

**YALSA Board Meeting
2005 Midwinter Meeting
Boston, Massachusetts
January 14-19, 2005**

Topic: BBYA: Audio vs. Print

Background: The question was asked on the YALSACOM list as to whether or not it is appropriate to listen to a book on tape/CD instead of reading it for the BBYA selection committee.

Action Required: Discussion/Decision

From Pam Spencer-Holley:

I return to my belief that listening to an audiobook is not the same as reading the book. When reading, an interaction between the reader and the words of the author occurs with the readers past experiences coloring and tempering their reaction to the book. When listening to an audiobook, a third level occurs and now the listener is hearing the author's words as interpreted by the narrator, who brings his/her own experiences to the reading and colors it with dialect, nuances, emphasis and so on.

I fear that some good books will be overlooked by committee members if they only listen to them, and some terrible books will make the list because the narrator makes them so lively. More and more, audiobooks are being released simultaneously with the print copies so more are becoming available that would meet the time constraints for selection to BBYA. I just tried listening to *The Chinese Cinderella*, which made the BBYA list, but if I'd only listened to it I would never have voted for its inclusion. An isolated example, but one that illustrates a potential problem.

And then we come to the fact that we have a committee, Audiobooks and Media Exploration, whose purpose is "to study and promote the use of media, with the exception of videos and DVDs, as related to libraries", which has been preparing a yearly list of "best" audiobooks. Now, I grant you that their charge needs to be reexamined and they need to formulate their selection criteria, but they have been choosing the audiobooks for the last several years.

Below is info from the YALSA web site on BBYA --their criteria selection and so on, which clearly indicates that the books are selected for reading and not listening, which in my mind discounts listening to audiobooks.

Best Books for Young Adults

Charge: To select from the year's publications, significant adult and young adult books; to annotate the selected titles.

Purpose of the List: The list presents books published in the past 16 months that are recommended reading for young adults (12 to 18). It is a general list of fiction and nonfiction titles selected for their proven or potential appeal to the personal reading tastes of the young adult. Such titles should incorporate acceptable literary quality and effectiveness of presentation. Standard selection criteria consonant with the Library Bill of Rights shall be applied. Librarianship focuses on individuals, in all their diversity, and that focus is a fundamental value of the Young Adult Library Services Association and its members. Diversity is, thus, honored in the Association and in the collections and services that libraries provide to young adults. Fiction should have characterization and dialog believable within the context of the novel or story. Nonfiction should have an appealing format and a readable text. Although the list attempts to present a variety of reading tastes and levels, no effort will be made to balance the list according to subject or area of interest.