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**DANCE ON THE PAGE: EXPLORING PICTUREBOOK DANCE
EXPRESSIONS THROUGH A MODEL OF DANCE LITERACY**



Dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Education (Educational Studies) or Master of Science
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SUMMARY

This dissertation explores dance within four picturebooks, *Mirror* (Lee, 2003), *Flora and the Flamingo* (Idle, 2013), *Dança* (Fazenda, 2015), and *Yukkuri and Jojoni* (Arai, 1991) in relation to dance literacy. Acknowledging an abundant presence of dance in children's media and texts, this study proposes an aesthetic approach to analysis of illustrated dance through an educational model of dance literacy. The aim is to consider the potential of dance in picturebooks to engage dance literacies on and through the page spread.

Children's literature scholarship on movement illustration and dance in picturebooks is reviewed, recognizing research approaches through social-cultural perspectives, critical theory, and aesthetic analysis. Situated in aesthetic analysis, this study considers an additional, interdisciplinary approach drawing on literacy studies. After reviewing developing conceptions of dance literacy, the *Dance Literacy Model for Schools*, DLMS (Jusslin, 2019) is applied as a framework to guide analysis of the texts.

The methodology considers concepts of creating dance, viewing dance, and aesthetically experiencing dance through the DLMS dimension, *Dance as an art form and form of expression*. An interdisciplinary, aesthetic approach to analysis draws on elements of picturebook composition as outlined by Sipe (2001) and elements of dance as conceptualized in U.S. dance education practices.

The texts were examined with attention to illustrations of characters dancing within isolated page spreads and across multiple page spreads. Findings observe: kinaesthetic gaps between illustrated movements as potential sites of reader co-creation of dance; spatial design affordances positioning the reader as a dance viewer; and illustration techniques representing multisensory, aesthetic experience through dance.

The study finds potential in the texts' dance expressions to afford experiences of creating and viewing dance relevant to dance literacies, and demonstrates an illustrative pattern of portraying aesthetic dance experience through levitation. Continued study of picturebook dance expressions is encouraged to further explore pathway of bodily knowledge and learning within the transliterate spaces of picturebooks.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Children's literature and dance: exploring the connections

I came to my postgraduate studies in Children's Literature and Literacies from a background studying dance and literature, and working in early childhood education. Drawing on my experiences in classical and contemporary dance forms, and teaching creative dance, I found particular interest in children's stories involving dance. While noting the abundance of ballet books in Anglo-European publishing, I began to reflect on how fiction shares, and can further share, the complex, rich world of dance forms and experiences with children. Concurrently, I came across research in dance education drawing on contemporary literacy studies to further develop the concept of dance literacy. I felt inspired to explore a connection between dance in children's books and what it means to be dance literate.

Dance educationalists have long advocated for the capacity of dance to support young people's learning (Gilbert, 2003; Reedy, 2015), calling for continued research combining interdisciplinary perspectives (Bonbright, Bradley, and Dooling, 2013; Stinson, 2014). Benefits of student learning in and through dance include: development of social competencies (Lobo and Winsler, 2006; Giguere, 2011b), cognitive strategizing and critical thinking (Giguere, 2011a; Chen, 2001), curriculum learning, such as in language arts and math (Logue, Robie, Brown, and Waite, 2009; Moore and Linder, 2012), and enhanced quality of life at school (Antilla and Svendler Nielsen, 2019). Furthermore, as both an embodied and performative practice, engaging in dance offers students collaborative and relational experiences supportive of identity and community growth (Antilla, Martin, and Nielsen, 2019). As Hong (2000) writes:

Dance in K-12 education offers students a unique way of knowing and making meaning that is vital to both the development of individual selfhood and to the individual's developing relationship and understanding of other people, places, and traditions.

Once primarily understood as writing and reading in support of studio and performance-based dance, contemporary conceptions of dance literacy recognize that dance involves multiliterate practices of meaning-making (Hong, 2000; Riggs Leyva, 2015; Jusslin,

2019). Expression and communication through dance enacts multiple literacies, including visual, spatial, kinaesthetic, temporal, sensate, linguistic, and media-based modalities (Hong, 2000; Riggs Leyva, 2015; Jusslin, 2019). The term dance literacy prompts some debate within dance perspectives for framing an embodied art through a lens traditionally preferencing linguistic modes (Curran et al., 2011; Hong, 2000; Dils, 2007b; Riggs Leyva, 2015). As Hong (2000) points out, however, a literacy model conveys dance in education as an inclusive, participatory knowledge form to which all students are entitled. Children's literature scholarship can support participatory dance practices in schools and communities by seeking to better understand how dance functions in children's and young people's texts.

1.2 Dance expressions in children's texts and picturebooks

Beyond live engagement in dance through education programs, performing arts, and community settings, children encounter dance through multiple textual forms, including television, films, books, social media, and play. Integrations of dance in children's texts frequently inspires considerable waves of intergenerational, cultural interpretation through multimodal spaces, both live and virtual. With music and lyrics by Lin-Manuel Miranda and choreography by Jamal Sims and Kair Martinez, "We Don't Talk About Bruno" (Miranda, 2021) from the computer-animated musical, *Encanto* (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, 2021), offers one recent example. While Miranda's song topped charts on Spotify, iTunes, and Apple in the United States, widespread kinaesthetic participation resonated through a flood of homespun TikTok dance (re)creations and social media shares (Spencer, 2022). Such prolific capacity of transmission and engagement through multiliterate media practices points to the continued relevancy of dance in contemporary modes of meaning-making, further encouraging the attention of children's literacies scholarship.

Increasingly studied in children's literature, dance permeates picturebook narratives and illustrations. As Ohar, Staniów, and Michułka (2019: 173) write, "in the world of children's fiction, dancing is omnipresent, and everything can dance: people, nature, flowers, trees, animals, toys – the whole world spins around". Picturebooks share stories of different dance forms and practices, of historical dancers and choreographers, and of community identity, individual expression, and creativity through dance (Graff and

Davila, 2014). Notably, ballet stories constitute a popular subgenre of Western children's picturebooks, drawing heightened scholarly attention through critical discourses of body, race, and gender (Miskec, 2014; Turk, 2014; Heinecken, 2019; Scieurba, 2017). Authors also apply elements and aesthetics of dance to enrich character portrayals and scenery (Happonen, 2018) and draw on cultural dance customs to support rhythmic and poetic dimensions of written text (Ohar, Staniów, and Michułka, 2019). Furthermore, audience and critical reception commonly express value in illustrations that 'seem to dance', preferencing artistic sensibilities of movement over stasis (Happonen, 2018). As such, picturebooks communicate dance through multiple dimensions of narrative content, illustration, theme, design, and aesthetic.

With different affordances than live or screen-based dance, dance illustrated in the printed picturebook page spread faces limitations in communicating elements of kinesthetics and embodiment. This conundrum, that "pictures do not literally present movement but rather still images of motion" (Happonen 2018: 57-58), leads to various conceptions of dance in picturebooks as imagery, representations, depictions, or impressions (Happonen, 2018; Ohar, Staniów, and Michułka, 2019; Miskec, 2014). To describe dance qualities imbued within narrative events and scenes that are of dance or hold association with dance, Happonen (2018: 55-56) uses terms such as, "dance and dance like expressions" or "choreographic expressions". This use recognizes that dance aesthetics may also shape meaning within scenes not necessarily about dance. Drawing on Happonen's terminology, I also use the term *dance expressions* in this study to include all dimensions of dance meaning shared through the texts. This serves two further purposes: the first, to reiterate dance as a form of expression, a bodily mode of creating knowledge (Jusslin, 2019); and the second, to acknowledge dance illustrations as multimodal collaborations in making meaning, communicating through codes of both dance and illustration.

1.3 The research process

In this study, I explore the potential of dance expressions in *Mirror* (Lee, 2003), *Flora and the Flamingo* (Idle, 2013), *Dança* (Fazenda, 2015), and *Yukkuri and Jojoni* (Arai, 1991) to engage elements of dance literacies. My research approach anchors in children's literature and literacies studies while bridging interdisciplinary perspectives

of dance studies and dance education. In considering the literature, I firstly define dance in relation to the fields of dance studies and literacy studies; then I review children's literature research studying how dance functions in picturebooks through sociocultural perspectives, critical theory, and aesthetics; lastly, I examine developing conceptions of dance literacy. I propose an additional approach to picturebook analysis of dance expressions through an educational framework of dance literacy.

To do so, I apply one dimension of Jusslin's (2019) *Dance Literacy Model for Schools*, (DLMS), to guide analysis of the study's picturebook selection. DLMS supports expanded practices of bodily learning in education through dance by identifying three interacting dimensions of dance literacy practices: 1) *Dance as an art form and form of expression*; 2) *Learning combined with other literacies*; 3) *Learning through dance in different curricular areas* (Jusslin, 2019: 36). In this study, I draw on *Dance as an art form and form of expression* while suggesting potential further research through the other two dimensions.

Focusing on illustration and picturebook design, I use an aesthetic approach in analysis that draws on compositional elements both of dance and picturebooks as aesthetic creations. In doing so, I seek to demonstrate the potential of dance expressions in the selected texts to engage readers as co-creators and viewers of dance, and to communicate aesthetic experiences in and through dance.

CHAPTER 2 - DANCE, DANCE IN PICTUREBOOKS, AND DANCE LITERACY

In this chapter, I begin by briefly reviewing scholarly conceptions of dance and the field of dance studies, demonstrating relevancy of dance studies towards interdisciplinary children's literature research. I then review research in children's literature offering varied approaches to analysis of dance in children's picturebooks. Lastly, I transition to consider developing understandings of dance literacy and models for structuring dance literacy practices in educational settings.

2.1 Dance and dance studies

What defines dance, or a dance, from other forms of human movement varies with context and cultural perspective (Kaepler, 2000). As dance participants, artists, makers, and theorists contribute evolving plural and multicultural perspectives, constructing a definition of dance in this study embraces fluidity. Hanna (2001) demonstrates dance as an embodied language involving devices and codes for conveying meaning, such as any other language forms. Like other languages, that of dance is not universal; interpreting dance involves knowledge of movement systems unique to the cultural context in which the dance or dance form arose (Kaepler, 2008). From the perspective of dance anthropology, Kaepler (2000) also encourages recognition that 'dance' as conceptualised through Western thinking runs the risk of overlooking how other cultures might traditionally categorise and name processes of movement and bodily expression. Instead, Kaepler (2000, 2008:1) posits dance as 'structured movement systems', the product of "creative processes that move human bodies through time and in spatial layouts", often embodying or performing sociocultural, political, and aesthetic systems.

As structured systems of movement, dance encompasses processes of knowledge and learning (Kaepler; 2000). Working within creative dance education, Reedy (2015: 1) emphasises dance as an artistic mode of communication and expression: "a means of knowing in which body, mind, and spirit come together in action". Similarly, contemporary literacy studies understands dance as one of many embodied modes through which individuals and communities share knowledge and make meaning

(Hong, 2000; Jusslin, 2019; Riggs-Leyva, 2015). Bridging conceptions of dance and literacy, Hong (2000: 246) offers the following definition:

Dance is a multidimensional and multi-layered way of knowing in, through, and about which individuals, communities and cultures past and present come to establish, maintain, renew, challenge and affirm their sense of identity and place within the global village” (Hong, 2000: 246).

In this study, I focus on dance as forms of knowledge communicated and generated through systems of the body and movement, acknowledging the significance of individual and community context within all pathways of dance engagement.

While still fighting for recognition in higher academia (Bonbright, 1999), dance studies has much to offer broader fields of research. Wong and Giersdorf (2019: 4) define dance studies as “the practice of recognizing or remembering the dance or recognizing the trace and impact of its dance”. Dance studies in academia is highly interdisciplinary, weaving fields of art, history, anthropology, education, media, and technology across movement practices, composition, performance, theory, and research (Butterworth, 2012). Morris (2019: 46) argues for the cross disciplinary potential of dance studies:

Dance’s theories and methods are no more stable than any others; they are open to critique and they change, but they nonetheless constitute a fluid body of ideas, analytical techniques, and vocabularies that focus on questions that scholars in other fields do not ask –questions such as how the bodies consume space, how they relate to each other, how their actions both represent and constitute meaning, and what the relationship is of observing bodies to acting bodies, including the scholar’s body.

That is, dance studies lends critical, reflective, and embodied research seeking to better understand the multidimensional ways through which bodies hold, generate, and share meaning. As an iterative tapestry of discourses grounded in meaning making through the body, dance studies can support children’s literature scholarship seeking to explore sociocultural and aesthetic experiences of the body in, and in relation to, children’s text. This study draws on scholarship of dance studies to structure interdisciplinary pathways within analysis of dance expressions. The following section reviews research

demonstrating the various ways that children's literature research explores dance in children's texts, often forming interdisciplinary connections with dance studies.

2.2 Conundrum of form: imaged dance and illustrated movement

Kinaesthetic, embodied expressions of dance shared within the stasis of the illustrated, printed page pose a unique challenge to literary analysis. How do we 'read' an illustrated, dancing body? What particular considerations and meaning may be afforded for children through static, imaged dance? Though left to speculation here, conundrum of form may also contribute to selective research on dance within children's literature, despite, as Ohar, Staniów, and Michułka (2019) observe, its omnipresence. Before considering illustrated motion and dance in children's literature research, a brief enquiry follows into how interdisciplinary dance art scholarship approaches dance images expressed through primarily static mediums.

With a focus on art and historical texts produced for adults, interdisciplinary perspectives lend insight into imaged dance. Research in fields of art history, performance, dance history, dance ethnology and anthropology studies images of dance within diverse media formats, including paintings, stone carving, woodblock prints, and photographs (Sparti and Zile, 2011). Dance images involve complex interactions of meaning between the 'live' dance (such as that performed or imagined), the imaged dance, and the artist's and viewer's relationship to both. Dance images serve many purposes; some attempt accurate documentation of movement and gestures, while others seek to capture experiential essences of performance or spontaneous dancing (Sparti and Zile, 2011). Additionally, as Sparti and Zile (2011: 10) contend, dance images can convey metaphor, stereotype, or moral implication. Interpreting dance images involves questions regarding the artist's context and intention, the function or purpose of the image, and the "limitations or special qualities" afforded by its media (Sparti and Zile, 2012: 10). Perhaps most significantly, analysing dance images requires recognizing to what extent we are "sufficiently knowledgeable about the culture, the time period, the dance style, and the artistic conventions to be able to really know what we are looking at" (Sparti and Zile, 2011: 10). Another medium through which dance can be imaged, picturebook illustrations require the same complex considerations in interpretation of dance expressions.

Children's literature scholarship studying illustration likewise offers relevant considerations to the analysis of dance expressions. In particular, picturebook theory explores how illustration techniques and book design generate qualities of motion and movement in both narrative construction and the reading experience. As Nikolajeva (2002; 97) points out, picturebook illustrators draw on "graphic codes" similar to those applied in comics, graphic novels, and photography, such as lines of motion and blurring. The illustrated form and body positioning of a figure, often through juxtaposition to other figures or mid-action illustration, helps indicate quality and direction of motion (Cavallius, 1977; Nikolajeva 2002). Location shifts of figures or objects are often visually cued through application of energetic lines (Cavallius, 1977). Scene transitions between page spreads and spatial positioning of figures – with variation in illustrated distance, angle, and perspective – express narrative movement and facilitate kinetics of reading, namely the viewer's eye transitioning within and across page spreads (Cavallius, 1977). Likewise, cultural conventions of reading direction and book design shape techniques of motion illustration, as well as how reader attention transitions through a text (Nodelman, 1998). Lastly, the creative process, the act of illustrating, no matter the medium, involves movement. For example, the artist's bodily movements, such as manipulating a paintbrush or digital cursor, informs the expression of motion within an illustration (Doonan, 1993). Such multidimensional kinetics permeate the picturebook page, contributing to kinaesthetic qualities of illustrated dance. The study of how illustration communicates movement underlies analysis of dance imaged within the picturebook medium.

2.3 Sociocultural functions of dance in picturebooks

Moving from analysis of medium and mode to content, children's literature scholarship also enquires into the sociocultural functions of dance in picturebooks. Dance expressions have the capacity to afford reader connection to meaningful community practices and identity. Studying Polish and Ukrainian picturebooks and poems, contemporary and classical, Ohar, Staniów, and Michułka (2019) observe four functional patterns of dance imagery expressed through illustrations and words. As *entertaining/ludic*, dance imbues scenes with characteristics of humour and even caricature (Ohar, Staniów, and Michułka, 2019). As *emotive/expressive*, dance conveys affect and mood within scene and character (Ohar, Staniów, and Michułka, 2019).

Through *aesthetic/educational* and *cognitive/informational* roles, dance helps share community experiences, such as celebrations, as well as cultural and artistic traditions (Ohar, Staniów, and Michułka, 2019). Within Polish and Ukrainian texts, Ohar, Staniów, and Michułka (2019: 173) demonstrate that these four dance functions work together to “invite children to participate in culture actively”, noting a strong pattern of intergenerational sharing. For example, a text may pair contemporary illustrations of dance with well-known, classical children’s poems, or depict traditional folkdances alongside modern stories, fostering “inter-generational popularity” (Ohar, Staniów, and Michułka, 2019: 183). This calls attention to the capacity of dance imagery in children’s media to help support connection and continuity of cultural identity across generations. Of importance to note, yet beyond the focus of this review, this intergenerational dynamic may simultaneously reproduce adult nostalgia of childhood, notions of childhood innocence, or ritualisation of child behaviors (Ohar, Staniów, and Michułka, 2019: 183) through dance. This points to the complexity of sociocultural discourses embedded in picturebook dance expressions, and the relevance of continued research within this dimension.

2.4 The ballet sub-genre: applying critical theory

Research into the sub-genre of ballet books demonstrates how approaches of critical theory reveal further insight into the sociocultural functions of dance expressions. While this study does not focus extensively on dance forms, the prevalence of ballet in picturebooks about dance garners considerable attention from children’s literature scholarship, prompting review. Ballet overshadows stories of other dance experiences in Anglo-European publishing (Graff and Davila, 2014). Scholarship studying ballet in picturebooks unearths complex discourses juxtaposing representations of achievement through art with cultural tropes of girlhood and idealizations of dancing bodies as highly abled, white and thin (Davies, 2018; Rittenburg, 2012). Feminist and girl culture criticism highlights how the convergence of ballet iconography within princess culture obscures values of ballet as an art form through objectives of materialism and commodification (Miskec, 2014; Turk, 2014). Nevertheless, from a perspective of black feminist intersectionality, Heineken (2019: 312) demonstrates that black ballerina picturebooks offer readers role models and “an escape from negative constructions of their gender and racial identities”. Additionally, despite intentions to represent gender

variance or challenge masculine stereotypes, gender analysis of boy characters in ballet stories reveals reiteration of social acceptance through traditionally masculine stereotypes (Sciurba, 2017). As demonstrated through ballet, approaches of critical theory support reflection on important sociocultural dimensions of dance expressions, such as representations of body, gender, and race.

2.5 Aesthetic capacity of dance expressions

Although less studied than sociocultural functions, scholarship also recognizes aesthetic influences and functions of dance expressions in children's stories. The work of Happonen (2001; 2008) studying Tove Jansson's (1914 – 2001) use of dance and movement qualities in character construction and narrative scenery offers one prominent example. Building on illustrative techniques of motion, Happonen (2001: 101; 2018) focuses on movement in children's literature as "forms of expression and understanding, such as aesthetic, cultural, spatial, bodily, and emphatic". To do so, Happonen (2001; 2018) draws on dance theory to examine expressions of dance in the stories and illustrations of Tove Jansson.

Jansson's body of work, children's texts and short stories alike, reveals her lifelong appreciation of social, improvisational, and experimental dance, and helps illuminate the aesthetic capacity and emotional spectrum dance expressions afford fiction (Happonen, 2018: 73):

For Jansson, dance represented a means for experiencing and thinking, an instrument and a framework she used for constructing narratives and pictorial spaces, compositions and characterisation. Thinking dance-wise she was able to imply exceptional nuances and moods in her work from serious to cheerful and from comic to tragicomic, and depict both joyful togetherness and the horror of the lonely moments as well as imply energy and dynamic changes in her illustrated texts.

For example, Jansson's attention to the spine and posture in figure illustrations reveals conceptual connections to the work of modern dance choreographer Martha Graham, and movement analyst Rudon von Laban, demonstrating how cultural dance discourses can influence aesthetic meaning in children's literature (Happonen, 2001).

With significance to this study's focus on dance as knowledge, Happonen (2001) posits that movement expressions through fiction have the capacity to connect with a reader's own body experiences. As Happonen (2001: 101) argues, "kinetic sensation is rooted in personal experience, which enables a resonance when looking at a picture or reading a text". In other words, Happonen (2001) gestures towards an aesthetic relationship between illustrated page spread and reader, between the illustrated and lived body, that generates meaning beyond verbal language. The potential of such resonance requires further research, however, it encourages additional attention to literacies related to aesthetics and the body in the reading experience. Like Happonen, this study engages analysis directed to aesthetic functions of dance expressions. To expand on this work, I draw on contemporary theories of multimodality and dance literacy to continue to conceptualise the connection between page and reader's body. In the following section, I review the development of dance literacy as a concept within literacy studies connecting to recognition of meaning and knowledge experienced through the body.

2.6 Moving towards a dance literacy approach

The turn of the 20th century brought increased recognition of multiplicity in educational approaches to literacy. The New London Group (1996) called for new pathways forward in literacy education to support the multiple modes and cultural perspectives through which contemporary students make meaning in their lives. Responding to the proliferation of digital technologies, the New London Group's "pedagogy of multiliteracies" sought to include modalities beyond traditional forms of reading and writing, including those of the body, categorized as 'gestural'. Through examining interactions of literacy tools used by students in educational projects, Bearne's (2009) framework for multimodal analysis of children's texts likewise accommodates the body through the category of 'movement'. The terms *gestural* and *movement*, as well as *kinesthetic*, as applied in the work of Hong (2000) and Riggs Leyva (2015), capture modes of communication and expression situated in the body.

Arguing such terms as useful yet limited, Jusslin (2019: 28) promotes the term *bodily* modes of meaning to better recognize "that mind and body work together and that the creation of movement itself is seen as knowledge". As processes of "knowing in and through the body", bodily knowledges develop through experiences of bodily learning,

the actions and interactions of the body in relation to self, others, and context (Parviainen, 2002: 11). Moving beyond Cartesian dualities, mind and body are synonymous within bodily learning, emphasising holistic experiences of meaning-making and communication “within the entire human being and between human beings, and in connection with the social and physical reality” (Anttila, 2018: no pagination). Jusslin (2019) emphasises that acquisition or engagement in bodily knowledges is not dependent on ability, age, or physical skill. I apply Jusslin’s (2019) terminology in this study, referring to dance as one of many bodily modes of making meaning, with the understanding that multiple modes, bodily and otherwise, contribute to dance.

2.7 Developing conceptions of dance literacy

While definitions continue to evolve, ‘dance literacy’ is an increasingly applied term within twenty-first century dance studies and dance education (Curran et al., 2011; Jones, 2014; Riggs Leyva, 2015; Jusslin, 2019). The National Dance Education Organization (2022), a leading non-profit organization supporting dance education curriculum in the United States, offers the following definition of dance literacy:

[T]he total experience of dance learning that includes the doing and knowing about dance: dance skills and techniques, dance making, knowledge and understanding of dance vocabulary, dance history, dance from different cultures, dance genres, repertory, performers and choreographers, dance companies, and dance notation and preservation[.]

This approach to dance literacy speaks to arts learning by curriculum subject, appropriately valuing dance, which has been historically marginalised in Western education (Bonbright, 1999), as its own area of study. Dance conceptualised as a literacy, however, holds further potential for student learning. As Dils (2007: 107) argues, dance literacy “reconfigures the dance curriculum as a set of interconnected knowledges through which we understand the body and movement” in relation to dance traditions, individuals, and societies.

Scholarship reveals a degree of tension across fields of study regarding what it means to be literate in dance (Riggs Leyva, 2015; Dils, 2007; Jusslin; 2019). Concerned with elevating recognition of dance within arts and academia, later twentieth century dance

studies often considered dance literacy as writing and reading about dance, dance theory and history, or engaging in notational dance systems, such as Laban Notation (Dils, 2007; Riggs Leyva, 2015). Jones (2014: 114) refers to such practices as “logo-centric literacy about dance”, involving “[e]xploring, analysing, and learning ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘when’ and ‘where’ in dance”. Similarly Parviainen (2002: 22) differentiates between ‘articulated’ and ‘bodily’ knowledges of dance”, defining articulated as “a mode of knowledge expressed in words, numbers, formulas, and procedures, communicated in an exact manner”. As Parviainen (2002: 29) notes, articulated and bodily forms of dance knowledge “should not be treated as competitors”, rather as “interwoven or complementary modes of profound dance knowledge”. Engaging in dance knowledge encompasses interacting modes and texts, engaging multiple literacies.

2.8 Multiliteracies of dance

Dance offers multidimensional, bodily forms of meaning-making, engaging a spectrum of textual modes through processes of doing, making, performing, viewing, and documenting. Broadly, Jusslin (2019) contends dance literacy is characterised by movement literacy (Kentel and Dobson, 2007) and physical literacy (Edwards et al., 2017) with additional emphasis on aesthetic literacy (Lussier, 2010), yet, defining any literacy is value-laden and dependent on context (Riggs Leyva, 2015; Jusslin, 2019). Riggs Leyva (2015: 2) observes:

Asking, “what is dance literacy’ cannot possibly result in a singular definition. Literacy in dance includes alphabetic and textual practices, uses of language, and visual, kinaesthetic, aural, and spatial modalities. The complexity of dance literacy lies in the extent to which each aspect is present and interacting with the others in any given context.

Reviewing contemporary research, Jusslin (2019) identifies four overlapping patterns in how educational practices characterise and apply dance literacy: 1) dance is intentionally combined with other modes of literacy, such as journaling; 2) dance helps facilitate learning in other curriculum areas; 3) dance in itself enables multimodal learning; and 4) symbolic, notation systems are used to document and create dance. All applications of dance literacy are significant in engaging students in bodily modes of learning (Jusslin, 2019).

Bridging fields of dance education and literacy, Dils (2007) traces the connection between dance literacy to the work of Henry Giroux (1992), Elliot Eisner (1998), and Tina Hong (2000). Giroux's (1992: 108) liberatory border pedagogy emphasises that, in response to a "world of changing representations", teaching practices must "offer students the opportunity to engage the multiple references that constitute different cultural codes, experiences, and languages". Likewise, promoting "a conception of multiple literacies" in schools, Eisner (1998: 12) posits literacy as "the ability to construe meaning in any of the forms used in a culture to create and convey meaning". This entails meaning systems beyond the verbal and written, such as those of visual, sound, and movement (Eisner, 1998). The work of Giroux (1992), Eisner (1998), and the New London Group (1996) help establish that "(t)he respective arts forms are different ways of knowing", warranting inclusion in student education (Hong, 2000: 246).

Drawing on pedagogies of multiliteracies, Hong (2000: 246) developed a dance literacy model for K-12 dance education. Hong (2000: 246) promotes the use of the term dance literacy in dance education as it centers "discourse of participation over the discourse of performance", by utilising "the language of education, involvement, community, personal development, and identity". Hong's (2000) model organises dance literacy learning into three dimensions: *kinesthetic*, *choreographic*, and *critical*. Through these interacting domains, "[s]tudents explore, construct, communicate, interpret, and negotiate their own and group meaning as they learn to think in the medium and investigate dance as socially constructed texts, which represent diverse realities" (Hong, 2000; 250). While well understood as such by dance educators, framing dance as a literacy has the added "utilitarian" benefit of communicating the multidimensional and participatory nature of dance learning to policy makers and administrators more familiar with traditional literacies (Hong, 2000; 246).

Hong (2000) refigures learning in, through, and about dance through a literacy lens. Nearly two decades later, reviewing the development of dance literacy – how it is understood and applied in education and research – Jusslin (2019) proposes an expanded model with particular attention to multimodality in dance literacy practices. Designed for school settings that lack dance education programs, Jusslin's (2019) *Dance Literacy Model for Schools* (DLMS) supports dance literacy practices through

“the many possible ways of combining dance with other forms of expression”. Jusslin (2019: 36) organises dance literacy into three overlapping dimensions that relate to objectives in both dance-specific learning and broader curriculum goals: 1) *Dance as an art form and form of expression*; 2) *Learning combined with other literacies*; 3) *Learning through dance in different curricular areas*. DLMS offers heightened conceptual fluidity to support dance literacy practices as part of multimodal learning. Engaging the multiple literacies of dance is one of many ways to continue bring bodily learning into educational settings (Jusslin, 2019). As this study draws on the framework of DLMS, it will be further explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3 - AESTHETIC ANALYSIS THROUGH THE DANCE LITERACY MODEL FOR SCHOOLS

3.1 Applying a DLMS framework

The methodological approach in this study applies the *Dance Literacy Model for Schools* (DLMS) (Jusslin, 2019: Figure 1) as a framework to guide interdisciplinary, aesthetic analysis of dance expressions with relevancy to dance learning. My rationale for choosing DLMS is as follows. Firstly, I sought an interdisciplinary perspective of dance literacy to support analysis. DLMS offers a contemporary model that encompasses multiple conceptions of dance literacy, as developed in fields of dance studies, dance education, and literacy studies. Secondly, while DLMS centers the body and experiences of bodily learning, it also emphasises multimodality in dance literacy. As Jusslin, (2019: 37) states, “all dance literacy is multimodal, as it includes multiple modes of meaning”. This emphasis on multimodality gestures to the capacity of any mode to engage and support dance knowledges. DLMS, therefore, offers a more flexible lens through which to analyse dance within another mode, such as the picturebook. Concurrently, I recognise that applying DLMS to picturebooks constitutes an expansion of the model’s objective: to firstly support bodily learning in schools without dance education programs. My aim is not to move focus away from this purpose, but to explore how DLMS can also guide interdisciplinary, critical awareness of dance literacies embedded in children’s literature and media.

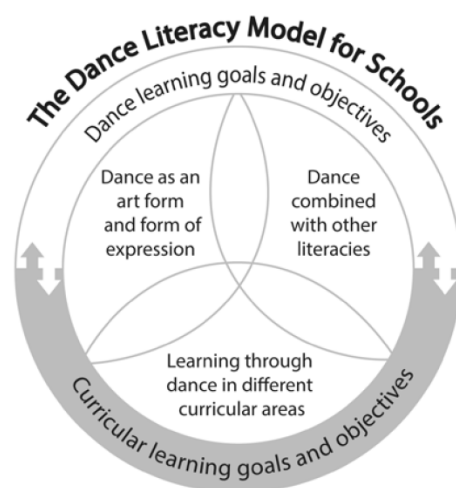


Figure 1. The Dance Literacy Model for Schools (Jusslin, 2019: 36)

While most dance learning engages all three dimensions of DLMS, each dimension represents a broad angle of focus (Jusslin, 2019). *Dance as an art form and form of expression* highlights the “artistic and aesthetic value of dance” (Jusslin, 2019: 37). *Learning combined with other literacies* engages dance with other expressive modes, such as writing, film, music, and architecture (Jusslin, 2019: 37). As Jusslin (2019) notes, other literacies inspire dance, just as dance inspires other literacies. In *Learning through dance in different curricular areas*, dance helps facilitate further curricular aims, of which “[t]he possibilities are endless” (Jusslin, 2019: 37). This study focuses analysis within the dimension, *Dance as an art form and form of expression*, which I will refer to in abbreviation as, ‘Dance as Art/Expression’, while touching briefly on potential future directions within the other two dimensions.

3.2 An interdisciplinary, aesthetic approach to analysis

Dance literacy engagement within Dance as Art/Expression focuses on dance as an expressive art and aesthetic experience, which involves “learning in and about dance and appreciating dance by both creating and viewing” (Jusslin, 2019: 37). Analysis aims to observe the ways in which dance expressions in the selected texts share elements characteristic to dance art, and afford experiences of creating and viewing dance for the reader. The following questions guide observation:

1. In what ways might the dance expressions afford reader experiences of creating dance?
2. In what ways might the dance expressions afford reader experiences of viewing dance?
3. How does the narrative communicate aesthetic experiences of the dance or dancing body?

To conduct analysis within the selected texts through an interdisciplinary, aesthetic lens prompts consideration of both a picturebook and a dance as aesthetic objects. Through composition of elements, an aesthetic object is one that affords an experience of sensation or affectation for the viewer or beholder (*Britannica Academic* 2021, aesthetics entry). Sipe (2001: 23), like Arizpe (2013, 2014), encourages recognition of picturebooks as aesthetic objects: that is, “unified artistic wholes in which text and pictures, covers and endpages, and the details of design work together to provide an

aesthetically satisfying experience for children”. Aesthetic elements of picturebook composition are qualities of art and design that interact across the whole book, including the external book structure, cover, front and end matter, and illustrated page spreads within (Sipe, 2001). Sipe (2001) outlines elements of picturebook composition for teachers seeking to support students in visual literacy development. Compositional elements can be organised by those of *illustration in isolation* (color, line, shape, distance, point of view, and medium) and *illustration in relation to picturebook context* (framing, spatial arrangement, narrative sequencing and page turns). Focusing within and across selected page spreads, my analysis draws on these elements of aesthetics as outlined by Sipe (2001).

My analysis simultaneously seeks to approach the illustrations as dance creations. To engage dance analysis relevant to dance education practices, I will focus on the elements of dance as developed from the work of H'Doubler and Laban, and commonly applied within Western dance education pedagogies (Perpich Center for Arts Education, 2011; Reedy, 2015; Hanna, 2002; Meiners, 2001). Drawing on the work of dance and movement theorists, Margaret H'Doubler (1889 – 1982) and Rudolph Laban (1879 – 1958), dance education pedagogies often conceptualise dance through what are known as the *Elements of Dance* (Reedy, 2015; Hanna, 2002; Meiners, 2001; Smith-Autard, 2004). Though terminology varies according to practice, the elements of dance involve categories of body, action, time, space, and energy (Perpich Center for Arts Education, 2011). Each element helps conceptualise multiple compositional and experiential dimensions of dancing, creating dance, or watching dance. For example, the category of body includes awareness of the whole body, parts of the body, body systems, inner dimensions of self and identity, sensations, emotions, ideas and intentions (Perpich Center for Arts Education, 2011). While dance analysis involves multiple dimensions including critical reflection on culture, context, identity and relationships, referring to these five elements of dance offers an entry point to guide observations related to aesthetic composition.

3.3 Selection of texts

As dance occurs in children's picturebooks in many different ways, a flexible criteria for text selection emerged as I reviewed and explored texts. I began the process with an

interest in stories that involve child-generated dance; dance created by a child character away from structured, adult-led dance classes. Simultaneously, I sought a selection of picturebooks inclusive of international authors. As I reviewed dance books, a small pattern emerged of dance stories shared through wordless picturebook formats. I found this relevant as both dance and wordless picturebooks predominately communicate non-verbally. As availability of dance stories with characteristics of child-generated dance, international authorship, and wordless design proved limited, these characteristics were not held as strict requirements. Two texts deviate: in *Dança* (Fazenda, 2015), the main dancing character is an adult man engaging in social partner dance, and *Yukkuri and Jojoni* (Arai, 1991) includes written text. Additional shared features help establish commonality within the set of texts. These features are:

1. Character development occurs primarily through dance expressions
2. Narrative space infuses elements of reality and fantasy
3. Motif of *duets*, dancing in relation to another individual
4. Authorship by singular picturebook artist or illustrator

Additionally, all four picturebooks demonstrate potential genre crossover as *artists' books*.

The following picturebooks (Figure 2) were selected for analysis: *Mirror* (Lee, 2003: Figure 2), *Flora and the Flamingo* (Idle, 2013), *Dança* (Fazenda, 2015), and *Yukkuri and Jojoni* (Arai, 1991). The texts share artistic perspectives from four countries across three continents. Internationally acclaimed, Suzy Lee lives and works in Seoul, Korea (Lee, 2022) and is the 2022 recipient of the Hans Christian Anderson Award (International Board on Books for Young People, 2022). Her book, *Mirror* (Lee, 2003), illustrates a metafictional journey of a child dancing playfully with her reflection in a mirror. U.S. Author and illustrator, Molly Idle currently lives in Arizona (Idle, 2021). Her picturebook, *Flora and the Flamingo* (Idle, 2013), a 2014 Caldecott Honor Book (Idle, 2021), shares the story of child and flamingo who meet in an abstracted water scene and create a balletic duet together. Portuguese illustrator, João Fazenda, currently works and resides between Lisbon and London (Fazenda, 2017). In *Dança* (Fazenda, 2015) an adult man, weighed down in his day-to-day office job, discovers flow and color through partnered social dance. The fourth text, *Yukkuri and Jojoni* (Arai, 1991),

shares the story of a boy accordion player and girl dancer making music and dancing together while exploring a new town. This story is an early work of Toyko -based author and illustrator, Ryôji Arai, recipient of the 2005 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, 2005).

Yukkuri and Jojoni (Arai, 1991) is published in Japanese. Translation was provided by an acquaintance whose first language is Japanese. *Yukkuri and Jojoni* (Arai, 1991) includes written text in the form of brief, poetic sentences juxtaposing each pictorial spread. I chose to include *Yukkuri and Jojoni* (Arai, 1991) in this study as, like wordless picturebooks, it offers a heightened visual journey through Arai's rich illustrative art, while also meeting all aforementioned selection criteria. Arai's written text includes multiple expressive dimensions: for example, written sounds representing Yukkuri's accordion music and Jujoni's spinning motions integrated rhythmically throughout the written text. While recognizing written and visual texts interact in a variety of ways to construct meaning in picturebooks (Nikolajeva and Scott, 2006), my analysis will focus on Arai's illustrations in consideration of translation limitations and the study's emphasis on non-verbal forms of expression.



Figure 2: Left to right, front covers of *Mirror* (Lee, 2003), *Flora and the Flamingo* (Idle, 2013), *Dança* (Fazenda, 2015), and *Yukkuri and Jojoni* (Arai, 1991),

3.4 Wordless picturebooks and artists' books

Flora and the Flamingo (Idle, 2013), *Mirror* (Lee, 2003), and *Dança* (Fazenda, 2015) are contemporary (published within the 21st century) wordless picturebooks. A 'wordless' picturebook is "a text where the visual image carries the weight of the meaning" (Arizpe, 2014: 94; Nieres-Chevrel, 2010). Typical format of a wordless

picturebook includes the “sequencing of images (fixed and printed) whereby the page is the unit of sequence” (Bosch, 2014: 71). Children’s literature scholarship generally recognizes that not all picturebooks categorised as wordless are truly without words; varying quantities of alphabetic text, words and written “fragments”, are often included in book titles, peritexts, and meaningfully placed within illustrative page spreads (Bosch, 2014: 72). -The overall absence, or minimal presence, of words, however, holds particular relevance and shapes the processes of reading and meaning-making (Arizpe, 2014, 2013; Nieres-Chevrel, 2010).

Scholarship in children’s literature and educational studies recognizes wordless picturebooks as affording readers (also referred to as viewers) heightened experiences of textual engagement (Arizpe, 2014; Nodelman, 1998). As Arizpe (2014; 2013) demonstrates, the demands upon wordless picturebooks readers are numerous. Through various tasks of navigating image content in relation to visual sequence, the reader enters into a creative collaboration with the picturebook artist to construct narrative meaning (Arizpe, 2014). In particular, Arizpe (2014) draws attention to how, without the addition of information and clarification provided by written text, interpretive dimensions of both possibility and ambiguity expand for the reader of a wordless picturebook. The reader, therefore, plays a more active role, employing their experiential knowledges and contexts to connect visual clues, make interpretive choices, fill in narrative gaps, envision multiple possibilities, and accept elements of uncertainty (Arizpe, 2014). Likewise, analysis of wordless picturebooks involves awareness that each reader and reading experience brings potential for creation of a new perspective and story pathway.

Lending further significance to an interdisciplinary, aesthetics-led exploration of dance expressions in picturebooks, all four selected texts demonstrate kinship with *artists’ books*. Despite relative ambiguity in scholarly definitions (Scott, 2014), artists’ books, at their most fundamental, are “works by visual artists that take book form” (Atkins, 1990: 48). Through innovation in design and aesthetic, artists’ books frequently play with conventional codes of book structure (Scott, 2014). Picturebooks, particularly wordless picturebooks, are closely related to artists’ books, as Beckett (2014: 53) contends, “[m]any artists’ books are wordless, and many wordless picturebooks fall into the category of artists’ books”. Beckett (2014) demonstrates how techniques explored

within artists' books influenced the development of picturebooks. Likewise, Scott (2014) emphasises parallel explorations of aesthetic and visual techniques between artists' book and picturebook makers. Most significantly, the two genres, as argued by Scott (2014), frequently experiment with temporal and spatial design.

The selected texts demonstrate genre crossover elements between picturebooks and artists' books. Idle, Lee, Fazenda, and Arai, all professional visual artists through practices of illustration, picturebook making, animation, and/or graphic design (Lee, 2022; Idle, 2021; Fazenda, 2015; Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, 2005), engage playful innovation characteristic of artists' books within their works. For example, in *Mirror* (2003) Lee constructs the gutter between page spreads as the edge of a mirror, one page becoming the mirrored reflection of the other. Dancing figures in Fazenda's *Dança* (2015) float up and off the top of the page spread, visually transcending and extending book boundaries through illustrated dance. Idle embeds illustrated folds and flaps in *Flora and the Flamingo* (2013), expanding the spatial dimensions of the page spread and multiplying options in possible reading pathways (Drucker, 2017). Arai's unique illustration style plays with perspective and figure size in *Yukkuri and Jojoni* (1991), infusing weightlessness and transience between foreground and background. Acknowledging elements of genre crossover with artist's books, further supports attention in analysis towards the texts as aesthetic objects.

CHAPTER 4 - DANCE EXPRESSIONS: CREATING, VIEWING, AND THE 'AESTHETIC LIFT'

When observed through the lens of Dance as Art/Expression, the picturebooks selected in this paper demonstrate multiple affordances relevant to dance literacy. Analysis focuses on prominent patterns relating to participation in dance literacies through creation, viewing, and aesthetic experience. These patterns demonstrate potential strengths of picturebooks as texts supportive of developing dance literacies. Likewise, aligning with this study's objective to contribute to understandings of picturebooks as aesthetic objects (Arizpe, 2014; Sipe, 2001), analysis prioritises exploration of patterns related to illustration and picturebook composition. The following discussion examines: 1) kinaesthetic gaps between illustrated movements as potential sites of reader co-creation of dance; 2) spatial design affordances positioning the reader as a dance viewer; 3) illustration techniques communicating multisensory, aesthetic experience through dance.

4.1 Choreographing the space between

Wordless picturebooks, even more so than picturebooks with words, afford multiple reading pathways (Arizpe, 2014). As Lysaker, Martin and Xue (2021: 282) describe, "the spatial grammar of images replaces the linear grammar of words, increasing ambiguity and making different ways through the story possible". As such, the reader occupies a heightened role of co-authorship (Arizpe, 2014). Studying children's writing responses to wordless picturebooks, Lysaker, Martin and Xue (2021: 282) highlight three main opportunities of co-authorship through "writing characters, writing in the gaps, and narrative mapping". In examining dance expressions in the selected wordless picturebooks, this study considers the spaces between sequential images of a character or characters dancing as kinaesthetic or choreographic gaps. Illustration gaps between images of dancing and across page turns are observed as requiring reader engagement in aspects of dance composition.

Engaging in dance as an expressive art involves participating in creative processes of dance (Jusslin, 2019). In relation to dance education in schools, the objective of creating dance primarily indicates opportunities for students to explore, compose, collaborate, and otherwise make meaning through bodily, movement experiences

(Hong, 2000; Smith-Autard, 2004). Smith-Autard (2004: 6) contends that for students to experience dance as a form of art, “it is imperative that the dance teacher includes in the work-scheme a consideration of dance composition.” Dance composition involves interactions of ‘objective knowledge and skills’ with ‘subjective creative inputs’ through processes that apply, explore, rework, discover, experiment with ideas, feelings, concepts, approaches, or materials (Smith-Autard, 2004: 138). According to Smith-Autard (2004: 138), an individual’s creative inputs in the act of dance composition may include: personal bodily knowledges, emotional responses, inspiration, spontaneity, and imagination, as well as individual interpretation and “own life-experiences entering the dance”. In other words, at its basis, dance composition involves a participant drawing on creative and experiential resources and entering a generative process. Analysis gleaned the texts for potential sites of reader participation in acts of creating dance through the reading experience.

Studying staged dance photography, Reason (2011: 296) asserts that a dance photograph’s transformative quality is its “ability to show us a world we could not witness and that did not happen, but which is somehow ‘true’, in an imaginative, experiential, empathetic way”. While Reason (2011) is speaking of another medium, the same idea, that an image can express a whole dance experience, may be applied to dance illustrations in picturebooks. Picturebook illustrations can only, at most, capture several visual moments within any expressed dance sequence; the majority of the dance remains unmade and unseen. ‘Writing’ in a kinaesthetic gap of dance expression asks a reader to imagine the dance between. The task of the engaged picturebook reader in co-authoring then becomes one of dance composition: the reader must ‘write’ the dance between the images, drawing on interpretation of the available illustrations, personal bodily knowledges and other creative inputs.

In *Mirror*, Lee’s (2003) structural design locates kinaesthetic gaps at each page turn, neatly demonstrated in the opening progression of dance between child and reflection. In a sequence of three images and page turns, their dance transitions energetically from an isolated gentle hand gesture (Figure 2), to a moderate groove with arms and legs activated (Figure 3), to a full body jump and spatial shift upwards into the air (Figure 4). Illustrated visual elements support the escalation of energy. The child’s hair flows out to the sides and around, as if responding to accelerations of body motion. Abstract

brushstrokes emerge and expand from the gutter line, adding expressive atmosphere through visual art. Each page turn affords space for the reader to imagine how the child and reflection come to arrive at the next illustrated body position, as well as how the brushstrokes and ink marks grow and flourish behind the dancing figures. Multiple (re)interpretations of body, action, time, space, and effort within the gaps are possible.



Figure 3: *Mirror* (Lee, 2003), sixth double page spread



Figure 4: *Mirror* (Lee, 2003), seventh double page spread



Figure 5: *Mirror* (Lee, 2003), eighth double page spread

Notably, Lee's (2003) use of picturebook design lends structure to certain elements of dance. For example, temporality of the dance sequence is both structured in pace and open to interpretation. The illustrated images of child and reflection may be considered

as visual markers arriving at temporal intervals, objective ideas or moments of inspiration carrying the unseen dance through the page turns. Nevertheless, a reader pace varies in actively turning the page, passing of time between page turns is not quantifiable. How fast or slowly the dancers may arrive at the next image, as well as the character's spatial pathways and qualities of body movements, are open to imagination. Later in the narrative, Lee's (2003) design experiments with stretching this temporal interval by architecting a wider kinaesthetic gap. Merging into one another at the gutter, the child and reflection disappear, completely absent for the length of a full, blank double page spread, to then return on the following page spread. For the length of two page turns, illustrated dance expressions are absent, a temporal interlude affording considerable space for reader choice in interpretation. Interpretive choices may involve considering the extent to which the dance continues out of sight, pauses, ends, or shifts; that is, compositional demands are made of the reader.

A character's experience of body, space, time, and other elements of dance within kinaesthetic gaps may follow any number of narrative pathways, as suits reader imagination. In the observed texts, dance expressions related to form or style also shape reader participation as co-creator. In drawing on conventions of ballet, *Flora and the Flamingo* (Idle, 2013) encourages reader application of acquired ballet knowledge, whether experiential or through Western socio-cultural context, such as common media representations of ballet. When Flora and the Flamingo begin their duet, Idle (2013: Figure 6) illustrates the pair each forming a body position with crossed feet, bent knees, straight torsos, arms or wings held in a circular shape at mid-torso level. This image, located on a folding flap, folds down to reveal the pair stretch upward, elevated on the mid foot, arms curved up high, legs crossed with straightened knees (Idle, 2013: Figure 7). The movement between these two images – the pathway of the body, the energetic quality, the time and speed of transition, and so forth – remains open to interpretation. Knowledge of ballet, however, might guide how a reader composes the gap between these two bodily positions. The two body positions, using ballet terminology, convey a plié (a knee bend) into a relevé (a rise up onto the metatarsal of the foot) with port de bras (carriage or transition of the arms). Through a balletic lens, the movement pathway possibilities between these two positions are then limited by conventions of the form: that is, the conventional ways in which a ballet dance transitions from the plié to relevé.

Knowledge of the expressed dance form, therefore, may sculpt the creative participation of the reader, potentially providing a more structured experience of co-creation within the image gaps.

Recognizing, however, that the gap remains a place of ambiguity regardless of experience with an expressed dance form, is of particular importance to book mediators. As Kaepler (2008) points out, interpreting dance involves awareness of the dance form's cultural context and movement systems. Navigating and co-composing the space between images of dance also runs the risk of assumptions or superficial understandings of a culture or community's movement systems reinforcing stereotypes. While beyond the immediate focus of this study, interpreting dance expressions in picturebooks elicits the same considerations of critical reading and teaching for intercultural learning as argued by Short (2009) for other patterns of cultural expression. With the hope of continued publishing trends of dance forms beyond ballet, research approaches to dance analysis in children's literature may benefit from expanding understandings of how both adult and child readers interpret and co-author meaning in and between dance illustrations.



Figure 6: *Flora and the Flamingo* (Idle, 2013), eleventh double page spread



Figure 7: *Flora and the Flamingo* (Idle, 2013), eleventh double page spread, lowered folding flap

4.2 The picturebook reader as audience of dance

Participation as a viewer develops learning and appreciation for dance as a bodily form of art and meaning making (Jusslin, 2019). This prompts enquiry into how the selected texts might engage the reader as a viewer of dance. Analysis firstly observes reader *point of view* in relation to each narrative's dancing characters. As an element of picturebook aesthetics, point of view refers to where the compositional design of the illustrated page spread positions the implied reader (Sipe, 2001). Point of view, which I will also refer to as viewing position, as observed across the selected texts, affords a range of reader viewing perspectives, both alike to experiences of watching live or recorded dance and explorative of those available through the picturebook mode.

Flora and the Flamingo (Idle, 2013) and *Mirror* (Lee, 2003) both construct reader point of view to be predominately fixed in space and level (not significantly higher or lower than the illustrated characters). This viewing position locates the reader close to the illustrated dancing, creating the illusion that the reader is included within the dimensions and physics of the page space. Idle's (2013) illustrations structure the reader's point of view much like an audience member attending a ballet performance. The edges of flowering tree boughs frame Flora and the Flamingo from above as they dance, reminiscent of a theatrical ballet proscenium. Likewise, *Flora and the Flamingo's*

movements and body facings present towards the reader; just as classical balletic form prioritises the direction of the audience (Jensen, 2008). That is, even when the dancer's body positions direct to the side or away from the audience, the head and upper body often angle or gesture towards the audience. In this sense, regardless of lived experience, the implied reader is constructed into the role of ballet audience member. By drawing on classical ballet performance, the act of viewing dance expressions within *Flora and the Flamingo* (Idle, 2013) reiterates traditional conventions of watching Western performance dance.

Mirror (Lee, 2003) constructs an alternative experience of viewing dance, one contemporary dance might categorise as *site-specific* performance. Hunter (2009: 399) describes a site-specific dance performance as “a response by a choreographer to a particular location”. Site-specific performance can occur in any location and involve any kind of dance, yet is distinguished by the interdependent relationship between the location and the dance, with significance lost, diminished, or shifted if relocated (Hunter, 2009). Site-specific dance is an investigation, the subject of which is the “relationship between the spatial/experiential components and the choreographer and the consequent creative process leading to performance” (Hunter, 2009: 399). The dance in *Mirror* (Lee, 2003) is a product of the child's playful, creative response to a mirror and their own mirrored image. That is, the dance, improvised in the moment, is inspired by and generated from interaction with a certain location, like that of site-specific dance.

Lee constructs the reader's perspective, as the audience to the child's dance, with notable specificity, integrating the implied reader within the interactive relationship of dancer/choreographer and location. Firstly, Lee (2013) illustrates the child and reflection symmetrical across the gutter, positioning the implied viewing angle at equidistant from each side of the double page spread. In doing so and assuming relevant reader experience, Lee (2013) architects the book gutter to act as a metafictional mirror, forming a sagittal plane in relation to the reader's body. The gutter of the page spread marks the mirror's far edge. The symmetrical illustrated, fantastical dance expressions between child and reflection – grooving, floating, morphing in otherworldly shapes made of limbs, and disappearing into thin air – are dependent on this constructed viewing position.

That this interdependent design of dancer, location, and audience shares similarities with site-specific performance is neither of necessity nor bears known connection to author intention. However, it helps demonstrate how picturebook content and design of dance expressions can afford viewing experiences of dance beyond the conventions of dance performed in traditional theater settings. This is significant as ideas and practices of contemporary dance, as well other dance perspectives, continue to be underrepresented in children's picturebooks (Graff and Davila, 2014). More importantly, *Mirror* (Lee, 2003) shares a story of dance art and expression helping to make meaning of one's immediate, lived space. Dance is demonstrated as a readily available mode of expression, rather than reserved for formal, structured spaces.

The illustrated dance in both *Flora and the Flamingo* (Idle, 2013) and *Mirror* (Lee, 2003) takes the form of one progressive movement sequence developing across multiple page spreads, with a clear beginning, middle, and end. *Flora and the Flamingo* (Idle, 2013) and *Mirror* (Lee, 2003) preserve continuity of place and time, expressing a singular dance within an abstracted space. In contrast, *Yukkuri and Jojoni* (Arai, 1991) and *Dança* (Fazenda, 2015) share dance expressions across multiple places and longer lengths of time. In *Yukkuri and Jojoni* (Arai, 1991), both characters appear in some state of dance in almost every page spread, from energetically casual to heightened states of illustrated movement, giving the impression of a longer journey in and through dance and music, while exploring the new town. Rather than of one progressive sequence of movement, the reader viewing experience is of dance engaging discovery and learning, of new friends, places, and experiences. In *Dança* (Fazenda, 2015), on the other hand, dancing is illustrated in brief, one-to-two page scenes, interspersed with images of the man going to work. In this format, Fazenda (2015) shares dance as recurring across different places and time within the main character's daily life: a party, a studio class, a billboard on the street. This episodic view expresses dancing as a social groove, a current of community artistry and connection, flowing alongside the rote tasks of daily life. Both *Yukkuri and Jojoni* (Arai, 1991) and *Dança* (Fazenda, 2015) afford wide-angle viewing perspectives for the reader, drawing attention to the continuities of dance in and across community experience.

4.3 The aesthetic lift: illustrating aesthetic experiences of dance

Attending to aesthetic experience has long been considered a significant part of learning in dance (Stinson, 1982; McCutchen, 2006). According to Stinson (1982: 72), aesthetic experience focuses on “inner attitudes” towards dance experiences, rather than fulfilment of “external forms”, the technical mastery or execution of movements. Researching the role of aesthetic experience in dance education, Bannon and Sanderson (2002: 22) define the aesthetic experience, at its core, as “the simultaneous engagement of body, mind, and sensibility, aligning feeling and cognition”. Bannon (2010: 51) further emphasises aesthetic experience as relational: that the “qualities of our involvement” emerge within this “cohesion of interconnected modes of knowing”. Developing aesthetic sensibilities as part of dance learning, “through the expansion of perceptual powers”, supports students’ “direct apprehension” of lived environment (Bannon and Sanderson, 2000: 22). The aesthetic dimension of dance literacy benefits students by affording growth in multisensory awareness and connection, key to expanding capacity of involvement. As Bannon and Sanderson (2000:21) contend:

The relevancy of the aesthetic is that it has to do with discovering being ‘human’, individual and ‘interested’ rather than distanced, removed and ‘objective’ as earlier theorists promoted.

Attempting to observe aesthetic dance experience expressed through illustration presents challenges of form and subjectivity. A dancing individual’s aesthetic experience, “ranging from multisensory synaesthesia to somatic action” (Bannon, 2010: 51), and the observer’s interpretation of this aesthetic experience are both individual and informed by context and lived experience. Likewise, analysing aesthetic experience expressed through the dance image involves ambiguity, as mentioned by Sparti and Zile (2011), of author intention and reader interpretation. Therefore, with the underlying assumption that any dance illustration in the selected texts may express some dimension of aesthetic experience, this study chose to look for shared patterns in illustration. Specifically, common illustrative techniques were observed; those that potentially gesture towards Bannon’s (2010) construction of aesthetic experience as quality of involvement through cohesion of cognition, emotion, and sensation. In certain dance expressions demonstrating awareness, connection, and multisensory experience, a

prominent illustration pattern emerged: 1) the dancing character's body levitates above the ground; 2) their face and chin angle upward; 3) and their eyes are closed. I abbreviate this combination of features as the 'aesthetic lift'.

In three of the four texts, the aesthetic lift was observed in climatic or heightened moments of the narrative. In *Mirror* (Lee, 2003) and *Flora and the Flamingo* (Idle, 2013), both of which share a singular sequence of dancing across multiple page spreads, the characters progress through increasingly energetic dancing to arrive at an aesthetic float. Reaching the end of *Flora and the Flamingo*'s ballet-inspired duet, Idle (2013: Figure 8) illustrates both characters at the near apex of a leap, as if flying into the air. Their chins are lifted, eyes closed with shared facial expressions of content. In *Mirror* (Lee, 2003: Figure 5) the aesthetic lift marks the middle of the child's dance. With each page turn beforehand, the synchronous dance between child and reflection escalates energetically until they reach a jump-like levitation – arms and legs askew, hair flowing all around, with upward facial tilt and closed eyes. Their float continues through the following spread as the child and reflection merge gently into each other at the gutter line (Lee, 2003: Figure 9). Applying the aesthetic lift within such climatic moments indicates heightened significance, a fully absorbing moment within the dance.



Figure 8: *Flora and the Flamingo* (Idle, 2013), fourteenth double page spread

In *Yukkuri and Jojoni* (Arai, 1991), the aesthetic lift appears casually across multiple page spreads, almost as if Yukkuri and Jojoni float their way through the story. This continuity may be attributed to Arai’s artistic style rendering dream-like ambiguities in depth, orientation, and character size. In relation to background people and scenery, Arai frequently illustrates Yukkuri and Jojoni disproportionately large in the pictorial foreground. For example, in Figure 10, Jojoni dances with eyes closed and tilted face – she appears as if both standing on the ground and hovering above the town, her dancing experience extending, perhaps metaphorically, beyond the normal dimensions of her immediate environment.



Figure 10: *Yukkuri and Jojoni* (Arai, 1991) second double page spread, right

How the three illustrated characteristics of the aesthetic lift function to communicate aesthetic experience is subjective and open to interpretation, yet certain possibilities may be observed. In the absence of illustrated gaze, visual perception becomes less prominent in the character’s expressed sensory experience; their focus draws inward. As such, the engaged reader is afforded the opportunity to imagine or consider the

character's sensory perception through alternative pathways. Simultaneously, closed eyes illustrated in combination with an upturned face retains external awareness. A raised face and chin continue to expand energy and attention outward from the illustrated body, maintaining the character's engagement with external space. To demonstrate, Fazenda's (2015: Figure 11) dancing couples, illustrated with lowered eyes and lifted faces, communicate focus towards a personal, internal experience of the dance, while they continue to share an external, kinaesthetic and spatial relationship with their movement partner.

Similarly, a dancing body illustrated suspended above ground affords options in reader interpretation, yet gestures towards elements of fantasy and experience beyond reality. Drawing on visual cues, representations of body mechanics, and personal movement experiences, a reader must make choices relating to the application of physics and time within the illustrated page space. For instance, a reader might interpret if the character is near the apex of a jump or floating in a gravity-defying manner. The image may be viewed as a snapshot in time or a fantastical temporal pause. Open to reader imagination, the illustrated, above-ground suspension contains multiple truths, while suggesting some capacity through dance to experientially escape realistic bounds of human movement.

In *Dança* (Fazenda, 2015) the aesthetic lift serves a particularly distinct role as a repeated visual device of aesthetic connection with dance. First at a dance party and later in a studio dance lesson, Fazenda (2015) illustrates partners beginning to dance on the floor, only to soon float up to the ceiling as they become absorbed in the movement flow. Despite assuming the body positions of the partnered dance form, the main character, the man, does not float up like the others (Fazenda, 2015: Figure 11). He remains weighted on the ground looking up wistfully. Fazenda (2015) illustrates the man's body in cold, blue and grey rectangles, a visual juxtaposition to the warm green, yellow, and red curves characterising the floating dance couples. Such illustrated contrasts in color, line, and spatial positioning serve to other the man from the dancing group, suggesting some unknown factor inhibiting his experience of connection and involvement. Story resolution comes when the man discovers his own meaningful relationship with the art while practicing alone at home. Here, Fazenda (2015: Figure 12) illustrates the man beginning to float upward with eyes closed and lifted face; his

body lines softening into more human curves. On the story's final double page spread, the reader can only see the feet and lower legs of the man and his partner as they together dance above the top of the page. The personal, multisensory cohesion of aesthetic experience here, helps facilitate a more meaningful experience of participation for the man. As a visual device then, the aesthetic lift in *Dança* (Fazenda, 2015) may indicate that when one finds their own personal relationship and expression within the dance, the dancing becomes an elevated experience, thereby offering connection with others.



Figure 11: *Dança* (Fazenda, 2015), second double page spread, left



Figure 12: *Dança* (Fazenda, 2015), fifteenth double page spread

The correlation of aesthetic experience with conceptions of lift and elevation, escaping gravity, prompts critical reflection in relation to Western ideologies of transcendence. Transcendence takes on a variety of meanings across cultures, philosophies, and eras (Sardella, 2016), however, Western conceptions of transcendence hold historic affiliation with Cartesian mind/body dualisms (Fraleigh, 2004). As Fraleigh (2004: 15) notes, “Western ideologies set the stage for a splitting of matter from mind, body from soul, and flesh from spirit”. Within western dance lineages, particularly those related to ballet, such dualisms continue to inform movement qualities privileging light and airy qualities (Fraleigh, 2004). Transcendence in aesthetic experience implies endeavour towards or actualisation of states beyond the body (Fraleigh, 2004). Expressing aesthetic experience primarily through reiterations of levitation runs the risk of visually reiterating mind/body dualisms.

This is not to cast the aesthetic lift as inherently negative, but to invoke awareness regarding its use in illustration. As noted, conceptions of transcendence differ by context and interpretation may take various approaches. Studying the concept of transcendence in relation to aesthetic experience through learning, Lee (1993; 79) offers an alternative definition of transcendence relevant to contemporary education:

Transcendence for the learner marks the moment when knowledge becomes a personally significant possession. It is a moment of transformation, of going

beyond the limit or boundaries of previous knowing. When the experience is transcendent, elements fall into place, into a pattern of coherence in which the connections are not merely logical. It is a matter of insight rather than inference, and it is not reversible.

Perceived as a transformation of knowledge, transcendence through dance indicates that aesthetic experience involves personally significant experiences of bodily making meaning or learning. The illustrated aesthetic lift then may serve to non-verbally express a character's journey in making meaning: a new space of insight and knowledge accessed through movement. At the same time, as a recurring visual pattern, the aesthetic lift requires continued attention within children's texts. By emphasising a single story of aesthetic experience, the aesthetic lift may run the risk of limiting representation of the many ways individuals experience meaningful bodily transformations of knowledge.

CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSION

5.1 Potential of picturebook dance expression

This study set out to explore picturebook expressions of dance through a model of dance literacy. The aim was to identify ways in which dance in picturebooks might engage elements of dance literacy on and through the illustrated page spread. For its emphasis on multimodality in all dimensions of dance literacy, the Dance Literacy Model for Schools, DLMS (Jusslin, 2019) was selected to conceptually frame enquiry into how picturebook dance expressions in the selected texts may relate to participation and learning in dance as an art and form of expression. A secondary aim was to contribute to research prioritising picturebooks as offering readers aesthetic experiences. To do so, I conducted an aesthetics-led approach to analysis focusing on compositional elements of picturebooks and dance. The four texts, *Mirror* (Lee, 2003), *Flora and the Flamingo* (Idle, 2013), *Dança* (Fazenda, 2015), and *Yukkuri and Jojoni* (Arai, 1991), were considered through concepts of creating dance, viewing dance, and aesthetically experiencing dance.

The findings of this study suggest that picturebook dance expressions may afford dance literacy engagement aligning with the DLMS dimension, *dance as an art form and form of expression*. Visual and kinaesthetic gaps between illustrations of dancing in and across page turns afford opportunities for readers to draw on personal bodily knowledges, imagination, and creative inputs to co-compose the dance in between. That is, ‘reading’ the unseen dance can involve interpreting and imagining a character’s “body, moving in time and space with energy”, the elements of dance as understood within dance education pedagogies (Reedy, 2015: 9). Sites of co-creation encourage further conversation regarding interpreting picturebook dance expressions in relation to cultural context. The texts also demonstrated ways in which picturebook dance expressions can offer varied viewing perspectives of dance, akin to those of theatre and site-specific performance. This gestures towards potential in picturebooks to introduce, reproduce, or explore the many ways in which one may be an audience to dance, particularly that beyond the traditional Western theatre space.

Additionally, the findings demonstrated a pattern in communicating aesthetic experience through dance: all four texts included illustrations of dancing characters in a

position of ‘aesthetic lift’, a multisensory moment of levitation with closed eyes and lifted face. This prompts inquiry into sociocultural conventions or expectations of what it looks like and feels like to experience an aesthetic connection to art, and how this may be reiterated to children through their visual media. If the illustrated aesthetic lift helps express aesthetic experience in picturebook dance expressions, as is the case in this study’s text selection, it may do so by reproducing associations of transcendence through escaping realities of the body.

5.2 Reflections on process and future pathways

The initial objective in this study was to apply all three dimensions of DLMS to analysis of picturebook dance expressions. However through limitations in scope, it became necessary to narrow focus to one dimension, dance as art/expression. Observing the texts in relation to three participatory elements of dance as art and expression – creating, viewing, and aesthetically experiencing dance – proved effective for a foundational exploration. From this foundational approach, the study suggests that DLMS can offer guidance to literary analysis of picturebooks as texts relevant to dance literacy development. Nevertheless, analysis revealed that each participatory element stands as its own complex topic worthy of further research. Further research avenues might benefit from participant studies. For example, reader response research might help develop better understandings of how children navigate and make meaning within the kinesthetic gaps of dance illustrations, and apply their own experiences and knowledges to construct meaning in the dance expressions. Similarly, participant research might engage book mediators and dance educators in conversation or practice to explore how the studied picturebooks may be applied in educational settings to support learning and engagement in dance through viewing participation. This study observed potential affordances of picturebook dance expressions; participant research can offer further qualitative insights into how children engage with such texts and how they may be used in educational settings.

One unexpected finding of the study was the consistent presence of the ‘aesthetic lift’ in dance illustrations of all four texts. This repeated visual image warrants further consideration to explore how it functions socioculturally: what meaning children make of it and the historic discourses or cultural codes it may carry and reproduce within

children's media. Additionally, the other two dimensions of DLMS, *Learning combined with other literacies* and *Learning through dance in different curricular areas* may also offer research further insights when applied to dance picturebooks through multimodal, participant studies.

5.3 Dance expressions within the transliterate space of picturebooks

As demonstrated, dance within picturebooks represents an interaction of meaning making modes; a multimodal meeting point activating literacies related to both reading picturebooks and dance. Not only are well researched literacies engaged through picturebook reading, such as visual (Arizpe and Styles, 2016), spatial (Sipe, 2001), and emotional (Nikolajeva, 2017), but dance expressions can contribute additional strengths in activating multiple, literacies including those of body, movement, and aesthetics.

Moving away from categorising and privileging certain modes of meaning over others, Thomas et al. (2007) coined the term *transliteracy* as the ability to engage in communication across modes and mediums of expression. Arizpe, Farrar, and McAdam (2017) encourage consideration of picturebooks as “‘transliterate spaces’ where all types of modes and forms intersect”. Illustrated dance expressions within picturebooks offer a rich example of the transliterate space in action. Arizpe, Farrar, and McAdam (2017: 377) posit:

Knowing how picturebooks work and how to make multimodal meaning will lead to confident educators, mediators and other professionals who can critically select texts that develop ‘literacies’ required for twenty-first-century life.

Expanding our understanding of how dance expressions work in picturebooks supports teachers and book mediators to draw on these books as multimodal learning tools.

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