

## Charlie Chaplin as a Cultural Phenomenon of the USA – His Life and Work

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### **Abstract**

Charlie Chaplin is known as one of the greatest icons of the early American cinematography. His work of art has been known to the world for many decades and he has been considered one of the most influential persons in film making history. The study portrays Chaplin and his life from different perspectives. An insight is given on his early life and the most influential milestones in it that have contributed in the artist becoming who the audience knows today. Furthermore, Chaplin's work of art is depicted with a distinction of silent and voiced films and a detailed descriptions of his character, the Tramp. We search answers to questions about the steps in Chaplin's career that made him so influential and how the American society viewed his work. A comparative analysis of various sources clarifies that not only was the artist influenced by his personal life and the happenings in it, but also by the American and British society itself and numerous worldwide occurrences.

**Keywords:** Charlie Chaplin; comparative analysis; cinematography; the Tramp; silent films; voiced films

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### **Introduction**

Charlie Chaplin was one of the greatest icons in the early American cinematography. He not only built new foundations in terms of comedy, but also had great influence on the society. His films won the hearts of millions of people throughout the whole world and his unique and inimitable style became recognized and celebrated for many years. This study provides an overview on Chaplin's life and career and investigates his work of art from an analytical viewpoint. We aim at getting a deep insight into the life and career of the greatest pantomime artist of all.

In the theoretical overview the artists' life is described from his birth till his death, and it is also pointed to some of the milestones in his life that are interpreted in the later parts of the work. Within his childhood, we cover the first twelve years of Chaplin's life. Both his personal life and difficult childhood are portrayed as well as the beginnings of his dreams about becoming the most famous actor in the world. Following on, we focus on his teenage years. This part of the study deals with the

artist's age from twelve to twenty and it describes not only Chaplin's personal experiences, but also the beginnings of his early career. His first theatrical roles are depicted here and also his tours around Great Britain with Fred Karno, who made Chaplin a well known comedian around the entire British Isles. The last component of the theoretical overview covers Chaplin's whole life from twenty years onwards with a detailed description of his cinematographic production. The chapter not only presents the life and career of Charlie Chaplin after his arrival to the USA, but also shows the milestones in his life, which he used either consciously or unconsciously as inspiration for his later work.

The study then examines chosen sources concerning the milestones in Chaplin's life and investigates the issue from both the perspectives of steps in Chaplin's life that made him so influential in the American society and the society's response to these. We introduce Chaplin's most famous character of all times – The Little Tramp, and both the origins of the character and its characteristic features and the inspirations for its creation and the American society's reactions to it are discussed. We further examine the silent film era and the years Chaplin spent producing silent films. This covers twenty- two years of the artist's career, which are divided to characteristics of the given period, detailed description of the film producing companies that Chaplin worked for, inspirations for the production and the society's response to the silent films.

After that, the voiced film era is described with the seventeen years of Chaplin's life producing voiced films. We not only deal with the description and analysis of the characteristics, inspirations and the society's reaction to the voiced films, but also give detailed depiction of three chosen films from this period: *The Great Dictator*, *Monsieur Verdoux* and *Limelight*.

The analysis of selected sources of information reveals that there were numerous internal and external factors influencing Chaplin, which must have been of great influence in his life and later career and also his cinematographic performance and production. His films were greatly influenced not only by the happenings and people in his personal life, but also by the society surrounding him and numerous worldwide events, which all contributed to forming, shaping and inspiring the artist in becoming the Chaplin, whom we know today.

## 1. An overview on Chaplin's life

### Childhood

Charles Spencer Chaplin was born April 16, 1889 to parents Hannah Hill and Charles Chaplin senior, both making a living in entertainment. Although there is no certain evidence where he was actually born, in his autobiography Chaplin (1989) himself refers to his birthplace as to be East Lane in Walworth, London. The marriage of Hannah Hill (Lily Harley by stage name) and Charles Chaplin senior did not last for long. Not only did they break up soon after Charlie's birth, but also Chaplin's payments for the support of the family stopped very early. Making a living for a three member family was very hard for Hannah (Robinson, 2013).

His mother's problems with her voice made the five-year-old Charlie perform for the first time in his life. Chaplin (1989) remembers himself standing behind the scenes in Canteen, Aldershot, when his mother's voice failed during a performance and the audience became so rough and hostile that she had to leave the stage. The director guided him onto the stage as a replacement for his mother. Unashamed he started singing '*E Dunno Where 'E Are* (which is also referred to as Jack Jones in his autobiography) and was so successful that the audience started throwing him coins. He stopped singing and proclaimed to collect the money first, then to carry on singing only. This made the audience even more satisfied. Charlie kept on performing till his mother came and took him off the stage (Robinson, 2013).

After his 6<sup>th</sup> birthday the financial situation of the family and Hannah's health condition became so bad that she decided to move to the Lambeth Infirmary. As Chaplin (1989) remembers, the family was separated and he and his brother were sent to Central London District Poor Law School at Hanwell. Although he got used to that particular kind of life quite quickly, Charlie felt sad and lonely. The following three years were full of moving for the family: in and out of the workhouse and then from one place to another. "*It was like a game of draughts: the last move was back to the workhouse*" (Chaplin, 1989, p. 24).

By the time of re-entering the workhouse for the last time the mental health conditions of Charlie's and Sydney's mother worsened so much that she was sent to an institution named Cane Hill Asylum, leaving her two sons in their father's care. Chaplin (1989) describes this period of time as the longest and saddest days in his entire life. He remarks that even though he lived in his father's house, Charles Chaplin senior did not appear there often and his wife Louisa was particularly unhappy with the two Chaplin boys in there. She also made it obvious: not only by being cold and adverse, but also by attempting to kick them out from time to time. One night the conditions became so severe that the twelve-year-old Sydney and Charlie, eight that time, had to spend the whole night outside the house (Chaplin, 1989).

This period, however, ended after two months when Hannah was released from the asylum. She took her sons to her own care and they moved to a small room next to a slaughterhouse (Robinson, 2013). Chaplin (1989) remembers a funny, yet sad story from this period: He was looking out of the window when he saw a sheep escape from the slaughterhouse. Although he found the act of trying to catch the sheep very entertaining at first, then he realized the sadness of the situation – the sheep would be killed anyway. As written in his autobiography, he believed that this scene could have been the foundation for his future films – a combination of comedy and tragedy (ibid.).

Charlie was now eight years old. In his autobiography he states that he left school to join a clog dancing group called The Eight Lancashire Lads, which was guided by William Jackson. They agreed that Charlie would live and perform with Mr. Jackson's family and earn some money for his own. The period of the following two-three years was full of tours with the Eight Lancashire Lads. Although they were very successful among their audience, Charlie felt an increasing temptation to become something different – a child comedian (Chaplin, 1989).

As Robinson (2013) portrays, the group got a commitment to a pantomime play *Cinderella*, in which Charlie impersonated one of the cats. It was his first official appearance as an actor. In his autobiography, Chaplin (1989) recalls Marceline, a man who performed along with the group in the Hippodrome at that time, in quite a detailed way. Observing Marceline must have made such an impression on the young boy that he later became one of the main motives in Chaplin's films.

Chaplin's experience with the Eight Lancashire Lads ended when Charlie's mother started making remarks on her son's health conditions. As a result Mr. Jackson sent the boy away explaining that he was tired of Hannah's continuous complaining (Robinson, 2013). Not only did Charlie have to return to extremely unfortunate living conditions, with his brother working overseas, but also he had to reconcile to his father's death (Chaplin, 1989). After that, the youngster tried many occupations – from selling flowers in the local pubs to making toys out of used shoe boxes. However, he never gave up his dream to become the world's most famous actor (Robinson, 2013).

### **Teenage Years**

The young Charlie Chaplin found himself at home again with his mother Hannah in extremely poor conditions. Moreover, Hannah's health was unpleasant, too. As Chaplin himself depicts, one day he arrived home to be told that his mother had gone mad. As he was later explained by the doctor, Hannah was undernourished and sent to Cane Hill Asylum. This certainly was a hard life experience for Charlie. He spent weeks alone and hungry until the return of his brother Sydney, who brought some money and food with him (Chaplin, 1989).

Even though Charlie had registered in Blackmore's theatrical agency before, it was approximately one month after Sydney's comeback that the agency sent him a postcard offering a job (Chaplin, 1989). This obviously was a turning point in his life. As written in his autobiography, Chaplin acquired two roles, one in a play called *Bill* and one in *Sherlock Holmes*. Even though *Bill* was not a great success, the young Charlie got very good feedback from *The Topic Times* magazine (Robinson, 2013).

After two weeks of playing Jim the theatre group headed on to play *Sherlock Holmes*. The all-over Britain tour, as Chaplin (1989) recalls, lasted forty weeks and afterwards another tour took place. Soon after returning from their second tour, Hannah, their mother was released from the Cane Hill Asylum. Her sons rented and furnished a flat in London and they all moved in together. This, however, did not last for long. Charlie and Sydney both got an engagement to a third tour so they left their mother on her own (Chaplin, 1989). Approximately a year later, in 1905, Hannah's health worsened again and she was sent to Cane Hill Asylum once more. Unfortunately she never recovered from the illness, resulting in those times being very difficult for the young boy (Chaplin, 1989).

After finishing the tour the sixteen-year-old Charlie was offered to play by the side of a famous actor and playwright William Gillette. This, as Chaplin (1989) expresses, was a gift from the heavens. Not only did Charlie admire Mr. Gillette as a great actor, but he also was able to learn a lot from Gillette's performance style. The

following months were full of minor roles and short work experiences in the theatre for Chaplin. In February 1908, however, his brother Sydney managed to persuade his boss Fred Karno to offer Charlie a two-week trial in his company of comedians. This turned out to be successful, so Charlie got a one year contract (Robinson, 2013). Working for Fred Karno made Chaplin a good and well known comedian in Great Britain. The Hull Daily Mail (1909) was among the first newspapers which presented Charlie Chaplin's name on their theatre programme offer.

### **Adulthood**

The one year contract at Karno's company was prolonged to three and in the winter of 1910 the company organized a tour to the US, to which they also picked Charlie. He thought of this as of a very good opportunity to become more famous and was incredibly excited about it. The tour lasted twenty-one months and helped Chaplin's name to become well-known among the American audience (Robinson, 2013). During his first stay in the US Charlie visited a fortune-teller who foretold the young man a great success and wealthy life in America. This could possibly have been one of the reasons why he later returned to the States (Chaplin, 1989).

Shortly after the first tour a second one took place. While still working as a theatre actor for Karno, Charlie received a job offer from the film making company Keystone. Acting in films did not interest Chaplin to a great extent, yet he signed their contract with the intent to make some money and return to the theatre after some time. He, evidently, could not know that film would make him one of the greatest artists of all time (Suchý, 1989). Chaplin (1989) recalls a morning when his future character – *The Tramp* was born. He was told by his boss, Mack Sennett, to go and make up a comic mask. On the way to the locker room an idea came to his mind: loose, baggy pants, oversized shoes, and a tiny jacket with a small hat. In his autobiography he clarifies his intent to create an outfit full of contrast - and so it was. Chaplin apparently decided to keep the character for the rest of his career.

Even though becoming more and more successful, the young actor was not satisfied with the way his films were produced. For this reason, as Robinson (2013) explains, Charlie asked for the opportunity to direct his films on his own. His request was gratified and since then Charlie Chaplin had full control over his films. For the one year that Chaplin stayed with the company he acted in thirty-six films. Twenty-four out of these were directed on his own (Chaplin, 1989).

By the time of 1915 Charlie Chaplin became so famous in the USA that staying with Keystone seemed unimaginable for him. As Brož (1964) describes, Chaplin signed a contract with Essanay, another film producing company, for ten times higher salary than he had earned before. The fact, that Chaplin and his films were worth it, is clearly visible from the numerous articles in newspapers and magazines that he appeared in. The Arizona Republican (1915), for instance referred to Chaplin's first Essanay film *His New Job* as to be a wonderfully funny picture. Another article, in The Daily Gate City (1915), described the film *Tramp* as the funniest that Chaplin had ever made. He produced fifteen films for Essanay in overall, all of which were a great success (Chaplin, 1989).

The next contract, signed with the help of his brother Sydney, was with Mutual

Film Corporation and owing to this Charlie Chaplin became a millionaire. He produced more than ten films for the company, among which *One A. M.*, *Easy Street* or *The Immigrant* were all equally triumphant. Chaplin himself considered those times to be the happiest times of his film-making career (Chaplin, 1989).

This particular era was undoubtedly declaring Chaplin's great success. An article in *Photoplay News* from 1917 stated: "*After two weeks' run of Chaplin comedies it had been necessary to tighten up the bolts in the theatre seats, since the audience had laughed so hard the vibration had loosened them*" (Robinson, 2013, p. 225). When the contract with Mutual Film Corporation ended, Charlie signed one with First National. Because the company was quite new and there was no atelier, he decided to buy a piece of land in Hollywood and build his own one (Chaplin, 1989).

Working for First National was a very profitable period. *Shoulder Arms*, for instance, produced in 1918, was inspired by WWI and had enormous success among soldiers. In a *South Bend News-Times* (1918) article it was stated that the film was so unique that people in front of the cinemas were queuing in the longest rows ever. Another great hit, *The Kid*, was filmed with the help of a four year old boy – Jackie Coogan. The story behind the film emerged when Charlie attended a theatre play and spotted the small boy by accident. It is unnecessary to say what a masterpiece the cooperation of the two was (Robinson, 2013).

Yet in the year of 1918 Charlie Chaplin married for the first time. His wife Mildred Harris, as Chaplin (1989) explained, was young and beautiful, but their marriage was unhappy due to the fact that Charlie did not truly love her. Soon the two divorced. In an interview for Wright (1920) Mildred Harris described Chaplin as an unkind, jealous man who would care only for work and not come home until the mornings.

After finishing his five year contract with First National, Chaplin could freely move to his own film making company, United Artists, which he founded together with Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks and D. W. Griffith in 1919 (Robinson, 2013). Meanwhile he received a letter informing that the health conditions of his mother Hannah got better. Now Charlie could move her to California. He and his brother Sydney immediately furnished a small house near them and Hannah could move in (Chaplin, 1989). As a rest after so many years of hard work Charlie decided to visit Europe. As Chaplin (1922) describes, the sentiment with which he visited all the places in London from his childhood was exceptionally strong and touching.

The relaxed and vibrant Charlie returned to the USA and got married for the second time. Lita Grey's name is, however, not even mentioned in his autobiography, so it can be supposed that their relationship had a bitter break up. Suchý (1989) explains that Lita's forty-two page accusation against her husband contained all sorts of sexual and social sins and as a result she sued out quite a big sum of money. Regardless of his personal problems, Chaplin did not stop working and produced many more great films, such as *A Woman of Paris*, *The Gold Rush* or *The Circus* (Brož, 1964).

Although Charlie had received offers to be the first to record picture and sound simultaneously, he did not care. Even in 1928, when the first all-talking picture was

shown, he stayed uninterested (Robinson, 2013). Chaplin (1989) himself regarded sound as to be unnecessary and distressing. He claimed that by using sound the pantomime would completely lose its meaning and the actors lose their charm. Moreover, he considered the big microphones and long cables to be extremely disturbing. For the above mentioned reason, taking a risk, Chaplin decided his next film *City Lights* to remain silent. What he did new, however, is that he composed the background music on his own. And even though there were talking films on the market, Chaplin's silent *City Lights* was a top hit (Chaplin, 1989).

Ten years after his first visit to London Chaplin decided to return there for a second time. This time his intentions were half way recreational and half way work related. As Brož (1964) explains, the European trip was prolonged to an all-around the world trip and lasted more than a year. Chaplin returned to the USA full of doubts and questions about whether to use sound in his films. Looking for inspiration he met Paulette Goddard, a beautiful young woman. Chaplin fell in love and soon he married again (Chaplin, 1989).

The 1930's and their foretaste of a coming war induced Charlie to produce a new film. Robinson (2013) states that *The Great Dictator* was Chaplin's first film with a real dialogue and it required a lot of work with precise planning. The satire on Adolf Hitler was a risky job, though. Chaplin (1989) explains that the process of filming had to be stopped up for many times as a consequence of the unpleasant political situation. But even the above mentioned did not discourage him from finishing the film and *The Great Dictator* was finally presented in 1940 for the first time. Both the theme itself and the dialogues in the film carried political ideas. Owing to this, the cinemas were not particularly interested in it and in most of them the film was not even played. A shift, however, came after 1941 when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. As a result the cinema owners decided to present *The Great Dictator* additionally, which logically became one of Chaplin's greatest films (Brož, 1964). By the time of finishing *The Great Dictator*, Chaplin's marriage with Paulette Goddard broke up. As he explains in his autobiography, even though their love was strong at first, it slowly cooled down and at the end both of them knew it had to come to an end. Paulette asked for a divorce and left Chaplin's house to remain empty and lonely after eight years of coexistence (Chaplin, 1989).

Attacking Pearl Harbor made the USA enter WWII. Entering the war meant not only fighting on fronts, but also performing political activities in the country. It was the activities in politics that made America's admiration for Charlie Chaplin lower by many levels (Robinson, 2013). The turning point, as Chaplin (1989) expresses, occurred when he was invited to present a speech on a council for the help of Russia; where among others he expressed sympathy for communist people. Charlie kept on receiving invitations to give speeches on various different political occasions until the day the American press accused him of being anti-American. Consequently Chaplin was declared a communist (Chaplin, 1989).

It is said that yet in the greatest sadness that we feel there has to be something happy in our lives that keeps us balanced. Charlie Chaplin was no exception. In his greatest struggles with the American government in 1942, as Suchý (1989) explains, he met the seventeen year old Oona O'Neill. After nearly one year of

courtship Charlie and Oona got married. No one would have believed that the marriage could be lasting, but the love of the two was so strong that it survived till the last days of their lives. According to Buxton (2013) in Oona's interview for the Washington Post from 1960 she said that the thirty-six year difference between her and her husband was insignificant. She openly expressed her deep love and admiration for Charlie and declared their marriage to be happy and beautiful. Pursuant to the above stated it can be understood that Charlie Chaplin finally found his true love and lived his further life in a peaceful companionship of his family.

In 1947 Chaplin presented his next film *Monsieur Verdoux*. Even though the film struggled with censorship at the beginnings, lastly it was allowed to be played in the American cinemas (Chaplin, 1989). Censorship, however, kept on following Charlie. His next and one before last film, *Limelight*, presented in 1953, was completely censored and banned from playing in the American cinemas for more than twenty years. The reason was political – Charlie Chaplin was a persona non grata in the USA. In 1972, however, after permitting the film it was not only presented but also it received an Oscar. This film seems to have taken the longest time to be awarded and, apparently, banning it was the biggest mistake of all times made by American film making industry (Robinson, 2013).

Chaplin's life in the USA started to become harder and harder after the political issues during WWII. The press kept calling him a communist and he was adjourned for many times because of the beliefs that he performed anti-American activities. Tired of it all he decided to leave the USA for a few months. But when he and his family left the country, Chaplin received a telegram saying that he would not be allowed back unless he submitted to other examinations. At that moment Charlie realized he would never want to come back to the States again (Chaplin, 1989).

After spending some time presenting *Limelight* in England the Chaplin family decided to settle and continue living a calm life. As Robinson (2013) describes, Charlie decided for Switzerland and bought a house in a small village called Corsier. Already living in Europe, Chaplin produced his last film. The *King of New York*, dated to 1957, was not only Chaplin's last film, but also it was the last film for United Artists, which broke down subsequently (Chaplin, 1989). The following twenty years in the friendly environment of Corsier let Chaplin live life at its best. Robinson (2013) states, that Chaplin wrote, among others a biographical book named *My Autobiography*, which was later completed by *My Life in Pictures*. Even though Charles Spencer Chaplin died December 25, 1977, the unique and unrepeatable sense of humour of his characters is still present in his masterpiece.

## 2. Research

The main goal of the research was to examine chosen sources regarding the milestones in Charlie Chaplin's life. Two research questions were created in order to investigate our issue:

1. *What were the steps in Chaplin's career that made him so influential in the cinematographic industry?*



## 2. How did the American society view Chaplin in his work?

The first research question dealt with Chaplin's whole film production. The author analyzed and compared various sources regarding Chaplin's filming years and specified them to great detail. Moreover, the issue allowed us get a deeper insight into the happenings and reasons for Chaplin becoming so influential in the cinematographic industry, which was also depicted in the paper. The second research question opted for an overview over Chaplin's work – his reasons and inspirations regarding the American audience. A comparative analysis was selected as a method of investigation and its main goal was to compare the given sources in order to gain as many useful data and standpoints on the given topic, as possible. The sources used in the research were various. The main, primary sources were both Chaplin's biography and autobiography. According to the information found in those we searched various different books dealing with the given topic, using them as secondary sources. Magazines and newspapers covering the topic were used as tertiary sources. Lastly, it is important to mention that films and videos found online were used as well, but only as indirect sources, which helped us in a better understanding of the given topic.

## 3. The Tramp

The Tramp, or *The Little Fellow* as Chaplin himself referred to it, is the comic character designed by Charlie Chaplin in the early 1910's. The unique appearance and the extraordinary characteristics of The Tramp are kept throughout Chaplin's entire career and are visible in almost every film that he stars in. The Tramp has become a worldwide known icon and the most favourite comic character of the American audience (Chaplin, 1989).

### Origins

In 1914, working for Mack Sennett at Keystone, Charlie Chaplin's character The Tramp was born. It was on a rainy morning of filming Mabel's Strange Predicament, as Robinson (2013) explains, when the young actor was asked to make up a funny costume for some gags. Walking to the locker room Charlie did not know what his boss exactly wanted from him, so he let himself be guided by his inner creativity. Due to the fact that the Keystone films were produced without having any plot the funny mask could be made out of anything (Chaplin, 1989).

As he walked in, the idea of a costume full of contrasts came to his mind. Charlie borrowed his colleague's Fatty Arbuckle's large trousers and another colleague's tiny jacket. The character was not ready, though. Charlie put on size fourteen shoes, too big for him, which belonged to Ford Sterling and were lying nearby. Then he completed his outfit by a little hat and a cane. It seemed that the costume was ready, but remembering his boss's words (that he had imagined Charlie to be older when they first met) Charlie decided to add a moustache. Owing to the fact that he trimmed it to the size of a toothbrush he looked older but did not lose his specific face expression. The outfit was then ready to be shown (Robinson, 2013).

Even though Charlie did not know what attributes his character should have had at first, the longer he wore the clothes the clearer his vision was. Chaplin himself states: “*The moment I was dressed, the clothes and the make-up made me feel the person he was. I began to know him, and by the time I walked on to the stage he was fully born*” (Chaplin, 1989, p. 109). Charlie Chaplin walked out of the locker room in his funny costume and headed directly to the camera. Making funny moves, hopping around and stumbling in the most ridiculous ways he attracted the interest of all the people in the atelier. At that moment, when all the crew was laughing heavily, he realized he had done a good job (Chaplin, 1989).

### **Characteristics**

Mellen (2006) characterizes the Tramp as a unique little man walking strangely as a duck with his toes pointing out. As visible in his films, his movements are funny, yet unlucky sometimes and full of stumbling. His appearance on the stage is marked by hopping around with a cane in his hand and a hat which is rose in the most ridiculous situations. The make-up on his eyes makes his face emphasized and the little moustache above his lips gives him a specific look. His expressive mimic is clear and well visible to the audience. Gimpling and smirking are characteristic features of his well known face expressions (Robinson, 2013).

Taking a closer look at his personality, the Tramp can be considered a kind-hearted man with vibrant qualities. He is a many-sided character. As Chaplin (1989) describes, he can be a musician, a poet, a farmer or a lonely gentleman not afraid to steal a candy from a child or kick a woman in the rear in his greatest anger. His childlike behaviour often gets him to troubles, but his clever, yet sometimes ridiculous problem solving abilities always help him come out unscathed.

The Tramp gets chased very often. Many times it is him who fools the people around, but many times it is the unlucky situations in everyday life that get him into troubles. The whole being of the Tramp is based on the social inequality of this world and the everyday struggles in our lives (Mellen, 2006). And as it comes to love, Chaplin (1989) admits that falling in love with the most beautiful girl around is also a characteristic feature of the Tramp. He is always decided to win the girl's heart and in most of the times he also succeeds in it.

### **Inspiration**

There are various opinions on what exactly inspired Charlie Chaplin in creating the funniest character of all times. Although he himself does not refer to it very much in his autobiography, yet the various biographers and researchers studying his art have done quite a deep analysis, so many traces can be found. Robinson (2013), for instance, indicates that it could be his mother Hannah in the first place, who used to perform pantomime and comic situations to her little sons while living in their tiny flat in London. He further considers the theatre actor Bransby Williams, whom Charlie met while touring with the Eight Lancashire Lads, to be one of Chaplin's inspirations for the Tramp. The reason is that the young Chaplin studied Williams to detail and imitated him with great success among the audience of his friends. Marceline, another actor met in the times of Chaplin's childhood, made

a strong impression on the young boy, too. Similarly as with Bransby Williams, Chaplin studied and observed Marceline to a great extent. Possibly the observation made him transfer some of Marceline's characteristic features into the Tramp. It is also important to mention William Gillette, Dan Leno and H. A. Saintsbury, to whom Chaplin himself referred with great admiration in his autobiography. According to the facts stated above it can be concluded that the times of Chaplin's youth in the theatres of England inspired him to a great deal (Robinson, 2013).

On the other hand, however, other authors specify Chaplin's inspirations from a slightly different point of view. According to Brož (1964), the main influence in building up the Tramp's character was set deeply inside Chaplin and was rather unconscious than conscious in nature. It can be stated that the Tramp comes directly from the London streets as an outcast who has hardly what to eat. The society, for this reason, does not help him out and leaves him struggle through life. It is the memories on Chaplin's unfortunate and sad childhood full of shame and hunger that made him start looking at life critically. The unrighteous and discriminating society is beautifully and precisely transferred into the Tramp's everyday life. The character, as further explained, is getting into various conflicts due to his natural human need to survive. It clearly depicts the hard times of Chaplin's childhood. Charlie Chaplin undoubtedly expresses his aversion to the social inequality and its unfriendly character through the Tramp (Brož, 1964).

As a result of the sources explained above, it must be made clear that the two viewpoints do not exclude one another, rather work as complements. For this reason it can be stated that the character of the Tramp was inspired by both conscious and unconscious streams of thoughts. Both Chaplin's problems in his early life and the actors in the theatre with his mother in the first place seem to have influenced Chaplin equally in forming his unique and inimitable character.

### **The Society and the Tramp in His Early Days**

Although there were times when Charlie Chaplin and his films were banned in the USA, it is of high importance to point to the Tramp's early days and his enormous success within the American audience. Robinson (2013) states that the extraordinary adoration by the public resulted from the fact that the Chaplin films were produced for the everyday people, who liked to see the high positioned ones fooled or 'kicked in their bottoms'. Brož (1964), approving the above stated, adds that expressing the everyday struggles in the Tramp's life got the character closer to his audience and won the hearts of millions of people within a few weeks.

Chaplin (1989) himself referred to the massive crowds waiting anywhere he went as to pleasing, yet shocking at times. He states that the quickness with which the Tramp made him famous was paralyzing and it took him years to get used to it. It is also important to mention the Chaplin imitators. As Suchý (1989) explains, there were many of them desiring to reach the original Tramp's fame, yet, obviously they were not so successful. Furthermore he adds that Chaplin also adjourned some of them, but soon there were so many imitators that it became pointless.

Charlie Chaplin appeared in the newspaper on a daily basis. The Daily Gate City (1915), for instance described the Tramp as to perform the greatest pantomime of

all times. Another newspaper, the Arizona Republican (1918) described the Chaplin films to be unique and inimitable and referred to Chaplin as to be the funniest man in the whole world. The above stated facts are approved by Robinson (2013) as well, who describes an appeal that appeared in Photoplay News magazine in 1917. According to the article in the magazine many cinemas stated that they had to secure the bolts in the seats because the audience had laughed so heavily that they made the seats loosen. Seeing and imitating the Tramp was not enough to the audience, though. The Day Book (1916) reported not only Chaplin toys, figures, hats and canes being on the market, but also a newly developed dance - the walk waltz, which was inspired by the Tramp himself.

As a conclusion to the above stated, it can be said that the early days of the Tramp were full of admiration by the American audience. The funny character not only won the hearts of the public by being entertaining, he also mediated a message of the current state of the society. Apparently the two together created the unique Tramp whom the American society loved so much.

## 4. The Silent Film Era

The silent film era of Charlie Chaplin's life dates back from 1914 and the creation of his character Tramp until the year of 1936, when his last silent film, *Modern Times* was produced. The period of the twenty-two years in silent film business brought Chaplin enormous success and fame and made him the greatest comedian of all times. Altogether he worked for five comedian film making companies during that time span and appeared in seventy-three silent films. Sixty out of these were directed and produced by Chaplin himself. All the Chaplin films held special and unique features and carried exceptional characteristics that made all of them become unforgettable and loved within the American audience (Chaplin, 1989).

### Characteristics

As any other films in the cinematographic industry have their distinctive features, so did the Charlie Chaplin films have their own characteristics. It is important to mention that the Chaplin films varied to a small extent, depending on which film producing company he worked for. Yet, despite that fact some major characteristics of his films can be drawn (Suchý, 1989). Almost all the Chaplin films (except for one drama, which is mentioned below) were comedies. But they were not only comic; they represented a well rethought burlesque on the society. The Chaplin films were among the first to depict high society members, such as government members or millionaires, to be fooled in front of the public (Robinson, 2013).

Another feature, as Brož (1964) explains, was the beautifully expressive pantomime, with which Chaplin acted. It was so meaningful and expressive that many times the audience was able to capture even Chaplin's thoughts through the camera. The setting of the films and the number of the actors varied. However, the main topic of the films remained unchanged. It was the main character, the Tramp, who constantly got into troubles. Wherever he appeared he accidentally met someone,

whom he managed to fool either willingly or unwillingly. A beautiful woman, who appeared in every single Chaplin film, also became one of the distinctive features of the Chaplin comedies (Robinson, 2013).

The formerly depicted main character, the Tramp, was however the most important and influential in the Chaplin films. Even though he did not appear in every film that Charlie produced, his great sense of humour accompanied Chaplin throughout his entire career. His unique appearance and expressive mimic became world-wide known within a few months and marked the strongest characteristics of the Chaplin films (Chaplin, 1989).

### **Keystone Films**

Charles Chaplin entered the Keystone film producing company's atelier in 1914 as an unknown actor for the American public. He stayed with the company for a whole year and acted in thirty-six Keystone films. Twenty-four out of those were produced and directed by him. The period of time working for Keystone not only started to make Chaplin well known among the American audience, it also made him the public's favourite comedian within a few months (Chaplin, 1989).

One of the characteristic features of the Keystone films, as Brož (1964) explains, was the fact that they were filmed mainly without any preparation. It can be stated, for this reason, that all the Keystone films were completely improvised. He further adds that the harsh and masculine type humour, which all the films contained, was also one of the distinctive features of the Keystone productions.

It can be further added that the main characters and sources of humour were men, whilst women were present only as a decorative feature in the films. Moreover, being chased by someone, mostly by the well known Keystone cops (whom the audience appreciated very much), was also an inseparable part of the Keystone films (Robinson, 2013).

### **Essanay Films**

In 1915 Charles Chaplin signed a contract with the Essanay film making company and started producing films straight off. Within the year that he worked for the company he produced fifteen films and succeeded with all of them (Chaplin, 1989). Compared to the Keystone films it is well visible that the number of the films produced was cut to less than a half. The reason was that Chaplin decided to make his films better designed and executed. Moreover, unlike in the previous productions, where comic incidents were popular, the Essanay films relied rather on well prepared funny situations (Robinson, 2013). The filming time was prolonged. As Brož (1964) states, the result of the longer filming was clearly seen in the quality of the Chaplin films, which was increased.

The new Chaplin films not only received extra quality and took a longer time to be produced; they were also enriched by some more specific features. One of these features was the female character. The woman in these films obtained more attention. It is necessary to state, however, that the male character still possessed the most significant roles in the films. The films, furthermore, were full of love. The love story, or winning the heart of a beautiful woman, became a characteristic fea-

ture of the Chaplin films. Last, but not least, it is important to mention that Chaplin produced his films to be clear and dramatic with a great laughter coming at their end (Robinson, 2013).

### **Mutual Films**

When Chaplin's contract with the Essanay ended, he started filming for the Mutual film making corporation. He worked for the company for two years, since the beginning of 1916 till the end of 1917, and during that time he produced in total twelve films (Chaplin, 1989). One of the major changes compared to his previous contracts was that Chaplin asked for artistic independence, which meant to have complete control over all the films he produced. Mutual agreed with it and Chaplin thereafter started producing films from a slightly different viewpoint. Due to this artistic freedom Charlie Chaplin experienced the happiest working years in his entire life (Chaplin, 1989).

The artistic independence brought, however, many changes to the Chaplin films. Homosexuality, for example, unseen by that time, appeared in more Mutual films. Another new characteristic, which made the Mutual films even more interesting, was the appearance of comic transpositions. In these Chaplin disappeared and reappeared in the most unimaginable ways (Robinson, 2013).

There were, however, other new elements that appeared in the Chaplin films while working for Mutual, as well. It was the increasing critical view on life that he started presenting in his films to a great extent. He openly expressed his aversion to the social injustice and so did his films. Even though the funny situations still remained the same, Chaplin started expressing deeper thoughts by them. Moreover, he started adding memories from his early life, which made his work even more valuable (Brož, 1964).

### **First National Films**

At the end of 1917 Charlie Chaplin started working for the film producing company First National. The cooperation between him and the corporation, as Chaplin (1989) explains, lasted for five years and through this time he produced nine films. Chaplin's filming style had completely evolved by that time. All he had to do was to make up some new plots for his stories. Some minor innovations that he took, however, still remain to be explained. It was exactly a First National Film, *A Dog's Life*, when Chaplin introduced a new kind of a companion, a dog, for the first time. Another curiosity of the First National productions was the fact that Chaplin hired a child actor for the first time in his life in 1920, for his film *Kid*. Both of the films had great success within the American audience (Robinson, 2013).

### **United Artists Films**

In the year of 1923 Charles Chaplin started working for United Artists, a company, which he founded together with his three friends Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks and D.W. Griffith. United Artists functioned till 1957 and Chaplin stayed with the company till its last days. Altogether he produced nine films for this corporation, five of which were silent (Chaplin, 1989).

The typical features of the Chaplin films accompanied his works throughout his entire career. Producing for United Artists, however, gave Charlie even more inventive freedom than his previous employer companies. This resulted in fulfilling Chaplin's long-standing desire to produce a dramatic film. Consequently, in 1923, his first film for the United Artists and also his one and only dramatic motion picture, *A Woman of Paris*, was born (Brož, 1964).

### **Inspiration**

The inspirations for the sixty-six silent films that Chaplin produced through the twenty-two years of his career were various. As Brož (1964) claims, the most of them were inspired by Chaplin's memories from his early life. He also shows some connection between some of the early Chaplin films and the former theatre life which Chaplin led. These were for example the Mutual films *One A.M.* or *Easy Street*.

Besides the inspiration from his early life memories there were other sources for it, as well. As Robinson (2013) states, the society itself also inspired Chaplin to a great extent. Taking a closer look at his film *Immigrant*, produced for Mutual, it can be stated that depicting the hard times of the ordinary people and the way how they were treated by the government members became a very popular topic for the Chaplin films.

The existing issues and political occurrences also inspired Charlie for some of his silent films. As written in his autobiography, although there were some risks and fears of producing a motion picture with the theme of war, he did not let himself be discouraged and filmed his first film about war, *Shoulder Arms*, a First National production (Chaplin, 1989).

Moreover, the everyday lives of the ordinary people gave Chaplin inspiration, too. As Robinson (2013) explains, many times the gags and comic situations came to Charlie's mind just by observing the people around.

It can be assumed, for this reason, that the biggest influence on Chaplin's film production was both his personal life and the lives of the ordinarily living people. Caricaturizing generally boring things was not considered being the only main goal of his work; it was also the determination to make his audience laugh (Chaplin, 1989).

### **Society's Response to the Silent Films**

The American audience fell for the Chaplin films already in the very beginning of his career. As written in his autobiography, the quick tempo with which Chaplin's films won the hearts of millions of people was sudden, unexpected and somewhat shocking also for the Tramp himself. The long queues of people waiting in front of the American cinemas every day was only one of the signs of Charlie's success (Chaplin, 1989).

Another sign was his daily appearance in the local newspapers and magazines. The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* (1916) for example named Chaplin to be the funniest man in the world. It also pointed out to the enormous numbers of fans that the Chaplin films got. Another article, among others, also named Charlie to be the funniest comedian of all times. Moreover it described the warmth with which his

fans welcomed his new film *A Dog's Life* saying: "*He was given a royal welcome yesterday by long lines of fans*" (Seattle Star, 1918, p.5).

The public's adoration was obvious not only from the cinema tickets sold for each of Chaplin's films, but also from the numerous fan letters he received. At the beginnings he and his brother Sydney tried to answer them all, but in a short period of time the numbers of letters received multiplied to such an amount that it became impossible to keep up with them (Chaplin, 1989).

The American audience became so obsessed with Chaplin and his funny character that it was usual to meet doublers dressed in Tramp-like clothes every day. Moreover, the local shops got filled with Chaplin toys, figures, hats and canes, which became very popular among little children. According to the above stated facts it can be assumed that the American audience had a very positive relationship to Charlie Chaplin and his silent films (Robinson, 2013).

## 5. The Voiced Film Era

The epoch of voiced films covers seventeen years of Charlie Chaplin's life and dates back from 1940 till 1957. The period of the voiced film era brought Chaplin many difficulties on one side, but even greater possibilities to express his views on the other one. Despite the fact that Chaplin produced only five films during that time, they presented strong ideas and were guided by unusual events, therefore some of them are necessary to be described individually (Robinson, 2013).

### Characteristics

Chaplin's artistic freedom brought endless possibilities to his production. The biggest benefit of that state was not being obliged to discuss the topics and the messages of his forthcoming films with anyone from the cinematographic industry. As a result he was able to make films of any kinds with any themes, depending only on his own set limitations (Chaplin, 1989).

Even though Chaplin considered voiced films unnecessary and disturbing at first, he soon realized that a talking picture had the abilities to present even deeper ideas and thoughts than a silent film. This motivated him to the production of new films, where he could express his critical view on life and his unhappiness with the society to a greater extent than ever before (Brož, 1964). Unfortunately, Charlie's popularity within the American audience had decreased significantly by that time and his voiced films did not win the hearts of the wide public, as he would formerly had expected. And although none of his voiced films was loss making, as Suchý (1989) explains, it is necessary to mention that all of them had to face negative criticism for many years. The reason for this, as he claims, was the fact that although Chaplin as the greatest pantomime artist of all times could finally cope with the traps of the voiced film quite well, he still despised it and remained afraid of it to a great deal. Brož (1964), on the other hand, had a completely different viewpoint on this issue. He believed that Chaplin knew exactly, what the advantages of a voiced film were, and he also made use of them very well. He further claimed that the



negative criticism that Chaplin's films received resulted purely from their content, as mostly the ideology which they held was subverting the image of the perfect American society.

It was exactly the depicting of the imperfect society, which became one of the main characteristics of Chaplin's voiced films. Another feature, already known and unchanged, was the fact that all of the films were comedies. The Tramp, however, was replaced by a more mature character, which was needed due to the progressive age of Chaplin himself (Robinson, 2013).

### **Inspiration**

Taking a closer look at some of Chaplin's voiced films, it is clear that one of the main inspirations for them was the current political situation in the world and Chaplin's personal disapproval to it. By his films he tried not only to show how unsatisfied he was with the way that people lived, but he also pointed to the wrong steps that the government was making. His critical view on life was presented stronger than ever before and his aversion towards the social injustice was depicted openly, as well. Not only was Chaplin inspired by the tragic current happenings in the world, but he also expressed his unhappiness with the moral come-down of the society (Brož, 1964).

The topic of his early life was also present in his later production. The memories on the London streets of Chaplin's childhood, as Robinson (2013) explains, became an excellent inspiration for one of his voiced films. Being motivated by the city itself was not all, though. The memories of his early life led Chaplin to his father, Charles Chaplin senior, who consequently became a muse in the Chaplin film, as well. According to Suchý (1989) Chaplin was not only inspired by his early life, but he was also motivated by the events that occurred in the last years of his stay in the USA. His film, *The King of New York*, depicted all the burdens and grievances which Chaplin had to face from the American government and he used the film as a public reply to them.

According to the above mentioned facts it can be stated that Chaplin's voiced films, similarly to his silent productions, were inspired by various events and spheres of life. His strong unhappiness with the social system, however, remained the most influential issue in his production and was reflected in a number of the films from Chaplin's voiced production.

### **The Great Dictator**

This film is considered to be the greatest phenomenon of all the Chaplin's work. The reason for this, as Robinson (2013) states, is not only the fact that it was Chaplin's first motion picture with a real dialogue, but also the reality that it was the first film with an antifascist theme, which was produced in Hollywood.

Although Chaplin was clear with the fact that the American cinematography was not interested in films with political filling, his old desire to produce a satire on a dictator was revived when Adolf Hitler, the German politician, came into power. Chaplin openly expressed his antifascist ideology and was determined to produce a comedy which would make fun of the dictator. The reason for this, as written

in his autobiography, was that Charlie believed that all what Hitler was doing was wrong and wanted to show the world that by irony, which he considered to be the greatest weapon of all, he could make the world turn up against fascism as such (Chaplin, 1989).

The production of the film took almost two years and during that time Chaplin had to face many difficulties with the American government, which acted against him for not being an American citizen. Even though the filming itself was finished by 1940, it took another year until the authority allowed *The Great Dictator* to be performed in the cinemas. The only reason for doing so was the attack of Japan on Pearl Harbor, which made the USA enter WWII (Robinson, 2013).

This motion picture was not only a simple satiric comedy on Adolf Hitler, but it also held deep political and social ideologies. Brož (1964) explains that by the film Chaplin stated his strong antifascist standpoints and expressed his true beliefs in the democracy. Moreover, in his final speech, as it is known by the wide public, he called out to all the humanity to unite by explaining that all the people are created equal and the power resides in them all:

*“Soldiers! Don’t give yourselves to brutes - men who despise you - enslave you - who regiment your lives - tell you what to do - what to think or what to feel! Who drill you - diet you - treat you like cattle, use you as cannon fodder. Don’t give yourselves to these unnatural men - machine men with machine minds and machine hearts! You are not machines! You are men! You have the love of humanity in your hearts! [...] The Kingdom of God is within man - not one man nor a group of men, but in all men! In you! You, the people have the power - the power to create happiness! You, the people, have the power to make this life free and beautiful - to make this life a wonderful adventure. Then - in the name of democracy, let us use that power - let us all unite”* (Chaplin, 1989, p. 296).

Releasing *The Great Dictator* caused Charlie many difficulties with the American government. It is necessary to mention that Hitler, after viewing the film, had Chaplin declared to be a communist, which was then exploited by the American press. Consequently, Chaplin was accused of acting in an anti-American way and soon he was forced to face the accusations on legal proceedings (Suchý, 1989). Despite all the difficulties Charlie Chaplin had with the film not only before, but also even after the release, *The Great Dictator* had enormous success within the wide public. The fact that Chaplin managed to create and group so deep ideologies with the simple and comic Tramp (who also appeared in the film as one of the main characters) in one motion picture, made the film become a real masterpiece (Robinson, 2013).

### **Monsieur Verdoux**

This film was Charlie Chaplin’s second voiced motion picture. Its production lasted for almost two years and the film was presented in 1947. Even though the main character Monsieur Verdoux, a mass killer, had to face strong criticism and censorship at its beginnings, the final rearranged version of the film was approved and allowed to be played at the American cinemas (Chaplin, 1989).

Seeking for inspiration Chaplin looked deeply into the roots of the American society and decided to reveal its secretly kept faces. He, as Brož (1964) explains,

pointed to the failures and limitations present in the society and expressed his deep disapproval towards them. He also stood up against the befooling of the people by the cinematographic industry. Moreover, Chaplin pointed to the extreme social injustice in the USA and the decreasing moral value of the people. Topics like the Stock Market Crash and the Great Depression therefore also appeared in the film (Robinson, 2013).

The most important idea of *Monsieur Verdoux*, however, was Chaplin's aversion towards wars. Both Brož (1964) and Robinson (2013) agree that Chaplin stated by the film that those who are encouraging and provoking wars are equal to murderers and he blamed the American government of encouraging mass killing in order to restore peace in the world. "*For being a mass murderer, does the world not encourage it? Is it not building weapons of mass destruction for the sole purpose of mass killing? Has it not blown unsuspecting women and children to pieces, and done it very scientifically? As a mass killer, I am an amateur in comparison...*" (Robinson, 2013, p. 575). Unfortunately, the reactions of the American audience to the film were not pleasing at all. According to Suchý (1989) the deep ideology which the film held was either not understood by the wide public or was rejected on purpose.

By showing America's true face Charlie Chaplin subverted the image of the perfect society, to which the plain people were not prepared. As a result, the whole film was abandoned by the public and Charlie Chaplin lost the support of a whole nation within a few weeks (Chaplin, 1989).

### **Limelight**

After the unpopular *Monsieur Verdoux* Chaplin was unsure whether to produce another film, so he decided to re-announce a twenty-year old film *City Lights* to see the public's reactions. The re-announcement was successful and Chaplin, gaining back his lost security, started the production of *Limelight*, his third voiced film, which was introduced in 1957 for the first time (Chaplin, 1989).

The inspiration for the film can be found in Victorian London and Chaplin's early life. He not only added his personal life experiences from the London cabarets and music-halls to the film, but he also depicted his father's life in it (Brož, 1964). By the time of producing *Limelight* the government's relationship towards Chaplin worsened by a great deal. The Federal Bureau of Investigation started a process against Chaplin for acting in an anti-American way and declared him to be the most dangerous and most unwanted man in the cinematographic industry. As a consequence, they tried to ban him from producing any other films on the ground of the USA (Brož, 1964).

Even though the film itself was produced in the USA, the unpleasant situation around Chaplin did not allow him to risk any other failures, and so it is understandable that he decided to introduce *Limelight* in Europe first. That decision turned out to be a good one, as the film had enormous success within all the European cinemas. Many of the European newspapers referred to *Limelight* as to be Chaplin's greatest life work (Robinson, 2013).

The situation in the USA and its attitude towards the film was, however, very unpleasant for Charlie. Due to the fact that he had become a persona non grata by that time, the film was completely censored and banned for more than twenty years. But when in 1972 *Limelight* was finally allowed to be played in the American cinemas, it garnered enormous success and Charlie retrieved the well-deserved admiration of the American public. In addition to it all he soon received an Oscar for the best original screenplay in the film, which he was given by massive standing ovations of the present audience (Chaplin, 1989)

### **Society's Response to the Voiced Films**

The attitude of the American audience towards the five voiced films, which Charlie Chaplin produced, can be simply described as unstable. Although Chaplin had been the favourite comedian of all the American society, his problems with the authorities and his increasingly critical view on life shown in his films made the wide public lose their admiration for him for more than twenty years (Chaplin, 1989).

Although his first voiced motion picture, *The Great Dictator*, was successful among the American audience, his next one, *Monsieur Verdoux* was not so fortune-favoured. Robinson (2013) claims that the main reason for this was the controversial topic of the film, which depicted the society as to be spoiled and morally declined. Therefore, as he states, the wide public rejected the film and consequently estranged from the artist.

Brož (1964) on the other hand states that the main reason for the film's dislike was set rather in the issues happening around Chaplin's personal life and its connection to the government. He claims that the accusations and numerous legal proceedings in Chaplin's life contributed to his comedown by a great deal. Moreover, the press, as he explains, was completely against Chaplin and played an important role in affecting the wide public.

Comparing the two sources described above, it is necessary to be stated that both circumstances had noticeable influence on the forming of the negative attitude of the audience to Chaplin, therefore none of them can be considered more important than the other. Moreover, it can be assumed that criticizing the society had a great influence on the government to start acting against Chaplin and vice versa. As a conclusion, it can be stated that the two conditions were present continually, initiated one another and were interdependent.

The fact that he became a persona non grata for more than twenty years in the USA caused the complete estrangement of the American audience from Charlie Chaplin. Due to the fact that the Chaplin films were not played in the American cinemas, the American society's attitude towards him can be therefore considered to be negative and rejecting (Brož, 1964).

## Conclusion

Charlie Chaplin was undoubtedly an influential part of the American cinematography. Based on the information depicted in the paper, the most significant step in Chaplin's career must have been the creation of the funniest character in the world – the Tramp. This statement is proved by many of the authors used as sources in the work, such as Robinson (2013) or Brož (1964). The Chaplin films were another very important step for him in gaining enormous influence and fame. Robinson (2013), for instance, supports this by explaining the Chaplin films having been produced for ordinary people, which caused huge adoration by the public. The study also tells that the specific characteristic features of the Chaplin films and their humour also became an important part of Chaplin's increasing fame. As written by Chaplin (1989) himself, his films became loved and unforgettable among the American audience. Lastly, from the standpoint of Chaplin (1989) himself, it can be seen that the increasing artistic freedom which he received, also enhanced his worldwide popularity.

From the standpoint of Robinson (2013), who considered the depicting of the lives of ordinary people as a source of inspiration for Chaplin, we could see that the society members and their everyday lives made a great influence on the artist. Moreover, the personal disapproval of the political system and his critical view on life and the social injustice also influenced Chaplin to a great deal. Brož (1964) proved this by describing how unsatisfied Chaplin was with the way of living of the people, which he openly expressed by his films. From Chaplin (1989) it can be seen that not only did the political system work as an influence on Charlie in his production, but also the unpleasant political occurrences, such as wars. For that reason it can be assumed that the political happenings in the society also impacted Chaplin's production to a great deal.

As it is declared by many of the authors in this work, the first years of Chaplin's career can be stated to be extremely successful and popular. Chaplin (1989) himself, for example, referred to the enormous amounts of people waiting to get tickets for his everyday films, as a sign for his popularity. Another sign was approved by The Day Book (1916), in which the selling of various Chaplin things (from Chaplin toys to canes and hats) was described. According to the above stated, it can be assumed that the first years of Chaplin's career were very successful and as a result the American audience adored him. From the results of the later analysis, the conclusion of Chaplin's popularity decrease after a few years can be drawn. As we cite Robinson (2013), it can be seen that the public rejected some of Chaplin's later films due to their controversial content. Moreover, as Brož (1964) claimed, the difficulties in the personal life of Charlie Chaplin concerning the government and his later proclaiming to be a *persona non grata* in the USA, can be also stated as a negative influence on the perception of the wide public. Therefore we can see the American audience leaning towards Charlie Chaplin in his later years rather in a negative than positive in nature.

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