

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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***Happy Feet* (2006)**

George Miller

OVERVIEW

Director George Miller was born in 1945 in Chinchilla, Queensland, Australia. From an early age, Miller was interested in both film and medicine: he practiced for several years as a medical doctor while simultaneously making short films with producer Byron Kennedy. Miller and Kennedy achieved huge international success with *Mad Max*, Miller's feature film debut. Kennedy Miller Productions went on to produce two *Mad Max* sequels and films by other Australian directors such as John Duigan and Phillip Noyce. Miller then directed high-profile and internationally acclaimed films including *The Witches of Eastwick* (1987), *Lorenzo's Oil* (1992), *Babe* (1995), and *Happy Feet* (2006), for which he won an Oscar. Miller returned to *Mad Max* in 2015 with *Mad Max: Fury Road*, which earned widespread praise and prompted the writing of two additional sequels.

Film *Happy Feet* is George Miller's first animated film. It centers on the early life of an emperor penguin named Mumble, who does not fit in in his colony: whereas the other penguins sing to attract mates, Mumble has a terrible voice but loves to tap dance. The film is essentially a jukebox musical, as it features penguins singing various preexisting popular songs. After the mixed response to Miller's previous film, *Babe: Pig in the City*, Miller promised to keep this film lighthearted. Still, the screenplay (which was written by Miller and three other people) ended up evolving to include a plot element about environmental destruction.

Background Unlike *Babe* and *Babe: Pig in the City*, which utilized many professional voice actors, *Happy Feet* has a cast full of famous Hollywood actors. Elijah Wood, fresh from starring in the *Lord of the Rings* films (2001-2004), voices Mumble, while Brittany Murphy voices his love interest, Gloria, and Robin Williams voices both Ramón and Lovelace. Famous Australian actors Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman play Mumble's parents. The filmmakers used motion capture technology for the penguins' dancing; revered tap dancer Savion Glover both choreographed and performed Mumble's dancing. The film took four years to make but was a commercial and critical success, winning Miller an Oscar for Best Animated Feature.

CHARACTERS

Mumble – young male emperor penguin who cannot sing but loves to dance

Norma Jean – Mumble's mother, a beautiful singer

Memphis – Mumble's father, a beautiful singer

Gloria – young female emperor penguin beloved by Mumble; also a beautiful singer

Noah – male elder of the emperor colony

Miss Viola – singing teacher for baby emperor penguins

Mrs. Astrakhan – specialist singing teacher for baby emperor penguins who are struggling

Ramón, Raúl, Nestor, Lombardo, and Rinaldo – five Adélie penguins who befriend Mumble

Lovelace – rockhopper penguin with his neck caught in a six-pack ring; treated as a guru

SYNOPSIS

An emperor penguin named Mumble is born and immediately begins to tap dance. Throughout Mumble's childhood, his father tries to get him to stop dancing and learn to sing like the rest of the emperor penguins, since that is how they attract mates. But Mumble has a terrible voice and is scorned by the community. Mumble develops romantic feelings for Gloria, a beautiful singer. One day Mumble is separated from the rest of the colony and meets a group of five male Adélie penguins. He learns that

Adélies attract mates by making impressive nests out of pebbles; his new Adélie friends find the emperor customs absurd, and they are impressed by his tap dancing. Emboldened, Mumble returns to his emperor colony with his new friends and dances for Gloria, encouraging her to accompany his dancing with her singing. She is surprised but ultimately loves it. However, the oldest of the community elders, Noah, stops them and declares that Mumble's strange behavior and foreign friends have caused a shortage of fish. Although Mumble protests that this is senseless, Noah expels him from the community.

Mumble and the Adélies, accompanied by a rockhopper penguin named Lovelace, go on a quest to find out the real reason for the fish shortage. It becomes clear that human beings, whom the penguins call "aliens," are responsible for overfishing. Mumble tries to talk to the humans but ends up caught and placed in a zoo. After months of depression, he starts to tap dance again, to the delight of the zoo patrons. Researchers set Mumble free and follow him back to his colony, where he persuades the other penguins to join him in dancing; as he predicts, the humans love it. Video of the dancing penguins goes viral and results in a fishing ban in the Antarctic. The food supply recovers, and Mumble is welcomed back into the community.

SCENES

Attracting a mate – A female penguin sings a song, as male penguins follow her and try to join in. Another male penguin starts singing a song of his own, which the female listens to with interest. They begin singing a duet as the other penguins look on.



Winter – The female penguin addresses the male penguin as Memphis, asking him if he's got a good grip on the egg with his feet. He assures her that he does, calling her Norma Jean. The female penguins of the colony all leave. Darkness and winter weather assault the male penguins, as they try to huddle together to keep themselves and their eggs warm. An old penguin encourages the others to stick together in their orderly rows and praise the Great Guin who keeps them safe. But Memphis gets distracted by thoughts of Norma Jean and drops the egg, which rolls a little distance down a snowy slope. He hastily recovers it and returns to the group.



Birth of Mumble – The sun returns. Baby penguins begin to hatch, but Memphis expresses concern because his egg remains intact. Finally, after Memphis's friend and his newly hatched baby, Gloria, come over to see what is going on, Memphis's egg hatches. Memphis calls the new baby penguin 'Mumble'. Mumble immediately starts tap dancing. Memphis tells him not to, because it "just isn't penguin."



Moms return – The male penguins, babies in tow, watch for the females to return; they worry that the return is later than usual this year. Finally they do return. Norma Jean is reunited with Memphis and meets Mumble; they are happy.



Singing class – Mumble attends baby penguin class. The teacher tells them that the most important thing for each of them to learn is their own "heartsong." She tells them to sit quietly and let their heartsongs come to them. A couple of the babies sing solos; their voices are beautiful. Mumble begins to sing but he sounds hoarse and atonal; the teacher says that a penguin without a heartsong is hardly a penguin at all.



No heartsong – Memphis and Norma Jean talk to the teacher about Mumble’s failure to find his heartsong. Norma Jean worries that this means he can never find his one true love. The teacher suggests that Mumble work with Mrs. Astrakhan. He does; she tells him to be spontaneous, so he begins to tap dance. She chastises him and insists that he sing; his voice sounds no better, however. Norma Jean remarks that she thought the dancing was kind of cute; Memphis, however, insists that it is not penguin.



Dancing and danger – Mumble finds a spot far enough away from the other penguins that he can dance without anyone seeing him. He is accosted by four skuas. They are about to eat him when he asks why one of them has a yellow band around his leg. The bird with the band launches into a vivid story about his “abduction” by “aliens.” Meanwhile, Mumble slips into a crack in the ice that is too small for the big birds to follow him into. They fly off and he cries.



Graduation – “Graduation day” for Mumble’s class of penguins arrives, but Mumble is not allowed to graduate as he still cannot sing. Mumble is now much taller but still has many of his baby feathers, though most others in his age group look like adult penguins now. The graduates and Mumble go off on an expedition without their parents, jumping into the water and fishing for themselves for the first time. Mumble is first to jump in the water; he eagerly swims around in circles with Gloria.



Party – Night falls and the “teen” penguins have a singing party on an iceberg, led by Gloria, who is the best singer. Mumble gets carried away and begins to sing along, but his voice is loud and terrible. The other penguins ask him to stop. He goes off on an ice floe by himself.



Seal attack – Mumble wakes the next morning; the other penguins are nowhere to be seen. Suddenly a leopard seal appears and upends the ice flow. The seal chases a terrified Mumble through the water. Finally Mumble finds his way to solid ground, where the seal cannot follow. There he finds five Adélie penguins, who immediately begin taunting the leopard seal and congratulating Mumble for escaping. Mumble does a little tap dance, which the Adélie penguins love and want to learn.



A different way of life – The Adélie penguins invite Mumble to join them as they go back to their colony nearby. He agrees. Through conversation with the Adélies, Mumble learns that these penguins attract mates not by singing but by gathering a lot of pebbles to build appealing nests. The leader of the Adélies, Ramón, remarks that Mumble must have a lot of female penguins interested in him because of his cool dance moves. Mumble is astonished. He teaches the Adélies to tap dance.



An alien object – Mumble and the Adélies take a tumble on the ice and end up sliding for some distance. They fall into the water and see a machine that seems to be cutting up the ice. When the penguins are back on land, Mumble exclaims that he has never seen anything like that before and that he wants to find out what it is. One of the Adélies suggests that they go ask Lovelace, a penguin guru.



Lovelace – Mumble and the Adélies get in line with several dozen other penguins, each of whom comes with a pebble to add to Lovelace's nest in exchange for the answer to one question. Lovelace has an object around his neck that is mysterious to the penguins but is clearly a six-pack ring for human cans. When it is his turn, Mumble asks Lovelace whether he has ever been abducted by aliens. Lovelace is offended by the question; he says that his talisman was *bestowed* on him by the mystic beings on his journey of enlightenment.



Song and dance – The Adélies learn that Mumble loves someone but needs to be able to sing in order to attract her. Although they find that method of attracting mates to be absurd, they vow to help. Over at the emperor colony, Gloria sings while many male penguins try to attract her attention. She puts them off. Mumble and the Adélies arrive; Ramón hides behind the taller Mumble and sings, while Mumble mouths the words. Gloria sees through the ruse immediately and is angry. But Mumble begins to tap dance and suggests that Gloria sing along to his rhythm; she resists at first but then acquiesces. Soon the other penguins, Adélie and emperor, also join in the song and the dance.



Cast out – As the dance expands to include dozens of penguins, the old male penguins who oversee the colony become alarmed. The oldest one, Noah, shouts at the penguins to stop. He expels Mumble from the community, saying that the food shortage is the fault of Mumble's unconventional behavior and of the presence of "foreign" penguins in their midst. Mumble protests that he has seen evidence of "aliens" not too far from the colony, and that they are probably the ones responsible for the food shortage. Norma Jean appears and protests Mumble's expulsion. Memphis stifles her protest, confessing that there *is* something wrong with Mumble because he dropped Mumble when he was still in the egg. Mumble leaves, vowing to find out what is happening to the fish and then return.



Lovelace's confession – Mumble and the Adélie penguins return to Lovelace, who is now alone. Mumble asks, "Where do I find the mystic beings?" But then they realize Lovelace is slowly being choked by the thing around his neck, which he now admits was not bestowed by mystic beings. Lovelace agrees to take them to the place where he got stuck in it. Gloria catches up with Mumble at this point, saying she wants to be with him. Mumble protests that choosing him alienates her from the colony; he drives her away.

Elephant seal insight – Mumble and the Adélie penguins proceed, getting as far as an elephant seal colony. A couple of elephant seals confirm that they have seen aliens with lots of machinery, annihilating not only fish but everything in their path. Mumble says he wants to try talking to them. They walk on in the direction the elephant seals indicate.



Alien territory – Mumble and the Adélie penguins arrive at a spot with many alien objects, including more six-pack rings. But they are suddenly attacked by two orcas and must flee. They succeed, but a huge alien object then cuts through the ice on which they are standing: a human ship. Mumble swims in pursuit of the ship, telling the Adélies to take care of Gloria and his mom and renewing his promise to talk to the aliens and get them to stop stealing the penguins' fish.



Zoo – Mumble is captured by the humans and placed in a zoo in Australia. He tries to talk to the humans, but they do not understand him. He eventually gives up; as the months pass, a depressed Mumble becomes resigned to zoo life. One day a child taps on the glass and he begins to tap



dance in response. The child is delighted, and soon many humans gather to watch. Some record his dancing.

Home again – Mumble returns to his colony—with a tracker on his back. He announces that he made contact with the aliens and that although he was not able to speak to them, they seemed to respond to his dancing. He thinks they are coming soon to help. The colony elders remonstrate, but the other penguins ask Mumble to show them how to dance. He does so. Meanwhile, Mumble is reunited with his mother and the Adélie penguins. He also sees his father, who apologizes to Mumble for his treatment of him. Memphis agrees to let Mumble teach him to dance.



Dancing saves the day – A group of humans arrives by helicopter; they see almost the entire penguin colony dancing. They dance along and record the penguin dance with a camera. Eventually, even the penguin elders join in. The video of dancing penguins spreads all over the world; some humans dance along, others successfully agitate for a fishing ban in the penguins' area. Now with their food supply restored, the penguins dance together.



CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Mumble Mumble is an emperor penguin who does not fit in with the others in his colony because he loves to dance, which they find bizarre. He is also terrible at singing, which they believe to be crucial to attracting a mate. But his perspective widens when he ventures beyond the colony.

Musical Mumble begins to tap dance the second he hatches, and he feels the urge to dance constantly throughout his life. He continues in secret when necessary. He also loves Gloria, the best singer his age. In fact, Mumble is just as musical as the other emperor penguins; he simply expresses it with his feet instead of his voice.

Bashful From the day of his birth, Mumble is taught (by his father and other community members) to be ashamed of his penchant for dancing and his bad singing voice. He thus grows into a bashful young adult, hesitant to speak up for himself or to pursue the female he loves.

Independent His community's scorn also makes Mumble independent. He goes off by himself frequently, which results in both dangerous and friendly cross-species encounters. Mumble learns to think outside the box and ultimately resolves the food shortage by independently investigating its cause and finding a solution.

Memphis A male emperor penguin and a beautiful singer, Memphis loves his wife, Norma Jean, and his son, Mumble. He does not question the beliefs of his community or the actions of its leader, Noah. He is haunted by his one failure: dropping Mumble in the egg.

Conformist Unlike his wife and son, Memphis conforms to the mores of his society. He sometimes literally echoes Noah's words. When he tells Mumble to stop dancing, it is on the grounds that "it just isn't penguin." Memphis does not even protest Noah's decision to expel Mumble from the colony.

Fearful Clearly, Memphis's conformity is rooted in fear. He believes Noah's dire warnings that deviating from custom will anger the Great Guin, who provides them with food. Above all, he fears that he caused Mumble's "abnormalities" by dropping him one night when he was in the egg.

Loving Memphis frequently expresses love for his wife. He criticizes Mumble because he wants him to have a good life and cannot imagine how a dancing penguin who cannot sing could possibly have one. After Mumble's expulsion, Memphis regrets his behavior, saying when Mumble returns that "there hasn't been one day when I've done right by you."

Norma Jean Norma Jean is one of the best singers in the colony, and she sounds a great deal like Marilyn Monroe. She loves her husband, Memphis, and her son, Mumble. Although worried that Mumble will struggle to find a mate, Norma Jean makes clear that she loves Mumble the way he is.

Loving We first see Norma Jean when she initially hears Memphis's singing and falls in love with him. When Mumble is born, she loves him immediately. Unlike Memphis, she distinctly expresses to Mumble that her love for him is not contingent upon his changing the way he is.

Accepting As a star singer herself, Norma Jean is surprised that Mumble cannot sing. But after just two failed singing lessons, she says to Mumble that she thinks the dancing is cute, adding, "who cares if he's a little different?" Unlike Memphis, she protests Mumble's expulsion, asking the community to accept him.

The Adélie penguins These five male penguins live in a colony with their fellow Adélies near Mumble's. They are fast friends, never apart. They like to have fun and meet new friends, so they are drawn to Mumble. They bravely face danger when it finds them.

Fun-loving When Mumble first meets the five Adélies, they taunt a leopard seal for his failure to eat them. They love Mumble's dancing and immediately get him to teach them. Throughout the film, they sing, they dance, they pursue female penguins, and they celebrate any success that arises.

Loyal These five penguins are driven above all by loyalty. They always look out for each other, and once Mumble becomes their friend, they will do anything for him. They help him pretend to sing to attract Gloria, and they help him in his quest to find out what is happening to the fish.

THEMES

Society

Culture *Happy Feet* foregrounds the theme of culture, showcasing the different cultural practices of the emperor penguins and the Adélie penguins, as well as how rigidly the members of each culture tend to adhere to those practices. The emperor penguin elders worry about any deviation from the norm, whether it be Mumble's dancing or the females' later-than-usual return from the winter fishing season the year Mumble is born. For some time, Mumble is only exposed to his own colony, so as far as he knows, it is universal to criticize dancing and to attract mates exclusively by beautiful singing. But when he meets the Adélie penguins, Mumble discovers that cultures differ: the Adélies attract mates by building nests out of pebbles, and they love his dancing. They find the emperor penguins' customs to be absurd. Mumble learns that the siloing of cultures causes people like his father to take their culture's customs for granted, not realizing how arbitrary they are. Although Noah is proven wrong in his belief that deviations from cultural practices cause things like fish shortages, cultural difference does have real effects: Mumble is expelled from his community for failure to conform.

Illustrative moment: Within minutes of meeting the Adélie penguins, Mumble learns about cultural differences. He dances a little, and they love it. He discovers that the way they attract mates is totally different from the emperor penguins' way. One of the Adélie penguins remarks that Mumble must have all the ladies after him because of his dancing; this astonishes Mumble, as it is the opposite of what he has been told his whole life. He realizes that the emperor penguins' way of thinking is not the only one, and that there might be a world in which he fits in.

Politics

Conflict Conflict abounds in *Happy Feet* and takes various forms. Mumble's differences from the other emperor penguins quickly leads to conflict between his parents, between him and his father, and between him and various others in the colony. This is a conflict over behavior and values. Conflicts also arise across species, chiefly in the form of predator-prey relationships. Mumble and the Adélie penguins frequently must flee predators. This is a natural conflict, but one with a profound impact. The biggest conflict, ultimately, is the one between human beings and Antarctic birds over fish. The emperor penguins

feel its effects before they realize its cause: not knowing that they are competing for food with human beings, they argue among themselves about whether their own behavior has caused the food supply to diminish. Once Mumble learns the true nature of the conflict, he is able to figure out how to resolve it, communicating with the humans using the same dancing that got him in trouble with his colony. In the end, predator-prey conflicts remain because they are natural, but the other conflicts are resolved through understanding and compromise.

Illustrative moment: One scene demonstrates both resolution of one conflict and escalation of another. When Mumble comes back to the emperor colony with his new Adélie friends, he persuades Gloria and ultimately several dozen other penguins to join him in dancing. But the large group of penguins dancing draws the attention of Noah, the chief penguin elder, who decides that Mumble's propensity for dancing is even worse than he thought and must be punished with expulsion, lest it draw others from the colony's customs. Mumble, Norma Jean, and Gloria dispute Noah's decision, but Memphis does not, which then causes a conflict between Memphis and Norma Jean. Only by leaving the colony can Mumble stop the conflict from escalating further.

Leadership The film leaves no doubt that Noah is leading the emperor colony ineffectively. His fanatical belief that they must all behave the same way in order to appease the Great Guin is proven to be wrong. Clearly, Noah resembles fanatical human leaders in the real world (and some viewers of *Happy Feet* interpreted the film as anti-religious, pointing also to the resemblances between Lovelace and a certain stereotypical kind of southern, African American preacher). Ultimately, though, Noah does adapt: when the human beings come to the colony and he sees that they are indeed responding to the other penguins' dancing, he joins in. Mumble, meanwhile, represents leadership of a more accidental and more genuine kind. Knowing that Noah's beliefs are wrong, Mumble becomes curious about the real cause of the fish shortage and sets out to solve it. He attracts the assistance of the Adélie penguins, Lovelace, and Gloria by virtue of his own passion rather than force and fear-mongering. By staying true to himself, Mumble becomes a leader of others, ultimately discovering how to save the colony and gently others to help him.

Illustrative moment: Quite early in the film, Noah's leadership style becomes clear. During the long, dark, cold winter, Noah leads the males with eggs as they try to stick together and keep warm. One night is particularly windy and cold; as the males shiver and struggle in a huddle, Noah shouts at them to remember the Great Guin, who gives them fish and will make the sun come back as long as they remain faithful and stick to their ways, marching in orderly rows and taking turns on the edge of the group. He links the return of their comfort and their females to their own behavior.

Relationships

Parenthood One of the major themes of *Happy Feet* is parenthood. Norma Jean and Memphis both take parenthood very seriously and are wrapped up in their concerns for Mumble's well-being. But they approach parenthood in entirely different ways. Norma Jean accepts her son's differences and defends them in conversations with Memphis and other penguins in the colony. Memphis, by contrast, cannot accept that his son is different from the other penguins and thus may have a different kind of life than Memphis's own. This results in constant tension between Memphis and Mumble. Norma Jean sees parenthood as more important than anything else, taking Mumble's side in all conflicts. Memphis sees the customs and prosperity of the larger emperor colony as more important than his son's individuality. It becomes clear, too, that Memphis blames himself for Mumble's differences because he once dropped Mumble when he was in the egg. He sees his own parenting failure as all-important. Parenthood in this film involves a good deal of love but also a good deal of struggle and heartbreak. Ultimately, parental love triumphs over rigidity: Memphis regrets his treatment of Mumble and makes up with him when he returns.

Illustrative moment: When Noah banishes Mumble from the emperor penguin colony, Norma Jean reacts with defensive love, protesting that Mumble should be allowed to stay. Memphis reacts by asking Mumble yet again to stop dancing. He will not change. And neither will Mumble, who says beseechingly to his father, "I can't change the way I am." Memphis's parental love takes the form of trying to direct his son's behavior, while Norma Jean's is more clearly unconditional.

Psychology

Otherness The theme of otherness is central to *Happy Feet*. Like many other stories and films for children, it is about a child character who does not fit in. Even before he hatches, Mumble is different: the other penguins hatch before him. As soon as he does hatch, Mumble begins to tap dance, drawing his father's censure. His otherness never changes. He later retains his down baby feathers longer than others of his cohort. He never sings well and never stops dancing. At the same time, there are plenty of ways in which Mumble is the same as the other emperor penguins. He likes to swim and eat fish. He loves the penguin his age who is the best singer. Mumble's otherness causes him to be unpopular with the other penguins, criticized by his father, and ultimately ostracized. However, his otherness also makes him independent and creative, which the community eventually learns to value and which indirectly solves the problem of human overfishing. The film celebrates otherness by making Mumble's dancing save the day—and by making it sound just as good as the other penguins' singing.

Illustrative moment: Baby Mumble's first day at penguin singing class showcases his otherness and the other penguins' reaction to it. When the teacher prompts the babies to look within themselves and find their own heartsongs, most of the babies are able to do so easily. Mumble is, too, but not in a way the other penguins recognize: he dances. When forced to sing, he sounds terrible. The other babies (except Gloria) laugh at him, and the teacher stares at him and says, "A penguin without a heartsong is hardly a penguin at all!" This echoes Memphis's earlier comment that dancing "just isn't penguin." Mumble's very identity is threatened by his love of dancing.

Quest

Investigation Mumble expresses curiosity early in life. When pursued by several skuas, he asks one of them why he has a yellow band on his leg, then listens with interest to the skua's story of abduction by aliens. Mumble later sees human machinery and meets Lovelace, who claims that his six-pack ring is a talisman bestowed on him by mystic beings. After his banishment from the emperor penguin colony, Mumble devotes himself to investigating these aliens and their activities, suspecting that they are responsible for the shortage of fish. Mumble's investigation involves long journeys over land and sea, as well as consultation with creatures of other species, such as the (herbivore) elephant seals. Mumble's persistence results in the success of his investigation: when he swims far enough to see it, he clearly sees humans in a large ship reeling in huge numbers of fish. Investigation alone does little good, however; Mumble also must learn to communicate with the human beings and to persuade his fellow penguins to follow his lead. The film suggests that truth will out.

Illustrative moment: Fairly late in the film, having discovered a ship from which human beings are fishing, Mumble's friends assume that they will now simply return to the emperor colony and tell them what they have seen. But Mumble decides to take his investigation to the next level, vowing to go talk to the "aliens" and ask them why they are taking the birds' fish. He wants to do this alone, asking the Adélie and Lovelace to go back and keep an eye on Gloria and Norma Jean. Mumble's friends watch him swim away to what they expect will be his death; Lovelace vows to tell the story of his quest forever.

Change

Growth Although the world of *Happy Feet* is one in which animal communities tend to hold rigidly to their customs, there is also potential for growth. Without exception, growth occurs when someone is exposed to difference and realizes that they can expand their perspective. Mumble learns to value himself and his dancing skills more highly when he meets the Adélie and they admire those skills. Gloria, though taught to value only singing, is able to pay attention to Mumble's dancing when he asks her to and goes along with his suggestion that she accompany his dancing with her singing. She ends up loving the combination, as do several other penguins. Noah shuts down this song-and-dance number, but at the end of the film, a combination of curiosity and desperation prompts the entire colony to give dancing a try. Even Noah himself joins in when he realizes that Mumble was right about the humans' interest in the penguin dancing. All of the characters, even the most rigid, are shown to have the capacity for growth.

Illustrative moment: When Mumble returns from banishment, Memphis tells him that he has realized he never treated him well. Mumble forgives him immediately. Norma Jean suggests that Memphis let Mumble teach him to dance. Memphis is unsure that he will be able to dance, but he agrees to try. It turns out to be easier than he thought, and he and Mumble dance a little duet together.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Happy Feet* has been interpreted as an allegory for the experience of a young person struggling to be accepted by their community and their parents for some aspect of their identity such as homosexuality or disability. What moments from the film do or do not support such an interpretation?
2. Some have found the ending of the film, in which dancing penguins make humans implement a fishing ban, to be overly facile. Others have found it heartwarming. What do you think?
3. Did you believe the film to be anti-religious? Why or why not—or to what extent?
4. Compare and contrast *Happy Feet* with *Babe: Pig in the City* or with another children's film you have seen.
5. How did you like the animation in *Happy Feet*? What do you find to be the strengths and weaknesses of animated films, as compared to live-action ones?