

Eleanor M. Huntington

A Land for Animals, a Space for Children: The Landscape in Australian Family Films

Abstract

In the most successful family films produced and directed by Australians in the last two decades, the Australian landscape and animals' roles in such spaces instruct young viewers how to navigate life in a postcolonial and explicitly multicultural nation. Through close textual readings of *Babe*, *Happy Feet*, and *Red Dog*, coupled with an analysis of official Australian government policy, this paper argues that the main animal characters deconstruct the paternal/colonial Anglo-Celtic dominance through their interactions with their landscapes.

In his extensive study of national mythmaking in Australia, film scholar Ross Gibson characterizes non-Aboriginal Australia as “a young society, unendowed [sic] with myths of belonging.”¹ As a nation, Australia holds the historical position of being both colonizer and colonized. Though Australia is postcolonial in the sense that it is no longer a dominion of the United Kingdom, the original inhabitants of the continent, indigenous Australians, remain underrepresented in the financial, governmental, and cultural seats of power.²

Australian film has historically utilized the landscape as a place of constant danger, a site for adventure, and a space for spiritual journey. For children, any new and uncertain landscape is dangerous, adventurous, and transitional. In order to understand the vastness of the natural landscape, children require additional, not always human, guides. In Chris Noonan's *Babe* (1995), George Miller's *Happy Feet* (2006), and Kriv Stenders' *Red Dog* (2011), the pastoral pig, the exotic and exciting emperor penguin, and the familiar-yet-not-quite-domesticated dog deconstruct Anglo-Celtic dominance. Each main animal character finds a new identity by adopting aspects of those he encounters. The characters' interactions with these landscapes force them to be different and to create a new sense of common, shared heritage. Because of Australia's relative youth as a nation, Gibson

identifies alienation and fragility as themes present throughout the country's arts.³ Youth is often associated with these characteristics; it is a period of near constant transition, fraught with daily challenges to one's perception of self in the world. Films intended for young audiences help them to navigate both their place in the physical world and their emotional experiences. Children's and family films thus work to both educate and entertain viewers, attempting to strike a balance between didactic and encouraging tones.⁴ In the most successful family films produced and directed by Australians in the last two decades, the Australian landscape and animals' roles in such spaces instruct young viewers how to navigate life in a postcolonial and explicitly multicultural nation.

The films selected for this study of Australian family films are among the top box office successes in Australian history. Although the top honor lies with Peter Faiman's *Crocodile Dundee* (1986), family films comprise three of the top ten Australian box office hits.⁵ *Babe* (Noonan, 1995) was not only a box office success both inside and outside Australia, but it also received seven Academy Award nominations, winning for Best Visual Effects.⁶ Similarly, *Happy Feet* (Miller, 2006) was also a global phenomenon and won the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature in 2007. While the final film, *Red Dog* (Stenders, 2011), was not a success in any country other than Australia, it not only won the Best

A LAND FOR ANIMALS, A SPACE FOR CHILDREN

Film at the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts Awards in 2012, but it also became the top-selling local DVD in Australian history.⁷

The films' intended audiences span levels of maturation. *Babe*, rated G for General Audiences, is intended for the youngest possible audience and its central character, the pig Babe (voiced by Christine Cavanaugh), is little more than a toddler throughout the narrative.⁸ The film centers on Babe as he is saved from a meat factory and unexpectedly becomes a contestant in a sheep-herding competition, charming the rest of the animals on the farm. The film combines live-action with some animatronic animal acting. All of the animals are voice-acted, able to communicate verbally with each other but not with human beings. While *Happy Feet* is animated (with several live-action sequences), it is also rated PG and narratively is geared to slightly older children. The main character, Mumbles (voiced by Elijah Wood), grows from an egg, to a young penguin, to a teenager during the duration of the film. Like a teenager, he must learn to be comfortable and confident in his own dancing abilities before he finds his true love. The final film, *Red Dog*, is rated PG but features pre-marital sex, recreational drinking, and some mature language. The film is entirely live-action and the titular character, Red Dog (Koko), does not speak. Instead he transforms a remote mining town into a community before traversing the Australian outback looking for his deceased master.

Establishing the Landscape

Tom O'Regan's *Australian National Cinema*, which serves as the standard information source for Australian film scholarship, provides a very loose definition of what constitutes an Australian film. O'Regan identifies Australian cinema as a hybrid national cinema.⁹ As an English-language cinema, he claims that it is more heavily influenced by mainstream Hollywood cinema than other national cinemas, but he also focuses on the importance of local specificity, particularly the landscape, in establishing its difference. Of the three films studied in this paper, only *Red Dog* is immediately recognizable as Australian. As described by one of the characters, the land

depicted is "rougher, hotter, brighter, redder." As evidenced by the lack of an American release and the scant critical attention *Red Dog* received in the United Kingdom upon its release, the film's Australian subject matter and location hurt its chances for global recognition. Australian filmmakers often limit their potential profits when they situate their action in Australia and so frequently choose standardized Western landscapes.¹⁰ As a medium-sized English language cinema, Australian films are in direct competition with the more ubiquitous Hollywood products and thus often succeed financially when they are not noticeably different from Hollywood products.¹¹

Thus, *Babe* and *Happy Feet* rely heavily on non-Australian talent and promote American and British popular culture. Though both feature prominent Australian actors, each also draws extensively from non-Australian performers.¹² Additionally, *Happy Feet* relies on songs from the Western pop world for its soundtrack, opening with a Prince number ("The Song of the Heart") and ending with an Earth, Wind & Fire song ("Boogie Wonderland"). Mumbles' parents, Memphis (Hugh Jackman) and Norma Jean (Nicole Kidman), reference the famous American singers Elvis Presley and Marilyn Monroe. Even the human lead in *Red Dog*, John Grant, is an American actor (Josh Lucas). Though the film was created primarily with Australian audiences in mind, the American character is the most respected, becoming a pillar in the Western Australian community. The three family films span from being unrecognizably Australian with no aspect of the story taking place in the country (*Babe*), to being thoroughly and traditionally tied to the Australian land (*Red Dog*).

Babe and *Happy Feet* promote environmental simplicity. *Babe*, though filmed in New South Wales (NSW), Australia, is based on an English short story but has no set location.¹³ It glorifies the everyday workings of a farm and promotes local foods by positively portraying Farmer Hoggett, who raises animals on his bucolic farm, butchers them, and eats them with his family; Hoggett's farm is contrasted with the nightmarish mechanical pig farm depicted in the film's opening credits. *Happy Feet* is much more explicit in its environmentalism, calling out humans for irreparable and dangerous climate change. It takes place primarily in Antarctica but

involves Mumbles and several of his penguin friends washing up on Australia's shores and becoming part of the attraction at an Australian zoo.¹⁴

Set in Dampier, Western Australia (WA), in the late 1960's and 1970's, *Red Dog* is much more explicit in its setting, providing titles that designate the places and times of its action. Technology is the reason people exist in this space; without the mine, there would be no need for humans to inhabit the area. In the first flashback narration, Jack (Noah Taylor) even asks, "Why build a town out here?" to which he and others definitively respond, "Money!" Though the characters frequently comment on the isolation of the outback, the bush is a desirable space where they are physically unrestrained and experience personal and spiritual growth.¹⁵

Narrative Themes in Family Landscapes

In Australian landscape films intended for adult audiences, the most common narrative patterns are, as described by Felicity Collins and Therese Davis, "melancholy defeat or wry acceptance of things-as-they-are."¹⁶ Films intended for children do not take such a pessimistic route, and the landscape becomes a site for an educational experience. Though previous generations may have made grievous mistakes, such as oppressing indigenous peoples, ignoring immigrant populations, or contributing to environmental harm, a new generation holds the possibility of being better, of being more thoughtful and intentional, than their forebears. In this sense, films intended for children work as a "corrective to the past," designed to counteract past societal failings.¹⁷

Films for young audiences simplify right and wrong, focusing on the choices individuals make and how these choices affect themselves and others. Family films in general are more moralistic and didactic than other media. In *Babe*, which even features an omniscient narrator who evokes a literary read-aloud, the farm animals, the humans, and the audience learn to be more accepting of different abilities. *Happy Feet* expands on this theme, again focusing on the importance of accepting difference while also emphasizing the importance of environmental consideration.¹⁸ In the tradition of post-*Mabo* cinema (films released after the landmark indigenous rights court cases *Mabo v. Queensland*

(No. 2) in 1992), *Red Dog* addresses issues of immigration and multiculturalism, focusing on the necessity of building non-traditional communities in contemporary Australia.

Together, these films teach young Australians how to behave in a postcolonial, multicultural nation. Most Australian movies receive some form of monetary government support, which can then consciously or subconsciously effect the content produced.¹⁹ As a visual and aural medium, cinema promotes what adults deem normal social behaviors. *Babe* demonstrates that even a very small person (or pig) can accomplish great things through kindness and polite manners. *Babe* is not a perfect character, however, and his frequent mistakes provide a point of emotional connection for young children. When Babe tries to help the duck Ferdinand (voiced by Danny Mann) destroy an alarm clock, he is trying to be a helpful friend but ends up destroying the farmer's living room. Similarly, Babe is wrongly accused of killing the sheep Maa (voiced by Miriam Flynn) when he accidentally dabs her blood on his snout. A child would understand Babe's confusion when he gets in trouble for trying to be good and when he is blamed for something he did not do but is unable to communicate his own innocence.²⁰

Children's entertainment can also include more explicitly educational material than would be allowed in films for older audiences. Like Babe, Mumbles makes mistakes and realizes that it is cool to be different, but *Happy Feet* also communicates legitimate scientific information to its audiences. A child watching the film would be introduced to a wide variety of Antarctic animals and would learn about the importance of protecting food supplies for them. By weaving the life patterns of penguins into the film's narrative, the filmmakers also teach children about family structures different from the dominant human and heterosexual mode, as male penguins care for the eggs while the female penguins find food.

As the only film of the three explicitly concerned with Australian themes, *Red Dog's* lessons inform an Australian child about Australian cultural values. The film's heroes are unpolished and uncomplicated, but are loyal and determined to build a community. Red Dog is a silent hero, but he is also uncouth, releasing flatulence in the bus and acting jealous of John's girlfriend. Red

A LAND FOR ANIMALS, A SPACE FOR CHILDREN

Dog's greatest quality is his devotion to the people who inhabit the land. The film's emotional climax presents the previously silent miner Jocko (Rohan Nichol) giving a rousing speech detailing Red Dog's positive attributes as an animal who "understand[s] the meaning of independence and the importance of a generous heart... [Who is] loyal by nature, not design, and who know[s] the meaning of love and loss." In the context of a family film, this speech serves as a checklist of qualities that a child should emulate.

Paternal/Colonial Approval

The films' narratives, though relatively simplistic, nevertheless stress the need to break away from the paternal (colonial) power in order to establish a new, improved and different (postcolonial) identity. This break is not a complete rejection of the parental (colonial) legacy, however, but is instead shown as an opportunity to renegotiate and redetermine the parent/child and colonizer/colonized relationship. Unlike other former British colonies, which are composed of majority non-white indigenous peoples, many Australians look and speak like their former British colonizers. Due to the forced migration of convicts, orphans, and other people deemed problematic by the British government, those who became white Australians developed a strange relationship with the parental homeland. Even as the Australian government, which has long been dominated by the descendants of white immigrants, attempts to differentiate itself from the United Kingdom, many of its political, educational, and cultural systems reflect their colonial heritage.²¹ This dual impulse, to break away and to keep with tradition, is present throughout the family films, but is represented as part of the growth cycle.

Age differentials create inequitable relationships between youngsters and their fathers or masters. While the females fulfill the traditional role as maternal caregivers, the male characters serve as the arbiters of their sons' achievements. In *Babe*, the harsh attitude Rex (the male sheepdog, voiced by Hugo Weaving) takes to Fly's (the female sheepdog, voiced by Miriam Margoyles) mothering comes across as mean-spirited and even escalates into a domestic fight. While Fly is inconsolable

about her puppies being sold, Rex is stoic and unfeeling. He scoffs at Babe's attempts to herd the sheep, scolding Fly for besmirching the good name of sheepdogs. Similarly, in *Happy Feet* Norma Jean supports her son's need to dance, searching out a private ice field for him to practice his tapping while Memphis bemoans his son's inability to fit in with the rest of the penguins. Throughout the course of the films, however, the fathers recognize their sons' value, in much the same way that a postcolonial nation might seek the colonizer's recognition.

The father's initial lack of acceptance leads both Babe and Mumbles to work even harder and achieve more. Each becomes obsessed with parental approval, even as they realize they are unable and unwilling to change their authentic selves to fit their fathers' expectations. Babe uses his adoptive mother Fly's advice to begin to herd, but he internalizes the need for Rex's approval. After his confidence plummets and he runs away, he only regains the ability to herd once Rex rescues him and refers to him warmly as "son." He eventually fulfills Rex's destiny as a champion sheepdog, but requires Rex's assistance in retrieving the sheep's password. In response to his father's repeated requests that Mumbles just try to sing like everyone else, Mumbles furiously yells, "Don't ask me to change, Pa, because I can't." Instead of changing, he finds a way to use his unique ability—his dancing skills—to serve the greater good. Mumbles is ultimately able to secure a food source for the entire penguin group, but only once he has reunited with his father. Though his mother accepted him with all of his eccentricities from the beginning, it is once Mumbles begins to dance with Memphis that he is able to perform his heroic feat. Postcolonial paternalism continues to place ultimate authority in the male figure.

A Space and Place for Animals

The postcolonial focus on the land links to a postmodern rejection of the urban. Australia's land is unique not only in its topographic elements, but in its flora and fauna.²² The Australian landscape films are set in places teeming with animal life. Even in the human isolation of the outback, animals exist and thrive. The landscape film positions the outback as "an archaic source of primitivism

[able to] redeem modern alienation and spiritual angst.”²³ This fantasy promotes the idea that in nature, humankind becomes whole. The positive adult response to *Babe* demonstrates how a farm story allows audiences of all ages to reconnect to simplicity.²⁴ The praise offered to Babe upon his victory, “That’ll do, Pig,” presents a positive view of ordinary living connected to the land and the natural world. The dancing penguins in *Happy Feet* reenergize the “aliens” (humans) with their joyous dancing, while Red Dog unites immigrants and native-born Australians alike. Though children are too young to be alienated by modernism and riddled by spiritual angst, they are nevertheless also enlivened by interactions with animals when they are simultaneously being taught to appreciate the power of these animal spaces.

The animals connect the human beings to their best selves. Babe is quite different from Farmer Hoggett, as Babe speaks incessantly while Hoggett is a man of few words, but through his interaction with the pig, Hoggett experiences uninhibited joy. As he nurses the ailing pig back to health, Hoggett begins to sing. Caring for Babe provides Hoggett with a purpose; with each camera cut between the two, Hoggett’s face is brighter and his voice louder. Eventually he is so overcome with emotion that he unexpectedly breaks into a jig, ecstatically jumping with an enormous smile plastered across his face. For a character that has previously shown no emotion whatsoever (all of his minimal thoughts having been conveyed by the narrator), this direct attachment to an animal object brings him incredible personal fulfillment.

Two of the side characters in *Red Dog* attribute their personal happiness to their relationships with Red Dog. Vanno (Arthur Angel) introduces himself to the visitor, Tom (Luke Ford), in the pub and to the audience by describing his extreme homesickness for his beautiful Italian hometown. Red Dog was his only friend, as all the other miners quickly grew to despise him for his constant glorification of his hometown. In addition to being a welcoming presence for Vanno, Red Dog also inadvertently introduced Vanno to his wife, who served as a veterinary assistant. The animal provided the lonely immigrant with what was most necessary for his happiness, a wife, a child, and a position in the society. The character Jocko, on the other hand,

was silent and aloof because of his enormous guilt for causing a car accident that killed his wife and child prior to the start of the film’s narrative. Red Dog reminds Jocko of the importance of laughter and happiness in his life by stealing a steak from a beachfront grill just as Jocko attempts suicide by drowning. As the landscape can serve as a site for spiritual journey, so too do animals encourage humans on the road to emotional connection and personal recovery.

Animal characters that adopt new roles and new identities demonstrate how human beings can also move beyond prescribed social boundaries. Particularly for young viewers, the themes presented in films and other media inform how children view themselves and their positions in the world. The films acknowledge social hierarchy within the animal worlds, enforced by the animals themselves through their squabbles and battles. Duchess the Cat (voiced by Russi Taylor) devastates Babe when she slanders him for not knowing his proper role, Noah the Elder (voiced by Hugo Weaving) eviscerates Mumbles for being a “bad egg” for encouraging dancing in a society that sings, and Red Cat and her owners, who are equated as “civilization” in the narration, fight against Red Dog’s physical encroachment, as he represents chaos that threatens to undo their traditional, hierarchical society. In each narrative, the hero animal is rewarded for being different, for not bowing to the pressure to conform. The ideal Australian is one too who will be rewarded for being different, but within the normative confines of the Western business and social world.

Authentic Community Spirit

Though the representations of racial and ethnic diversity in these films are imperfect, all promote the importance of intentional community in improving individual lives, a key tenet and the idealized spirit espoused by the postcolonial and explicitly multicultural Australian government. In the vein of the traditional landscape film, which posits that the colonial settlement is a communal place of rebirth, people (or animals) must come together in order to live successfully.²⁵ Babe unites the farm through his earnestness. He accomplishes the previously unthinkable by being the conduit to friendly relations between sheep and sheepdogs, who had

A LAND FOR ANIMALS, A SPACE FOR CHILDREN

previously viewed each other as the bitterest of enemies. Mumbles also unites his community and bridges the generational gap within it. While the penguin elders distrusted any change to the established order and treated Mumbles as a pariah for publicizing dancing among the penguin youth, the elders come to trust Mumbles and appreciate the youth's input in the society. Though initially distrusted, Babe and Mumbles both contribute to the well-being of their communities precisely because they have different gifts and abilities to share.

Red Dog becomes an emblem for those who feel isolated and alone in the outback. He has many peculiar characteristics that allow others to be comfortable and be open about their own peculiarities (such as the larger miner who hides his affinity for knitting, believing it to be a feminine activity).²⁶ Though the miners, including the hero John, initially treat the outback as a place of escape from their personal problems and only as a site for monetary enrichment, Red Dog encourages them to join in communal activities. In addition to becoming an honorary member of the local union, he also brings together the entire community to watch his epic fight with Red Cat and to keep watch during his overnight veterinary emergency. Every single character has a memory to share of Red Dog; he is a common dog, not owned by anyone in particular but instead, representative of the community. Following John's accidental motorbike death, the community faces its first real challenge. Newly formed, it could easily dissipate, but Red Dog revives this community by serving as a symbol. The film ends with the dedication of the Red Dog statue, as the Dampier residents wanted to honor him. In spite of the residual problems faced by the town and the inequitable representation of indigenous and Asian miners, the town is determined to remain a community.

Conclusion

The colonial narrative focuses on the issue of mastery: as Ross Gibson clarifies, "England simply is, in contrast to the colonial society, which becomes."²⁷ *Babe* presents the society with the clearest class and species distinctions as the landscape most closely aligned with the mother country. In contrast, *Red Dog* presents the most fluid class distinctions, with all characters—Australian and immigrant, human and animal—as migrants to the frontier town. These characters do not assume mastery over the land, or even over their own lives (as seen by John's tragic death), but accept themselves in the natural space. They create a community that is thoroughly Australian but also thoroughly independent from preconceived notions of civility in the outback. In his explanation of postcolonial mythmaking in Australian cinema, Ross Gibson claims that "The nation is feasible, but only as a collection of extraordinary individuals."²⁸ These films must celebrate difference and unique abilities, as it is only through the efforts of a group of individuals with special skills that Australia can achieve success as an independent nation.

Thus, *Babe*, *Happy Feet*, and *Red Dog* each read the postcolonial experience through a lens of maturation. As a child grows and develops an independent identity apart from its parents while still retaining some of its learned characteristics, so too does a former colony reflect some of its colonizer's culture even as it works to distinguish itself as unique. The landscape films of the Australian New Wave communicated a need to tie essential Australianness to the experience of the European settler in the physical space of the land. The Australian family films of the last twenty years posit that children, the future leaders of Australia, need to continue this connection to the land.

Eleanor M. Huntington is a Master's student in the Bryan Singer Division of Cinema and Media Studies at the University of Southern California. Her work focuses on educational media and has been published in *Spectator*, *In Media Res*, and *Film Matters*.

Notes

1 Ross Gibson, *South of the West: Postcolonialism and the Narrative Construction of Australia* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 64.

2 From the time of European settlement until late in the twentieth century, the Australian government effectively treated indigenous Australians as non-citizens. In addition to a fraught relationship with its indigenous peoples, post-World War II Australia has received an influx of immigrants from around the world, particularly from throughout Asia, as acknowledged in the government's official Multicultural Policy, which estimates that the country has accepted more than seven million immigrants since 1945. The first European settlers to Australia were the English and Irish convicts transported on the First Fleet. This wave solidified Anglo-Celtic power over Australian culture. The gold rushes of the mid-nineteenth century drew immigrants from throughout the world, including strong contingencies of Chinese and Germans. As happened in the United States, the Australian government enacted exclusionary migration measures to halt the migration of Asian immigrants in what is known as the White Australia Policy. Following the near Japanese invasion of Australia during World War II, the government adopted a policy of "populate or perish," realizing that in order to fend off future attacks, the country would need to be a more imposing presence in the world. Waves of Eastern European immigrants followed, especially from Greece and Italy. With the dismantling of the White Australia policy in the 1970's, Australia welcomed new immigrants from a variety of Asian countries. In addition to welcoming Western workers through work-holiday visas, Australia continues to serve as a frequent port for Asian immigrants as well as the desired location for refugees from throughout the Middle East. The introduction to Catherine Simpson's, Renata Murawska's, and Anthony Lambert's *Diasporas of Australian Cinema* (Bristol, UK: Intellect Ltd, 2009) provides a much more thorough overview of immigration to Australia during the twentieth century. Also see: Australian Government: Department of Social Services, "The People of Australia: Australia's Multicultural Policy," accessed June 23, 2015, https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/12_2013/people-of-australia-multicultural-policy-booklet.pdf.

3 Indigenous Australians (Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islanders) have inhabited the continent for at least 40,000 years, while Europeans settled in Australia beginning with the First Fleet of convicts in January 1788. Australia became a dominion of the United Kingdom on January 1, 1901, and became an independent nation and member of the Commonwealth on October 9, 1942 (backdated to September 3, 1939).

4 Though some use "children's film" and "family films" interchangeably, I use "children's film" to identify films that only have very young audiences in mind (normally ages eight and under), and "family films" to designate those that do not contain much, if any, objectionable material and can be enjoyed by both children and adults.

5 The top ten Australian feature films of all time, ranked by total reported gross Australian box office are: *Crocodile Dundee* (Faiman, 1986), *Australia* (Luhmann, 2008), *Babe* (Noonan, 1995), *Happy Feet* (Miller, 2006), *Moulin Rouge* (Luhmann, 2001), *The Great Gatsby* (Luhmann, 2013), *Crocodile Dundee II* (Cornell, 1988), *Strictly Ballroom* (Luhmann, 1992), *Red Dog* (Stenders, 2011), and *The Dish* (Sitch, 2000). George Miller's 2015 film *Mad Max: Fury Road* made an estimated \$15,812,761 dollars at the domestic box office, which would put it at number 13 in the Top 100 Australian films, behind *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (Elliott, 1994) and in front of *Muriel's Wedding* (Hogan, 1994). All statistics are taken from Screen Australia's official website, accessed June 23, 2015: <http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/research/statistics/boxofficeaustraliatop100.aspx>.

6 *Babe* was nominated for Best Picture, Best Actor in a Supporting Role, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Art Direction, and Best Film Editing.

7 Michael Bodey, "Local Hit Reigns Again as Top-Selling DVD," *The Australian*, February 8, 2012, accessed June 23, 2015, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/archive/business/local-hit-reigns-again-as-top-selling-dvd/story-e6frg9sx-1226265114081>.

8 This essay uses the American ratings system. Whereas the American ratings system divides films into five categories (G—General Audiences, PG—Parental Guidance Suggested, PG-13—Parents Strongly Cautioned, R—Restricted, NC-17—No One 17 and Under Admitted), the Australian classification system has only three categories (G—General, PG—Parental Guidance, M—Mature).

9 Tom O'Regan, *Australian National Cinema* (Oxford: Routledge, 1996), 2.

10 Felicity Collins and Therese Davis, *Australian Cinema After Mabo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 28.

11 O'Regan, 91.

12 In *Babe*, Australian Magda Szubanski plays Mrs. Hoggett and Hugo Weaving voices Rex; *Happy Feet* features Australians Hugh Jackman, Nicole Kidman, Hugo Weaving, Steve Irwin, and Anthony LaPaglia. Most of the voice actors and Farmer Hoggett (James Cromwell) are played by Americans in *Babe*, and Americans Elijah Wood and Brittany Murphy voice *Happy Feet's* romantic leads.

13 The far less successful sequel, *Babe: Pig in the City* (Miller, 1998), takes place in the fictional city of Metropolis. The skyline of Metropolis draws from many real but disparate cities, including New York City, San Francisco, London, and Sydney.

14 Australia has a long history of involvement and exploration in Antarctica. Some information can be found at the Australian National Film and Sound Archive website, accessed June 18, 2015: <http://www.nfsa.gov.au/visit-us/exhibitions-presentations/previous-exhibitions/extreme-film-and-sound-stories-antarctica/>.

15 Noel King, Constantine Verevis, and Deane Williams, *Australian Film Theory & Criticism, Vol. 1 Critical Positions* (Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2013), 120.

16 Collins and Davis, 25.

17 The idea of cinema as a corrective is from *Australian Cinema After Mabo*, 10.

18 George Miller worked on the screenplays for both *Babe* and *Happy Feet*. One could easily read a continuation of the environmental theme into his most recent production, *Mad Max: Fury Road* (Miller, 2015).

19 Before the establishment of Screen Australia in 2008, the Australian Film Commission, established by the Whitlam Government in 1975, managed the government's work with the national film industry. Screen Australia, "Doing Business With US," accessed June 18, 2015, <https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/funding/business/default.aspx>.

A LAND FOR ANIMALS, A SPACE FOR CHILDREN

20 In studies on the American children's television show *Sesame Street*, researchers noted the importance of children seeing well-liked characters make mistakes, as that makes children more comfortable moving past their own mistakes. See Louise A. Gikow's *Sesame Street: A Celebration of 40 Years of Life on the Street* (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, Inc., 2009).

21 The Australian government structure is a constitutional monarchy that uses a parliamentary system of government with a bicameral Parliament.

22 Australia.com (the government's official Australian tourism website), claims that the country has "more than 378 mammal species, 828 bird species, 4000 fish species, 300 species of lizards, 140 snake species, two crocodile species and around 50 types of marine mammal. More than 80 per cent of our plants, mammals, reptiles, and frogs are unique to Australia and are found no-where else." Australia.com, "Australia's Animals," accessed June 25, 2015, <http://www.australia.com/en/facts/australias-animals.html>.

23 Collins and Davis, 91.

24 In addition to its Academy Award wins and nominations, *Babe* won a Golden Globe for Best Film Musical/Comedy and the National Society of Film Critics Award for Best Film. As of this writing *Babe*'s Rotten Tomatoes aggregate review score is 97%.

25 Gibson, 69.

26 Gibson, 65.

27 Gibson, 72. The emphasis is in the original.

28 Gibson, 73.