



THE BOOT Cake

A **STUDYGUIDE** BY KATY MARRINER



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The Boot Cake

This study guide to accompany *The Boot Cake*, a documentary by Charlie Productions, has been written for middle and senior secondary students. It provides information and suggestions for learning activities in English, Drama, SOSE, Religious Education, Media and curriculum projects exploring the concept of identity.

About *The Boot Cake*

'I wanted to understand why so many people from so many places, from so many walks of life had forged their own relationship with the Tramp. [Who] saw Charlie Chaplin as their guide or mentor, even a saint. This quest took me to India.' – Kathryn Millard

In the small desert town of Adipur in north-west India, Charlie Chaplin is treated as a god. Every year on the anniversary of his birth, the town celebrates this icon of silent cinema. The Charlie Circle of Adipur – a group of businessmen, shopkeepers, teachers, engineers, students and even a three year old pre-schooler and a doctor who prescribes Chaplin movies for medicinal purposes – organize the birthday bash and invite the local community to embrace their passion for the silent film star.

Five years ago a chance remark about a Chaplin impersonator working in Japan in 1917 set Australian filmmaker Kathryn Millard on a quest to understand the curiously widespread appeal of Charlie Chaplin. She found his ghosts and reincarnations in sophisticated cities, back street slums and theatres in countries as widely disparate as Mexico, Brazil, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Australia. Her curiosity took her to India where she met Charlie impersonators Viswajeet Devnath, Prevan Kamate and Dr Ashok Aswani, and was invited to become an honorary member of the Charlie Circle. Millard even got to bring the birthday cake to the legend's birthday anniversary.

Millard is now a self-confessed Charlie tragic. Her documentary *The Boot Cake* is a mad, wonderful and poignant story of ordinary people finding inspiration and hope in the comic genius of Charlie Chaplin.



DIRECTOR KATHRYN MILLARD
(PHOTOGRAPHER LORRIE GRAHAM)

About the filmmaker

Kathryn Millard: producer, director and writer

Kathryn Millard is a writer and filmmaker. Her documentary *The Boot Cake* has been developed and produced with the support of the Film Finance Corporation, the Australian Film Commission, the NSW Film and Television Office, the Australia-India Council and Varuna Writers' Centre.

Millard's previous film credits include the feature film *Travelling Light* (2003), with Pia Miranda, Sacha Horler and Brett Stiller, the critically acclaimed short feature *Parklands* (1996) with Cate Blanchett and Tony Martin and *Light Years* (1991), a documentary about the work of Australian photographer, Olive Cotton. Millard has also written, produced and directed dramatized documentaries for ABC and SBS Television. She has been awarded writing fellowships from the NSW Film and Television Office and Varuna Writers' Centre.

The Boot Cake is a mad, wonderful and poignant story of ordinary people finding inspiration and hope in the comic genius of Charlie Chaplin.



ABOVE: CHARLIE CHAPLIN AND LLOYD BACON IN *THE FLOORWALKER*

Millard has also written extensively for print and acted as script editor/dramaturge for film and theatre productions including Noëlle Janaczewska's award winning plays *Mrs Petrov's Shoe* and *Songket*. She has published book chapters and articles on subjects including: screenwriting, film, photography, memory, colour and design and self-help culture, and written reviews and articles for journals including *Art Monthly*, *Scan*, *Senses of Cinema*, *RealTime*, *Island*, *Metro*, *Text* and *Theatre-Forum*. Millard's radio credits include *Garden Cycle* and *Orchestrations in Light*. Millard holds a Master of Arts and a Doctorate of Creative Arts from the University of Technology, Sydney. She is currently an associate professor in Macquarie University's Department of Media.

Charlie Chaplin

Charles Spencer Chaplin, better known as Charlie Chaplin, was born on April 16, 1889.

Chaplin first took to the stage at the age of five when his mother, a music hall entertainer, fell ill and could not perform. His parents' separation, his mother's mental illness and the family's poverty made life difficult for Charlie and his older brother Sydney.

In his adult life, Chaplin acted in, directed, scripted, produced and scored his own films, becoming one of the most creative and influential personalities of the silent film era. Chaplin's first film appearance was in *Making a Living* (Henry Lehrman, 1914), a short comedy that brought Chaplin instant suc-

cess. Chaplin's next film *Kid Auto Races at Venice* (Henry Lehrman, 1914) saw the debut of his principal character, the Tramp. With his tight coat, oversized trousers and shoes, derby hat and bamboo cane, the Tramp was a vagrant with the refined manners and dignity of a gentleman.

Chaplin's earliest films were made for Keystone Studios, where he learned the craft of filmmaking. While Chaplin's early films employed the extreme physical comedy and exaggerated gestures that were hallmarks of Keystone Studios' productions, his comedy was also unique. Chaplin had a strong affinity for and pathos. He made thirty-four shorts for Keystone before moving to Essanay Studios in 1915 where his films became longer and more ambitious. In 1916 he moved again, this time to the Mutual Film Corporation, where he was given near-complete artistic control. The twelve films he produced over an eighteen-month period at the Mutual Film Corporation rank among the most significant comedy films in cinema. Chaplin built his own Hollywood studio and independently created a significant body of work that remains entertaining and influential. In 1919 he co-founded the United Artists Film Corporation with Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks and DW Griffiths.

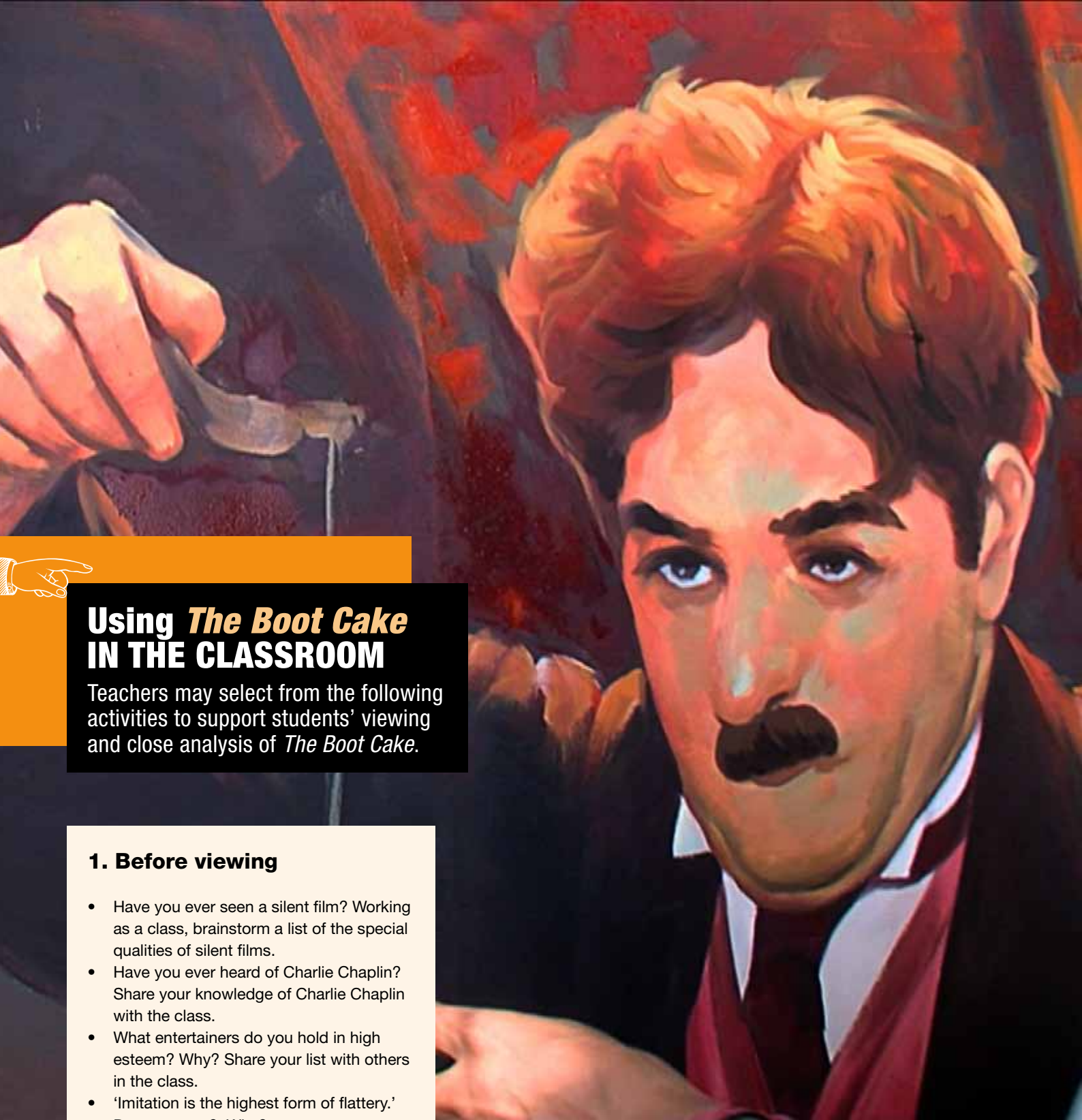
After the arrival of sound films, Chaplin made *City Lights* (Chaplin, 1931) and *Modern Times* (Chaplin, 1936), silent films scored with his own music and sound effects. Chaplin resisted making a 'talkie' until the 1930s; he considered cinema essentially a pantomimic art. Chaplin's dialogue films made in Hollywood were *The Great Dictator* (Chaplin, 1940), *Monsieur Verdoux* (Chaplin, 1947) and *Limelight* (Chaplin, 1952). Chaplin's final two films were made in London: *A King in New York* (Chaplin, 1957) and *A Countess from Hong Kong* (Chaplin, 1967).

Chaplin was married four times and fathered eleven children. His confirmed and rumoured affairs with young actresses gained the media's attention and were regarded by many as scandalous.

Chaplin's political sympathies always lay with the left. It was not until the Great Depression that his films became more openly political in their themes. While Chaplin's politics seem tame by modern standards, his views caused him to be labelled a communist and during the McCarthy era he was accused of un-American activities.

In 1972, Chaplin received an honorary Academy Award for 'the incalculable effect he has had in making motion pictures the art form of this century'. Chaplin was named in the British New Year's Honour List in 1975 and was knighted as a Knight Commander of the British Empire. He died on 25 December 1977 at the age of eighty-eight.

Chaplin acted in, directed, scripted, produced and scored his own films, becoming one of the most creative and influential personalities of the silent film era.



Using *The Boot Cake* IN THE CLASSROOM

Teachers may select from the following activities to support students' viewing and close analysis of *The Boot Cake*.

1. Before viewing

- Have you ever seen a silent film? Working as a class, brainstorm a list of the special qualities of silent films.
- Have you ever heard of Charlie Chaplin? Share your knowledge of Charlie Chaplin with the class.
- What entertainers do you hold in high esteem? Why? Share your list with others in the class.
- 'Imitation is the highest form of flattery.' Do you agree? Why?
- What entertainers do others choose to impersonate? Why do you think the entertainers generate this interest? Often the word 'tribute' is used to describe the intentions of the impersonators. Do you think 'tribute' is an apt description of their efforts?
- How do you celebrate your birthday? Why are birthdays occasions for celebration? Share your memories of birthdays and birthday parties with some of your peers.
- Bring some photographs of your birthday cakes to class. Make a mural on a class notice board. Share the stories behind the photographs with your peers.

1. After viewing

- Did you enjoy watching *The Boot Cake*? Share one of your favourite moments with the class.
- After watching *The Boot Cake*, what comments would you make about the purpose of the documentary?
- Why is it important to tell the stories of people like Dr Aswani, Viswajeet Devnath and Prevan Kamate?
- Why do you think the film is called *The Boot Cake*?
- Write a tagline that could be used to promote *The Boot Cake*.

ABOVE: CHARLIE BOLLYWOOD STYLE (PHOTOGRAPHER MRINAL DESAI)

MAKE A LIST OF THE BOOT CAKE'S THEMES.

MATCH EACH THEME WITH DIRECT AND INDIRECT EVIDENCE FROM THE BOOT CAKE.

- 'In every one of his films, there is a message.' – Dr Aswani
Watch a selection of Charlie Chaplin films. Do you agree with Dr Aswani's claim? What messages were made obvious in the films you viewed?
- Visit <<http://www.charliechaplin.com>> and <<http://www.imdb.com>> to learn more about Charlie Chaplin.
- Does Charlie Chaplin's style of comedy appeal to you? Why?
- Define pathos. Why do you think this term is often used to describe the narratives and characters of Charlie Chaplin's films?
- Can you think of any contemporary entertainers who have been influenced by Charlie Chaplin's comedic style?
- 'Charlie is a citizen of the world.' – Dr Aswani
What does Dr Aswani mean?
- 'We are crazy about your name,
O Charlie.
We are crazy about your name,
O Charlie.
Laughing and making others laugh,
With your name Charlie.'
The Charlie faithful express their love of Charlie

Before viewing

After viewing

Themes

Close analysis

Charlie Chaplin

'Charlie has played the role of a common man. There is only a small percentage of wealthy people, most people are middle class or poor, and Charlie has played their role.'

– Dr Aswani

In his films Charlie Chaplin plays the outsider. He is the immigrant, the underdog, the clown, the wise fool. He thumbs his nose at authority, deflates puffed-up officialdom and triumphs over adversity. Charlie's appeal can be explained by his characters' resilience. No matter how down on their luck, they can always see hope. (Millard)

Charlie's screen alter ego, the Tramp, was and remains a mentor, guardian angel and confidant for many people. The character was created from his childhood years spent on the streets and in the workhouses of East London. In the Tramp's first screen outing, *Kid Auto Races at Venice*, Chaplin, his director and cameraman turned up at a go-karting event and improvised their film in front of the crowd.



ABOVE: CHARLIE CHAPLIN STATUETTES STAND ON THE SHRINE IN DR ASWANI'S DISPENSARY ALONGSIDE THE REVERED HINDU GOD KRISHNA (PHOTOGRAPHER HIMMAN DHAMIJA).

Chaplin through verse. Consider the words that are sung and recited during *The Boot Cake*.

What do the words tell you about Charlie Chaplin and the way he is regarded by his fans?

- Why do you think Chaplin's Tramp is so popular?
- 'His films are like the Bhagavad Gita, our great book. Every time you read it, you find new meaning.'

'He's my god.' – Dr Aswani

Charlie Chaplin statuettes stand on the shrine in Dr Aswani's dispensary alongside the revered Hindu God Krishna. Some may judge Dr Aswani's gestures as unorthodox and even sacrilegious. Where do you stand? Is there anything wrong with Dr Aswani and others placing their faith in Charlie Chaplin?

- Investigate an aspect of Charlie Chaplin's life



Did you know?

CHAPLIN ONCE ENTERED A CHARLIE CHAPLIN LOOKALIKE CONTEST IN SAN FRANCISCO BUT DID NOT MAKE IT TO THE FINAL ROUND!

story. Use print, film and electronic texts to aid your research. Create a multimedia presentation to show others in the class. Shape your research so that it offers a perspective, like Millard does in *The Boot Cake*. Possible topics:

- Chaplin's time at Keystone Studios could be linked to a discussion of his decision to sidestep slapstick and develop his own brand of comedy.
- The personal lives and relationships of Hollywood's leading men and women sell magazines. An investigation of Chaplin's personal life could consider media and public interest in his marriages and affairs.
- A discussion of Chaplin's politics could be linked to an analysis of his film *The Great Dictator*.

The impersonators

- **Did you know?** There is an urban myth that Chaplin once entered a Charlie Chaplin look-alike contest in San Francisco but did not make it to the final round. Can you find any real evidence for this myth? (Other than its recycling on the internet?)
- *The Boot Cake* features Charlie lookalikes who have made a living from impersonating the star. Australian Chaplin imitator Ern Vockler, Tollywood and Bollywood megastar Kamal Hassan, and the Mexican Charlie Chaplin and Rajesh Puri, Carlos Amador, whose advertisements for Cherry Blossom reinvented Charlie Chaplin in India, are all indebted to Chaplin. Use the Internet to find out more about those who have



found fame and fortune impersonating Charlie Chaplin. How does *The Boot Cake* regard these performers?

- *The double is common to many cultures. The Argentinian writer Borges says that the double was initially inspired by reflections in water or mirrors. For the Ancient Egyptians the double or ka was our exact counterpart in another realm. In Scotland it is the fetch or double who comes to take us to the afterlife. For the poet Yeats, the double was our idealized self. The one who complements us but is always just out of reach.* – Millard

Had you ever heard of the concept of the double? Why does Millard bring this idea to her audience's attention? Find out more about one of the named cultural notions of the double.

FROM TOP: MUMBAI CHAPLIN IMPERSONATOR PREVAN (PHOTOGRAPHER HIMMAN DHAMIJA) • KAMAL HASSAN AS CHARLIE CHAPPELLI.



Dr Aswani is perhaps Charlie Chaplin's most devoted follower. He is an insightful and compassionate man, who believes that Charlie can help all sorts of conditions that stem from an unhappy state of mind.

LEFT: DR. ASHOK ASWANI (PHOTOGRAPHER HIMMAN DHAMIJA)

Dr Charlie

Dr Aswani is perhaps Charlie Chaplin's most devoted follower. As the founder of the Charlie Circle, organizing Charlie's birthday party is undoubtedly the highlight of his year. He is an insightful and compassionate man, who believes that Charlie can help all sorts of conditions that stem from an unhappy state of mind.

In *The Boot Cake*, Dr Aswani recalls his introduction to Charlie Chaplin:

When I was young I worked for a food company. I used to cycle to work everyday. On the way there was a theatre. One day I saw a poster at the theatre. There with a moustache, a hat, a walking stick, and wearing old clothes was a strange man. I said, "Hey, what is this thing?" I was hypnotized.

The advertisement was for Charlie Chaplin's film *The Gold Rush* (Chaplin, 1925). Dr Aswani attended three screenings that day. He lost his job but he found Charlie.

- I am an Ayurvedic doctor. When a patient comes to me my first task is to understand the state of their spirit. Then I check their pulse, I talk to them and give them a prescription. Sometimes when I feel they look really troubled, I ask them to wait. I open the drawer and show them these VCDs [video compact discs] ... When the patients see this, they're happy that a doctor has given them a VCD. They forget their pain. They watch the VCDs happily. When they come back the next day, half their pain has disappeared! This is how I have become a good doctor. People like it, they call me "Charlie doctor".* – Dr Aswani
Were you surprised by Dr Aswani's decision to prescribe Charlie Chaplin VCDs instead of medication?



ABOVE: MUMBAI CHAPLIN IMPERSONATOR VISWAJEET (PHOTOGRAPHER MRINAL DESAI)

- 'I believe that Charlie is in me.'
'Whenever I see him, I find myself.'
'I am Charlie.'
'The way I sit, stand, work and walk makes me feel as if I have seen and known Charlie. I have immersed Charlie into my life.' – Dr Aswani
Use these statements to initiate a discussion of how Charlie Chaplin has shaped Dr Aswani's identity.

Hotel Charlie

The first time I saw Charlie Chaplin I was around six years old. At that time my mother didn't have enough money to buy a television. I used to hide and watch the TV at my landlord's house ... To see something. Even a little. Just a glimpse of Charlie. – Viswajeet

Viswajeet Devnath is an aspiring actor. He became interested in theatre when he was at school, and he used to perform Charlie Chaplin shows. Viswajeet made his first Charlie costume with his mother's help and relied on his own resourcefulness to find a hat and make a cane. For Viswajeet makeup is essential to his transformation. Viswajeet prays to Charlie before he performs, and believes that his prayers are answered.



- ‘It’s very hard to live here, boss, but I survive because of Charlie Chaplin. His blessing will always be upon me.’
‘Whenever I wear the Charlie costume, I feel really good.’
‘Sometimes I feel that Charlie Chaplin is inside me.’
‘We have had the same life, the same struggle. You have to struggle a lot in Mumbai, boss.’
‘I am holding Charlie Chaplin’s hand as I walk.’
– Viswajeet

Use these statements to initiate a discussion of Viswajeet’s relationship with Charlie Chaplin. Viswajeet hopes to become a successful performer in Bollywood. What difficulties do you think he will face? Have you seen any Bollywood films? What did you like about them? What did you find interesting? As a research project, imagine a day in the life of Viswajeet looking for work in Mumbai’s Film City.

Mumbai Charlie

Prevan Kamate lives in Mumbai, where he is a community worker and performer. He makes a living playing Chaplin’s Tramp. Like Viswajeet, he first saw Chaplin on television and was inspired to imitate him. Prevan’s mother encouraged his efforts.

- ‘I know so many things in life through his films, his philosophy and his performances.’
‘Charlie himself was crying, but he made other people laugh. My story is the same. There is a lot of sadness. But to bring a smile to someone’s face, to bring joy, that is very difficult.’
‘Charlie Chaplin’s character is totally on my mind, on my soul. On my body.’ – Prevan
Use these statements to initiate a discussion of how Charlie Chaplin has influenced Prevan’s sense of self and approach to life.

*“I used to hide and watch the TV at my landlord’s house ... To see something. Even a little. Just a glimpse of Charlie”
Viswajeet*

ABOVE: THE BOOT CAKE, VISWAJEET DEVNATH (PHOTOGRAPHER MRINAL DESAI)

The Charlie Circle

‘Long live Charlie.’

Dr Aswani started the Charlie Circle in 1973. The Charlie Circle members are dedicated both to Charlie Chaplin and the philosophy of life depicted in his films. The members are active in their community; they see Chaplin as a reminder of their responsibility to others. Dr Aswani claims that the Charlie Circle teaches unhappy people a love of life, to rise instead of feeling that they are finished. An invitation to join the Charlie Circle is considered a great honour.

The Charlie Circle celebrates the anniversary of Charlie Chaplin’s birth every year. For Chaplin’s 116th birthday party they have planned a boot cake, a screening of *The Gold Rush* and a parade featuring sixteen Charlie Chaplin lookalikes.

- Crazy or inspired? Would you join the Charlie Circle if you lived in Adipur?
- Were you surprised by the Charlie Circle’s devotion to Charlie Chaplin? Recall and discuss those moments that confirm not only their belief in Chaplin but their determination to make the birthday party a success.
- ‘What did Lord Krishna teach us? Be happy. Be carefree. Dance to your own tune. Don’t cause anyone sadness.’ – Dr Aswani
When do we see the members of the Charlie Circle living out this philosophy?
- You are a reporter for a Mumbai daily newspaper. Write a feature article on Chaplin’s 116th birthday party in Adipur. Your article should include an introduction to Dr Aswani and the Charlie Circle, a description of the preparations and all that happens on the day, interviews with some of the participants in the parade and



LEFT: DOCTOR ASWANI AND THE CHARLIE CIRCLE
(PHOTOGRAPHER HIMMAN DHAMIJA) • **BELOW: OSWIN RIBEROI**
(PHOTOGRAPHER MRINAL DESAI)



onlookers' reactions. Go behind the scenes; be there when they cut the boot cake. Acknowledge the significance of the day to Adipur as a community. Download appropriate images from the Internet to include in your article. Ask your teacher to act as your editor and don't forget to devise an attention-demanding headline.

Adipur

Adipur was originally founded as a refugee camp after the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947.

In *The Boot Cake*, Dr Aswani recalls the devastating impact of the Gujarat earthquake: 'On January 26 2001, everyone was celebrating Republic Day. I was at home. Suddenly the ground started to rise and fall. It was fun, just for a few seconds.' Much of Adipur was buried and lost. The homes people had worked hard to build were destroyed. It was during the rebuilding process that Dr Aswani recognized the spirit of Chaplin: 'There went the smiling face of Charlie, taking with it grief and sadness and love.'

- 'Forget sorrow. Move through life with laughter.'
– Dr Aswani
When do you see this philosophy being lived out on the streets of Adipur?
- Were you surprised by the community's acceptance of and involvement in the celebrations organized by the Charlie Circle?
- Write a postcard from Adipur.

The Boot Cake

You know those parties where everyone is asked to bring a plate, well it seems that I'm going to a party ... A party to celebrate Charlie Chaplin's birthday and I've been asked to bring the birthday cake. A cake in the shape of a boot, as a tribute to Charlie Chaplin's film The Gold Rush. – Millard

Kathryn Millard visited leading Sydney cake de-



signer Anthea Leonard, Mumbai baker Meheraban Kola and the executive and pastry chef in the luxurious kitchens of a posh hotel to find out how to make the boot cake. Thanks to Millard's efforts the members of the Charlie Circle enjoyed a chocolate truffle sponge with cashew marzipan icing.

ABOVE: CHARLIE CHAPLIN
IN THE GOLD RUSH

- Watch the famous scene from *The Gold Rush* in which the starving Tramp sits down to dinner and eats his own boiled boot.
- Were you impressed by the efforts of the bakers and chefs?
- Design the cake that the Charlie Circle can enjoy on Charlie Chaplin's 117th birthday. Use an A4 page to present the recipe for the cake, design instructions and an image of the finished cake. Don't forget to include a reason why you settled on your recipe and design. Compile the A4 pages into a class cookbook.

The filmmaker

In many spiritual traditions, people make a pilgrimage in mid-life. I imagined my own pilgrimage might take me to the temples of Kyoto or on the road to Santiago. I would contemplate weighty matters –



art and beauty, kindness and soul. Instead I found myself taking a cake to Charlie Chaplin's birthday party in Adipur. What did I learn? I learnt that a cake covered in cashew marzipan will survive the extremes of heat. I learnt that quests, like saints and gurus, come in unlikely shapes and forms and as Charlie Chaplin himself once said, "Tragedy is life in close up. Comedy is life in long shot." *The perspective of the gods.* – Millard

FROM TOP: THE YOUNG CHARLIES • THE YOUNG CHARLIES ON CHARLIE'S BIRTHDAY • GETTING MADE-UP AS CHARLIE (ALL PHOTOS HIMMAN DHAMIJA)

- What did you learn about Millard? As a class, discuss Millard's professional and personal investment in telling the stories that are part of *The Boot Cake*.
- Documentary Film and Ethics
- What kind of relationships do you think the filmmaker and her crew have with the people whose stories are depicted in the film? What are the responsibilities of filmmakers to their subjects? If you were making a documentary, how do you think you would best establish a relationship with the subjects of your film?
- Watch and discuss films which raise issues about documentary ethics. Steve James' 'Hoop Dreams' and 'Stevie', for example.

Production values

- Millard refers to *The Boot Cake* as being an essay-style documentary. List the characteristics of the style. Make a list of other documentaries that can be labelled as essay style.
- The narrative structure of *The Boot Cake* is built

around the journey to Adipur. As Millard makes her way to the birthday party, what stories does she tell?

- How does the opening sequence foreshadow the ideas of the documentary, introduce the subjects and establish viewer expectations?
 - Why do you think Millard decided to narrate *The Boot Cake*?
 - How do the filmmakers portray the Charlie impersonators that Millard meets in India?
 - Throughout *The Boot Cake* an artist paints a portrait of Charlie Chaplin as the Tramp in *The Gold Rush*. Why do you think the filmmakers included these scenes?
 - Mirror images, doubles, silhouettes and shadows are key visual motifs. Recall examples and discuss the purpose and effectiveness of this approach.
 - Discuss how music complements the narrative, shapes our understanding of the subjects of the documentary, creates mood and evokes particular emotional responses.
 - Working as a class, draw on moments and aspects of the documentary to make a list of the challenges of filming *The Boot Cake*.
 - *The Boot Cake* makes frequent use of:
 - scenes from Charlie Chaplin's films
 - scenes from films starring Charlie lookalikes
 - the performances of the Indian Charlies
 - animations
 - observational footage
 - interviews
 - title cards
 - black and white
- How does this material help to tell the stories that are part of *The Boot Cake*?
- Watch the closing sequence of *The Boot Cake*. Is it an effective way to resolve the story?

Extended responses

- '*The Boot Cake* is an inspiring and uplifting documentary.' Discuss.
- What is the Charlie philosophy? Answer this question by drawing on *The Boot Cake*.
- 'Charlie belongs to the world.' Discuss *The Boot Cake*'s exploration of this idea.
- Write a review of *The Boot Cake*.

Going further

- 'The Unknown Chaplin' (1986) is Kevin Brownlow and David Gill's series about the working methods of Chaplin. Watch some of the series. What was Chaplin's method as an actor and director. How does he craft his gags?
- *Chaplin* (1992) is Sir Richard Attenborough's biopic of the life and times of Charlie Chaplin. The story begins in 1894, when Charlie is five, and ends in 1972, five years before his death in 1977. The film presents one version of the life – both on and off-screen – of the motion picture

pioneer. What are some of the conventions of the biopic?

- The documentary *Elvis Lives in Parkes* (Anthony Mullins, 2007) is the story of how a small group of locals from the town of Parkes in country New South Wales decided to fight the town's flagging fortunes with a festival in Elvis Presley's honour. Filmed in the same good-humoured vein with which the festival is curated, *Elvis Lives in Parkes* provides a history of the festival, from its early days when the celebrations were hindered by the community's indifference, to the triumph of recent festivals that feature the Elvis street parade, Elvis in the park, Elvis impersonator contests and the Elvis gospel church service. Are there any differences and similarities that you have noticed between Elvis imitators and Chaplin imitators?
- In *I am Bob* (Donald Rice, 2007), Bob Geldof is on his way to a Make Poverty History gig in Scotland when he becomes stranded by an incompetent chauffeur outside a run-down motel in Northern England. To his horror, he discovers a lookalike contest is taking place, and no one will believe he is the real Bob Geldof.
- Working with a group of peers, make your own short film about an iconic performer. As you research the life and times of the performer, settle on an idea that you will use as your focus. Write a treatment for your film and a screen-



ABOVE: CHARLIE IN INDIA
ANIMATOR TUSHAR CH

play. Delegate the various production roles and begin filming. When your film is finished, organize a screening and invite other members of the school community to attend.

References

The Boot Cake Press Kit, 2008.

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