

Approved for use in 7th grade

Summary of the Work:

Two shipwreck victims, Phillip, a blind, white American boy and Timothy, an old black sailor, are stranded on a small island in the Caribbean. Being totally dependent on Timothy, Phillip must overcome his prejudice and learn to accept differences in people in this adventure story of survival and adjustment.

Rationale:

The Cay is the suspenseful story of a young boy, handicapped by blindness and thrust into an unfamiliar environment, who is forced to grow up quickly. Young readers can identify with Phillip's struggle for independence and his frustration in coping with situations over which he has virtually no control. *The Cay* illustrates Phillip's progress toward an ideal of tolerance and shedding prejudice.

The Cay provides a wonderful example of characterization in writing. Through character perseverance, a young boy learns to overcome prejudice and better understand the meaning of love. The author reveals the virtues of respect and perseverance. The novel also examines the literary themes of man vs. man and man vs. nature.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

Beth Shotwell-Valeo (Children's Literature)

"Taylor 's first novel for young readers, *The Cay*, is the story of a boy's life-threatening adventure at sea in 1942 after his freighter, the Hato, is torpedoed by a German submarine. In his quest for survival, the boy must overcome his racial and cultural prejudices, as well as a serious physical disability in this Robinson Crusoe setting. More than twenty years passed before Taylor produced the prequel-sequel, *Timothy of the Cay*. The two stories make for compelling reading, and the events, characters and setting are still very much of relevance today."

* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

Noted Distinction:

- Jane Addams Children's Book Award 1970
- California Book Awards Winner, 1969.

Readability:

- Lexile Score: 860
- Readability Level:

Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment: ([link](#))

Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption:

Notes on the Text:

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

This novel deals with racism, as Phillip must decide if his mother (who is a racist) is correct. Timothy, the West Indian, speaks in his native dialect and is sometimes difficult to understand. **Although the book delivers a clear anti-racist message, *The Cay* has been criticized for its stereotypical portrayal of West Indians.**

Connection to the Curriculum:

The text features literary devices such as similes, metaphors, analogies, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, personification and idioms. The text can be used to help students distinguish between fact and opinion and recognize propaganda, bias and stereotypes.

The book could be used during a thematic unit on the Caribbean Islands.

Additional Connections:

(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)