*]°	<u>one will come to turn away from the objects of refuge</u>"
	kʌ̄pyüü lo̲q-par ku̲-wɛɛ chr̄-s	
	refuge object turn away-NZR.LOC/DAT become-NZR.GEN because-QT	
D:10a	**]*phyi ma de med na***	**[it says] "<u>because if the latter is lacking,</u>**
	chr̄mʌ the̲ mɛ̲ɛ̲-na	
	latter one DET AUX-COND	
10b	***skyabs yul log par 'gyur ba'i phyir zer***	**<u>[one] will come to turn away from the objects of refuge</u>"**
	kʌ̄pyüü lo̲q-par ku̲-wɛɛ chr̄-s	
	refuge object turn away-NZR.LOC/DAT become-NZR.GEN because-QT	
C: 11	*da dang po °ga re gzhag ga?*°	now what shall you posit [as] <u>the first</u>?
	ta̲ thã̲pō qha̲rē šaà-qaa	
	now first what posit-VLQ.INJ	
D: 12a	***dang po de med na***	**[it says] "<u>if the first is lacking</u>**
	thã̲pō the̲ mɛ̲ɛ̲-na	
	first DET AUX-COND	<< clap >>

12b	***skyabs su 'gro 'dod kyi blo mi 'byung zer***	**the mind desiring refuge will not arise"**
	qʌ̄p-su ṭo̲ tö̲ö̲-qi lō mi̲-cu̲ŋ-s	
	refuge-LOC go wish-GEN mind NEG-arise-QT	
C: 13	*a ni?*	then?
	ʌ̄ni	
	then	
D: 14a	***phyi ma de med na***	**[it says] "because if the latter is lacking,**
	chī̲mʌ the̲ mɛ̲ɛ̲-na	
	latter one DET AUX-COND	
14b	***skyabs yul log par 'gyur ba'i phyir zer***	**one will come to turn away from the objects of refuge"**
	kʌ̄pyüü lɔ̲q-par ku̲-wɛɛ chī̲r-s	
	refuge object turn away-NZR.LOC/DAT become-NZR.GEN because-QT	
C: 15	°*skyabs yul log par 'gyur ba'i phyir zer*°	[it says] "because one will come to turn away from the objects of refuge"
	kʌ̄pyüü lɔ̲q-par ku̲-wɛɛ chī̲r-s	
	refuge object turn away-NZR.LOC/DAT become-NZR.GEN because-QT	

Note that the challenger and defendant reassemble the textbook's source clauses in a roughly dialogic fashion. The defendant offers some pieces; the challenger, others. As for the direction of their reconstructive artistry, they begin with the end, "because of coming" (*'gyur ba'i phyir*), then work backward. After reconstructing the source citation, the phase often termed "establishing the outline" (*sa bcad sgrub*) begins. The defendant must now locate this citation within the textbook's dense, hierarchical "outline" (*sa bcad*). He names the section that houses the line, then proceeds upward. Rung by rung, hand over hand, the defendant ascends the scaffolding of the book's outline, climbing up and out. Each laborious step is taken after the challenger's prodding ("from where does that derive?" [*ga nas 'phros pa*]). Challenger and defendant thus jointly co-textualize the original discourse fragment, figuratively restoring its wholeness by locating it within the bounded and cohesive textual universe of the textbook. Toward the close of this outline phase, which lasted approximately four minutes, the challenger returns to the source citation, but this time using the consequence mode of argumentation; problematization thus begins.

Emergent Forms of Demeanor

What forms of intellectual demeanor do the challenger and defendant exhibit during the initial, citation phase? In terms of the defendant, let us first consider resources for signaling mood and epistemic modality, since these are implicated in demeanor-indexical effects. As Agha (1993) shows, the *yin* auxiliary contrasts with the *red* auxiliary along several dimensions: aspect, epistemic modality, and a verbal-indexical category he labels "participant role perspective." In terms of participant role perspective, *yin*, unlike *red*, indexes speech-act participants. It indexes speaker-perspective in assertoric mood constructions and addressee-perspective in interrogative constructions. Through examining the interaction effects of the *yin* auxiliary with co-occurring topical noun phrases, Agha (1993:156) identifies distinct types of "factive 'certainty.' " Line 4b above is an assertoric mood construction whose *yin* auxiliary thus indexes speaker-perspective, but the antecedent topic (i.e., the citation from the textbook, which reads "because one will come to turn away") appears noncongruent: It does not denote anything straightforwardly predicable of speaker. What derivative meaning might this "fractional congruence" (Agha in

press) yield? The *yin* auxiliary implies some type of "personal" association between speaker and the textbook citation. Since the defendant's line is recognizable as a memorized citation, this would most likely yield a "recollection-perspective" epistemic stance effect (Agha 1993:178–179) ("... as I recall"), an effect that is common in debate.

This epistemic stance effect is relevant for demeanor indexicality, not only (or even primarily) for the construction of denotational text. The defendant appears to foreground *his* recollection of the book, an effect he combines, revealingly, with the directive-assertive mood marker *da* (/*taa*/) (Agha 1993:240–242). The defendant projects a demeanor of "knowledgeability," an attribute expected of those who occupy the most exalted seat in the room. And this demeanor is also reinforced in at least two other ways. When the challenger repeats the defendant's words in line 7a, he lowers his voice. In 10a–b, the defendant repeats what the challenger says, yet no parallel drop in loudness occurs. In contrast, the defendant overlaps with the challenger's utterance. The defendant, in short, seems eager to demonstrate his knowledgeability.

As for the challenger, consider again his first utterance, which was marked by considerable ellipsis and reduction. The challenger simultaneously bowed slightly, delivered a mild clap (not a full clap-sequence), and smiled. Viewed together, he seems to minimize his demeanor *qua* challenger—a kind of cross-modal "role distance" (Goffman 1961). The challenger also makes no effort to overturn the defendant's claims to knowledgeability or stake claims about his own competence. While the defendant uses directive-assertive mood marking (line 4b), the challenger responds with a minimal response (line 5). Further, the challenger uses a confirmation-seeking question in line 7c. Had he chosen another type of interrogative construction (a WH-question or a YN-question) he could have demanded a more propositionally contentful response.[13] Little attention is called to his role as challenger, even less to his own competence.

Unsettling the Defendant: Shifts in Indexical Anchoring

Though the challenger tolerates the defendant's self-positioning as "knowledgeable," something else is stirring in this interaction—something that augurs an altogether different future for the defendant. At line 7b, and immediately after the segment transcribed above, the challenger utters "[it] follows that [it] isn't" (*ma yin par thal*). This delocutionary expression[14] is a harbinger of criticism to come, for it indicates that debate's problematization phase is imminent. The challenger then asks the defendant to "establish the outline." In response, the defendant names the superordinate section and proceeds "up" the textbook's outline. As the defendant does

Figure 3
Commencement of the debate.

this, the challenger begins to alter the way he restates the defendant's claims. Earlier, the challenger had often framed his restatements with the quotative clitic *-s* (e.g., lines 7a and 15) and uttered them with decreased loudness. The quotative clitic marks the end of the represented speech segment, indicating that the segment is not authored by the speaker.[15] (No distinction analogous to so-called "direct," "indirect," or "quasi-direct" reports is directly inferable from *-s* usage alone.) Since the quoted segment is independently recognizable as a textbook citation, the value of the author variable is likely inferable as the text-artifact itself, though, importantly, it is through text-artifactual mediation that monks claim to hermeneutically access doctrinal tradition.[16] We might gloss such lines more fully as "[As the text/tradition says,] . . ."

In lines 7a and 15 above, the challenger repeats the defendant's lines with word-by-word fidelity, but with lower relative loudness and with quotative clitic framing. Taken together, the challenger seems to ratify the defendant's claims. As the debate unfolds, however, the challenger begins using the matrix clause verb *byas* (/cɛ̀/) rather than the quotative clitic *-s* when restating the defendant's discourse. In colloquial Lhasa Tibetan, *byas* (/cɛ̀/) is the perfective form of the agentive verb "to do" (*byed* (/ceè/). As Goldstein (2001:733) notes, *byas* is also sometimes used as a verb of speaking, a usage evident in debate as well.[17] Consider the following lines:

D: 38	***skyabs gsum spyi yi rnam gzhag bshad pa zer***	**[the text says]**
	kɑ̄psum cī-yi̱ nāmšaà šɛ̄ɛ̀pʌ-s	**"<u>Explanation of the</u>**
	three refuges general-GEN presentation	**<u>General Presentation</u>**
	explanation-QT	**<u>of the Three Refuges</u>"**
C: 39	°*skyabs gsum spyi yi rnam gzhag bshad pa byas*°	[you] say, "<u>Explanation of</u>
	kɑ̄psum cī-yi̱ nāmšaà šɛ̄ɛ̀pʌ cɛ̱è	<u>the General Presentation of</u>
	three refuges general-GEN presentation	<u>the Three Refuges</u>"
	explanation say	

In line 38, the defendant frames his utterance with the quotative clitic. In response, the challenger lowers his voice, repeats the defendant's utterance, yet substitutes *-s* with *byas*. The matrix clause verb here spotlights the defendant's act of reporting: This is what the defendant claims tradition says. Not all subsequent restatements are framed with *byas*, but the challenger uses *byas* frequently as the citation phase of the debate draws to a close. He thus increasingly positions the defendant as someone who makes personal claims, which may—or crucially, may *not*—be isomorphic with tradition.

After eliciting a definition of refuge, the challenger then asks the defendant to confirm that there are two types of refuge: "ordinary" and "distinctive." The defendant readily confirms this, and the challenger restates his claim using *byas* framing. With the defendant's discourse on record, the challenger suddenly doubles back to the source clauses that started the debate. Using elements of the consequence mode of argumentation, he argues that the two causes of refuge—the causes stated in the textbook, which they had jointly reconstructed—are necessary for distinctive refuge. Once transposed into the consequence format, however, the defendant is reluctant to agree. He responds that the "reason is not established" (*rtags ma grub*); he presumably holds that it does not necessarily follow that distinctive refuge cannot be developed without these two causes. The challenger then argues that if that were so it would follow that the textbook doesn't speak of these two causes at all—which of course is absurd, since these were the lines they jointly reconstructed at the outset of the debate! The challenger, in short, tries to position the defendant as someone on the verge of a blatant contradiction.

To recount, the debate began with consensus and with no suspicion about the defendant's knowledgeability. Through the idiom of problematization, the shift from *-s* to *byas* framing, and the attempt to induce inconsistencies in the defendant's

discourse, the challenger initiates a chiastic turn, from consensus to dissensus. He starts to set the defendant against inherited doctrine, beginning with the citation that started the debate. A fatal leak of criticism begins, and this trickle becomes a torrent, so fierce that little of the defendant's status is left afloat. Despite the defendant's eager demeanor-indexical claims to knowledgeability, despite his candidacy for the *Rigchung*, the challenger increasingly positions him as not deserved of the very seat on which he sits. For the defendant, the debate becomes decidedly "unsettling," a felicitous term that Goldbert (1985) introduced in her dissertation on this genre. It is unsettling precisely because the event began with consensus. Once consensus is created, the challenger turns on it. Neither he, nor the other challengers who join him, relents for the remainder of the debate, which ends abruptly and without restoration of consensus when Gyalrong's house leader signals for the debate to stop. To sunder consensus is not to expose the incoherence of inherited doctrine, however. It is to expose the incompetence of the defendant's grasp of it—his ability to find (or forge) coherence amid the welter of philosophical claims.

Taunts

The challengers' turn against the defendant is nowhere more apparent than in the use of four "taunts" which comprise part of debate's lexical register (see Table 1).[18] At Sera Mey, monks consistently glossed taunt *tsha* as "shame [on you]" (*ngo tsha*; /ŋo̲ tshā/).[20] As for its stereotypic indexical properties, it indicates that the addressee (the defendant) has erred. In interviews, monks further glossed this error as "self-contradiction." Self-contradiction is thus said to be the criterial context for appropriate *tsha* usage. Of the remaining taunts, (b) and (c) are also addressee-focal indexicals that stereotypically indicate "incoherence," but they are more severe indictments than *tsha*, as evidenced by remarks monks made in interviews about the differential force of these taunts, and also—to turn to actual usage—by the fact that these taunts occurred after tokens of *tsha* were uttered. In this debate, the first token of *'khor gsum* ("three spheres") occurred only after six tokens of *tsha* had been uttered.[21] The final taunt, (d) differs from (a)–(c) in that it typically indexes the addressee's inappropriate "hesitation," rather than "incoherence." In actual debates, challengers often use this taunt after lengthy pauses or disfluencies in the defendant's speech, framing them as indexes of his flagging memory or incompetence.

Table 1
Canonical "taunts" in the lexical register of debate (Sera Mey, India).

Lexical forms and expressions	Kinesic accompaniments
(a) *'o tsha* ɔ̲ɔ̲ʔ tshā 'shame [on you]!'	Back of right hand slaps open left palm
(b) *'khor gsum* qhɔ̄ɔ̄ sūm 'three spheres!'	Right hand (palm down) performs clockwise motion above and in the direction of the seated defendant's head
(c) *dpe cha dang 'gal / phya dpe dang 'gal* pēcā tha̲ŋ qɛ̲ɛ̲ /chāāpē tha̲ŋ qɛ̲ɛ̲ '[you] contradict text, [you] contradict scripture'	Back of right hand slaps open left palm; back of left hand slaps open right palm
(d) *yo phyir* yɔɔ chīr[19]	Clap-sequence performed

In short, three of the four canonical taunts stereotypically index addressee-incoherence, which, again, demonstrates how denotational-textual coherence is of cardinal importance. No such demand for coherence, revealingly, is demanded of the challenger. The defendant alone must uphold the textual ideology of doctrinal coherence.

As for the distribution of the taunts, they are noticeably absent at the outset. None is uttered for approximately the first eight minutes. The number of taunts per unit time increases significantly during the final ten minutes of the 46-minute debate, however. With the exception of a brief, two-minute period (minutes 26–28 of the debate), the density of taunts during the final ten minutes far exceeds the density of tokens found earlier.

Spatial Implosion

As taunts increase in density, a global proxemic shift occurs, a change in the extension of what Kendon (1990:211) terms the "joint transactional space," that is, "the space *between* the interactants over which they agree to maintain joint jurisdiction and control." In this debate (and in others I witnessed), there is a noticeable shift in the distance that the challenger assumes vis-à-vis the defendant, as I will soon describe; but first, a word on method is in order. As Kendon writes, the extension of the transactional space is "measured in terms of the location and orientation of their *lower bodies*" (1990:211). Since challengers move frequently, a relatively discrete behavioral reference point was needed. The spatial positioning of challengers during the clap-sequence was selected, for this was frequently cited as the most important kinesic sequence. Because the clap-sequence itself elapses over several seconds and often spans several feet, I decided to assess the challenger's position at one moment in this sequence, namely, when the hand-clap first becomes audible.[22]

In total, the standing challengers delivered 281 claps during this 46-minute debate.[23] To recount, a lone challenger makes a beeline route toward the defendant at the start of the debate, halting a few feet before him. From this position of maximal propinquity, he begins to roll back, occupying positions ever farther from the defendant. As the citation phase draws to a close (after four minutes), a second challenger joins him and they continue this retreat. As they retreat, they begin to question the defendant's claims. Once the first taunt rings out, however, the transactional space begins to contract. Never again do the challengers stand as far back as they did when they uttered their first taunt. As problematization intensifies and taunts fly, the space that separates challengers from the defendant shrinks, the challengers' claps exploding ever closer to the defendant. In the last ten minutes of the debate, when taunts were the most dense, the challengers tended to stand a few feet from the seated defendant. In sum, as challengers begin to problematize the defendant's claims, spatially, they draw closer ever closer to his seat, not to deferentially stroke him with expressions of agreement, but to stoke the fire of oppositionality—in a word, to unsettle him.

The Defendant's Demeanor of Immovability

But what of the defendant who has been invited into this exalted, yet precarious seat? How does he comport himself in the face of the challengers' provocations? Most striking is his relative inactivity. Challengers and defendants are mirror images of each other (cf. Irvine 1985). Consider the kinesic asymmetries: *Contra* the challenger, the defendant neither stands nor ambulates. The challenger possesses an elaborate kinesic repertoire, but no such repertoire is prescribed for the defendant. The challenger is licensed to craft and rehearse his lines beforehand and to steer topics as he sees fit. No such privileges are granted to the defendant. In terms of the relative volume of their lexical repertoires, defendants are restricted—again, prescriptively—to a small set of canonical responses that range between one and four syllables. In practice, of course, challengers and defendants frequently break register,

but these standards of behavior remain, standards that seem to cast the defendant as relatively "passive." Passivity, however, is a misnomer, for when confronted with the challengers' provocations, the defendant appears conspicuously *non*reactive.

Many semiotic resources were employed to help project this demeanor effect. I consider paralinguistic evidence first, namely, "decelerations" of speech rate initiated by the defendant. Uhmann (1992), whose approach to speech rate fluctuation I follow here, distinguishes two parameters: the density of phonemic syllables per unit time and accented syllables per unit time. The defendant's responses, however, varied significantly only with respect to syllable/second density, on which I focus below. The unit of analysis is the intonational phrase (see Uhmann 1992:306–307) whose lengths are noted parenthetically in the transcribed segments that follow. Phonemic syllable/second density is listed in brackets, and interphrasal pause lengths are noted in brackets on separate lines.

To set the stage for the first moment to be considered, the challengers had been prodding the defendant about his view on distinctive refuge. Earlier, they had asked him whether distinctive refuge should be posited by way of objective or subjective criteria. Distinctive refuge should not be posited on the basis of "merely" (*tsam*) the objects of refuge, the defendant insisted, because subjective factors matter. When the challengers later return to this claim, they distort his position. They suggest that distinctive refuge should not be posited by way of its objects of refuge, and seek the defendant's evaluation of this claim; though superficially consistent with the defendant's original assertion, they edited out the "merely" (*tsam*) qualification. The defendant dislikes this stark formulation, and has avoided saying that the criteria for positing distinctive refuge are exclusively objective or exclusively subjective. Of special interest is the way he rejects the challengers' reasoning in the lines below. In lines 422 and 425 below, the defendant says the challengers' "reason" (*rtags*) is "not established" (*ma grub*):

C1: (421)	=*skyabs 'gro khyad par can yin*] *pa'i 'di yang* – (1.37) [6.57]		also this distinctive
	kɑ̄mṭo khɛ̄ɛ̀parcɛn yī̲-pɛ̄ɛ̀ ti̲ ya̲ŋ		refuge-
	refuge distinctive be-NZR.GEN this also		
D: (422)	**] *rta:::lgs ma grub zer:::* (2.08) [1.44]**		**[tradition says]**
	tāà m$\underline{\Lambda}$-ṭu̲p-s		**"the reason is not**
	reason NEG-established-QT		**established"**
C1: (423)	] *skyabs yul khyad par-* (1.08) [3.70]		distinct[ive] objects
	kɑ̄pyüü khɛ̄ɛ̀par-		of refuge-
	refuge object distinct[ive]		
C2: (424)	*skyabs yul khyad par can lab ya'di* (1.34) [5.97] =		that which is called
	kɑ̄pyüü khɛ̄ɛ̀parcɛn l$\underline{\Lambda}$p-ya̲ ti̲		distinctive objects
	refuge object distinctive say-NZR this		of refuge here
D: (425)	**= *rta::gs ma grub zer:::* (1.79) [1.68]**		**[tradition says]**
	tāà m$\underline{\Lambda}$-ṭu̲p-s		**"the reason is not**
	reason NEG-established-QT		**established"**

The defendant's articulation rates are lower than the challengers' immediately preceding utterances. In line 422, his articulation rate is nearly 4.5 times lower, and in line 425, it is nearly 3.5 times lower; he "decelerates" sharply. Further, both decelerations included a lengthened framing with the quotative clitic *-s*, whose effects require further comment. In the debate register, there is a strong tendency to zero-out the matrix clause of the represented speech segment. In cases where debate participants use the quotative clitic without the matrix clause and without any clear value

for the author variable, the default construal of the author variable can be glossed as "tradition." (By "tradition" I intend a virtual [i.e., not empirically manifest], authoritative locus of knowledge that is temporally anterior to the utterance in which it is invoked.) It is hence the impersonal voice of "tradition" that is interdiscursively brought into play. The defendant decelerates and simultaneously displaces authorship onto the impersonal voice of "tradition."

Other concurrent facts deserve mention. In his first response (422), he overlaps with a challenger. In the second (425), he latches with him (i.e., his utterance is less than one-tenth of a second apart); he is right on the challengers' heels. The defendant anticipates their moves, responding before they can even deliver the question—an index of his knowledgeability. Yet his responses are delivered not at a breakneck pace, but in a slow, lilting, majestic manner—an index of his poise. Through this deceleration, coupled with *-s* framing, he presents himself as a calm courier of tradition. Through latching and overlap, he preserves a demeanor-indexical claim to knowledgeability.

Nor is this an isolated case. In terms of the defendant's canonical responses across the debate, he tended to decelerate while responding. The canonical responses, again, range from one to four syllables. Of the defendant's 59 responses (which include cases where the quotative clitic was added, e.g., "[tradition says] 'accept'" (/dɵ̲ɵ̀-s/), or verbs of speaking (e.g., "[I] say 'accept'" (/dɵ̲ɵ̀ lʌ̲p/)), only 3 were articulated at a slightly higher syllable/second density relative to the immediately preceding utterance of the challenger(s). The remaining 56 cases involved "decelerations" by the defendant, as illustrated for the canonical response "[I] accept" (*'dod*) in Table 2 below. (Column 1 indicates the syllable/second density for the challenger's utterance; column 2 indicates the density for the subsequent response by the defendant; [*t* = "time"].)[24] Speech rate, in short, was among the semiotic resources used to index a culturally recognizable demeanor of "poise."

It is not that the defendant never became rankled or returned fire. Though he appeared poised throughout, he sometimes deviated from this demeanor. Late in the debate, he indicts a challenger for being nonsensical: "There isn't the slightest bit of sense in [what you are] saying now!"[25] He also accuses challengers of indiscriminately shouting the taunt, *tsha* (e.g., "How is that *tsha* [a real] *tsha*?"[26]). He even charges the challenger with trying to deceive him, and counters, "I am not going to be tricked!"[27] In many sequences, it is not the defendant's oppositionality that is striking, but his recovery of poise. Again late in the debate, for instance, the

Table 2
Speech rate decelerations by defendant on "[I] accept" (*'dod*) responses.

(C): Syll/sec. at t^{n-1}		(D): Syll/sec. at t^{n}		(D): Deceleration
3/0.65	[4.62]	1/0.58	[1.72]	−2.9
3/0.82	[3.66]	1/0.62	[1.61]	−2.05
3/0.66	[4.55]	1/0.51	[1.96]	−2.59
3/0.69	[4.35]	1/0.46	[2.17]	−2.18
3/0.69	[4.35]	1/0.52	[1.92]	−2.43
10/1.44	[6.94]	1/0.79	[1.27]	−5.67
8/0.87	[9.20]	1/0.50	[2.00]	−7.20
3/1.10	[2.73]	1/0.60	[1.67]	−1.06
9/1.12	[8.04]	1/0.90	[1.11]	−6.93
9/1.39	[6.48]	1/0.60	[1.67]	−4.81
2/0.60	[3.33]	1/0.40	[2.50]	−0.83
5/0.87	[5.75]	1/0.56	[1.79]	−3.96

defendant seems to challenge the challenger, yet gazes away immediately thereafter. In another moment in this exchange, he gazes away and then begins rocking in his seat. He thus imposes a kinesically based metrical structure on his own behavior, which can be seen as a figure of "balance" whose orderliness is counterposed with his "unsettled" behavior in previous turns.

That the expected demeanor of a defendant is unflappability is also evident in the challengers' response behavior. Thirty-one minutes into the debate, a new challenger rose to face the defendant, and the defendant's stridency reaches new heights in this exchange. The defendant shouts his canonical responses six times consecutively. The second time he shouts his response, a smile appears on one challenger's face. Moments later, the defendant delivers his third response. Smiles, now contagious, surface on the faces of two other monks. When the defendant bellows his fourth response, laughter erupts in the room, laughter that is reignited when the defendant shouts a fifth and sixth response. As implicit evaluations of the defendant's speech, such response behavior suggests that the defendant has, to everyone's amusement, breached etiquette: Defendants should not reciprocate when provoked.

Discussion

The salience of demeanor indexicality in Buddhist debate forces us to reconsider its place in argumentation, in particular, its relation to an unlikely ally: denotational textuality. In this genre, denotational textuality and demeanor indexicality conspire to reproduce the sense of stability and coherence that doctrinal tradition is officially supposed to possess. In first presupposing, then sundering and restoring doctrinal coherence, interactants in debate work to performatively unify doctrinal tradition, and it is to the defendant in particular that this onerous task of unification falls. He carries out this ideological labor not only through complex denotational-textual operations but also through his default demeanor of majestic poise. His demeanor and the operations he performs on the plane of denotational textuality parallel each other, yielding a vivid, multiplex figure of and for tradition's successful unification.

It should be noted that the relationship between demeanor indexicality and denotational textuality here is not strictly additive or unidirectional. In his analysis of a Clinton–Dole presidential debate, Agha observes how semiotic effects produced by distinct functional principles and projected concurrently can "illuminate each other during usage," and "are *reciprocally reflexive* when considered in relation to each other" (1996:470). The "parallel" I have noted between denotational textuality and demeanor indexicality in Buddhist debate is the result of concurrently projected effects that appear reciprocally reflexive in this sense. The sheer density of mutually illuminating effects in Buddhist debate—many of which occur across semiotic channels—should come as no surprise to those familiar with public "ritual" (cf. Parmentier 1994, 1997; Silverstein 1992, 2004), where such "excessive formalism" or "hyperstructure" (Parmentier 1994) has been shown to be central to ritual's ideological effectiveness, its capacity to reproduce cultural norms and values (Durkheim 1963). If debate were reduced to a series of denotational-textual operations, deprived of its phases and forms of demeanor, little of its ideological potency would remain. The phases of the event, especially the challengers' chiastic movement from consensus to dissensus, wholeness to fragmentation, advance the ritual plot: They create the conditions for tradition's unification and add dramatic tension to boot; if the defendant isn't careful, tradition will remain in pieces, and with it, the defendant's reputation. With forms of demeanor that flesh out and figurate concurrently executed denotational-textual operations, debate is able to carry out its implicit ritual work of unification with even greater efficacy.

This link between ethnologic and self-presentation in Buddhist debate may be disconcerting to some, however. In his research on classroom interaction, Wortham (1994, 2001) explores cases of cross-textual iconicity, where "what is said" at the denotational-textual plane parallels "what is done" at the interactional-textual plane

(cf. Silverstein 1996, 2004). Wortham found that when teachers and students fashioned analogies between their emergent identities in the classroom and the characters in their curricular texts, these analogies contributed to two distinct processes simultaneously: social identify formation and learning. Yet this functional overlap, notes Wortham, is at loggerheads with (post)-Enlightenment ideologies of language, which privilege reference and predication—functions that purportedly allow humans to reach a rational high ground from which to secure objective, interest-free knowledge about the world. A wealth of writers have, of course, problematized such views of language and knowledge, from the later Wittgenstein (1958) and Austin (1962) to Foucault (1973) and Latour (1993). Yet as Wortham remarks, and as I too would suggest, seldom are we shown precisely how referential and nonreferential functions are intercalated in discursive events. And if it is (partly) through such intercalation that rituals of argumentation like Buddhist debate acquire their ideological potency, then this problematic deserves attention, including the attention of all those who, following Foucault, feel that knowledge and power require a solidus ("/"), not a conjunction, to express their intimate relationship. In this respect, the disjuncture in the literatures on argumentation that I noted at the outset seems symptomatic of the tendency to split and sequester denotational and interactional planes of textuality. Once split, cases of "parallels" surface as empirical surprises, reminders that we continue to labor under a post-Enlightenment metadiscursive regime, and must struggle to appreciate how rituals of argumentation—not just Buddhist debate, to be sure—have a multiplex orderliness that neither an exclusive focus on ethnologic, nor a disregard for it, can hope to illuminate.

Notes

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1. The argumentation literature, whose contributors tend to be in communication studies, and the closely related "informal logic" literature, whose contributors tend to be in philosophy, are both indebted to Toulmin's classic work, as well as to Perelman (1969), Hamblin (1970), and others (see Johnson 2000; Walton and Brinton 1997).

2. To enhance readability for those familiar with Tibetan Buddhist literature, I use orthographic transcription, specifically, the Romanized Wylie (1959) transliteration system. For proper names and frequently used terms, English approximations of Tibetan pronunciation are used. Of the many facets of Lhasa Tibetan not accurately represented by the standard orthography, the quotative clitic /-*s*/ stands out as a special concern, since it receives attention in this article. Denwood (1999:118) suggests that the verb whose orthographic form is *zer* ('say'; /s̲er/) occurs in a reduced form, either as /s̲a/ (often with lengthening /s̲a:/) or as /-s/. However, /s̲a/ and /s̲er/ differ distributionally from /-s/. The latter can be framed by matrix clause verbs (e.g., *zer* [/s̲er/] and *lab* [/l̲ʌp/]):

e.g.,	tāšiì-qiì	cha̲ tshāpō	tu̲ù {-s / *s̲a(:)}	se̲r-qi tu̲ù "Tashi says 'the tea is hot'."
	PN-ERG	tea hot	AUX-QT	say-NZR AUX

The clitic /-*s*/ thus differs from *zer* (/s̲er/) and its reduced form (/s̲a/) on phonemic and morphosyntactic grounds. For this reason, I use a combination of orthographic and phonemic transcription for debate discourse. Line one is reserved for orthographic transcription (in italics), with parallel free translation to the right and phonemic transcription and glosses below (see Chang and Chang 1964). Conversational vocalizations such as "fillers" and "backchannels" are given orthographic approximations. Overlap, false-starts, and so forth are marked in line 1.

The symbols and abbreviations used are as follows: ACC=accusative; AUX=auxiliary verb; ASR=assertoric mood; COND=conditional; CSQ=confirmation-seeking question; DAT=dative; DET=determiner; DIR.ASR=directive-assertive mood; FCT=factive; GEN=genitive; GNM=gnomic evidential; IEV=imperfective evidential; INJ=injunctive mood; INT=interrogative mood; LOC=locative; NEG=negation marker; NP=noun phrase; NZR=nominalizer; P=participant-indexing auxiliary verb; ~P=participant nonspecific auxiliary verb; PEV=perfective evidential; PN=proper name; PRP=participant role perspective; QT=quotative clitic; TOP=topicalizer; VLQ=volunteering question; WHQ="WH" question; YNQ=yes/no question; **bold**=bold font in debate transcript designates defendant's speech; {. . ./. . .}=marks paradigmatic contrast; [ ]=brackets indicate author's interpolations; ":"=lengthening; [line break]=intonational phrase boundary; "/"=line break indicated in Tibetan text; "?"=interrogative mood signaled through pitch; "="=latching (gap between utterances of less than one-tenth of a second); <<clap>>-marks audible open-palmed hand-clap (an element of the challenger's "clap-sequence").

3. I use "argument" for both senses of the term, namely "argument" as a propositional text consisting minimally of a premise and conclusion—a definition enshrined in most primers on logic; and "argument" in its pragmatic inflection, that is, as a (largely assertoric) speech act (or acts) in which claims are advanced and supported (cf. O'Keefe 1982).

4. For a sustained theoretical discussion of demeanor indexicality see Agha (in press). I should add that no monolithic account of demeanor in debate is intended here. The first-order demeanor indexicality described herein has often been the object of reflexive ideological attention in the Tibetan diaspora, yielding second-order demeanor effects—effects that are beyond the scope of this article.

5. In speaking of "speech-event" roles, I am making a distinction between participant roles at a "speech-event" scale and at an "utterance event" scale, a distinction introduced by Levinson (1988) and taken up by Irvine (1997).

6. This is not to suggest that inherited doctrine is conceived by all social categories of monks as equal in its degree of authoritativeness and cohesiveness. Finer distinctions are certainly made, especially by those well versed in Buddhist hermeneutics.

7. *gzhungs mi mthun pa mang po yog red pa / 'di 'dra nang logs la ya mi mthun pa mang po cig yog red pa*

8. *don dag cig pa red zer* [*/-s/*] *zer ya- bzo ya cig- bzo dgos kyi yog red pa*

9. In this debate, the register-specific topicalizer *chos can* was used alongside forms of topicalization found in colloquial Tibetan.

10. A "pervasion" (*khyab pa*), as Tillemans writes, is the "entailment between the reason . . . and the property to be proved" (1989:268). An elementary example is "If something is a color then it is necessarily red."

11. *khyad mtshar 'dra po mthong gi 'dug // khong tsho ga re byas nas gtser brgyab kyi yin na zer* [*/-s/*] *// 'di bsam blo 'dra po*

12. I have added Sanskrit diacritics here. *Dhīḥ* is the penultimate syllable of Mañjuśrī's mantra (the mantra of his "peaceful" manifestation) and is felt to be untranslatable.

13. The challenger's questions during this entire initial phase are revealing. Of his 28 questions, only 3 are WH-questions. Of the remaining 25 questions, 7 are CSQs formed with the gnomic auxiliary, *yog red*. In most of the remaining cases, the interrogative mood is signaled through a terminal rise in pitch. Later, one finds a higher frequency of explicit WH- and YN-questions. The challenger's avoidance of pointedly interrogative constructions allows him to avoid disrupting the defendant's self-positioning as knowledgeable.

14. This idiom is a delocutionary construction (Benveniste 1971), in this case, an utterance-type specific to the debate register. It is formed from the tripartite consequence sequence, specifically, from the *thal*-clause (i.e., "it [absurdly] follows that . . ."), denoting opposition to an unstated proposition, ascribed by default to the defendant.

15. I use "author" to denote the agent framed as bearing responsibility for the denotational content of the represented-speech segment (Goffman 1981). I use "author variable" to call attention to the diverse values that fill this participant-role category.

16. Since Khedrup Denpa Dhargye's book is under discussion, one might alternatively suggest that the value of the author variable is Khedrup Denpa Dhargye himself. When monks cite important authors in debate, however, they typically use a highly explicit report form where the quoted segment is preceded by a verse of homage and the segment's borders are clearly demarcated.

17. That *byas* (/cɛè/) serves this function here is partly evidenced in lines 38 and 39, which exhibit a high degree of cross-turn parallelism: the embedded clause in line 38 is repeated in

line 39, with *byas* syntactically parallel to the quotative clitic (QT) *-s* in line 38. The embedded clause is identifiable, importantly, as a citation from a monastic textbook; it is the name of a chapter subsection, which suggests that discourse is being represented/reported in line 39. In general, the verb *byas*—like such verba dicendi as *lab* (say)—can also be used to subordinate QT-framed clauses (i.e., [quoted segment]-*s* {*byas, lab*, etc}). (Its usage here is somewhat analogous to the use of *go* as a quotative complematizer in American English.)

18. These are only the taunts specific to debate's lexical register; others are devised extemporaneously. Not all taunts taunt, of course. Their stereotypic pragmatic effects—what informants say they "do," in what scenarios-of-use they are said to be deployed—must be distinguished from their performed effects in discursive interaction. Further, as Agha (1996) writes, pragmatic effects like "aggression" are the precipitate of multimodal arrays of semiotic tokens, not discrete lexical items. To call these "taunts," as I do for convenience, is to thus risk committing a metonymic fallacy, in which one ascribes to discrete, decontextualized lexical items effects for which they are only (at best) partly responsible. Finally, since multiple norms of construal are therefore in play, effects projected at one level may—or may not—be reinforced at others.

19. This taunt was not glossed semantically by my informants. *Phyir* appears to be derived from the final postpositional *phyir* in the consequence sequence.

20. Surface analogies with other words and expressions have been attested (e.g., Perdue 1992:125, n. 1; Sierksma 1964). I do not suggest that *ngo tsha* is the correct etymology. I am interested only in the stereotypic indexical force of this taunt, together with rationalizations of it.

21. Some informants describe a specific scenario for appropriate *'khor gsum* use. Using oral commentary, Hopkins notes that it is used when "the reason, the pervasion of the reason by the predicate of the consequence, and the opposite of the consequence have been accepted" (1996:444).

22. To assess proxemic changes, the central aisle was first provisionally divided into equal zones. Upon review of the video data, the number and spatial extension of each zone were adjusted to reflect salient patterns. Since challengers often did not occupy the same position within each zone, fractional measures were used (at a scale no finer than .5). When multiple challengers occupied different positions, a mean was calculated. To assess the distance between challengers and defendant, I relied on anchor points contiguous with the challengers' feet or lower body, such as adjacent pillars or seated monks on the edges of the video frame. A fixed video camera was used throughout.

23. Claps from a senior monk who remained seated were omitted since they did not involve proxemic contrasts.

24. The defendant's and challengers' speech rates were compared across the debate for intonation phrases ranging from 1–4 phonemic syllables. For each length category, the defendant's mean rate was slightly lower.

25. *da go ya zer ci kyang yog ma red*.

26. *tsha de ga 'dra tsha*.

27. *nga mgo skor gyi ma red*.

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