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# ”Adapted to Fit In”: A Study of the Turkish TV Series, *Kuzey G’üney*

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## Résumé

### Biography

Aysegul Kesirli Unur was born in Izmir, Turkey in 1983 and studied advertising and film at Istanbul Bilgi University. She completed her MA degree at Istanbul Bilgi University, Department of Cultural Studies. Currently, she is a PhD candidate at Bahcesehir University, Cinema and Media Research and working as a research assistant at Dogus University, Department of Visual Communication Design. Her PhD thesis concentrates on TV police dramas in Turkey.

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### Abstract

When the celebrated Turkish TV series, *Kuzey G’üney* (Ay Yapim, 2011 – 2013) was launched and started to be broadcasted for the first time on a mainstream Turkish television channel, Kanal D, a rumour appeared that it was a spin-off of the American television miniseries, *Rich Man, Poor Man*, aired in 1976 on ABC. Although this rumour spread through Internet forums and everyday conversations, there was no official information that *Kuzey G’üney* was adapted from *Rich Man, Poor Man* but the similarities were hard to miss. For this reason, *Kuzey G’üney* which explains the story of two conflicting brothers whose lives were changed forever after Kuzey took the blame for a car accident that G’üney caused, was unofficially categorized as an unlicensed remake of the American miniseries although it followed a completely different path from *Rich Man, Poor Man* after the first season.

In his article on the Turkish *Star Trek* parody, *Turist ’Omer Uzay Yolunda*, Iain Robert Smith states that ”[r]ather than see this unlicensed remake as a derivative plagiarism of the earlier TV series, I position *Turist Omer Uzay Yolunda* within wider debates on the transnational flows of media and the overlapping, intersecting nature of cultural production.”[1] Following his footsteps, this paper will not approach *Kuzey G’üney* just as an unlicensed remake or an uncreative copy of *Rich Man, Poor Man* but analyze the series being aware of the influences of the political and cultural fluxes in Turkey, the past and present of the Turkish television industry as well as the dilemmas and tensions that have been inherited in the construction of Turkish national identity, in the series, that comes and goes between being ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’ at the same time.

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\*Intervenant

In this sense, this paper will discuss how the issues of textual appropriation, cultural borrowing and adaptation as process operates in the narration and production of *Kuzey G'üney* and concentrate on the cultural/industrial differences that came into play in the adaptation process of the characters of *Rich Man, Poor Man* in the Turkish context. By questioning the role of unlicensed/licensed remakes in the contemporary Turkish TV series industry, the paper will discuss how the characters in *Kuzey G'üney* were reshaped and transformed to fit in the limits of Turkish culture and values as well as how 'richness' and 'poorness', class conflicts and love affairs were represented differently in *Kuzey G'üney* to answer to the generic tastes, pleasures and sensitivities of the Turkish audience.

Smith, Iain Robert. "'Beam Me up, Omer': Transnational Media Flow and the Cultural Politics of the Turkish Star Trek Remake." in *Velvet Light Trap*, 61 (Spring), 2008. p. 4