


## Chapter 15

# Advances in Literary and (Neuro)Linguistics Skills That Can Contribute to Healing: Reading Many Books Brings Us Closer to Life

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter analyses the influence of bibliotherapy on the perceptions of readers (children, young people, and [older] adults) with special needs on their form of social interaction. By reading and writing, and by explaining to others what they read and write, by talking about plots, by expressing opinions and emotions, feelings and thoughts are articulated, and expressive (linguistic), relational, cognitive, and neurological abilities are improved. From linguistics (theoretical, applied, and cognitive), literary studies, translation/multilingual environments, and pedagogy (literacy, didactics of language, and literature), methodological approaches and interventions that can be useful and effective in bibliotherapy to activate neurocognitive abilities are provided. Furthermore, bibliotherapy is presented as a coherent option for improving the management of situations of confinement, physical, real, voluntary, imposed, or perceived loneliness.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The second part of this article's title is inspired in one of the aphorisms by the great Valencian intellectual Joan Fuster (Sueca, València, 1922-1992): "Les poques lectures ens aparten de la vida; les moltes ens hi costen" / "Reading a small number of books takes us away from life while reading many books brings us closer to it". This aphorism agrees with this other one also by Fuster: "Books are not a substitute for life, but life is not a substitute for books either" (Fuster 2022). Fuster expresses in the 20th century part of what was already expressed in the letany "Quid est liber?" attributed to the Neapolitan attorney-at-law Luca da Penne (1325-1390). That letany says as follows (original Latin version):

*Quid est liber || Liber est lumen cordis; Speculum / corporis; Uictorum confusio; Coro/na prudentium; iadema sapient/tium; Honorificentia doctorum; /Uas plenum sapientia; Socius / itineris; Domesticus fidelis; / Hortus plenus fructibus; Archa / na reuelans; Obscura clarificans; / Rogatus respondet, Iussusque / festinat, Uocatur properat / Et faciliter obediens. Explicit. (Códice misceláneo toledano, Biblioteca Pública del Estado, Toledo, MS. 381, Fol. 26 v.) apparently from the 11th century but in reality a forgery done in the 18th c. by the admired calligrapher Francisco Santiago Palomares (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid)).*

Translated into English, that litany says:

*What is a book? || A book is the light of the heart; Mirror of the body; Confussion of vices; Crown of Prudent People; Diadem for Wise People; Honor of doctors; Vessel of knowledge; Companion for the journey; Faithful servant; Garden full of fruits; Opener of secrets; Light of darkness; When asked, it responds; When ordered, it walks fast; when called upon, it comes quickly and obeys easily. The end" (Translated into English by the author of this chapter)*

This chapter explores the influence of bibliotherapy in the readers' perception (depending on their age) about their forms of social interaction, how they can improve their social networks as well as their behavior with regard to the management of their affections, how they express the latter, how their own personal processing of them improves and how they improve their linguistic skills (their spoken language, the conversational interaction which is key for dealing with loneliness). It is confirmed, for example, its value for dealing with a serious disorder such as aphasia due to the power of books – "The power of a book" (Henriksson & Laakso 2020), of the written word and all that is contained in it (Boyle, Akers, Cavanaugh, Hula, Swiderski & Elman 2023; Douglas, Archer, Azios, Strong, Simmons-Mackie & Worrall 2023;

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