

# The Genre Analysis of The Film of Tampopo

Junlin Xuan<sup>1, a</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

<sup>a</sup>Email: Gwanlam@link.cuhk.edu.hk

**Abstract:** The film of Tampopo basically has two main types of genres which are comedy and melodrama, but it also includes other mixed kinds of genres and various elements in general. It looks like a movie and a story about Japanese food culture while also has scenes about samurai spirit and so on. The two leading storylines and relevant scenes filming in both peaceful and delightful but also sudden and intensive paces as well as the unique vocal part all give this film detailed and related information and display of these genres.

**Keywords:** Mixed genres, Double storylines.

## 1. Introduction

The combined genres of the film of Tampopo make it special and unique not only to display the traditional Japanese food ramen noodle and its culture behind but also to tell the life stories of people and their personalities to the audience. It seems it is about Japanese food culture but also includes samurai spirit, some violent and sexual scenes and implies and so on. This article will mainly analyze the genre of this film through the theme, several scenes and the vocal part, the two main storylines, the characters and so on both generally and specifically to display the key points of it.

Tampopo is a combination of comedy and melodrama but also with minor genres and a mixture of elements in general. It is spatial-interlacing, network and parallel-combined and group image structure. It is not only a simple comedy or a melodrama on its surface but also has types of romance, tragedy, thriller, pornography, action, musical and so on.



Figure 1. Poster of the film

(The picture is from iqiyi website. The size is 260\*360.  
URL: [www.iqiyi.com/lib/m\\_207523114.html](http://www.iqiyi.com/lib/m_207523114.html))

## 2. Mixed Genres

### 2.1. Comedy and Melodrama

A mixture of genres give this film a mixed definition and lead to various comments but the two leading genres which are comedy and melodrama generally define a delightful and emotional atmosphere foundation of this film, a wide range of life scenes, a comparison between the leading down-to-earth lifestyle of ordinary Japanese people and the minor western eating habits and diet life, some common personalities of characters, such as helpful, smiley, intelligent, hilarious, optimistic, hardworking and so on, a happy ending as expected and the major style and direction which is comedic and life-like.

### 2.2. Characters and Plots

However, the minor elements bring some possibilities of making changes and differences as well as designing and creating various out-of-expectation characters and plots compared with traditional basic comedy or simple melodrama, providing this film a larger space of imagination and creation as well as less probability being fixed-defined, analyzed or judged by others towards it.

When it comes to the leading character the woman of the ramen noodle restaurant, she is so optimistic, brave and determined even if she is living in a hard life without enough earnings. The two truck drivers are so helpful and warm hearted who try hard to help the woman even though their life has never been easy to them either. It is a little bit different from other sorts of Japanese culture reflection movies here because the two truck drivers especially the leading one of them is quite serious and tough to the women, they treat and train the woman quite hard and strictly, unlike most of the scenes regarding Japanese people and culture which are usually mild and gentle with quite a bit of submission and a lot of smile even if they are teaching or guiding others to do things. While the guider in this film is so strict and lacking smile who looks so angry and bad tempered at first but gradually and eventually has smile on his face at the end, so it is like the opposite type of characteristics and personality at this point.



**Figure 2.** Characters laughing at the end

(The picture is from tiantk website. The size is 540\*292. URL: <https://www.tiantk.net/content/index16848.html>)

In addition, the family losing their mom is so united, caring, loving and contributed to each other that the mom is still thinking about making food for her family members who are her husband and her children until the last minute of her entire life. Additionally, the two lovers in the hotel room are beloved with each other as well shown by sharing a raw egg together. Characters are so characteristic and impressive along with various personality and life stories and totally tightly related to the food in the film too.

The director Itami Juzo uses a main story about a woman and her noodle restaurant and several minor stories regarding various kinds of people and food to reflect an obvious theme of this film which is delicious food has always been the main thing of Japanese people no matter what circumstances or situations they are facing and experiencing and displaying the spirit of helping each other and being self discipline in Japanese culture. The two main storylines going on in the whole film are also relevant to these people and stories, which are everyone and everything happen related to the noodle restaurant and people and things outside of it in other scenes.

### 3. Double Storylines

#### 3.1. The First Storyline

The first storyline which is also the major one contains genres including comedy, melodrama, musical, samurai spirit the most, for instance, the process of the leading character learning how to make delicious noodle could be full of fun and humor, not only when she tries to practice it but also when she tries to go to other food courts to learn it either publicly or secretly. The eating scene is so life-like and down-to-earth. The musical elements coming from the scene when everyone gathers and sings to the old man to express their thanks to him and the two helpful men who fight against each other at first while becoming partners at last bring the samurai spirit thing out.

In addition, the spirit of samurai is not only about the help from the old man and the two truck drivers fighting against each other but also about their helpful and warm hearted personality to try their best to help the woman out of the dilemma of not having a lot of customers in her ramen noodle restaurant. They are just passers to this woman and only drop in to have a bowl of ramen noodle, however, once they feel like the noodle is not tasty, they do not just run away or never come in again but point it out quite clearly and directly as well as try to look for ways and approaches to help improve the taste and general quality of the ramen. They actually have no obligation or responsibility to try to help her out and they just see her for the first time maybe, however, they decide to think about various ways and guide and teach her based on their methods through every single step which shows some of the

core values in samurai spirit as well. This storyline is also a reflection of traditional Japanese food culture specifically the image of ramen noodle.



**Figure 3.** One of the two truck drivers and the old man tasting the noodle

(The picture is from taste of cinema website. The size is 1920\*1029. URL: [www.tasteofcinema.com/2018/14-Great-Movie-Classics-youve-Probably-Never-Seen/](http://www.tasteofcinema.com/2018/14-Great-Movie-Classics-youve-Probably-Never-Seen/))

#### 3.2. The Second Storyline

The second storyline is about something a little bit nervous but also with romance, sorrow and pornography. Also, the storyline is basically about western food culture such as French cuisine compared with the first storyline which is regarding Japanese food culture. However, it not only has typical western restaurant but also contains places like hotel room, house, supermarket and so on.



**Figure 4.** Learning how to have western food

(The picture is from bilibili website. The size is 720\*390. URL: <https://www.bilibili.com/read/cv10066565>)

There are food everywhere on the scene and stories happen everywhere along with the food as well, for example, the two of the lovers order food and pass a raw egg on to each other again and again even when they have intercourse in the hotel room and they still talk about food when the man is almost dying and they are actually doing farewell to each other with gun shooting and bloody scene at the moment.

Another example is a man is rushing through the street and nobody knows what he is going to do while the shot switches to his home showing that his wife is almost dying. However, his wife is able to move from the bed to the kitchen finally and makes him and their children the last dinner. The whole family is crying while eating. Such scenes are various in this storyline.

### 4. Visual and Vocal

#### 4.1. Scenes

The film presents scenes relevant to one another by setting up a certain background, showing relevant scenes that have different genres by using expanding and extensive shots from endless streets and roads or puts some objects in between two

sorts of genres to bring one type to another naturally to link them together.



**Figure 5.** The life scene and conversation among roles

(The picture is from bilibili website. The size is 720\*387. URL: <https://www.bilibili.com/read/cv10066565>)

Besides, food as a key element has gone through the whole film along with the comparison between the two different places where Japanese food ramen noodle and western food French cuisine are being placed and served, for example, Japanese restaurants and food courts are usually quite tiny, old fashioned and a little bit messy sometimes with dark lighting, crowded or noisy backgrounds, owned and served by the owners who are usually the food makers as well only while French cuisine is showed up and located in a fantasy and bright hotel restaurant or a luxurious hotel room with light colored lighting and professional waiters and waitresses separated from the boss and the cook which is an obvious and classical comparison between these two kinds of food and the cultural meanings behind them. The director tries to insert the image of food in every shot in order to maintain the main point of the film and even make it as heart-warming as it could be even during some a little bit scary shots such as battle and gun shooting scenes and etc.



**Figure 6.** The scene of people eating noodle together

(The picture is from douban website. The size is 1080\*675. URL: [www.douban.com/note/628243392/?type=donate](http://www.douban.com/note/628243392/?type=donate))

## 4.2. Sounds

Vocal part also plays a significant role in this film. It is not directly visible to the audience while it uses voices, sounds, background noises and so on to seize viewer's attention and put forward the plots as well as link different scenes together.

The vocal part of this film makes some scenes quite intensive and exciting with the immersive atmosphere, for instance, when the leading character, the woman wants to go to another noodle food court to learn the secret of making

delicious noodle, the scene is actually so dark with only a little light going through, so the visible part is limited which makes the vocal part standing out particularly the vocal part sounds so scary that make people feel the tension of that scene, being found by others or not, so the background vocal here lets the scene up and down and also puts some elements of potential horror in it.

In addition, in another scene, when the mother who is also the wife of the family is about to pass away, she is still thinking about making food for her family, so the cooking sound of that scene is quite suitable and also makes the scene a little sad at that moment. In particular, when she lays down on the floor and finally passes away, the coming car with red light and the noise of the horn pressing add up the atmosphere and the feeling of tragedy as well as help switch the scene to the next one.

Besides, When a group of Japanese ladies try to learn how to have western food elegantly and quietly, the Italian man sitting next to them just has the noodle so loudly and joyfully simultaneously without the so called silence when having western food taught by the Japanese teacher which attracts all of the young ladies to look at him. The Italian man becomes the focus in the whole western restaurant surrounded by all those ladies with fancy dresses. Therefore, the vocal part makes various types of obvious and potential genres of this film particularly the tasty food pretty emphasizing, in short.



**Figure 7.** The Italian man is enjoying the noodle

(The picture is from bilibili website. The size is 720\*390. URL: <https://www.bilibili.com/read/cv10066565>)

## 5. Conclusion

To sum up, this film is two leading combined genres with other mixed genres and well shot. Its film storytelling way is quite unique and different that makes people have a deep impression on the film. The general lighting of the film is quite dark but the basis and the theme are quite bright and encouraging. It not only reflects the significance of food and cuisine towards Japanese people but also conveys an adventurous-like as well as up-and-down plots to the viewers by using imaginative and creative shots, linking scenes and exhibiting methods. All in all, it is an engaging film about food culture and other themes around it.

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