

NONFICTION

The story of a whirling era seen through the lens of a film icon

The Age of Charlie Chaplin

MATTHIJS DE RIDDER

When Charlie Chaplin first pointed his camera at the world at the start of 1914, he had no idea what he should expect from the modern age. Everything was changing so rapidly. Within a year, he had become the most famous man in the world, and his *Tramp* became the icon of cinema, the art form of the 20th century. However, there was another side to the new age.

Zooming in to focus on the films and panning out to the world stage

DE STANDAARD

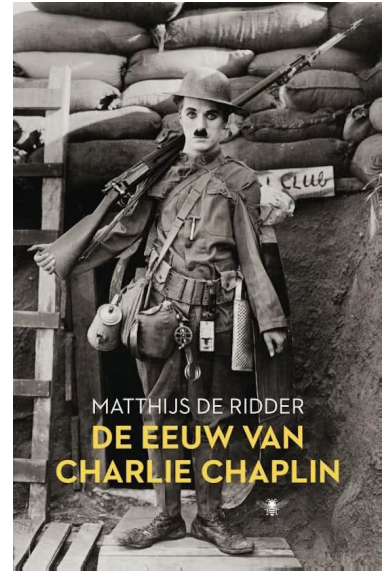
The onward-rushing 20th century saw the Tramp end up in the trenches of the First World War, keep himself standing on his own two feet using a great deal of imagination in an America hit by the Great Depression, and come face-to-face with Adolf Hitler. Avant-garde artists recognised him as a muse, and in the eyes of the Russian revolutionaries, he was leading the resistance against the plutocracy. Before he knew it, Chaplin himself became an icon of the modern age.

Matthijs de Ridder gives a sparkling account of an artist who was able to embody all the important themes of the 20th century. Using new sources, he casts a fresh glance over the life and work of Chaplin. At the same time, 'The Age of Charlie Chaplin' is a phenomenal cultural history of a turbulent period that defines our worldview to this very day.

De Ridder provides a deeper insight into the ups-and-downs of the 20th century, using Charlie as a sounding board, as a canary in the coal mine.

HET BELANG VAN LIMBURG

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Matthijs de Ridder (b. 1979) is a writer and critic. He edited work by great Flemish authors like Louis Paul Boon and Paul van Ostaijen. In his literary work he is always on the lookout for creative ways to tell the story of our times. 'To Borms. Willem Elsschot, A Political Writer' (2007) and 'Desire. A Literary History 1984-2014' (2014) provide exiting new insights into the history of Flemish and Dutch literature. 'Rebel Rhythms. A Jazzy History of Our Time' (2012) is a swinging cultural history of the 20th century set to the rhythm of jazz. 'The Age of Charlie Chaplin' (2017) also tells the story of the 20th century, this time as seen through the lens of film icon Charlie Chaplin. *Photo © Koen Broos*

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