

Associative Structure in the Perception of Music: The Case of Turkish ‘*Yanık*’ (scorched)

Müzik Algılamasında Çağrışım Yapısı: ‘Yanık’ Örneği

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Abstract. The term *yanık*, a desired quality of music, is one of the most important aspects of Turkish response to music in terms of the perception of meaning. As a discourse of sentiment, *yanık* is an image of the bittersweet emotions in music. What is considered as *yanık* is generally a vocal quality, representing feelings of grief, sadness, sorrow, and passion. The term is mainly considered to highlight two features of musical quality. First, it denotes sorrow or sadness. Second, it defines the vocal style or voice quality that it is believed to be good, right, and nice. In fact, both qualities are thought to be connected to each other. What is important is to be *yanık*. What is wanted is a sorrowful sound which can express sad feelings. Being sorrowful, when singing, is nice, and this feature is a part of the musical taste. Consequently, *yanık* is the fact which expresses pleasing and sorrowful emotions together. In this article, first I will give a brief introduction to the theoretical framework of my paper. In terms of the discourse of sentiment, I propose the theory of associative structure for understanding the cultural dynamics of *yanık* in the Turkish musical tradition. Secondly, following from this approach/theory, which treats the substance of musical sound as a ‘material’ rather than ‘raw’ parameters, I would like to carry out an analysis that investigates the range of meanings that sound material perceived as *yanık* has for Turkish listeners.

Keywords: Perception of music, associative structure, the bitter-sweet feeling, Turkish ‘*yanık*’ (scorched)

Özet. Müziğin arzulan bir niteliği olan *yanık* terimi, anlamın algılanması açısından Türklerin müziğe verdiği karşılığın en önemli boyutlarından biridir. Bir duygu söylemi olarak *yanık*, acı-tatlı duyguların müzikteki bir yansımasıdır. *Yanık* terimi ile kastedilen şey, hüznü, üzüntü, keder ve tutkuyu hissetmeyi ifade eden vokal niteliğidir. Teriminin esas itibarıyla müzikal niteliğe ilişkin iki önemli özelliği vurguladığı kabul edilir. Birincisi hüznü belirtir, ikincisi ise doğru, güzel ya da iyi olduğuna inanılan şarkı söyleme üslubunu ya da ses niteliğini tanımlar. Aslında bunların ikisi de birbirlerine bağlıdır. Önemli olan *yanık* olmaktır. İstenen şey kederli duyguları ifade edebilecek hüznülmüzdür. Şarkı söylerken hüznülmü olma güzeldir. Ve bu özellik müzik zevkinin parçasıdır. Sonuç olarak *yanık*, zevk ve hüznü duygularını birlikte ifade eden bir olgudur. Bu makalede önce yazımın kuramsal çerçevesiyle ilgili kısa bir giriş vereceğim. Burada, duygu söylemi olarak *yanık*ın, Türk müzik geleneğindeki kültürel dinamiklerinin anlaşılması bakımından çağrışım yapısı teorisini öneriyorum. İkinci olarak, müziksel soundun özüne ham parametrelerden ziyade bir materyal olarak bakan bu yaklaşımı/teoriyi izleyerek, *yanık* olarak algılanan sound materyalinin Türk dinleyiciler açısından taşıdığı anlam alanını irdeleyen bir analiz yapacağım.

Anahtar kelimeler: Müziksel algılama, çağrışım yapısı, acı-tatlı duygu, *yanık*

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1 Introduction

Audiences participate in music in ways that are physical, (singing along, tapping, clapping, dancing, sexual arousal, and so on); emotional ('feeling' the music, reminiscing, romanticizing, achieving a spiritual 'high' and the like), and cognitive (processing information, learning, stimulating thought, contributing to memory, framing perceptions and so forth) (Lull 1992:19). This paper is a study about the relationship between music and emotions. Having no tangible physical existence as a fleeting pattern, emotion is a purely subjective experience. My discipline, ethnomusicology, in which special emphasis is given to the study of music in its cultural context, studies music as a 'culture'. To think of music as a cultural process is to imply that social or cultural elements are contained within or passed through its sonic components. Perhaps the most significant difficulty for the scholars studying music as a culture is the approach to a cognitive material which is dismissed as 'emotion'. Nevertheless, emotions are not precultural, on the contrary, they are preeminently cultural.

Contrary to what had often been assumed, emotions turned out not to be universal facts of nature but to be differently formulated in different times and places. We learn how to feel, and how to deploy particular emotions in various ways and contexts which are appropriate to our situation. In Helga Kotthoff's succinct summary, "feelings are no longer regarded as something innate and inward, but rather as a culturally interwoven and shaped mode of experience. People also learn the discourses through which their emotions are more or less verbalized" (Finnegan 2003:183). Thus, the discourse could help to explain why listeners perceive music as the exposition of emotion. It is a recurrent notion that music is the means of emotional expression. It has been difficult to explain why music is impressive. In fact, there are many sources of emotion in relation to music including 'musical expectancy', (Meyer 1956) 'arbitrary association' (Davies 1978), and 'iconic signification' - that is, a structural similarity between musical and extramusical features (Langer 1951). However, it is fair to say that the previous works have been naturally speculative (Juslin & Laukka 2003: 770).

The study of the relationship between music and emotion poses particularly complex questions of what an analysis of music perception should consist. How do we hear the musical sounds? When and why do we hear sounds in one way rather than another? Does the listener attend to the acoustic characteristics of sound or to the sources specified by sounds? How can we offer the psychological explanation of why we hear what we hear? Are the listening and the perceptual experience parts of what constitutes a musical culture? As Nicholas Cook introduced, "To interpret music in terms of an interest in sound and its perceptual experience does not transcend cultural values, it expresses them" (1990: 7). Thus, knowing how to listen, and what to hear, are the parts of what constitutes musical culture.

The studies about the perception and cognition of music have largely focused on the perception of auditory events such as pitch, grouping, tonal and rhythmic structures. However, while some of these theoretical constructs do seem to be heard, others seem to bear little relationship to listeners' experiences. For example, even though there have been a lot of the studies conducted about the cognitive reality of large-scale structures there is little evidence that the large-scale hierarchical structures pos-

ited by cognitive theories play an important role in listeners' aesthetic appreciation of music. Furthermore, while attempting to describe the perceptions of experienced listeners, these models tend to result in a 'view from nowhere': the listening subject is deleted in favor of an apparently objective reading of musical structure. And in the last two decades, 'new musicology' has presented interpretations of works in which musical structures are read in terms of social meanings. Thus, there appears to be a sharp division between the conceptions of musical material implicit in studies of music perceptions, and those implied by some branches of music theory and history. Indeed, the way in which the relationship between music perception and music theory has generally been conceived is that whereas music perception and cognition study what listeners hear, music theory persuades the listener about what they might or could hear (Dibben 2003: 194).

2 Associative Structure

The hierarchical models of the perception of music are premised upon the idea that listeners' perceptions can be described adequately without taking into account the historical character of musical material, and that in these models the musical work is viewed as a concrete, self-contained unit specified by the notes of the score. An alternative to hierarchical models of musical structure is the idea of 'associative' structure. The theory of associative structure makes possible the interpenetration of immanent analysis with the sociohistorical and extramusical context (Dibben 2003: 200). Little empirical or theoretical research has been conducted into associative structure. Leonard Meyer (1973) discussed the associative structure of melody, and more recently Jerrold Levinson (1997) argued that music is heard on a 'moment-to-moment' basis (what he terms concatenationism), rather than in terms of large-scale structural relationships between events separated in time. According to Levinson, knowing that the existence of large-scale relationships may have some effects on the listening experience, but knowing that is not necessary to the aesthetic experience of music. In fact, his theory rehabilitates the untrained listener, and attempts a more veracious account of the listening experience (Dibben 2003: 194).

Despite criticism of the idea of concatenationism by some music theorists (critics have argued that large-scale structural relationships do play a part in the listening experience for them), Levinson's approach is very important because it is a systematic attempt to clarify what a nonhierarchical experience of musical structure might be like. In Nicola Dibben's article, "Musical Materials, Perception, and Listening", (2003) her approach differs from both Meyer's and Levinson's in that it encompasses associative links in two axes, which are somewhat similar to the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes of Saussurean linguistics. Meyer primarily discusses the syntagmatic axis, analyzing and categorizing the associative links between elements occurring within the same piece of music but displaced in time. It is in this domain that subsequent empirical research has been conducted. The paradigmatic axis (Saussure himself originally called this the associative axis) is concerned with the relationship between any instance of an element and the other elements belonging to the same category with which it could be substituted. This axis captures the manner in which

musical materials refer beyond themselves to the other instances such as archetypes and prototypes.

The difference between this theory of associative structure and hierarchical theories of music perception mentioned earlier is that it treats the substance of musical sound as a 'material' rather than as raw parameters. This alternative conception of musical material can be thought of as operating in two dimensions: first, intraopus, forging relationships within a particular piece, and giving rise to a sense of coherence; and second, extraopus, by virtue of reference to other specific, or generic, works and styles (Dibben 2003: 195).

Following from this approach, I would like to carry out an analysis that investigated the range of meanings of a sound material which is perceived as *yanık* by Turkish listeners. First of all, I think that Turkish listeners make associative links between musical elements that are present in any given piece in order to define music as *yanık*. Since this approach brings away the crude distinction between the intramusical and the extramusical attributes in *yanık* songs, it is based on the premise that musical materials perceived as *yanık* are heard in terms of their historical and cultural usage.

3 As a Predicative Metaphor of Bitter-Sweet Feelings: *Yanık*

The first question is easy to ask. What is *yanık*? This question is more than a matter of terminology. Since it is a metaphor, I think that here it is hardly necessary to carry out a strict terminological analysis of the term *yanık*. Instead, I will take the meaning of this term in the Turkish musical tradition in terms of bitter-sweet feelings in musical sounds. What *yanık* is, what *yanık* sounds represent, and the way it is used, depends on my own experience as a result of long observations. The term is one of the most important aspects of the Turkish response to music in terms of the perception of meaning. *Yanık* is a desired quality of music. What is the important thing in *yanık* music? As a discourse of sentiment, *yanık* is an image of the bitter-sweet emotions in music. The value of the *yanık* sound lies in its ability to communicate its bitter-sweet emotions to the listener. This provides the basis for what I shall tentatively describe as the aesthetic experience of *yanık*. The bitter-sweet feeling is one of the pleasures of social existence. It is the emotion, affecting a man as a result of both sorrow and aesthetic pleasure. The bitter-sweet feeling is an ambivalent emotion. Therefore *yanık* music combines two quite separate representations of the power of music to move emotions.

What is considered as *yanık* is generally a vocal quality, representing feelings of grief, sadness, sorrow and passion. The term is mainly considered as highlighting two features of musical quality. First, it denotes sorrow or sadness. Second, it defines the vocal style or voice quality that it is believed to be good, right and nice. In fact, both qualities are thought to be connected to each other. What is important is to be *yanık*. What is wanted is a sorrowful sound which can express sad feelings. Being sorrowful, when one is singing, is nice (Erol 2004: 197). And this feature is a part of musical taste. Consequently, *yanık* is a fact which expresses pleasing and sorrowful emotions

together. Then, the question is this: What are the musical characteristics of a *yanık* song which expresses pleasing and sorrowful emotions at the same time?

4 *Yanık* as Voicing Meaning

The listener learns to recognize meanings in music in a variety of ways. The clearest and probably the most important one is through the words or lyrics of a song. In human societies vocal music is more common than solely instrumental music; in fact, some societies have very little instrumental music. Since much music is embodied in a song, the symbolism and meaning of musical sounds themselves are often closely related to and even dependent upon texts. In many cases words and music have a complementary relationship - the text embodies the message of a song, and music intensifies the appropriate feelings (Keammer 1993:115). From this perspective, the lyrics of many songs which are perceived as *yanık* can be considered in terms of sad feelings. Because, there are a lot of words reflecting the sad or painful feelings in lyrics of *yanık* songs. Some of them are resignation to fate, separation, abandonment, loneliness, sorrow, melancholy, and pessimism. Although the lyrics of a *yanık* song are important, the impact of its sound must not be overlooked.

As a result of overindulgence in vocal skills, *yanık* music is based on singers. The techniques of vocalization, coupled with exaggerated means of expressing emotions, are crucial facts in *yanık* songs. A *yanık* song, associated with dense emotions, is able to create an impression of technical difficulty. However, that is not the case. The characteristics of *yanık* voice are the following: the length and calm clarity of voice, its sparkling quality, its fullness, its correct vibration and its vocalization. As a term of the appraisal of vocal quality, *yanık* might also appear to describe the high tessitura. Yet, it is necessary to say that this is not the definitive vocal marker for the burning quality in the human voice. Along with the high tessitura dialect, vocal production, vibration, ornamentation and vocalization can also be accepted by listeners as important properties of *yanık* voice. In Turkey, of course other terms of appraisal are also used to describe a singing voice. A number of them are velvet-voiced, soft voice, soft as cotton, deep and manly, tasting of quince, acrid or astringent, sweet, crisp or brittle and so on. As a discourse of emotion, the term *yanık* is an expression which resonates fully in the context of Turkish music tradition. It is a useful term in the context of appraisal. In this sense, it is also used as a polite way of suggesting that a singer does not know the correct way to sing a particular song, as in "he or she sings well but his or her voice is not *yanık*".

Perhaps more than any other music in Turkey, *yanık* songs are peculiar to *uzun hava*. *Uzun hava* (the long air) is a folk song performed in a slow and free rhythm. Being free and natural, they are thus able to communicate more directly with the listener. In Turkish folk music, the instrumental introduction and vocal *uzun hava* are distinguished from the strict tempo of vocal *kırık hava* (the broken air). In other words, in folk music the songs without a rhythmic mode are *uzun hava*-s whereas songs with a rhythmic mode are *kırık hava*-s. The melodic vocabulary which is used in *uzun hava* is very important. Thus, it provides an ample scope for the demonstra-

tion of vocal skills of a singer. They clearly celebrate the vocal skills and voice quality of a singer. It is therefore accepted that not all singers can perform *uzun hava*.

5 *Yanık*: Except for the Burning Quality in the Human Voice

I have already argued that *yanık* is a metaphorical expression of the bitter-sweet emotional state. The reason for this emotional state is often the voice quality or performance style of the singer. However, it can also be used in other musical contexts in Turkey. For example, *yanık* is also used in the context of music-making as an active verb (*yakmak* = to burn). The term, however, as a verb which expresses the act of music-making, has a limited meaning. *Yakmak*, in this context, is just to compose a Turkish folk song. *Ağıt yakmak* (to burn dirge), for instance, means to compose *ağıt* which is written generally about a sad event. Alternatively, a song and its melodic tropes which is recognized as *yanık* could be interpreted in terms of *bozlak* which is both a scale (*ayak*) and a genre or style in Turkish folk music. Most people think that *bozlak* moves sad feelings.

As I have already mentioned, even though the term generally refers to vocal or voice quality, *yanık* can also be used in order to describe the sounds of some specific Turkish traditional woodwind instruments, such as *ney*, *mey* and *kaval*, which are connected with the heritage of Turkish musical tradition. As Picken has stressed, the term *yanık* is also used to describe a genre of solo *bağlama* pieces from Central Anatolia, a rare *bağlama* tuning, and a well-known *yanık kerem*, a scale formation in Turkish Folk music (Picken 1975: 243). *Yanık kerem* is a variant of the *kerem* scale. This scale can be written in the conventional notation as A, Bflat, Csharp, D, E, F, G, and A. What is important in the scale are the first-five tones. An augmented second between the second and third degrees of scale is the most important characteristic. The equivalent of this scale (*ayak*) in traditional Turkish art music is *hicaz makam* (mode). European scholars have frequently associated this interval with Easternness. Although the augmented second is commonly heard in other modes of the traditional Turkish art music and in other scales of Turkish folk music, the use of this interval in *hicaz makam* and *yanık kerem* scale is very different. The augmented second in *hicaz makam* and *yanık kerem* is often used near the tonic tone.

6 The Perception of *Yanık* by the Listener

In order to specify the sound material as *yanık*, the listener makes associative links between the musical elements that are present in any given piece. In Ola Stockfelt's provocative overstatement, "the listener, and only the listener, is the composer of the music. Musical experience, in other words, belongs not just to the musical work, composer, or accredited expert but also, crucially, to the variegated audiences" (Finnegan 2003: 184). Imberty (1981) has proposed similar ideas in an attempt to explain the temporal structuring of a musical work by both the listener and the performer. The main principle of this proposal lies in the perception of qualitative changes, which is the basic principle of the segmentation of the musical information.

These changes accentuate the elements that confer directionality on the piece (Deliege and Melen 2002: 388). The musical expression of sad feelings in *yanık* sound may be perceived by listeners in a variety of ways. It is an aesthetic experience the meaning of which an individual can perceive through his or her own experience. That is to say, a song or a singer's voice either 'sets one on fire' or it does not. Thus, it must not be overlooked that preferences which depend on the perception of associative structure in music can be personal and idiosyncratic. In other words, the associations of a *yanık* song may differentiate for listeners who have different perceptual experiences. It can be thought of in perception like the idea of 'cue'. "A cue always contains rare but striking attributes that link to that which it cues in order that the latter may be recognized. A cue is a kind of conspicuous point that becomes fixed in memory by virtue of its relevance and by repetition. What might constitute a cue depends on the cultural and historical provenance of a given piece" (Deliege and Melen 2002: 390).

Yanık is perceived as musical features of syntagmatic and paradigmatic as a result of a selective and uniting process. Therefore, what a listener recognizes as *yanık* can sometimes be the voice quality of a singer such as the length, the calm clarity, and the sparkling voice, or sometimes be a melodic trope or a mode of song. For example, many Roms, who like to listen to and to perform *hicaz makam* and live in İzmir, Turkey, consider *hicaz makam* to be the most proper mode that makes them feel bitter-sweet. Needless to say, since "ethnomusicology treats the musical scale as an object of cognition theory, measurements can only be interpreted once they are integrated into their cultural context, where they regain their relevance" (Arom, Leothaud & Voisin 2002:10). Those who recognize *yanık* as the voice quality of a singer can determine from the voice whether it is *yanık* or not from the opening passage of a song, even the first long syllable of the song. I concluded that some listeners and musicians with whom I randomly interviewed about *yanık* in music were sensitive to the voice quality of a singer as an association of a burning quality in music, whereas others were sensitive to the melodic tropes or the melismatic passages in a song. These results can be connected to the approach of Cohen and Katz. According to their hypothesis, "cultural preferences, among other factors, determine the attitude to the time axis, which may be assessed via the type of complexity and the directionality that guide the musical events" (Cohen & Katz 2002: 31).

7 Weeping

Yanık music, stimulating extraordinary feelings in its listeners, may direct some of the audience to feelings of mental and physical ecstasy that can lead to peak experiences. One of the most important experiences is weeping. It is the embodiment of emotions. One can weep while listening to *yanık*. That is, *yanık* songs can move many Turkish people to tears. This is bound up with the expression of bitter-sweet emotions. Weeping is an emotional epicenter, resulting from affection. It is seen in Turkey as a domain of emotion and sensitivity which belongs to women. Since it is a signifier of powerlessness, the men in Turkey don't weep. They often blink their tears back. For the males, crying means not being able to have control over their feelings. Thus, they

can not let themselves go. As an outsider, Martin Stokes' observations are completely correct:

Every rite of passage faced by the young Turkish child emphasizes the correct and controlled response to pain and suffering. It is expected that young male children will weep at their circumcision ceremonies, although the ritual is accompanied by exhortations for them to behave like a man and suffer in silence. For males, weeping is acknowledged but can only take place in the solitude and private space. Public weeping amongst women is confined to particular occasions such as the departure of a guest, the point at which the bride leaves her parental home in marriage ceremonies, death, and funerals. (Stokes 1992: 147).

Emotions have been confined to women because of the powerful entrenchment of gender division in Turkey. As many researchers have pointed out, most societies consider emotions as things associated with women. In spite of the fact that this view considers emotions to be in the scope of the precultural domain, they are preeminently cultural. The emotions, and thus the affections generated by *yanık* songs are certainly not confined to women, because listening to the song which is perceived as *yanık*, males can also cry in public places. To sum up, the associative structures which exist in listeners' perceptual experiences manage their feelings, and cause both men and women to grieve and weep.

8 National Personality and *Yanık*

Bitter-sweet emotions are, of course, not peculiar to Turkish society. In many cultures the particular concept of sad feelings exists with local and historical nuances. *Yanık* songs have an important relationship with feelings such as sadness, sorrow, empathy, suffering and sociability. Thus, *yanık* makes no sense without an understanding of the Turkish perception. Like all such terms that make general national personality statements, Turkish national character is a vague term. Of course, I know that the analysis of any national culture must beware of imposing monolithic meanings on a society, and, what is accepted as national character may produce many knotty paradoxes. However, the scholars, in particular psychologists, who want to make an overall judgement on the national character, look for a privileged standpoint. The aim is to attempt to find an analytical perspective that would enable us to relate particular cases to national personality. According to this, the French emphasizes the thought whereas the Spanish put an emphasis on emotion. The key term in British culture is fair play. Similarly, it is said that Turks are emotional people. Although it is seen as a generalization, it is difficult to say that this argument is wrong. Thus it might be argued that the affection generated by *yanık* songs expresses essentially 'the oriental/Eastern aspect of the Turkish psyche'.

I don't want to create an impression that I have used the discourse of Easternness to my own advantage. Yet, it can be considered that this specific experience is directly associated with the East. Perhaps more than any other society the bitter-sweet feelings are peculiar to Eastern societies. Although it has a little part in European territories, Turkey is a country of the Near Eastern or Non-Arab Middle East. Accordingly,

Turks are Eastern and therefore the concept of bitter-sweet emotions is one of the aspects of being Eastern. Thus, *yanık* songs reflecting bitter-sweet emotions unsurprisingly appeal to Turkish people. The most important fact supporting this approach is that the term *yanık* is a metaphor used by Turkish people in order to evaluate music. That is, the term is an important part of the discursive consciousness of Turks in order to evaluate music.

The meanings people give to music are part of their motivations. *Yanık* music may not appeal to everyone. *Yanık* may intrigue the people who know it and move the feelings of those who find it beautiful. It should be considered that *yanık* is a discursive consciousness among Turkish musicians and listeners, because its meaning is in the discursive consciousness when one can describe it to someone else as *yanık*. Discursive consciousness includes the culturally acceptable rationalizations about goals and motivations that are involved in human actions, including music making (Keammer 1993: 14). The term *yanık* involves both the content of the discursive consciousness of Turkish people who find it bitter-sweet as emotional and their implicit values and knowledge that operate only at the practical level. The term *yanık* indicates the social construction of Turkish selfhood and the emotions which pertain to it. Thus, the music which is perceived as *yanık* resonates emotionally with a wide range of Turkish people whereas it does not with the other people. Let me give an example.

I presented an early version of this research at the 2005 IASPM meeting in Rome, Italy. I brought some valuable observations away from this conference, which included much useful information in order to develop my paper. The most important thing from my observations was the interest of the participants in the song I played to them. The people listened to the song, '*Yeşil kurbağalar*', an *uzun hava*, performed by Devrim Kaya, and were very interested in this Turkish folk song. I could tell by the expression on their faces that they loved it. Moreover, my colleagues, who were American, Italian, Uruguayan, Greek, British and Spanish, whom I met at the end of the session, told me that they had admired the song and the singer's voice. That is to say, some of my colleagues loved this song as a result of its aesthetic pleasure. However, this *uzun hava* perceived by those who listened to it as a good song and a nice voice did not cause them to grieve, let alone weep. However, for Turkish listeners, it was a *yanık* song which expresses pleasing and sorrowful emotions together. On April 2005, when Devrim Kaya performed this song in a folk music contest held by ATV, which is a main national commercial television broadcasting in Turkey, her performance managed audiences' feeling and caused both men, including the jury members who are very famous musicians and journalists such as Arif Sağ and Savaş Ay, and women, to grieve and weep. What I want to stress here is that it is based on the premise that musical materials which are perceived as *yanık* or something else are heard in terms of their cultural usage.

9 Conclusion

To get back to the point, as a discourse of emotion, the *yanık* has been evolved within its traditions, reflecting the properties of Turkish national personality. It cannot be considered simply as the sole cultural property of any social group or class, in Turkey. Thus, sweet-bitter feelings in *yanık* sounds unsurprisingly appeal to most Turkish people. It should be accepted that music which is perceived as *yanık* can stir up bitter-sweet feelings.

The meaning of *yanık* is shared by many people in the Turkish society. Thus, *yanık*, as a broadly shared musical meaning, serves to relate affect and emotion to the experiences of the Turkish society. As a result, the term *yanık* is a metaphorical expression of sweet-bitterness in music. In other words, it may be considered that *yanık* is recognized and is anticipated to be associated with bitter-sweet feelings. What is considered to be *yanık* is not the subject-matter of a song or its story, but the quality of voice, vocalization or vocal style associated with Turkish folk music and Turkish *arabesk*, and indeed all popular musical styles in Turkey.

As I have argued, Turkish listeners make associative links between musical elements that are present in any given piece in order to define music as *yanık*. At the same time, when Turkish listeners identify music as *yanık*, they make associations with similar or functionally equivalent elements or gestures in the wider repertoire of music with which they are familiar. It is obvious that the associative links which are associated with *yanık* songs lead beyond what is commonly regarded as the domain of music into a more general system of cultural reference.

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