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## *Library Touched My Heart\**

### **Kütüphane Kalbime Dokundu**

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**Abstract:** *Today's libraries try to provide zones where users can feel both intellectually and spiritually comfortable. Accordingly, this study aims to handle the matchmaking role of libraries within the frame of evolving services and transforming places. Within the frame of the study, relevant posts of the users in social media confession page of Ankara Adnan Ötüken Provincial Public Library, Marmara University Library, Gazi University Library, Yıldız Technical University Library were analyzed. Structured interview was made with 4 users of National Library who came to study in the library. The results were shared with literary lyrics and poems complying with the underlying context herein.*

**Keywords:** *Love in library; libraries as matchmaking places; stories in libraries; libraries as third places.*

### **Öz**

Günümüz kütüphaneleri, kullanıcıların kendilerini entelektüel ve ruhsal olarak rahat hissedebileceği alanlar sunmaktadır. Buna dayanarak da, bu çalışmanın amacı, değişen hizmetler ve dönüşen mekânlar bağlamında, kütüphanenin kullanıcıların tanışmasına ve duygusal deneyimler yaşamasına olanak sunan aracılık etme rolünü ele almaktır. Bu çalışma çerçevesinde, Ankara Adnan Ötüken Halk Kütüphanesi, Marmara Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi, Gazi Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi ve Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi Kütüphanesinin sosyal medya itiraf sayfalarındaki kullanıcı paylaşımları analiz edilmiştir. Ayrıca, kütüphaneye çalışmak için gelen 4 Milli Kütüphane kullanıcısı ile yapılandırılmış görüşme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Sonuçlar bağlama uyumlu edebi sözler ve şiirlerle paylaşılmıştır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** *Kütüphanede aşk; aracı mekânlar olarak kütüphaneler; kütüphane hikâyeleri; üçüncü mekân olarak kütüphaneler.*

### **Introduction**

*Surrounded by stories surreal and sublime,  
I fell in love in the library once upon a time.  
Jimmy Buffett, "Love in the Library"*

Ray Oldenburg (1989) stated that everybody needs a third place to get mentally and spiritually relaxed except for home and work. Home is the private zone of individuals where their safety

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and physical needs are met. Work is the indispensable environment of individuals. However, third place should be the place which enables the flow of daily routine in a smooth way and balances the social life and gives the individuals the opportunity to meet other persons, get socialized, and establish relations. Basing on the perspective of knowledge science in Japan, third place can be handled as a knowledge sharing and relationship building place; referring to *ba* concept in terms of adopting a physical, relational and spiritual dimension and *ma*, putting the emphasis on spatial terms, as a free zone in communication setting (Medeni, Medeni, Balci, and Dalbay, 2009). Third place can operate as a refractive *ma* enabling first time inter-personal interaction, and resulting EMMA (Encountering, Miscommunicating, Misunderstanding, Asking Cycle of Refraction) and ECUI (Empathizing, Communicating, Understanding, Inquiring Cycle of Reflection) processes (cross-cultural refraction and reflection). In today's world, role of libraries is evolving and Libraries of the 21<sup>st</sup> century should appeal to the expectations, psychological and emotional needs of users and library staff. As second places of library staff and third places of users, libraries can mean more beyond the conventional roles even though it might be considered as challenging. In accordance with that, libraries can be a match-maker for miscellaneous types of relations, such as relation between user-user, user-librarian, book-user, book-librarian.

In parallel with these classifications, in literature there are novels and novellas depicting the love stories of librarians. As in the fictional history novel entitled *Beyond All Dreams*, map librarian in Library of Congress has found her love of life, most powerful member of the congressmen of the nation while solving the baffling mystery of the lost ship even though there are strict rules for having a love affair with the members of Congress. Another novel from literature is *That Night on Thistle Lane*, life of a librarian, Phoebe O'Dunn began to change after she discovered a hidden room full of costumes in the attic of the library, met masked swashbuckler Noah and she fell in love with Noah. Concept of library is dealt with mysterious perspective. The fantastic fiction novel entitled *Wonderland Creek* touches upon the candid-hearted story of a librarian Alice Grace Ripley who headed to a town library in the mountains eastern Kentucky to deliver donated books after she lost her job in the library due to fund cuts during the period of Great Depression and she fell in love with the librarian there while working voluntarily. Basing upon the novels and novellas in literature, it can be said that throughout history libraries have witnessed the emergence of various love relationships between users and librarians, librarians and librarians. These novellas depicted the life-like romance affairs through the literary genres of historical romance, fiction, romantic suspense, contemporary romance, paranormal stories.

Besides offering the opportunity of meeting the love of their lives, libraries can also be a match-maker for connecting the readers with great reads which have literary taste. They can not only play the role of couple match but also book match as in the example of Alameda County Library. Basing upon the idea that people can also fall in love with books and heroines, personas in the novels, the library arranged a special event where readers found the books appealing to themselves thanks to the support of expert librarians on 14<sup>th</sup> February Valentine's Day, which played significant role in strengthening the relationship between readers and libraries (Alameda County Library, 2019), enhance the reading skills and imaginary skills of users. Librarians can function as a life coach in guiding the users thoroughly to recommend the right books to resolve their inner conflicts, match their real stories with the life-like stories, adventures of the book personas. Thanks to the matching activities of libraries, users can enrich their life with profound paths and solutions offered in the literary treasure of books.

Shedding a light on these match-making roles of library, our study aims to depict five different love stories from users and librarians throughout different libraries in Ankara, Turkey. It will be a case study. The data will be collected through structured interviews with users and

librarians. In this study, we will try to put forward the new roles of libraries and perception of library managers in these cases.

### *Love Concept in Libraries and Libraries as Matchmaking Places*

Love can blossom in such unexpected places and unexpected times such as libraries. Library walls can witness the birth of a romance story. Two lovers can find each other in the library corridors and or discover themselves while reading a book, making a research or studying on library desk. Nobody can image how their course of love flows but library can be the turning point of one's life. It can both be the place where you can find your love of life and be your guide with its rich collections a person can consult. Romance cases related to libraries were collected from the Social Media Confession Page of Ankara Adnan Ötügen Provincial Library, Marmara University Library, Gazi University Library, Yıldız Technical University Library. Structured interview was made with 4 users of National Library of Turkey in Ankara, who came to study in the library. We met them in the library entrance queue and witnessed their story with great joy and excitement.

Our study will provide the reader with real-life cases from different libraries and emotional lyrics coming from the sincere deepness of our heart, with great hymns and melodies, accompanying the cases and we believe, fitting them well. We felt as the musical translators of the cases and tried to provide the reader with our inner voice. We could not attain from the objective point of view. Our emotions were merged with the emotional stories of the users.

The stories we have discovered turned into lyrics which symbolize the unique feelings of the library users:

*Let me to the hall of great library  
From loveliest shelves, lie the divine beauty you  
That whom I do not intrude into yet...  
But with overwhelming sense of discovering  
What reigns over me...  
So confused, oh heart..  
Is that love?  
Oh mind, come on, what is this sparkling overflowing power?  
Have I been fascinated in the presence of great delightful works echoing Greek History  
or Great Gods, Goddess?  
Or just the echo of the waves on French coast during the era of Industrial Revolution?  
Did history books take me back through time?  
Oh library, are you time machine?  
Me? Travelling through eras...back and back...  
Never-ending echo.eo.eo...  
  
Just wake up from my daydream in history shelves...  
Oh Lovely... there lies...  
That thereby glancing eyes,  
Might discover my soul.  
Yet, lost in the shelves now,  
Whispering... is love almighty presence of you...  
Your finger on a book...  
Having touched it with overwhelming will...  
Having met you in a shelf...  
You, whose worth is unknown yet... trying to discover books whose worth is never shaken...  
That thereby has shaken me...*

*Oh heart...*  
*That shelf hath a far more fascinating meaning*  
*... which yet i do not know yet...*  
*Under your finger,*  
*Lies the books*  
*Proving boundless wisdom...*  
*Are you the queen of wisdom?*  
*Oh heart, mind library...*  
*Lost hereinafter.*  
*Afraid to open my eyes...*  
*Afraid to discover "what I dreamed was a daydream in library."*

In our query, we have discovered lovely stories set in the libraries. We have realized that library is a significant place for students. They spend most of their time in school and library, which orients their flow of love affairs get tuned in libraries. IT is a big and critical fact that they consider library as places with multiple tasks. It is a kind of socializing center for Z generation and they make new friends in the library. In some cases, they fall in love with the persons they meet, as can be understood from the below-given cases.

"I fell in love with a girl whom I saw in the library. They were two friends studying Ottoman language in the library. You were wearing teeth braces. You looked cute with them. When you could not find empty plug, you went to the bottom floor of the library. It was so fascinating to study while watching you. Even I have written a poem for you."

"That library and that lovely girl... What a good match. I saw you in the first floor of the library. I was walking with my blond friend. You were wearing green trousers and white T-shirt. We have met previously many times. I do not know if you have recognized me or not. I hope you will recognize me one day."

"I saw you in the waiting queue of library entrance. Your name is Batuhan or Onur. You were wearing grey colored jacket with a with furring and hooked top. You asked the security about how long time it will take to enter the library. I have been thinking about you since that day" quoted by a student who comes to the public library.

"Library is turning to somewhere everybody finds his love. What a library is it...I could not expect. I am fascinated with this library."

"The girl, I love has come to the library after such a long time. Poor girl. She is waiting in the queue to enter into the library... I have a seat. What if will I give my seat to her?"

"Waiting in the queue between 6.00-8.00 to enter library and studying in the library is worth-doing. The atmosphere is so great. Whenever I give a break for studying, I recognize that everybody is looking at one another... Girls pass with their make-up bags in their hands. They walk through the corridor of the library as a Victoria's Secret Model. They look so cute. If the library has a tongue, it will talk many things it witnessed."

As can be seen, students want to experience their feelings freely and they like acting expressively, frankly.

As authors of the paper, we have a created an emotional poem for the above-mentioned cases.

*The weather going insane in Ankara*  
*All gloomy, rainy and cloudy*  
*One morning again, with sleepy eyes, come to the library,*  
*Familiar library entrance,*  
*Again waiting in long queue,*  
*Hearing the voice coming from the thronging corridors of the library,*

*Feeling the smell of lilacs, lotus, rose and jasmine in the library garden,  
Are you an illusion?  
Are you imagery character that my mind created or symbolism put by a novel?  
This is unprecedented experience  
Yearning for togetherness when I see you everyday in this library entrance.*

Most of the stories here belong to the “love at first sight” kind of attraction. It is initially born out of a physical attraction and takes no time in getting to know the other person, then transforms into an emotional love story.

*Inspiration has brought me the path of knowledge  
Oh, books... Oh my library! Sweeter taste of literature  
Enchanted me as the garden of Adam and Eve,  
Blessed by the smell of ancient books,  
Felt the gorgeous atmosphere of this lovely information cottage,*

“There is a blonde, handsome guy. I know your name. Your friends yelled at you with your name. I am glancing at you with inviting eyes. Why don’t you see me? I use the desk to study in your surroundings. Your desk is close to me, but you don’t recognize me.”

*Greatest desk of libraries,  
Of mutual studies,  
Of mutual feelings...  
Library has meant a lot.*

“Today is 7<sup>th</sup> April. The boy who has blond hair, blue eyes, burgundy and gray colored checkered shirt with hooked top. It is written “fresh” on your shirt. Your friend, next to you, is wearing a grass-green colored t-shirt. You were sitting at the back side of the big saloon in the library. You came to the small saloon 3-4 times. You glanced at me, but this is not sufficient for me. If you read this, please like it or make comment. My blue man, let’s meet in the blue.”

“There is a blond boy who is wearing the sports uniform of Fenerbahçe, a football team. Nobody likes you, but I do. I love your smile. I am watching you all the time in the library.”

*I am sailing to your heart.  
Even if lost sometimes,  
I felt that library is my map  
Vitality and youth lie in you  
Thanks to my library, I get to know you  
Chasing the inspiration of yours, library became my third place.*

“I kissed somebody in the book lending section of the library. It was my first kiss.”

“I fell in love with a girl in the library. After she won the high school entrance exam, she did not use the library any more. Now how will I continue to use the library? She is not coming. I will stop using the library.”

*My library bears a meaning when she comes,  
Then, vague emptiness walks in the corridors of the library.  
Her presence, I believe in heart that, has given me all the power  
To conquer the treasure that lies here...  
When gone, all the inspiration fades away.*

“Everybody likes someone in the library. Why couldn’t I find my love in the library? Why? I am angry with the library.”

In some matters, expectation from library increased.

“That boy... You who is studying in number 118. You were studying English. Come tomorrow. I want to see your face.”

“That orange-haired girl... time stops when I meet you in the library. Where are you now?”

“That girl with a tattoo, in 156 numbered seat... We glanced at each other many times today.”

“That boy I glanced at for so long... he is not coming to the library these days... His friend has come and sat next to me. What luck is this?”

*My library is a therapy for me,  
In which despairs and grief are left behind,  
Highest honour and pressure for me to discover you in this cultural treasure  
The moment I found you, I dare not to glance at you,  
Only thou love above, my glittering eyes escaped your zone  
When courage came, have found you gone*

“I previously wrote in the confession page for the girl I like. I kindly requested her to wear recolored cloth. The other day I came to library and saw that everywhere is red. I have just written for her. Red is beautiful on her, only. Please, others do not wear it...”

*Meeting at Red  
The old-fashioned furniture of the library  
Long corridor opening to the big saloon,  
Smelling the antique fragrance of the collections,  
Walking towards your desk,  
My eyes looking for you,  
Everywhere is scarlet  
Oh, God. Why?  
Scarlet was our password...  
How was it hacked though?*

In addition to the below-mentioned cases that were collected from the social media confession websites of the libraries, structured interview was made with 10 students encountered during the library entrance queue. They were informed about our study and they became volunteer to support our story. Answers of students were included, as they had a love story related with the library. Other answers were discarded. Volunteering students were both delightful to participate in our survey and surprised at the interesting topic of our study.

The first student began with his story: “I was using the library everyday two years ago while I was preparing for university entrance exam. I chose National Library of Turkey as I lived in near surrounding. Every morning, on the way to the library, I used to see a girl walking on the same way with me. We happened to see each other quite often. One day, she looked at me with smiling eyes and said “Good morning” with shaking and hesitant voice. That was one of the thrilling moments of my life. I felt deep excitement. It is so difficult for me to put this into words. Weeks later, we sat in close desks and we started to talk to each other in break times, had a cup of coffee, dazzled by her eyes, the moments in the library passed so quickly. Silhouette of the library and hers were mingled. All six months we used to spend time together in the library, not only we studied, but also we discussed upon the books, magazines, journals we have read, music we listened. In what she finds the excitement, I find, as well. Her joy has become my joy. I still remember her laughter in the stairs of the library. I feel thrilled, when I remember her. After she won the university entrance exam, she moved to another city. We are still contacting each other, however, throughout these 2 years, we could not even say how much we loved each other. I am still using National Library to study. Now I am undergraduate student,

as well. Whenever I come to the library, she comes to my mind, I feel the sorrow and grief to some extent but I can confess that I never thought that I would have such a memory belonging to the library... I could have never known that library would witness my unique feelings for a unique girl.”



Figure 1. Screenshots from Social Media Confession (“İtiraf” in Turkish) page of Ankara Adnan Otügen Provincial Public Library



Figure 2. Ankara Adnan Ötügen Provincial Public Library study room and lending services



“The second student continued with her story:” I can say that I was grown up in the library. It is my home. It is beyond my third place. My mother was a librarian. When I was a child, after school, I was coming to the library where my mother used to work. I was walking and playing between the shelves, trying to read adult books in adult section when I got bored with the child section. I was creating games between the shelves. My mother had a friend, librarian, as well. She had a daughter with a red ribbon on her hair. That is the very cute, harsh detail coming to my mind years after but it is so vivid... she was my game partner, we were running, screaming the in the corridors of the library with great joy, making role-plays in the games we created just there. I also remember us reading 3D books, in each page, surprise and wonder in our eyes and big open mouths were the unique evidence, who knows. This relation... maybe not the type of love and attraction you ask for, but it is definitely a type of deep love for friendship. I owe my reading habit to her, perhaps... and that library... It changed quite a lot but still have the oldest reflections I my mind. Soft and pure delight flows in to my heart when full with spurred nostalgic emotions. If you ask my child-self, what is library?” I will say for hundred percent that it is reading and playing with red-ribboned girl.”

The third person continued to contribute to our study with a good story of library as well: “I have a sweet and a sour story. My girlfriend was studying in the Department of Information Management. She got internship in one of the libraries in Ankara. Before her internship, I was not the type of person who visits the library quite often. Thanks to her internship, I discovered the path to the library. In order to see her, I became a member of the library, got a member card, began to lend books and read in the reading rooms section of the library. While she was working, I was giving her a secretive smile, at which she replied so soon after. Sometimes my fingers, intentionally reached for the wrong shelves, which was a kind of persuading inviting for her. She was coming to help me to find the book and reach the right shelf. My eyes locked on the book she touched. Glancing around, she hesitantly controlled if others discovered what was between us. Interwoven with her presence, library was a motivating place to discover more and more about books, collections and I was highly motivated to read. This was a romance I experienced between the born shelves of the library. Our story began in this way. I still find library way as a Milky Way of my life... Now she is librarian, and my wife. I am still coming to the library to make a research, to read. She is not working in National Library of Turkey but her library is also a good one.”

Another romance is from another couple who felt utmost volunteer to be part of our research. They were excited to share their love story. They informed us that they met in the library the previous year. Since then they have a relation and they still use the library to study. Their love has become more meaningful among the shelves and they say they feel that their love is getting more almighty among the holy rich collections.

The fifth case from the interview is that a girl, who is a student in the Department of Philosophy in Hacettepe University has shared her story with us about the role of library in her life. She emphasized that she did not find her love in the library, however, she discovered her tendency to read books and found books that match her fields of interest. Library was a match-maker place in terms of broadening her vision and cultural perspective.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

*Special wonders shine herein,  
This library thy centre is, thy desk, big windows,  
Thou history lies everywhere...  
The universe's splendid glorious treasure  
Bewitched though, speechless to...  
Accompanied by love, among the shelves,*

*Like a pilgrim, walking through the scarlet visions,  
Sometimes, lost hereinafter,  
Was that thee? Red in almighty?  
Whence your grace captures me,  
All treasure becomes mine...*

In the post-modern era we live in, libraries have evolved into social centers not only users borrow books and study but also have social dialogues, make new friends, discover new people and even find their love. Meaning of library for users has begun to vary and even users wrote lyrics, poems for their stories. In accordance with the changing needs and perspective of the users, libraries can arrange activities like movie nights, interactive game days, puzzle nights, cultural days, social dialogue sessions in which people including couples can join. What is more, libraries, in order to serve the function of being a match-maker between books and persons, can design mobile apps for matching the personal characteristics of the persons with appropriate books. It is thought to be a fruitful book matching activity. This can increase the number of users who borrow books from library.

The authors also think that these real and virtual life interactions are in accordance with third place, ba and ma conceptualizations and related EMMA and ECUI processes (cross-cultural refraction and reflection), as persons can get involved with their space as well as each other so that they become more attached and closer. However, application of these conceptual frameworks can be the topic of future work, as in this paper the focus of the study has rather been to collect and discuss the related data from the field and practice. Accordingly, we hope this piece of work could shed light on the academic, professional and social affairs of different library stakeholders in the world.

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