*Tampopo*

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One of the major aspects of the Japanese culture that was shown during the movie was food, but in particular, ramen. Ramen is a very popular food in Japan and noodles in general are popular in Asia. Each region in Japan has its own variation of ramen, meaning that there are so many ways to prepare ramen to one’s liking. The main focus of the film was ramen but there were other foods that were seen in the movie, particularly in the sub plot of the movie and in the vignettes, for example in the etiquette class and during the business meeting in the restaurant with the food from what it seemed like France.

Another aspect that I found interesting that I identified was the perception of beauty. In one part of the film, the en that were mentoring Tampopo throughout the entire movie wanted to give her a complete makeover to match the new beginning of her ramen shop. The idea of beauty or being cute is very prominent in the Japanese culture. I found it curious to see that the lines that the actors were saying about Tampopo being pretty for her age and other remarks. I believe that one does not have to be necessarily mainstream pretty to be able to sell her soup. If she is good at making the soup and it takes good, that is all she needs to be successful because that is what people will come for, not because the person that is making the soup is pretty or not.

In regards to the camera work and storyline, I was perplexed on how the vignettes were introduced. I felt like there should have been a better way to introduce them to the audience. It felt very choppy and like there was no correlation between the main plot and the vignette that was going to show. What I did like about the vignettes was that they had an aspect of food in each one, which tied into the movie’s theme.

I also liked that there was a primary sub plot as well. Although the movie was all about Tampopo and perfecting her ramen recipe, it was nice to take a pause from the main plot and see the sub plot. The beginning of the film made more sense once the sub plot characters were seen more. At first it seemed really bizarre to have them watching a movie and personally confused me about how the movie was going to be shown.

I could relate to many aspects of the movie. One scene that resonated with me was the scene when the big corporate men were ordering lunch at the french restaurant and everyone was ordering the same thing. Meanwhile, the youngest of the group was ordering something completely different from the rest of the group. I had a similar experience growing up because my parents had always taken me to restaurants that were not the typical fast food joints. My parents always took me to culturally diverse restaurants so that I can taste foods from all over the world and be open minded about other cultures, by exposing me to different cuisines.

Another aspect that I can relate to that has a correlation with Japanese culture is the fact that there are many ramen shops around. This could be said as well as taco stands in Mexico. I have spent summers in Mexico and no matter where you went, there were taco stands. I think the reason that there are so many is because no two taco vendors have the same way of preparing the food so it is unique. It is so normal to see them everywhere and I can assume that in Japan, it is similar because ramen is popular. In the movie, each ramen restaurant that they went to had its own way of preparing the broth and noodles, which is why there are so many shops because people have different tastes as well.

I would give Tampopo a rating of 3.5. I liked the concept of the film and how the movie played out. It kept the viewers hoping that Tampopo would perfect the recipe for ramen and become very successful. The reason that I did not give it a higher rating was because of the cinematographic choices that the director made.