

Woody allen's
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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

"Sleeper" is a film, which at first glance, appears to be about nothing but making people laugh, but when examined more closely might appear to be a commentary on politics, consumerism and even love. This film is supposed to be Woody Allen's take on a modern silent film, and there are definitely similarities to the silent film classics of Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin, most notably the physical humor that defined the slapstick sub-genre of comedy.

Scenes like those with the giant produce or the awakening of Woody Allen's character, Miles Monroe are absolute gems and caused me to laugh hysterically the first time I saw them. They also appear to only exist for the sole purpose of making the viewer laugh. If the main character in a film only believes in "sex and death" does that imply that the main point of the film is also sex and death? At first glance, the slapstick nature of the film appears to support part of this claim as the futuristic society in which Miles has woken up appears to be obsessed with ways of increasing pleasure- both emotionally and sexually.

We see a glimpse of this culture during the dinner party hosted by Luna in which the Orgasmatron and the Orb are introduced for the first time. The scene in which Miles is acting like a robot and trying to pass around the orb, but only drugging himself is hilarious and the introduction of the Orgasmatron is absolutely ridiculous since Luna says, "I think we should have had sex, but there weren't enough people." Suddenly, sex is something that appears overly complicated and has been replaced by machines.

One of the two things that Miles believes in has been replaced by machines and technology. In fact, I argue that the other thing he believes in - death - has also been replaced by machines and technology. Miles has been cryogenically frozen for 200 years - obviously he should have been dead by now. Instead, technology has taken away the other thing he believes in. So what then, does Miles and consequently the film believe in? Obviously the future, in which Miles has found himself in, is run by a Totalitarian government led by a dictator whom he spends a large majority of the film trying to overthrow. Is the film a political commentary then? Certainly, Woody Allen spends a lot of time highlighting the police force and the rebel faction which has formed against the government. He even manages to throw in a few quips regarding the politics of 1973 America. We see the absolute uselessness of said police force and we hear Miles comment on how the rebels will simply replace the existing government in a cyclic fashion. But there still isn't enough. Even the romance between Miles and Luna seems to be empty and almost like an afterthought.

I just don't think that there is enough substance to qualify this as a political film, a commentary on consumerism or even a romance story. In the end, I argue that maybe this movie isn't really about anything at all. Maybe it is simply a funny film that highlights screwball comedy and has some of the elements of a science fiction movie. Whether or not it is a movie with a deeper message, "Sleeper" is still a movie that I thoroughly enjoyed and a great introduction to Woody Allen.