

Charlie Chaplin and His Times

By Kenneth S. Lynn

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Examining the legendary actor's life, art, and controversial politics within the context of their times, Lynn presents a fresh and definitive portrait of Chaplin.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
Loved by millions in his heyday, exiled into obscurity in his middle age, and worshipped anew in his final years, Charlie Chaplin has been the subject of many biographies. In this book, Kenneth S. Lynn focuses on Chaplin's personal, political, and romantic associations. Lynn sees Chaplin's obsessive egotism and brutality toward women as a result of his obscure London upbringing and the torment and embarrassment his mentally disturbed mother caused him. Lynn also takes a fresh look at Chaplin's alleged victimization at the hands of immigration officials in the 1950s and performs an intriguing psychological reading of *Limelight*, which he considers Chaplin's most autobiographical film. Along the way, Lynn provides mini-histories of issues and events that shaped Chaplin's life, including a consideration of the tramp in early 20th-century America, biographies of famous silent film stars, and an account of the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

From Library Journal
On the heels of Joyce Milton's excellent Tramp (LJ 5/1/96) comes a second critical biography of film's greatest comic. Lynn (Hemingway, Harvard Univ., 1995) deftly interweaves Chaplin's life with the events and personalities of his era, including British music hall impresario Fred Karno, silent screen star and pal Douglas Fairbanks, numerous lovers and wives, brother Sydney, and Adolf Hitler. Lynn has done meticulous research, consulting census and asylum records to evaluate Chaplin's relationship with his increasingly schizophrenic mother. Through London maps and late 19th-century sociological studies, he detects a lower-rung but not entirely poverty-stricken Chaplin childhood; other dissimulations found in Chaplin's My Autobiography (LJ 10/15/64) are explained as well. Lynn addresses his subject's leftist views and makes sense of the House Committee on Un-American Activities investigations of 1947 that led to Chaplin's European exile until 1973. All a biography should be, this is enthusiastically recommended.?Kim R. Holston, American Inst. for Chartered Property Casualty Underwriters, Malvern, Pa.
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From Booklist
Surprisingly, Lynn's richly detailed and psychologically insightful biography of Chaplin is only the second popular, comprehensive book written about this icon of pantomimic virtuosity, socially significant comedy, and cinematic innovation in a dozen years, and the first to diligently link Chaplin's traumatic childhood to his complex personality and indelible films. Lynn, whose previous books focus on writers, portrays Chaplin as a man haunted by his mother's mental illness and guided by the only things he could trust: his ability to assume roles and entertain. As Lynn analyzes Chaplin's immense ambition and irascibility and the tremendous appeal of his brilliant and edgy humor, he reveals the tangles of his uneasy associations with Hollywood colleagues and the painful outcomes of his abusive and manipulative relationships with women. Chaplin's life is truly an enormous subject, embracing, as it does, the rapid rise of the movie industry, issues of censorship, the birth of Communism and the virulent anti-Communist backlash, and all manner of familial and gender-based conflicts, and Lynn does a magisterial job of knitting it all together, allowing Chaplin to emerge as fresh and evocative as the Little Tramp in his first incarnation. *Donna Seaman*

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Manuel Jett:

As people who live in typically the modest era should be up-date about what going on or data even knowledge to make them keep up with the era and that is always change and make progress. Some of you maybe may update themselves by reading books. It is a good choice for yourself but the problems coming to you actually is you don't know which one you should start with. This Charlie Chaplin and His Times is our recommendation to make you keep up with the world. Why, because book serves what you want and need in this era.

Debbie Brown:

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