

## MASTER'S THESIS

### Rereading Michel Foucault's genealogy of power through Johnnie To's film Tang, Ching Hay

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**Rereading Michel Foucault's Genealogy of Power through Johnnie  
To's Films**

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## Abstract

Michel Foucault introduces his concept of power implicitly through his descriptions of various experiences: madness, clinic, psychiatry and sexuality. In fact, Foucault's theory of power is concerned with manifesting itself through the analysis of power in the "history of the present". According to Foucault's project, which wants to search for the "origins of origins", three domains are inter-related: truth, power and ethic. This thesis will focus on the relationship between power and ethics. I refer to the panoptic mechanism of disciplinary power, and power relations as war. In addition, I also develop Foucault's analysis of subjectivity in terms of what he calls "technologies of self".

However, Foucault is never straightforward in telling us what the concept of power is, but a focus on films produced by Johnnie To's Milkyway Image can be an effective tool to reread and reflect on Foucault's ideas. To's films - including *Too Many Ways to be Number One*, *The Longest Nite*, *PTU*, *Where A Good Man Goes*, *Running On Karma* and *Election* series - are used as an illustration of Foucault's theory as well as a stage of philosophical argument. From this thesis, Foucault's conceptual ideas and Johnnie To's films can mutually benefit our understanding of philosophy and film.

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