# Recognizing the Narrative Art of a Picture Book: Word-and-Image interactions in Anthony Browne's *Gorilla*

Yang, Li-Chung[*]

## Abstract

Anthony Browne's picture book *Gorilla* was published in 1983, and awarded the Kate Greenaway Medal in the same year for its outstanding artistic quality. Decades after its first publication, *Gorilla* has not only retained its popularity with both adults and children, but also received wide critical attention from educators and researchers. *Gorilla* seems to become a case where some recent studies of the picture books might be centered, a work whose intriguing format can be used to test the claims those studies make. This essay suggests that Browne's *Gorilla* provides us with not just an excellent example of the complexities of the word-and-image relationship in a picture book, but also a highlight of the current studies of the picture book. The first part of the essay gives a critical review of the recent research of the picture book in the literary and literacy studies. The essay then concentrates on the theoretical discussions literary scholars, including Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott, and David Lewis, have made, examining the ways in which they explore the word-and-image interactions in *Gorilla*. Finally the essay suggests that visual literacy has inevitably become an essential part in the literary and literacy curriculum in the English-speaking world, and that the local educators and teachers may well consider the possible integration of visual literacy into the classroom practice.

**Key Words: children's literature, literacy, picture books for children, Anthony Browne**

[*] Associate Professor, Department of English Instruction, Taipei Municipal University of Education

# Recognizing the Narrative Art of a Picture Book: Word-and-Image interactions in Anthony Browne's *Gorilla*

Yang, Li-chung

## Introduction

In the year 2000 when he celebrated Anthony Browne's Hans Christian Andersen Award, Jean Perrot, founder of the Charles Perrault International Research Institute for Children's Literature, opened his essay by writing that the distinguished award came to consecrate "a mature artist who has won worldwide recognition, expressing both a typically English sense of humor and a particular sensitivity to the condition of the child within the contemporary family" (p. 11). Indeed, many factors, including his preoccupation with visual puzzles, his characteristic use of surrealistic style, and his concern with social issues, may have made Anthony Browne one of the highly praised and intensely analyzed writers and artists. What is remarkable about Browne is, however, that he takes as a prevailing assumption in his work that children have an emotional, subjective world even though they are "just children," and that he celebrates the child's subjective inner world in graphic form. Browne's stories play out not just the common fantasy of metamorphosis, as so many children's stories over the centuries have also done. His stories also frequently respond to the yearnings in the children's hearts, and capture their emotional plights in a world where problems become adventures. This can be seen from his earlier picture books such as *Through the Magic Mirror* (1976), through his later books such as *Changes* (1990). In those books Browne has shown that childhood is often a terrible, confusing time, and that the child has a powerful, dynamic interior life, even though he lives in a world invented by the adult. In the 1976 picture book, the young boy Toby is "fed up with books, fed up with toys, fed up with everything" around him. But things turn out to be

topsy-turvy or amazingly different after he walks through a magic mirror. Different from the living room where his parents stay, the world he steps into is full of strange things: a dog taking a man for a walk, a flock of choirboys flying up in the air, a terrified cat chased by a gang of hungry mice, and a lion coming alive from a poster and chasing after him. In a similar vein, *Changes* deals with another boy's confused mind when he's going to have a newborn sister. In the picture book, Joseph is told that things are going to change before his father goes to fetch his mother in the hospital. But he does not understand fully what changes really mean only to be obsessed with kinds of possible change while waiting alone for his parents. Like *Through the Magic Mirror* and *Changes*, his 1983 picture book *Gorilla* also depicts the fantasy that takes place as a result of the distance between the adult and the child, and the subjective interiority the child enjoys by that distance. It depicts how a girl named Hannah copes with emotional isolation when her need has not been met or even acknowledged. The narrative of the picture book is mainly concerned with Hannah's fantasy journey away from home and back again.

To accentuate the emotional complexity of a child's world, Browne often makes an effective use of word-and-image interactions that makes him stand out among contemporary picture book artists. In her review of Browne's work, Jane Doonan (1999) perceptively notes that "one measure of Browne's achievement is the way in which he maintains a balance between the distancing effects of how he tells his story and the affective function of drawing us into the play on reality that his picture book represents" (pp. 53-54). Browne's achievement as a brilliant picture book artist lies mainly in his skillful development in the varying relationships of words and images. Speaking of his own works, Browne states clearly,

> Making a picture book, for me, is not like writing a story then painting some pictures No, it is more like planning a film, where each page is a scene that includes both words and images inextricably linked. What excites me is working out the rhythm of the story and seeing how much is told by the pictures, how much by the words, and how much by the gap between the two. (Evans, 1998, p. 194)

In the case of *Gorilla*, it is evident that Browne is self-conscious and thoughtful of the

intricate word-and-image interactions, which won him the first Kate Greenaway Medal in 1983. Moreover, decades after its first publication, *Gorilla* has not only retained its popularity with both adults and children, but also received wide critical attention from educators and researchers. It can be no surprise that educators and researchers turn to Browne's work when they intend to conceptualize or theorize the ways words communicate with images in the picture books. But it is important to note that much of the educational or scholarly discussion over Browne's work crystallizes some of the latest major trends in the studies of the picture books.

## Word-and-Image Interactions in Picture Books

Let's look briefly at the most recent research and theory involving the picture book before examining the scholarly attention to Browne. Most discussion of children's picture books may dwell on their educational uses, but there emerge notable examples, including Perry Nodelman (1988), John Stephen (1992), Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott (2001), and David Lewis (2001), to name just a few, in the field of literary studies. Perry Nodelman, a Canadian expert in children's literature, is perhaps one of the senior literary scholars who have given the picture book its rightful place in the canon of literature worthy of serious analysis and investigation. Nodelman is influential in the analyses of the picture books, which examine how words interact with images in the texts. Observing the prevalent view of the picture book, Nodelman (1988) writes,

> It is unfortunately true that most discussion of children's picture books has either ignored their visual elements altogether or else treated the pictures as objects of a traditional sort of art appreciation…rather than narrative elements. (p. ix)

Nodelman argues that approaches focused only on written words or those based on art appreciation are partial or misguided because neither of them takes account of the narrative role of images in the picture books. In *Words About Pictures: the Narrative Art of Children's Picture Books,* as described in the title of the book, Nodelman advocates that the reader might best understand images in picture books "in light of

some form of semiotic theory," which suggests "the possibility of a system underlying visual communication that is something like a grammar---something like the system of relationships and contexts that makes verbal communication possible" (pp. ix-x).

Taking cues from Nodelman (1988) that visual representations are understood with "a knowledge of learned competencies and cultural assumptions" (p.17), John Stephens (1992), an Australian scholar in children's fiction, turns to look toward the ideological dimensions of the picture book. Stephens holds the belief that learning how to read a picture book is itself a socializing process heavily imbued with ideological assumptions. Because of the different nature of words and pictures, because of a never-ending oscillation, he asserts that reading even a simple picture book is "quite a complex cognitive process" (p.161). "Audiences not only need to be able to decode the verbal text --- its grammar, its syntax, its semantic structures, and so on," writes Stephens, "but also need to develop an understanding of how to 'read' a picture in terms of the conventions by which it operates" (p.161). The picture book by itself is, as he puts it, "a series of inconsequential events structured as a language lesson, and as such might be expected to strive for clarity and precise, simple meaning," but it actually becomes only "a surface beneath which other kinds of meaning can be perceived and meaningfulness itself becomes problematic" (p. 164). Unlike Stephens, who is concerned about the ways the ideological components are encoded, Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott (2001), professors of English and comparative literature, see the need for "a consistent and flexible terminology, a comprehensive international metalanguage, and a system of categories describing the variety of text/image interactions" in the picture books (p. 6). In their book *How Picturebooks Work*, Nikolajeva and Scott make a fine differentiation between types of word-image interaction, ranging from symmetry, through enhancement, counterpoint, and contradiction. They also explore the ways in which those categories interact with such literary elements as characters, setting and point of view. To refresh our understanding of how pictures and words interact or interanimate each other, however, David Lewis (2001), a British specialist on picture books, comes up with an "ecological" perspective on the picture book. This perspective, Lewis argues, prompts us to see "how the words and pictures in picture books act upon each other *reciprocally*, each

one becoming the environment within which the other lives and thrives" (p. 54; emphasis mine). The notion of ecosystem as a dynamic world, he continues, also helps us to understand "how the word-picture relationship might shift and change, page by page and moment by moment," and appreciate "the heterogeneity that we can sometimes find within the picture book" (p. 54). Above all, the ecological perspective of the picture book, Lewis asserts, "points toward the role of the reader in the interanimation of the word and image" (p. 54).

Educators and researches in the field of literacy have also called for a broadening of our conception of literacy, with specific mention of the picture book. Barbara Kiefer (1995) sees the urgent need for adults and children to explore the full potential of the picture books, taking account of the integrated nature of the pictures and words that lies at the heart of the picture books. She argues that picture books are educational not just in the developments in teaching verbal and visual literacies. Following Louise Rosenblatt, Kiefer contends that the picture books are significant in their power "to give rise to a variety of intellectual and emotional responses" (p.10). In a similar vein, a number of teachers and educators (Evans 1998) have begun to capitalize on the importance of illustrations not as an *add on* but as essential to the meaning of every picture book. It is important to note that the picture book is considered more than just reading stuff for pre-school or school children. Rather the picture book provides them with a rich source of textual and visual material, and affords the opportunity of learning to read *both* words and pictures. Drawing upon the semiotic concept of "transmission," Lawrence Sipe (1998a) goes even one step further to explain the process we engage in when we relate the verbal and the visual texts of the picture book to each other. He takes a full account of the phenomenological dynamics of the synergistic relationship between words and pictures. In picture books, Sipe (1998a) observes, "we must oscillate, as it were, from the sign system of the verbal text to the sign system of the illustrations; and also in the opposite direction from the illustration sign system to the verbal sign system. Whenever we move across sign systems, 'new meanings are produced,' because we interpret the text in terms of the pictures and the pictures in terms of the texts in a potentially never-ending sequence" (p.102). Concurring with Sipe (1998b), Len Unsworth (2001) also sees it necessary to learn the

language of the picture books. However, Unsworth considers the picture book in an ever more complex environment of literacies, and aims at a coherent and practical framework for classroom work. More than a "starter set" of terms Sipe suggests to talk about the picture books, Unsworth contends that both adults and children need technical knowledge about language and visual grammar in order to participate in the "multimodal meaning-making" in the picture book (p.148). Kress and van Leeuwen's functional account of images (1996), he suggests, can be aligned with the functional descriptions of language to enhance the analytical satisfaction of understanding the ways in which linguistic and visual signs cohere to form texts.

## Interactions between Words and Images in *Gorilla*

The burgeoning theories and studies have been broadening and deepening our understanding of the real significance of the picture books in the literary and literacy curriculum. On the other hand, the diversity of the picture books and the compound nature of the artifact have also engaged the educators and scholars in their pursuit for the metalanguage for the picture books. Many conceptual and theoretical frameworks, like postmodern (Anstey 2002), metafiction (Pantaleo 2005), intertextuality (Doonan 1999) have been proposed to explain the changes in contemporary children's picture books. It is important to recognize that Anthony Browne has received considerable or theoretical attention among those scholarly studies. When stressing "the intertextual process" as a dominant feature of Browne's work, Jane Doonan asserts that his picture books require his readers to have other texts and discourses, such as folk tales, fine art, comics, cinema, advertisements and his own works (p. 30). Eliza Dresang also comes up with radical change theory, suggesting that "connectivity, interactivity, and access in the digital world explain the fundamental changes taking place in the body of literature for young readers" (p.14). Browne is, for Desang, one of the contemporary artists that make bold experiments with the forms and formats of the picture book (p. 29).

In their attempt to conceptualize or theorize the word-and-image interactions in the picture book, literary scholars, including Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott (2001),

and David Lewis (2001), have unanimously referred to Browne's *Gorilla*. In a broad spectrum of word-image interactions, Browne's *Gorilla* is, for Nikolajeva and Scott, one of the exciting examples of "counterpoint between text and picture," in which "words and images provide alternative information or contradict each other in some way" (p. 17). Taking the term 'modality" developed by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, Nikolajeva and Scott notice the complex range of subjective expression achieved through the interaction between words and images in the book (p. 174). When categorizing or labeling *Gorilla* "visually provoked dubitative," however, they concentrate on the clash between mimetic and non-mimetic representations in the book (p.184). While both the verbal and the visual narratives cooperate to present the settings and events as realistic, Nikolajeva and Scott argue, some pictorial details undermine the credibility of the iconotext throughout the text. Take, for instance, the first establishing spreads of *Gorilla* in which Hannah, a girl fascinated with gorillas, is defined in real life in terms of her relationship with her father. The words indicate that Hannah wishes to see a real gorilla, but her father fails to share his time with her, let alone help her fulfill her wish. The pictures also present a realistic setting where such tiny details as the towel, the cereal box reinforce the sense of reality. However, Nikolajeva and Scott suggest that the visual details simultaneously anticipate Hannah's fantasy world, noting in the television scene that "the cone of light from the television … transforms the wallpaper, replacing the monsters and ugly plants in its shadowed part with brightly colored sunflowers, mushrooms, and butterflies" (p.190). Such a clash between mimetic and non-mimetic representations also occurs in the night adventure Hannah takes with the gorilla. The image of the gorilla is, for Nikolajeva and Scott, "a combination of Hannah's wish for a caring father and her interest in gorillas," and the adventure, "real and unreal at the same time," embodying both Hannah's lack of parental love and her wishes for a perfect parent (p.191).

　　Nikolajeva and Scott accentuate *Gorilla* as a counterpoint in modality, indicating the different stories the words and pictures tell in the book. A particular strength of their approach lies in the fact that they identify characteristic word-and-image interactions in the picture book, creating a definite category to label the dynamics of picture book communication. While they are interested in the effects of incongruity the

words and images rub up along with each other, they tend to fix *Gorilla* into certain formal, simple category of picture book. Some combinations of words and images may be uncomplicated or static, but a picture book like *Gorilla* does not always maintain the same relationship between words and images. By limiting or complementing each other, words and pictures, as Nodelman (1988) points out, "perform the completion of each other that Barthes calls 'relaying'" (p. 221). In terms of the "relaying" relations between words and images, Browne's *Gorilla* demonstrates a flexible interanimation of verbal and visual texts in the picture book.

If we look once more at the establishing spreads of the book, we'll see that Browne's pictures stand as visual interpretations of the rather bare narrative presented in the words when presenting the emotional world of the girl Hannah. The words limit or affect the ways in which we look at the pictures of Hannah and her father, but they do not tell or are not able to show *how Hannah feels* when her father is too busy or too tired. In a complementary fashion, Hannah's feelings are conveyed by tone, color, position in the page and other graphic means. In the breakfast scene, for example, Browne (1994) uses "very geometric shapes" comprising hard sharp lines, and everything except Hannah is in cold blues, whites, and greys (p.187). It's very likely that Hannah's home gives the reader the feeling that it looks very much like a locked place or prison. When she is with her father, Hannah is seen against the vertical patterns of the wallpaper and the curtain. When she's alone, the room doesn't have a window but a TV set. In addition, the gulf between Hannah and her father is effectively conveyed by the picture composition. The mutual spatial relation of Hannah and her father reveal their psychological relationship and relative status. In the breakfast scene, Browne (1994) "exaggerate[s] the perspective to widen the gap between the two of them (p. 187); the father is shown at "top of the hierarchy" while Hannah is down at the bottom of the picture. On the following page we see Hannah standing, with hands behind her, watching her father working at a desk. Her face cannot be seen, but her posture seems to be tense and nervous when she intends to get near her father. Browne uses the perspective lines created by Hannah's shadow as well as an implied light source behind her to spotlight the distance between them. In the context of the accompanying words, "They never did anything together," Hannah's

loneliness is magnificently conveyed in the scene where she is seen from a high viewpoint, sitting on the floor at the corner of a dark room, watching television and eating a solitary meal. In this picture, the invisible diagonal lines formed by the wooden floor as well as the wallpaper patterns create a strong sense of depth that isolates Hannah from the reader. The TV set, placed between Hannah and the reader, is the only companion to Hannah. The background patterns explicitly suggest that Hannah is located at the borders of everyday situation and her own interior world. Hannah is *subject* to the world ruled by the adult (her father) via television, popular culture, and children's programming, and she also has the ability *to subject* part of the exterior world to her imagination.

The basic pattern of the layout in the establishing scene is with a fairly small picture and a selection of verbal text below on the left-hand page, and a large picture on the right-hand page. The image-text-image segments appear almost in regular sequence, but the verbal-visual interaction is never static or fixed. It changes with the development of the entire story. At the critical moment when Hannah is disappointed at the toy gorilla as a birthday present, the transformation of the toy gorilla marks disconcerting change in the visual narrative structure. In this spread, the three small pictures depict the growth of the toy gorilla in size, and the verbal text says "Hannah threw the gorilla into a corner with her other toys and went back to sleep. In the night something amazing happened." Without glossing over the gorilla's mysterious growth, the opposite picture shows a giant gorilla towering over her bed, and looking right into her eyes. Giving little information in words, Browne leaves open the possible interpretations of this gorilla of the night. Nikolajeva and Scott (2001) read the gorilla of the night in realistic terms, moralizing Hannah's night voyage. They see the figure of the gorilla as "an image of a perfect parent," noting that such an "imaginary existence, visualized by pictures, seems to be a compensation for lack of parental love rather than a healthy exercise in creativity" (p. 190). Clare Bradford (1998), however, argues that Browne subverts the stereotypes of the masculine/father by comparing them with the figure of the gorilla, whose blend of strength and tenderness affords a view of the masculine that resists polarized associations of strength with men and tenderness with women" (p. 83). While Nikolajeva and Scott, and Bradford explore the

symbolic implications of the gorilla, the transformation of the toy gorilla is a pivotal moment when the words fall silent and the pictures must take over the entire narrative. It is, as David Lewis (2001) suggests, a clear example of "how a story can be passed backwards and forwards between the words and the pictures" (p. 49).

But if he leaves much for the pictures to tell Hannah's story in the preceding part of the book, Browne turns to the *words* to highlight her feelings in the pictures of her night adventure with the gorilla. Hannah's night voyage encapsulates such daily activities as visiting the zoo, going to the movie, having meals, and having fun together in the pictures. Browne uses the warm colors---reds, yellows, and browns---to depict Hannah's voyage with the gorilla. In addition to the pathetic presence of the caged animals, he links icons of popular culture to the images of gorilla, such as Chaplinque clowns, Superman, the Statue of Liberty, Western hero and criminal. But it is important to note that *words* in the entire voyage begin to function predominantly as what Barthes calls "anchoring labels," elucidating the qualitative nature of the action (Nodelman, 1988, p.213). At her first sight of the gorilla, for example, Hannah was "frightened," but he had "such a nice smile that she wasn't afraid," and gladly accepted his invitation to a night journey to the zoo. The gorilla "gently lifted her up" after he invited Hannah to the zoo. Words are also deliberately used to illuminate the emotional implication of visible gestures when we cannot see what really goes on in Hannah's mind in the pictures. Interestingly the reader cannot see her face for most of the time when she is with the gorilla. It is *words* that spotlight Hannah's joyful feelings about the voyage. At the zoo "Hannah was thrilled" when she saw "so many gorillas." After that, going to the movie with the gorilla was "wonderful" for Hannah. When they danced on the lawn, "Hannah had never been so happy."

Some combinations of words and images may be static or uncomplicated, but a picture book like *Gorilla* demands more of the reader to appreciate the interactions between words and images. David Lewis (2001), concurrent with Unsworth (2001), has attempted to analyze *Gorilla* along with the grammar of visual image devised by Kress and van Leeuwen. Unlike Unsworth, who endorses that systematic knowledge is essential and should be explicitly taught, Lewis begins to consider the picture book reading beyond the formal account of the picture book. While he notices that the

systematic and organized nature of the grammar equips him with increased sensitivity to the visual structure, Lewis is perceptive that the ability to analyze the picture book aesthetically, semiotically, and even grammatically will never in the end be enough. In order to understand a picture book, affirms Lewis, "we need to understand its role in the complex interchange of gesture, language, ideas and images that go to make up the picture book reading event" (p. 137).

# Conclusion

The intriguing format of Browne's *Gorilla* lies in a flexible interanimation of words and images in the picture book. Some studies of Browne's work (Bradford 1998; Doonan 1999; Nikolajeva & Scott 2001; Lewis 2001) also demonstrate clearly the futility of a search for the definite meaning of the picture book. What I would like to offer here is neither a naïve delight at the plurality of approaches Browne's work has been able to afford, nor a gesture of despair at the failure of the reader to read the text and get it right. Instead, I'd like to suggest that studies and theories involving the picture book have begun to center on the word-and-image interactions in the picture book, and that analyses of the dynamics of the picture book communication have become an essential part in the literary and literacy curriculum in many of English-speaking countries. Here in Taiwan, picture books have recently been promoted as useful English-learning tools that afford school children opportunities to understand more about themselves and others, develop their literacy and hone their language skills. In the local language classroom, the teachers and educators may be divergent in their approaches to the picture book as a pedagogical form. But we may well concur with Lawrence Sipe (1998b), perceiving that "we should not underestimate what children are capable of when they talk about picture books; even young children can be very sophisticated as literary critics of picture books" (p. 67). To enhance children's interest in critical appreciation of the texts they encounter, we also may well consider the possible integration of visual literacy into the language classroom, encouraging children to verbalize their responses to the pictures and guiding them to analyze the ways in which words and pictures interact to contribute to

the story of a picture book.

# References

Anstey, M. (2002). 'It's not all black and white': Postmodern picture books and new literacies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *35*(6), 444-457.

Bradford, C. (1998). Playing with father: Anthony Browne's picture books and the masculine. *Children's Literature in Education*, *29*, 79-96.

Browne, A. (1976, 2000). *Through the magic mirror*. London: Walker Books.

---.(1990, 2002). *Changes*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

---.(1983, 1992). *Gorilla*. London: Walker Books.

---.(1994). Making picture books. In M. Styles, E. Bearne & V. Watson (Eds.), *The prose and the passion: Children and their reading* (pp. 176-198). London: Cassell.

---.(1998). The role of the author/artist: An interview with Anthony Browne. In J. Evans (Ed.), *What's in the picture? Responding to illustrations in picture books* (pp. 192-204). London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Doonan, J. (1999). Drawing out ideas: A second decade of the work of Anthony Browne. *The Lion and The Unicorn, 23*, 30-56.

Dresang, Eliza T. (1999) *Radical Change: Books for Youth in a Digital Age.* New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1999.

Evans, J., ed. (1998). *What's in the picture? Responding to illustrations in picture books*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Kiefer, B. (1995). *The potential of picture books: From visual literacy to aesthetic understanding.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (1996). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design*. London: Routledge.

Lewis, D. (2001). *Reading contemporary picturebooks: Picturing text*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Nikolajeva, M., & Scott, C. (2001). *How picturebooks work.* New York: Garland Publishing.

Nodelman, P. (1988). *Words about pictures: The narrative art of children's picture books*. Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press.

Sipe, L. (1998a). How picture books work: A semiotically framed theory of text-picture relationships. *Children's Literature in Education, 29*(2), 97-108.

---.(1998b). Learning the language of picture books. *Journal of Children's Literature*, *24*(2), 66-75.

Pantaleo, S. (2005). Young children engage with the metafictive in picture books. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, 28*(1), 19-37.

Perrot, J. (2000). An English promenade: Winner of the 2000 Andersen Illustrator Award/ Anthony Browne. *Bookbird, 38*(3), 11-16.

Stephens, J. (1992). *Language and ideology in children's fiction*. London: Longman.

Styles, M., Bearne, E. & Watson, V., eds. (1994). *The prose and the passion: Children and their reading*. New York: Cassell.

Unsworth, L. (2001). *Teaching multiliteracies across the curriculum: Changing contexts of text and image in classroom practice*. Buckingham [England] Phildelphia: Open University.

# 正視英語圖畫書的敘述藝術：
# 由安東尼‧布朗的《大猩猩》論文字
# 與視覺語言的互動

楊麗中[*]

# 摘　　要

　　當代英語世界著名的兒童圖畫書作家安東尼‧布朗 (Anthony Browne) 擅長描繪現代社會的兒童世界，刻劃兒童與成人之間的關係。對臺灣的讀者而言，布朗的原文作品和相關譯本亦不陌生。1983 年，他的圖畫書創作《大猩猩》(*Gorilla*)為他贏得首座象徵英國圖畫書尊榮的凱特格林威獎 (The Kate Greenaway Medal)。二十多年來，這部作品一直受到家長和兒童的青睞，同時也引發語文教育以及兒童文學研究者的熱烈討論。本文主張，匯集各方注意的《大猩猩》不僅展現圖畫書中文字與視覺語言的多重文本特性，也具體而微地反映英語國家關於圖畫書研究以及語文教育晚近的發展趨勢。針對布朗廣泛受到注目的現象，文章首先回顧知名語文教育以及兒童文學研究者關於圖畫書的重要貢獻；接著，文章對焦於《大猩猩》中文字與視覺語言的互動，析論尼可拉亞維和史考特 (Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott)以及路易斯 (David Lewis)等學者關於圖畫書的理論，指出該作品裡靈活、富變化的文字與視覺語言關係。文章最後指出，閱讀圖畫書時，文字與視覺語言彼此的互動關係不僅成為圖畫書研究的新趨勢，也成為英語國家在語文以及兒童文學課程中不容忽略的部份。藉此發現，本文希望建議，圖畫書作為英語文讀物，不只是為了識字習文，圖畫書裏文字與視覺語言的展演對話，也是值得本土英語文教育者正視的課題。

**關鍵字：兒童文學、語文教育、圖畫書、安東尼‧布朗**

---

[*] 臺北市立教育大學英語教學系副教授