

## Film Review: Homesickness

This review is based on group two's short film, *The Taste of Home*. There are three characters in the film, including the main character William, Scotty, who is William's roommate as well as friend, and Selena, another friend of William who comes from the same country as William.

The film starts with William walking by the sign of the University of ... into the library. After studying for some time, he then decides to have lunch outside. Pulling out a sandwich made by his friend Scotty and eating it, William then expressed his dissatisfaction by saying, "I'm full, but I'm not fulfilled." It is worth a moment's attention that, at this point, the film has not explicitly mentioned what the dissatisfaction is. William then goes back home, where Scotty asks him what is wrong, to which he replies, "I really need something good to eat." Scotty makes him a well-prepared meal, but it still does not satisfy William. William stops eating halfway and takes Scotty's advice to take a walk. During the walk, William comes across Selena, and knowing William's frustration with food in New Zealand, Selena invites him for a meal. Eventually, the meal prepared by Selena makes William feel fulfilled, reminding him of the authentic taste of Chinese food back home. The movie ends there.

Situated in a foreign land, the film touches on one aspect of homesickness experienced by overseas Chinese, which is inaccessibility to home food. While food is the basic necessity for survival, it also carries sociocultural elements and resonance where being deprived of the food that we are accustomed to eating can potentially induce certain emotional responses, which, in this case, is frustration. It showcases the essential role that always having items of the mother culture in a host culture plays in shaping the well-being of expats. Additionally,

the mis-en-scene and soundtrack are engrossing, bringing out corresponding emotions right where they are supposed to come out.

From my point of view, The Taste of Home is a quintessential narrative of homesickness and nostalgia that Chinese international students experience on a daily basis, to which I can definitely relate. Moreover, it resembles the film “My People, My Country” discussed in the class, as both share the fact that our heritage impacts us in various ways. If My People, My Country is a macro-level epitome of Chinese culture impacting Chinese no matter where they are, then The Taste of Home would be a miniature that focuses on a very specific aspect of the same topic.

Compared to my group’s work, The Taste of Home addresses different topics. It clearly has a lot of work put into making it, which I can relate to based on my experience making the film. Although the number of scenes shot is roughly equal in both films, it is rather obvious that The Taste of Home was harder to shoot because it was shot both indoors and outdoors, involving multiple different scenes, including William’s apartment, the library, campus, streets, bus, and Selena’s apartment.

I want to conclude by saying that this project has been absolutely enjoyable and challenging. The groupwork was my favourite part, and the sharing and mutual reviewing at this stage just takes the project to a whole other level.