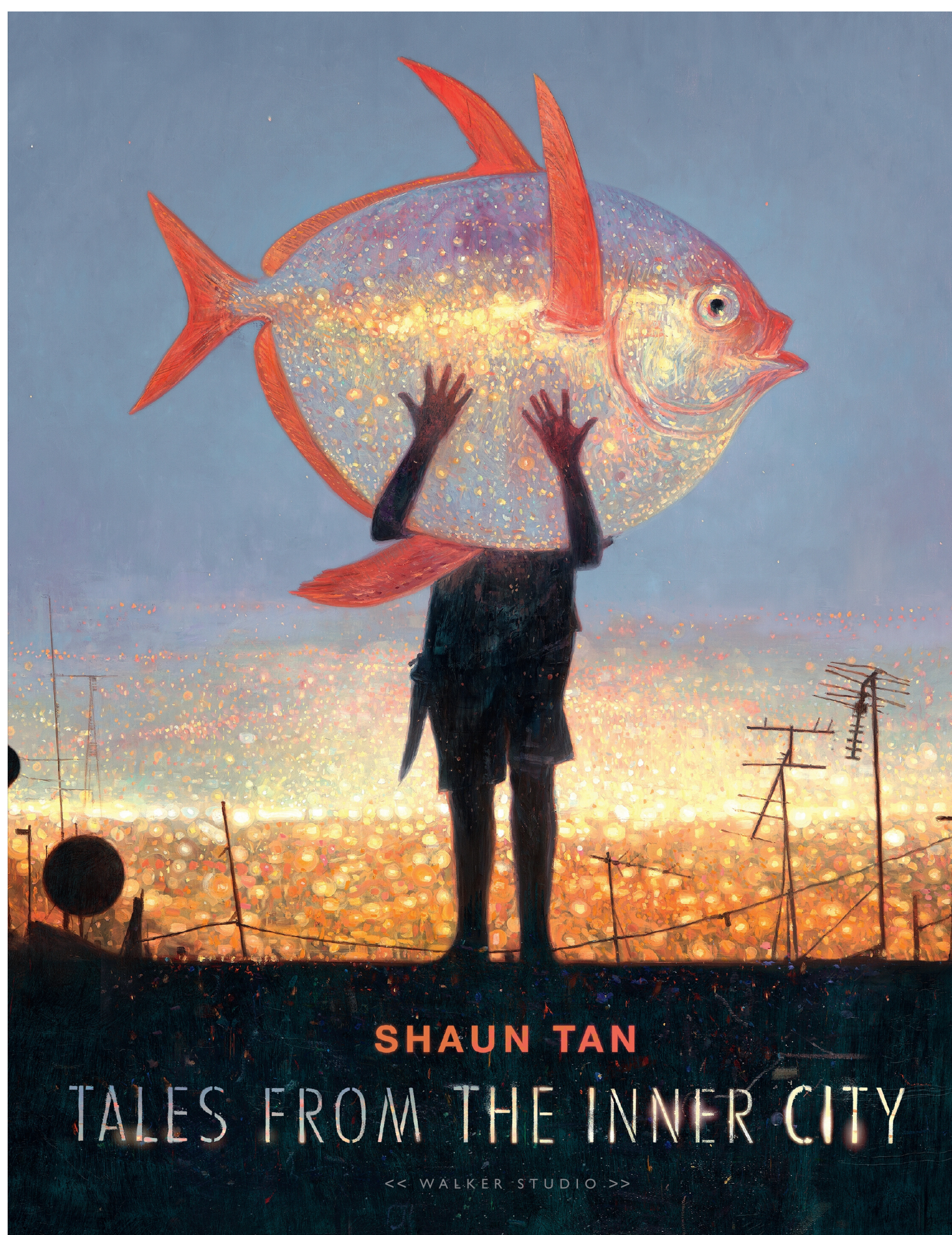


CILIP KATE GREENAWAY SHORTLIST 2020 SHADOWING RESOURCES



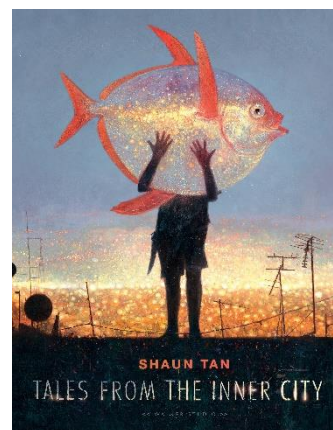
CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal 2020

VISUAL LITERACY NOTES

Title: Tales from the Inner City

Author/Illustrator: Shaun Tan

Publisher: Walker Books



Shadowers' Views

Shadowing the Kate Greenaway shortlist requires you to look very carefully at artwork in order to form a judgment about it. The word **view** can refer to both what can you see, and to your opinions. You are looking for a book that 'creates an outstanding reading experience through illustration'.

First look

The work of Shaun Tan is extraordinary. He is an Australian writer and artist who works both alone and with other authors. His highly original work is universally admired. If you are unfamiliar with his illustrations and picturebooks, you may find *Tales from the Inner City* unusual. The book is a collection of short fantasies, written as poetry, short stories or brief commentaries on the behaviour of human beings and the creatures with whom they share Planet Earth.

Look at the front cover; you can see just how thought-provoking, inventive and curious this book is. Consider this description: *A boy is holding a large illuminated fish. He is looking down on the inner city lights. There are TV aerials around him and no sign at all of any water. The fish in the boy's arms has been caught by fishing in the sky from the top of a tall building* (the story is on page 91). Open the book and you will find more unusual images. It is the illustration that you will be judging so make sure you find all the pages with any form of visual text.

Consider all the visual aspects of the book i.e. end papers, font choices, title page and layout. How do these 'extras' to the story contribute to the overall impact of the book?

Look again

On the contents pages, the numbers you see on each animal is the page where writing refers to that creature. Turn to page 105. Here you will find a poem about a rhino. It is one of the shortest texts. In contrast, look at page 23. The text (words and images) takes up 38 pages (p.22-59 but that includes blank pages and more pictures than words. Turn to page 105. A short, sad poem about a rhino takes only 4 pages, 3 of which are illustrations. What is the function of the pictures in these texts?



Read Shaun Tan's Ideas

Explore the book and consider the peculiarity of its contents and Tan's techniques. Tan has produced a set of invaluable notes on his ideas for this book and his art techniques. You can download them by searching for [Tales from the Inner City PDF](#). Or go to the website of publishers Allen and Unwin (Australia) and look for resources/teachers.

Interpreting the texts

It is always beneficial, when studying a book, to introduce tasks which require imaginative responses. The following suggestions may help shadowers to engage with the book.

Painting a world of dreams

The word Surrealism has sometimes been used to describe Shaun Tan's art. Surrealism was a movement in art that based its ideas on the growing understanding of psychology. Sigmund Freud discovered that subconscious thoughts and desires were making people unwell. He was particularly interested in dreams and thoughts revealed by hypnosis. His book, *The Interpretation of Dreams* was published in 1900. By the 1920s, influenced by Freud's work, a group of artists began painting scenes based on dreams and their imaginations. The resulting pictures seemed baffling and weird, almost as though they were intended to disturb viewers. One of the main elements of surrealist images is ordinary things in extraordinary places – such as, crocodiles living in a skyscraper, giant parrots or disappearing pigs.



Salvador Dali



Salvador Dali



Rene Magritte

Here are three artworks, which contain animals, by famous surrealist artists.

Do you think the illustrations in *Tales from the Inner City* are surrealist?

Human relationships with animals

Shaun Tan feels that humanity has 'disrespected animals greatly' by destroying their natural habitats, factory farming and abusing them for entertainment. Do you agree? Could things change? To encourage different ways of thinking about and caring for all life on Earth, Shadowers might like to express themselves creatively by:

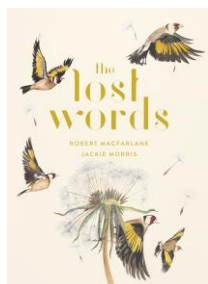
- Writing a poem/short story
- Designing and create a poster
- Preparing a talk.

Research

Surrealist art: www.tate.org.uk/kids/explore/what-is/surrealism

Looking after the world: www.greenpeace.org.uk

Read more



If you have enjoyed reading *Tales from the Inner City* why not try the 2019 Kate Greenaway winner *The Lost Words* which is illustrated by Jackie Morris and written by Robert MacFarlane. This book also explores the relationship we have with the natural world.

FURTHER THINKING

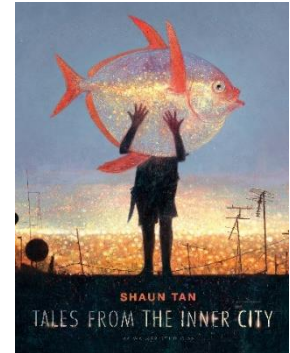
CILIP works in partnership with Amnesty International and Inclusive Minds to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of human rights, inclusion and representation in children's literature. The discussion points below are intended to further stimulate reader's thinking on the themes explored in the shortlisted books.

CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal 2020

Title: **Tales from the Inner City**

Author/Illustrator: **Shaun Tan**

Publisher: Walker Books



Discussing human rights in this story:

Right to equality; Right to be treated fairly and with dignity; Right to a good life with enough food, clothing, housing and healthcare; Duty to other people to protect their rights and freedoms; Children's rights; Disability rights; Freedom of expression.

- Frogs: How has the Secretary been treated? How do you feel about her act of forgiveness?
- Hippos: Who should have been responsible for keeping the child safe and upholding his dignity?
- Tigers: Do you recognise the 'great weakness of humankind' that is described? How can we ensure that everyone feels able to look after themselves?



Discussing inclusion and representation in this story:

- What does the passage about the snails (p61) say about how we can challenge attitudes to difference and how attitudes change over time?
- How does a story such as Hippo (p139) show how we can be unaccepting of those who think differently?
- To what extent does the book make itself accessible to all readers?



Teaching Ideas for the CILIP Kate Greenaway Award Shortlist 2020

Title: Tales from the Inner City

Illustrator: Shaun Tan

Author: Shaun Tan

Publisher: Walker Studio (2018)

These notes have been written by the teachers at CLPE to provide schools with sessions which focus on the importance of illustration in building a narrative and supporting children's response. They build on our work supporting teachers to use picture books to enhance critical thinking and develop creative approaches in art and writing. The teaching notes show how picture books can be used in schools to enhance children's reading comprehension and composition of their own creative writing. We hope you find them useful.

These notes focus on the book as a title shortlisted for an award for outstanding illustration, so the many other viewpoints from which it can be discussed are not directly addressed. However, *Tales from the Inner City* is an incredibly rich, challenging and stimulating book; it deserves and would reward long-term in-depth engagement.

Before beginning this sequence:

Collect together a range of art materials that will allow the children to engage in the activities exploring illustration, for example: cartridge paper, sketching pencils 2B–4B, fineliners, felt tips and marker pens, watercolour paints, ink, coloured pencils, chalk and oil pastels, and a variety of brushes. Shaun Tan's preferred medium is oil paint, but even he describes this as 'obnoxious and messy'. You may be able to replicate the properties he appreciates — its subtlety and flexibility, and the possibility of working on different scales — with other more practical media.

In order to engage fully with the layers of meaning and the details within the illustrations, it is advisable to ensure that you have access to a visualiser or similar device to enable you to share images from the text with the pupils on a large scale.

Suggested Activities:

Session 1: Exploring the Book as an Artefact

Begin by sharing the front cover illustration with the children: invite them to discuss what they notice, providing questions as necessary to focus and develop their responses: *What do you see here? What does this illustration make you think? How does it make you feel? What questions do you have? What kind of book do you expect this to be? Why is this huge fish out of water, is it a type you recognise, what feelings does seeing it held this way stir in you?* Scrutinise the person, fish and place depicted: *who do you think this character might be, where are they standing? How do you think they are feeling, what makes you think that? What details do you notice about them?* Children might note their knife sheath and shorts, their size relative to the fish, the colour and pattern of the fish and city in the background, the silhouettes of the character, aials and dishes in the foreground. *Where and when do you think this story is set? What tells you this? What else do you notice? Does the cover remind you of anything that you have seen — in photographs, films or books? What do you notice about the colours chosen by the illustrator? How do they make you feel, what kind of mood or atmosphere do they help to create?*

Discuss the title, ***'Tales from the Inner City'***: what does the word ***'Tales'*** suggest to you about the contents of the book — as opposed to, say, *'stories'*? What does ***'Inner City'*** convey to you, do you think this is the central part of somewhere like London, Manchester, Melbourne? Children may also point out that 'inner' also means 'interior', as in the phrase 'inner feelings'. Does the title give any suggestion to the story that lies ahead? Scribe children's suggestions around a copy of the front cover or allow time for them to scribe their thoughts on post-it notes to stick around a copy of the cover. Do you recognise the name of the illustrator? They may recognise the style or name of Shaun Tan from the sister volume to this title, *Tales from Outer Suburbia* (Templar); or from *Cicada* (Hodder), *The Singing Bones* (Walker Studio), *Rules of Summer* (Hodder), *The Bird King and Other Stories* (Walker), *The Arrival* (Hodder), *The Lost Thing* (Hodder), also an Oscar-winning adaptation, *The Red Tree* (Hodder); or from his illustrations to John Marsden's *The Rabbits* (Hodder) or Gary Crew's *Memorial* (Lothian) or *The Viewer* (Hodder). What kind of book do you think this will be and what does knowing other titles from Shaun Tan lead you to expect, what associations does his name have for you?

Allow children to appreciate the book as an artefact, handling it to see the foil details of the fish. Turn to share the back cover. What do you think is happening here? What does this illustration make you think? How does it make you feel? What questions do you have? What is the impact on you of the various 'anomalies', such as the relative size of the cat and humans — indeed, are we looking at a giant cat or small humans? — the fact that a cat, which normally avoids water, is swimming or at least wading? How does the palette and surrounding darkness make you feel? What is the source of the light that all three are facing, and that shines through the cat's ear?

Open the book to look at the inside-jacket illustration of what appears to be a deer at the edge of a dark glade. How do you think this image ties in with the two on the front and back cover, does it stir the same emotional response in you? Why? Why not? Remove — or ask the children to remove — the dust jacket and continue to explore the book as an artefact, appreciating its heft, the quality of finish and its tactile cover, the weight of the paper and clean font and design. Children may relate the image on the opened-out cover to the one from the inside-jacket cover that they have just seen. What do you think is happening in this illustration? How does it make you feel, what do you think is the mood of the illustration? How do the palette, the contrast between the inside and the outside affect you, and how is this enhanced by the physical finish of the book? Continue to explore the book by sharing the endpapers, showing the front ones first, then comparing the back: what do you think Shaun Tan is showing us in this pair of illustrations? What do the facial expression and body language of the tiger suggest to you? Where do you think the tiger is? How does it feel to see it in this setting? Children may use the metaphor 'concrete jungle': what do you think this phrase means, what associations does it have?

Turn to look at the full-bleed (i.e., to the edge) double-page spread of deer looking out across the city, and allow time and space for the children to discuss what they see and how it connects with the previous glimpses of this scene. How does this illustration make you feel? What is the effect of having it gradually revealed to you and now seeing it in full: what do you make of this scene now you see it whole, does this support or go against your previous ideas and feelings when you saw just parts? What do you think is

happening now? How do you explain what you see? How does this scene make you feel? What is the atmosphere of the illustration? Where are these deer, and what are they looking out over? Invite children to make connections to their own knowledge and experience: have you ever seen deer, or visited a forest? What was this like, how do you think it influences your response to this scene? What do you think they might be thinking or feeling? How does the forest they are standing in compare with the city outside? How is this affected by the fact it is interior?

Turn to the title page, discussing the way the author-illustrator's name and the title of the book are presented, and the outline of the cat. *How does the way Shaun Tan's name and the book title are presented make you feel? What associations does stencilled lettering have for you? What is the impact of the absence of colour and the grainy or sprayed effect? Where do you think the silhouette-like cat is leading you? A silhouette is traditionally a solid shape, but these have a texture. Draw together the children's thoughts and responses to the animals and portrayals they have seen so far: what are you expecting of the book you are about to read? What atmosphere or mood have the illustrations of the boy holding the fish, the submerged cat, the prowling tiger, curious deer and advancing cat created?*

Now turn to share the visual contents page, allowing time and space to discuss what they have seen. *What do you think you are looking at here? What information is being presented? Do you recognise any of these outlines from what you have seen so far? Why do you think they are shown in outline, yet not silhouetted, having texture, and indeed colour? What do the numbers refer to? Why might Shaun Tan and the book designer have chosen to present the contents of the book in this way, rather than using names, for example, or listing the stories as they appear? How does this treatment make you feel, what does it make you think?* Read aloud the quotation from Alice Walker on the next page; you could consider writing this out to accompany the artwork you will produce during these sessions. *What do you think Shaun Tan might want us to think by sharing this quotation, how do you think it relates to the stories that follow, and his decision not to use in his visual contents page the names we humans have given animals? Why do you think a muted rather than bold dark typeface is used for this quotation, and that it is small and discreet on the page?*

Now give children the opportunity to explore the book for themselves, inviting them to consider how they could read the stories, and to see what patterns they find in the way the book is set out. *What order do you think you would like to read the stories, in sequence from page 11 to page 221, or taking your example from the visual contents page, which is not linearly ordered? What do you notice about the stories as you look through the book, are there any patterns to the way they are arranged or presented? What form do the stories take? Are there any that especially stand out to you, because of the illustration or text? Which? Why? Are there any that you want to read first, and others less so? Why?* Children might observe a number of things, or these features may become apparent as they read on in the collection; for example, the stories are of varying lengths, from four pages to 38; they cover different timescales, from a moment in time to all of civilisation; they take a variety of forms — short story, free verse poetry, microstory/flash fiction/vignette; there are 25 different narrative voices for the 25 different stories; the stories are written from 1st, 2nd and 3rd person perspectives, and in the past and present tense. Observant readers may also

note that there is no story for the deer they have seen in these initial encounters with the book — they might in due course consider writing their own story to accompany Shaun Tan's illustration.

Explain that these sessions will challenge children to create their own illustrated, Shaun Tan-inspired story, borrowing some of his working practices and approaches. Finish this session by inviting the children to use the sgraffito technique to create their own animals. Using a wax pastel crayon cover the entire paper with different bright colours; then apply a layer of dark crayon on the top so as to cover the first layer completely — then gently draw the outline of an animal of their choice by scratching away the dark surface with a sharp object. Display the animals the children create as a complement to Shaun Tan's visual contents page. *What animals have you chosen to portray? Why? What is it like to see only the outline, and only to glimpse the layers beneath?*

Session 2: Exploring How the Author Illustrator Uses Words and Pictures

Explain that in this session children will be exploring three or four of the stories with a view to examining how Shaun Tan manages his dual roles of author and illustrator, and how the text and illustrations work together in the stories he tells here. They could refer back to the stories that stood out for them in the previous session, or you could identify some that you especially want to focus on: the stories 'rhino' (pages 104 to 107), 'orca' (pages 156 to 159), 'shark' (pages 64 to 69) and 'crocodile' (pages 10 to 15), for example, offer a range of forms and themes. Over time, however, you will want to ensure that there is opportunity for the children to engage with the whole of the collection in a way that these five sessions do not permit.

Read aloud each of the stories, beginning by sharing the silhouette with which each opens, and ending with the full-bleed double-page spread with which each one closes. Allow time and space for the children to reflect on what they have heard and seen. In response to each story, discuss: *what do you think is happening in this story? How did it make you feel? How do you think the illustration stood in relation to the words that had gone before? Did it alter how you felt about what you had just heard? How?* For example:

- *in 'rhino', how does the image of the rhino against the backdrop of tailback traffic sit with the poem?* Children might mention the contrast between the single rhino's textured skin in the foreground and the countless faceless vehicles in the background, the contrastive palette.
- *in 'orca', how does the image of the sky-bound orca resonate with the paragraph that precedes it?* Children might mention how they begin by seeing the image as incongruously weird, but the words question whether it is our anthropocentric view that is weird.
- *in 'shark', how does the image heighten the atmosphere the story has created?* Children might mention the palette, the scale of the creature relative to the countless milling spectators, the industrial background and sombre palette, the limited use of colour for blood and the waving flags.
- *in 'crocodile', how does the window-cleaner against the reflected sky chime with the account the 'maintenance guy' narrator has given? How do you view the façade now you know what is behind the glass of the 87th floor?* Children may comment on the striking palette, on the mirror-like reflection which is not, however, what it appears.

Shaun Tan has spoken about his arrangement of the book, with the story followed by the illustration, so that 'when words stop pictures will always persist.' *Do you agree that this arrangement provides what Shaun Tan has called 'respite [...] a wonderful breathing space'? What do you think he means by this phrase? How does the illustration sit with the story it follows?*

Finish the session by inviting the children to create a diorama like that shown below by Shaun Tan in his author notes (at <http://www.shauntan.net/books/TFIC/TFIC comment.html>). Within school you may be able to borrow small-world-play resources to support children in creating a three-dimensional model, possibly around the sgraffito animal they created in the previous session. Encourage them to be as creative and imaginative as possible in populating and 'furnishing' the setting their animal will inhabit, encouraging them to explore the dissonance and dream-like quality they have seen in Shaun Tan's stories so far. Invite children to display their complete dioramas and to present and discuss them, offering feedback and ideas for how the stories that take place in them might develop.



Session 3: Exploring the Impact of Viewpoint, Perspective, Scale

Begin the session by asking the children to summarise and reflect on what impressions the illustrations and stories they have encountered so far have made on them. Explain that in this session they will be reading more stories to consider how Shaun Tan uses painterly aspects of viewpoint, perspective and scale in his illustrations, and to what effect, and how his use of them complements what he is doing as an author. As before, children could make their own selection of stories to bring to the discussion, as they read further in the collection, or you could guide them to particular stories, such as 'dog' (pages 22 to 59), 'cat' (pages 70 to 77), 'owl' (pages 108 to 127) and 'frog' (pages 128 to 133). In each case read the story aloud, sharing the illustrations and allowing time and space to reflect on what they have seen and heard. Again, invite the children to respond to each story: *what do you think is happening in this story? How did it make you feel? How did the illustration or illustrations support or extend what you had heard in the story, reinforcing the mood?* Lead the discussion, prompting the children to think especially about the way in which the text of the story relates to the accompanying illustration (or series of illustrations for 'dog' and 'owl'), considering the narrative viewpoint and perspective, the scale of the illustration. For example:

- *in 'dog', how do the successive views of the relationship between human and dog, their stories intertwined through history, make you feel? What do you think each scenario is showing? Why are*

there no words for some of the illustrations, do you think? What is the impact of the repeated view of the strip; what do you think it represents? How does the intimate scale of the relationship relate to the scale of emotions associated with events shown, and with the timescale of the story? Who do you think is the speaker of the poem, and where are we viewing from? How do the words and illustrations work together? Do the words provide something that the illustrations do not convey, or the illustrations something that the text cannot convey?

- *in 'cat', how does the closing illustration relate to the story that precedes it? Whose voice do we hear narrating the story, and how does it relate to us and to the characters? How does the final illustration make you feel? Deepen the discussion of perspective by revisiting the similar image seen on the back of the dust jacket: does the illustration elicit the same response from you? What is the same about this version, and what is different, and how does this affect you? Children may comment on the different skyline, and the directionality of the images. For similar effects where humans are shown out of scale with animals, you could also share the stories 'shark' (pages 64 to 69), 'parrot' (pages 168 to 171) and 'snail' (pages 60 to 63).*
- *in 'owl', whose voice do we hear in the free verse poem, what are the emotions the patient is capturing? How does the viewpoint of the poem relate to the series of five spreads interspersed between the words? Children might suggest that the patient, staying in the waiting room, doesn't change viewpoint but that the views Shaun Tan gives us deepen our engagement with their experience. How does the first spread of the faceless building make you feel? What kind of building do you think this is? What associations does it have for you? What is the impact of the spread with the snowy owl perched at the foot of the bed? What details stand out for you? Children might observe the talons and eyes, but also the incongruity of the bird in the sterility of the setting. How does the next illustration capture '**drowning in feathers**', and how does this relate to the next spread of the bird's piercing yellow eyes? How does this pair of illustrations make you feel, how do they connect to the words Shaun Tan has written? Finally, what is the impact of the final spread of the same building at night, an owl in each window? Children might like to compare and contrast the two illustrations of the exterior. Why do you think Shaun Tan bookends this story with the 'same view'; how is the view the same and how is it different? What is the impact on you of the altered perspective?*
- *in 'frog', how does the final illustration strike you, do you find it absurd, ridiculous, humorous...? Whose eyes do we see this scene through, and who is the narrator of the story; how does the illustration connect to the secretary's viewpoint? What details do you notice in the spread? Children might observe the exclusively male environment, the industrial complex outside, the uniformity of the chairs, glasses, window bars. How do you think these elements fit with what the story might be saying? How is the secretary's normal perspective altered, as she enters this space where she had never previously dared to speak? Do you think the spread shows that '**there's no natural order, it's all luck and absurdity, it's up and down and upside down**'? How?*

End this session by inviting children to develop their idea from the sgraffito and diorama by experimenting with collage, which Shaun Tan has described as 'a great way to play around with ideas easily'. This could be

done digitally, but some of the most interesting juxtapositions, which will naturally involve interesting effects of scale and perspective — might be found by working with found images in magazines and leaflets or printed out from the internet. In his author notes Shaun Tan gives insight into the process that leads from piecing together images then drawing or painting over them, including populating them incongruously, for example frogs on a boardroom table, rhinos on a motorway or horses on a flyover (pages 82 to 83; see his preparatory collage below). Invite the children to view each other's work, using post-it notes to record their thoughts and suggestions on each other's work. *What do you like about what your classmate has created? Why?*



Session 4: Exploring the Portrayal of Dream and the Impact of Colour

Explain that in this session the children will be continuing to consider Shaun Tan's use of perspective, viewpoint and scale, but going on to reflect also on his use of colour and the way all these painterly elements are controlled to create a dream-like, surreal atmosphere that permeates the book. Again, begin by asking the children to summarise and reflect on what impressions the illustrations and stories they have encountered so far have made on them. Agree a definition of what we mean by 'dream-like' — elaborating by reference to their own experience if they are comfortable to do so — and what characterises dreams, also what distinguishes daydreams, dreams and nightmares. Go on to ask whether there are any stories in which they have noticed a dream-like quality. Children could again make their own selection of stories to bring to the discussion, as they continue to explore the collection, or you could guide them to particular stories, such as 'butterflies' (pages 16 to 21), 'eagle' (pages 182 to 187), 'bee' (pages 200 to 207) or 'yak' (pages 208 to 215).

Read each story aloud before focussing on the illustrations; allow the children time and space to reflect on what they have heard and seen before inviting them to respond to each story: *what do you think is happening here? How did this story make you feel? How do you think the illustration stood in relation to the words that went before? Did it alter how you felt about what you had just heard? How?* In the discussion, encourage the children to think especially about the mood or atmosphere of the story, and how this is enhanced by the illustration. For example:

- *in 'butterflies', how does the story make you feel? What is the mood of the story and how does the final illustration heighten that mood? What elements of the illustration (and of the story) strike you*

as realistic, which are surreal or dream-like? Children might mention the city background, the vast host of people and the vaster still — uncountable — host of butterflies, the wave of colour coming to fill the page. *Do any words or phrases from the text especially resonate? How do you think you see these expressed in Shaun Tan's painting?*

- *in 'eagle', how does the closing illustration fit with the atmosphere of the story? What is the effect of placing the eagle in this setting?* Children might comment on the dissonance, the extraordinary set alongside the ordinary in the way that is possible in dreams or nightmares.
- *in 'bee', what do you think is happening? How does the story make you feel? How do the words and illustration interweave dream and reality? What is the impact of this illustration compared to say, that in 'butterflies' or 'eagle'?*
- *in 'yak', how is the relationship between the animal and its passengers captured by the words and illustration? What is the impact on you of the image of the vast creature, with passengers scrambling aboard or holding tight, how does this capture **'the oceanic sway of bovine hips and shoulders, this old lullaby'**?*

Across all illustrations, children may talk about Shaun Tan's palette choices and the effect these have on them, for example **'the spring blossoms of every imaginable colour and pattern'** of 'butterflies', the smear of gore in 'eagle', the **'colossal pink hemisphere'** of 'bee' and the fuzzy, muted abstraction of 'yak', the only colour provided by the setting sun and splashes in the animal's own coat. Shaun Tan has said, 'Colour is important for drawing attention to something, like little notes; you can't hear those notes if there's a lot of notes being played. I always start with a black-and-white medium in my mind; I add colour where there is some soundtrack required, it's like adding music to a scene... a tool of exaggeration, a way of caricaturing reality'. *Can you find examples that demonstrate what Shaun Tan has said?*

End the session by inviting the children to consider how they will use colour 'where it's needed' in their own final illustration, and how the illustrations they have explored in this and previous sessions might help them to decide where it is needed. They can also create a first draft of the story that their final artwork will illustrate, considering how the words and picture will work together.

Session 5: Exploring the Nature of Illustration

Begin the final session by inviting the children to reflect and feedback on the illustrations and stories they have encountered so far and how these have affected them. Explain that in this session they will be drawing together their learning so far to consider what Shaun Tan is doing as an illustrator, how his illustrations 'work' and what they accomplish in this book. This will bring to bear all they have learned about his use of perspective and viewpoint, of scale and colour, and the storytelling decisions he makes as an author **and** illustrator. The more of the collection they have read, the more wide-ranging the discussion can be, and you could consider allotting stories to specific children for them to feed back on, although you would want all of them to read all of the stories in due course. You might especially want to share 'pig' (pages 84 to 89), 'sheep' (pages 134 to 137), 'moonfish' (pages 90 to 103), 'bear' (pages 174 to 181), 'pigeon' (pages 194 to 199) or 'human' (pages 216 to 221). Read each of the stories aloud, sharing the illustrations and allowing time and space to reflect on what they have seen and heard. As before, invite the

children to respond to each story: *what do you think is happening here? How did it make you feel? How did the illustration or illustrations support or extend what you heard in the story, reinforcing the mood? How do you think the illustration stood in relation to the words that had gone before? Did it alter how you felt about what you had just heard? How?*

Shaun Tan has spoken previously about 'illustration' being a derogatory term when he was an art student, and that his artwork does not literally illustrate the stories; support the children in discussing this distinction, and unpicking what his illustrations **are** doing instead. This discussion could be facilitated and enriched by looking at other picture books they have read, or at previous Greenaway winners, or other titles from this year's shortlist to have an idea of the scope of illustration. *What do you think Shaun Tan's illustrations do if not 'merely' illustrate the text? How do you think they work with the text, and how do they go beyond it?* Children might mention the way they create mood and atmosphere, suggest relationships, and suggest a dream-like quality, partly because of surreal juxtapositions, but also because of the painterly techniques with which he creates them. Indeed, Shaun Tan has said, 'The text illustrates the pictures — it provides a connective tissue for me. I use text as grout in between the tiles of the pictures. At the end of all of my stories [...] I remove the text and see if it works by itself. And if it does, I feel that that's a successful story.'

Invite the children to create their own responses to *Tales from the Inner City*. They may be inspired by the same issues that concern Shaun Tan, or by ideas of their own: this book stems from 'subconscious concerns I've grown up with; writing and painting is a way of exploring creeping anxiety about the world I live in', and of course the children's subconscious concerns may not be the same as Shaun Tan's. He describes beginning with 'a fuzzy mental image, like recalling a dream'. Children could work in any medium they choose, and draw on their dioramas, photo-collages and exploration of colour. They could also write in whatever form they choose, as Shaun Tan does here, and take comfort from his own reserve: 'I don't trust myself as a writer. I still lack confidence.' He has spoken about refining the text last, as words are easier to edit. (Children who especially want to focus on writing could write their own story for the 'deer' illustration at the start of the book.)

Invite the children to view each other's work and discuss what feelings their stories evoke, using post-it notes to record words and phrases they use in response to what they see. *What do you like about what your classmate has drawn? Why? Shaun Tan has said about the aim of his work: 'Over the years as an illustrator I've realised more and more that painting and storytelling is about communication; communication is not telling people things, not having a message and giving it, for an artist it's about having a conversation, a way of having a conversation without the other person being present in the room, leave a lot of open space for interpretation.'* Unpick what they think he means by this, and discuss: *how well do you think you have communicated your ideas and had a conversation? How do you think you have been influenced by Shaun Tan's techniques and illustrations in Tales from the Inner City? How well do you think you have incorporated what you have learned?*

Beyond Session 5

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Tales from the Inner City rewards multiple re-readings — both for text and illustrations — and it is important to offer children the opportunity to revisit and reflect on the book at leisure. Every Shaun Tan book is an invitation to view things from a fresh and unexpected perspective, so it would be interesting for them to have the opportunity to read other titles from Shaun Tan: every one is excellent in its own right but also provides interesting points of comparison, including the sister volume *Tales from Outer Suburbia* (Templar), *Cicada* (Hodder), *The Singing Bones* (Walker Studio), *Rules of Summer* (Hodder), *The Bird King and Other Stories* (Walker), *The Arrival* (Hodder), *The Lost Thing* (Hodder) also an Oscar-winning adaptation, *The Red Tree* (Hodder), as well as *The Rabbits* (by John Marsden; Hodder), and *Memorial* (Lothian) and *The Viewer* (Hodder) with Gary Crew.

Shaun Tan introduces *Tales from the Inner City* in a short video (that features his family's Brazilian sun conure parrot Diego) at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITd_9qdDsBE; he has also written extensive, thought-provoking notes for *Tales of the Inner City* at <http://www.shauntan.net/books/TFIC/TFICcomment.html> which can greatly enrich discussion of the book and the many issues it raises.

Children might like to find out more about Shaun Tan from his website <http://www.shauntan.net/> and blog at <http://thebirdking.blogspot.com/>. There are many articles and interviews on the web, including a tour of his studio at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9NCUydoJFk> in which he shows the process from portable sketchbook to worked up drawing and ultimately oil painting. In a fascinating *Guardian* interview with Neil Gaiman, a long-standing admirer of his work, the two discuss creativity and the way words and pictures work to tell a story at <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/dec/02/neil-gaiman-shaun-tan-interview>.

In-depth teaching sequences for over 220 other high quality texts, including John Marsden's *The Rabbits* and Gary Crew's *The Viewer* (both Hodder), both illustrated by Shaun Tan, can be found at: www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading.

This sequence of activities was designed by CLPE for the Greenaway shortlist. To access more free resources from CLPE, visit: www.clpe.org.uk/freeresources.

Further resources to support children's understanding of picturebooks for all ages and research on the importance of using picturebooks across the primary years can be found at: <https://www.clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures>.