A historiographical approach to Hong Kong Occupy
Focus on a critical moment

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This article is conceptualised within the framework of a historiographical approach to critical discourse analysis (Flowerdew 2012). It focusses on a critical moment in Hong Kong’s socio-political development, the Occupy movement, and a specific language event, an interview on a local Hong Kong English-language television programme discussing the rationale for the movement. A micro-analysis of the interaction focusses on important features of the historical context, intertextual links, the backgrounds and the roles of the participants, and the argumentations strategies used by them. The article shows how a focus on a critical moment in discourse can shed light on the bigger socio-political picture and how arguments regarding particular topics may reflect larger ideological struggles, the political agendas of different groups, and the ways arguments are constructed dialogically in response not only to the words of interlocutors, but also in relation to prior (and future) discourses.

Keywords: Hong Kong, Occupy movement, historiographical approach, critical discourse analysis, intertextuality, argumentation strategies

1. Introduction

There are many ways to analyze a historical event such as Hong Kong Occupy. Various approaches to other Occupy events are illustrated in a previous special issue of Language and Politics edited by Luisa Martin Rojo (Rojo 2014) and also in the other articles in the present special issue devoted to Hong Kong Occupy (see for example Bhatia). In this article, I will apply my own historiographical approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Flowerdew 2012). Such an approach develops first readings of historical events, focussing on critical (discursive) moments in those events, moments which are particularly powerful in highlighting
the historical and social forces at work in the event in question and helping to understand it. The critical moment that I have selected for this article on Hong Kong Occupy is a television interview broadcast by Associated Television Hong Kong (ATV) in its *Newsline* current affairs interview programme broadcast on 2 June 2013. The interview involves a founding member and prominent leader of Occupy, Benny Tai Yiu-ting on one side, and a leading anti-occupy member of the Hong Kong Legislative Council, Priscilla Leung Mei-fun, on the other, with the debate being moderated by a programme host, Michael Chugani. In the extract which is the focus of this article, the two protagonists present their conflicting attitudes towards Tai’s plans for Occupy and towards civil disobedience and the rule of law. Tai defends the planned action and Leung argues against it. The transcript is presented in the Appendix.

2. Method

This paper is a continuation of my study of ongoing socio-political transformation in Hong Kong from a discourse perspective. I have labelled this a historiographical approach (Flowerdew 2012), arguing that there is a role for the discourse analyst in the writing of history, in providing first readings of historical moments as they develop synchronically. Such an approach views the discourse analyst as a historiographer, as someone who views texts and their contexts which are related to historical events, people, and situations in a critical way and recognises their essentially figurative nature. A historiographical approach also emphasises how current discourses are linked to previous historical discourses (see also Achugar 2008; Fairclough 1992; and Wodak 2002). As well as drawing on the past, though, an analysis of discourse in such a historical and historiographical way reveals what is new in a discourse and highlights continuity and discontinuity. Further, while a focus on the historical antecedents of a discourse or discourses points to the present, the present may also point to the future, to how fragments of past discourses can contribute not only to present discourses, but also discourses of the future. This is a justification for the study of history (Marwick 2001) and hence a historiographical approach to discourse analysis.

In focussing on a particular discursive event, in this case a political interview, my aim is to go beyond a snapshot analysis and to locate the text in its historical context and at the same time show how it represents a critical moment in Hong Kong’s evolving socio-political identity. The analysis of a discursive event such as a political interview requires a focus on the (contrasting) historical positions from which the interlocutors speak (Bourdieu 1991). Such a discursive analysis thus implies a focus on intertextuality (Bakhtin 1984; Kristeva 1980), how language
responds to prior utterances and meanings and, indeed, points forward to further responses. As Bakhtin (1984, 201) famously stated:

“The life of the word is contained in its transfer from one mouth to another, from one context to another context, from one social collective to another, from one generation to another generation. In this process the word does not forget its own path and cannot completely free itself from the power of those concrete contexts into which it has entered”.

An intertextual analysis as applied to the Newsline interview which is the focus of this article, can thus show how the interlocutors draw on historical antecedents in the construction of the identity of their political camp/party and their individual identity and look forward to future responses.

The methodology for such an approach requires first of all a consideration of the socio-political history of the discursive event in question, in the case of the present study going right back to the seizure of Hong Kong by Britain from China in the nineteenth century, the lead-up to the return of sovereignty to China, and post retrocession politics in and concerning Hong Kong (see Flowerdew 1998, 2012). This historical work is expanded to include an ethnographic dimension, including regular visits to Occupy sites, informal interviewing of participants, and an intensive focus on the news coverage (print, television, on-line) of Occupy and the lead-up to Occupy. This analysis allows for the identification of “critical moments” which may be the focus of detailed textual analysis.

Having selected the interview in question for detailed textual analysis, the textual analysis itself requires repeated viewings of the recorded interview, transcription of the interview, and repeated reading of the transcript. The transcription, while not so detailed as might be done for a conversation analytic analysis (see e.g. Greatbatch 1986; Heritage 1985; and Hutchby 1991 for such approaches to media interviews), nevertheless identifies such features as overlapping language, interruptions and emphatic stress. Perhaps the most interesting part in terms of the analysis is selected for detailed attention in this article (in this case the second half of the interview following the commercial break in the programme), the first part being retained as part of the intertextual context. The analysis is broken down into three sets of research questions relating to A. the historical context of the interview; B. The relevant generic features of the interview; and C. How Aristotle’s logos, ethos and pathos are manifestedin the interview. Due to space constraints, particular perspectives are focussed upon under these three broad headings in this article (see below under “research questions”), in particular the historical context of the interview and the intertextuality of the interview (research questions under A), the backgrounds of the participants (research question under B), and the argumentation strategies employed (research question under C).
2.1 Research questions

Following the above methodology allows a formulation of a number of specific research questions for the study: in terms of history (A.); in terms of genre (B); and in terms of Aristotle’s rhetorical strategies of *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos* (C.), as follows:

A. What is the historical context of the interview
   1. What features of the historical context are significant for the meanings in the text?
   2. What are the specific links to the past – intertextuality?
   3. How are the historical antecedents recontextualised in the interview?
   4. How does the discourse point forward to the future?

B. What are the relevant generic features as manifested in the interview?
   1. What are the backgrounds and the roles of the participants in the discourse?
   2. What is the interaction pattern of the discourse?
   3. How are power relations manifested in the discourse?

C. How are Aristotle’s *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos* manifested in the interview
   1. Logos – what are the arguments used by the interlocutors to persuade the audience of their views – argumentation strategies
   2. Ethos – how do the interlocutors present themselves as credible representatives of their political camp – self presentation strategies?
   3. Pathos – what rhetorical strategies are employed by the interlocutors to persuade the audience of their views – rhetorical strategies?

These questions are inter-related and there may be overlap. It is thus not always possible to follow a rigidly systematic approach to developing them in the analysis, but this is the general framework. Given the space constraints of a journal article, I have not been able to focus on all of these questions in the analysis which follows and I will briefly mention those that have not been addressed in the discussion section. I have selected the particular questions that I have because I am particularly keen to highlight the historiographical dimension of the analysis, the backgrounds and roles of the participants, and, given that the genre is that of an interview and takes the form of a discussion between two interlocutors (mediated by an interviewer), the argumentation strategies, that is to say *logos*. 
3. Analysis

3.1 What features of the historical context are significant for the meanings in the text?

Within the context of a historiographical approach, it is important to consider what features of the historical context are important for the meanings in the text. As already should be clear, the interview can be contextualised within Hong Kong’s on-going search for democracy, which goes back some 30 years or more. During British rule (from 1842-1997), Britain never gave Hong Kong democracy, unlike many of its other colonies, probably due to pressure from China, and never gave the colony the opportunity to become an independent state, again due to pressure from China, which had always claimed Hong Kong to be an integral part of that country. In spite of this, since the 1950s, there was debate within the British and Hong Kong colonial government regarding democratic elections and over the years a limited amount of democratic development was allowed (see e.g. Flowerdew 1998).

In 1984, Britain and China signed the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which stated that in 1997 Hong Kong would become a Special Administrative Region of China “with a high degree of autonomy” under a policy of “one country-two systems” and with “Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong”. One of the key provisions of the Joint Declaration was that Hong Kong should have a legislature which would be “constituted by elections”; although the exact nature of such elections was left vague. The Joint Declaration was followed in 1990 by the Basic Law, a mini-constitution for Hong Kong drawn up and promulgated by China, but based on the Joint Declaration. Article 45 of the Basic Law had two controversial provisions concerning elections. The first of these stated that the Chief Executive1 should be “selected by election or through consultations held locally and be appointed by the Central People’s Government”. The controversy here revolves around the term “election”, which is open to different interpretations. The second controversial provision of Article 45 stated that “the ultimate aim is the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures”. Again, there is ambiguity here in how to interpret the terms “universal suffrage” and “broadly representative”. Article 45 of the Basic Law further stated that the method of election of the Chief Executive “shall be specified in the light of the actual situation” and “in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress”. There is, of course, further room for different interpretations here.

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1. Chief Executive is the post-retrocession title for the leader of the Hong Kong government.
In accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress, in 1985, the Hong Kong colonial government introduced a system of 12 legislators elected by trade-based sections, or “functional constituencies”, some of which had very low numbers of members. In 1991, under pressure from the Hong Kong people following the Tiananmen protests of 1989, the British Hong Kong government introduced 18 directly elected legislative council seats. Democratic development accelerated under the governorship of the last British governor, Chris Patten, who tried to broaden the franchise and who was bitterly criticised by China for introducing too much democracy too quickly and contrary to previous understandings between Britain and China. Following the change of sovereignty, many of Patten’s innovations were dismantled by the new Beijing-controlled Hong Kong government. Patten promoted a discourse concerning the British legacy to Hong Kong, consisting of four elements: a free market economy, freedom of the individual, rule of law, and democratic institutions. These four elements are very important, because they, arguably, represent what makes Hong Kong different to Mainland China and they are at stake in one way or another with the Occupy movement (see Flowerdew 1998, 2012). These elements have been taken up since the change of sovereignty and are referred to as “core values” of Hong Kong (although the meanings that are attached to these terms depends on the ideological position of the person using them). They are linked intertextually in the Newsline interview, as will be shown in the next section of this article.

During the post-colonial period since 1997, progress on democratisation has been slow and controversial. During this period, the Chief Executive has been elected every five years by a “small circle” election committee dominated by members loyal to Beijing. In 2017, in accordance with a ruling of the Chinese National People’s Congress Standing Committee on 29 December 2007, the Chief Executive is due to be elected by “universal suffrage” (as foreseen in article 45 of the Basic Law). However, according to this version of universal suffrage, as conceived by Beijing, although every Hong Kong permanent resident will have the right to vote, the candidates will continue to be selected by an election committee (referred to as a nominating committee) that can still be weighted in favour of Beijing loyalists. Only two to three candidates can stand for election and before they can do so they must first win more than half of the votes of the election committee, which will have only 1,200 members. This procedure was only confirmed in August 2014 by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPCSC) of the PRC.

In anticipation of such an outcome, in January 2013, Benny Tai, a law professor at the University of Hong Kong, had already proposed a non-violent civil disobedience movement where the public would illegally occupy roads in the Central financial district of Hong Kong and paralyse its activities. The movement would
be modelled on other Occupy movements, such as those in New York and Los Angeles, and would have the goal of persuading Beijing to introduce a fairer form of democracy. The full name of the movement was “Occupy Central with Love and Peace”. A key issue and one much debated during the actual Occupy protests concerns the legality of the action. As mentioned above, Chris Patten claimed the rule of law to be a key element in Britain’s heritage to Hong Kong and something which sets it apart from Mainland China under one country-two systems. The Hong Kong and Mainland governments repeatedly claimed that Occupy was illegal and undermined Hong Kong’s core value concerning the rule of law. However, Occupy supporters argued that civil disobedience was justified in order to maintain the rule of law, which was being undermined by the electoral arrangement being proposed, and that they were willing to assume the consequential legal responsibility for their actions. This is a key issue in the interview transcript which is the focus of analysis here and is hotly argued over between Benny Tai, founding member and prominent leader of Occupy, and Priscilla Leung, leading anti-occupy figure and pro-establishment legislator.

Following the NPCSC decision, while Tai and his two co-leaders of the Occupy movement, a sociology professor, Chan Kin-man, and a Christian minister, Chu Yiu-ming, were still waiting to launch their action, they were pre-empted by another group. On September 22, 2014, some 13,000 secondary school and university students began a class boycott which evolved into a sit-in outside the government headquarters in the Admiralty district. On 28 September, the Occupy movement announced the beginning of their civil disobedience campaign and its supporters joined the students. What now became referred to simply as Occupy thus developed into a larger movement and further sites developed in the Mongkok and Causeway Bay areas. The number of protesters was estimated to include up to 100,000 at the peak of the movement. In the early days of the occupation there were struggles between the protesters and police, who used pepper spray and, on one occasion, tear gas, to try to remove the protestors. As this action only encouraged more people to side with the Occupiers, the police subsequently took a more hands-off approach and the protests remained largely peaceful. The movement was referred to by some as the Umbrella Movement, due to the (often yellow) umbrellas used by the protestors to protect themselves with from the pepper spray. The movement lasted from 26 September until 15 December 2014, when the final (peaceful) clearance by the police and bailiffs took place. Although the supporters of the movement were primarily motivated by the issue of democracy, other factors have been claimed also to be motivating forces, including stagnant wage levels, high property prices, business cronyism, and growing Mainland influence
in Hong Kong. Although some of these factors might be seen to be common to other large international cities, they can also been seen as a corruption of the free market principles so proudly espoused by Chris Patten as a key element in Britain’s heritage to Hong Kong and of “one country-two systems”.

The interview that is analysed in this article took place on 2 June 2013, quite some time before the Occupy event itself. However, it is important to be familiar not only with the historical background, but also the subsequent events. This is true of any approach to history; it is able to look both backwards and forwards.

3.2 What are the backgrounds and the roles of the participants in the discourse?

Participants’ backgrounds and roles may be considered as an important feature of the context of the interview (Hymes 1974). As such, I will cover this research question (which comes under B above) before considering intertextuality (which comes under A). Brief biographies are as follows:

3.2.1 Michael Chugani
Michael Chugani is the interviewer and is the regular host of the Newsline programme, which is a 25 minute programme presented weekly and taking the form of Chugani interviewing one or more local political or other public figures. Chugani is a well-known local free-lance journalist from Hong Kong’s ethnic Indo-Pakistani minority (although holding a US passport), writing and broadcasting in both English and Cantonese. The transcript shows him to take a neutral line, challenging and playing the devil’s advocate with both of the two interviewees, although he has been labelled by some as a “China stooge” (Chugani 2014), i.e. pro-Beijing.

3.2.2 Benny Tai Yiu-ting http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benny_Tai
Tai was born in Hong Kong in 1964. He graduated from the University of Hong Kong and obtained his LL.B. in 1986 and P.C.LL. in 1987. He also has a master’s degree in law from the London School of Economics. He is currently an associate professor of law at the same university, where he has been since 1991. He received widespread media attention in January 2013, when he initiated the Occupy Central with Love and Peace campaign for universal suffrage in the 2017 Chief Executive election and 2020 Legislative Council Elections. His Wikipedia entry states that

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2. See e.g. Time 7 October 2014. Hong Kong’s youth are venting economic as well as political frustration. http://time.com/3477757/hong-kongs-youth-are-venting-economic-as-well-as-political-frustration/
“he has been accused by members of the pro-Beijing camp, including Legislative Councillor Priscilla Leung, of violating the code of conduct of a legal scholar by calling upon people to intentionally violate the law.” This is the same Priscilla Leung who is an interlocutor in the interview which is the focus of this study.

In the Newsline interview Tai was dressed in grey Chinos, a dark bluish black cotton jacket and an open neck striped shirt, with traditional framed glasses. From his appearance he could be described as a stereotypical academic. He speaks in fluent and accurate Standard English, although with a slight Hong Kong accent. He speaks in a calm measured voice throughout the interview, although he becomes somewhat excited towards the end, in exchanges with Leung.

3.2.3 Priscilla Leung Mei-fun http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Priscilla_Leung
Leung was born in Hong Kong in 1960. She is a prominent, quite outspoken, pro-establishment Legislative Councillor, elected in 2008. She is also a barrister and an associate professor at the City University of Hong Kong’s School of Law. She studied at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (BSSC), University of Hong Kong (CPPE), and Renmin University, (People’s University of China) (Dr of Jurisprudence).

In the Newsline interview, she is quite elegantly dressed in a lemon coloured three-quarter-length jacket over a black dress, with a silver necklace with a pearl and matching earrings. She is well made-up, with no glasses. Her English might be described as “Hong Kong English”, with certain “non-standard” features (as can be noted in the transcript). She speaks in quite an emotional tone and is able to dominate the floor, cutting off the programme host at one point, with “No, I haven’t finished yet”. Fairclough (1989, 191), in his analysis of an interview with Margaret Thatcher, describes the former British Prime Minister as follows: “MT’s strategy of problem resolution can be summed up as the recipe ‘be authoritative, decisive and tough, yet do not compromise your femininity’”. It seems that Leung might have taken a leaf out of Thatcher’s book both in her dress and debating style.

3.3 What are the specific links to the past – intertextuality?

We will now take a closer look at the transcript to identify specific intertextual features which link up with the historical background as sketched out above. There are two very overt intertexts in the interview, referring to actual documents. The first of these is Tai’s reference to the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights, an intertext that he cites to support his version of what should be understood by the term “democratic elections”. He uses an internationally accepted document to support his argument and undoubtedly this is a powerful argumentation strategy. The second overt intertext, the Basic Law, is cited by Leung, and this
intertext will be dealt with below in a broader discussion of the term “law”. (It can be noted that such overt references as these to the International Covenant and to the Basic Law, i.e. to another text, are referred to by Fairclough (1992) as “manifest intertextuality”, although I prefer the term “explicit intertextuality” (to contrast with “implicit intertextuality”, see below)).

On a very general level, the whole transcript is concerned with the issue of democracy and democratic participation. The word democracy occurs 12 times (although it is used only once by Leung). The term democracy can be considered as an intertext. (When a fragment of one text is part of a larger system of system of discourse like this, it is referred to by Devitt (1991) as “functional intertextuality”). Both interviewees claim to agree that they want democracy, however it may be defined. Leung describes it as “a common goal” (l.102), for example. However, they disagree on the right path to achieve it. Tai argues for civil disobedience to speed up democratic development. This is made clear in the exchange at the beginning of the extract (l.29–33):

Chugani: what do you hope to achieve by that (Occupy) Benny Tai? By doing that you're going to have cameras, videos of all the world of people being carried away by policemen, and what do you hope to achieve by that?

Tai: Well, that is the whole purpose to alert the people of Hong Kong of the importance of having true democracy

Leung, on the other hand, argues that there needs to be an interim stage (l.123)

Leung: we know there must be an interim stage to achieve our universal goal because under one country two systems we are mingling different political systems

Occupy supporters, including Tai in this interview, argue that direct action is justified in order to fight for the democratic provisions that were promised in the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. Supporters of the establishment, including Leung in this interview, however, argue that the path to full democracy needs to be gradual and that civil-disobedience should not to be tolerated. Both sides in the argument are recontextualising the notion of democracy and democratic elections as specified (ambiguously) in the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law to fit their own beliefs and values, or ideologies. Recontextualisation is a process whereby an element of one text is first decontextualized from that text and then recontextualised (with a different meaning) into a new text or context. Of course, these notions of democracy and democratic development, as expressed in the Joint Declaration, the Basic Law and other agreements between Britain and China, have undergone myriad recontextualisations since the promulgation
of those documents, but this is where they originate from in the context of Hong Kong’s political development.

Regarding the notion of civil disobedience, there is no reference to this, of course, in the Joint Declaration or the Basic Law, and Tai does not make overt reference to any intertextual links in the interview. However, commentators have noted how what Tai proposed was related to Mahatma Gandhi’s civil disobedience movement in colonial India, to Martin Luther King’s struggle against racial discrimination in the United States and to the more recent Occupy movements in the United States and elsewhere. The reference by Tai to “deliberation days” also draws on procedures for deliberative democracy worked out by Ackerman and Fishkin (2004) (see http://chinaelectionsblog.net/hkfocus/?tag=civil-disobedience-hk) and the term is theirs. Tai’s mention of deliberation days (and electronic voting at one of those sessions) strengthens his democratic credentials and the peaceful nature of the proposed Occupy action (this peaceful ideal is also emphasised in the full name of the movement: “Occupy Central with Love and Peace”), mentioned in the first part of the interview (not included in the transcript). Leung, on the other hand, suggests that Tai may lose control of the movement and that it might turn violent, claiming that “they [the Occupiers] may use violence”, at one point (l.69).

If the term “democracy” is a very important intertext in the interview, so are the terms “law” and “rule of law”, the latter another of the elements in Chris Patten’s discourse (Flowerdew 1998) and a core value in post-colonial Hong Kong. The word “law” is used twelve times in the transcript (seven times by Leung, four times by Tai, and once by Chugani), although with different meanings for the two participants. It is, of course significant that both Tai and Leung, as lawyers, are experts in the law. “Law” is a significant intertext also because the Hong Kong and Beijing governments and their supporters repeatedly insisted that Occupy was an “unlawful” activity. This is why the term “breaching the law” is used five times in the transcript of the interview excerpt. Occupy supporters, as mentioned above, did not deny that their action was illegal, but they justified it in terms of the means justifying the ends, in the cause of the greater good represented by

3. See for example the following quotation from an interview with Tai: “Tai cited the precedents set by Mahatma Gandhi demanding independence from the British in India, the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King against racial discrimination in the United States, and the “occupy” tactic recently used against Wall Street in the U.S.” http://chinaelectionsblog.net/hkfocus/?tag=benny-tai-yiu-ting

4. See e.g. the September 28, 2014 HK government press release: “The unlawful assembly being held outside the Central Government Offices on Tim Mei Avenue in Central is affecting public safety, public order and traffic nearby. It also affects the rights and freedom of other members of the public.” http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201409/28/P201409281053.htm
“true” democracy (the term “true democracy” is used no less than seven times by Tai in the extract). In this sense there is implicit intertextuality with other discourses on civil disobedience, such as those around the Occupy movements in the United States, or, indeed, with Ghandi’s original civil disobedience movement in colonial India. It can also be mentioned that when Tai uses the term “real democracy”, he is setting up a presupposition with the opposite term “fake democracy”, which is used by the pro-democracy supporters to describe what is on offer from the government.

Another intertext relating to Chris Patten’s elements of the British legacy to Hong Kong (and as proclaimed in the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law) and taken up in post-colonial Hong Kong as core values, although more in the background than democracy and law, is that of individual freedom. Neither of the interviewees uses the word “freedom”, but the interviewer, Chugani, uses it when paraphrasing Tai’s position (“freedom to stand for election and the right to vote”). Note also how this value links up with democracy, in its collocation with election and vote, on the one hand, and with law, in its collocation with right, on the other, all of which occur in the transcript extract). Such collocations are discussed already in my earlier books (Flowerdew 1998, 2012), as used by the last colonial governor, Chris Patten, and his successor, as the first post-colonial Chief Executive, Tung Chee Hwa.

The fourth of Patten’s elements and Hong Kong’s core values, the free market economy, is not alluded to directly, except in Tai’s reference to “those people who are enjoying some privilege in the system, no way are they willing to give up their privileges”. Although it is not made explicit, he is likely referring here to Hong Kong’s elite class of business tycoons, who are pro-Beijing and who exert excessive influence over Hong Kong government policy. (This type of intertextuality comes under Fairclough’s category of “interdiscursivity”, that is to say textual features that do not leave an obvious trace from the source, although I prefer the term “implicit intertextuality” here, to contrast with “explicit intertextuality”, as referred to above.) These individuals, it may be claimed, are distorting the free market economy to their own advantage (see Flowerdew 1998). The Mainland government insists that Hong Kong should be considered as an “economic city” and not become a “political city”. This has meant Beijing currying favour with business tycoons at the expense of the grass roots in Hong Kong.

A final intertext which I will consider here and which arguably underpins the whole interview, although not mentioned overtly (and thus an example of “implicit intertextuality”, or interdiscursivity), is the Tiananmen protests of 1997 in Beijing, protests which ended with many dying at the hands of the People’s Liberation
Army. Although Tiananmen is not mentioned explicitly, the possibility of violence if Occupy takes place is referred to by Leung, as already cited. It is likely that Hong Kong viewers of the interview would make a connection between Leung’s claims and the Tiananmen incident, an incident which is commemorated by large crowds of people in Hong Kong every year on its June 4 anniversary by a candlelight vigil, as mentioned, in fact, by the interview host Chugani, as another intertext, when he refers to this event as an example of the sort of peaceful demonstration that is possible in Hong Kong (l.43).

To conclude this section on intertextuality, in line with the view of discourse as historiography, the whole interview can be seen as a “pretext” for what actually transpired when Occupy subsequently took place. Following this approach, the predictions of the two protagonists can be considered in terms of this actuality. Tai’s vision of a peaceful event – “I think the image we got is a group of people acting peacefully” (l.36), as contrasted with Leung’s prediction of possible violence – “they [the Occupiers] may use violence” (l.69) – is an interesting example to consider from this perspective. There was some violence associated with Occupy, especially at the beginning, but for the most part it turned out to be peaceful.

3.4 What are the argumentation strategies used by the two protagonists

Given the importance of argumentation in the interview genre and because there is not space to examine all of the research questions, we will now move on to one of the research questions grouped under C above (Aristotle’s three categories of logos, pathos and ethos, in this case logos), that is to say argumentation strategies. We can analyse the argumentation strategies used by the two interviewees by applying Fairclough and Fairclough’s (2012) model of practical argumentation. This model specifies a number of premises as follows: a Circumstantial premise which represents an existing state of affairs, a Goal premise which specifies an alternative state of affairs as goal on the basis of a Value premise which represents the values being argued from, and a Means-Goal premise which claims that the action proposed in the conclusion of the argument, the Claim, is a means of achieving the goal. We can represent the premises of each of the two interviewees as in Table 1.

This table shows us that both Tai and Leung are operating according to the same Circumstantial premise, that the Basic Law and other agreements lay down that there should be universal suffrage in 2017 (this is actually referred to in the first part of the interview, not reproduced here). Their Goal premises are different, however. Tai argues that the goal should be Western-style universal suffrage in 2017 – “the right of the people to stand for election and that means no screening in the nomination process” (l.84) – according to international standards. Leung, on the other hand, prefers an interim form of constitutional development in 2017
– “there might be some interim stage” (l.110) – as defined by the CPCSC. Tai argues for his goal according to his Value premise, i.e. on the grounds that: 1. It is important to have “true” democracy (l.144); and 2. that civil disobedience can help achieve “true” democracy. Leung’s Value premise, on the other hand, is based on: 1. that, although peaceful demonstration is a positive attribute of Hong Kong – “[if] it’s peaceful we very respect it, it show (sic) the good point of democracy, it show (sic) that Hong Kong is famous for demonstration (sic) peacefully” (l.47) – Occupy may be violent – “they may use violence” (l.69); and 2. that the rule of law is important and Occupy is unlawful – “they never say they are intending to breach the law” (l.46). Tai’s means of achieving his Goal (his Means-Goal premise) is civil disobedience – “with pressure, with sufficient pressure generated the tension generated, that is the only chance that we will be able to achieve true democracy in Hong Kong” (l.44), while Leung’s Means-Goal premise for achieving her (different) Goal premise is a step by step, slower pace of reform and to take what is on offer from the Hong Kong and Mainland governments – “we know there must be an interim stage to achieve our universal goal because under one country two systems we are mingling different political systems” (l.124). The Claim for Action premise of each of the two protagonists is implicit in their Means-Goal premises,
namely civil disobedience for Tai and the slower pace of constitutional development on offer for Leung.

One point which should be made, however, is that it can be argued that Leung is disingenuous with regard to her circumstantial premise that the Basic Law and other agreements lay down that there should be universal suffrage in 2017. This stems from the fact that what is on offer from the government, as already mentioned, although allowing one person one vote, will control who can have the right to stand for election. Although Leung says that she supports Tai’s goals of one man one vote and the right to stand for election – “I support his goals” (l.120) –, when pressed by Chugani, the programme host, regarding the right to stand, she argues for the government’s interim model, which puts constraints on who can stand for election – “we know there must be an interim stage to achieve our universal goal” (l.123). There is thus a flaw in the premise that she supports universal suffrage in 2017.

4. Discussion and conclusion

In this article I have demonstrated a historiographical approach to Occupy, focusing on a critical moment, a political interview that preceded Occupy, but which effectively set up the argument for and against the movement and epitomized the larger argument running through Hong Kong society in general, divided as it was, and still is, into these two camps. Of course, there are many other critical moments which I could have selected (and other articles in this special edition represent some of these). However, the interview which is the focus of this article gets to the heart of the conflict driving the Occupy movement and, coming as it does prior to the actual action, it fits appropriately in this collection as the first contribution.

I have argued in this article that, in terms of methodology, a full analysis of the interview in question should focus on three sets of research questions concerned with: A. its historical context; B. its relevant generic features; and C. its rhetorical strategies of logos, ethos and pathos. However because my main goal is to highlight the historiographical dimension, I have focussed particularly on the historical context, A, although I have also included the roles of the participants in the discourse, which comes under B, generic features, and, especially, because the genre is that of an interview and takes the form of an discussion between two interlocutors (mediated by an interviewer, on the argumentation strategies of the protagonists, which comes under C, logos. This has meant that I have left out some interesting and important features of a fuller analysis. For example, I have not considered the contrasting interactional styles of the two interviewees (Tai is mostly calm and measured, while Leung is more strident and forceful). As another example,
in terms of power relations, I have not considered the subject positions of the two interviewees, that is to say how they behave in terms of their discursive rights and social positions and obligations (Fairclough 1989, 38), although I have hinted at them. Tai is a representative of the so-called democracy, anti-establishment, or anti-Beijing camp. Leung, on the other hand, is a representative of the pro-establishment, pro-Beijing camp. Both act in accordance with these subject positions as representatives of their particular political camps. Furthermore, in terms of power, both operate in the context of Grice’s (1989/67) cooperative principle and associated maxims, but consistently flout them to gain control of the discourse. As well as a power issue, this struggle for the floor is part of the interlocutors’ pathos – their rhetorical strategies to persuade the audience of their views. This is another feature of the interview that I have unfortunately not had space to develop. Finally, in terms of pathos, I could also have examined the metaphors used by the participants as part of their rhetoric: for example, Tai’s references to “pressure” and the “generation” of “tension” to persuade the Hong Kong people of his views (l.143), or Leung’s use of the “handbag” as a metaphor for the constitutional arrangements to be “tailored” to fit one-country two-systems (l.132).

In the relatively little space that I have had, however, I hope to have demonstrated how a historiographical approach to Occupy can help us in understanding the movement and how it fits into Hong Kong’s evolving political identity, as begun at least since Britain’s seizure of the territory from China in 1842. More broadly, this analysis may offer insights for other social movements globally. I also hope to have shown how the focus on a critical moment in discourse can shed light on the bigger socio-political picture. In my examination of the argumentation pattern of the interview, I have also shown how arguments regarding particular topics may reflect larger ideological struggles, the political agendas of different groups, and the ways arguments are constructed dialogically in response not only to the words of interlocutors, but also in relation to prior (and future) discourses. Finally, I also hope that I have provided a context for the other articles in this special issue.

References


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Appendix: Transcript

The transcript is as follows. I have broken it down according to topics, to facilitate a quick skimming of the content. It can be viewed at the following addresses:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hm7beyGxYvI
(last viewed 1 May 2015)

The transcript begins 12 minutes 27 seconds into the interview: (after the commercial break)
Topic 1. Programme host Chugani asks Tai about his plans for Occupy

C: Thanks for staying with us, this is Newsline, I’m Michael Chugani, with me is Mr Benny Tai who had come up with the idea of Occupy Central and Priscilla Leung who is a legislative councillor, (turning to Tai) now Benny Tai, in the first half of the show you have mentioned the Scholarism students last week who had, actually, they sat down on the street and they didn’t do anything they just wanted to disrupt normal life there, so your occupy Central is going to do the same thing, yes, you haven’t decided which part of Central

T: Yes,

C: Well, what you’re gonna do is you’re not gonna stand on the pavement, the sidewalk, you’re going into the middle of the road, and when you do that that will block traffic

T: That’s right

C: And that is your intention, right

T: The kind of actions that we plan to do

C: And when and if the police come and arrest you you will not resist

T: We will not resist

C: You will let them, will you voluntarily stand up and say “arrest me” or are you going to sit there and they are going to carry you away?

T: Things may still not decide (sic) but I think most people will prefer to be carried by the police

C: So you would rather that each policeman, so the men, the male policemen, will have to carry the males and the women the policewomen will have to carry the females, otherwise you are going to have the other problem of a woman saying that she was indecently touched by a policeman

T: Yeah

C: So that is going to be a very difficult situation to do, why don’t you stand up, saying “alright, arrest me”, it will make the whole thing a lot easier?

T: Well that’s the whole purpose of the movement, a civil disobedience movement is to generate at least a certain kind a certain degree of tension

C: What do you hope to achieve by that Benny Tai? By doing that you’re going to have cameras, videos of all the world of people being carried away by policemen, and what do you hope to achieve by that?

T: Well, that is the whole purpose to alert the people of Hong Kong of the importance of having true democracy

C: But they know that, they know that

T: A lot of people may still not consider it too important, at least, I think the image we got is a group of people acting peacefully, and they are willing to sacrifice themselves, and hope that the people could see, that may ask why these sort of people are willing to do this, and there must be something, either they are a bit crazy or there must be some reason for that, and that’s to alert the people and cause them to think more, and hoping that that will generate more thinking more support for true democracy in Hong Kong

Topic 2. Chugani asks Leung if she thinks Occupy could get out of control

C: (turning to Leung) Now why Priscilla Leung do you think that something like that could get out of control because every year on June 4th and on Tuesday June 4th there will again be tens of thousands of people at Victoria Park holding candles, a candlelight vigil and every year (Leung is smiling) it’s peaceful

L: it is totally different, they never say they are intending to breach the law, it’s peaceful, we very respect it, it show (sic) the good point of democracy, it show (sic) that Hong Kong is famous for demonstration (sic) peacefully,

C: (interrupting) they are breaking the law passively,
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50 L: Not passively, let me tell you, even a football game in London, you know, any
agitated crowd, he’s living in a theory, model,
52 C: Civil disobedience is not a model, it’s been done
53 L: (interrupting) But he said “I can control it”, then I would like to ask him a
question, later he can answer, is he the star now or the director or is someone
already pushing him out, already the situation that other people see it, he’s he’s
not the man behind, once mass movement
57 C: (16:24; interrupting) are you a puppet for anyone Benny Tai, that’s what she's
58 saying
59 L: (overlapping) No I haven’t finished yet, secondly, the way that he is causing
trouble and obstacles to police is disgusting, you know, maybe they can choose
other areas, you know some people disagree with their movement and recommend them to
go like New Territories.
63 C: If you don’t mind
64 L: We don’t know, the public
66 C: If you don’t know, how can you make that accusation?
67 L: Not accusation, mass movement everyone is part of it and everyone like what he’s
saying I can control it in a very non-violent way, anyone who may identify with
their goal, but they don’t want with their goal, they don’t identify with the same
means, they may use violence, and there are so many youths who think differently in
terms of how to make use of this movement, so he may control 10,000 people but how
about the other people?

Topic 3. Chugani asks Tai if there is someone other than him controlling the
Occupy Movement

72 C: (turning to Tai) OK, let me ask, Benny Tai, Priscilla Leung says you are no longer
in control of the movement, somebody is controlling you, you are just a front, is
that true?
75 T: We are organising the deliberation days, the first one we are

Topic 4. Chugani asks Tai to define democracy

76 C: (overlapping) You are going to have one in a week’s time
77 T: Yes we are going to have one on 9th June and then we are going to have more
deliberation days and this is a process itself, it is to help all of the people who
support true democracy to think about how we’re going to achieve true democracy
through the civil disobedience acts - peaceful

Topic 5. Tai defines his view of “True” democracy

81 C: (interrupting) Define true democracy for me
82 T: Well that’s according to the international standard the ICCPR that’s the
International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights, one of that will be no
unreasonable restriction on the right of the people to stand for election and that
means no screening in the nomination process, that is the international standard,
and so we emphasise that we have a whole year and you can say even more than that,
the whole year time, we just talk about the idea, we just talk about the idea of
civil disobedience, let Hong Kong people think about this idea, are they, do they
support us? Maybe I will not receive any support among Hong Kong people,
90 C: (interrupting) but you have already divided Hong Kong society
91 L: (overlapping) Yes
92 T: (continuing) I'm just talking about it, I'm just talking about it, it is the process of thinking and we need to build consensus, but we need to have a time for people to think about whether you treasure democracy that much.

**Topic 6. Chugani asks Leung what is wrong with Tai wanting true democracy**

95 C: (turning to Leung) Priscilla, there is nothing wrong, tell me what is wrong with Benny Tai saying we want true democracy according to the universal international understanding of what true democracy is, which is the right to stand for election and the right to vote.
99 L: (overlapping) Of course
100 C: (overlapping) You must support that.
101 L: Of course, first of all we talk about what Benny is talking about, the way that he is fighting for that goal, if it is a common goal, is wrong.
103 C: (interrupting) Do you support that goal before you go on?
104 L: I support that goal.
105 C: (interrupting) One person one vote and freedom to stand for election.
106 L: Otherwise I would not have come out for election in 2007.
107 C: (interrupting) We're talking about the chief executive election as well.
108 L: Let me tell you, I have to ask Benny, we are under one country two systems, we know how to push forward political reform successfully and there might be and there might be some interim stage, I have personally proposed many possible models, which, at first when I proposed it was unpopular even for the pro-establishment camp, but now after four years it may be one of the models that is workable like how to make functional constituency members legislators to run for.
114 C: (interrupting) But you still haven't said whether it is right.
115 L: (continuing) Let me.
116 C: (continuing) the principle of one person one vote and the right to stand (emphatic stress) for election.
118 L: It is right but,
119 C: (interrupting) and you support that, you support his goals?
120 L: I support his goals,
121 C: (interrupting) You support his goals.
122 L: the goal is (sic) common goal, it is also set clearly in the Basic Law, but I also want to challenge Benny, in fact we know there must be an interim stage to achieve our universal goal because under one country two systems we are mingling different political systems, different legal systems to mix up and then a compromise law like the basic law, so that if we only look at one standard like what he said we need to import the international standard, in fact one country two systems, there is no other model in other parts of the world, so we need to have a tailor-made.
129 L: Let me finish.
130 C: I have three minutes then I have to go.
131 L: If you have a handbag for Hong Kong it might not fit Hong Kong, we need to tailor-make it to one country two systems, but the progress and steps made acceptable by all the stakeholders, that is the way, a wiser way to do it.

**Topic 7. Chugani asks Tai why he won't talk to the central government**

134 C: (to Tai) Why don't you sit down and talk with the central government and say ok, let's work something out?
135 T: Have they approached you again since the …?
137 C: No. I just respond to Priscilla, we have been in this in your so-called interim
period for veeeery long, I think for those people who are enjoying some privilege in
the system, no way are they willing to give up their privileges, and we are asking
is an equal right for everyone, without pressure, who would be willing to give up
his or her own privileges?
C: Why don’t you talk to the central government?
T: With pressure, with sufficient pressure generated the tension generated that is the
only chance that we will be able to achieve true democracy in Hong Kong.
C: I don’t believe it is the only chance.
T: Yes, the only chance.
C: I don’t believe it is the only chance.
T: Certainly the only chance
C: Will you talk, if the central authority says ok Benny Tai come let’s sit down and
talk about it, will you do that?
T: Well I think up to this point things have to be decided by the supporters of true
democracy, what’s the model we want? Now after we have worked out the
C: (interrupting) so you won’t talk to them
T: after we have worked out the model through the deliberation days and the electronic
voting indicating our preferences, now that may be a time for talking, but not
necessarily me, because I thinks it’s better for those who have votes in the
legislative council to talk with the central and the SAR government in order
to work out a compromise
C: Priscilla, should the 10,000 people that go there on Occupy Central Day be arrested,
should they be arrested?
L: I don’t know, because I really don’t know the situation. I only have to ..
T: (interrupting) (smiling) As you say you support law and order, why don’t you say
they should be arrested? They have breached the law.
L: (interrupting) I don’t
T: (turning to Chugani) I won’t offer a blanket order like that, ok? I mean if we sit
in the street we have breached the law, I mean that when we sit we have breached
the law, now I don’t know

Topic 8. Chugani asks Tai if he personally wants to be arrested

C: Do you want to be arrested?
T: (smiling/laughing) Yeah
C: You want to be arrested, you do
L: (in shocked tone of voice) You see his face, that’s why, that’s the absolute point,
do you know the worry of the police? they said nowadays even they try to arrest a
triad member they were laughed at, you see, now law professors say breaching the
law, so what, he said please arrest me, this is not such a casual expression
T: I’m willing to be punished.
L: Punished is not your personal price, I don’t mind whether you are punished or no,
you are encouraging and inciting people, [exaggerated hand gestures] like breaching
the law is a dramatic and romantic thing [emphatic stress], it’s not the case, and
you are disrupting police to protect other people’s life and livelihood
C: Ten seconds
T: We just want to show that Hong Kong people that is what we want, [emphatic stress]
true democracy
C: (interrupting) I’m going to have to end it right there, see you next week,
good evening.
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