

Grapheme, Pictogram, Image, and Back: Walter Crane, a Return to Picture-Writing

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In 1870, William E. Gladstone's government passed the Elementary Education Act, which set the basis for a public, non-religious, free of charge, and ideally compulsory schooling system in England. Truly, it seems hard to find another point on which Gladstone's liberalism and Marx and Engels' communism – "free education for all children in public schools" – agree.¹ The Act sanctioned a feeling summarised by the words of the English biologist Thomas Henry Huxley:

Suppose it were perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would, one day or other, depend upon his winning or losing a game of chess. Don't you think that we should all consider it to be a primary duty to learn at least the names and the moves of the pieces; to have a notion of a gambit, and a keen eye for all the means of giving and getting out of check? [...] Well, what I mean by "education" is learning the rules of this mighty game.²

Non-religious Sunday and evening schools were founded, mainly devoted to the children of the poor and urban proletariat. And from the debate triggered by Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, immediately linked with egalitarianism, the idea of social evolutionism sprouted.³ The stillness of hermetically sealed class partitions gave way to enthusiastic confidence in the progress of the species, and in the background, meetings of the International Workingmen's Association took place in St Martin's Hall, London, in 1864.

It was in this context that Walter Crane (1845–1915) emerged as "the Academician of the Nursery".⁴ Crane was one of the most important end-of-the-century English artists and certainly one of the greatest illustrators of all time. He was deeply convinced of the power of images to improve the lower classes' welfare and education. Close to socialism, an advocate

of the aesthetic enhancement of illustrated children's books, Crane's original, self-taught style blended together the Pre-Raphaelite cult of detail with a synthetic flatness learned from Japanese prints.

In more than five decades of activity, Crane worked consciously and systematically on the evanescent borderline between text and image, line and drawing.

CRANE AND THE ALPHABET: LETTERS WERE ONCE PICTURES

Like many intellectuals with connections to the aesthetic movement, Walter Crane saw one of the causes of the decline of contemporary society in the pauperisation of alphabetic characters:

We know that the letters of our alphabet were once pictures, symbols, or abstract signs of entities and actions, and grew more and more abstract until they became arbitrary marks [...]; until the point is reached when the jaded intellect would fain return again to picture-writing, and welcomes the decorator and the illustrator to relieve the desert wastes of words marshalled in interminable columns on the printed page.⁵

Crane's tendency toward "iconism" is deeply rooted in late nineteenth-century culture, as is evident, for example, from Holman Hunt's belief in the iconic structure of the alphabet that "still bears intelligible pictures of the objects which originated the sounds intended, or suggested the meaning to be conveyed [...]" the letter S represents a serpent, whose hissing gives the sound".⁶

But Crane goes even further. In fact, this ties in even more with Crane's attitude towards Egyptian and Japanese ideograms and

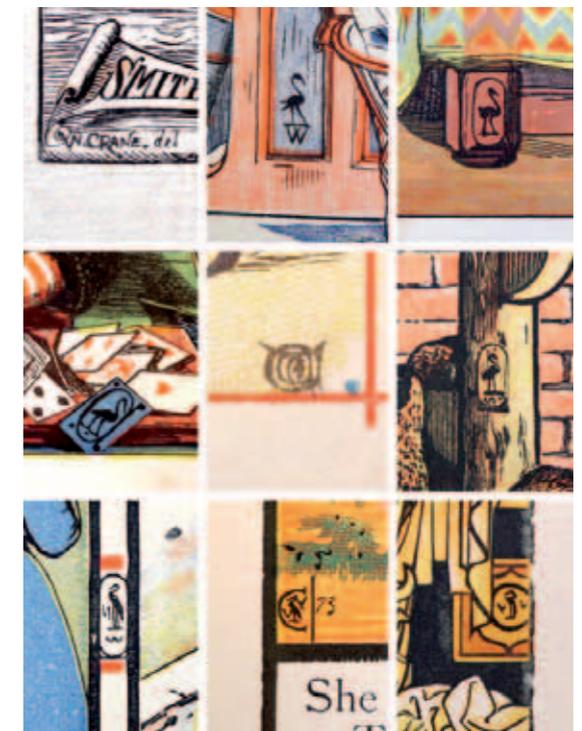


Fig. 1 Walter Crane, monograms. Details from *After Dark*, London 1862, title page; *Sing a Song of Sixpence*, London [1866], p. 6; *The Old Courtier*, London [1867], p. 3; *Grammar in Rhyme*, London [1868], p. 5; *How Jessie Was Lost*, London [1868], p. 8; *Annie and Jack in London*, London [1869], p. 3; *The Adventures of Puffy*, London [1870] (dated "69"), p. 2; *Old Mother Hubbard*, London [1874] (dated "73"), p. 6; *The Alphabet of Old Friends*, London [1874], p. 4.

his concern to recover a new meaning for modern language through the rediscovery of its iconic origins. His suggestion was that we inflate new meaning into otherwise dumb symbols through the adoption of a new visual system of communication moulded on hieroglyphs

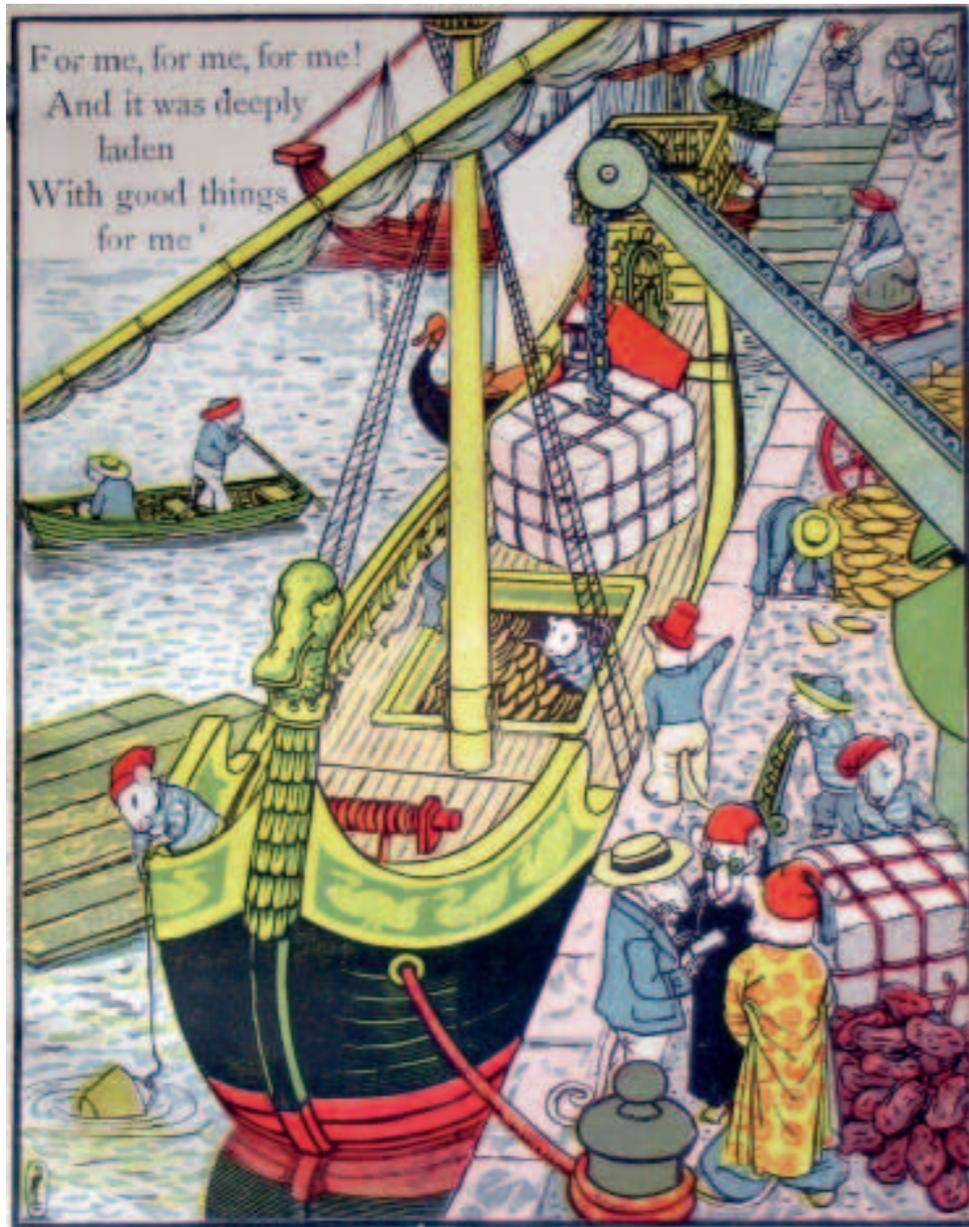


Fig. 2 Walter Crane, *The Fairy Ship*, London [1870], p. 2.

and ideograms. Behind that lay the original myth of a universal, international, socialist-style language.⁷

Crane's signature is a prime example of the mutual overlapping of word over picture and vice versa, a striking demonstration of the expansion of the borders between image and text.

The artist's name was a speaking one, and Crane used this contingency to the full, following a practice customary among printing professionals and satirical illustrators and turning his name into a rebus, a pictorial puzzle, a visual riddle. Although in his early works he used traditional authorship marks, from 1866 onwards Crane opted for a visual translation of his family name, inserted within a cartouche of Egyptian prototypes.⁸ This signature became even more complicated after 1870, when the initial letter of the name split into its two component parts (Fig. 1). This monogram is truly a rebus, or, better still, an "iconologema", following Umberto Eco's definition taken from Charles Pierce's "hypoicon" concept:⁹ the water bird appears to be a proper pictogram, while the initial of the name, broken up into its two constituent parts, embraces the whole sentence, as if it were inside quotation marks.

Aside from monograms proper, the artist used to represent himself within illustrations, as in a hall of mirrors. And the ambiguity did not stop with the ornithological pun of his signature, but went on to amplify the literal meanings of the word through its sharing the same verbal label with other terms. A crane is in fact either a long-necked bird or a mechanical device; the artist drew on both of them, but while the sinuous wader had an inkling of the elegance of Japan and the Far East, the industrial hoist was certainly not so common in the lofty aestheticism of those times. This is what happens for example in an illustration for *The Fairy Ship*, produced after Crane's drawings by the printer Edmund Evans for the London publisher George Routledge and Sons, along with many other so-called toy books – six- or eight-page coloured picture books printed from engraved woodblocks and sold at the affordable price of sixpence or one shilling. In this image, aside from the curvy monogram in the lower left corner, it is through



Fig. 3 Walter Crane, *Lancelot's Levities*, ca. 1885, p. 264f.

the insertion of a lifting harbour crane that the artist hints at his name. Here, as everywhere else in Crane's work, the hidden meaning may be spotted thanks to an evident shift in style from the rest of the illustration. The two-dimensional hoist contrasts with the vanishing perspective of the dock and the hooked bales, raised so as to draw the eye of the viewer (Fig. 2).¹⁰

In some other sketches, the transformation from bird to machine is explicitly displayed from visual to verbal and vice versa: a "fisherman stork" is associated by visual analogy with a wading crane. Then, by verbal analogy, the bird, synonymous with the mechanical device, "becomes a crane". And on top of the hoist stands a bird, as though to close the circle of visual suggestions triggered by the artist. From common fishing activity to physical resemblance, the chain of equivalences connects diverse entities and draws the viewer from visual to verbal in an unexpected parody of the real world (Fig. 3).¹¹

DETAILS, HIDDEN FIGURES, VISUAL RIDDLES: KEY TO PUZZLES

Crane's work is full of hidden shapes, cryptic clues, and visual riddles based on the interplay of words in visual or verbal ambiguity. No shape, clue, or riddle has been noticed so far by bibliographies or critics, and an essential part of the meaning of Crane's work – related to the connection between word and picture, line and drawing – has therefore been lost.

Through this conscious and systematic work, the artist weaves an iconographic net that magnifies the playfully educational purpose of his illustrations.

This is obviously not the first time one can speak of a didactic approach to images; it stems from the antique tradition of mnemonics and its didactic use of diagrams, cipher alphabets,

rebuses, and emblem-like pictures, particularly through the use of tangible and solid *imagines agentes*, later employed and popularized by nineteenth-century celebrity mnemonists.¹² To stay with children's books, the seventeenth century produced that noble father of didactic books, Comenius's *Orbis pictus*, in the preface of which one reads that "such [a] book, and in such a dress, may (I hope) serve: I. To entice witty Children to it, that they may not conceit it a torment to be in School, but dainty-fare. For it is apparent that Children (even from their Infancy almost) are delighted with Pictures".¹³ This thread continues through book titles by John Newbery, John Harris, and Benjamin Tabart, to name but a few.¹⁴

In line with contemporary educationists such as Johann H. Pestalozzi, Friedrich Fröbel, and their pupils Elizabeth Mayo, Charlotte Mason, and Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, Crane stresses the pleasure children take in counting, "checking quantities", finding the cryptic clue, or following the details displayed by the illustrator's art in a Chinese-box-structured page.¹⁵ As early as 1866, in an unsigned drawing for a heading, *Key to Puzzles*, we already find Crane winking at his young readers: playing up the visual metaphor, the artist pictures an armoured soldier holding a key like a pike and charging at a locked door (Fig. 4).¹⁶ Math problems, as well, may take the shape of worldly objects and be displayed in Crane's illustrations on parallel lines or in paratactic sequences as though on a visual abacus: numbers and letters come alive, like the swarm of mosquito-cyphers that vex the child learning multiplication in the *Baby's Own Alphabet* toy book (1875). The peak of this attitude toward cross references is clearly shown in some puzzles such as those displayed in *The Fairy Ship* and *This Little Pig Went to Market* (1871). In *The Fairy Ship*, the daring diagonal mast and waving sail are evident reminders of Japanese prints. Only a second glance reveals the octopus hidden under the entangled flag. The same happens in *This Little Pig*, a well-known finger play that helps preschool children become familiar with sequences, quantities, and the counting system. Each little pig corresponds to a finger or a toe that has to be grabbed, proceeding from thumb to pinkie as the game goes on. The sequence of clothed and shod little pigs is wrapped up in the last illustration: verbally suggested by the text, visually picked up by the stiffly placed tableware, and ritually introduced by the process of recitation – here the structure is a hand as wide as the page. And the fingers are nothing else but the five little piglets (Fig. 5).



Fig. 4 Walter Crane, *Mixed Sweets from Routledge's Annual*, London 1867 [1866], "Key to Puzzle", p. 144.

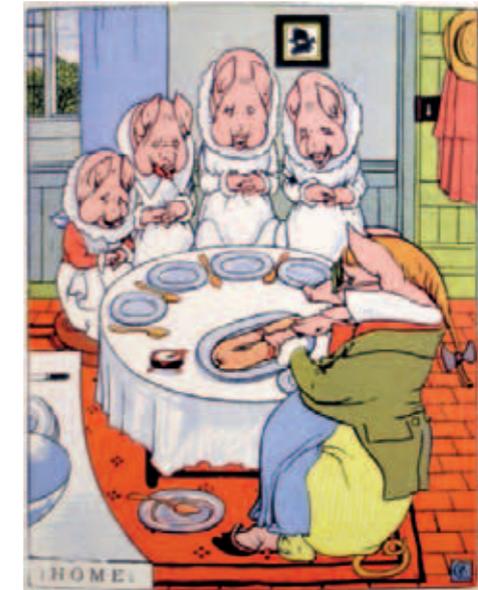


Fig. 5 Walter Crane, *This Little Pig Went to Market*, London 1871, p. 8.

Although Crane's puns and riddles were noted by his contemporaries, again, nothing has been spotted so far by critics, and as soon as the culturally oriented interpretation key to Crane's references was lost, puns and riddles were no longer identifiable from the jumble of decorative details in his illustrations.

Yet it is exactly this aspect that sets Crane apart from otherwise similar examples. Standing somewhere between the "lack of didacticism" of Edward Lear's works and the gentle *bon ton* of a Kate Greenaway or Beatrix Potter, Crane is indeed a unique case, the only artist of his time able to give new life to the tradition of playful mnemonics and learning through games.¹⁷

Crane's magnificent educational project was strictly linked to the cultural climate that blossomed in Britain in the late 1860s and 1870s, experiencing a magic moment in the Victorian era that lasted less than twenty years. A sublime instant of faith in social evolutionism when a new society was expected, transformed by the deep, silent, Ruskinian revolution brought about by artists designing a brand-new communicative system.

The optimistic, not to say utopian, confidence in the future and in the community faded away in the space of a few years, once those expectations merged with the political world and a party system that exempted individuals from personal effort and intellectuals from commitment.¹⁸

THE BLACK BOOKS: FUN TO MAKE, AND DONE JUST FOR CHILDREN

Political ambitions apart, Crane's understanding of the child's mechanism of perceptual learning remained intact, linked as it was to Japanese and Egyptian writing structure.¹⁹

It is not possible to understand the effectiveness of Crane's illustrations without connecting them to their innate educational aim, where every puzzle has a distinct instructive purpose. The didactic intent became clearer and clearer in Crane's sensitivity when, beginning in the 1880s, he was commissioned to do several sets of illustrations expressly for schoolbooks.²⁰ In their bid to educate future generations, the primers illustrated by Crane displayed his firm belief in his work's purpose and potential: once printed, these books would accompany children in their growth towards adulthood. They were to be subtle tools of education, forming taste and personality. Crane's work put into practice a thoroughly considered educational method, the perfect outcome of a complex theoretical apparatus.

Crane's primary interest in analysing childhood perceptive mechanisms was strongly sharpened by the observation of his own children. Crane was a devoted father and uncommonly attentive to his children: with them he used to play and spend time, and for them he drew many personalised picture books, known within the family as the black books, "because they were for the most part done in sketch books bound in a shiny black cloth. [...] These black books were done by my grandfather, page by page, one every night for each of his children. He told much better bedtime stories with his pencil than in words and the arrangement was satisfactory to all parties".²¹

They were "intended strictly for home consumption",²² and during his lifetime the artist repeatedly turned down offers of publication, declaring, "these little books were tossed off at odd moments. They were fun to make and were done just for the children. They gave me as much pleasure as they gave them."²³

These unpublished illustrated notebooks are still unknown to critics in their completeness, and yet they bear witness to the artist's behaviour towards his children: from the freshness of the first ones made for Beatrice in 1879, probably to soften the impact of the new arrival Lionel on the sensitive mind of the young girl, down to the neatness of the later ones, designed in the early 1890s for Lancelot and little Myfanwy, who died of diphtheria in 1891. Michael P. Hearn writes that "Crane filled these sketch books with spontaneous drawings as exuberant in their humor as anything by Edward Lear or Lewis Carroll."²⁴ Had these crisp, humorous sketches – peopled with guinea pigs and marmots, fairies and magicians, and a population of pots and pans – been published, there is no doubt that Crane's role would have been differently appreciated.

Crane had great awareness of children's tastes, of what they liked and what was useful for them, long before having any children of his own. His toy books, produced from 1865 to 1876, were already a clear example of the effectiveness of his approach towards childhood: they were expressly intended as tools of education to be used by middle-class children not yet able to read or write. When Crane came to have his own family, he realised that his predictions were exactly right: children start learning while listening to fairy tales and nursery rhymes that help them memorise letters, the alphabet, numbers, or sequences of actions and episodes. Later they go on with the "grammar of sounds and letters", from simple syllables and easy words to more complex syntax, lexis, and disciplines.²⁵

Truly, as John M. D. Meiklejohn put it, the ladder to learning "must have the shortest and easiest steps; and each step must be quite firm under the climber's foot. [...] Pictures – words in the pictures – words out of the pictures – words in sentences: this is the first ladder to learning!"²⁶

FROM VISUAL RIDDLES TO EDUCATIONAL PUNS: THE THREE RS

Particularly relevant in this light is a series of three picture books from 1885 to 1886, where Crane turned the child's first steps in reading, writing, and arithmetic into visual narrative. In these bright embryos of primers he was engaged with at the time and a few years later, the artist worked over themes and motifs that had already emerged in his black books. These books form a series on their own, originally intended to be expanded by other titles.²⁷ As it was, only three volumes were actually completed and published by Marcus Ward & Co.: *Slate and pencil-vania* (1885), devoted to mathematics, *Little Queen Anne* (1886), to reading, and *Poohooks and Perseverance* (1886), to writing, all reissued together in the collection *A Romance of the Three Rs* (1886). The artist himself declared: "If my hobby horse serve in any degree to help little folks over the rough stones of the road to Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic, or afford



Fig. 6 Walter Crane, *Slate and Pencilvania*, London 1885, p. 19.

pleasant pastime by the way, they will not have been ridden in vain. At any rate, if wishes were horses, this book should be, in the spirit of its cover-device, a Pegasus to all little passengers aspiring to run, and read, or write.”²⁸

In *Slate and Pencilvania*, a humorous parody of the nursery rhyme “Sing a Song of Sixpence”, numbers perform additions and multiplications while hanging on a “clothes line” (Fig. 6) or waiting to be plucked from a tree – a

tree of knowledge from whose lower branches dangle more easily reach-able lower numbers, such as on the covers of Dale’s *Readers* – and a sequence of numbers is displayed on Master Crane’s palette.²⁹

In the second picture book, *Little Queen Anne*, little Anne Stuart, dressed as Pallas Athena, is invited from “three real Royal Rs to a fancy ball” (Fig. 7). As her adventures progress, the main steps in learning are recalled: Anne goes to the ball with a coach of twenty-six horses, letters decorating their crests, and, once there, she walks up “easy steps of one syllable” – the same as those found in Meiklejohn’s *Golden Primer* and in many black books. Then “she meets some old friends” – that is to say, nursery rhyme characters already encountered before learning to read – and is received by “the three Rs”. Reading is dressed in Roman style, with glasses, reading lamp, and a book on his helmet; Writing, in medieval fashion, with quills and a goose as headgear; Arithmetic, as an Arabian magician, fully covered with numbers and symbols. Lexical ambivalence, based on homophonic or homographic word ambiguities, plays inexhaustibly with word polysemy, alterations of pronunciation and modulation of sense, all reflected in ambiguity of image and a host of hidden figures and telling detail.³⁰

In the third book, *Pothooks and Perseverance*, more than anywhere else, the letters of the alphabet lose their appearance as abstract marks and revert to their original form as “pictures, symbols, signs of entities and actions”.³¹ On the front cover, letters and type form the shape of a serpent – *The ABC-Serpent*, as the subheading reads – and the whole alphabet is rattled off, from A’s open jugs to Z’s braided coils. A sea of ink is spread over the flyleaves, where we find an entire capital and lowercase alphabet made of a thick plankton of whitebait, eels, seaweed, seahorses, mermaids, anchors, and – surprise! – cranes, parrots, and swans. The story is played

Fig. 7 Walter Crane, *Little Queen Anne*, London 1886, p. 11.



out by hybrid characters, as well. The alphabet mirrors the text’s duplicity, always on the border between literal and metaphorical; the illustrations play with the letters: the “capital A”, penned by a mysterious hand as a zoomorphic initial (echoed by the shape of the stool the child is sitting on);³² the “bouncing B”, ending with a big bull’s head reminiscent of many spelling books (the child’s seat once again repeating the shape of the letter); the “comfortable C” of a cat’s tail; the “pretty big D”, and so on (Fig. 8). And then the ABC-Serpent appears on the horizon, shaping his coils into the form of ABC (Fig. 9). Crane re-proposes the long-standing tradition of illuminated initials juxtaposing classic iconographies and brand-new associations based upon word homophony, homography, or allophony, image polysemy or analogy, and shifts of meaning by means of visual or textual metaphor, synecdoche, or metonymy.

Appearing throughout the picture book are continuous references to nursery rhymes and fairy tales, that is to say to the only literary products children already know before starting to read or write.³³

PHYLOGENESIS AND ONTOGENESIS: WRITING IS BUT A SIMPLER FORM OF DRAWING

Nonetheless, once again, Crane steps beyond the otherwise traditional ground of an iconic, anthropomorphic link between alphabet, letter, and drawing. In the parallel fate that characterises the childhood of individuals and that of social groups, the artist treats the alphabetic sign language with the same appropriation mechanism employed by children in their early stages of learning. He dissects the structure of letters and figures in search of their common iconic roots: “outline, one might say, is the alpha and omega of art.”³⁴

“Writing, after all, is but a simpler form of drawing”.³⁵

Crane sought for a perfect overlapping between the two, through what he defined as “a calligraphic method of drawing”.³⁶

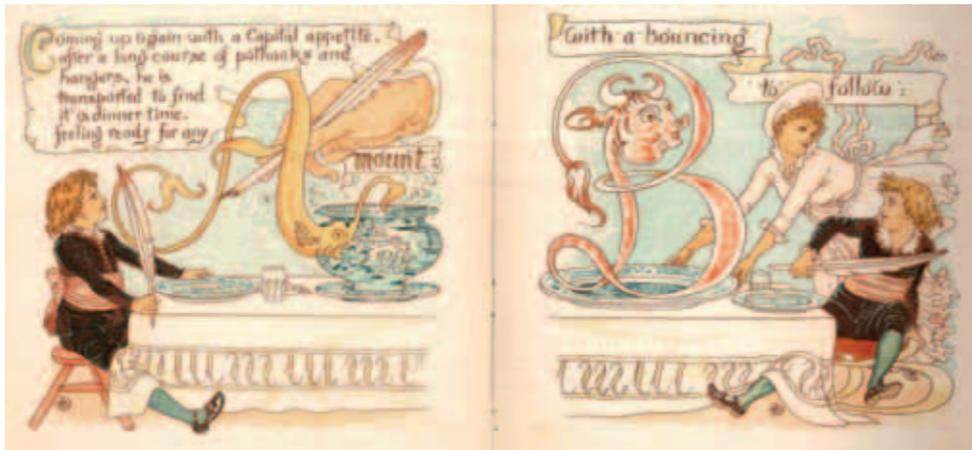


Fig. 8 Walter Crane, *Pothooks and Perseverance*, London 1886, p. 14f.

The way children take possession of signs and forms hidden under the worn and torn surface of everyday objects becomes a key source of creative strength. The artist refers to a childish game “from the traditions of the nursery, which appeal[s] at once in a curious way to both the oral and graphic senses, and unite[s] story and picture in one”.³⁷ A story is being told, starting from simple signs of alphabetic origin and progressing to the association of forms and words as more complex figures and events: “By such devices a child learns to associate line and form, unconsciously and step by step defining form in the use of, or pursuit of, line.”³⁸

Crane behaves like a child whose first approach to the dumb symbols of the alphabet is to dress and animate the types and numbers and, while anthropomorphising letters and cyphers, to bring them within the universe of recognisable objects; Crane plays with the shapes of the letters, as small children do long before they can understand the complex correspondences of images and phonemes, seeking for signs of already known figures as though in the changing outlines of the clouds.

This is particularly relevant to Crane’s treatment of schoolbooks and primers. Meiklejohn and Dale, who commissioned more than half a dozen sets of illustrations from Crane, both founded their educational system on the use of the image as the main

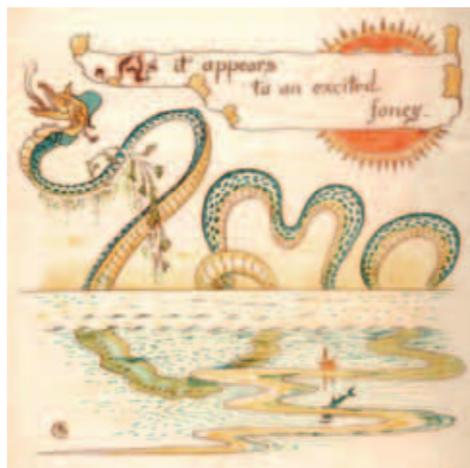


Fig. 9 Walter Crane, *Pothooks and Perseverance*, London 1886, p. 21.

pillar of learning, albeit in different ways. Again, both used letters and words in their constitutional core of colours and lines, before studying them as graphemes.³⁹

For both of these authors, Crane built up a net of references including phonemes, letters, syllables, and words, entwined in a way more clearly perceivable to children: letters inserted in figures, figures clothed with letters, syllables embroidered in the decorative borders of the page, and words formed by selection of the slightest possible variations in the composition of their syllables (Fig. 10).

This visual writing rests on the link between grapheme and figure, and their perfectly fitting match and interchangeability. Crane’s profound communicative strength lies in the didactic application, the shifting from an iconic way of thinking and being – typical of a pre-reading-age child – to a symbolic level of thinking, where the child has learned how to associate a graphic symbol with a sound, and a series of letters with a word and meaning.

As children learn by filling in the gaps, connecting the dots, finding the odd one out, and spotting the difference – and in so doing encounter logical or mathematical problems to be dealt with later on in an organic way during their schooling – these illustrations help them to develop an agnostic, doubtful yet optimistic stance towards the world: they learn to question the conventional acceptance of the alphabetic system and more generally the duplicity of signs and images, playing with hints and clues, and discovering hidden figures, letters, and words scattered around the plate.

With Crane, the letter becomes figure and the figure becomes letter in a continuous interpenetration of different ontological statuses in the reduction of two worlds – the iconic (multicoloured, variegated, personal, and culturally determined) and the alphabetic (phonematic, conventional, and abstract) – to the common denominator of line, “the alpha and omega”.⁴⁰



Fig. 10 Walter Crane, *The Golden Primer*, vol. II, London 1884–1885, pl. 13.

NOTES

- 1 Karl Marx/Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, London 1888, II:10, p. 17.
- 2 Thomas H. Huxley, "A Liberal Education, and Where To Find It", in: *Macmillan's Magazine* (March 1868), p. 83.
- 3 Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, London 1859.
- 4 Paul G. Konody, *The Art of Walter Crane*, London 1902, p. 48. On the intense annoyance that this label caused Walter Crane, see Anthony Crane, "My Grandfather, Walter Crane", in: *The Yale University Library Gazette*, 31 (1956), no. 3, pp. 97–109: 105. After almost 40 years, the most reliable and complete reference point on Walter Crane remains Isobel Spencer, *Walter Crane*, London 1975; for an updated bibliography, see Morna O'Neill, *Walter Crane: The Arts and Crafts, Painting, and Politics, 1875–1890*, New Haven 2010.
- 5 Walter Crane, *Of the Decorative Illustration of Books Old and New*, London 1896, p. 5f. In connection with these issues, see also John M. D. Meiklejohn, *The English Language*, London 1886 (1920), p. 3f.
- 6 William Holman Hunt, "The Proper Mode and Study of Drawing, 1: Addressed to Students", in: *Magazine of Art*, 4 (1891): pp. 81–83: 83, quoted from Gerard Curtis, "Shared Lines: Pen and Pencil as Trace", in: *Victorian Literature and the Victorian Visual Imagination*, ed. by Carol T. Christ/John O. Jordan, Berkeley 1995, pp. 27–59: 38.
- 7 Following the CIHA Colloquium *Aesthetics and Techniques of Lines between Drawing and Writing* in 2011, a superlative essay was published on Crane, educational reform, and "the close connection between Crane's interests and those of the Esperanto movement". I refer to this for a thorough discussion of the point: Grace Brockington, "Rhyming Pictures: Walter Crane and the Universal Language of Art", in: *Word & Image*, 27 (2012), no. 4: pp. 359–373. See also Francesca Tancini, "As a Kind of Picture-Writing: Walter Crane, Drawing, and the Creation of a New Symbolic System", in: *Picturing the Language of Images*, ed. by Nancy Pedri/Laurence Petit, conference proceedings New Britain 2007, Cambridge 2013, pp. 147–161.
- 8 The first known examples of the Egyptian-styled monogram are *Poor Cock Robin*, London [1866] (see documents dated 4 and 8 May 1866, Manchester, John Rylands Library (hereafter JRL), WCA/2/2/2/1/36 [ff. 31–32], WCA/2/2/2/1/37 [ff. 31–32]), *The Heiress of the Blackburnfoot*, London 1866 (see documents dated 17 May 1866, JRL: WCA/2/2/2/1/39 [ff. 33–34]), *Sing a Song of Sixpence*, London [1866] (listed in *George Routledge & Sons' Wholesale Catalogue*, July, London 1866), and in a series of unpublished drawings titled *The Dragon of Wantley*, [1866] (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library [hereafter HL], *Uncatalogued Material: Walter Crane Miscellaneous Drawings IV*, [49] [a]–[f]).

- 9 Umberto Eco, *Kant e l'ornitorinco*, Milan 2005 (1997), p. 346 (paragraph not included in the English translation); and Charles S. Pierce, *Collected Papers*, ed. by Charles Hartshorne et al., Cambridge, MA 1931–1958, II, par. 276. See Francesca Tancini, "L'artista in vetrina: Strategie di autopromozione nell'editoria seriale d'autore", in: *Il peritesto visivo*, ed. by Luca Acquarelli et al., monographic number of *E[C*, 7 (2013), no. 13, pp. 41–54: 46–48.
- 10 Walter Crane, *The Fairy Ship*, London [1870], p. 2. The use of the hoist is also documented, for example, in Walter Crane, *The Baby's Own Aesop*, London 1887 [1886], p. [ii].
- 11 Walter Crane, *Lancelot's Levities*, ca. 1885, HL, Typ 8302.88.10; then published as Walter Crane, "Lancelot's Levities", in: *Little Folks*, N.S., XXVII (London 1888), pp. 5–7, 104–106, 200–202, 264–266, 320–322, 407–409: 264f.
- 12 See *La cultura della memoria*, ed. by Lina Bolzoni/Pietro Corsi, Bologna 1992; Lina Bolzoni, *La stanza della memoria: Modelli letterari e iconografici dell'età della stampa*, Turin 1995. On the nineteenth-century use of the art of memory, see Paolo Castelli, "L'arte della memoria tra il XVIII e il XX secolo: Alcuni episodi nell'evoluzione delle mnemotecniche moderne", in: *Engramma* (2009), no. 70, pp. 5–54. Yet to be explored are late Victorian resurgences of the art of memory, mainly through the ideas of Robert and William Pyke, and their channelling into children's periodicals, serials, and annuals.
- 13 Johannes Amos Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus*, London 1658 (1672), p. [ii]f.
- 14 See Sydney Roscoe, *John Newbery and His Successors*, Wormley 1973; Marjory Moon, *John Harris's Books for Youth, 1801–1843*, Cambridge 1976; idem, *Benjamin Tabart's Juvenile Library*, Winchester 1990; *Be Merry and Wise: Origins of Children's Book Publishing in England, 1650–1850*, ed. by Brian Alderson/Felix de Marez Oyens, New York/London/New Castle 2006.
- 15 Walter Crane, "Notes on My Own Books for Children", in: *The Imprint*, I (17 February 1913), no. 2, pp. 81–86: 85.
- 16 *Mixed Sweets from Routledge's Annual*, London 1867 [1866], p. 144; this illustration is here attributed to Crane for the first time on the basis of documents dated 4, 12, and 20 October 1866 (JRL, WCA/2/2/2/1/60, WCA/2/2/2/1/64–66); for this book Crane also made an illustration (signed) for Mrs Henry Wood's "The Ghost of the Hollow Field", p. 7, and two headings, pp. 1, 140 (signed), hereby newly added to Crane's corpus.
- 17 This is particularly true if related to the wealth of educational nursery rhymes, alphabet and counting rhymes, and riddles that populate British culture, as outlined, for example, in the works of Iona and Peter Opie: *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, ed. by Iona Opie/Peter Opie, Oxford 1952; Iona Opie/Peter Opie, *Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, Oxford 1959; idem, *Children's Games in Street and Playground*, Oxford 1969. Note that the art of memory was also practised by Lewis Carroll, who wrote a *Memoria technica*

- on mathematical bases (see Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll (Rev. C. L. Dodgson)*, New York 1898 [1899], p. 268f).
- 18 For an in-depth analysis of context, see Brockington (note 7).
 - 19 Crane (note 15), p. 85. See also Walter Crane, *The Bases of Design*, London 1898, p. 189.
 - 20 John M. D. Meiklejohn, *The Golden Primer*, 2 vols., London 1884–1885; Nellie Dale, *Steps to Reading*, London [1898]; eadem, *The Walter Crane Readers*, 2 vols., London [1899]; eadem, *The Dale Readers*, 3 vols., London [1899] 1907; Alfred A. Watts, *The Child's Socialist Reader*, London 1907.
 - 21 Anthony Crane (note 4), pp. 97–109: 103.
 - 22 Walter Crane, *Legends for Lionel*, London 1887, p. 1.
 - 23 Margaret C. Maloney, "About Beatrice Crane, Her Book and Her Family", in: Walter Crane, *Beatrice Crane Her Book (the 2nd)*, 1 June 1879, Toronto 1983, p. 8. Only a few of these black books have ever been published: a couple in Crane's lifetime – Crane 1887 (note 22) and Crane 1888 (note 11) – and a couple more after his death (Walter Crane, *Mr. Michael Mouse Unfolds His Tale*, New Haven 1957, and Crane 1983). Much more work definitely deserves to be done on the black books: Spencer listed 29 black books in her sharp and rigorous appendixes (Spencer [note 4], pp. 91, 202–203), while Michael P. Hearn hinted at "over thirty black books" in a couple of essays inexplicably overlooked by scholars of the subject (Michael P. Hearn, "Nursery Aesthetics: Walter Crane and His Picture Books for Children", in: *American Book Collector*, II (1981), nos. 3, 5: 3: pp. 2–12: 5, pp. 19–33: 24). The truth is, there are far more than 40, divided between Houghton, Beinecke, Whitworth and the Senate House Library, plus some exemplars scattered among the National Art Library, New York Public Library, Toronto Public Library and Detroit Public Library.
 - 24 Hearn (note 23), 5: p. 24.
 - 25 Meiklejohn (note 5), p. 5.
 - 26 Meiklejohn (note 20), I, p. [i]f. He continues: "This beginning is the most difficult of all beginnings. This arises from the two facts: that over 26 letters have to do the work of 45 sounds; and that, of these 26 letters, only 8 are faithful to their work [...] true both to ear and eye". And, to hierarchise, "the eye should help the ear", as stresses Nellie Dale, *On the Teaching of English Reading*, London 1898 (1907), p. 11.
 - 27 Among documents pertinent to these publications, see the mock book *Little Queen Anne and the RRR*, N.S. No. 1, 1885–1886, HL, Typ 8302.86.5; a notebook, October 1880–August 1881, HL, Typ 8300.81, fol. 8r (where, among the titles envisaged by Crane under the *New Series of Picture Books: First Steps, Or Toddler Rounds the Three Rs*, a part from those effectively realised from 1885 to 1886, are "3. *Charley's Circus*, 4. *Path's Pantomime*, 5. *The Five Fairies*, 6. *The House that Time Built*, 7. *Jill and the Sea Flower*, 8. *A Ladder and a Wonderful Lamp*"); and several surviving drafts realised for a never-finished picture book about good manners for children, *The Majesty's Servants*, HL, Typ

- 8303.25; HL, Typ 8302.27PF, box 2; New Haven, Beinecke Library, Yale University (hereafter YU), MS Vault Crane; Manchester, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester University (hereafter WAG), WCA.1.1.1.4.176.
- 28 Walter Crane, *A Romance of the Three Rs*, London 1886, p. [i].
 - 29 Here Crane works over some points already hinted at in several black books penned from 1879 to 1883 for his children: *Beatrice Crane Her Book 1879*, 20 February 1879, HL, Typ 8302.79; *Lionel, 1880–1881*, HL, Typ 8302.80.15; *Lionel's Own Book*, dated [5] November 1880 to 30 January 1881, HL, Typ 8302.81.15; *A Book for Lionel*, undated, YU: MS Vault Crane (as yet uncatalogued); *Adventures of Dumbo, More Adventures of Dumbo, Further Adventures of Dumbo* [ca. 1883], HL, MS Eng 783.1, I, III; WAG, WCA.1.1.1.4.9, WCA.1.1.1.4.39, etc.
 - 30 Again, more than a hint comes from the black books Crane produced for his daughter from 1880 to 1881: "To Beatrice, sitting like Queen Anne in the sun, comes a letter": *The Adventures of Beatrice*, 1880–1881, HL, Typ 8302.81.10; *Beatrice Crane Her Book, April 1880*, April to June 1880, London, Senate House Library (hereafter SH), GB 0096 SL IV 69.
 - 31 Crane (note 5), p. 5.
 - 32 Note that the fishlike A-animal dips its trunk into a pot that displays the very same decorations as the cover of Crane *Romance* 1886 (note 28).
 - 33 And once again, in this book Crane condenses suggestions from black books for Lionel and Lancelot: *Lionel His Book*, fol. 9r-14r, HL, Typ 8302.89.50; *Lancelot His Book*, November 1883 to January 1884, fol. 2r-4r, SH, GB 0096 SL IV 71; *A Book for Lionel* (note 29); *A Boy's book of the Alphabet* (note 29); WAG: WCA.1.1.1.4.48-51, etc.
 - 34 Walter Crane, *Line and Form*, London 1900, p. 3. See also Francesca Tancini, "'Outline is the Alpha and Omega of Art': Eredità naturalistiche e anticipazioni simboliste nell'opera di Walter Crane", in: *Annuario della Scuola di Specializzazione in Storia dell'arte dell'Università di Bologna* (2011), no. 8, pp. 105–117.
 - 35 Crane (note 34), p. 15.
 - 36 *Ibidem*, p. 7: "There are various methods of proceeding in getting an outline of any object or figure. [...] The form might be gradually built up by the combination of a series of lines [...]. This might be termed the calligraphic method of drawing."
 - 37 *Ibidem*, p. 28.
 - 38 *Ibidem*.
 - 39 Again, the reference here is to Brockington (note 7), pp. 364–371.
 - 40 Crane (note 34), p. 3.