

Chaplin vs buster



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Looking at Modern Times we see cater his act to the viewer. Pressured by the public to reflect social and political discrepancies of the world Charlie develops a topical approach to his art. Buster also developed his act to appeal to the masses as I will later discuss but when comparing our two films Charlie's Modern Times is the one which caters to both the social and political issues of the day. Beyond the realm of film Charlie holds his own personal commentary about his world and the issues faced as his book A Comedian Sees the World demonstrates.

Still despite his views initially Charlie saw a clear separation between his art and politics. " Art is the treatment applied to work and has nothing to do with the subject matter. " 2 Despite this by the mid sass it was not enough to be political yourself as an artist it was also expected to be seen in your art. It was following his world tour that he became more outspoken about the condition the Depression had left the world, and decided to give into outside pressures. Like other Charlie films the film Modern Times took straight from the textbook of Chaplain's aesthetic contract where comedy, romance and pathos, would meet.

As stated the difference between other early films by Charlie and Modern Times however were the topical allusions used. We can clearly see this in early scenes between the Electro Steel Company's owner and his workers. The boss barks demands throughout the beginning and by the end of the sequence Charlie's character ends up going mad from the oppressive nature of the work place. Another allusion is to link between poverty and crime as we see scenes of Charlie's love interest stealing from the rich to feed both her

and her struggling family. It is important to note however that Von Wiggings' essay notes that the combination of

Chaplain's aesthetic contract as well as, social and political realities was problematic. To him the film does not ring true to the woes of depression when contrasted with the optimism of a go lucky clown. Still this does not discount the topical allusions which were used throughout this film. Unlike Buster this film is very much a commentary on the world around them. When looking at the gags done in Modern Times the sheer expressiveness of Charlie. Uses the silliness of things like body movements. You especially you can't overlook the obvious facial movements of Charlie compared to the stone faced Buster.

For example scenes like when Charlie is being force fed food are pleasurable because of his being over the top clearly contrast scenes in The General like when Buster no longer sees the train in front of him and gives slight facial movement and reaction. This is one of Busters most well know trademarks. Buster got his start in a family vaudeville act and would later grow to own his own production studio where he directed and starred in a number of films. The General is a classic chase film set during the Civil War. It recounts the story of a down on his luck train engineer who gets wrapped up in a daring rescue for the love of his life.

Laura Macgregor notes in her paper and as I mentioned Buster Sexton's "The General." Buster Keating tries to appeal to sentiments of the time which called for greater realism in comedic gags. 4 If it couldn't happen in real life then it was not real and Buster saw it as an "impossible gag." So rather

than fantastic gags he would work at keeping his gags realistic. Laura add that by utilizing the long shot with a long take Buster is able to show how authentic his stunts, like when he travels between train carts, can be. This makes the slapstick comedy more believable to the audience ember.

One example of another realistic gag is when Buster's character disguises his love as a sac of potatoes. After putting her on the train you catch shots of Buster wincing in pain as he watches soldiers continue loading. ⁵ This is contrasted with some of the gags in Charlie's' film *Modern Times* such as the scene when Charlie finds new employment only to mess up and accidentally cast off one of the ships or the scene where he is blind folded and roller skating a few floors up. Cartoonist scenes where Charlie is being rung through the inside of a machine would not hold true to the realism Buster was looking for.

It is important to note that Buster did not simply deny suspending belief in all his films, rather he developed a comedic realism within his features in response to audience's wants. To add to the authenticity Keating also believed things should be visually real. From costumes to the genuine armies of people Buster was committed. " In the general I took a page from history and I stuck to it in all detail. I staged exactly what happened. " ⁶ Another technique used by Buster in the *General*, which Laura touches on, was to plant the gag alongside the narrative.

Just as audiences called for comedic realism Laura claims audiences of the sass's were looking for more sophisticated or complex comedic relief over what many would deem as simple slapstick comedy. " ... Almost all of the

gags in *The General* serve similar double duty as gag and narrative element" 7 It is interesting because by doing so gags not only are used to expand on the story but become key in the development and cohesiveness of the film. Once again looking at the scene where Buster potato sacs his damsel the gag is clearly working on the bigger picture of getting them back to their allies.

Without this gag the story can not move forward as smoothly. In comparison to more random scenes within Charlie's' *Modern Times* such as his roller skating scene within the department store. Though comedic it is not intertwined within the plot. To better entertain the public and though both films were not received well for various reasons they commit to growing within there art just in different ways. Charlie's pressures being that of representing daily life in the Depression while Buster is more concerned with appealing to audiences' want for a more realistic performance.