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**BIBLIOTERAPEUTICKÉ ELEMENTY V KNIHÁCH
ANNE FINE O DĚTECH Z ROZVEDENÝCH RODIN**

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Thesis

**THE BIBLIOTHERAPEUTIC ELEMENTS IN ANNE
FINE'S BOOKS ABOUT CHILDREN FROM
DIVORCED FAMILIES**

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Tato stránka bude ve svázané práci Váš původní formulář *Zadání dipl. práce*
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ABSTRACT

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Divorce has huge personal effects on a family and it is often the children who are affected the most. While they are caught in an emotional instability, they need reassurance and support during this stressful time. Teachers can help through the process of bibliotherapy which involves the use of books to help children deal with psychological, emotional and other personal issues that arise throughout their lives. Bibliotherapy can assist children overcoming problems by reading stories about characters who have successfully untangled a dilemma or perplexity similar to theirs. Educators can rely on powerful tales and the concept of bibliotherapy to help pupils and students who are struggling with personal experiences that distract them from their educational pursuits. Using carefully selected thematic books teachers can use literature to reach students experiencing difficult situations and cope with life's challenges such as divorce.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The theme upon which this thesis is based is to determinate the importance of bibliotherapy to children who are exposed to pressure of divorce that has become an increasingly common experience for families in the western world. Psychologists have found divorce can have a variety of psychological impact on children. This work explores the current literature on divorce, and the various types of psychological impact divorce can have on children. Specifically, this project intends to highlight and explore the extent with which the books of Anne Fine can be used as a therapeutic tool in dealing with various outcomes encountered by children of divorce.

Throughout the traumatic time before, during and after divorce a book can bring tranquillity and peace back into children's lives. The bridge between coping, expression and healing can be accomplished through children's literature. Story-telling is a timeless and superb teaching tool. Expression through text offers readers opportunity to find solutions through the characters and conflicts within a story, and thus within themselves. As educators we can play upon this way of expression to provide the guidance and resources suitable for our pupils to make the process of coping and healing easier, consequently enabling emotional and academic progression.

In the first part of the Theoretical background chapter, the essential information regarding effects of divorce on children is explained. Further on, specific impacts on children of different ages are described. Next, single-parent families and stepfamilies are reviewed. The second part is devoted to defining bibliotherapy, its roots, types and procedure.

In the next chapter, Research Methodology, the explanation of the research process is described. In the chapter Results and Commentaries, the results of findings are presented in

the form of a list where the most common psychological impacts of divorce are named and together with the insights of bibliotherapy are indicated particular text excerpts of Anne Fine's books that could possibly serve as an appropriate and useful therapeutic tool. In the Conclusion chapter, the main ideas of the whole theses are reviewed.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical chapter objective is to give essential information about the topic of divorce and bibliotherapy. First, the topic of divorce is introduced and various findings of psychological effects are pointed out. Specifically, different findings with respect to children's age are explained. Then, the theme of single-parent families and step-families is presented as two possible worlds where children of divorce must find their new position. Further on, the phenomenon of bibliotherapy as a suitable therapeutic tool is introduced and its roots, types and procedure are discussed.

Divorce and Education

Over half of couples divorcing in the Czech Republic from 1995 to 2004 had at least one child aged under 18 (Novák, 2012, p. 13). This meant that every year there were more than 40,000 children who were younger than 18 when their parents divorced. (Matějček & Dytrych, 2002, p. 43). Children experience varied effects from the divorce process, and they carry these effects with them into the classroom. By knowing what to expect, educators will be better equipped to effectively teach the children of the divorce who are in their care (Benedek, 1998, p. 61). Lansky (2000) also claims that because of the prevalence of divorce in a society, "every teacher needs to be familiar with the effects divorce may have on child's classroom behaviour" (p. 285).

Consequences of Divorce

Majority of researchers agree about the initial impact of divorce. Authors Hetherington and Kelly (2002) state, "Every divorce is a unique tragedy because every divorce brings an end to a unique civilization – one built on thousands of shared experiences, memories, hopes, and dreams" (p. 2). Children of divorce often become "consumed by fear of the unknown" (Benedek, 1998, p. 60). Other resources describe divorce as "periods of unparalleled stress

and psychological pain for children (McKay, 1999, p. 187) and only slightly less traumatic for children than the death of a parent (Lansky 2000, p. 29; Novák, 2012, p. 53). Novák (2012) further explains that in death extended family unite, relatives are usually available to the children, and mourning is accepted and encouraged (p. 55). Matějček and Hetherington agree that death is final and has closure, but divorce doesn't provide a chapter ending for a child (Hetherington, 2002, p. 10; Matějček, 2002. p. 43). Matějček and Dytrych (1994) also claim that there is one notable difference between the Czech Republic and the USA or other European states and that is the role of extended family. They believe that importance of grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles, or aunts in the Czech Republic plays more of a considerable role during divorce than elsewhere (p. 137). While divorce is very stressful for parents, it is even more stressful for children (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002, p. 122; Lansky, 2000, p. 1). Divorce equals feelings of sadness, loneliness and anger during childhood (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980, xxxi). According to Hetherington:

For a young child, psychologically, divorce is the equivalent of lifting a hundred-pound weight over the head. Processing all the radical and unprecedented changes-loss of a parent, loss of a home, of friends – stretches immature cognitive and emotional abilities to the absolute limit and sometimes beyond that limit. Children are dependent on and attached to parents, even not very competent parents. When their parents seem unreliable and untrustworthy, the very bedrock of children's well-being is shattered. (Hetherington , 2002, p.112)

Factors

Many factors play a role in the way divorce will affect a particular child. The degree of importance placed upon each factor differ among different authors, nevertheless the most frequently mentioned are age at the time of divorce and gender. Personality, economic

circumstances, coping skills, degree of access to both parents, or presence of a new partner can be part of the issue as well.

Gender

There are altogether consistent reports in consideration of gender. The most prevalent view denotes that girls experience less difficulties in adjustment than do boys. Girls usually adjust more quickly to divorce (Matějček, 1992, p. 147; McKay, 1999, p.191). McKay as well as Hetherington assert that a possible explanation for this is, that a more sensitive consideration is shown to the girls by parents ((McKay 1999, p. 191; Hetherington, 2002, p. 117). McKay further states that boys are able to sense rejection by their fathers and lose their role model and identification. Moreover, boys usually need more assistance in expressing their emotions and feelings due to restrictions society generally places on males (p. 188). Benedek (1998) agrees that boys might need more sensible support to express sadness because society views it as weakness in males to display such emotions (p. 63). Amato (1994) sees the cause not only according to cultural prejudice of believing boys being tougher but also emphasises the fact that boys are picked on more by custodial mothers because they resemble their fathers. Lansky asserts that boys go through more sadness and grief than do girls their age and that divorce has a more lasting impact on boys (Lansky, 2000, p.54). While sadness may be smothered, boys tend to express more anger and aggression than do girls (Benedek, 1998, p.62; Lansky, 2000, p.54; Matějček, 2002, p. 46). Girls tend to suffer from eating problems such as anorexia or bulimia related to divorce more than do boys (Benedek, 1998, p.72). Benedek (1998) claims that the duration of initial overt reactions from the divorce should subside in six months to one year for a girl and one or one and a half year to two years for boys (p. 83). The Hetherington study (2002) supports the finding that both genders recover two years after divorce and begin to “function reasonable well again” (p.122).

Novák (2012) on the other hand mentions that two years are good enough for adults but he predicts that children are like “encased bombs” that can blow up in different times induced by different causes (p. 93).

Age

Divorce is definitely stressful experience and has many painful effects on adults and even more so on children. The question “At what age does divorce have the minimal damaging impact on children?” is often raised. Wolf replies, “There is no best age” (Wolf, 1998, p. 29). Matějček (1994) agrees that age when a child wouldn't be hurt by divorce simply doesn't exist (p. 134). The fear of losing their parents is the most frequent worry children experience as the initial break-up reaction and the concern about themselves and their wellbeing is a painful question for majority of children (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002, p. 113; Wallerstein, 1980, p. 35). Regardless of age, potential reactions include fear, shock, confusion, sadness, anger, guilt, depression, anxiety, school problems and physical problems (Benedek, 1998, p.61-71; Lansky, 2000, p.30; Matějček & Dytrych, 2002, p. 43; McKay, 1999, p.187). Wallerstein, Lewis and Blakeslee (2000) in their research state that unhappy parents believe the myth that their children suffer in marriage as much as they do. On the contrary, while divorce can be beneficial for adults, it is detrimental to the needs of children (p. 39). Children do not think of divorce as a remedy. “They want to make the divorce go away and restore the marriage” (p. 92). Dreams and intensive desire for reconciliation prolongs till children's teens (Wallerstein & Kelly, 2000, p. 92).

Pre-school children. Children under age of two do not show much distress and seem less worried than older pre-school children for whom is change and loss is the predominant issue (Wolf, 1998, p. 31). According to Emery and Novák divorce is most noxious for children under the age of six because of their inability to understand the issue of divorce

(Emery, 1999, p. 59; Novák, 2000, p. 62). Children may exhibit range of somatic symptoms, they suffer anxiety, particularly at bedtime because they fear abandonment. Other signs of regressive behaviour such as wetting the bed or sucking the thumb are common (Benedek, 1998, p.61; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002, p. 113; Matějček, 1992, p. 155; McKay, 1999, p.190; Wallerstein 1980, p.63). Hetherington and Kelly (2002) claim that preschool boys often perform demanding, aversive behaviours such as crying, hitting, whining, or nagging (p. 115). Routine, consistency and parental support are crucial attributes for pre-school children experiencing divorce (Benedek, 1998, p. 62; Everett & Everett, 1994, p. 70).

Children, ages 6-8. Children in this age group worry about being left without a family (McKay, 1999, p.190). They often feel guilty because they perceive divorce as their fault (Everett & Everett, 1994, p. 38; Novák, 2012, p. 20). Immature children's mind has a limited capacity to understand cause and effect (Wallerstein & Kelly, 2000, p. 110). Children hope for reconciliation of their parents and even try to stop parents from getting divorced by exhibiting hazardous escapes from homes or pretending various health problems in hope that parents will get together as they would fear their health condition or comeback home (Everett & Everett, 1994, p. 70). Grievous sadness is a pattern characteristic for this young age (Wallerstein, 1980, p.65; Hetherington & Kelly, 2003, p. 113). School performance may deteriorate due to frequent escapes to fantasy (Benedek, 1998, p.79, Matějček, 1992, p. 157, Matějček & Dytrych, 1994, p. 140). Children often suffer nervous habits, headaches, stomachaches, or sleep difficulties (Benedek, 1998, p.68; Lansky, 2000, p.38). Matějček (1992) also mentions that children might start stammering (p. 156). Leon (2003) warns that research proves the notion of developmental psychopathology in young age in connection with divorce. The key to maintaining stability is routine and reassurance that they are not the cause of divorce (Benedek, 1998, p.66; Everett & Everett, 1994, p. 70).

Children, ages 9-12. The question “At what age does divorce have the least damaging effects?” is impossible to answer. However, it is proved that divorce is most difficult on children ages 9 – 12 (Matějček, 1992, p. 146; McKay, 1999, p.188; Novák, 2012, p. 95). Guilt and grief are common responses (McKay, 1999, p.190) but predominant one is anger (Wallerstein, 1980, p.74). Children form a strong alliance against one parent, typically the one who sought the divorce and is seen as a responsible figure for separation (Wallerstein & Kelly, 2000, p. 115). The suggestibility of children that is extendedly formable till the ninth year of age and is frequently misused to manipulate against the other parent. It causes increased tension and development of his character is greatly compromised. Nevertheless, as the child matures, his critical thinking develops. He is able to detect the misleading parent’s leadership as he reaches eleventh year of age (Matějček & Dytrych, 1994, p. 146). They further explain that a child is able to function in two different worlds but only if a condition of discontinuity of post-divorced conflict is fulfilled (p. 144). This age is the most distinct period of increasing concern and participation in the peer world. To avoid attachment with an improper peer group or involvement in other antisocial behaviour children of this age need a warm and involved adult role model (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002, p. 218).

Teens, ages 13 – 19“. Adolescence is the time when worries about sex, love, betrayal, and morality take center stage” (Wallerstein & Kelly, 2000, p. 304). Teens of divorce fear how the divorce will change their lives (Benedek, 1998, p. 83). Conflicts inside a family rise due to an increasing independence and involvement with peers that starts at early adolescence and often prolong at divorced families till the teenager leaves home (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002, p. 205). Wallerstein (2000) claims that it is due to inability to enforce routines and discipline during divorce and at least a year after separation. Children are angry at parents for particular past deprivations connected with divorce and reignite by the adolescent’s

resentment of parents in general (p. 107). Teens embody intense emotions and are angrier than younger children. The anger is often targeted against parent's dating (McKay, 1999, p.190). Adolescents unhappiness is frequently converted to drug-taking, stealing, alcohol abuse, or sexual promiscuity (McKay, 1999, p.190; Matějček, 1986, p. 34). Majority of adolescents who become delinquent after divorce do not anticipate the connection between anger at their parents and their acting out. Unfortunately, many parents do not suspect these implications either (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002, p. 238). Wolf (1998) mentions that diminished concentration, depression and lack of interest in school are common (p. 34). According to Hetherington:

Children continue to need guidance and advice in adolescence, but to be in a position to provide both, a parent has to be respected and to have a long history of engaged parenting. A history of firm discipline, caring and nurturing imbues parental "no's" with the moral force that even an increasingly independent-minded, peer-influenced teen will heed. Conversely, a history of non-authoritative parenting makes parental "no's" ineffectual with a headstrong adolescent. (Hetherington , 2002, p. 208)

Hetherington also states that for a child who has "a chaotic and neglecting or disorganized home life, an authoritative school can make an important contribution to healthy development" (p. 223). A new marriage and introducing a new stepparent is problematic mostly during early teen years (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002, p. 197; Matějček & Dytrych, 2002, p. 56). More about remarriage and function of stepfamily is discussed in the next chapter.

Single-parent Family, Remarriage and Stepfamily

According to Novák (2012) the highest rate of divorce occurs in period of three to five years after the marriage. It approximately reaches 60% of all marriages where children are already born. More than half of divorced adults remarry in six years or start to cohabit with a new partner (p. 13). Marital failure cannot be understood as a single event because the consequences of divorce and life in single-parent family are already a part of the life experience and influence the pathway of life that usually leads to new romantic relationships or a second marriage (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002, p. 4).

Single-parent family

If a custodial parent stays alone, more emotional, psychological and social problems emerge. The root of these problems is solely economic, as single-parent families are often poorer. As soon as the economic stresses are removed, children start to look like their peers (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002, p. 49). Parenting is more authoritative, school performance is less successful in contrast to children from two-parent families. Behavioural problems are frequent and children more depend on teacher's help (Novák, 2012, p. 99). Wallerstein (2000) mentions the lack of time that single parents, women prevalently, are able to devote to their children including a constant parental dialogue that revolves the day's events and interactions within the family. Single parents often feel weighed down by the responsibility for making all the decisions themselves and by the pressures of time. Remarried parents are able to reinstate parenting structure because they can rely on a new partner for emotional and social support (p. 25).

Remarriage and Stepfamily

Remarriage and creation of a new stepfamily is a step towards better and hopefully more promising future. Hetherington (2002) summarizes reasons for remarriage as not only looking “for security and companionship but also for an opportunity to right old wrongs, to make up for past mistakes, to heal old wounds, to finally find a better kind of love and family life” (p. 165). Even if the new couples are in love, building and sustaining a strong relationship and believe in solving any problem, formation a stepfamily might be difficult (p. 164). Men and women from previous marriage enter the new union with different parenting values and prior experience in parenting. Naturally, the biological parent certainly senses a prevalent right to establish rules of discipline because of biological ties and past history. The stepparent, on the other hand, might feel less emotionally involved in his new role or afraid to intervene because of potential disagreement with a spouse (p. 177). Matějček and Dytrych (1994) recommend patience in situations when children try to provoke their steps. Stepparents should not respond in a similar way, rather they should understand that defiance is a sign of uncertainty of the child and only pictures the inner fight of the child in a new emotional net of relationships. Both authors agree that even having fun together is a part of getting along, and even more important is any kind of physical activity that has a certain goal (p. 162).

While in first marriages a satisfying marital relationship is the key for positive parent-child relationship, establishing workable relationship between stepparents and stepchildren can be seen as the cornerstone to successful and functioning second marriage (Hetherington & Kelly, 2003, p. 181). Children usually play a paramount role in a second marriage as a source of potential marital stress and tension. They might see a stepparent as the one who doesn't have parental rights, sometimes they do not accept a stepparent as a member of the family (Everett & Everett, 1994, p. 146). Matějček and Dytrych (1994) go further and according to

their findings, children perceive a new member of the family as an “uninvited alien”(p. 154). They further claim that while some children completely reject a new stepparent, some try to impress him or her in order to gain attention and soften their emotional deprivation. Most frequently children fluctuate between those two extremes and their relationship with a new stepparent is ambivalent (p. 155). Matějček (1992) explains the position of a new stepparent according to German psychologist Bruno Bettelheim’s analysis of fairy tales involving the character of a stepmother. While a biological mother is always nice and supportive, a stepmother is the evil one. This deeply ingrained idea embarrasses the position of a new stepmother in the modern world (p. 172).

Children do not accept the authority of a stepparent until that adult has gained their trust and respect. The child’s resentment of approving a stepparent as a disciplinarian can be a long-time issue (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002, p. 182). This process might be influenced by the conflict of loyalty between an absent and often idealized biological parent and an everyday present and demanding chastener (Matějček & Dytrych, 1994, p. 155).

Children are often the road block to success of the second marriage. Peripheral position of a stepparent might be strengthened by the birth of a new child to a stepfamily. Moreover, the marital bond is empowered and relationship between a stepparent and a stepchild improves as a new member of the family arrives (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002, p. 178). She further states, “in most stepfamilies, negotiating the relationship between stepparent and stepchild is a major challenge that can undermine marital stability” (p. 178).

Not only can stepchildren can be a cause of disputes for many second marriages but also the tremendous workload associated with raising and carrying for them can be stressful. Stepparents who have no children of their own are usually shocked at the amount of time and

energy that caring for children entails. The illusion of a happy marriage and companionship with a spouse might be undermined easily if building relationships prolongs (Matějček & Dytrych, 1994, p. 156).

As children feel unloved, unwanted and excluded from the new family pact, they leave home earlier than children in intact families (Wallerstein, 2000, p. 247). Young children display fewer difficulties than the older ones. Prevalently, the angriest are boys in their teens. They are not able to face up to the discipline imposed by their stepfathers as they perceive it is harsh and unfair (Matějček & Dytrych, 2002). On the other hand, acceptance of a new father is easier for girls (Novák, 2012, p. 99).

Also, children may feel really pushed away from the new family orbit and find themselves in a bleak and unsupportive environment. When they lose personal support from their biological parents, they must bear unprecedented responsibility for raising themselves. In such family surroundings they depend on their vulnerability, strength, and resilience. Highly competent children are able to get along with less help than sensitive and vulnerable children who need the most help because change is hardest for them (Wallerstein, 2000, p. 265). Happy and stable remarriages have enormous economic, social, and psychological advantages for children when stepparents play quiet, protective roles in their lives.

Individuality

Children are individuals and their reactions to divorce distress vary (Matějček & Dytrych, 1994, p. 134). Without exception, divorce always means changes in lives of both parents and children. The more extensive and dramatic changes in child's life appear, the greater will be effects on the child. Children change roles, residences, economic classes, schools, friends and such (Wolf, 1998, p.55). Combination of these factors increases the

potential harmful effects of divorce (Novák, 2000, p. 31). Wallerstein (2000) agrees and warns about the impact of repeated loss that has a cumulative effect (p. 28). Drop in the standard of living is the most palpable sequel of separation (Wallerstein, 2000, p. 163). Hetherington (2002) claims that prediction of possible child's adjustment to the new position that the divorce brings along is impossible. She points out "great diversity in children's responses to parental marital situation" (p. 275). Wallerstein (1980) agrees and supports the view of children responding according to "their internal timetables" rather than following certain pattern (p. 268).

Young adults of divorce

Researchers agree on the whole about initial impact divorce has on children and there is also mutual understanding that in general, divorce can for certain have a negative effect on the children in the long run. Disagreement occurs about the extend, severity, and duration of problems because of "great diversity in the routes taken after marital breakup, in life in a single-parent household, and in new cohabiting or remarried relationships" (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002, p. 276). While Hetherington is not in favour of overestimating the negative effects due to divorce, Wallerstein maintains that problems do not diminish through the adolescence but children suffer most in their adulthood because "divorce is a cumulative experience and its impact increases over time and rise to a crescendo in adulthood" (Wallerstein & Kelly, 2000, p. 298). Reaching adult age comes along with looking for a life mate. Wallerstein (2000) believes that when serious romantic relationships move center stage, young people who carry the picture of their broken family as the template for seeking the image of their new family fail. The absence of an exemplary image is lacking. While searching for love, intimacy and commitment, anxiety leads young adults into making bad resolutions or avoiding relationships altogether (xxxv). She also mentions that divorce "leaves

a permanent stamp” on a child (p. 62). The major impact of divorce in adulthood emerges when serious romantic relationships move center stage and the desire to choose a life mate emerges. Everett and Everett (1994) judge divorce as an emotional process that interfere with more than one generation (p. 29).

Academics and teacher’s support

Decreasing school performance is frequent during the process of divorce (Amato, 1994; Benedek, 1998; Pehrsson, Allen, Folger, McMillen, Lowe, 2007). Children from divorced families have a lower academic self-concept and are less motivated to achieve (Miller, 1999, p. 285). Deterioration in school performance is one of the consequential effects of divorce. Benedek (1998) claims that many experience difficulty concentration and exhibit restlessness (p. 60). Other factor such as worry might be the reason for deterioration of school work (Lansky, 2000, p. 43). Lansky further mentions that while some children may intentionally allow their performance abate in order to gain attention from parents, the others, on the contrary, perform better in hope to suppress problems at home (p. 43). Children living with newly divorced mothers are less likely to get help with their homework, moreover, they tend to be late for school (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002, p. 46). Hetherington detects that children of divorce were more likely not perform well academically and verge to an increased rate of high school drop-out (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002, p. 223). Attending college is a priority in intact families while the lack of concern of children’s future in divorced families is common. Many young people who reach age eighteen are faced with fact that their college attendance is jeopardized when biological parents refuse to participate. Wallerstein (2000) points out that “despite their blood relationship some divorced fathers do not see their children as their moral or social heirs. They acknowledge their legal responsibility to help take care of the children, but this obligation ends at age eighteen” (p. 252). Also activities that

enhance children's lives like music schools, swimming lessons, visiting museums and trips become unattainable due to economic hardship of a divorced parent, usually a mother. Generally, attitudes regarding school are less positive than in children from two-parent homes (Wallerstein, 2000, p. 164).

School environment and teachers may have considerable influence on the children of divorce who get very little support from their parents as they are going through the process of separation and later are busy with work, and more or less preoccupied with rebuilding their social lives (Wallerstein, 2000, p. 299). Teachers can have pronounced influence on the effects the divorce has on children because school is like authoritative parenting, characterized by an organized predictable environment and standards that are unavailable at home (Hetherington, 2002, p. 219). Benedek (1998) agrees as he sees school as a place of security due to its foreseeable structure (p. 210). Novák (2012) asserts that teachers should be informed of major changes in child's life in order to approach the child with enhanced sensitivity and understanding (p. 126). Novák (2012) recommends that teachers should be tolerant as the children are not concentrating on schoolwork due to preoccupation with their parents' divorce. He points out that misbehaviour is natural reaction to divorce; inconsistency and lack of interest are not intentional (p. 125). Hetherington (2002) concludes that supportive school settings can measurably increase children's chances of "successfully navigating life after divorce" (p.12). While expert clinicians can individualize meetings and very precisely meet each child's needs, teachers can additionally enrich such therapies with suitable texts that offer bibliotherapeutical elements. School guidance counsellors in cooperation with school librarians and teachers can help each individual to gain better understanding of their new status in post-divorced families through the careful selection of literature with similar

themes. The next subchapter is dedicated to defining bibliotherapy, its roots, types and purpose.

Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy – the use of books to heal – is a concept that date back to time of the ancient Greece where philosophers believed that literature had healing effects strong enough to repel illness. This study investigates books of Anne Fine that could serve as a source for extensive reading with the beneficial therapeutic effects in children experiencing post-divorced difficulties. Even though divorce is not seen as enormous societal impediment, it is essential that school teachers today find approaches that are relevant to student’s unique needs, such as the need of emotional healing after divorce. Due to changes in family settings many pupils enter the educational system lacking the necessary social and emotional prerequisites to be successful. Although bibliotherapy practice is not a formal procedure within secondary school curriculum in the Czech Republic, there are not any particular restrictions that would hinder attempts of teachers to support particular pupils stricken by divorce as a part of English lessons.

Definitions and Roots

Bibliotherapy is the term arising from its Greek etymology of *biblion* (books) and *therapeia* (healing) (Rubin, 1978). Using books as a therapeutic instrument can be traced back in history, to the days of first libraries in Greece (Harvey, 2010). The libraries in the ancient cities of Alexandria and Thebes displayed inscriptions bearing the words “Medicine of the Mind” and “Healing of the Soul” (Afolayan, 1992; Heath, Sheen, Leavy, Young, & Money, 2005). The term “bibliotherapy” was first used in an *The Atlantic Monthly* article to describe therapeutic literature (Crothers, 1916; Afolayan, 1992; Heath et al., 2005). Crothers

described bibliotherapy as a process of prescribed reading that was later discussed with the doctor, or a therapy group. This approach to bibliotherapy played significant role after World War I in many hospitals (Myracle, 1995). Since 1930s' an abundance of bibliotherapy definitions emerged and they vary from the simple, "treatment through books" (Pardeck & Pardek, 1994, p. 25) through "sharing a book or books with the intent of helping the reader deal with persona problems" (Doll and Doll, 1997, p.1) or the Stamps's (2003) definition of "a strategy that helps students overcome or deal with a current problem or issue in their lives" (p. 26) to the more complex one such as Shrodes's (1950) definition: "Bibliotherapy may be defined as a process of dynamic interaction between the personality of the reader and literature -- interaction which may be utilized for personality assessment, adjustment, and growth" (p. 335).

Types

Since 1970s' there are recognized three types of bibliotherapy, institutional, clinical and developmental (Rubin, 1978). Institutional bibliotherapy is practiced with institutionalized patients who discuss the text with their doctor. Nowadays, this approach is used in private clinics with individuals. Clinical bibliotherapy is used for groups of clients with emotional or behavioural problems and is implemented by a qualified therapist. Developmental bibliotherapy refers to the use with groups of ordinary individuals who do not display any trauma or illness. Its goal is promotion of normal development and maintaining mental health and can be used by teachers (Afolayan, 1992; Kramer & Smith, 1998).

Bibliotherapy goals and process

The first one who made an attempt to apply theory to its use was Caroline Shrodes, the pioneer of the bibliotherapeutic process. She explained how literature supports therapeutic

work through process of identification, catharsis and insight as the subsequent steps in bibliotherapeutic process. Since Shrodes' proposal many researchers relied on the same stages of the therapeutic process (Afolayan, 1992; Kramer & Smith, 1998; Pardeck, 1998). This procedure is suitable when fiction or other imaginative literature is used. Pardek (1994) defined the goals of bibliotherapy. The goals of bibliotherapy are (a) to provide information about problems; (b) to provide insight into problems; (c) to stimulate discussion about problems; (d) to communicate new values and attitudes; (e) to create an awareness that others have dealt with similar problems; and (f) to provide solutions to problems (Pardek, 1994, p. 421).

Pardek also formulated four stages of the process that include: 1) readiness (also referred to as identification); 2) selection; 3) introduction to the book (also referred to as presentation; and 4) follow-up (Pardek, 1993, p. 28).

Stamps views the process of bibliotherapy very much alike Pardek and he also discerns four stages of bibliotherapy process. The first stage called "identification" offers a possibility to identify with the character. The subsequent stage "catharsis," enables a release of emotions through the following of the character's journey in the story. The third stage "insight", is a connection of the reader's experiences with those of the characters in the book. Finally, "universalization", the last stage allows a reader realize that people all over the world face similar painful realities (Stamps, 2003).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As shown in the theoretical background, children suffer as they are confronted with divorce of their parents. The question to be raised is whether Anne Fine's books offer suitable and effective texts that provide particular manifestation of impacts of divorce and meets previously described bibliotherapeutic criteria of healing process.

Books

Three books for older children were chosen to look at as a possible therapeutic material that would be appropriate for use at eighth and ninth grade of elementary school classes in the Czech Republic. English is taught in the Czech Republic as a foreign language since the third grade of elementary school and language proficiency level at higher grades allows pupils to read the above mentioned books.

The Goggle-Eyes

The novel deals with the subject of divorce and new boyfriends. It is narrated by Kitty, whose teacher Mrs Lupey sends her after a classmate Helen, who has run out of the classroom in distress. When Kitty realizes that Helen hates the man her mother is going to marry, she tells her the story of her mother's boyfriend whom she first disliked too. She even gave him the nickname "Goggle-Eyes" because of the way he stares at her mother. In the end, Kitty admits that the initial hatred changes into mutual understanding and tolerance.

Step by Wicked Step

Five schoolmates are spending a night in an old house, waiting for the rest of their class group to arrive. They discover a secret room and an old diary written by a boy who ran away because his mother married a man whom he disliked, after the boy's father died. As

they read the boy's story, it spurs them to share the stories of their parents' divorces and remarriages and the consequences these events have had on their lives.

Alias Madame Doubtfire

Daniel and Miranda Hilliard are separated. Daniel, impractical, out-of-work actor spends very little time with his three children as his ex-wife, a successful businesswoman, restricts their given time. When busy Miranda decides to hire a housekeeper, Daniel dressed as a woman gets the job. While the children recognize their father almost immediately, his former wife is clueless. Later, she discovers the deception, but the mutual determination of her children and Daniel to see each other more often changes her decision in favour of her ex-husband and his desire to see his children more frequently.

Method

The particular text extracts were selected from the books in order to contain specific category of divorce consequences mentioned in subsequent subchapter Categories. Next, each book was evaluated according to findings of different authors and researchers who agreed on three crucial criteria that a book must embody in order to be effective for bibliotherapy. These criteria were based on suggestions in several studies (Heath, et al., 2005; Hendrickson, 1988; Pardeck, 1994; Roberts & Crawford, 2008). These main criteria include, but are not limited to:

1. The book must contain an interesting, well-crafted storyline.
2. The problem and solution within the story must be relatively realistic and not give a false sense of hope.

3. The main character must be a positive model, demonstrating good coping skills and problem solving skills.

Categories

In the theoretical background main effects of divorce were outlined according to the age and gender. These outcomes vary not only according to these two factors but also depend on the situation before the divorce and the amount of involvement with the non-residential parent. The ability of a custodial parent to adjust to the divorce plays an important role, as well as the parental agreement of child's upbringing and discipline does. Approval and love from both parents are paramount. Added stressors such as economic hardship, moving house, changing schools and very often parental remarriage are disruptive. Without exception all consequences of divorce are always accompanied by stress that is most often caused by the following five categories.

Change. The family settings children have always known will be distant. With divorce, children might have to adjust to new schedules, routines or household responsibilities. Many times children may lose contacts with friends or extended family members in case of moving. Children experience grief because the original family does not exist anymore.

Fear. Naturally, children assume that if they have lost one parent, they might be abandoned by the other one as well. Not only they blame themselves, feel unsafe and not loved, but also worry to be left alone. Young adults frequently experience lack of involvement by fathers failing to support them with college tuition and general loss of interest in their child's academic attainment.

Parental absence. Changes in frequency and intensity of contact with the noncustodial parent result in a loss of time, assistance and affection provided by the absent parent.

Hostility between parents. Adults struggle and argue. Tension between parents may be cause of feelings of guilt, anger and loneliness in children. Great confusion might be part of the situation when parents try to influence children to take sides and turn against the other parent.

Economic hardship. Divorce is typically accompanied by an apparent decline in the standard of living for the majority of custodial mothers and their children.

Once all the text passages were identified, I conducted an analysis of the results. In the following section, the results of the research are presented by the means of discussion. The commentaries of the results follow the presentation of the results.

IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

In this section, the results of the analysis of text extracts' suitability are presented. The presence of different categories is discussed. First, the results of individual books are presented. Then, the results from all three books are compared. Further on, the commentaries with suggestion of possible after-reading activities are added.

Results

Manifestation of divorce outcome categories were looked up at the three books and evaluated whether they offer a possibility of identification, catharses, insight and universalization that bibliotherapy suggest as the subsequent stages of healing process. Additionally, the texts were evaluated in order to meet criteria of interesting and engaging story line where the problem and solution are relatively realistic and don't give a false sense of hope and where the main character displays a positive model, demonstrating good coping and problem solving skills.

Goggle-Eyes

Goggle-Eyes novel deals with the subject of change after divorce. As the most apparent outcome, anger of the main character is displayed. Kitty, the hero of the story, struggles when her mother's boyfriend Gerald intrudes the post-divorce family settings and visits her mother at their house. Kitty calls Gerald "Goggle-eyes" because of the way he stares at her mother. Kitty goes through the stage of absolute hatred that gradually changes into mutual understanding and tolerance. At first, Kitty sees Goggle-eyes as an intruder of their privacy.

I hated having Goggle-eyes about. I hated the whole house whenever he was in it. I can't describe exactly what it was, but it just didn't feel like home any more if he was ambling from room to room in search of a pencil to do the crossword, or slipping out of the downstairs lavatory leaving the cistern hissing behind him, or lifting my schoolbag off the coffee table so he could lean back on the sofa and watch the news on the telly. I hated Mum for being happy and relaxed, and nice to him. I hated Jude simply for answering whenever he asked her a trivial little question or said something casual and friendly. And sometimes I even hated sweet furry Floss for taking advantage of the fact that Goggle-eyes wasn't the most active of men, and settling on his trouser legs to moult and purr and dribble away contentedly. But most of all, of course, I hated him. (p. 32)

As the story unwinds, Kitty realizes that Goggle-eyes is a reliable man who brings comfort to the family and tries to approach him in more friendly manner.

It suddenly occurred to me that part of the reason I couldn't stand Goggle-eyes was because he was so different from me and Mum, and suddenly I thought, if I could only understand, I might be able to get along with him better. ... later, lying in bed waiting for Mum, I wondered if I hadn't been a bit unfair on poor old Gerald Faulkner, deciding so early on that he was the worst thing to have happened to our household since Dad packed his boxes and went off... (p. 114)

I just find him soothing and amiable and steady-easy to have around, I'm used to him, I suppose. He's part of the furniture. I honestly believe, if he and Mum got married, I wouldn't mind. (p. 137)

Along with the change, parental absence as an outcome of a divorce is present in the story. Children miss their private time spent with their biological parents as they are busy building new relationships.

I like Mum to come because our car ride together to the meeting is about the only time- the *only* time-I'm sure I've got her on my own. That's one of the worst things about Dad moving away to Berwick upon Tweed. Jude and I hardly ever get to be alone with him or with mum. We're either both with the one or we're both with the other. And they can't split themselves in two, so one of us can have a private chat down the back garden while the other is pouting out her heart on the sofa. (p. 23)

I felt terrible. Being outnumbered is horrid at the best of times. But when you know that everyone you care about will feel dead rotten if you get your way, getting your way goes sour. Whose feelings count for most? And why? I'll tell you one thing I'm quite sure about: things are much simpler when it's your real dad. (p. 64)

The themes of fear, hostility between parents and economic hardship are not a part of the plot.

The story offers believable and realistic plot. Looking for a new relationship is a very natural step that the majority of divorced adults take. The evolution of Kitty's attitude towards her mother's boyfriend enables readers to take subsequent steps of a bibliotherapeutic process.

The novel offers an example of coping skill used by the main character. Kitty perceives Goggle-eyes as an unpleasant person. She chooses to write an essay about him as a school requirement on something the pupil really hates.

Something I hate comes round to our house regularly, I wrote. Flabby and complacent, it acts as if it owns the place. When it breathes, all the little hairs that stick out of its nostrils waggle. Its teeth are going yellow from encroaching old age, but under its thinning hair, its scalp is mushy pink, like boiled baby. It has a really creepy way of looking at people, like a dog drooling hopefully over its food bowl. That's why I think of it as 'Goggle-eyes.' (p. 37)

Fine also offers a picture a mental development of the main character who presents not only her own feelings, but also reveals her concern about her mother and Goggle-eyes. Kitty is able to admit her mistakes and think of other's needs.

He tried really hard to be patient, you could tell. He spent an awful lot of time pretending he wasn't even noticing how rude I was to him. (p. 37)

And maybe it had helped, having Goggle-eyes there watching everything, laughing. Maybe Mum just felt far more cheerful when she had company. She and Dad use to muck about quite a bit before things went wrong. Maybe there were advantages to having someone else around the place. (p. 57)

The story of Kitty in *Google-Eyes* is perfect for those who feel abandoned, loose attachment with both parents, moreover, struggle with a great anger. The novel facilitates building community among pupils as the story is set up as a dialog between two classmates. Kitty tries to lighten and cheer up her girlfriend Helly who find herself in a very alike situation as Kitty. The book sets an example of developing coping skills.

Step by Wicked Step

Step by Wicked Step, the book consisting five diverse stories, is the most various source that displays four of five categories of divorce consequences. There are five main characters. Claudia in the story 'Green Pyjamas' struggles after her parents separated and her father starts to live with his girlfriend. 'The Blue Bird of Happiness' is a sad story about Colin who profoundly misses his mother's boyfriend. Ralf experiences a chaotic life in 'A Tale of Three Stepmothers'. Pixie Payne in 'The Pains in My Life' hates her stepsisters and misses her friends and activities during visits of her non-custodial father. Robbo shares the story about his sister who really dislikes their stepfather in 'Dumpa's the Problem'.

All stories address the category of change. Stella, whose parents separated, visits her father at Granny's house. She finds the change difficult. Pixie feels similarly while visiting her father's new family.

If I went over to Granny's to visit Dad, I'd miss Natasha's party, or going to the shops with Shreela, or working on my project with Flora. And Granny's house was boring. No more boring than usual, but boring all the same. There isn't much to do. None of my stuff is there. (p. 34)

"There's nothing to do here," I sobbed at her angrily. "There isn't even any point in going out because I don't have any friends round her. So I'm stuck upstairs in that boring little bedroom, twiddling my thumbs, because all of my own stuff in back at the other house." (p. 99)

The stories touch upon category of a parental absence several times. After Claudia's mother finds out about her husband's girlfriend, the frequency of visiting declines.

And, after that, my dad hardly dared come near the house. (I think he thought Mum might kill him.) Sometimes he phoned to get to talk to me, and from the freezing way Mum went silent the moment she heard his voice, and held the phone away from her as if it were a bad smell, I'd know it was him. (p. 33)

I just want things back the way they used to be, with you home first every Wednesday, and all the fuss about what time I had to go to bed, and you forever complaining about me not turning the hot tap off properly, and telling me to take more care over my homework. I want you back. (p. 34)

The most painful separation of a father and his son is described in Colin's story where his mother left her boyfriend whom Colin calls Dad without any previous notice.

It wasn't how it used to be with Dad. The thing about Dad is, you can *talk* to him. And he remembers what you say. He'd know the names of all my friends, and if I'd quarreled with them. He knew my favourite animals, and what I'd call my dog if I had one. (p. 55)

"I think Mum thinks that I've forgotten him," he told them. "I never mention him at home. But even though I know he can't still be living there, I always secretly sneak his name and our old address on all the forms that Mum's filled in for school, to show he still matters and he's still my dad." (p. 63)

Hostility between parents, another outcome of divorce is mentioned in Robbo's story and manifests child's inability to displace stressful moments out of his memories.

My mum and dad split up when I was only six, so I don't remember much. I can remember my dad kicking a hole in the kitchen door when they were arguing once. My

mother was crying, and I was fiddling with the nutcrackers, so maybe it was Christmas. I don't know. (p. 110)

The last category of divorce outcomes is an economic hardship that most often affects women who have custody of their children after divorce. This struggle is mentioned only marginally in Collin's story as a description of the situation after separation.

Then Mum found a job in a canteen, and when she came home she was always too busy doing things like making toast and finding clothes for the next day to listen to anything I said about school, and too tired to talk about much herself, except how the noise in the canteen had given her a headache, and how much her legs ached from being on her feet all day. (pp. 54 - 55)

The thin book *Step by Wicked Step* encourages pupils to be sensitive to each other's differences as shown on the diverse mosaic of lifestyles and experiences of main characters. Pupils can gain perspective on variety of the future course of life; they might experience to "walk in someone else's shoes". None of the stories gives a false sense of hope. On the contrary, the story about the boy who lost contact with his mum's boyfriend completely and whom he loved dearly might be perceived as a difficult one. Nevertheless, older children are able to analyse and understand the perplexity of such a situation. Younger children would get upset, confused, or hurt by the outcome of the story. The book provides a great opportunity to increase awareness in pupils that not all families are alike. Furthermore, children have the opportunity to see different styles of solving problems.

Alias Madame Doubtfire

The book *Alias Madame Doubtfire* addresses the topic of hostility between parents at the midst of a divorce. Lydia, Christopher, and Natalie live with their mother who gets temporary custody of them and must witness incessant fighting between their parents as the mother permanently limits the amount of time her husband is allowed to spend with their three children. As a consequence, aggressiveness develops in the children and as well in their father as well. The reaction of the youngest Natalie might picture Natalie's fear of losing her mother as well.

“The witch! The selfish, thoughtless, inconsiderate witch!”

“Dad!”

“Robbing me of my weekends! How dare she? How *dare* she?”

“Dad, *please!*”

“I could murder her. Truly I could! Sometimes I think I could cheerfully slit her throat!”

“No! Daddy! No!” Natalie was off her chair in a moment. Tears scorching her cheeks, she hurled herself across the room, and beat him fiercely with her fists. (p. 12)

“It's very bad of your father to try to upset the schedule like this. How do I know he'll bring you back in good time? You know what he's like. Oh, what a *nuisance* that man can be!” (p. 88)

Daniel took his son by the collar, squeezed hard, and slung him backward, up against the wall.

“Because, you little bastard,” he yelled. “As you well know, a job's a job, but real life's real!”

Christopher held his breath, too scared even to wriggle. To Lydia, watching, it seemed

forever before her father gradually loosened his fingers under Christopher's neck, let go, then shoved both hands deep in his pockets as if trying to stop himself from striking his son, hard. (p. 129)

Fear of losing a family after a divorce is typical for children up to the age of eight. Even though this situation is not part of the story, there are two very agonizing moments when the very existence of children is discussed. First, Lydia overhears the dialog between her mother and her father who is disguised as Madame Doubtfire and she first realizes that she and her siblings might not have been even given a chance to live. Her mother is talking about the very last moment before the wedding ceremony.

It struck Lydia suddenly that, if either her father or her mother had backed out at that moment, she and her brother and sister would never have been born. It was the most disturbing notion. (p. 105)

The following excerpt displays discussion between the father and Lydia who uncovers her inner thoughts as a result of reflection on her parents' relationship.

"Something I thought about before a little, when Mother was telling us about your wedding. I thought then that, if either of you two had backed out, none of us children would ever have been born."

"But you *were* born."

"Yes. And that's the point. We were born. And we're the only things that lasted, aren't we? I mean, the marriage was a failure. A total failure. And you two aren't really even friends anymore."

"No, we're not really good friends."

"So, I was thinking, Natty, Christopher and me, we are the only three things to come out

of that marriage. We're all that's left. We're the whole point, now...The only reason you two have any real contact . So that gives us a sort of Extra Right. Don't you see?...If we three are not happy with the way things are, then what was the point of all those years? None! None at all! If you can't work things out to suit us, then all it was total waste and failure (pp. 186 - 187).

The children's characters do not have to settle with parental absence, since they live in the same city and visit their father regularly. The change in children's lives is obvious. Signs of economic hardship are not present. However, the adult gender stereotypes are overtly reversed. Children's mother is a successful businesswoman who provides for the family. Daniel, the father, is an actor who is usually unemployed. A major problem featured in the book is the parental inability to communicate. Their hostility and open fighting evokes fear and stress in all children.

The plot of the book *Alias Madame Doubtfire* with its absorbing storyline is highly entertaining yet realistic. The oldest child, an adolescent Lydia offers a positive model of behaviour demonstrating good coping and problem solving skills. She is not shown as artificially mature but as a sensible and far-sighted person, more so than her overreacting parents. As she takes on the parental role, she lectures her foolish father and consoles her younger sister.

“Oh, do stop being so silly!” Lydia scolded her father impatiently. “You're almost making Natty cry. You tell us off for it, and then you do exactly the same. “She turned on her sister. “Now just stop being such a baby, Natty. He hasn't hurt the tea cosy. Or Mother. He just gets annoyed. He can't control himself. You're simply going to have to learn to ignore him.” (p. 10)

Irresponsibility, the main reason for divorce in Hilliard's family is mentioned several times. Miranda Hilliard couldn't rely on her husband because of his irresponsibility and unreliability. She unwittingly revealed the fact to her husband while talking to Madame Doubtfire. "I realized that I had just made the terrible, terrible mistake of marrying the most irresponsible man in the world" (p. 109). It might be beneficial to expose pupils to the issue explained in the book. Responsibility is one of the key virtues in human lives. Reading this book might help rise the pupils awareness of their own responsibilities within their families and the school as the consequences of irresponsible behaviour during the childhood and the adulthood differ profoundly. Lydia, the oldest child shows an ability to take responsibility for two younger siblings and protect them while their father behaves improperly. She is able to point out the danger of their father's behaviour and in this way offers an example of positive problem solving skills. Additionally, the story is not disentangled in a sense of false hope. Mr and Mrs Hilliard do not reunite but they manage to remain friends as they mutually develop problem solving skills.

In Fine's opinion, stories can go far more deep than television (Fine, 2002). That's particularly truth about the comedy *Mrs. Doubtfire*, starring Robin Williams, that came out only five years after the publication of the book. This light-hearted family movie concentrates on Daniel's struggle to fulfill his role as Mrs Doubtfire and stay undetected. The book is considerably more focused on the children's welfare and their ways of coping and mind proceedings over bitter fights of their parents. The book gives the reader a message that the pain of divorce might be survived.

Change, the first category of divorce effects is present in all researched books. A change of family settings, new schedules, responsibilities and the reduced occasions to meet friends are displayed. The second category, fear, occurs in *Alias Madame Doubtfire* as a

consequence of parental cruelty when little Natalie's father threatens to kill his former wife. The fear of losing the other parent after divorce is not described. This kind of fear is typical for pre-school children whereas the researched books have older heroes. Claudia's story in the book *Step by Wicked Step* describes parental absence as Claudia reveals a very clear desire to get her father back. Other books deal with the next category which is the parental hostility. Hostility between parents, as another frequent effect of divorce, appears in *Alias Madame Doubtfire*. The very intensive parent's quarrels lead to aggressiveness of little Natalie and her father as well. The last category of divorce outcomes is an economic hardship that most often affects women who have custody of their children after a divorce. This struggle is perceived mostly by adults and Fine does not focus on this problem.

All books show how very complicated life is. Fine believes that it is important to think about unsettled events that occur in children's lives in greater depth, because "people who can't do that lead impoverished lives" (Fine, 2002, p. 26). She sees books as "the best way of learning how people tick and the best way of thinking about how we ought to live" (Fine, 2002, p. 27). She pictures children from both intact and broken families who must visit schools and get in contact with adults on everyday basis. She depicts both age categories from the other's point of view and as a result mild signs of craziness of both sides are revealed. Fine views life as "one long comedy of negotiation and affectionate war between two sets of people who are each, from the other's stand-point, frequently stark staring mad. At least, it is a comedy when viewed from the outside, but not always very funny from within" (Fine, 2002, p. 39). Peter Hollindale, who interviewed Fine in 1999, claims that she is a very fair writer. He points out her ability not to take the children's side according to their viewpoint only, but also her fairness of showing both sides, children's and adults' equally. She carefully balances outside outcomes and inside experiences of main characters. Adult characters often behave as

unreasonably as children do and their motives are rather emotional than rational. Adolescents who are in the turmoil of personal growth and live within the family tensions then must find the emotional support elsewhere. Fine believes that books can do the job, they can entertain as well as help to those who need it. Hollindale prizes Fine's stories as "gently (sometimes toughly) educative and socializing experiences, and often they are acts of sympathetic therapy for the anxieties of childhood and adolescence" (Fine, 2002, p. 54).

Commentary

The goal of this thesis was to use the insights of the field of psychology together with the insights of bibliotherapy to provide a list of useful and effective texts from Anne Fine's books in whole-class settings.

Shrodes (1950) in her study explains: "Literature, being at once a fantasy and yet a realistic portrayal of human behaviour, permits the reader, paradoxically, both an illusion of psychic distance and immediacy of experience" (p. 81). Her findings enable teachers to use therapeutic texts in the whole-class settings in order to offer benefits to all pupils. Some of them are willing to discuss the texts, others prefer to stay distant. Nevertheless, they all are through sharing therapeutic texts exposed to realistic situations that arise in their everyday lives and only differ in intensity. Therapeutic texts serve also as a preventative tool, preparing pupils for future possibility of traumatic experience so they may gain perspective in this way. Additionally, sharing bibliotherapeutic books increases awareness and facilitates developing of coping skills (Knoth, 2006). In this context books chosen by teachers must be age, contents and reading ability appropriate, yet they do not necessarily need to address students' individual needs. Teachers decide according to the diversity of reading ability whether a text will be read aloud or individually.

To ensure a profit of a bibliotherapy intervention, children must not be forced into discussion (Inman et al., 2000). For those pupils who for whatever reason do not want to be a part of the discussion, there is a wide range of follow-up activities that can be used by pupils after reading texts. Each child can be assigned by a teacher a different activity that would suit his/her nature, a stage of healing process he/she currently is and willingness to participate in a group discussion. These activities may include art activities, creative writing or storytelling. The non-contact activities offer pupils to work out their own therapy process in a silent way. While working, they can listen to the discussion their classmates are involved in. Children can illustrate key events in the story and as they work on features of characters they project their ideas of coping with the event or a character from the story. They may also change certain details as a way of their decision for the best solution according to their own consciousness. Creative writing encompasses creating a diary for the main character, re-writing the ending of the story or changing particular events from the story that would navigate the course of the book to a different direction.

While some pupils are not in favour of discussion, others may be inclined to it. Studies show that children rather prefer participation in discussions about a book and its storyline than revealing their own personal issues (Berns, 2004; Johnson, Wan, Templeton, Graham, & Sattler, 2001). Pupils can empathise with fictional characters more easily than with their classmates or family members. Children's answers are a personal window into their feelings, attitudes and issues they work through. Berns describes the process of opening the discussion amongst her students, "I help them do this by removing obstacles, such as the need to have the right answer, and by encouraging them to unleash their spontaneity, feelings, and awareness" (2004. p. 331). Berns also recommends beginning with simple questions that are directly related to the story and only later ask open-ended questions requiring "critical

thinking in order to move the discussion from literal recall of information to interpretation, analysis, syntheses, and evaluation of the material” (2004, p. 334). Basic sample questions were suggested by Sullivan and Strang and they recommend following:

- What is the story about?
- How does the story make you feel?
- Who is the main character?
- What problem did the main character encounter?
- How did the main character solve the problem?
- If you faced a similar problem, what might you do?” (2002, p. 78).

To stir up any following discussion teachers can stimulate pupils by more complex questions:

- What section of the text/chapter did you have the strongest feelings about? Please explain you positive/negative feelings.
- How do you visualize this person/situation?
- Do you identify yourself with any character from the story? Why? Are there any connecting elements with your person?
- Can you see any strong or weak points of a specific character?
- Did your perception of a character/situation changed as you were reading a book? Why? Please, try to explain.
- Were your opinions/attitudes to a particular belief altered? Did they become stronger/weaker?

- Do you believe that you changed because of reading a particular story?
- Did any book/story help you to overcome difficulty in your own life? Please, try to explain how.
- Do you agree divorce is a good/bad thing? Why, try to explain.

Either way, discussion, creative writing or art activities shared in a safe classroom environment with a caring teacher give pupils chance to practice and learn how to cope with life challenges that may arise and calm their fear of unknown.

V. IMPLICATIONS

Use of the books in classroom

Conducting Anne Fine books dealing with the sore theme of divorce may be introduced once a suitable environment has been developed. Comfort and respect, rapport and trust between the teacher and the students are paramount to be established. Intimate knowledge of children and chosen literature is essential as well. The selected books must offer believable characters and situations since there is realistic hope for pupils offered.

Shrodes (1950) points out that individual reader's reactions to a chosen book will never be uniform, "For no two persons can there be an absolute equivalence of symbols, for no two people have identical psychological fields" (p. 85). Perceptions and reactions of readers vary because of their existing experience that shapes perceiving images of content of the books. Because of the variety of the reactions and getting feedback from others, opportunity to hear other's perspectives is perceived as being therapeutic in context of the group (Shechtman & Ben-David, 1999). This positive virtue of working in groups extends potential benefits of bibliotherapy along to sole exposure to the literature. By choosing appropriate texts teachers can broaden the therapeutic impacts of books and the process bibliotherapy can thus be more efficient and effective. Teachers' decisions to choose the right book grow from their experience. Anne Fine's novels are realistic and cannot confuse pupils by giving them false prospects of divorced parents' reunion. When choosing a book the teacher must consider structure, subject matter, reading and developmental level of pupils, context and situation in a particular group of children, because a wrong text can have harmful consequences.

The efficiency of bibliotherapy is measured by observation. When children make connection between the story and their own life and when the teacher can notice a positive shift in their mental health, it means success. The greatest accomplishment can be observed when the teacher witnesses pupils using their new found coping skills to manage interpersonal or emotional incidents in their school environment.

Limitations of the Research

While psychological outcomes of divorce are similar for children of western world regardless country borders, embodiment of bibliotherapy at schools in different countries vary. There are data available from studies done in USA or UK but there aren't any data available concerning use of bibliotherapy in Czech elementary schools since bibliotherapy is not a part of the Czech curriculum. Thus I couldn't make any comparison of particular books used for the purpose of bibliotherapy.

Further Research

The potential for future research in the area of bibliotherapy is very wide. Future research plans include a longitudinal study exploring effects of reading Anne Fine books of pupils eight through ninth grade. Research questions will include: Do teenage pupils perceive fiction as help in coping with their lives? What role has reading fiction played in their lives so far? What useful information have they utilized?

VI. CONCLUSION

As described in the theoretical background section of this thesis, there are many various effects of divorce influenced by different factors. On the whole, outcomes of divorce are painful and stressful. Bibliotherapy has in many cases played a supportive role for the therapeutic process and cannot be considered a substitute (Holman, 1996). Shrodes (1950) also points out that individual reactions to a chosen book will never be identical, “For no two persons can there be an absolute equivalence of symbols, for no two people have identical psychological fields” (p. 85). Rubin (1978) credits bibliotherapy as a tool that enables insight and understanding to offer “to look within and beneath the surface of things” (p. 9). Realistic fiction pictures complexity of the world we live in. It offers insight into painful and uncomfortable issues, nevertheless, reading this kind of literature might help pupils in the future when they face their own personal difficulty. They can draw from their subconscious knowledge about such issues even if they might not have been affected by them at the time of reading. Knoth (2006) recommends exposure to realistic fiction as the way to bring better understanding self and peers because “sharing emotionally complex books before a difficult experience occurs may give children the ability to practice their own personal bibliotherapy” (p. 275). Knoth is particular about the divorce theme:

Rather than address what is happening in the present, I am inclined to prepare children for emotional experiences before they occur. I would rather inoculate children than treat the symptoms of the emotional trauma. We give children vaccinations against measles. We can't vaccinate against divorce, but we can give children some emotional knowledge to use when their families, or other families they know, do go through a divorce. (2006, pp. 273 - 274)

Findings of this thesis suggest that Anne Fine's children novels bring the readers to a better understanding of themselves and the world around them as their world falls apart in the slow and long process of coping with the divorce. The researched books are valuable in conducting bibliotherapy about divorce as they are age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate and meet reading level of higher grades of lower-secondary pupils of elementary schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Anne Fine's Biography

The biography below is copied from the official Anne Fine's website

<http://www.annefine.co.uk/biography.php> and is written by the author herself.

My childhood

When I was young, it never occurred to me that I might be a writer. I think I must have thought that books were born on the library shelves. But I was good at writing stories, and I had a good deal of practice.

My primary school teacher came in every Monday morning in a rather grumpy mood. He'd look at the work calendar on the wall, which told us that we should be doing maths, and put his head in his hands. Then, "Why don't you write me an essay?" he'd suggest. He'd write a few titles on the board - things like, *A Day in the Life of a Lost Coin*, *Description of my Granny*, or *Adventure at the Seaside* - anything like that. Then: "I want absolute silence till break-time" he'd say, nursing his hungover head. "The first person to whisper gets the strap."

I don't remember him ever giving **anyone** the strap (though we did keep very, very quiet, just in case). I loved those double lessons more than anything in the world (except for reading). No endless discussions. No sharing of ideas. No realising that someone else had also had your brilliant idea. I covered pages and pages, writing fast, hiding my work from the girl beside me. And I learned to judge the length and arch of a story. It was the best training I could ever have had, though I still didn't know I'd be a writer.

At school, I enjoyed languages most, and studied French and Spanish, along with History, for A levels. That meant there was no room for English, and so for my whole life I have been able simply to read what I want when I want, and only for pleasure or interest. I suspect that this has been really important for the way I write, making it so much easier to think always of the reader.

And then ...

I studied Politics and History at University, and the interest in political issues shows up in many of the books. (If you're ten or older, have a go at *The Granny Project*. And after that, if you're not the sort to get nightmares you could try *The Road of Bones*. I taught in a girls' secondary school for a year — exhausting! — and then moved with my husband to Oxford, where I worked as an Information Officer for Oxfam. I was only in this job for two years, but still it changed my attitudes to money, to 'things', and to what is truly important in life, for ever.

In 1971 my first daughter was born. Unable to get to the library in a snowstorm to change my library books, in desperation I sat down and started to write a novel. Clearly this was the right job for me, for I have never stopped writing for more than a few weeks since.

My husband's job took us to California, Arizona, Michigan and Canada, where our second daughter was born. In 1981 I returned to Edinburgh, and a few years later moved to County Durham, where I now live quietly in a stone house beside a river with Richard, my partner of over twenty years. The list of books has grown longer and longer, and whether writing for children or adults, I still work mostly with a pencil and rubber in absolute silence. But I'm not totally out of the ark. I use a computer to do most of the endless corrections, and everything

else. I still hide my work if anyone walks past, and wouldn't dream of talking about what I'm writing or let a soul look at it until it's completely finished. Oh - and even after all these years I still prefer reading other people's books to writing my own!

A lot of my work, even for fairly young readers, raises quite serious social issues. I believe that many personal decisions have a social or political resonance, and the way people try to pick their way through tricky family situations interests me. But people won't read books that don't hold their interest, and since I still adore funny books and write for the reader inside myself, I always end up with the kind of book I myself would have loved to read (if only someone else had bothered to write it for me).

Appendix 2: Anne Fine's Bibliography

The Anne Fine's books are listed according to the date of the publishing. The letter at the end of the line marks recommended reader's age category. The classification has been suggested (a) books for older children; (b) books for middle children; (c) books for young children; (d) picture books; (e) novels for adults, by Anne Fine in her book *An interview with Anne Fine*. The classification of the books published after 2002 can be looked up at the official Anne Fine's website <http://www.annefine.co.uk/biography.php>.

- 2012 *Trouble in Toadpool*, Doubleday Children's Books (b)
- 2009 *Our Precious Lulu*, Bantam Press (e)
- 2009 *Eating Things on Sticks*, Doubleday Children's Books (b)
- 2008 *The Killer Cat's Birthday Bash*, Puffin (c)
- 2008 *Fly in the Ointment*, Bantam Press (e)
- 2007 *The Killer Cat Strikes Back*, Puffin (c)
- 2007 *Jamie and Angus Forever*, Walker (c)
- 2007 *Ivan the Terrible*, Egmont (b)
- 2006 *The Road of Bones*, Doubleday Children's Books (a)
- 2006 *The Return of the Killer Cat*, Puffin (c)
- 2006 *On the Summerhouse Steps*, Corgi Children's Books (a)
- 2005 *Raking the Ashes*, Bantam (e)
- 2004 *The More the Merrier*, Corgi Children's Books (b)
- 2004 *Nag Club*, Walker (c)
- 2004 *Frozen Billy*, Doubleday Children's Books (b)
- 2003 *A Shame to Miss 3*, compiler, Corgi Children's Books (a)

2003 <i>A Shame to Miss 2</i> , compiler, Corgi Children's Books	(b)
2003 <i>A Shame to Miss 1</i> , compiler, Corgi Children's Books	(c)
2002 <i>Up on Cloud Nine</i> , Doubleday Children's Books	(a)
2002 <i>Jamie and Angus Stories</i> , Walker	(c)
2002 <i>How to Cross the Road and not Turn into a Pizza</i> , Walker	(c)
2001 <i>Very Different: and Other Stories</i> , Mammoth	(a)
2001 <i>Ruggles</i> , Andersen Press	(d)
2001 <i>Notso Hotso</i> , Hamish Hamilton	(b)
2001 <i>All Bones and Lies</i> , Bantam	(e)
2000 <i>Bad Dreams</i> , Doubleday Children's Books	(b)
1999 <i>Roll Over Rolly</i> , Puffin	(c)
1999 <i>Countdown</i> , Heinemann	(c)
1999 <i>Charm School</i> , Doubleday Children's Books	(b)
1998 <i>Telling Liddy</i> , Bantam	(e)
1998 <i>Loudmouth Louis</i> , Puffin	(b)
1996 <i>The Tulip Touch</i> , Hamish Hamilton	(a)
1996 <i>Jennifer's Diary</i> , Hamish Hamilton	(c)
1996 <i>How to Write Really Badly</i> , Methuen	(b)
1996 <i>Countdown</i> , Heinemann	(c)
1996 <i>Care of Henry</i> , Walker	(c)
1995 <i>Step by Wicked Step</i> , Hamish Hamilton	(a)
1994 <i>The Diary of a Killer Cat</i> , Hamish Hamilton	(c)
1994 <i>Press Play</i> , Picadilly	(c)
1994 <i>In Cold Domain</i> , Viking	(e)

1992 <i>The Same Old Story Every Year</i> , Hamilton	(c)
1992 <i>The Haunting of Pip Parker</i> , Walker	(c)
1992 <i>The Genie Trilogy</i> , Mammoth	(b)
1992 <i>The Angel of Nitshill Road</i> , Methuen	(b)
1992 <i>Flour Babies</i> , Hamish Hamilton	(a)
1992 <i>Chicken Gave it to Me</i> , Methuen	(b)
1991 <i>The Worst Child I Ever Had</i> , Hamish Hamilton	(c)
1991 <i>The Book of the Banshee</i> , Hamish Hamilton	(a)
1991 <i>Stranger Danger</i> , Puffin	(c)
1991 <i>Poor Monty</i> , Methuen	(d)
1991 <i>Design a Pram</i> , Heinemann	(c)
1991 <i>A Sudden Glow of Gold</i> , Picadilly Press	(b)
1990 <i>Taking the Devil's Advice</i> , Viking	(e)
1990 <i>Only A Show</i> , Hamish Hamilton	(c)
1990 <i>A Sudden Swirl of Icy Wind</i> , Picadilly Press	(b)
1989 <i>The Country Pancake</i> , Methuen	(b)
1989 <i>Goggle-eyes</i> , Hamish Hamilton	(a)
1989 <i>Bill's New Frock</i> , Methuen	(b)
1989 <i>A Sudden Puff of Glittering Smoke</i> , Picadilly Press	(b)
1988 <i>Crummy Mummy and Me</i> , Malin/Deutsch	(b)
1988 <i>A Pack of Liars</i> , Hamilton	(b)
1987 <i>Madame Doubtfire</i> , Hamish Hamilton	(a)
1986 <i>The Killjoy</i> , Bantam	(e)
1986 <i>Anneli the Art Hater</i> , Methuen	(b)

1985 *Scaredy-Cat*, Heinemann (c)

1983 *The Granny Project*, Methuen (a)

1981 *Round Behind the Ice-House*, Methuen (a)

1980 *The Stone Menagerie*, Methuen (a)

1979 *The Other, Darker Ned*, Methuen (a)

1978 *The Summer-House Loon*, Methuen (a)

SHRNUTÍ

Diplomová práce se zabývá biblioterapií zaměřenou na děti z rozvedených rodin. Vychází z psychologických poznatků a výzkumů týkajících se psychopatologických projevů, které se u dětí objevují jako důsledek rozvodu. Podrobněji se zabývá možností využití biblioterapie v rámci výuky anglického jazyka pro žáky vyšších tříd na druhém stupni základní školy. Praktická část zahrnuje selekci vhodných textů ve třech knihách Anne Fine. Výsledky výběru jsou doplněny rozbořem textů, aby návrhy na potencionální využití plnily podmínky úspěšné terapie. V závěru práce je rozebrán význam užití biblioterapie v procesu vyrovnávání se s důsledky rozvodu na poli vzdělávání.