

DISCUSSING TRANSNATIONAL FORMAT ADAPTATION IN TURKEY: A STUDY ON *KUZEY GÜNEY*

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ABSTRACT

When celebrated Turkish TV series, *Kuzey Güney* (Ay Yapım, 2011 – 2013) started to be broadcast on a mainstream Turkish television channel Kanal D, a rumour appeared that it was adapted from the American television miniseries, *Rich Man, Poor Man*, aired in 1976 on the ABC television channel.

Although there was no official information that *Kuzey Güney* was adapted from *Rich Man, Poor Man* the similarities were hard to miss.

This article questions how the process of transnational format adaptation works in Turkish television by analysing *Kuzey Güney* (Ay Yapım, 2011 – 2013) as a case study. After briefly explaining the Turkish television industry's encounter with the TV series format throughout its history, the article questions how foreign TV series were used as inspirational materials, ready to be adapted and produced domestically as a common practice. The article analyses *Kuzey Güney* by particularly focusing on the stylistic, intertextual and cultural dynamics that are activated in its creation.

Turkish TV series started their journey in 1975 with *Aşk-ı Memnu*, adapted from Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil's renowned novel and directed by the film author, Halit Refiğ. Before the impact of this celebrated TV series, the Turkish audience was already familiar with the TV series format through the imported productions that started to appear on television in 1972. Sevgi Can Yağcı Aksel (2011: 3) explains that Turkish audiences were mesmerized by the imported TV series which were available to them from the comfort of their homes. In Türkel Minibaş's words, quoted by Aksel, the common people did not care about anything, neither the petrol crises nor the Cyprus dispute, when Dr. Kimble from the popular TV series *The Fugitive* (1963-1967) came to Istanbul for a visit.

Although Turkish audiences were fascinated by the imported TV series, *Aşk-ı Memnu* made a great impact and it is still considered a Turkish television classic. Therefore, after the achievement of *Aşk-ı Memnu*, the state-run Turkish public television, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT)¹ took the initiative to continue producing Turkish TV series, mostly directed by the distinguished directors of Turkish cinema. Eylem Yanardağoğlu (2014: 54) underlines the fact that at the end of the 1970s, the television sector had been helping the declining cinema sector since it was television that had put the cinema industry in that tight position in the first place and "TRT's commissioning of TV series was part of a strategy."

As Yanardağoğlu explains (2014: 52), with the establishment of private TV channels in the 1990s, in order to meet the demand coming from the Turkish TV audiences, the production of domestic TV series continued. However, growing number of these series carried practices such as appropriation and adaptation which were commonly used techniques in the Yeşilçam² period of Turkish cinema to the Turkish television industry. Even though most of the TV series were created from 'original' scripts, producing a domestic TV series appropriating the basic narrative elements of popular foreign, mostly American, TV series without getting any permission became a tendency, especially at the end of the 1990s and in the beginning of the 2000s.

1 Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) is the state-run television channel which began its broadcasting in 1972. Until the appearance of private TV channels at the beginning of the 1990s in Turkey, TRT was the voice of the nation and had an absolute control over the television broadcasting in Turkey.

2 Yeşilçam which means green-pine in English refers to a historical period in Turkish cinema which begins in the 1950s and gradually disappeared at the end of 1970s. The name comes from a small street in Istanbul's Beyoğlu district where most of the film companies were located during that period. Therefore, Yeşilçam is also used to refer to the name of the Turkish film industry of this era.

This article questions how these processes worked in the Turkish television industry by analysing the celebrated Turkish TV series, *Kuzey Güney* (Ay Yapım, 2011 – 2013) as a case study. First of all, the article explains the appearance of the Turkish television industry in the early 1970s by particularly focusing on the high number of imported programmes on the TV schedule. After mentioning the changing Turkish television scene with the establishment of private TV channels in the 1990s, the article concentrates on how foreign television series started to be used as inspirational materials while producing domestic TV series. By approaching this process as a form of transnational format adaptation, the article questions the reasons behind applying this practice. Consequently, the article tries to understand how the adaptation process works by applying Albert Moran's tripartite scheme and analysing *Kuzey Güney*, a Turkish version of the American television classic *Rich Man, Poor Man* (Universal Television, 1976).

01 TELEVISION IN TURKEY AND TV SERIES FORMAT

Silvo Waisbord (2004: 359) says that "global television is likely poised to be a 'wall-to-wall format'." What Waisbord means by this account is that all around the world, television channels are full of the national versions of various kinds of programs which were created by different companies and exported to be domestically adapted and produced. Although today the Turkish television scene is not an exception to Waisbord's portrayal of global television, this scenery can be considered as a relatively new phenomenon.

After a period of test broadcast, the regular television broadcasting started in Turkey on the state-run TV channel TRT in 1972 in the capital Ankara. As Sevilay Çelenk (2005: 49-50) underlines, in those pioneering years, TRT's main intention was to educate; report on/for and inform the public rather than entertain. However, Ayşe Öncü (2000: 301) highlights that although in its early broadcasts, TRT's schedule was constituted of some domestic programmes that celebrated Turkish national values and folk culture to address those initial aims, more foreign programmes appeared on the television screen when TRT's broadcasting time increased.

As Öncü (Ibid.) emphasizes, Turkish television audiences met with American TV series and serials such as *Star Trek* and *Mission Impossible*, and BBC productions like *The World at War* and *Upstairs Downstairs* in the 1970s. "Thereafter, Turkish state television kept up with the global best-seller

market in action series, soaps as well as documentaries, albeit at the bargain basement level (with due apologies for the metaphor). By 1985, programmes of 'foreign' origin had reached 50 percent of broadcasting time."

However, as Öncü (2000: 302) points out "TRT maintained strict control over the soundtrack, anchoring all visual images – domestic or foreign- in correct and proper Turkish, as officially defined." In this way, the images of global commercial television appeared on Turkish television without threatening, in Öncü's terms, the 'authenticity' of Turkish values. In this sense, imported TV series on TRT were, in Albert Moran's (2009: 117) words, 'canned programmes' which were "devised, produced and broadcast in one territory, [...] shipped in cans or other containers for broadcast elsewhere." According to Moran (Ibid.), these kinds of programmes are already nationalized in the territory in which they were produced but "can be customized for home audiences up to a point by dubbing or subtitling." Correlatively, although 50 percent of the broadcasting time of TRT was constituted of foreign programmes all these foreign materials were dubbed by the actors from the National State Theatre who spoke the standardized Turkish.

Öncü (2000: 302-3) says "all screen characters conversed in the vocabulary, rhythms and narrative forms of 'correct and beautiful' Turkish, whether they be members of the Cosby family or cowboys from the Wild West." In this way, "National television spoke for the nation, and to the nation, in 'proper' Turkish, simultaneously dominant and privileged."

Although TRT was appointed as the only broadcasting institution by law, in 1990 the President of the Turkish Republic, Turgut Özal, declared that there was no law for broadcasting from overseas. During the following four years, the first private TV channel in Turkish history, Magic Box Star 1, and many other new TV channels started broadcasting from overseas without being under the control of any state regulations in Turkey. Çelenk (2005: 179) says this situation caused various legal and ethical complications until the legalisation of the private television channels in 1994. The establishment of private TV channels paved the way to represent what had not been previously represented on TRT such as different identities, dialects and accents as well as popular music videos of *arabesk* singers and programmes on celebrity culture as well as the adaptations of foreign game shows and new kinds of domestic TV series.

Öncü (2000: 314) explains that in the private television channels "televisual genres of global consumerism, selectively appropriated and redeployed to attract the widest possible Turkish audiences, have rendered a concert of cultural alterna-

tives recognizable and hence negotiable in the public arena." In the name of being different, both the public and private TV channels started to imitate global media channels. "This resemblance went all the way –down to small details like the way women presenters dressed or the way cameras zoomed in. The global media exercised a hegemonic power by being accepted as the norm."

Ayşe Öncü (2000: 296) defines the Turkish television 'flow' of that time as

An amalgam of forms, formats and genres, 'borrowed' from the television screens of Europe or the USA and 'translated' into local versions of game and quiz shows (with contestants in the studio audience or at home); sitcoms (with or without edited in laughter); talk shows (with or without 'active audiences') and music videos (with or without the possibility of calling in to vote for favourites) flow into one another, interspersed with karate films, Brazilian tele-novellas, cowboy movies and ads of premier soft drinks or detergents in world markets.

Alternatively, Eylem Yanardağoğlu (2014: 52) says after the establishment of private television channels, the audiences' appetite for local dramas kept growing. She states that "at the end of the 1990s there were around forty primetime serials per week on television. TV dramas became the major output of commercial television in this period, ranging from seasonal series with thirteen or twenty-six episodes to longer ones that have been on air for at least five seasons."

With the growing demand coming from the TV audiences and the timeslots to fill, the appropriation practices put into action and in a short period the 'Turkified'³ versions of American TV series such as *Dharma and Greg* (1997–2002), *Married with Children* (1987–1997), *The White Shadow* (1978–1981), *The Jeffersons* (1975–1985), *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch* (1996–2003) *Dawson's Creek* (1998–2003), *Bewitched* (1964–1972) and *Who's the Boss?* (1984–1992) as well as films like *She's Out of Control* (1989) appeared on television.

These TV series neither imitated their source materials scene-to-scene nor simply adopted the generic conventions.

3 By getting his inspiration from the German expression *getürkt*, meaning Turkified in English, in his book entitled as *Cinema in Turkey*, Savaş Arslan uses the term 'Turkified' in order to explain how Turkish directors copied popular foreign, mostly Hollywood films, in order to meet the extensive demands coming from the public and produce films in high quantity during the Yeşilçam era of Turkish cinema between the 1950s and 1970s.

During the adaptation process, only the distinctive features of the original TV series such as the characters, their personal conflicts and the major events are taken as the base. Although in the beginning, the resemblances between the adapted and the adapting texts cannot be missed, after a certain amount of time, the episodes of the Turkish versions tend to stick to the 'original' scenarios loosely since they create their own plotlines using the limited material that they took.

In this sense, it can be claimed that TV series which were taken as the source materials are treated like TV formats that are ready to be adapted and produced domestically. Bodycombe, quoted by Albert Moran (2005: 296), describes format as a product which "is a recipe for re-producing a successful television program, in another territory, as a local program. The recipe comes with all the necessary ingredients and is offered as a product along with a consultant who can be thought of as an expert chef." In the process of the 'Turkification' of the foreign TV series, there is usually no consultant that controls and leads the team that adapts the format since most of the time these series are not licensed adaptations. Although this situation has been changing in recent years and the number of the licensed TV adaptations has been increasing, unlicensed adaptation was a common practice in the past.

However, instead of dwelling on copyright and licensing issues, this article will get its inspiration from Iain Robert Smith (2008: 4) who in his article on the Turkish *Star Trek* parody, *Turist Ömer Uzay Yolunda* (Hulki Saner, 1973), states that "[r]ather than see this unlicensed remake as a derivative plagiarism of the earlier TV series, I position *Turist Ömer Uzay Yolunda* within wider debates on the transnational flows of media and the overlapping, intersecting nature of cultural production." Following his argument, this article's case study *Kuzey Güney* will be approached in a similar way.

02 TRANSNATIONAL FORMAT ADAPTATION

Albert Moran (2005: 297) states that adapting the successful overseas programs meant "accessing a template that had already withstood two rounds of R&D [research and development], first to survive development and trialing before broadcasting executives and, secondly, to survive further testing before viewing audiences." Silvio Waisbord (2004: 361-5) relates the popularity of television formats to the "increased demand generated by the explosion in the number of television hours"

and states that for television producers, format adaptation is a cost saving strategy as well as an ultimate tactic to minimize the risk of launching a new TV programme.

The points that were made by Waisbord concerning the popularity of television formats may also be illuminating to understand the reasons behind the strategy to create 'Turkified' versions of the foreign TV series. However, it should be noted that the adapted TV series generally consist of the programmes that were previously broadcasted in the canned formats on Turkish televisions. In this sense, while their success in their home countries guarantee a certain amount of ratings for format adaptation, their already proven achievements on Turkish television in the canned formats also promise another safety cushion for the television producers.

Eventually, through the adaptation of the canned programmes, the already familiar characters and storylines were reintroduced to the Turkish audiences in later years in the recognizable national settings and situations which were attuned to the national traditions and customs. However, this 'Turkified' form of format adaptation still carries a lot of risks and frequently, what captures the audience's interest is not the strongest or most resilient but the most 'fitting' product in reference to Sarah Cardwell's (2002: 28) words.

03 KUZEY GÜNEY AND THE RESURRECTION OF CAR NARRATIVES

The Turkish TV series, *Kuzey Güney* (Ay Yapım, 2011 – 2013), a Turkified version of the popular US TV series *Rich Man, Poor Man* (Universal Television, 1976), was among the most 'fitting' products since it achieved to survive in the extremely competitive environment of the contemporary Turkish television scene for two seasons.

Kuzey Güney was produced by the media company Ay Yapım which previously produced hit Turkish TV series such as *Yaprak Dökümü* (2006-2010), *Aşk-ı Memnu* (2008-2010) and *Fatmağül'ün Suçu Ne?* (2010-2012). The name of the production company already created a certain amount of expectation from the Turkish audiences and raised *Kuzey Güney's* popularity when it was launched as the next big TV production of Ay Yapım.

Kuzey Güney also marked the comeback of the adored star of *Aşk-ı Memnu*, Kivanç Tatlıtuğ, in much better physical shape. In addition, the magazine pages of the newspapers were full of stories telling that Kivanç Tatlıtuğ, not an actor in origin but a fashion model who won the Best Model of Turkey and

Best Model of the World competitions in 2002 and who was criticized for his poor acting in *Aşk-ı Memnu*, had taken acting classes for his role in *Kuzey Güney*. Therefore, the TV series created a big impact on the Turkish television scene even before it started to be broadcasted and became one of the most popular Turkish TV series of 2011.

However, even before the broadcast of the first episode of the series a rumour had appeared that *Kuzey Güney* was an adaptation of the American television miniseries, *Rich Man, Poor Man*. Although this rumour had spread through Internet forums and everyday conversations, there was no official information that *Kuzey Güney* was adapted from *Rich Man, Poor Man* but the similarities were hard to miss, especially for the older generations.

Rich Man, Poor Man, adapted from Irwin Shaw's novel and aired in 1976 on the American ABC television channel was shown on TRT the following year. During the time it was shown, it was dubbed by the artists from the National State Theatre (1977: 10) and was very well received. In fact, when the main character, Tom Jordache died on the last episode of the first season, the whole country, particularly its celebrities, grieved over the timeless death of the young man according to a major newspaper article with the headline "All the celebrities that we interviewed said the same thing: the charming young man's death was a pity." (<http://www.turknostalji.com/resimler/2/tom-oldugu-gun-tum-turkiye-gozyasi-doktu-213.jpg>)

It cannot be said that *Rich Man, Poor Man* left an equally memorable trace on people's minds as *Charlie's Angels* (1976–1981) and *Little House on the Prairie* (1974–1983) did which were among the other popular imported TV series that were broadcasted at that time. However, the faint memory of *Rich Man, Poor Man* was revitalized when the Turkish TV series *Kuzey Güney* started to be shown on a mainstream, private Turkish television channel, Kanal D.

Rich Man, Poor Man tells the story of two contrasting brothers, Rudy (Peter Strauss) and Tom Jordache (Nick Nolte) as well as their common love interest, Julie (Susan Blakely), whose lives go in very different directions after high school. *Kuzey Güney's* plot is based on the same triangle with some specific modifications which direct the series to follow a very different path after the first season. However, the resemblance between the characters of the series, especially in the early episodes, is noticeable.

The resemblances start with the title of the shows. The dichotomy between the brothers which was expressed in the title of the U.S. version as rich man/poor man is reflected in the actual names of the brothers in the Turkish series as

Kuzey (Kıvanç Tatlıtuğ), meaning the North and Güney (Buğra Gülsoy), meaning the South. Additionally, whereas some of the Turkish characters' names verbally mimic the names of the characters in the U.S. version others were designed to physically resemble the characters in *Rich Man, Poor Man* by means of their costumes, make-up or character traits.

Moreover, Tom's 'legal' boxing career and Kuzey's 'illegal' underground fighting career can be considered among the resemblances between the series. However, these kinds of similarities between the two series on much smaller scales are countless. Therefore, it is more constructive to focus on the distinctions between the series since these differences offer a variety of generous materials to discuss how the adaptation process works.

In order to understand these changes which were implemented in the adaptation process, Albert Moran's tripartite scheme offers a constructive path to follow. Moran (2009: 120) who takes his inspiration from Heylen speaks of "a tripartite scheme for understanding levels of activity in relation to a literary or written work that must be taken into account in translation." Moran (Ibid.) explains that this scheme is constituted of linguistic codes, intertextual codes and cultural codes. For him, although television does not work with linguistic codes it does work with form and style which include elements "to give the format program a recognizable 'look' as far as domestic audiences are concerned."

For Moran (Ibid.), the intertextual codes "appear to connect with specific bodies of knowledge held by particular communities, including both local production teams and segments of home audience." These codes include both the organizational norms that are the routines and practices which may be traditional to a local television industry and other kinds of intertextual knowledge that are intertwined with national historical facts or significances.

The cultural codes which Moran (2009: 121) refers to as the third level of adaptation are the "combination of factors that make for communal and national differences. Broadly, these include social matters of language, ethnicity, history, religion, geography and culture." Besides, as Moran (Ibid.) emphasizes, gender relations may also play an important role in a successful domestication of a TV format. While analyzing *Kuzey Güney* in the following section, this scheme will be taken into consideration and the analysis will be constructed accordingly.

The complexity of defining the form and style of a Turkish TV series like *Kuzey Güney* and relating this with the stylistic elements of a specific television genre should be addressed first. Whereas most of the studies such as Yanardağoğlu and

Karam's et al. (2013) and Yörük's (2013) call such programs Turkish soap operas, some studies such as Batı's (2011) prefer to call them Turkish television melodramas. Recently, Arzu Öztürkmen, referred to by Marilungo (2014), commented on this categorical complexity and "underlined the need to agree upon a genre definition and distinguish the *dizi* (literally 'serial, row, sequence' in Turkish) from other similar products such as soap-opera, TV series or telenovela, given some narrative peculiarities of the product." According to Öztürkmen, the length of the episodes and the musical interventions that are used to comment on the narrative events reflect a significant Turkish style.

Nevertheless, as Robert C. Allen (1989: 45) states

Each country's experience with the range of text to which the term 'soap opera' has been applied is different. It is a bit like ornithologists, taxidermists, and bird watchers from a dozen different countries all talking about birds, but in one country there are only eagles; in another pigeons and chickens but no eagles; in another macaws and pigeons but no eagles or chickens; and so on.

In other words, the industrial, critical and viewer communities which Allen describes as the three different types of interpretive communities are distinctive for each national culture. Since 'soap opera' is perceived by Allen (Ibid.) as a transnational and transcultural phenomenon its articulation also shifts from one location to another.

Therefore, in reference to Charlotte Brunson, Eylem Yanardağoğlu and İmad N. Karam et al. (2013: 562) point out that "Turkish TV series show similarities with the 'soap opera' format, which is not completely an American genre." Yanardağoğlu and Karam explain that in the non-Western countries such as Egypt, Brazil, or India, the soap opera format is perceived as a part of the melodrama tradition as it targets female audiences and revolves around the conflicts between poor and pure and rich, urban and unjust.

In this sense, it is practical to define *Kuzey Güney* as a Turkish soap opera in order to put it in a wider category. However, inspired by Öztürkmen's suggestion to agree on a generic category for defining Turkish TV series, it should also be noted that whether they adopt the soap opera, police procedural or hospital drama format there might be some recurring narrative and stylistic elements which are intrinsic to the Turkish TV series and these elements might be closely related to the norms of the Turkish television industry.

Like any other weekly, prime-time Turkish TV series, *Kuzey Güney*'s production team is subjected to the routines and practices of the Turkish television industry which might be different from those experienced by the production team behind *Rich Man, Poor Man* not –only because of the national organizational distinctions but also because *Kuzey Güney* belongs to the television industry of a different era that is much more competitive. The competition in the Turkish television industry is really high and this situation also influences the organizational practices, the working conditions, and the production of the TV series closely.

As a typical Turkish TV series, every episode of *Kuzey Güney* lasts almost 90 minutes. The total broadcasting time of one episode increases even more with the commercial breaks. During one season approximately 40 episodes are broadcasted if the TV series is not cancelled after a few episodes because of low ratings.

The long duration of the Turkish TV series and the television season do not only require working at high-speed but also cause a lot of problems concerning the exploitation of labour power. The extremely long working hours that arise from the difficulty of writing, shooting, and editing almost a full-length film every week and the constant threat of unemployment because of the highly competitive television environment that puts every Turkish TV series under the risk of immediate cancellation, make the organizational norms much more difficult and complex.

These organizational norms also influence the form and style of the Turkish TV series which tend to stretch the main events in one episode in order to fill the 90-minute-long duration by adopting tactics such as using long takes, extremely long sequences, shaky camera techniques and long musical sequences. For instance, although *Kuzey Güney* appropriates the characters and the main story of *Rich Man, Poor Man*, since *Rich Man, Poor Man* only consisted of 33 episodes there was not enough material to use in *Kuzey Güney* which was broadcasted for 80 episodes.

For that reason, in *Kuzey Güney*, the adapted narrative events were stretched and extended with the support of long scenes, extra sub-plots or long dialogues. As a result, after the first season, although the similarities between the two series continued imperceptibly, it can be claimed that *Kuzey Güney* radically changed its path with the addition of sub stories, new characters and conflicts. Therefore, eventually, *Kuzey Güney* became a highly different TV series from *Rich Man, Poor Man* not only based on its form and style but also based on its narrative.

However, the industrial and organizational norms are not the only factors that contribute to the formation of *Kuzey Güney* since the intertextual and cultural codes play much more significant roles in telling the story of two opposing brothers differently than in *Rich Man, Poor Man*.

The intertextual and cultural codes are almost instinctively activated in *Kuzey Güney* from the beginning. For instance, in both series, in the first episodes, a serious fight takes place between the father and the rebellious brother (Tom in *Rich Man, Poor Man* and Kuzey in *Kuzey Güney*) which even gets physical at the end. However, while what happens after the fight is differently narrated in each series, the reasons that lead the characters to get into a fight in the first place are also not the same.

In *Rich Man, Poor Man* the fight happens because Tom sets fire to the house of a very rich man, Teddy Boylan, after he finds out that Julie, who is broken up with Rudy at the time, is having an affair with Boylan. In the day following the fire, two gentlemen come to the bakery and inform the father about Tom's behaviour as well as the possible financial consequences of his act if they ever find out who set the fire. When the gentlemen leave the shop the father just automatically punches Tom who punches him back almost reactively. This is the fundamental reason of Tom's departure from his home town.

However, in *Kuzey Güney* the same fight happens after Kuzey steals money from his father to buy a gift for Cemre, a dress she liked but cannot afford, and goes to her house to give her the gift and ask her out but finds out instead that his brother Güney has been going out with Cemre without his knowledge. Kuzey, furious about the situation, goes home and is questioned by his father about the money, and although beaten and insulted by him, at first he does not hit back. Therefore, even though Tom immediately punches his father back after he is beaten, Kuzey hits him back only because his father slaps his mother who tries to break up the fight.

This difference between the two series can be considered a result of the cultural representation of masculinity, the respected position of the father and the sacred role of the mother in the Turkish patriarchal family. In this sense, although the events that have taken place in the narratives are similar in general terms, they are narrated in consistence with cultural dynamics and intuitions.

Furthermore, the same cultural codes are activated at some other particular moments as if the producers were trying to find the contemporary, Turkish equivalents of the incidents or issues that were included in *Rich Man, Poor Man*'s narrative. For instance, in *Rich Man, Poor Man* which begins

at the end of World War II, when Tom gets into a fight with a war hero, he does not hesitate to punch him and states that he does care more about living forever than dying in the war. However, in *Kuzey Güney*, which takes place in the contemporary world, Kuzey is really ashamed of the fact that he is disqualified from compulsory military service because of an almost fatal injury he got in prison. It always makes him feel like less of a man which is an important distinction that distinguishes Kuzey from Tom.

Moreover, although Kuzey of *Kuzey Güney* and Tom of *Rich Man, Poor Man* are similar in nature and in their approach to life, there are always some obstacles that set Kuzey back and these obstacles do not always come from outside but also arise from Kuzey's own cultural performance of masculinity, brotherhood, and sexuality, from the limits and borders that he creates himself. Whereas Tom of *Rich Man, Poor Man* is a much more free spirited, self-actualized man who becomes successful in life and is happy with a little money and a simple life without extravagance, Kuzey is required to perform a specific form of masculinity and national identity which puts pressure on him to repress his feelings, to control his desires; to avoid over-enjoyment and preserve his own cultural and moral values and principals at all cost.

However, one of the most significant moves in *Kuzey Güney* is replacing the major incident, the fire on Teddy Boylan's house, with a car accident in the Turkish version. The car accident in *Kuzey Güney* happens after Kuzey's fight with his father. Following the fight, Kuzey gets out of the house, gets drunk with his best friend Ali out of misery of losing Cemre to Güney. After a short while, Güney comes to the tavern to lecture Kuzey about the fight. But things between the brothers get tenser. When they leave the tavern, Kuzey, blind drunk, tries to drive. However, after a little rough-and-tumble Güney gets in the driver's seat. While driving and grumbling at the same time, Güney who would take the university entrance exam the next morning, gets furious with Kuzey. Distracted and occupied with the quarrel, Güney hits a man. Eventually, the young man, the victim of the car accident, dies at the crime scene. Kuzey, who takes the blame for the accident, feeling guilty and believing that if Güney takes the university exam he would have a bright future, is sent to prison.

At the end of the car accident sequence, while the small cargo van type car stands on the empty road with its doors open, and the brothers are convulsed on the road with shock and pain, Kuzey flashes out and the audiences find him drinking *rakı* with his best friend Ali in a boat talking about how a little incident can result in causing a life time of misery.

In *Kuzey Güney*, time stops with the car accident and even though others' lives develop and change, for Kuzey a person, a memory, an old physical/emotional wound or a simple obstacle always stop him from moving on. Therefore, whereas in *Rich Man, Poor Man* life flows on in a linear, continuous time span despite what happens, in *Kuzey Güney*, the past always interrupts and suspends the present which is embodied in the frequency of the flashbacks.

The car motif plays a crucial role in Kuzey's stuck position. Different from *Rich Man, Poor Man*, after the accident, the opposition of the brothers is gradually built on the possession of a car. For instance, after Kuzey gets out of prison, one of the first struggles he has to deal with is the fact that he cannot receive a driver's licence for two years since he is a convicted criminal of a fatal car accident. However, Güney, the actual perpetrator of the accident, who starts to work in Sinaner Holding after graduating from the university, receives a company car immediately. It can be claimed that this contradictory status of the brothers, Güney's possession and Kuzey's dispossession of a car, not only raises questions concerning class conflict, the idea of Westernization and the formation of Turkish national identity but on an intertextual level it also revokes a well-known theme in the history of the Turkish novel and cinema that is the car narrative.

Jale Parla (2003: 535-536) says in the history of the Turkish novel, the car played an inspirational role. The car narratives, Parla explains,

which begin with the seemingly innocent acquisition of cars, grow into enigmatic narratives of possession and dispossession, empowerment and loss of power, function and dysfunction, maturation and infantilism, narcissism and fetishism, fragmentation and self-destruction, not to mention a whole century of estrangement and a feeling of inferiority inspired by the contact with the West.

Jale Parla (2003: 536-7) explains that the car novels which she describes as a subgenre of the Turkish novel, begins with Rezaizade Mahmut Ekrem's novel, *Araba Sevdası*, (The Carriage Affair, 1898). In the novel, one day in his daily excursions in Çamlıca, the main character, Bihruz Bey, "whose one fad in life is a carriage that he flaunts as he rides dressed in the most elegant and fashionable manner—without regard to the weather" sees a beautiful young woman riding in another carriage and thinks that such beauty in an elegant carriage like that should only be a cultivated, Westernized lady from

a respected family. Bihruz falls in love with this lady who is actually one of the most famous courtesans at the time, riding in a rented carriage and his obsession with the woman is combined with his obsession with the carriage.

In a similar way, Güney, an ambitious, cunning young man who desires to live like rich people and searches his way to hit the goldmine suffers from what Parla names as *Bihruz* syndrome, which becomes especially apparent in his relationship with Banu. As it was represented in a scene in the second episode which designates the beginning of the love affair between Güney and Banu, the young woman's sexual attractiveness gets mixed up with the fetishistic appeal of her sports car and Güney gets carried away with this complex sensation that he feels for Banu as well as the prosperity that is reflected by her car.

Güney's embodiment of his 'imagined' social status and his desertion of his own cultural roots are successfully expressed in a scene in the sixteenth episode when he slowly passes by Cemre without offering her a lift on his way to the Sinaner Holding. As expected, Güney is punished by Kuzey and Ali who secretly steal the tires of his car and leave him in front of the house without a lift the next morning which can be considered as a direct reference to the classical Turkish film that focuses on a 'car narrative', *Çiçek Abbas*⁴ (Sinan Çetin, 1982). However, whereas in the film, the tyrant steals the victim Abbas' tires which he bought by getting money from a loan shark, in *Kuzey Güney*, the situation is reversed in a way to stress that the victim finally gets his revenge from the tyrant.

Güney's getting carried away with the promises of a love affair with Banu can be considered as the fundamental distinction between Güney of *Kuzey Güney* and Rudy of *Rich Man, Poor Man*. Whereas Güney falls into the 'illusory' world of Banu and prefers to be with her even though he does not actually love her, Rudy, a man of principles, rejects Virginia's obsessive love and struggles to be successful through hard work and determination instead of leaning onto her money and social status. In this way, Rudy leaves a much more 'positive' impression on the audiences whereas Güney gradually becomes an antagonistic figure in *Kuzey Güney* which says a lot about the cultural representation of the characters who

4 *Çiçek Abbas* is among the classics of Turkish cinema. The film revolves around the rivalry between two minibus drivers Abbas and *şakir* who are in love with the same woman, Nazlı. Abbas, kind and bighearted and former assistant of *şakir* who is mean, selfish and a dangler buys a minibus for himself by getting money from a loan shark and gets together with Nazlı. Out of jealousy, one night, *şakir* steals the tires and the engine of Abbas' minibus. Abbas who does not have the money to buy the missing parts gets in a bind and the loan shark confiscates his minibus.

desert their own social status and forget about their 'roots' in Turkey.

Kuzey's relationship with the car is much more complicated than Güney's. The obstacles preventing him to get a driver's licence make finding a decent job harder for him. Although he lives, speaks, and acts like a common man, Kuzey does not completely embrace this social status either. This in-between position of Kuzey becomes apparent in the sixth episode in which he is accidentally mistaken for a valet and has the chance to drive a very expensive car.

The joy that he experiences in the car indicates that Kuzey also secretly wants to have a portion of the prosperity that Güney desires but his joy cannot be fully lived when he is pulled over by the police for high speeding. Kuzey escapes from getting arrested by telling a story about a pregnant wife waiting for him at home. However, after this sequence, every time Kuzey actually drives a car which he borrows from his father or a friend, the audiences are filled with the feeling of suspense, fearing the consequences if he gets caught by the police while driving a car without a driver's licence as the perpetrator of a fatal car accident. This ambivalent, childish fear that is embodied in Kuzey's relation with the car motif follows him in almost every step he takes. He is surrounded by hesitant enjoyments, half lived, interrupted pleasures and the fear of losing oneself in the foreign other.

With all those qualifications, Kuzey, as the hero of the story, stands in the ideal position against Westernization. He does not completely get carried away with the values and lifestyle of the West but also does not turn his back to the prosperity that Westernization offers. However, Güney, the *Bihruz*-like snob, who is additionally encouraged and manipulated by his mother to fall for the 'artificial' world, is programmed to self destruction. Therefore, while Kuzey deserves everything good in life Güney is destined to lose everything, even punished for turning his back on his roots.

However, it can be said that this kind of extreme polarization of the good and the evil is a common characteristic of the melodramatic modality of the Turkish TV series which guarantees the 'goodness' of the protagonists and the 'evilness' of the antagonists. The antagonism in the Turkish TV series usually has to do something with the excessive adoption of Western values and lifestyles that are frequently inscribed to the rich classes. While commenting on *The Carriage Affair*, Nurdan Gürbilek (2003: 608) points out that

Snobbism is defined as something excessive. The snob is not someone who imitates, but someone

who imitates excessively, not someone who borrows, but someone who borrows beyond measure, not someone who desires the other's desire, but someone who exaggerates that desire. Thus the critique of snobbism is mostly the critique of excessiveness. There is always someone out there more excessive, more of a caricature than our own true self. The existence of the snob is the guarantee for our feeling genuine ourselves.

As pointed out by Dağtaş (2008) the lifestyle of the rich is regularly represented in excess in the Turkish TV series and *Kuzey Güney* is not an exception in this sense. The lifestyle of the wealthy Sinaner family is surrounded by the specific representations of excessiveness that is expressed through women wearing extremely chic clothes, high heels and make up all the time, hovering servants, extravagantly decorated mansions right along the Bosphorus, top model cars and an arrogance that comes with looking down on the provincial, finding it vulgar. However, this representation of the rich classes easily turns into a caricature or a bad example of what happens when people turn their backs on their cultural roots and adopt the Western ways beyond measure: a demonstration of the idea that no prosperity comes out of money without keeping your 'genuine' self in there somewhere.

Additionally, in reference to Nurdan Gürbilek's ideas about the definition of snobbism as something excessive, it can be said that this extravagant representation of the Sinaner's way of life as well as Güney's aspirations and efforts to become one of them guarantee Kuzey's in-between position and his own way of 'genuineness' in the series which is always under a certain kind of protection. Kuzey is always depicted having a distance from the excessive lifestyles of the Sinaner family as well as Güney's self-delusive involvement in this extravagance. At this point, the car motif becomes useful again to explain how Kuzey's contrary position against this over-Westernized life is protected while partially involving him in it from a safe distance.

The existence of the taxi driver Yunus who functions like a private driver for Kuzey and does not have a correspondent in the narrative of *Rich Man, Poor Man* is one of the significant elements that keeps Kuzey's distance to what the Sinaner family and Güney represent in the series. When Kuzey needs to be transported from one place to another or when one of his extended family members needs a car, he calls Yunus who is ready to help immediately. In this sense, although Kuzey does not possess a car and also 'legally' cannot drive a car, he can be

a part of the prosperity that the car motif symbolically represents in the narrative through a mediator like Yunus without being exposed to the 'illusive' Westernized world too much.

However, Yunus' caricature-like representation, as an 'authentic', provincial Turkish man with his 'sympathetic' North Sea region accent as well as his naive, hospitable and ready to help attitude also indicates that 'authenticity' is something that does not feel that genuine itself. Yunus is represented in the series in a way that supports and materializes Nurdan Gürbilek's (2003: 603) point when she says "The ideal will always look like a caricature of itself, something *alafanga* in the local scene, but the local scene itself is already reduced to a caricature of itself, something *alaturka* before the foreign ideal."

Therefore, it can be said that at the end, Kuzey, who has gradually been placed somewhere in the middle between Yunus, the 'authentic' provincial, and Güney, the Bihruz-like snob, is assumed to be standing in the most 'fitting' position that represents the fact that neither of those positions can exist without each other because they are interconnected. Kuzey as the key figure who is constantly reinvented and re-defined by others is also the only one who can travel between different positions without losing his 'genuine' self.

This is why in the very last scene of the series, where Kuzey and Cemre are finally united as well as get rich when Kuzey's 'bakery' business turns into a success, they are seen in a classical convertible car surrounded by a fairy tale-like aura. The car which was sent to Kuzey's house by his boss/partner will carry Kuzey and Cemre to the airport since they are about to move to the Netherlands from where Kuzey will manage his business that has been launched to the foreign lands.

The fairy tale-like atmosphere that is supported by the drop head car, the parkway surrounded by trees, the music, the lighting, the camera which slowly moves away from the couple that seal their happiness with a prosaic kiss indicate that both Kuzey and Cemre are drawn into the enjoyment of the 'illusive' world that the West promises. However, since they know the dangers of over-Westernization, losing one's own cultural and moral values in this 'foreign' other, it is acknowledged that they will be okay and finally be allowed to get pleasure from this sweet life and prosperity since their happiness is guaranteed by Güney's image in the prison, serving time for getting carried away with his desires and aspirations which appears in the final scene of the series. As a result, whereas Tom in *Rich Man, Poor Man* is defeated by his archenemy Falconetti and dies at the end of the first season, moving the Turkish audiences into tears, Kuzey lives happily

ever after in *Kuzey Güney* by celebrating his position as the survival of the 'fittest' in the Turkish context.

04 CONCLUSION

This article suggests that although appropriating the basic features of some popular foreign TV series or films while creating a domestic TV series was among the common practices of the Turkish television industry, the stylistic, intertextual and cultural dynamics prevented this process from turning into a scene-to-scene imitation. In order to understand the steps that were taken in this practice the article uses *Kuzey Güney* as a case study.

Apart from approaching the issue by relating the discussion with the significant moments in Turkish television history, the article uses Albert Moran's tripartite scheme for analyzing the influence of the organizational and industrial routines as well as the cultural and intertextual codes on *Kuzey Güney's* narrative. As a result of this analysis, the article remarks on the major influence of the car narratives, a familiar theme in Turkish literature and cinema, on surrounding the characters with national and cultural conflicts, anxieties and tensions while creating the Turkish version of *Rich Man, Poor Man's* story.

Albert Moran (2009: 122-3) states that "adapt, 'tailor', and 'customized' are deliberately neutral terms as far as their larger cultural implications are concerned." He underlines the fact that although home audiences are mixed, heterogeneous and diverse in their tastes and interests, when a TV format is customized the main goal is to reach as many people as possible and this can be achieved through attempting to talk to a national audience. Therefore, Moran suggests that "the advent of TV formats as a central element in the new television landscape appears to signal not the disappearance of the national in favour of the global and the local but its emphatic endurance or even reappearance."

Correlatively, it can be said that the stylistic, cultural, and intertextual codes that are activated in *Kuzey Güney* all refer back to the 'national' in their most banal forms. As Billig, quoted by Moran (Ibid.) says "banally, they address 'us' as a national first person plural; and they situate 'us' in the homeland within a world of nations. Nationhood is the context which must be assumed to understand so many banal utterances." Through these banal national utterances and cultural proximities, *Kuzey Güney* becomes a familiar, domestic product just like Kuzey as a television character becomes 'one of us'. However, in order to extend and build upon the points that are made in

this article, conducting an audience research might be stimulating to understand how these codes and utterances are decoded by the audiences from different ethnic backgrounds, professions, class, and gender positions.

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