IMAGINING KURDISTAN

IDENTITY, CULTURE AND SOCIETY

ÖZLEM BELÇIM GALIP

I.B.TAURIS

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To the women in my life: Xezal, Nalan and Zilan

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INTRODUCTION

The Kurds, who belong to the world's largest nation deprived of its own state, live in the territories of the states of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. Following the 1991 Gulf War, the Kurdish question in the four regions became a particularly crucial issue within the Middle East and in international politics more broadly. Hence, issues around Kurdish nationalism and political problems have received considerably more attention than matters of culture, including literature. However, though studies on Kurdish literature have remained relatively peripheral, research (undertaken mainly in Europe and the United States) on their literature from all Kurdish regions and in both Sorani and Kurmanji dialects,[1] has increased considerably in recent years.[2] This book explores the way Kurds have experienced their 'identity' and 'home-land' through tracing themes of displacement and loss for both individual and collective history,[3] analysing the representation of 'home-land' and how the search for identity of fictional Kurdish characters is embedded in the reconfiguration of Kurdistan as the national and ancestral 'homeland'.[4]

Linguistic diversity and the lack of political and national unity have not only shaped the fragmented character of Kurdish novelistic discourse, but have also forced the displacement and voluntary migration westwards of many Kurds in search of freedom. While some Kurdish intellectuals have, because of political conflicts, chosen the path of exile in various Western countries and have had the

opportunity to publish their novels in their native dialects (Sorani and Kurmanji), others, despite political conflicts, have not left their homeland; nevertheless those who remained have from time to time been obliged, or have sometimes preferred, to write in the official languages of the state, such as Persian, Arabic, or Turkish.[5] In this context, a striking question arises: How is Kurdish identity and the idea of 'home-land',[6] both as a symbol and as territorial space, constructed in Kurdish novelistic discourse in both Turkish Kurdistan and diaspora?

Homeland and Identity

This book examines what 'home-land' and 'identity' mean both for the narrative of 'being at home', and for the narrative of 'leaving home'. In this context, one main question is posed: What are the differences and similarities in the perception of 'homeland' and 'identity' in Turkish Kurdistan and diaspora? Applying a conceptual framework based on 'home', 'homeland', 'place', 'diaspora', and 'identity', I investigate the geographical sense of Kurdistan, whether 'symbolic' or 'factual', in a selection of novels from Turkish Kurdistan and its diaspora. In this respect, I seek answers to two further questions: How is 'Kurdish territory' drawn? And what kind of meanings and values are attributed to Kurdistan?

In examining whether the Kurdish novel represents Kurdishness as a national entity connected to a particular region and community, I also discuss the textual representation of Kurdistan, and the novelists' intentions in the way it is represented. Through comparative analysis, valuable insights can be obtained for understanding the geographical sense of Kurdistan. The differences or similarities that exist between novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan and its diaspora demonstrate how statelessness and fragmentation affect the characters, society, themes, and world of the novels chosen.[7] This is crucial, especially in the context of exploring the achievements of Kurdish narrative discourse in emphasising the reality and continuing damage of the statelessness that has been inflicted upon the Kurds in Turkish Kurdistan and in the diaspora.

Some secondary questions are also considered: for instance, acknowledging that the Kurds are a stateless nation and therefore fragmented, to what extent and in what way have Kurdish characters in the novels been influenced by this fragmentation and statelessness? And if fragmentation and statelessness have had a significant impact on the Kurds, has this influenced literary identities in different ways in Turkish Kurdistan, on the one hand, and diaspora, on the other?

Beyond Analysis of the Text

In this book, a 'Kurdish novel' is a Kurdish-language work written in any dialect of Kurdish.[8] This also relates to the discussions on Kurdish national identity, in which the Kurdish language is regarded as one of the markers of Kurdish identity (Vali 2003: 100, McDowall 2004: 9). There is an opposing view concerning the various distinct dialects, to the effect that Kurds do not think of themselves as a group primarily along linguistic lines (Özoglu 2004: 17), since there are certain other cultural sentiments. Most importantly, the majority of the novelists examined in this book have also addressed the significance of Kurdish for the Kurds, both in their novelistic discourses and in their other publications, and often encourage the Kurds to read and write in Kurdish. Accordingly, an essential requirement when selecting the novels was that they were written in the Kurdish language.

In order to draw a comprehensive picture of the Kurdish novelistic discourse and to ensure an accurate outcome, I have included all the 100 novels published in Turkish Kurdistan and its diaspora between 1984 and March 2010. It is not my intention to discuss every novel that might conceivably be treated as proposing the same social, political, and cultural ideas. My point of departure for limiting myself to one region is primarily that identities and perceptions of 'home-land' have developed differently in relation to contextual and political differences in each of the nation states (Chaliand 1993, Natali 2005, Romano 2006). The situation of the Kurds from Iraqi Kurdistan or Iranian Kurdistan is different from the circumstances of those in Turkey,[9] owing to the different socio-political and cultural

contexts of these non-Kurdish nation states. Being dominated by different nations means that the Kurds are confronted by different policies, which causes them to create different literary discourses.

This does not necessarily assume the lack of a common Kurdish literature; rather, it attempts to reach an accurate comparative analysis of literary texts within the same dialect and related to the same political, social, and ideological environment. Moreover, to include novels from different regions would require research on all these regions and their diasporas, which would be impractical for a literary analysis based on diverse methodological approaches. First, the novels from other regions are written in different dialects (Zazaki or Sorani) and different scripts (Arabic). Secondly, due to the number of novels, a comprehensive focus on one region is more feasible. This is why the scope of this book is limited to novels written by authors from Turkish Kurdistan and its diaspora.[10]

Essentially, the novels are divided into two categories, those written by novelists living in Turkish Kurdistan (36 novels, from 1988 to 2010), and those written by novelists in the diaspora (64 novels, from 1984 to 2010). In categorising these groups, it is the location of the novelist (whether in Turkey/Turkish Kurdistan or in Europe) that is taken into consideration rather than the place of publication. For various reasons, but mainly because of the ban on Kurdish publishing in Turkey until 2002, certain novels, such as those by Nurî Şemdîn (official name: Naci Kutlay) and Îhsan Colemergî, were published in Stockholm, even though their authors were not in exile. Additionally, there has been a striking increase since the year 2000 in the number of exiled writers, such as Hesenê Metê and Firat Cewerî, who have preferred to publish inside Turkish Kurdistan and in Istanbul. A novelist who lives in Turkish Kurdistan but who has chosen, or was obliged, to publish his or her book in Europe, is regarded as quite unusual in Turkish Kurdistan.

Similarly for novels published in Turkey or Turkish Kurdistan by exiled novelists. In this case, the place of publication does not determine the category, since the place of publication will have been determined by the writer's conditions and the socio-political restrictions of the sovereign state.[11] I evaluate both the personal and

the contextual factors behind the portrayal of the literary 'home-land' and 'identity' of the novelists, and how these factors have shaped their literary productions.

Broadly speaking, there were no novels published in Turkish Kurdistan before the 1980s. During the 1980s the only novel produced was *Zeviyên Soro* (The Lands of Soro, 1988) by Nurî Şemdîn (Naci Kutlay).[12] Although Kutlay (Şemdîn) was not an exile, he lived for some time in Sweden, and his novel was published in Stockholm in 1988 because of the ban on Kurdish publications in Turkish Kurdistan. Even though there was an easing of restrictions on publishing during the 1990s, just two novels were produced in that period: Îhsan Colemergî's *Cembelî Kurê Mîrê Hekaryan*[13] (Cembeli, the Son of Mir Hakkari, 1995) and Îbrahîm Seydo Aydogan's *Reş û Spî* (Black and White). Like Kutlay's novel, Colemergî's *Cembelî Kurê Mîrê Hekaryan* was first published by Apec in Stockholm, then a few years later by Avesta in Istanbul. This means that Aydogan's *Reş û Spî* was the only novel published during the 1990s in Turkish Kurdistan.[14]

Compared with the 1990s, however, the first decade of the 2000s saw a striking increase in numbers, with 33 Kurdish novels being published, but Europe played a bigger role in the publication of Kurdish works up to 2002.[15] The increasing number of Kurdish refugees and immigrants in European countries after the 1980 military coup in Turkey led to the development of Kurdish publishing. Therefore, the selection of novels from the diaspora also covers the post-1980s period. Six novels were published in the 1980s (by Mehmed Uzun[16] and Mahmut Baksî), and the number increased to 13 during the 1990s. As in Turkish Kurdistan, the first decade of the twenty-first century in the diaspora was very fruitful for novelistic discourse, and the number of published novels increased to 49.

Together with the form and content of the novels, authorship or socio-political contexts are tools for reaching a better understanding of the text. The various criteria employed draw attention to the different symbolic, political, and social meanings of the novels, and illuminate the meaning of textual portrayals within an understanding of the social and political arrangements surrounding them. Most importantly, I have employed a humanistic geography

approach to literature, arguing that literature, and the novel in particular, constitutes an instrument of geographical inquiry into a society or a nation (Lowenthal 1961, Pocock 1981, 1988, Porteous 1985, Bordessa 1988, Cosgrove and Daniels 1989). Thus one should take the contextualisation of the novels/novelists into consideration in order to shed light on how the nation/society is constructed, and why. In this respect, I have benefited from both contextual and textual approaches.

Although I adopt textual analysis, because of the large number of novels chosen I will not seek the stylistic and linguistic analysis invoked by the textual approach. The texts are interpreted mainly from their socio-political and cultural subtexts, since it is essential to keep the historical, political, social, and cultural contexts in mind in the analysis of the Kurdish novelistic discourse.

It is worth mentioning that I found the contextual approach indispensable for this particular book after reading those novels in which the dominance of authorial intentions is explicitly reflected in the texts. Throughout the book, I argue that the meanings of Kurdish novels are mainly shaped in relation to factors such as the setting and ideology of the novelist and the period in which the novel was written. In this regard, what is apparent within the Kurdish novelistic discourse is the dominance of the real or imagined socio-political context of Kurdistan, which undoubtedly affects the way 'home-land' is perceived and narrated.

Theoretical Considerations

There are various ways to analyse literary works, but my approach here is to consider novelistic discourse as a literary sphere that represents nationhood and national territory. This implies a modernist understanding of the relationship between literature and nation. By tracing developments in the study of nation-building, national identity, and literature from Benedict Anderson (1983) to Frederic Jameson (1988) and Homi Bhabha (1990, 2004), I affirm the connection between the making of national identity and the making of literary texts. However, I also underline the territorial

aspects of literary works, which contribute to the constructing of national identity. In this context, I argue that the settings and literary expression of places in the novels can provide data for territorial reality and geography.

There are various theoretical approaches to the literary works. For example, on the one hand, is a 'text-oriented approach' that includes philology, rhetoric, formalism and structuralism, new criticism, semiotics and deconstruction in literary studies; it is 'concerned with questions of the "materiality" of texts, including editions of manuscripts, analyses of language, and style and the formal structure of literary works' (Klarer 1999: 78). On the other hand, there is an 'author-oriented approach' covering biographical criticism, psychoanalytic criticism, and phenomenology, in which the stress is on the author attempting to link his or her biography to the text (Klarer 1999). In the 'author-oriented approach', details in the form of dates, facts, and events in the author's life are crucial contributions to the analysis. Hence, I argue that an author's mode of perception of space and places, and thus his or her treatment of space and places is culturally, socially, and politically conditioned, reflecting the culture and ideology to which the author belongs. In this case, the engagement between geography and literature appears in the way they are described as a depiction of a specific 'space' and 'place'; in terms of the cultural context of people's notions and views of a particular place, this can offer insights into the nature of their spatial relations.

Geography is part of the literary project of some authors. Humanistic geography, defined as 'humanistic conceptualization of place' (Rose 1993: 41), is interested in literature and describes the place as a 'centre of meaning constructed by experience', thus confirming the fact that authors might somehow accurately represent the experience of 'place' (Brosseau 1994). In the context of geographical interpretation of literature, Thomas O. Beebee (2008: 1) focuses in his *Nation and Region in Modern American and European Fiction* on 'the role of literature in the production of national, regional, local, global, and local mental maps'. He concentrates on such significant geographical ideas as mental maps and 'heterotopias',

deriving the term 'heterotopia' from Michel Foucault's article 'Of other spaces' (1986 [1967]).[17] Heterotopias are described as 'the "counter-sites", a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which [. . .] all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted' (Beebee 2008: 24). In response to Foucault's definition, Beebee also argues that 'heterotopia' refers to a 'true imaginary place', in which 'place' is endowed with imaginary qualities, 'again using "imaginary" in the sense of imaging something rather than perceiving it, as in the act of remembering' (2008: 3–4). Foucault states that a mirror embodies the concept of 'heterotopia': it includes both the unreal, due to illusion, and reality, due to the reflection of the image.

Concerning a humanist approach to the geographical interpretation of literature, Porteous (1985: 117) notes that, 'within the broad realm of imaginative literature, geographers have again been highly selective. Plays are not considered, poetry is but occasionally used, the novel reigns supreme.' Thus, novels have become the leading genre as documentary sources that depict the 'geography of the text' (Brosseau 1995: 96). Porteous further explains that the advantages of the novel 'lie in its length (meaty), its prose form (understandable), its involvement with the human condition (relevant), and its tendency to contain passages, purple or otherwise, which deal directly with landscapes and places in the form of description (geographical)' (1985: 117). In light of Brosseau's argument, novelistic discourse emerges as the most convenient genre for analysing literary geographies as sources of 'geographical data' (Darby 1948, Jay 1975), and in this respect Brosseau (1994) coins the term 'novel-geographers' for those investigating people's experience of space through novelistic discourse. In other words, novels can be analysed for their construction of a geography that explores the interaction between people as a group, and particular places.[18] The location or space that is drawn as geography in the novel becomes clearer and more visible with the personal sentiments projected onto it, and this personifies the landscape.

Novels also enable individuals to establish a bond with each other across different contexts. Novelistic discourse, like national projects,

produces national places, geographical territories, and identities that appear as a nation. So, in adopting a constructivist view of the nation, the peculiarity of the novel closely matches the processes of nation-building. This being the case, one can state that the nations fictionalised in novels are 'imagined communities'. In this regard it can be argued that, through combining fiction and reality, novelistic discourse contributes to constructing 'true imaginary places', and in this context, the figuration of 'true imaginary places' parallels the representation of the nation and issues of national identity constructing what Jameson (1988) calls a 'national allegory'.

Taking the above discussion into consideration, I argue that this constructive imagining of 'territorial reality', 'nation', and 'identity' occurs in Kurdish novels; however, taking note of humanistic approaches to geography and literature, I also consider Kurdish novels as 'stimulating data, information, and suggestions about individual and social perceptions of places and landscapes' (Fabio 1996: 4). Through fictionalising literary landscapes, transferring the attitudes, values, and responses of the characters to the place and landscape experience, and by narrating the histories and myths that create an outline of a nation, the literary text may challenge, support, and preserve certain ideologies based on national identity and homeland.

Chapter Overview

The first three chapters concentrate on the historical and political identity of Kurds and Kurdistan, and the development of Kurdish literature is described in order to contribute to the analysis of the Kurdish novels. The fourth and fifth chapters are structured according to the two categories of novel, those originating in Turkish Kurdistan and those originating in its diaspora. The analysis adopted to establish the similarities and differences between these categories is elaborated on in the fourth chapter. Because of the large number of novels and because the first Kurmanji novel from Turkish Kurdistan was written in the diaspora, the initial focus is on analyses from the diaspora. Chapter Four sheds light on the multi-layered characterisation of cultural geographies of 'home-land' and the ambivalent

articulation of 'identity', as a result of diasporic experiences intertwined with changing visions and evolving political relations. Informed by diverse discussions on 'diaspora' and 'diasporic identity', the chapter reveals these diverse constructions of 'home-land' and Kurdish national identity through the textual and contextual analysis of 64 novels, ranging from the first novel published in Europe, Mahmut Baksî's *Hêlîn*,[19] up to Silêman Demîr's recently published *Kassandra* (Cassandra, 2010).[20]

Chapter Five, which covers 36 novels from Turkish Kurdistan, uses rural/urban space, regions, and landscapes as a framing device to show the re-creation of symbolic or real Kurdistan, and how the idea of Kurdistan as an ancestral homeland contributes to the formation of Kurdish national identity in novelistic discourse created in Kurdistan. The textual analyses show that the real geographical sites and imaginary locations presented in the novels can offer a useful context for understanding Kurdish national and cultural identity.

In Chapter Six, based on a comparative analysis of 100 novels, I argue that the contexts of 'homeland territory' and 'non-homeland territory' are influential factors in creating different images and identities for Kurdistan. In addition I suggest that, apart from territorial differences, political awareness, and ideological differences in relation to the Kurdish national struggle also contribute to producing different discourses for the portrayal of Kurdistan and identity.

Chapter Seven draws together the final arguments based on the analyses of the novels. It concludes that overall the analysis has revealed a division. In the diaspora, the meanings of 'home-land' and 'identity' are effectively altered by detachment from the territories of Kurdistan, involvement in the environment of the host countries, and prevailing global conditions. On the other hand, in Kurdistan itself, proscriptive socio-political contexts such as having to confront statelessness in daily life, and being of a younger generation compared with the writers in the diaspora, are factors that have a crucial impact on the literary expression of the recurrent themes outlined in this book.

CHAPTER 1

KURDISTAN AND BEYOND: THE SEARCH FOR A HOMELAND

Kurds, as a distinct group in the Middle East, have not created a state identity through tools such as nationalist parties, literary advances and the intelligentsia, but have managed nevertheless to create a distinct national identity.[1] The main components of this identity include territory/homeland, shared experiences and memories of past times, national symbols, and language (Smith 1991). When reflecting on what constitutes a person's national identity, special attention should be given to territory, since this plays a major role in the development of group identity. Every group, especially at the level of ethnicity, requires a territory with which members can identify themselves. Shared territory among group members is a crucial component in the process of identity formation. For Smith (1996), nations have ethnic roots, and the history of ethnic communities is defined in fundamental ways by an ancestral 'homeland' or territory.

Kurdish identity is tied very closely to a territory that was called Kurdistan, revolving around a 'core area' that has been referred to as territory–Kurdistan. Like 'identity', 'territory' itself is subjected to changes and new formations through the years, so the perception of Kurds regarding the territory of Kurdistan changes as their socio-political and cultural context alters over time.

Referring literally to 'the land/homeland of Kurds', the term Kurdistan has been in use for at least six centuries.[2] Kurdistan's

demographic structure has frequently changed due to both local and international factors. The current territory of Kurdistan, delineated after World War I by the Allies, consists of 'a generally mountainous expanse of some 200,000 square miles straddling the present state boundaries of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and the former Soviet republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan' (Dahlman 2002: 271). It is located in Eastern Turkey (Turkish Kurdistan), Northern Iraq (Iraqi Kurdistan), North-western Iran (Iranian Kurdistan) and part of Northern Syria.[3] It covers an area of some 550,000 square kilometres (Hassanpour, Skutnabb-Kangas, and Chyet 1996: 368) and more or less encompasses the Zagros and the eastern Taurus mountain ranges.

The topography of Kurdistan is quite distinctive, and its mountainous scenery is often emphasised in Kurdish cultural and folkloric materials. Three main mountain chains are considered to constitute Kurdistan – the Armenian or Eastern Taurus, the Inner Taurus, and the Zagros – while the numerous high uplands and large river basins such as the Tigris and the Euphrates are physical features characterising Kurdistan (Jwaideh 2006: 4). Due to the lack of a state, there are no internationally recognised Kurdistan territories. In Turkey even the term 'Kurdistan' itself has been banned since the early 1920s and people using this term have been convicted. On the other hand, large areas of the Kurdish regions in Iran are officially called 'Kurdistan'. Despite international recognition of the existence of the federal Kurdistan region in Northern Iraq, the Turkish state authorities avoid using the term Kurdistan but still refer to the region as Northern Iraq.

The Kurds' homeland has undergone two main divisions in its history. First, following a treaty between the Ottomans and Safavids in 1639, the first official border line was drawn between the two empires. Secondly, following World War I, the Ottoman Empire had to negotiate with the Europeans, and in 1923 the Treaty of Lausanne divided the Ottoman part of Kurdistan between four countries, the Republic of Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and the Soviet Union.

Divided thus between several states, Kurds have been dominated by various differing socio-political and cultural systems, and have been culturally, politically, and linguistically fragmented.

The building of nation states in the region led to the dispersal of the Kurds into four territories, resulting in the imposition of varying socio-political and cultural conditions upon them. Hence, while being a Kurd in origin is of central importance, the course of Kurdish identity formation has differed from one region to another depending on the shifting of political spaces. This negates the possibility of a fixed and essentialist Kurdish identity (van Bruinessen 1992b, Kirisci and Winrow 1997, Özoğlu 2004). This sense of fluidity certainly applies to the origin of the Kurds as delineated by the map of Greater Kurdistan.[4] On the one hand, Kurds usually regard themselves as the descendants of the ancient Medes (whose power collapsed after a succession of defeats), who settled 2,000 years ago inside the boundary of current Kurdistan. On the other hand, through reference to ancient manuscripts, researchers have attempted to link the name 'Kurds' with geographical terms in order to determine the origin of the Kurds. The various factors leading to differing views on the development of the origin of the Kurds mainly revolve around the division of territory between several nations, the lack of written historical sources stretching back to ancient periods, and diverse political ideologies.

Kurds as Descendants of the Medes: The Building of a Myth

Kurdish identity, because of internal and external change, has been unfixed and shifting throughout history. Alterations in the historical and political context of Kurdistan have been the major factor in this fluidity, with Kurdish identity constantly readjusting itself to the requirements of a changing context. In relation to the diverse internal and external factors shaping Kurdish identity, Kedourie (1996: 226) argues, 'the politics of Islam, the autonomous political structures of tradition, and the resistance of the "periphery" to an integrated national economy were all the components of the Constitution of Kurdishness'. The common discourse on Kurdish identity centres on the idea that the exclusion and denial of this identity is very much part of the Turkish political project of creating a modern and secular

nation state, and that this has increased the politicisation of Kurdish identity. Therefore, the fluid and unfixed structure of Kurdish identity should be seen as a consequence of the Kurds' fluid and unfixed historical, socio-political, and cultural contexts, mainly characterised by the nature of the regime and by the ideological changes in the political apparatus.

In fact, images of the 'imagined territory of Kurdistan' in nationalist discourse have become one of the unifying elements of the Kurdish imagined community, in both 'homeland' and 'diaspora' (Anderson 1983). Gupta and Ferguson (1992: 11) point out that 'homeland [. . .] remains one of the most powerful unifying symbols for mobile and displaced peoples, though the relation to homeland may be very differently constructed in different settings'.

Kurds are certainly among these mobile and displaced peoples. However, one needs to ask how Kurds are able to build and maintain a sense of national identity when the territorial base to which that identity refers is divided by other nation states. Territorial, linguistic, and religious fragmentation did not stop the Kurds from sharing a common myth of Kurdistan as 'ancestral homeland'. As Conversi (2004: 243) notes, 'national homeland images continue to exert a powerful influence on popular perceptions of identity and remain among the most effective instruments that nationalists have at their disposal to mobilise their national communities'. Conversi's understanding of perceptions of 'national homeland' applies very much to the Kurdish situation as, for example, the ancient civilisation of Mesopotamia is usually referred to as the cradle of Kurdish culture. However, alongside the issue of the ancestral homeland of the Kurds, the issue of the ethnic origin of the Kurds is debated, and in this there is little sign of a consensus.

This has long been a source of discussion and uncertainty. There are various essentialist discussions regarding origins, one of which concerns the emergence of the term '*Carduchi*' (Karduk in Turkish), which is commonly believed to be the first term conveying the notion of 'Kurd'. It may have Assyrian origins and have come from '*qardu*' meaning 'strong' and 'hero'. There is no certainty that the terms '*Cardoukhoi*' (in some sources spelled *Carduchi*) or '*Kardu*' refer to

Semites or to an ancient indigenous people, though they certainly do refer to people who inhabited the same areas in which Kurds live today (Jwaideh 2006: 12). However, English Assyriologist G. R. Driver, in his article 'The name Kurd and its philological connexion' (1923), argues that the ethnonym 'Kurd' originates from '*Karda*' or '*Qarda*', which appeared in Sumerian Thureau-Dangin clay tablets in the third millennium BCE. He etymologically links the term 'Kurd' to '*Karda*', which refers to a land located to the south of Lake Van in Turkish Kurdistan. This area was inhabited by the group of people called '*Su*' or '*Subaru*', and they were linked with a group of mountain dwellers called '*Qur-ti-e*' (Özoğlu 2004: 23). In common with Driver's contention, the English historian George Rawlinson argues that '*Carduchi*' was the ancient lexical equivalent of 'Kurdistan', the current homeland of the Kurds. According to Xenophon's *Anabasis* (401–400 BCE), considered by some researchers to be the first historical reference to the ancestors of the Kurds, '*Carduchi*' was a group of people inhabiting the mountainous region of northern Mesopotamia, and the term '*Gurd*' refers to the ancient term for 'hero'.

Along with other scholars (Izady 1992, Bulloch and Morris 1993) favouring that theory is the Turkish sociologist Ismail Beşikçi, who has served 17 years in prison as a consequence of his writings on the Kurds. In his book entitled *Doğu Anadolu'nun Düzeni: Sosyo-Ekonomic ve Etnik Temeller* (*The Order of East Anatolia: Socio-economic and Ethnic Foundations*), he links the '*Carduchi*' mentioned in Xenophon's work entitled *The Retreat of the Ten Thousand* (370 BCE) to the Kurds. *Anabasis* can be defined as a contemporary account of the epic journey of the Greeks fighting with Cyrus during their struggle to return home from Mesopotamia to the Black Sea. In *Anabasis*, although not much is said about the '*Carduchi*' group of people, they are mainly characterised by their war-like qualities.

Some researchers take a primordial approach, arguing that the Kurds as a nation date back to the seventh century BCE (Chaliand 1993, Olson 1996) and the Arab conquest of Northern Mesopotamia. In this context, Arfa (1966) claims that 'Kurd' as a name dates back to the Arab invasion of Kurdistan during which, however, the majority of tribes preferred to use their tribal or clan name rather

than being called 'Kurd'. However, according to Hirschler (2010: 152), Kurdish historiography in the 1990s located Kurdish origins in a still more ancient period, establishing a link with the Aryans, in which case Aryans are the indigenous inhabitants of the Kurdish regions, with a history that some Kurdish authors describe as stretching as far back as 60,000 years.

Another early document that exemplifies this use of 'Kurd' is in the *Sharafname* (1596), which tells the history of the Kurds, including ancient Kurdish dynasties and tribes. It was written by Sharafhan Bitlisi, a sixteenth-century Kurdish ruler of the autonomous Bitlis emirate in Eastern Anatolia. Although he does not particularly define the term 'Kurd' (he actually divides Kurds into four, as Kurmanji, Lurs, Kalhur, and Gurani), the geography of Kurdistan is described in detail:

> The boundaries of the Kurdish land begin from the sea of Hiirmuz [the Gulf of Basra] and stretch on an even line to the end of Malatya and Maras. The north of this line includes Fars, Irak-i Acem [the Khuzistan region of Southwest Iran], Azerbeycan, Little and Great Armenia. To the South, there is Irak-i Arab, Musul and Diyarbakir.[5]

Some Kurdish nationalists, and even some researchers, argue that Medes or Aryans were the real ancestors of the Kurds in the seventh century BCE (Minorsky 1927, Arfa 1966, Izady 1992, Vanly 1993, Nezan 1996, Bender 2000). They believe that the Medes (728–550 BCE), an Indo-European tribe that descended from Central Asia onto the Iranian Plateau, were constituted from these Aryanised Kurds and extended their power throughout almost all of the Middle East in the seventh century. Victor Minorsky's piece in the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (1927) is considered to be the earliest reference to the Medes as the ancestors of the Kurds. Similarly, Bender, for example, includes the Guti, Hurrians, Kassites (Kashshu), Urartians, and Medes in a single ethnic line. According to the Iranian general and ambassador of the Pahlavi dynasty, Hasan Arfa (1966: 2), the Aryans came from the north of the Caucasus and the Kurds were Aryanised

around 900 BCE. Arfa goes on to state that Kurdish settlements that existed in Iran during the Sasanian Dynasty moved to North-west Iran, mixed with the people living there, the '*Kurdu*', and were united with these people (ibid: 5). Again, Laciner and Bal (2004: 475) argue that 'in the eighth century BC, the Assyrians were conquered by the Medes, who overran a large part of the territory now occupied by modern Kurds'.

However, van Bruinessen (2000a: 4) opposes the idea that the Kurds were the descendants of the Medes on the grounds that 'there is not enough evidence to permit such connection across the considerable gap in time between the political dominance of the Medes, and the first attestation of the Kurds'. While David McDowall (2004: 2) approves the prehistoric origin of the Kurds, he refuses to see Kurds as a unified entity until the last century, arguing that they 'existed as an identifiable group for possibly more than 2000 years [. . .] It was only in the early years of the twentieth century that they acquired a sense of community as Kurds.' Although van Bruinessen (1989: 613) is also, like McDowall, sceptical of the connection of the Kurds with the Medes, he underlines the early existence of the Kurds, but draws attention to their diverse, complex identity by saying 'most Kurds in Turkey have a strong awareness of belonging to a separate ethnic group [. . .] There is, however, by no means unanimity among them as to what constitutes this ethnic identity and what the boundaries of the ethnic group are.'

The identification of Kurds with Aryans and/or Medes must, admittedly, be viewed in the context of the process of nation-building, being mainly a reaction against Turkish nationalism's denial of Kurds' distinct nationhood. The linkage with the Medes is used to negate the official claim that Kurds are of Turkish origin. The myth of the Medes is mainly used as a tool to politically mobilise Kurds by the PKK (The Kurdistan Workers' Party, *Partiya Karkarên Kurdistan*), alongside the myth of Newroz. The PKK has used 'national Kurdish myths of common ancestry and past differentiated from that of other groups in the area' to enhance its nationalist claims (Romano 2006: 131).

Newroz refers to the traditional celebration by the Kurdish community of the Iranian New Year according to the Iranian

calendar.[6] Held around the spring equinox, 21 March, Newroz occupies a much more important place among the Kurds in terms of Kurdish identity than as a mere spring festival. According to the mythological Kurdish version, Newroz is associated with the legend of Kawa from Medes, a blacksmith who defeated the evil Assyrian ruler King Zuhak (also known as *Dehak*). Under Zuhak's rule, the Kurdish people had to sacrifice two young men every day and serve their brains to Zuhak's serpents. Zuhak's vile reign also kept the spring away from Kurdistan. Traditionally 20 March is marked as the day that Kawa defeated Zuhak, thus overcoming the Assyrian Empire and liberating the Medes; the next day spring returned to Kurdistan.

On a historiographical level this event has been dated to the victory of the Medes over the Assyrians in 612 BCE, which constituted the end of the Assyrian Empire. From the 1980s, because of its association with freedom, Newroz became the single most important symbol of the Kurdish uprising, and the Newroz celebrations have been constantly suppressed by the Turkish authorities. During the 1992 Newroz celebrations, the Turkish state killed over 50 Kurdish participants, and two were also killed in 2008. Similarly three Kurds were shot dead by Syrian state forces in Syria. In a desperate effort to pre-empt this Kurdish national festival, the Turkish government tried to reclaim and reinvent the event by announcing that Newroz (which is called *Nevruz* in Turkish) was in fact a Turkish holiday, and commemorated the first day that Turks left their Central Asian homeland. In 2000 it became legal to celebrate this day with the name Nevruz, although its Kurdish name, Newroz, is still forbidden.

Gunes, in his book *Kurdish National Movement: From Resistance to Protest*, singles out the PKK's reactivation of the myth of Newroz to create a contemporary myth of resistance (2012: 115–22) linked to the Median Empire. According to Gunes (ibid: 5), the PKK emphasised the importance of the Medes' 'heroic' struggle against the Assyrian Empire, and drew a parallel between Kawa the Blacksmith's struggle for the Medes and the PKK's struggle in the contemporary era. He continues by asserting that the PKK had constructed the Median era as the 'golden age' of the Kurdish nation and used it to

maintain Kurds' national unity. Also the main Kurdish satellite television station's sharing of the name 'Med' (MED-TV is known for its links with the PKK) is a part of the party's ideology for uniting Kurds and reminding them of their origin. Hassanpour (1998: 59) states, 'it is clear that every second of MED-TV's broadcasting seriously undermines Turkish sovereign rule. The logo "MED-TV", which is always present in the upper left comer of the screen, is an assertion of Kurdishness (the Kurds are Medes not Turks).'

Similar to the myth of origin, the ancestral and national homeland has been a crucial instrument in the construction of Kurdish identity and the nationalist myth, just as territorial geography has played a significant role in the relationship of Kurds to Kurdistan, not only in 'homeland territory' but also in the 'diaspora'. 'Alongside this genealogical link, homeland narratives (the "where" of Kurds) sketch out a stable geographical reference for the Kurdish region, identified as eastern and southeastern Anatolia but also sometimes as Mesopotamia' (Houston 2007: 401). In this case, Mesopotamia, believed to be the ancestral homeland of the Kurds, has been part of the discussion about the geopolitical identity of the Kurds.

It is known that Kurdistan, historically known as Mesopotamia, does not encompass a homogenous population, but includes diverse religious and linguistic groups. As it was conquered by many nations, there is a complex regional history. As Bulloch and Harvey (1993: 58) state: 'The racial mix became even more complex over subsequent centuries, as Turkish and Arab tribes pressed in on the Kurdish heartland. In early medieval times some ethnically Turkish tribes became Kurdified, while Kurdish tribes became Turkified. Kurds became vassals of Arab chieftains and vice versa, and Arab and Turkish words entered the vocabularies of the Kurdish dialects.'

The concept of Mesopotamia as the imagined land of the Kurds (Hamit Bozarslan 2004: 49) can be argued to be a reaction against Turkish rule in the Kurds' homeland, and so linked with contemporary Kurdish politics, mainly in the form of the PKK. In addition, Casier (2011) in her article titled 'Beyond Kurdistan? The Mesopotamia Social Forum and the Appropriation and Re-imagination of Mesopotamia by the Kurdish Movement' argues

that on the conceptual level, the ideological transformation of the Kurdish movement is represented by the shift in emphasis away from 'Kurdistan' towards 'Mesopotamia' as the name given to the lands populated by the Kurds. She argues (2011: 231–2) that 'Mesopotamia' is employed as a myth by the PKK and 'Öcalan [PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan] to help raise collective awareness and to mobilize the masses. It nevertheless contributes to the depiction of the Kurds as being amongst the world's most ancient peoples, and presents their history as legitimizing their contemporary identity. So it explains and thereby justifies Kurdish existence (identity) and the political demands of the Kurdish movement' (ibid.).

The employment of such a (pre-) historical mythology of an identified ethnic group in the service of its present-day claims is, one cannot fail to note, a classical ingredient of nationalist narration. The MSF (Mesopotamia Social Forum)[7] in Diyarbakır takes its name from the use by Öcalan and the Kurdish movement of 'Mesopotamia', which is employed 'in Turkey and transnationally (particularly among the Kurds in Europe) to signify a Kurdish identity, the Kurdist cause. It is used, for example, as the name for cultural centres, such as the *Mezopotamya Kültür Merkezi* [Mesopotamia Cultural Centre, MKM], satellite TV channels (*Mezopotamya TV*, MMC, Mezopotamya Music Channel), news agencies (MHA, *Mezopotamya Haber Ajansı*, Mesopotamia News Agency), Facebook pages (Mesopotamia), radio stations (*Dengê Mezopotamya*, The Voice of Mesopotamia), etc.' (Caiser 211: 422).[8]

Wherever one stands on the dispute over the origin of the Kurds, all the theories refer to more or less the same geography, which is the land occupied by modern Kurds. However, there is also 'both a practical and mythical interpretation of political Kurdistan' (McDowall 2004: 3). Hence, the ancestry and territory of Kurdistan contain not only realistic elements but also imaginary ones. Despite the lack of an existing recognised territory of Kurdistan, it is well defined in the minds of the majority of Kurds, particularly the politicised Kurds. The sense of solidarity among Kurds heavily depends on the idea of common ancestry and myth. Kurdish ancient myths and symbols have become important components of Kurdish identity.

Kurds up to the Last Decades of the Ottoman Era

In order to contribute to an understanding of the current social and political context of Turkish Kurdistan and its reflection in the Kurdish novelistic discourse on which I will focus in the analytical chapters, in this section I examine the circumstances of Kurds and Kurdistan during the Ottoman Empire, within a multi-ethnic, decentralised, and religious administration, including the *Tanzimat* (reorganisation) reforms and their impact on the Kurds. Clearly a section of this length is insufficient to provide a detailed account of a period of up to four centuries. I will concentrate on providing a brief overview of the Kurdish emirates and tribes and their privileges, the leading Kurdish political and cultural organisations, and the uprisings which occurred in the last decades of the Ottoman era as a result of changing administrative systems.

Due to the complex and diverse structure of Kurdish society, the various interests of neighbouring countries, and structural transformation and centralisation within the Ottoman Empire, the Kurds' relationship with the Empire has been very changeable, ranging from intense loyalty to strong resistance. From the sixteenth century to the collapse of the Empire, many factors have affected socio-political conditions in the lands of the Kurds, the Eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire. First, the Ottoman wars with Persia, then the penetration of other entities such as Russia, France, and Britain, and the announcement of the *Tanzimat* reforms (1839–76)[9] by *Hatt-i Şerif* of *Gülhane* (Noble Edict of the Rose Chamber), through to the Young Turks movement (in Turkish '*Jontürk*', originating from the French '*Jeunes Turcs*') against the rule of Sultan Abdülhamid.

Turkish Kurdistan and Iraq were conquered by the Ottomans in the early sixteenth century and remained under Ottoman sovereignty until the end of World War I. The conquest, which took place at the Battle of Çaldıran in Northern Kurdistan on 23 August 1514 between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, and the far-reaching victory of Ottoman Sultan Selim over Safavid Shah Ismail, led to the first division of Kurdistan.[10] The majority of the Kurdish lands were

granted to the Ottomans as a result of their victory. The boundary of Kurdistan was formalised in 1639 in the Treaty of Zohab, which divided East from West along the Zagros Mountains (Dahlman 2002: 273) and delineated the lands under Ottoman and Persian control. This remained in place until World War I in 1914.

Özoğlu (1996: 12) argues that the Ottoman Empire's first interest in Kurdistan came mainly from the need to defend its eastern borders against Shia Safavid expansion. Selim I sent one of his advisors, Molla Idris Bitlisi,[11] Kurdish scholar and statesman in the service of the Ottoman Kurds, to organise Kurdish chiefs against the Safavid dynasty. Bitlisi managed to gather the support of at least 20 Kurdish tribal leaders representing tribes with an overwhelmingly Sunni majority who favoured the Ottomans. When Sultan Selim's armies entered Amid (Diyarbakir) in 1514, the Safavid governor of Diyarbakir, Mustafa Ustaclu Han, was forced to withdraw (ibid.). Diyarbakir opened its gates to the Ottomans and accepted its adherence to them. The Ottoman army took the city easily, as, even before the invasion, Molla Idris Bitlisi had ensured the loyalty of the inhabitants to Selim I. The Kurdish tribal leaders were rewarded for their support and loyalty in backing the Ottoman Empire during its war against Safavid Persia by being allowed to retain a high degree of autonomy.

After the incorporation of Kurdistan into Ottoman lands, Ottoman Kurdistan went through various structural changes arising from administrative divisions of the Empire which differed from traditional Ottoman arrangements. The Ottoman administrative system consisted of two components, the central government and the provincial administration (Özoğlu 2004: 51) headed by *valis* (governors). Within this provincial administration there were *sancaks* (or *sanjaks*, meaning 'districts'). This was the traditional title of the sub-provinces of the Empire, which were ruled by *sancakbeyi* (district governors) who were also military commanders, and by *kadı* who were members of the *ulema* (also spelled *ulama*, referring to the educated class of Muslim scholars, men with knowledge of Islamic sacred law or theology), both appointed by the central authorities.

Kurdistan was divided into the *Eyalet* (principality),[12] which was the largest administrative unit, then *Ekrad Beyliği* (Kurdish *sancaks*),

which were defined by the hereditary rule of Kurdish nobles and subject to military obligations, and which were not organisationally different from such units in other parts of the Empire, being involved in *tımar* (village-level revenue), *zeamet*, and *has*.[13] Then there were the Kurdish *hükümets* (governments) which were fully autonomous, in the most inaccessible regions, and not obliged to pay tax or provide troops or *sipahis* (lowest-level military men) to the Ottoman Army.[14] Eppel observes that the alliance of Vilayet-i Kurdistan, which included 7 major and 11 minor emirates (or principalities), with the Ottomans against internal and external challenges was a 'direct result of the dynamic balance of forces between Ottoman *valis* (governors) and the Kurdish emirs, and of the Ottoman ability to manoeuvre and forge coalitions between various local forces' (Eppel 2008: 239). Regarding the privileges and actual extent of autonomy of the Kurdish tribes and emirates that resulted from the administrative structure, Mehmet Öz states that:

> [Kurdish] hükümets, which were given under administration and property of their holders in return for their service and obedience. They govern (their districts) by way of free-holding. Moreover, their countries are set aside from the pen and cut off from the foot. All of their revenues were not included in the sultanic register. There is no one person from the Ottoman governors and servants of the Sultan within these areas. Everything belongs to them. And, in accordance with their charters (given by Ottoman sultans, regarding their rights and privileges) they are not subjected to dismissal and appointment. However, all of them are obedient to the orders of the Sultan. As other Ottoman district governors, they attend to campaigns together with the province-governors of whichever province they are subjected to. They own people and tribes as well as other soldiers.[15]

So Kurds, for centuries, lived in their lands (the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire) with *de facto* autonomy thanks to the decentralised structure of the Empire and the millet system based on

religion and common culture rather than ethnic identity, which also somewhat helped the various communities to co-exist within the Empire. The main principalities in the Ottoman ruled areas between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries were:

- Botan: also called Bedirkhan emirate. Centred in the town of Cizre in Turkish Kurdistan, extending as far as a small part of Iraqi Kurdistan. The emirate ended in 1847;
- Hakkari: the emirate lasted from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. It controlled the Kurdish provinces of Hakkari and Van in Turkish Kurdistan along with some areas in Iraqi Kurdistan;
- Badinan: 1339–1843, centred in the town of Amadiya in the present-day Duhok province in Iraqi Kurdistan;
- Soran: 1816–35, located in Iraqi Kurdistan, the city of Rawanduz was the capital;
- Baban: 1649–1850, in present-day Iraqi Kurdistan and Western Iran.

In Ottoman society, nationality was determined on the basis of a person's affiliation with a religious community, and Kurds were not ethnically self-conscious (Kirisci and Winrow 2004: 22–3). The Kurds, being Muslim (the majority were Sunni), identified themselves in religious rather than ethnic terms. Being Muslim also put them at a big advantage compared with non-Muslim communities, as the idea of Islamic community (*ümmet*) was always favoured during the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the Kurds were involved in the administration of the Empire as Muslims and they enjoyed a significant level of autonomy. Ottoman society was plural but never pluralistic in the modern secular sense. Its functioning had always been hierarchical and coercive, and this was designated as 'Ottomanism' (*Osmanlılık*) (Kieser 2002: 398).

When expanding its eastern border (including the Kurdish territories), the Ottoman state retained and strengthened the power of the traditional local rulers, which resulted in powerful Kurdish tribes and emirates accepting the sovereignty of the Sultan. Around 16 governments and emirates were founded during the Ottoman

Empire. Özoğlu (1996) claims that the Ottoman state was actively involved in and primarily responsible for the process of Kurdish feudal-tribal emirate formation. He (1996: 25–6) asserts that:

> While the Ottoman state imposed the iltizam system of tax farming [sold off by the state to wealthy notables, and it was abolished during the *Tanzimat* reforms in 1856] (which leads to greater autonomy), the dirlik [fief] system was introduced into Kurdistan, favouring more central control. The fact that the Kurdish notables were supported in the dirlik system [also called *Miri* system in some literature] indicates that the Ottomans were very careful in monitoring the authority of the Kurdish mirs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As the Ottoman Empire declined in the following centuries, the iltizam replaced the dirlik system. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Kurdistan was full of practically independent Kurdish emirs paying only lip-service to Istanbul.

The Ottoman Empire allowed Kurds to have a degree of private property and hereditary rights to land until the centralising (*Tanzimat*) reforms in the nineteenth century. In addition, as the majority of Kurds were of *Şafi* rite rather than *Hanefi*, which is the official *mezhep* (religious sect) of the Empire, the rulers of Kurdish emirates established their own *medreses* (in English medreseh or madrasa).[16] It is considered that these *medreses* played a leading role in the development of the Kurdish language and its literature. These *medreses* functioned until the 1970s even though they were officially closed soon after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey (van Bruinessen 1999, Atacan 2010: 112).

The degree of autonomy of the Kurdish emirates varied depending on their geopolitical importance and the power of the ruler, as the Ottomans aimed for strong leadership against internal threats. The administrative structure remained until the first half of the nineteenth century, during which profound conflicts and tensions occurred within the body of Ottoman Kurdistan due to structural and administrative changes in the Empire.[17] The change began with

the reforms of Mahmud II and continued with the *Tanzimat* reforms. The aim of these was to centralise state administration, modernising the state apparatus by creating a central bureaucracy, and introducing a centralised revenue system through collecting taxes directly from the local population, although Kurdish notables had been enjoying that privilege for centuries, and they raised widespread resistance. In line with the reforms, the Ottomans established a new, more centralised administrative structure within the Kurdistan region. This limited the autonomy of the notables in the region, and changed the balance of power between the Ottoman Empire and the Kurdish emirates. In addition, a new Land Code was issued in 1858 in order to centralise the administration of land and tax collection. According to this, all land had to be registered at the land registry (*tapu*), which would provide individuals with possession rights to the land. However, this type of possession did not mean ownership.

Abdülhamid II (1876–1909), one of the most controversial figures in the whole Ottoman saga, was criticised widely for the authoritarian nature of his regime. During the wars between the Ottoman Empire and Russia (1853–6, 1877–8), although most of the Kurdish tribes backed the Ottomans, there was a great deal of unrest and rebellion among others, which sought to exploit the situation in order to reinforce or renew their autonomous status (Eppel 2008: 255). It is believed that the first Kurdish revolts were carried out against Sultan Abdülhamid not as Kurds but as Ottoman citizens (Özoğlu 1996, 2004, Klein 2007) and the collapse of the old Ottoman millet system can be considered to be among the main reasons for these revolts (McDowall 2004).

Kurdish intellectuals at this time continued to emphasise that the Kurds were an integral element of the Ottoman Empire, a position they would maintain until after World War I, and many Kurdish nationalists continued to be Ottomanists until after the war. (Klein 2007: 145–6). The first reaction from the Kurdish notables to the centralisation reforms of the Tanzimat period was the Bedirkhan Bey revolt in 1846. Bedirkhan Pasha, the emir of Botan (appointed by the Ottoman Porte), controlled this strong emirate in the first half of the century.[18]

Kurdish *mîrs* (rulers) such as Muhammad of Rewanduz, Bedirkhan of Botan, and emirates such as the Hakkari Emirate, the Baban Emirate, and the Soran Emirate were highly affected by the administrative and structural changes and lost their effective roles. The Ottoman Empire put an end to the Kurdish emirates in the first half of the nineteenth century (Eppel 2008: 240). McDowall (2004: 47) comments:

> The Kurdish emirates were at an end, but it was not yet clear whether the Ottomans could substitute effectively for them. Just as the emirs had in the end been undone by undervaluing the importance of external recognition and support to their position, so also the Ottoman authorities were destined to underestimate the mediating role these princes had fulfilled with regard to the local population.

After the decline and eventual elimination of the Kurdish emirates, Kurdish sheikhs[19] increased their rule and influence on the masses through Sufi orders such as Naqshbandiya and Qadiris, which began to spread rapidly throughout Kurdistan during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and which were very influential in the forthcoming Kurdish national movement. According to Olson, the 'sheikhs' achievement of reputation and power indicates the desire of Kurds to fill the power vacuum that arose with the vanishing of the emirates' (1992: 22–3). The revolts and uprisings of the early twentieth century will be touched upon in the second chapter. Kurdish nationalist movements, 'neither unified nor linear' (Klein, 2007: 137), contained different factions and underwent transitions throughout the period from the end of the nineteenth century to the foundation of the Turkish Republic.

It is appropriate to briefly touch upon the Hamidiye Cavalry, a Kurdish tribal militia established by Sultan Abdülhamid in 1891, which was used as a vehicle for power, privilege, and self-interest. Between 1891 and 1895 Sultan Abdülhamid, whose reign ended in 1908, authorised the establishment of an irregular mounted force in Eastern Anatolia, mainly selected from Sunni Kurdish tribes and

supported by Kurdish tribal and religious leaders, which can be defined as a Kurdish tribal militia. It recruited mainly from the tribes that had lost their power as a result of the new Ottoman administrative policies.[20]

Views on the reason for the establishment of the Hamidiye Cavalry differ from one researcher to another, and include the integration of Kurdish tribes into *ümmet*, maintaining protection against the Russians, sustaining the loyalty of the Kurds: 'By thus providing paid employment of high prestige and a virtual license to raid, the sultan hoped to install in the Kurds a strong loyalty to him personally' (van Bruinessen 1992a: 186), or organising the Sunni population (some of the Kurdish tribes, Turks and Turkmens) against the Armenians and their supporters. As soon as it was created, problems broke out which have long been regarded as exemplifying the worst kinds of abuses committed by the Hamidian regime. The state-sponsored Hamidiye chiefs were linked with numerous criminal activities in the region including murder, raids, and land grabbing. They were not directly ordered by the state, but such crimes committed by members of the militia were curtailed by the state authorities (Klein 2007: 141–2). The militia was disbanded as a consequence of the Young Turk Revolution in July 1908.

Although Kurdish revolts during the nineteenth century should not be interpreted as being based on national or political grounds, Kurdish cultural clubs were established in the main urban centres, mainly Istanbul, Diyarbakir, Erzurum, Mus and Bitlis, by Kurdistan's intelligentsia, 'with aristocratic backgrounds [...] sons of princes exiled to Istanbul, or heirs to tribal chieftains educated in the tribal schools or in the Empire's military academics' (Chaliand 1993: 26). These began to contribute and expand the cause of Kurdish nationalism in the late Ottoman period. In the Ottoman Empire, Kurds were divided into many tribes and were not significantly involved in commerce. Their life was nomadic, primarily dependent on sheep and goat herding and some farming. The Kurdish bourgeoisie developed in Kurdish concentrations in Western Anatolia, far from Kurdistan.

After the revolts in the nineteenth century many Kurdish tribal leaders and their families were exiled to other parts of the Ottoman Empire, especially to Istanbul. A number of these individuals became part of the Ottoman administration as members of parliament, governors and military officials, and established literary and socio-cultural clubs. A short period of liberty beginning with the Young Turk Revolution also made it possible for the formation of Kurdish organisations, literary clubs and educational societies to take place.[21] With an Ottomanist perspective, the purpose of these clubs was to include not only Kurds, but also others from within the Ottoman state, because they believed that 'education, modernization and protection of the freedoms of the Kurdish people was important not just for Kurdish society, but for the good of the empire overall' (Klein 2007: 139). However, as mentioned above, these Kurdish societies operated legally and promoted Kurdish identity amongst the Kurdish student population of Istanbul, rather than pursuing any nationalist agenda. The first and perhaps most important Kurdish organisation that was formed after the events of 1908–9 was the *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (KTTC, Kurdish Society for Mutual Aid and Progress). This was founded not in geographical Kurdistan, but in Istanbul, by Kurdish intellectuals and notables most of whom were resident in the Empire's capital. Its main founders, Muhammad Sharif Pasha, Emin Ali Bedirkhan, and Sheikh Said Abdulkadir (son of Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri) were members of key Kurdish tribal families whose 'statelets' had been dismantled by the central Ottoman government earlier in the nineteenth century, and who had been living in 'exile' in the capital ever since. Indeed, the goals of the KTTC, as stated in the first issue of its journal, included defending the Constitution, raising the levels of education in Kurdish society and fulfilling other 'modern needs' of the Kurds, and promoting friendship among all Ottoman groups, particularly among Kurds and Armenians (Klein 2007: 139). Another group of Kurds, mainly students and sons of Kurdish notables, formed another new society called *Heviya Kurd* (Kurdish Hope) in 1910.

There was also a significant effort by Ottoman Kurds to develop Kurdish journalism and literature, benefiting from the relatively

liberal conditions in the last Ottoman decades thanks to the Young Turk Revolution and the ensuing short-lived free social and political atmosphere. For instance, Abdurrahman and Mitdat Mikdat Bedirkhan, brothers from the Botan tribe, published *Kürdistan*, a bilingual journal (Kurdish and Turkish), between 1898 and 1902 in Switzerland, then in Cairo and some of the other European capitals, and finally by Sureyya Bedirkhan in Istanbul from 1908 until World War I.

Other Kurdish newspapers and magazines were subsequently published in Istanbul. One of them was *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi* (*Kurdish Journal of Mutual Aid and Progress*) published in 1908 for nine months, printed in both Ottoman and Kurdish. Also, the *Heviya Kurd* society started to distribute a weekly paper called *Rojî Kurd* (*Kurdish Day*, 1913, three issues)[22] and its successor *Hetawî Kurd* (*Kurdish Sun*, 1913, ten issues) in order to promote Kurdish culture, language, and literature. These clubs started to make nationalist demands only in 1918 with the formation of the *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti* (Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan, SAK) on 17 December 1918. Its activities can clearly be defined as nationalistic, for its leaders openly asked for independence, or at least autonomy (Özoğlu 2001: 386–7). However, Kurdish nationalism missed the critical moment of national formation in the late Ottoman Empire and subsequently confronted a more repressive and organised state ideology after the establishment of the Turkish Republic (Loizides 2010: 515–16). As well as the internal factors, the influence of the Great Powers and the Allies should not be ignored, and this is the focus of the next section.

The Colonial Partition of Ottoman Kurdistan: World War I and Beyond

Discussion about conflict and the Kurds has mainly focused on the past three or four decades, during which thousands of lives have been lost and villages evacuated due to the intensification of Turkish state control over the Kurds and the emergence of the Kurdish insurgency. However, since the beginning of the twentieth century, particularly

after World War I and the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the Kurds have experienced colonial divisions, intense suppression, forced resettlements, and linguistic homogenisation. Divided between several states under the Lausanne agreement after World War I, Kurds have been dominated by different socio-political and cultural systems, and have been culturally, politically, and linguistically fragmented.

This section presents an overview of the Kurdish situation during World War I, and principally examines the Great Powers' intervention in the region, which led to the partition of Ottoman Kurdistan into several states. It also briefly touches upon the socio-political and cultural suppression of Kurds under the turkification process which accompanied the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Understanding the post-World War I situation and the early years of the Turkish Republic is important for understanding the impact on the Kurds of the Turkish state's assimilationist policies that were applied as part of the nation-building process, and which created the environment for the contemporary Kurdish question and the related conflicts. The emergence of Kurdish nationalism during the final decades of the Ottoman Empire and the early republican period, including the principal Kurdish revolts and uprisings, will be elaborated in the next chapter.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Ottoman Empire was already experiencing a continuous period of conflict and unrest following the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, and this intensified after 1914, when the Empire joined the Central Powers (Germany, the Habsburg Empire, and Italy) against the Allies (Great Britain, France, and Russia) in the Great War.[23] The strategic position of Kurdistan between the Ottoman and Russian Empires led to it becoming a battlefield in the fierce war between these two Empires. Not only did the civilian population suffer massacres and deportations, and resettlement of some groups of Kurds to Turkish cities and western Anatolia, but the future of Kurdistan was sacrificed to the interests of other Great Powers, principally France and Great Britain.[24]

In 1918, the war ended with the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, and the whole Empire, especially Ottoman Kurdistan, was left in ruins. Soon afterwards, the partition of the Empire was to take place. The partitioning of the Ottoman Empire (1918–22) resulted in the formation of the current Arab world and the Turkish Republic, as well as the mandate of France over Syria and Lebanon, which has also affected the whole socio-political structure of Kurdistan.[25]

The years after World War I and during the early Turkish Republic are important for the history of the Kurds, because at that time they lost their one great opportunity for independent statehood (McDowall 2004: xi). After the Safavid and Ottoman Empires, the Kurds have become minorities in the territories of several sovereign countries.

As well as the overwhelming geopolitical forces impacting on Kurdistan, the incoherent nature of the nationalist movement was also a very significant factor in the failure of the Kurds to establish statehood. In the late Ottoman era, two distinct opinions about the future of Kurdistan were dominant among Kurds. On the one hand, a group of mainly Kurdish intelligentsia supported independence, and on the other hand, a feudal group did not want to separate from the Turks. The disputes and clashes between urban intellectuals and feudalists always weakened the spread and influence of Kurdish movements in the region. Excluding the nationalist Kurdish intelligentsia, many other Kurds as Muslim citizens of the Empire, favouring the Caliphate, Sultanate, and *vatan* as a land of Islam (Akyol 2006: 23), 'provided substantial manpower for the Ottoman army [. . .] many were enrolled and the greater part of the Ottoman forces in the region was Kurdish' (McDowall 2004: 105). However, Kurdish nationalists such as the Bedirkhans and Serif Pasha of Suleymaniyeh, together with other Kurdish figures, mostly members of the Ottoman bureaucracy, also started to establish their own political organisations towards the end of the Great War.

The societies founded by Kurdish notables before the end of World War I in 1918 did not make political demands, and so should not be considered to be nationalist organisations (Bozarslan 2004, Özoğlu 2004). For instance, *Kürt Teavün and Terakki Cemiyeti*

(The Society for the Mutual Aid and Progress of Kurdistan, SMPK), a socio-cultural organisation founded by an old Kurdish emir (Olson 1993: 37) and closed down by the Young Turks in 1909, attempted to attract attention towards the problems of Kurds, but did not involve itself in making any political demands. Several other Kurdish organisations were founded, such as *Kürdistan Neşri Maarif Cemiyeti* (Society for the Propagation of Kurdish Education) in 1910, *Kürdistan Muhibban Cemiyeti* (Society for the Friends of Kurdistan) in 1912, and *Kürd Hêvî Talebe Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Hope Student Organisation) in 1912. They did not propose any political agenda relating to the Kurds, only social, cultural, and educational notions. On the other hand, *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti* (The Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan, SAK), established during the final years of World War I, and involving prominent Kurdish notables such as Emin Ali Bedirkhan, Sayyid Abdulkadir of Şemdinan, and Hamdi Pasha,[26] is considered to be the first Kurdish society pursuing an open political agenda for the purpose of establishing an independent Kurdish state, and working for the advancement of Kurdistan and the Kurdish people (Özoğlu 2004: 18, 81–2). The SAK split as a consequence of familial rivalries between Kurdish leaders (Bedirkhans and Şemdinans) and internal conflicts.[27]

Initially Great Britain took a supportive stance towards the Kurds, in pursuance of its own regional interests, which included the foundation of Armenia. In this context, Major E.W.C. Noel, who had been the assistant to the British Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, was sent to Turkey in 1919. Noel's mission was to explore the possibility of winning Kurds to the British side. Adopting his proposal, Britain decided to support Kurdish nationalists such as Bedirkhans. However, Britain abandoned the idea of supporting the establishment of a Kurdish state, instead preferring to maintain good relations with the new Kemalist regime.

This was established after the occupation by British and French troops in 1918, as a result of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, and was not received well by Kurdish tribes. Mehmed Serif Pasha (1865–1951), a member of the SAK, Ottoman Ambassador to Stockholm and Kurdish former general of the Ottoman army,

played a key role in the Peace Conference in Paris. He gained support from the Allies for an independent Kurdish state during this conference and reached an agreement with the Armenian delegation involving the division of eastern Anatolia into a Kurdish and an Armenian state.[28] However, several 'tribal leaders from Erzincan sent telegrams to the French High Commissioner in Istanbul protesting at Serif Pasha's actions [. . .] In March 1920 a declaration stressing Islamic solidarity and opposition to efforts to separate Kurds and Turks was signed by 22 Kurdish tribal leaders' (Kirisci and Winrow 2004: 79). Soon after, Serif Pasha had to resign from his position as the president of the Kurdish delegation. Despite the reactions from some Kurdish groups following the defeat of the Ottomans in the war, lobbying in Western countries by Kurdish nationalists for an independent Kurdistan covering a small percentage of the former Ottoman Kurdistan resulted in the Treaty of Sevres, based on 'President Woodrow Wilson's declaration of the principles of civilization, Kurds, among other minorities, were granted the opportunity to claim statehood' (Eccarius-Kelly 2011: 80). The treaty was signed on 10 August 1920 by the Ottoman Empire (defined as the sick man of Europe by the Allies during this period) and Allied Powers in Sevres, France, with four Ottoman signatories. According to Articles 62–4 of the treaty, autonomy was provided for the Kurds living within the Ottoman Empire, thus recognising the legitimacy of the claims made by Serif Pasha:

> If within one year from the coming into force of the present treaty the Kurdish people within the areas defined in Art. Sixty-two shall address themselves to the Council of the League of Nations in such a manner as to show that the majority of the population of these areas desires independence from Turkey [. . .] Turkey hereby agrees to execute such a recommendation, and to renounce all rights and title over these areas [. . .] If and when such renunciation takes place, no objection will be raised by the Principal Allied Powers to the voluntary adhesion to such an independent Kurdish State of the Kurdish inhabiting

that part of Kurdistan which hitherto been included in the Mosul Vilayet (Vanly 1992a: 144).

This autonomy was to be transformed into independence after one year in accordance with a referendum to be conducted among the Kurds. By signing the Treaty of Sevres the Allied powers (Britain, France, and Russia) were fulfilling the wartime Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916,[29] and they started dividing the Ottoman Empire's colonies among themselves. The French obtained Hatay, Lebanon and Syria. The 1917 Agreement of St.-Jean-de-Maurienne between France, Italy, and the United Kingdom allotted France the Adana region.[30] However, this was never fulfilled. After the Turkish resistance gained control over Anatolia, the hope of putting into practice the promises made in the Treaty of Sevres completely collapsed. During the Turkish War of Independence (1919–22), Mustafa Kemal's[31] forces defeated the Allies and, as a consequence of Kemal's victory, the Lausanne Peace Conference replaced Sevres on 24 July 1923, and this fulfilled all Turkey's demands except with regard to Mosul.[32] Turkey refused to acknowledge the Kurds as a distinct nation, so the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne, in which the division of Kurdistan between Turkey, Syria, and Iraq was formalised, made no provision for a Kurdish or Armenian state, but instead certified the return of eastern Anatolia to Turkey with the borders that remain today.

Although Kurdish tribal leaders supported the Turkish national resistance along with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk against the Armenians and Greeks, Kemal did not keep his promises to them by providing special rights and privileges.[33] In 1923, under Kemal's leadership, the secular state of Turkey was established. He dissolved the National Assembly, which had included 75 Kurdish representatives. Within Turkey's state discourse, the concept of Turkishness came to refer simultaneously to a civic, territorially defined identity, as well as to an ethnic identity (Secor 2004: 355). He also closed Kurdish schools and forbade all expressions of Kurdish culture and language. There was no place for 'Kurdishness' in the new Republic of Turkey. In the 1930s and 1940s, Kurdish villages were renamed in Turkish,

the words 'Kurd' and 'Kurdistan' were obliterated and replaced in historical texts, people were forced to adopt Turkish surnames, and Kurds were called 'mountain Turks' (Houston 2005: 406). Kirisci and Winrow (2004: 105) argue that the government consolidated its rule over the Kurdish areas, and many Kurds seemed to have been assimilated by 1939. Similarly, van Bruinessen asserts (1984a: 121) that, 'by the late 1930s, the eastern provinces were pacified. Every Kurdish village of some size was closely controlled by a Turkish police post [. . .] The government policy of forced assimilation seemed to bear fruit. In the towns, everyone spoke Turkish, and Kurdish nationalist sentiment seemed to disappear altogether.'

After the Turkish Republic was established, some of the late Ottoman cultural institutions were closed down, such as Turkish Hearths (*Türk Ocaklari*),[34] as a result of rising Turkish nationalist sentiments. New institutions were established, notably The People's Houses (*Halkevleri*), which were founded in 1932[35] as the semi-official cultural organs of the single party (CHP), aiming to spread the ideals of the party and create modern and secular citizens for the Turkish Republic. These played a key role in the cultural assimilation of minorities. Through their activities, which ranged from organising conferences and theatre performances to establishing libraries, they played a major role in the attempts to modernise the region and assimilate Kurdish speakers into Turkishness (Aslan 2007).

The hegemonic discourse of Modern Turkey continues to aspire to full homogenisation; Turkification is still very active in Turkey and Turkish Kurdistan. Turkey still lacks the minimal democratic conditions necessary to enable toleration of freedoms and liberties for different groups and views. Kurdish MPs, lawyers, activists, and journalists operating under the name of KCK (Koma Civakên Kurdistan, Union of Communities in Kurdistan) were imprisoned; some of them have been released very recently after being imprisoned for several years,[36] and hundreds of them are still in prison.

First, in 1946, with the foundation of the Mahabad Republic and, secondly, on 11 March 1970, with the signing of the

Iraqi-Kurdish agreement, it was thought that the Kurdish struggle had resulted in successful formations. However, Iraqi Kurdistan is unique among the regions of Kurdistan in having obtained *de facto* autonomy, being officially governed by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). It was after the American invasion in 2003 that Kurds from Iraqi Kurdistan had their first great opportunity since the colonial partition of Ottoman Kurdistan.

Following the uprisings of Kurdish *pesmergas* against Saddam Hussein's regime, the Kurds succeeded in removing Iraqi forces from Northern Iraq. Although Iraqi Kurdistan is officially a part of united Iraq, the new Constitution of Iraq established in 2005 refers to it as a federal entity. Arabic and Kurdish are both official languages of the federal region. The KRG has administered Northern Iraq since 1992, and new legislation in the 2005 Iraqi constitution gave official recognition to the KRG as the government of a constituent state in a democratic federal Iraq (Gunter 2010: 184) that includes two main parties – Massoud Barzani's KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party) and the PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) led by Jalal Talabani – as well as others such as the KDP, PASOK (Kurdistan Socialist Party), the Kurdistan Branch of the Iraqi Communist Party, the Assyrian Democratic Movement, and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (KHRP 2003: 65). The Kurdish federal region includes three provinces, Duhok, Arbil, and Sulemania, as legally autonomous areas.[37]

With the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime, the idea of an independent Kurdistan was reborn. In 2005, organised by the Kurdistan Referendum Movement (KRM), which was established in 2003, an unofficial referendum covering these three autonomous regions took place. It was the initiative of Kurdish elites and activists, mainly leading members of the Kurdish diaspora in Europe and the United States. Although 98 per cent of the participants voted for the establishment of an independent Kurdistan, the main Kurdish political parties, namely the PUK and the KDP, rejected the outcome and supported the notion of a unified Iraq.[38]

The Kurdish Diaspora: Formation of Diasporic Identity and Politics of Homeland

A number of diaspora communities retain a strong attachment to the territorial aspect of their original identity, even if they are physically distant and unlikely ever to travel to that territory. In some cases, as the essential value of territory starts to diminish with the focus on daily activities in the new host country, the homeland's symbolic importance can increase. 'Homeland' and 'diaspora' have been used as interlinked terms for centuries, as diaspora populations are deeply influenced and implicated, ideologically and culturally, by their links with their homeland. Indeed, as Avtar Brah (1996: 190) has claimed, 'the concept of diaspora embodies a subtext of home'. In the settlement countries, these communities and groups, which have not necessarily migrated by force, recreate a territorially discontinuous identity and maintain a link with other members in their claimed or imagined homeland (Safran 1991, Chaliand and Rageau 1995, Marienstras 1989). This suggests that the mythologised homeland is re-imagined in diaspora. In this respect, and because of my subject matter, the concept of diaspora that I wish to propose here is embedded within the concept of 'homeland' rather than the country of settlement.

Much migrant writing is concerned with concepts of 'homeland' because, as a result of separation from 'home-land', the writer centres his attention on his sense of 'home' as a requirement in the search for identity, and, because of the absence of home, the vision of 'home' is constructed on the basis of memories and imagination. In other words, by acts of imagination and memories, 'home' can be moved and rebuilt. Similarly, according to Hall (1990: 236), displacement increases the yearning for home and recreates 'the endless desire to return to "lost origins", to be one again with the mother, to go back to the beginning'. However, the lack of a sovereign entity undoubtedly distinguishes the Kurdish diaspora from other state-bound diasporas, and Kurds are certainly to be included in the 'stateless diasporas' category. The stateless and divided Kurdish 'territorial minority' forms a diaspora (extra-territorial minority)

consisting of immigrants and refugees from four 'countries of origin' spread throughout many nation states (Emanuelsson 2005: 20). Nor can the major role played in Kurdish history by forced migration be ignored. In recent years large numbers of people have fled from Kurdistan, and Kurds now make up a broad range of diasporic communities[39] dispersed around the world.[40] This is one reason why estimates of the number of Kurds outside Kurdistan are imprecise. In 1992, van Bruinessen estimated that a quarter to a third of all Kurds were living outside Kurdistan, and that only a minority of them were likely ever to return (1992b: 66). Refugees from Turkey constitute the majority of Kurds in Europe, at a rate of approximately 80 to 85 per cent (Wahlbeck 2001: 73–99); substantial numbers are to be found in Europe and the United States, and there are also indigenous Kurdish populations in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkmenistan (Nezan 1993).[41] Kurdish diaspora numbers include refugees, migrants, and second and third-generation members of the diasporic communities, and the figures keep changing. Since the displacement early in the twentieth century, the extent of migration has increased further. In 1980, Kurds fled from the military takeover in Turkey, and later from the armed conflict and continuous human rights violations that followed (Emanuelsson 2005: 84). During the 1990s the number of Kurdish refugees from other states increased drastically because of escalating suppression and conflict between these states and the Kurds (van Bruinessen 2000b: 10–12, Wahlbeck 2001: 74). As a result, there has been some very important research carried out on Kurdish diaspora issues, including that by Wahlbeck (1999), Emanuelsson (2005), Alinia (2004), and Østergaard-Nielsen (2006), as well as chapters or articles by Faist (1999), van Bruinessen (2000b), and Hassanpour (2003b). Each work discusses the Kurdish diaspora from a different perspective.

For Kurds, forced exile becomes essential to the heightened sense of longing for 'homeland' and is central to the understanding of the Kurdish diaspora. Kurds who are legally accepted in the host country are tied to each other as members of the same community through various networks, such as associations, community centres, and foundations that link them with their real and 'imaginary' 'homeland'.

It is also significant to note that apart from the migration of Kurds to European countries as a result of economic and political factors, forced migration within Turkish Kurdistan has also had a significant impact on their geographical distribution. Internal migration in the Kurdish provinces during the 1970s occurred because of economic factors (Wedel 2000: 182), whereas the migrations of the 1980s and 1990s happened mainly for political reasons, with thousands of Kurdish villages evacuated or demolished under the Emergency Decree policies of the Turkish State. While some Kurds migrated to other Kurdish urban centres (mainly Diyarbakir, Urfa, and Van), the majority settled down in various metropolitan cities of Turkey, mainly Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Mersin.[42] Regarding the forced migrations, van Bruinessen (2000: 79) points out that the 'first deportations were simply reprisals against rebellious tribes. In later years, deportations became part of the concerted effort to assimilate the Kurds,' a view supported by other researchers (Besikci 1977, Jongerden 2001, 2007).

Some years since the criteria and conditions related to EU accession obliged the Turkish government to lift the state of emergency, the Turkish state has begun to favour the return of Kurdish villagers under village-town projects, while pressure from the Council of Europe through the Law on Compensation for Damage arising from Terror has created the possibility of full compensation for the villagers for the loss of lands and possessions (Claridge and Linzey 2005). Despite these policies, however, the resettlement of evacuated villages is considered to have failed to restore damaged and destroyed structures in villages (Human Rights Watch Report 2005, KHRP Legal Review 2005).

Kurds are increasingly characterised by exile, migration and diaspora; thus, the displacement from 'homeland' has become a part of Kurdish identity. Akkaya notes that 'diasporic experience has allowed the Kurds in diaspora to have multiple identities rather than one based on a very strong reference to "the homeland"' (2011: 8). Kurdish diasporas have thus contributed to the reproduction and articulation of a collective and trans-state Kurdish identity (van Bruinessen 1999, Wahlbeck 1999, Alinia 2004, Hassanpour and

Mojab 2005, Khayati 2008, Akkaya 2011). The interaction between 'homeland' and 'diaspora', which is also central to the issue of diaspora, is very influential within Kurdistan, as well as in the varied contexts within which Kurds are living. As the idea of 'home-land' for Kurds has been a contested and evolving notion, the ideological notions of Kurds in the 'homeland' affect Kurds in the diaspora, and vice versa. Van Bruinessen (1992b, 2000) asserts that the awareness of Kurdistan as the homeland of the Kurds has been strengthened in exile due to the increased flow of modern ideas, freedom of expression, a safe distance from the region of origin, and, eventually, the political mobilisation of Kurdish guest-workers and their descendants by Kurdish refugees.

The Kurdish language, which is the cornerstone of the cultural identity of the Kurds, becomes the vehicle of literary expression and cultural articulation in the diaspora, since for many years Kurdish intellectuals and writers expressed themselves in the official language of the states in which they lived due to the long-lasting ban on Kurdish. It is, therefore, not surprising that one of the most significant contributions of the Kurdish diaspora is the revival of Kurdish, mainly Kurmanji, through literature. It is crucial to note that many literary works have been published outside Kurdistan.[43] After the Sheikh Said and Xoybûn (Khoybun) uprisings, many intellectuals and writers were obliged to choose exile. Celadet Ali Bedirkhan, Kamuran Ali Bedirkhan, Cegerxwîn, Nureddin Zaza, Qedrî Can, Reşîdê Kurd and Osman Sebrî contributed to modernising the language and developing a Kurdish prose tradition in exile.

In addition, when considering Kurdish diasporan literature, attention should be given to the contribution of Yazidi Kurds who lived in Georgia, Azerbeijan and Armenia during the Soviet period. Despite the oppression and hard conditions under Stalin, writers and intellectuals such as Erebê Şemo, Eliyê Evdirehman, Heciyê Cindî, and Emîne Evdal played an important role in Kurdish literature and in the emergence of Kurdish novelistic discourse.

Many Kurds from Turkey came to the West as immigrant workers in the 1960s and 1970s (Kreyenbroek 1990: 56). In that context, we can see a shift of Kurmanji literary activities to Western Europe.

Exclusively, Kurds from Turkish Kurdistan have managed to promote the Kurmanji dialect and develop literature in Kurmanji. 'As part of their policy of promoting the cultural development of the immigrant communities, the Swedish authorities allot their Kurdish residents a relatively large publishing budget' (Allison and Kreyenbroek 1996: 26). Kurdish publishing houses in Sweden have taken the lead in encouraging many Kurdish intellectuals to write in their mother tongue. 'Press freedom and state subvention of migrants' cultural activities enabled the intellectuals to publish journals and books in Kurdish.' Kurdish 'was developed into a modern literary language for political and intellectual discourse' (van Bruinessen 1992b: 66).

The first Kurdish Cultural Institute, which was founded in France, made remarkable contributions to the promotion of Kurdish culture and literature. The institute has organised biannual seminars at which Kurdish intellectuals and writers gather together and discuss the problems of the language on the path of modernisation. Likewise, various cultural institutions, community centres, and foundations in the capitals of European countries have organised language courses in order to teach Kurdish and have supported the publication of Kurdish journals, magazines, and books. In this respect, Sweden is another important host country for Kurds, many from Iraq and Iran, and many of whom are politically active intellectuals (Schmidinger 2010). It is clear that the structure of Kurdish communities can differ from one European country to another; thus it is claimed that Kurdish migrants in Germany are very well organised politically (see, for example, Emanuelsson 2005, Akkaya 2011). The Kurds in Sweden are socially and politically diversified, and since they live in the more favourable Swedish political environment, they maintain a diaspora discourse that is both flexible and more highly developed (Khayati 2008).

CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW OF KURDISH POLITICS: WARS, UPRISINGS AND MOVEMENTS

It is widely known that the states that rule over Kurdistan have maintained a stubborn denial of Kurdish identity and have often repressed cultural and linguistic expressions of Kurdishness with great severity (Chaliand 1993, Allain 2004, Özcan 2006). Attempts over time to suppress Kurdish identity in the four regions of Kurdistan (Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Syria) have acted as a stimulus for Kurdish nationalism, manifested in various uprisings. However, even before the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Kurdish revolts occurred against state policies. Sultan Abdülhamid II's attempts at centralisation during the nineteenth century led to a backlash by Kurdish tribal chiefs which turned into widespread revolts. Then, after the foundation of the Turkish Republic, a number of Kurdish uprisings took place during the 1920s (Sheikh Said in 1925 and Ararat in 1928) and 1930s (Dersim in 1937–8). The Constitution of 1961 resulted in the return of democratic politics in Turkey and contributed to the foundation of a left-wing opposition movement that the early Kurdish activists took an interest in. Thus, after the silent years of the 1940s and 1950s, the 1960s and 1970s were a period in which tens of Kurdish political parties and organisations clashed with the Turkish state. Turkey experienced a military coup in 1980, followed by severe repression. As a result of

the crackdown, many Kurdish political parties and groups disappeared during the 1980s. While the coup destroyed or pushed into exile almost all these Kurdish parties, PKK (*Partîya Karkerên Kurdistan*, Workers Party of Kurdistan) maintained its dominance both in Kurdistan and in exile. PKK, having experienced radical political transformations since its foundation in 1978, has managed to achieve a considerable level of support from Kurds despite the on-going oppression and bans imposed by the Turkish state on those who support Kurdish rights (Galip 2014).

Despite the high number of national movements and Kurdish political organisations, Kurdish nationalism has never been a strong or cohesive political force. As a result, Kurds still remain socially and politically fragmented (Vali 2003: 82). Kurdish resistance and revolts from the nineteenth century up to the present day have been motivated by diverse political ideologies and concerns. While the nineteenth-century revolts aimed at maintaining the administrative system within the Ottoman entity before the centralisation reforms officially came into effect in 1839, some Kurdish uprisings in Turkey during the 1920s contained both Islamic and nationalistic sentiment against the strong Turkish nationalist state which arose after World War I. However, Kurdish political parties during the 1960s and 1970s, including PKK, did not pursue any religious agendas; instead they were committed to left-wing ideologies and Communism.

This chapter, which is divided into three parts, aims to shed light on the development and functioning of Kurdish uprisings and national movements.

The first section focuses on the nineteenth-century Kurdish revolts led by Sheiks and emirate rulers such as Bedirkhan and Sheikh Ubeydullah against the centralisation policies of the central government and in favour of the preservation of their traditional rural and tribal lifestyle.

Shortly after the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, a series of Kurdish uprisings in Turkish Kurdistan erupted, including numerous politically motivated regional uprisings such as the Sheikh Said Rebellion, the Ararat uprising in 1930, and the Dersim uprising in 1937–8. In the second section, I will examine how Kurdish

nationalism increased its momentum after the Turkish War of Independence and the establishment of the Turkish Republic. These Kurdish uprisings in the 1920s and 1930s were suppressed so severely that in the following decades there was no active national movement. This was the case until the new Constitution was put in place in 1961, providing some rights and freedom, and enabling the establishment of left-wing Kurdish and Turkish political parties.

The third section will describe the background of Kurdish nationalist parties and organisations, and the opposition between these parties and Turkish left-wing political parties, which led to inter-party violence. It will then concentrate on PKK, which has gained significant support since the beginning of its armed struggle in 1984.

Kurdish Revolts in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Kurdistan

This section focuses on the tribal revolts which took place during the nineteenth century in Ottoman Kurdistan. I briefly consider the principal revolts, including the Baban Revolt (1806–8), the Revolt of Mir Mohammed of Soran (1833–7), the Bedirkhan Revolt (1847), the Yazdan Sher Revolt (1855), and the Sheik Ubeydullah Revolt (1880–81), all of which were linked to Kurdish principalities, and were crushed severely without achieving their targets.

The Kurdish principalities, which were founded in the sixteenth century for the protection of the eastern frontier of the Ottoman Empire and to reinforce stability, continued to serve their purpose and were very advantageous for the Ottoman state for centuries. Alongside modernisation and centralisation, the abolition of principalities caused instability and unrest not only between Ottomans and Emirs; it also created tensions between tribes, as the lack of principalities led to the re-emergence of the tribal structure. It was in this context that the politics of centralisation and the abolition of the principalities resulted in strong objections by Kurdish tribal rulers (McDowall 2004, Orhan 2012). According to David McDowall (2004) and Martin van Bruinessen (1992a), the

suppression of the principalities played a big role in the breakout of Kurdish revolts in the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. The Ottoman centralisation reforms were instigated by Sultan Mahmud II (1808–39) and developed by Sultan Abdülhamid simply to ensure control over the eastern part of the empire after losses in the Balkans and the independence of Greece, but the fact that they were seen as threatening arrangements led to the series of Kurdish revolts.[1] By discussing these revolts chronologically, I will attempt to contribute to a better understanding of their causes, which will also be helpful in understanding those which took place after the Turkish War for Independence and the transition from the Ottoman Empire into the modern Turkish state, though the latter were motivated by different reasons and demands, involving nationalistic sentiments.[2]

The nineteenth century has been regarded as the period of the insurrection of the feudals (Yildiz 1992, White 2000), one of which was the Baban revolt, the first significant Kurdish revolt, which occurred between 1806 and 1808 in the territory of Baban principality, one of the 16 principalities awarded to the Kurds after the victory of the Ottomans at the Battle of Chaldiran. The principality was established under Sulayman the Magnificent after the invasion of southern Kurdistan (Iraqi Kurdistan).

Baban principality (1649–1851) covers the present territory of Iraqi Kurdistan and western Iran, and aided the Ottoman army against the Iranian threat during the eighteenth century, but relations with the Ottoman authorities had deteriorated significantly by the first decade of the nineteenth century.

According to Chatty (2010: 242), the Ottoman authorities started to worry about the power of the principality and, in order to limit its power, they imposed a member of a rival Kurdish tribe as Emir, thereby challenging the authority of the principality and aggravating relations between themselves and the principality. In addition to this, rivalries between Babans and other Kurdish principalities such as Soran and Botan, together with the Ottoman centralisation reforms and the weakening of local autonomy, created unrest within the principality. The revolt started under the leadership of Abdurrahman Pasha, with clashes breaking out between the Baban army and the

Ottomans. It lasted several years, at the end of which Abdurrahman Pasha was defeated and had to flee to Iran. The principality maintained its autonomy until 1851, when the Ottomans abolished it under the modernisation reforms.

Both the Russo-Turkish War of 1806–12 and the subsequent one in 1828–9 had a destructive influence on the Kurds, as both wars were partially fought out in Kurdish regions. This was especially true of the second war, when the Russians temporarily took Erzurum and Trabzon, and some parts of Kurdistan were temporarily cut loose from the empire (van Bruinessen 1978: 220).

Just a few years after the Baban revolt another significant revolt broke out in Southern Kurdistan (Iraqi Kurdistan) led by Mir Muhammad (also known as Pasha Kor, or Mir Kor, meaning Blind Pasha or Blind Emir[3]), who was considered to be the descendent of Saladin. He was from Soran principality, which was located between the Great Zap and the Iranian frontier, and had gained its autonomy after it was taken from the Safavids. Mir Muhammad expanded his control, incorporating wider territory and other tribes, and this was not well received by the Ottoman authorities. In a period of two decades, he took over the Bahdinan emirate of Amadiyah, massacred many Yazidis, led a movement across the frontier into Iran, and controlled many other regions of Northern Iraq, notably Arbil, Zakho and Duhok (Ateş 2013: 67). This attracted the attention of not only the Ottomans but also other local emirates and tribes. According to Nezan (1993: 19), through this revolt, he 'attempted to take advantage of the Ottoman Empire's difficulties and create an independent Kurdistan [. . .] to secure for his dynasty the honor of having realized Kurdish unification and independence'. Establishing his armies and armaments factories in his capital, Rawanduz, he tried to get support from other tribes to create unity, but this was rejected (Safrastrian 1948: 52, Nezan 1993: 45, Chatty 2010: 242). According to Ateş (2013) and van Bruinessen (1978), with regard to the reports of the British agent Richard Wood, the Qajars offered help to Mir Muhammad, who was also supported by a Russian infantry battalion of 800 men, against the Ottomans, and this led the Ottomans to realise that they would not defeat the Mir. They offered

that he should remain the ruler of Rawanduz but acknowledge his submission to the Sultan, and he accepted this arrangement. However, after he was sent to Istanbul, he disappeared, and the aftermath is unknown. Although his brother, Resul Beg, took over the principality after Mir Muhammad, a few years later the Soran principality was abolished.

Another significant revolt during the nineteenth century was that of Bedirkhan Bey (1802–58), the ruler of Botan emirate, which ended in a similar way to that of Mir Muhammad ten decades earlier. Bedirkhan's family was one of the most powerful in Kurdish feudalism, hereditary chieftains of the Bokhti tribe and rulers of the principality since the fourteenth century, although there had been some periods of interruption (Nezan 1993: 21). Although Bedirkhan Bey was awarded an official rank in the Ottoman army for a campaign against the rebellious governor of Egypt in 1839 (Houston 2008: 52), soon afterwards he provoked severe reaction by his ill-treatment of the Nestorians, against whom he carried out massacres and forced many to leave their lands, as they refused to pay their taxes. According to McDowall, Bedirkhan's motivation for his treatment of the Nestorians was twofold: 'fear of European missionary encroachment and active dislike of Nestorian Christians who were both formidable fighters and in conflict with their Hakkari overlord' (2004: 52). Britain and France put pressure on the Ottomans to punish Bedirkhan (van Bruinessen 1978, Klein 2011, Ateş 2013). Apart from the thousands of soldiers under high-ranking Ottoman generals, troops who were supported by Yazidi Kurds (Ateş 2013: 79), the betrayal by Bedirkhan's nephew, Yezdan Sher (who later led another uprising against the Ottoman Empire which was also defeated), who guided the troops, led to inevitable defeat for Bedirkhan. Under remorseless attack by the Ottoman forces, he had to surrender in July 1847. He, together with his family, was exiled to various places (including Crete and Damascus). Botan ceased to exist as a semi-independent emirate; however, the role of the Bedirkhan family in the politics and socio-cultural sphere of Kurdish lives continued, and descendants played key roles in

Kurdish nationalist movements (e.g., *Xoybûn*, which was established in Syria in 1927, and supported the Ararat uprising of 1928–30) much later.

The next Kurdish uprising was led by Yezdan Sher (sometimes referred to as Yazdan Sher), the nephew of Bedirkhan, who rose up against the Ottoman Empire in 1855, in the middle of the Crimean War (1854–6) between the Ottoman and Russian Empires. Yezdan Sher chose this time because of the weakness of the Ottomans during the war, although the Ottomans were supported by Britain and France, who wished to stop the expansion of Russia. Yezdan Sher refused to submit to the governor of Bitlis, who was the appointee of the Ottoman authority, and he rose up. He occupied Bitlis (where he launched the struggle) and Mosul with 2,000 supporters without any difficulties, and continued through the entire region between Van and Baghdad, gaining more partisans, eventually having several thousand men under his command, before being captured after betrayal by British agent Nimroud Rassam (Vanly 1992: 154). According to Nezan (1993), he was pursuing an independent Kurdistan, which was why he trusted Rassam, who, together with Britain, he thought would assist him in achieving his aims, so he set off with him for Istanbul, the Ottoman capital, where he was imprisoned.

The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–8[4] partially took place in Kurdish provinces. Sheikh Ubeydullah (also referred to as Sheikh Ubeydullah of Nehri) played a role in the war as a commander of Kurdish tribal forces supporting the Ottomans, but after the war he led a sudden rebellion, starting in 1880 in Kurdish areas in both the Ottoman Empire and Persia.[5] Due to his having established a base during the Russo-Turkish war, which had ended with the defeat of the Ottoman forces, and to his tribal connections and religious influence, and arising from his discontent about the Treaty of Berlin (1878) which was signed after the war and made promises to Armenians about an independent state in the Van area (referred to in Article 61), Sheikh Ubeydullah's revolt represented a big challenge for both the Ottoman and the Iranian states. Sheikh Ubeydullah, who was head of the Naqishbendi movement and from the powerful

Kurdish Şemdinan family from Nehri, succeeded in establishing his influence in the neighbouring Kurdish areas of Iran, Urmia, and Mahabad, and approached Tabriz before the revolt was suppressed by Ottoman and Iranian forces. Afterwards he was exiled to Istanbul, and he died of cholera in Mecca in 1883. The defeat of Sheikh Ubeydullah by the Ottoman and Qajar forces marked the last significant political development in Kurdistan until World War I (Dahlman 2002: 278). It is considered that the motivations behind Sheikh Ubeydullah's revolt were Kurdish national aspirations (McDowall 2004) and religious objections to the secularising Ottoman Empire (Olson 1998). Sheikh Ubeydullah's letter to William Abbot, the British consul-general in Tabriz, is reckoned to be the first expression of modern Kurdish nationalism:

> The Kurdish nation, consisting of more than 500,000 families, is a people apart. Their religion is different [from that of others], and their laws and customs are distinct [. . .] The Chiefs and Rulers of Kurdistan, whether Turkish or Persian subjects, and the inhabitants of Kurdistan, one and all are united and agreed that matters cannot be carried on in this way with the two Governments [Ottoman and Qajar], and that necessarily something must be done, so that European Governments having understood the matter, shall inquire into our state. We also are a nation apart. We want our affairs to be in our own hands (cited in Joseph 1961: 109–10).[6]

Mainly on the basis of this letter, according to Olson (1989) Sheikh Ubeydullah's revolt should be considered to constitute the origin of Kurdish nationalism. Jwaideh (2006: 231) also considers the revolt to be the origin of the Kurdish nationalist struggle, as he mentions that 'fear of the Armenian ascendancy in Kurdistan appears to have been one of the most powerful reasons behind [Ubeydullah's] attempt to unite the Kurds' and le'd them into an uprising. However, McDowall (2004: 53) argues that there is little evidence that the revolt was anything other than a tribal disturbance.

In summary, some historians or researchers consider the nineteenth-century Kurdish revolts, notably those of Kor Muhammad Pasha (1833–7), Bedirkhan Pasha (1843–7), and Sheikh Ubeydullah (1880–82), to be the first Kurdish nationalist revolts, as a response to the abolition of the principalities by the Ottoman state. However, it is also commonly thought that the motivations behind these revolts lay in economic and religious concerns manifesting themselves in the perceived need for feudal tribal rulers to maintain their own authority, and involving only limited demands for administrative reforms, such as the exception of Kurds from taxes and protection of their local power, rather than for an independent Kurdistan (van Bruinessen 1988, Mumcu 1992, Özoglu 2004, Klein 2007).

It is true that the Tanzimat reforms, the Russo-Turkish wars (of 1828–30 and 1877–8), the Turko-Persian wars, and Ottoman intervention in the affairs of the Kurdish emirs, which occurred because of the increasing weakness of the Empire, all drastically affected the Kurdish regions, resulting in hostility against the Ottoman authorities and a series of revolts. The limitations to the privileges of the Kurdish feudalists and principalities led certain rulers to react against the Ottoman authorities in order to maintain these privileges. However, after the loss of the independent principalities, one should not disregard the discourses of these rulers or emirs on the creation of independent Kurdistan or on self-rule in their regions. They challenged Ottoman rule by claiming their own authority over Kurdish regions, either through independence or self-rule, and this signified a revival of national consciousness inspired by national liberation movements in the Balkans, which was built upon, considerably by the beginning of World War I, through various Kurdish political and socio-cultural organisations and uprisings.

From Unrest to Uprising: The Sheikh Said Uprising and Others

Immediately after the founding of the Turkish Republic, there were several overt and covert, maybe not fully nationalist and

revolutionist, regional Kurdish uprisings, whose actors and forms varied. These were not only severely suppressed, but policies of forced assimilation began to be practised more effectively afterwards. While Orhan (2012: 350) argues that it can be estimated that at least 150 conflict groups emerged during the 1920s and 1930s in the Kurdish lands in general, Taspinar (2005: 79) states that of 18 revolts against the state between 1924 and 1938, 17 were Kurdish in origin. This section will focus on the principal uprisings, which led to mass mobilisations and resulted in more repressive state policies towards Kurds and Kurdish regions.

As mentioned in the previous section, as well as the Kurdish notables and sheiks resisting the centralisation policies of the late Ottoman Sultans, the development of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) of Young Turks supporting Westernised ideals and opposing Sultan Abdülhamid II led to an increase in unrest. Some Kurdish figures not only supported but also held positions within the CUP from the start. Two of the four founding members of the CUP, Ishak Sukuti and Abduallah Cevdet, were Kurds (Jwaideh 2006: 102), and after the Young Turk Revolution[7] (which was welcomed by many Kurds), other Kurdish members took on crucial positions.[8] However, the revolution led to a national awakening among the Kurds, during which the first Kurdish political society, *Kürdistan Teali ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Society for Rise and Progress of Kurdistan), was established in Istanbul, and a number of other organisations followed.[9] Due to the nationalisation and centralisation policies of the CUP up to the outbreak of World War I, there were several acts of local and regional Kurdish resistance, and conflicts between Kurds and Turks took place. The secular regime of the Young Turks, the loss of their privileged position after Sultan Abdülhamid, forced Turkification policies, and administrative centralisation can be listed as the main causes of unrest among Kurdish notables against CUP rule. The murder of Sheikh Said Barzinja of Suleymania, the death of Ibrahim Pasha of Millis (general of the Hamidian Cavalry), the Revolt of Bitlis[10] organised by a number of Kurdish sheiks, the killing of Mustafa Pasha (the chief of the Bajalan Kurds in the Khanaqin region) in 1912 by Turkish police, and the execution of

Sheikh Abdul Salam Barzani II[11] in 1914, all increased the tension between Kurds and the Young Turks. As a consequence of the French Revolution, however, the ideas of nationalism had become influential among the Turks just as they were influential for other millets in the Ottoman Empire, including the Kurds.[12] Sheiks, religious leaders representing an important segment of the Kurdish masses, were more nationalist than the Turkified urban Kurdish elite, and they were closer to the Kurdish masses (Jwaideh 2006: 105). The sheiks acted as political-religious leaders during the late Ottoman era and after the foundation of the Turkish Republic, as they had the power to mobilise a large number of Sunni tribes. Kurdish sheiks not only opposed the secular regime of the CUP, they also paved the way for Kurdish nationalist organisations and the rise of the urban notables, especially in the capital, Istanbul. The end of World War I and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire led to an expansion of Kurdish nationalism within separate movements. Özoğlu (2001) argues that Kurdish nationalism emerged as a response to the collapsing Ottoman Empire during and after the war. Therefore, it was not a cause of the empire's disintegration but, on the contrary, a consequence. Again Özoğlu argues that the political and military activities of Kurdish notables in the period before World War I were not nationalistic; they reflected the desire of powerful Kurdish lineages to consolidate, expand, or recover their regional influence. However, this all changed soon after the end of the war.

In 1920–21, during the early days of the Turkish War of Independence, an uprising took place among the Alevi Kurds in the region of Koçgiri (today Sivas and Tunceli) located west of the town of Erzincan, led by Haydar Beg, the head of the influential Koçgiri tribe. The area was populated by Alevi Kurds, a heterodox religious minority.[13] This was an important rebellion, constituting the first serious challenge to the Kemalist regime. The leading figures of the movement came from a range of different backgrounds, including Nuri Dersimi, a Kurdish nationalist intellectual, Mirzayan Alişer, a poet, and prominent tribal leaders such as Haydar Beg himself, Mustafa Pashazade, Alişan Beg, and Haci Rassim. Kieser (2002) particularly emphasised the role of the Kurdish Alevi tribes in this

revolt, arguing that they were the first 'interior' enemies opposing Mustafa Kemal Pasha's (later Atatürk's) reorganisation of the power structures. There are diverse arguments about the cause of the Kocgiri rebellion, as it was characterised by fluidity, and rebellious actors could have varying perceptions, calculations, and political ambitions (Orhan 2012: 340). Although the movement, under the influence of the Society for the (Advancement of Kurdistan) *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti*, started before the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres (1920), Kurdish autonomist ambitions arising from the Treaty motivated the rebellion. The leaders of the rebellion, in supporting the provisions of the Treaty which could lead to an independent Kurdistan (Article 64), were obliged by the military and security forces, who carried out heavy attacks on the region, to limit their demands to include only autonomy under a Kurdish governor, with Kurdish officials and cultural rights for Diyarbakir, Van, and Bitlis, rather than the establishment of an independent Kurdistan (Gawrych 2013: 135). The rebellion was suppressed brutally on the orders of Mustafa Kemal, assisted by lack of support from Sunni Kurdish leaders and tribes, who saw it as a specifically Alevi revolt, and the state deported part of the region's population to the western towns of Turkey.

Four years after the crushing of the Kocgiri rebellion, in February 1925, the Sheikh Said rebellion occurred in the Kurdish region of Turkey, particularly Bingöl, Palu, Genç, Diyarbakır, and Varto. The transition from empire to nation state in Turkey was the cause of both the Kocgiri and the Sheikh Said rebellion. Although Mustafa Kemal proposed a degree of possible autonomy for some Kurdish regions, this was not implemented. Just after the foundation of the Republic, the emerging Kemalist regime and Turkish nationalists attacked religion and embarked on prohibitive policies against the Kurds, leading to the establishment of a Kurdish underground nationalist organisation named *Azadî* (Freedom) in Erzurum in 1923 by former officers of the Turkish army and the Hamidiye regiments. Prior to this 'nationalist sentiment had been confined to the educated notable class in Istanbul, to the larger towns of Kurdistan and a handful of aghas' (McDowall 2004: 192).

Azadî set out to attract Kurdish religious leaders such as Yusuf Ziya Beg, Halit Beg Cibran, and Sheikh Said, in order to reach out to the masses. *Azadi*, under the leadership of Sheikh Said, carried out a revolt which is considered to be a turning point in Kurdish nationalism. The Sheik Said uprising, by a Zaza-speaking Sunni tribe and one of the major Naqshbandi-led uprisings, carried within it multiple aspirations, including a desire to restore religion (the uprising was not supported by the Alevi Kurds), and the hope of creating an independent Kurdistan. The uprising started in the village of Piran in 1925, and is considered to be the first large-scale nationalist rebellion, using religion mainly to mobilise and spread nationalist sentiment. Both Dahlman (2002) and van Bruinessen (1992a) argue that, in contrast to the Sheihk Ubaydullah rebellion in the 1880s, the Sheikh Said uprising was effective in politically mobilising the Kurds. The uprising spread widely, from north of Diyarbakir to other Kurdish towns and provinces in the southeast, such as Bingöl, Palu, Genç, and Varto, and lasted for about three months. However, the Turkish authorities reacted in a brutal manner. To suppress the uprising, the capital (Ankara) deployed almost half its army to the region, and authorised 'Tribunals of Independence' to punish offenders (Zürcher 1984, 2004, McDowall 2004, Jwaideh 2006, Romano 2006). The Independence Tribunal of the East (*Şark İstiklal Mahkemesi*) ordered the execution of Sheikh Said and 52 followers on 29 June 1925.

In order to suppress the Sheikh Said rebellion and prevent any other uprising, the state enacted a series of policies. Martial law was declared in the Kurdistan region, and on 4 March 1925 the Ankara government announced a Law on the Maintenance of Order (*Takrir-i Sükûn Kanunu*), which restrained the freedom of the press[14] and suppressed any sort of opposition to the state. Even after the uprising had been suppressed, the Tribunal continued to pursue the leading figures who had been involved, and the rebels' family members were forced into exile in Western Turkey (Olson 1989).

Discussion still continues as to whether the Sheikh Said rebellion was based on religious and tribal reactions to the modernity of the Kemalists or whether it had a nationalist base. A number of scholars

and researchers depict the rebellion as a combination of Kurdish nationalism and Islamic grievances against the new republic (e.g., Olson 1989, White 2000, Romano 2006), but for Kurds the rebellion is thought of as part of their national struggle (Jongerden 2007: 25) and it is believed that it led to hope of liberation amongst the Kurdish masses (Nezan 1993: 54).[15] A social engineering project under the title of Reform Plan for the East (*Şark Islahat Planı*),[16] the state's extra precautions after the uprising, and forced assimilation policies increased the tension between the Kurds and the newly established state, and consequently the unrest scattered to other parts of Kurdistan.

After the Sheik Said rebellion, further revolts took place. One of the main ones was the Mount Ararat (*Ağrı Dağı*) uprising, which is considered to be the most nationalist of the rebellions. The relationship between this revolt and the *Khoybun* organisation is similar to the link between *Azadi* and the Sheik Said uprising. *Xoybûn* supported the Kurdish revolts in Turkey during the 1930s. *Xoybûn*, meaning 'to be one's self', was the name of a Kurdish nationalist organisation founded in 1927 in Syria. It was led by Ehsan Nûrî Paşa, Celadet Bedirkhan, and some other Kurdish intellectuals, and played a major role in the subsequent Ararat uprising that took place in north-eastern Turkey in 1928–30. Even though the revolt was violently suppressed by Turkish forces, it was a significant movement that attracted a great deal of support, especially from the Kurmanji-speaking Kurds of the region, as well as raising awareness of Kurdish national identity. According to White (2000: 76), '*Xoybûn* affirmed its nationalism at its founding congress, asserting there that Kurdish national consciousness, waking up from its heavy sleep, has cried out loud – so high that the assimilation project cannot stand up'. Hence, *Xoybûn* attempted to create a strong Kurdish national liberation front with a trained fighting force that would not depend on the traditional tribal leaders. Despite the pressure from the Turkish state to eliminate *Xoybûn*, the French authorities tolerated the existence of the organisation in Damascus because of their oppositional stance towards Turkey. While conducted and commanded by a modern and secular organisation,

the Mount Ararat uprising was perceived by the Turkish nationalists of the time as an instance of banditry (Yegen 2006: 129). Like other rebellions that had taken place earlier, the tribe members involved in the revolt were deported and relocated to western provinces of Turkey.

Afterwards, many other towns and provinces in Turkish Kurdistan, notably Dersim (which was historically much larger than today, covering Sivas, Erzincan and Elazig provinces), also witnessed several conflicts and state violence in the 1930s. Since the nineteenth century, centralisation efforts had been accelerated in the Dersim region through administrative and military means, such as 'reinforcement of gendarmerie, population census for military recruitment, improvement of transport and communication, construction of judicial offices' (Orhan 2012: 351). After the Law on Settlement in 1935, a special law was introduced specifically for Dersim by the Grand National Assembly, using as a pretext the 'backwardness' and disobedience of the tribes, through which the military gained the authority to arrest or deport anybody in the region. In addition, military approaches to the pacification of the Dersim region were applied in 1936 under the guise of modernisation. Seyyid Rıza, a local charismatic figure, played a key role in the mobilisation of the Kurdish Alevi tribes in the region, uniting other Kurdish tribes, and insisting on autonomy and the withdrawal of the Tunceli Law of 1935. After several incidents—tribal attacks took place against the newly founded police stations—a military campaign was put into practice. Although Seyyid Rıza and his comrades surrendered, governmental and military operations continued to expand to an even larger scale. Again, although Seyyid Rıza, his son Resik Huseyin, and some other tribal leaders were executed, the military cleansing campaign continued. The Turkish state approached the suppression of Dersim with severity, fielding around 25,000 combatants against 15,000 rebels. Each side lost approximately 5,000, and the devastation of civilian villages is inestimable (Olson 1989: 126).[17] According to official reports at the time, almost 10 per cent of the entire population of Tunceli was killed. The Kurds claim that their losses were even higher (van Bruinessen 1996).

Although the rebellions mentioned above arose partly from regional and partly from Islamic sentiments, they were still significant movements in the development of Kurdish nationalism. As Orhan (2012: 339) argues:

> Kurdish rebellions and conflict groups in Turkey during the 1920s and 1930s were [. . .] local as they underwent regional forms and variations. Yet, the values and actions of rebellious actors were not reduced to only local realities since it is possible to observe that they exceeded local frames by religious and nationalist motivations.

The government initiated military campaigns and propaganda against Kurdish insurgents in order to cultivate Turkish identity. While heavy-handed suppression of Kurdish uprisings created more tension between Kurds and the Turkish state, assimilation of the Kurds seemed to be a permanent solution, a way to put a stop to Kurdish uprisings. According to Mesut Yegen, Kurds were regarded as 'prospective Turks', who could be Turkified through policies and pressure. The dispersal of the Kurdish population to Turkish western provinces, the closure of *medreses* (which were very important for the development of Kurdish language and literature), the imposition of Turkish as the language to be used for education, the promotion of Turkish cultural homogeneity, and bans on any word related to 'Kurd' can be included among the policies created for the Turkification process pursued by the Turkish state.

The Emergence of a Kurdish Socialist Movement since the 1960s, and the Hegemony of the PKK

After the brutal crushing of the Kurdish rebellions in the 1920s and 1930s, Kurdish oppositional organisations and groups remained silent until the 1960s. From the 1960s through to the 1980s, there were tens of Kurdish and Turkish left-wing political parties and organisations, resulting in two decades of prosecutions, clashes within and between the parties, extrajudicial killings, and the closure

of the parties, followed by the closure of others which emerged soon after. Until the PKK took up arms in 1984, none of these organisations constituted a substantial or long-term challenge to the Turkish state.

Olson (1992: 487–8) explains the reason for the silence after the Kurdish rebellions of the 1920s and 1930s as, first, brutal suppression having placed the Kurdish nationalists on the defensive, and, secondly, the government establishing an alliance with the Kurdish tribal leaders and feudal lords who cooperated with them in the suppression of Kurdish nationalist activities. Olson also argues that the emergence of Kurdish nationalist organisations from the 1970s occurred as a result of the weakening alliance between the feudal chieftains and the state.

However, even before then, Kurdish unrest against the Turkish Republic had emerged during the 1960s. As opposed to the military resistance of the 1920s and 1930s, Kurdish unrest in the 1960s and 1970s assumed the form of popular support for left-wing parties or political groups (Yeğen 2007: 132–3). This was mainly due to the relatively liberal political atmosphere created, under the influence of the prevailing international conditions, by the 1961 Constitution.[18] This provided extensive individual rights and liberties, which were subsequently severely limited following the 1971 and 1980 military coups. Socialism became lawful in 1960, soon after which the Turkish Labour Party (or Workers Party of Turkey, *Türkiye İşçi Partisi*, TİP) was established (ın 1961) by representatives of workers rather than a group of intelligentsia, in contrast to earlier socialist groups.[19] During the multi-party period,[20] with competitive politics, both left- and right-wing parties divided into factions arising from ideological and political differences. These parties in the 1960s included the new socialist and Marxist parties,[21] in contrast to the Kemalist and state nationalistic CHP (*Cumhuriyet Halki Partisi*, the Republican People's Party, which was the only party between 1923 and 1945), and Kurds affiliated to these parties.

However, in the late 1960s, Kurds started to break with Turkish socialist ranks to form new organisations focusing on Kurdish cultural and political issues (Watts 2010: 42). The separation of

Kurdish activists from the Turkish left-wing movement began during '*Doğu Mitingleri*' (Eastern Meetings),[22] organised by the Turkish Workers Party in the late 1960s, and intensified during the 1970s. From then on, Kurdish activists began to establish their own socialist groups and political parties, increasingly challenging, in a more comprehensive manner, the country's official ideology, Kemalism, for its denial of the existence of a distinct Kurdish identity (Galip 2014).

Founded in 1965, the TKDP (*Türkiye Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi*, Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey), is one of the oldest Kurdish political parties in Turkey. The TKDP was inspired by Iraq's KDP, led by the Barzani family. The KIP (*Kurdistan İşçi Partisi*) and KUK (*Kurdistan Ulusal Kurtuluşçuları*, Kurdistan National Liberationists) both emerged later from TKDP. Some other left-wing organisations such as *Kawa*, *Rizgarî*, and *Ala Rizgarî* were sympathetic to TKDP, but were also inspired by the biggest Turkish left-wing political party of the time, the TIP (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*, Workers Party of Turkey). The TKSP (*Türkiye Kürdistan Sosyalist Partisi*, Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan) was also inspired by the TIP; in fact TKSP's leader Kemal Burkay was previously a central executive committee member of TIP. Meanwhile the PKK, *Tekoşın*, and *Sterka Sor* were on the more revolutionary left-wing side of Kurdish movements.

It is also important to note that all these Kurdish parties were illegal. The legal element of Kurdish politics was mainly dominated by the cultural associations, such as the DDKO (*Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları*, Eastern Revolutionary Culture Centres), which was outlawed during the military coup of 1971; its successor, the DDKD (*Devrimci Doğu Kültür Dernekleri*, Revolutionary Cultural Associations of the East), which was founded by people on the left-wing side of the TKPD; the DHKD, which was the legal side of the TKSP; and many other smaller associations. Importantly, PKK had no direct links with, nor did it emerge from, any of those major Kurdish political parties of the 1960s and 1970s. PKK had its own unique ideology, with inspiration from revolutionary leftist organisations of the time, namely the THKO (*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu*, the People's Liberation Army of Turkey) and the THKP-C

(*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Parti-Cephesi*, the People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey). As noted by Akkaya and Jongerden (2011: 125–35) PKK learned a lot from the experiences in armed struggle of these two parties. Ideological differences and personal rivalries led to many divisions and conflicts among these organisations (Meho 1997: 11), to such an extent that they spent as much time in clashes with each other as they did in the struggle against the Turkish state and Turkish security forces. PKK is considered to have had clashes with some of these organisations and eliminated its political rivals (White 2000: 148). With the military coup in 1980 and the massive operations to crush Kurdish organisations, party members were either imprisoned or forced to escape to Europe.

In order to build so-called political stability and restore law, and resulting from constant disorder and impotent governance, the military, promoting a Kemalist ideology, took over the government on 12 September 1980 and remained in power for three years. General Kenan Evren, chief planner of the military coup in 1980, served as president for the next seven years. Under military rule, the unitary state with its ideology of a single national identity dealt a fatal blow to diversity and multiple identities, while oppressing Turkey's democratic civil society. Undoubtedly the military coup had numerous outcomes, including the termination of the legal activities of a large number of left-wing parties, media censorship, economic liberalisation at the expense of labour, increased Islamic impact, weakened relations with the European Union,[23] and the denial of Kurdish identity. Under the junta's rule, thousands of people were arrested, including Kurdish activists, and half were severely tortured (Balci 2008: 179). Political parties were outlawed, and hundreds of writers, journalists, and scholars were either arrested or deported. Most importantly, the 1982 Constitution and further legal amendments in 1983 that led to decreasing politicisation of the groups, and to violations of human rights and freedoms, came into force during this period. In particular, Article 5 on the fundamental tasks of the Turkish state and Article 26 banning the use of the Kurdish language resulted in heavy-handed repression of Kurdish identity.

Despite the dispersal of other Kurdish parties and organisations after the coup, PKK and its guerrilla war had, by the mid-1980s, become central to the national struggle. As a consequence of the massive operations to destroy Kurdish organisations, party members were either imprisoned or forced to escape to Europe. This situation left PKK, which had managed to move many of its members to Lebanon's Bekaa Valley just before the coup, in a position to dominate Kurdish politics in Turkey from the early 1980s onwards. Along with the suppression of other Kurdish organisations and parties, there were certain other organisational and methodological factors that led to PKK, which developed out of the Marxist and revolutionary left, being the only power in the Kurdish national struggle in Turkey. There are various arguments about PKK's success in the 1980s and 1990s. Some researchers consider that the brutal 1980 coup was the primary dynamic clarifying popular support for PKK (Romano 2006, Tan 2009); for others the suitability of Kurdistan's geography for guerrilla warfare (Göcek 2011) is also regarded as a factor behind its achievements. To some, the support received by PKK from other states, such as Iran and Iraq (who, if they had issues with Turkey, could punish the Turks by helping the Kurds), was another reason for its political success (Barkey and Fuller 1998). Ergil (2000) argues that PKK grew rapidly in size and popularity, especially recruiting rural Kurds, partly due to the harsh repression by the Turkish state of Kurdish political and cultural rights. Accordingly, after the military coup and the suppression of other Kurdish organisations and parties, there was no alternative political vehicle for the Kurds in Turkey other than PKK (Robins 1996), which made it the most influential organisation for the Kurds in Turkey and Turkish Kurdistan:

> Turkey's long-simmering war with PKK stretching back to 30 years now is often considered as one of the world's bloodiest conflicts, resulting in the loss of tens of thousands of lives. In 1983, 1986 and 1987 Turkey's air force and army made extensive bombing attacks against PKK camps. Up to 7,000 commandos scoured the border areas, sometimes penetrating

> up to 20 miles, in search and destroy missions. 1983 marked the first time in 60 years, since 1923, that so many Turkish troops were on Iraqi soil (Olson 1992: 489).

Despite seeking asylum in a number of countries, PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan was captured by Kenyan officials in February 1999 and handed over to Turkish officials.[24] Since then he has been held in semi-isolation in Imrali Island Prison. Sympathisers responded to his capture with various strident demonstrations, protests and riots in Europe. PKK's power is considered to have declined since 1999 because, along with changes in the regional balance of power in the Middle East and increasing disenchantment with PKK among the Kurds, Öcalan's detention was itself a major blow to the party (Radu 2006: 87), and discussions have started about its political future and actions (Akkaya and Jongerden 2011: 143). The main concern of its supporters is whether the party has given up the ideal of a United Greater Kurdistan. According to Akkaya and Jongerden (ibid: 143–4), although PKK has not completely abandoned the idea, it has been transformed from a classical political party to a 'complex party' that includes different parties and organisations within its framework and that has proposed a democratic confederalist system. Changes in organisational structure, democratic confederalism as an alternative to the state, and new ideological and political approaches, can be seen as new attempts by the party to reinvent itself.

However, Öcalan's statements at the time of his arrest and similar statements issued later via his lawyers that praised his prison conditions and emphasised his wish to negotiate with Turkish officials were seen as a reversal of his position, and were regarded by some Kurds as a betrayal of PKK's struggle, especially by Kemal Burkay, leader of the Kurdistan Socialist Party (PSK), who accused Öcalan of being a coward (Marcus 2007: 284). However, millions of Kurds still refer to Öcalan as their leader, although his contact with his sympathisers is highly limited. Since 2011, he has been banned from accessing his legal representatives on trivial grounds such as that weather conditions were preventing access to the island, or the non-functioning of the boat.[25]

On 21 March 2013, during Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakir, Öcalan's call for a ceasefire and negotiations was read out, declaring a 'farewell to arms' and withdrawal of PKK's fighters from Turkey to Iraqi Kurdistan. Sticking to its promises, PKK released eight Turkish captives in March 2013, and started silently to withdraw to South Kurdistan on 8 May 2013. Despite the hopes and commitments from the Kurdish side, however, the silence of the Turkish government and the inconsistent remarks of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who uses 'head terrorist' as a description for Öcalan during public speeches, create more obstacles in the uneasy journey towards peace. Erdoğan was criticised for not revealing the measures his side had agreed to in exchange for the guerrillas' ceasefire and withdrawal. The peace process faced the risk of deadlock because of the uncertain practices of the ruling AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, Justice and Development Party) government.[26] Erdoğan's rhetoric promising peace has completely failed to be borne out in reality, along with the AKP's long-anticipated reform package,[27] which was laid out at the end of September 2013. Not only did the package not meet the demands of the Kurdish side for peace, but it was designed to consolidate the power of the AKP. During the peace process and beyond, Öcalan's opinions regarding the process have been announced either through the pro-Kurdish BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) delegation[28] or his family members.

The first socialist party after the 1980 military coup was the short-lived Socialist Party (Sosyalist Partisi, SP) led by Doğu Perinçek,[29] which emerged in 1988 with a pro-Kurdish programme. It succeeded in embracing the Alevi and Kurdish elite, including the intelligentsia, and began to address the Kurdish problem (Ergil 2000, Yalçın-Mousseau 2012), but with very little effect.

Although several pro-Kurdish political parties have been established since the 1990s and entered into parliamentary politics, obtaining voting bases in Kurdish populated areas, they have constantly been subject to closure or court trials because their activities have been claimed to be in violation of the Constitution and the laws on political parties. Many such parties have been closed

down by Turkey's constitutional court, and many of their activists arrested and imprisoned.

The first official Kurdish legal political party, HEP (*Halkın Emek Partisi*, People's Labour Party) took seats in the Turkish parliament between 1991 and 1993. HEP formed an alliance in the 1991 general elections with SHP (*Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Partisi*, Social Democratic Populist Party), which claimed to be heir to the CHP,[30] and was led by Erdal İnönü, the son of İsmet İnönü (co-founder of CHP). The alliance with HEP enabled SHP to gain Kurdish votes, resulting in 22 seats in parliament. SHP's decision to enter a coalition government with DYP (*Doğru Yol Partisi,* True Path Party, established in 1983; it has since been transformed into DP (*Demokrat Parti*, Democratic Party), and merged with the Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*, ANAP) in 2009) led to disputes among Kurdish deputies because of DYP's human rights abuses in the late 1970s. Kurdish deputies resigned from SHP, while the members of HEP remained in parliament.

However, since then, due to its alleged relations with PKK, HEP has been under serious threat of closure, and endured official and unofficial harassment by the Süleyman Demirel (Prime Minister of Turkey during that period) administration.[31] Thirty-three HEP members have been murdered since the killing of Vedat Aydın[32] in 1991 (Whitman 1993: 43). Due to the allegations about their cooperation with PKK, of their 18 MPs, one was murdered, four have been imprisoned, and six were forced to flee Turkey. For example, Leyla Zana, wife of Mehdî Zana, who was elected as the major of Diyarbakir but imprisoned after the 1980 military coup, has served ten years in prison.

The DEP (*Demokrasi Partisi*, Democracy Party), HADEP (*Halkın Demokrasi Partisi*, People's Democracy Party), and DEHAP (*Demokratik Halk Partisi*, Democratic People's Party), the successors of HEP, faced the same ill-treatment, murders, and disappearances. From HEP to HADEP, 105 politicians have been murdered (Ibrahim and Gürbey 2000).[33] Despite the closure of many parties, the pro-Kurdish movement has maintained its existence. DTP (*Demokrat Türkiye Partisi*, Democratic Turkey Party) was established in 2005 as

the successor of DEHAPS, and won victories during the 2009 municipal elections. After the closure of DTP in December 2009 by the Constitutional Court of Turkey, BDP (*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi*, Peace and Democracy Party), founded in May 2008, became its successor, and won 36 seats in parliament in the 2011 elections by supporting independent candidates and thus tackling the 10 per cent electoral threshold. HDP (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*, the People's Democracy Party) is considered to be the sister party of BDP, with which it will join in the upcoming local elections in March 2014 under the HDP banner in Western Turkey in order to unite the Kurdish and Turkish left and not be limited by Kurdish regional boundaries, and with emphasis on disadvantaged and oppressed groups, reflecting its leftist orientation.

Since 1984, excluding several ceasefires, until the very last ceasefire declared by imprisoned PKK leader Öcalan in March 2013 as the abandonment of the armed struggle in order to resolve the 'problems of Turkey' by democratic means, military and political clashes have continued. Disappointed with the talks on the peace process which took place between March and September 2013, and the 'democratic reform package' unveiled by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (now he is the president of Turkey) in September 2013, many Kurds, alongside the pro-Kurdish (and illegal) party BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) hope to achieve their rights through the next general election in 2015.

CHAPTER 3

KURDISH LITERARY AND CULTURAL PRODUCTIONS: FROM ORAL LITERATURE TO DIGITAL MEDIA

In addition to the Kurds' territorial identity in the context of Turkish Kurdistan, it is commonly considered that the Kurdish language[1] has become the most salient emblem of Kurdish culture and national identity (Kreyenbroek and Allison 1996: 1, Vali 2003: 100, McDowall 2004: 9) and the leading marker of the Kurds as a distinctive nation (Kreyenbroek 1992: 68, Blau 1996: 155, Llobera 2003: 212, Fasold 2006: 377). Different linguists and scholars identify various ways of dividing the dialects. David McDowall (2004) divides the language into two main dialects, Sorani and Kurmanji; Philip G. Kreyenbroek (1992) divides it into five, Sorani, Kurmanji, Gorani, Zazaki, and Kermanshahi; while Nader Entessar (2010) categorises it as Kurdi, Kurmanji, and Sorani. All these views confirm the fact that Kurdish consists of several dialects rather than a unified language. This chapter, focusing on epics, literary works, and media in the Kurdish language, will contribute to a better understanding of Kurdish literary and cultural productions, and their radical transformation from oral epic to digital media, while maintaining the significance of the language in reinforcing the distinctness of the Kurdish nation and identity. Since this book covers novels produced in Turkish Kurdistan and its

diaspora, my focus here is mainly on the development of Kurdish literature in the Kurmanji dialect in this region.

Indeed, many Kurds regard their language as both proof and symbol of their Kurdish identity, and the Kurdish language is one of the major grounds on which they can claim to be a separate nation.[2] Furthermore, it is often argued that the death of the Kurdish language is associated with the death of Kurdish identity. It is, therefore, very significant that efforts have been made to preserve and develop the two main dialects of Kurdish (Sorani and Kurmanji), particularly in their written forms. The emergence and increasing development of Kurdish literature in both the diaspora and Turkish Kurdistan demonstrates the significance of language. In Turkey since the mid-1920s, in Iran particularly in the 1920s and 1930s, in Syria since the early 1960s, Kurdish language and literature have been under severe threat due to bans and prohibitions. Before the fall of the principalities in the mid-nineteenth century, the Ottoman and Persian states were not in a position to prevent the development of a written tradition in Kurdish (Blau 1996: 51), and this resulted in a rich repertory of Kurdish classical poetry.

In the second section of the chapter, I will briefly concentrate on Kurdish written literature, from Kurdish classical poetry to the most recent literary genre, the Kurdish novel. The pioneer of the latter emerges in 1935, and towards the end of the twentieth century has developed mainly in the diaspora. However, during the past decade, Istanbul and Diyarbakir have become the principal centres for the publication of Kurdish novels, and even Kurdish writers based in Europe prefer their works to be published in these two cities. Since the appearance of the first Kurdish newspaper in 1898, the Kurds have experienced a transition from a predominantly oral and scribal tradition to a print, audio-visual, and electronic culture (Hassanpour 1996: 82). Modern communication technologies are not only used in Kurdish but also in other sovereign languages such as Turkish, and, representing a form of imagined community, have enabled Kurds not only to develop their language, but to reach out to the masses to express their repression and their quest for nationhood, or to circulate cultural artefacts. In this respect, the last section of the chapter

will deal with press and media in relation to the modernisation and urbanisation of Kurdish society, mainly in host countries in Europe.

Rituals of Oral Storytelling: *Dengbêj*, Epics, and Songs[3]

To begin with, there is no denying the fact that Kurdish poetry and epics were transmitted by oral tradition. *Memê Alan*, *Siyabend û Xecê*,[4] *Dimdim*, *Zembîlfiroş*, and *Binevşa Narîn û Cembeliyê Hekkarê* are the leading epics, and have reached our present day mainly through *dengbêj* culture and traditions. '*Dengbêj*' (bards)[5] is formed of two words, *deng* (voice) and *bêj* (the one who tells, from *gotin* – to tell), and refers to the 'expert on voice and word' (Mutlu 1996: 55). More precisely, it is defined as 'a person who has a pleasant voice and who sings *stran* about people and events' (Allison 2001: 68) or 'Kurdish musician with a memory for folkloristic stories and regional myths' (Eccarius-Kelly 2011: 179) and 'reciter of Kurdish romances (tragic love stories)' (Chyet 1995: 230).

Love, war, and loyalty are the central themes around which Kurdish epics are usually concentrated. *Memê Alan* is often regarded as the national epic of the Kurds. It is completely fictional and is unrelated to the history of the Kurds, and it exists in various versions. The protagonists are Mem, the son of the Kurdish Amir, and Zîn, daughter of the Emir of Botan, and the story presents a panorama of Kurdish social relations, traditions, and customs. The work by Ahmad Khani (in Kurdish, *Ehmedê Xanî*) entitled *Mem û Zîn* (*Mem and Zin*) is based on this pre-existing epic/folktale, and tells the story of two lovers separated by factors beyond their control. Xanî bases his historical and geopolitical analysis on the narrative of the '*methnewi*' (a kind of poem consisting of rhyming couplets) of *Memê Alan*, which has come to be regarded as the symbol of the Kurdish language and is interpreted as an expression of nationalist sentiments. It is considered to be the first work to have been written down, and reveals the feeling that the Kurds were a distinct people. American linguist Michael Lewisohn Chyet in his doctoral research called '*And a Thornbush Sprang up Between Them: Studies on Mem û Zîn, a Kurdish Romance*' (1991) analyses 16 different versions of the epic.

Siyabend û Xecê (*Siyabend and Khaje*) is a love epic similar to *Mem û Zîn*. It takes place on Suphan Mountain in Van and concerns a desperate love that brings death for both Siyabend and Khaje. According to the story, Siyabend, an orphan, is expelled from his village because of his bad behaviour. While he is in the mountains, Siyabend finds his best friend, and afterwards a woman, Xecê (Khaje), with whom he falls in love. However, the son of a wealthy man is also in love with her and kidnaps her. In contrast to many other epics, Siyabend, the main character, is not a particularly good person. The epic ends with the deaths of both characters, who share the hope of reunification after death.

The ballad of *Dimdim* is one of the most well-known Kurdish epics. It is believed that it is based on a real Kurdish uprising during the reign of the Safavid Shah Abbas (1587–1629). In *dengbêj* style, it was passed down to the nineteenth century, when it was written down by ambassador Alexandar Jaba. It describes the resilient and glorious fight of Kurdish villagers led by Amir Khan against Safavid soldiers for Dimdim fortress near Urmiye, starting in 1608 and lasting for seven years. The uprising was violently suppressed. Erebê Şemo's novel *Dimdim* (1966) is also based on this very ancient epic. Following the Qasra Şirin agreement between the Ottomans and the Persians in 1639, in which Kurdistan was divided between the two empires, Castle Dimdim, which remained on the Persian side, became a symbol of struggle for Kurds.

Like the majority of Kurdish epics, *Zembîlfiroş* (*Basket Seller*) revolves around a desperate love story. It takes place in an unknown past in Farqin (the city's Turkish name is Silvan). It concerns a prince who, realising the temporality of life and the reality of death, abandons all his possessions and walks away. Together with his wife, he starts living as a dervish, making and selling baskets and constantly travelling. He ends up in Farqin, where the wife of the highest-ranking official (*beg*) falls madly in love with him. However Zembîlfiroş loves his wife, and furthermore he is a dervish so he will not be tempted by earthly matters. The epic has two different endings: either Zembîlfiroş kills himself or he begs the gods to take his life.

Another well-known Kurdish epic, *Binevşa Narîn û Cembeliyê Hekkarê*, recounts a tragic love story. Dewrêş Beg wants to marry his cousin Binevş even though neither Binevş nor her family want him. They move away to a different region that is controlled by Cembelî bey, who meets Binevş and falls in love. When Cembelî receives her family's approval to marry Binevş, Dewrêş kills all her family and marries her by force. Cembelî becomes a dervish. Years later he discovers where Binevş is being kept, but when he goes to see her, through a terrible mistake she kills him, and afterwards kills herself. The epic, like others, ends unhappily, with the death of Cembelî and Binevş. The moral attitudes and physical strength of Cembelî are emphasised throughout the epic. Îhsan Colemergî wrote a novel with the same title based on the epic, but, while the plot is essentially the same as the epic, the ending, quite to the contrary, is a happy one.

While maybe not as common as in earlier periods, Kurdish orally transmitted stories continue to be significant, and strenuous efforts are made to maintain the '*dengbêj*' (bard) culture, despite modernisation and the supremacy of written literature over oral tradition. Kurdish myths and stories constitute an inspirational sphere for researchers and even Kurds themselves to understand Kurds and Kurdistan.[6] Anne-Marie Thiesse (1999), who considers 'the nation' to be a recent phenomenon, argues that nations and national identities are invented in such a way that national territory and boundaries are protected through myths, along with such elements as national history, heroic past, national character, and cultural artefacts.[7] In this regard, it is important to be aware of Kurdish epics and stories in order to understand Kurdish modern literary works, because, by referring to historical events, past tragedies, classical works, and epics and myths, Kurdish novelists attempt to sustain or construct Kurdish national identity through their texts and narratives.

The Development of Kurdish Literature and the Emergence of the Kurdish Novel

Because of the socio-political circumstances of Kurdistan, Kurds have been deprived of the conditions for creating written literature; even

so, this literature, in the form of poetry and epic writing, arose in the tenth century. It must be noted that most of these works were written in the dominant language of the rulers, going back to as early as the thirteenth century (Blau 1996: 154). For example, Kurdish historians and biographers such as Ibn al-Athir (d. 1233) and Ibn Khallikan (d. 1282) wrote in Arabic. The geographer and historian Abu al-Fida (d. 1331) also used Arabic in his writings. In the sixteenth century, Idris Hakim Bidlisi (d. 1520) wrote the first history of the Ottoman dynasties, called *Hasht Bahasht* (*The Eight Paradises*), in Persian. Likewise, Sharaf Khan, ruler of the Principality of Bidlis, wrote *Sharafname* (1596), concentrating on the history of the Kurdish Principalities over five centuries, in Persian. Blau (1996: 154) argues that the use of dominant languages was widespread among historians and non-creative writers, who felt they belonged to 'the ranks of the intellectual and ruling elites of their extra-ethnic communities'; however, creative writers, particularly poets, used Kurdish in their work, thereby 'endowing it with the power of becoming a collective identity symbol and perhaps a medium of written communication outside the poetic domain'. Among the earliest leading classical poets and lyricists writing in Kurdish are Melayê Bateyî (1414–95), Mele Perîşan (?), Elî Herîrî (1415–90?), Melayê Cizîrî (1570–1640), Feqiyê Teyran (1590–1660), and Ehmedê Xanî (1651–1707). Although they received their education in Arabic and Persian at '*Madrasa*' (*madrasah*, Islamic theological school),[8] they expressed themselves through their poetry using their mother tongue.

Being also well-versed in Sufism, these poets contributed a great deal towards developing Kurdish into the language of intellectuals. Cizîrî work, *Divan*, was used as an essential source book at *Medreses*. *Divan*, which contains 123 poems, was published for the first time in 1904 in Berlin by Martin Hartman. Apart from love and history, he took advantage of philosophy, physics, and astronomy as thematic issues in his poetry. Feqiyê Teyran (1590–1660), who was a student of Melayê Cizîrî, wrote *Sêxê Senan* (*The Sheikh of Senan*), *Qiseya Bersiyawî* (*The Story of Bersiyay*), and *Qexlê Hespê Reş* (*The Story of the Black Horse*). He is considered to be the first prose writer in Kurdish.

His prose tale *Bersis*, which is full of djinns, fairies, and devils, is based on an epic common to Jews and Kurds. *Bersis* is written in a poetic style, and it gives information about the social life of people in that period.[9] According to Mehmed Uzun (2007), Teyran developed his poetic style in accordance with Cizîrî; however, he stayed away from the influence of Islamic mysticism, instead taking steps towards using the language of common people.

Advocacy of the use of the Kurdish language continued during the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. According to Kreyenbroek (1990: 56), 'over the course of the 19th century something like a Kurdish nationalism began to develop, and from the end of that century onwards we find Kurdish intellectuals writing periodicals in Kurmanji, some of which advocated the "liberation of Kurdistan"'. The poet Hacî Qadirê Koyî (in English, Haji Qadir Koyi, 1817–97) is among the intellectuals who were familiar with nationalist struggles in modern nations. Koyî, who wrote in Sorani and spent his last years in Istanbul, even urged Kurds to use modern tools such as newspapers and magazines for mass communication. Until World War I, Kurmanji was strong, as most national movements were led by Kurmanji-speaking intellectuals, or figures such as the Bedirkhan brothers.

When discussing the development of Kurdish language and literature one cannot ignore the role of the press. The first Kurdish periodical, entitled *Kurdistan*, which began publication one year after Koyî's death, is a very significant attempt at developing Kurdish in written form. The first issue of *Kurdistan* (1898–1902) was published in Cairo on 22 April 1898 by Miqdad Midhat Bedirkhan, whose brother Abdurrahman Bedirkhan Beg took over responsibility for the periodical after six issues. From Cairo it moved to Geneva, London, and Folkestone, appearing in both Kurdish and Turkish and focusing on cultural, literary, and political issues.

Xanî's *Mem û Zîn* and Koyî's poems were published and distributed all over Kurdistan. With the appearance of *Kurdistan*, the interest in prose writing increased, and the first Kurdish short story, *Çîrok* (*Story*) by Fuadê Temo, who was the founder of *Kürt Hêvî*, was published in Istanbul in the journal called *Rojî Kurd* (*Kurdish Day*).

Political organisations such as *Kürdistan Azm-i Kavi Cemiyeti*, *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Society for Cooperation and Progress), *Kürd Talebe Hêvî Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Hope Student Organisation), *Kürd Tamim-i Maarif Cemiyeti* (The Organisation to Spread Kurdish Publishing and Sciences), and *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti* (Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan) published journals and newspapers in Kurdish and Ottoman Turkish, such as *Kürdistan*, *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, *Rojî Kurd*, *Hetawî Kurd* (*Kurdish Sun*), and *Jîn* (*Life*). They all gave a great deal of space to Kurdish literature. In *Jîn* (1918) with its 25 issues, edited by Mukisli Hamza Beg and Memduh Selim, in cooperation with *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti*, the works of Ehmedê Xanî, Melayê Cizîrî, Siyahpoş Nalî, and Hacî Qadirê Koyî were published.

Two members of the Kurdish Rozhaki-Badirkhanid princely house, Celadet Ali Bedirkhan (1893–1951) and Sureyya Bedirkhan (1883–1938), and Kamuran Ali Bedirkhan (1895–1978) developed a Latin-based alphabet for Kurmanji. The Bedirkhan brothers used this alphabet for the first time to publish the journals *Hawar* (*Cry*) (1932–43) and *Ronahî* (*Light*) (1935), which they smuggled out of French Syria into Turkey. Then, Kamuran Ali Bedirkhan published *Roja Nû* (*New Day*) (1943–6), which again contributed to the development and spread of Kurdish literature within Kurdish society. The works of Osman Sebrî, Qedrî Can, Nureddin Zaza, Cigerxwîn, Ehmed Nami, and Kadri Cemil Paşa were published in these three journals.

It is evident that the development of the Kurdish language has been negatively influenced by the prolonged banning of the language itself, as well as by other acts of oppression which have contributed to a lack of political unity among the Kurds. As Hassanpour (1993: 140) states, 'the modern state plays a major role in the destinies of minority languages'. The foundation of the Turkish Republic and the process of linguicide in Syria meant that from the 1960s the development of Kurmanji slowed, and publishing in Kurmanji effectively ceased (Hassanpour 2005: 647, Izady 2007: 313, Uçarlar 2009: 200), being replaced by Sorani, which became the central dialect in terms of the number of publications and linguistic

developments from that period through to the 1980s. Since the 1980s, however, the lifting of embargoes in Turkey and Turkish Kurdistan on writing and publishing in Kurdish, and the contributions made by Kurdish migrants in Europe to publication and broadcasting, have revived and reinforced the use and development of the Kurmanji dialect, and have returned it to where it was at the beginning of the twentieth century. Even so, the fragmentation of the Kurdish nation and the difficulties arising from social and political conditions mean that the various branches of Kurdish literature have developed quite separately from one another, despite the developments that have occurred in both the Sorani and Kurmanji spheres during the past two decades.[10]

Iraq under the British Mandate granted limited cultural and linguistic rights to the Kurds, which led to the flourishing of Kurdish literature in Iraq. Kurdish prose writing appeared through the publication of Kurdish magazines and newspapers. In Syria under the French mandate in the period between the two World Wars, Kurdish literature was developed thanks to the efforts of Prince Celadet Bedirkhan. However, when Syria gained its independence after World War II, Kurds lost their liberties and cultural rights, and were obliged to get their works published in exile. In this respect, it is essential to focus on Cigerxwîn (1900–84) who is a renowned Kurdish poet, writer, journalist, and historian. Although he was educated at religious *Medrese*, he criticises the backward feudal and religious establishments, which were considered to be the main reason for the Kurdish workers' and peasants' miserable living conditions. In 1927, Cigerxwîn contributed to *Hawar* by publishing poems. He carried on the classical form of traditional Kurdish poetry by maintaining the old heritage of classical Kurdish poets such as Cizîrî and Xanî.

Due to the harsh socio-political conditions, the dominance of oral traditions and poetry over prose writing in Kurdistan, and the conservative nature of the Middle East relative to the West, the Kurdish novel emerged quite recently. The Kurds have a rich, extensive, and mainly oral literature that goes back to pre-Islamic times (Blau 1996), but compared with poetry and epic writing,

Kurdish prose writing developed rather late; this is not unusual since 'the dominance of poetry over other literary genres has been a common phenomenon in the history of many oriental nations' (Ahmadzadeh 2003: 139). Aspects of the Kurdish folkloric heritage, that is, the epics, lyrics, riddles, and stories which constitute the traditional literature and cultural activities of the Kurds, have been researched and collected by significant Kurdologists such as Basile Nikitine, Celadet and Kamuran Bedirkhan, and Thomas Bois, among others.

It should be noted that Kurdish novelistic discourse owes much to Kurdish intellectuals and writers of the Former Soviet Union (FSU), who made a substantial contribution to the development of the Kurmanji dialect and thereby to the emergence of the Kurdish novel. It is useful to give a brief description of the situation of the Kurdish intelligentsia in the USSR and its influence on Kurdish literature and publications. 'Although the population of Kurds in the Soviet Union was smaller than that of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria, the number per head of the population was much higher than in any of these countries' (Hassanpour 1996: 70). During the 1920s Kurds were regarded as constituting a distinct nation, and this played a part in the enhancement of Kurdish education and literary activities. Former Soviet Kurds obtained a written form of their mother tongue after the 1917 Revolution, and first began writing Kurdish using the Armenian alphabet during the 1920s. In 1927, they shifted to the Latin alphabet, with improvements by Aisor Margulov and Erebê Şemo, until 1945 when the Cyrillic alphabet was imposed on them. At present Kurds in the FSU write using both Cyrillic and Latin forms.

This level of literacy enabled the emergence of a striking number of writers 'engaged in important literary and social-political activities including the creation of a literary language that is an instrument of social progress and communist education among this minority people' (Vanly 1992b: 210). The first school textbooks to be written in Kurmanji were produced, and the principal steps towards modern prose writing were taken, in Soviet Armenia (Leezenberg 2011: 89), while the first Kurdish novel, *Şivanê Kurmanca* (*The Kurdish Shepherd*) by Erebê Şemo (1898–1978), which was based on the life of its author, was first published in Yerevan in 1935.[11]

Şemo's other novels are also among the first Kurdish novels. *Kurdê Elegozê* (*The Kurd of Elegoz*) is a sequel to *Şivanê Kurmanca*. *Berbang* (1958) is a revised version of *Şivanê Kurmanca*. *Jiyana Bextewar* (*Happy Life*, 1969) is based on the experience of Kurds who left their lands to escape from the massacres by the Ottomans and migrated to the Caucasus, and their new settlement in these lands. His novel *Dimdim* (1966) is based on the epic of the same name. In this novel, Şemo tells of the socio-political conditions of the period, the struggle within Castle Dimdim through the eyes of leader Xanê Lepzerîn. *Hopo* (1969) is based on the period after the revolution. In the novel, the folkloric way of narration and the influence of techniques of the oral tradition are in the foreground.

Eliyê Evdirehman's *Xatê Xanîm* (*Lady Xate*, 1959) and *Dê* (*Mother*, 1965), Heciyê Cindî's *Hewarî* (*Cry*, 1967) and *Gundê Mêrxasa* (*The Village of the Courageous*, 1968), and Seîdê Îbo's *Kurdên Rêwî* (*Traveller Kurds*, 1981) are also on the list of early Kurdish novels published in the USSR.

Eliyê Evdirehman's *Ser Çiya da* (*War on the Mountain*) is based on the war on Mount Ararat. The protagonist of the novel is Sheikh Zahir, who is the leader of the Khoybun (Xoybûn) uprising. The novel draws a portrait of the Khoybun uprising and the political conditions of this period. Heciyê Cindî (1908–90), who was Yazidi in origin, had to migrate to the former Soviet Union in 1918 due to oppression by the Turkish state. His novel *Hewarî* (*Cry*) was first published in 1967 in Yerevan. It was re-published in Diyarbakir in 2008 by Lîs publishing house. With his analytical and observant style, he concentrates on the events of 1915.

Despite the development of Kurdish language and literature in the Kurmanji dialect in the USSR, the bans and prohibitions imposed by the Turkish Republic hindered the presence and growth of Kurdish publications and literature. In 1924, Kurdish schools, religious foundations, and publications were banned throughout Turkish Kurdistan. Musa Anter's poetry anthology *Kimil* (*Aelia*, 1962) and his play *Birîna Reş* (*Black Wound*, 1965), and Mehmed Emin Bozarslan's short story compilation *Meyro* (*Meyro*, 1979) are among the few Kurdish works published after the 1950s. According to

Malmisanij (2006b: 19), 'in the period 1923–1980 not more than 20 Kurdish books were published in Turkey'. The monthly literary journal *Tîrej* (*Light Beam*, 1979–80) lasted for only four issues but holds a significant place because it was the first journal to be published in Turkish Kurdistan after 1923.

After the military coup of 12 September 1980 restrictions were enforced even more strongly. Under military rule, the new Constitution in 1982 reverted to banning the Kurdish language, but in 1991 Prime Minister Turgut Özal inaugurated a more liberal stance towards the Kurds by repealing the language laws. As a result, some books and newspapers started to be published in Kurdish in the early 1990s, but after Özal's unexpected death, the official discourse on the Kurdish question returned to issues of national security, terrorism, and separatism, with the Turkish state's policy of denial making it almost impossible for a novel to be published in Turkish Kurdistan during that decade. One Kurdish writer from the region, Îhsan Colemergî, wrote his novel *Cembelî Kurê Mîrê Hekaryan* (*Cembelî, Son of the Mir of Hakkari*) in 1992 but was only able to publish it in Sweden in 1995, while Îbrahîm Seydo Aydogan's *Reş û Spî* (*Black and White*) was published in Istanbul by Elma in 1999.

With the dominance of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) in the Turkish parliament following elections in 2002, language policies were reformed, due mainly to Turkey's negotiations for membership of the European Union.[12] In 2004, a new regulation concerning radio and television broadcasts that contained different languages and dialects came into force with regard to the Turkish national broadcasting channel (TRT, *Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu*); however, this amendment has not been sufficient to abolish entirely the process of linguicide. Because current Turkish language policy places constraints on human rights with regard to education and language, Kurdish linguistic rights remain restricted in the public sphere as well as the private.[13] Despite this situation, Malmisanij's research reveals that there has been a considerable increase in Kurdish book publishing in Turkey after the easing of restrictions on Kurdish publications under pressure from the European Union. Despite the restrictions and censorship, the

Istanbul and Diyarbakir Kurdish Institute, the Dicle Fırat Culture and Arts Centre (Dicle Fırat Kültür Sanat Merkezi), the annual book fair based in Diyarbakir, and the Institute of Living Languages at Mardin Artuklu University have opened up new opportunities for Kurdish writing and publications since the millennium. As Malmîsanij notes, 'in 2000 more than 40 Kurdish publishing houses were established in Turkey' (2006b: 26); however, nearly 50 per cent of the output (305 books) came from eight publishers, with Diyarbakir and Istanbul as the main centres for Kurdish publishing houses and periodicals.[14]

These numbers suggest that the first decade of the twenty-first century has been somewhat a golden age for Kurdish literature, particularly the Kurdish novelistic discourse. There is a striking increase in the proportion of Kurdish writers in the diaspora who now prefer to have their works published in Turkish Kurdistan (mainly by the Lîs and Avesta publishing houses), where an emergent literary circle goes from strength to strength.

It is important to mention that Kurdish literature, especially the genre of the novel, was developed mainly in the diaspora during the 1980s, primarily in Sweden and Germany. In this regard, Mehmed Uzun, Firat Ceweri̇̂, Mehmet Emîn Bozarslan, and Bavê Nazê contributed to the enrichment of Kurmanji and enabled Kurdish (Kurmanji) in its written form to reach many more speakers. Certainly, the struggle of Kurdish intellectuals and writers from Turkish Kurdistan in the diaspora to promote Kurdish language and literature has been to the benefit of novelistic discourse, and Mehmed Uzun (1953–2006) and Mahmut Baksî (1944–2000), who were in exile in Sweden for many years, can be considered to be the most productive novelists from Turkish Kurdistan. Uzun's *Mirina Kalekî Rind* (*The Death of Old Rind*, 1987) and *Siya Evînê* (*In the Shadow of Love*, 1989), and Baksî's *Gundikê Dono* (*Dono's Village*, 1988) and *Hêlîn* (*Helin*, 1984), were published in the late 1980s. Kurdish publishing houses in Europe include Nûdem, Roja Nû, Orfeus, Apec, Helwest, Sara, Welat, Pelda, Jîndan, Newroz, and Kurdistan.

The political situation of the Kurds and the controversial position of Kurdistan have led scholars and researchers to engage mainly with

the political and historical aspects of the Kurds, and even though research on Kurdish literature has developed considerably in recent years, insufficient attention has been paid to the Kurdish novelistic discourse in particular. On the other hand, due to the less restricted conditions prevailing in Iraqi Kurdistan, both literature and literary research have expanded significantly. Although the future seems to be quite promising at the moment in relation to the Kurdish literary world in Turkish Kurdistan and in the diaspora, and despite the growing number of fictional and non-fictional literary works becoming available, Kurdish literature, and in particular the novelistic discourse, still remains to be studied.

Kurdish Imagined Community from Afar through Media Culture

As a consequence of the divisions resulting from World War II and the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the Kurdish press, which first appeared as a newspaper entitled *Kurdistan* in 1898, launched and developed by Kurmanji-speaking Kurdish intellectuals and cultural institutions, was confronted from the start with oppression and obstacles. This meant that Kurdish intellectuals, mainly Bedirkhan family members, were forced to pursue publication of Kurdish magazines and newspapers exclusively outside Kurdistan itself.[15] Taking all the bans into account, it is not surprising to discover that printing in Kurdish did not start in Kurdistan. The first newspapers and periodicals published in Kurdish during the Ottoman period were published elsewhere, in cities such as Istanbul, Cairo, and Baghdad.

The Kurdish intelligentsia were very prominent in developing the Kurdish language, mainly the Kurmanji dialect, during the early years of the nineteenth century. Sureyya Bedirkhan (1883–1938), Celadet Ali Bedirkhan (1893–1951), and Kamuran Ali Bedirkhan (1895–1978) had developed a Latin-based alphabet for Kurmanji, and the Bedirkhan brothers used this alphabet for the first time to publish the journal *Hawar* (*Cry*, 1932–43). They published *Hawar* from 1932 to 1943 in Damascus in Syria under the rule of the French

Mandate, in Kurmanji Latin script. *Hawar* was one of the first of a long series of Kurmanji publications in exile after the creation of the Turkish Republic (Kreyenbroek and Sperl 1992: 57). *Ronahî* (*Light*) (1935) was also published by the brothers, who smuggled it out of French Syria into Turkey. Kamuran Ali Bedirkhan then published *Roja Nû* (*New Day*) (1943–6), which again contributed to the development and spreading of Kurdish literature within Kurdish society. Kurdish language and literature has always developed outside Kurdistan. Likewise, even in the modern period, the journal *Nûdem* (*New Time*), which was published in the Kurmanji dialect in Sweden for ten years between 1992 and 2002, with the support of exiled writer Firat Ceweri̇̂, played a significant role in promoting Kurdish literature. Hence, the predominant role of the Kurdish press as 'the organ of Kurdish nationalism' (Hassanpour 1992: 221) in constructing Kurdish identity, which has always been developed outside Kurdistan due to the bans[16] and the forced exile of Kurdish intelligentsia.[17] Except for Iraqi Kurdistan since 1991,[18] the sovereign states have held a near-monopoly on broadcasting in the regions of Kurdistan and have used this to serve and promote their own dominant and official culture, language, and political agenda, and to work towards assimilating the Kurds and other minorities (Sheyholislami 2010: 293).[19] Despite the harsh conditions and assimilation policies, no less than 145 periodicals appeared openly in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and the USSR between 1898 and 1985 (Hassanpour 1996: 58) because Kurds have strived to pursue their own alternatives, not only through Kurdish newspapers and journals, but also in the form of the new media, satellite channels, and the internet. These have contributed to the construction of Kurdish collective identity, and made Kurds aware of each other, not only those within Kurdistan but also those outside, mainly in European countries. The freedom of expression and opportunities provided by the host countries has allowed the Kurdish diaspora to develop modern communication technologies in its own mother tongue. However, this does not necessarily mean that host countries have been completely free of influence by Turkish policies against Kurdish media productions. The first Kurdish satellite channel, MED-TV

(1995–9), which a group of Kurdish intellectuals started broadcasting in the United Kingdom and Belgium, was closed, and a couple more channels followed. The Turkish state constantly put pressure on European governments to ban Kurdish channels allegedly linked to the PKK, including MED-TV. In this section, I will attempt to reflect on the situation of the Kurdish media – broadcasting, mainly in the diaspora, and the press, which continuously experience closures and attacks by nationalist groups, but determinedly continue their journey.

Due to the limitations on the use of the Kurdish language as a state policy, the first Kurdish-language broadcast, Yerevan Radio, was welcomed by Kurds and made a huge impact on those in Turkish Kurdistan (Greve 2006: 254–5, Akboğa 2012). It was transmitted from Armenia in the days of the former Soviet Union, covering Cold War politics and Kurdish traditional music, and providing a short daily radio show and weekly programmes from 1955 onwards. In addition to this, in 1957, in order to counter the Iraqi government regime, Kurdish radio broadcasting was launched through 'Voice of the Arabs' in Egypt. Kurdish radio broadcasting in those periods still maintained its symbolic meaning, which encouraged many Kurdish activists or nationalists to advance it, mainly in Europe, but also in Iraqi Kurdistan.

In terms of the Kurdish press in Turkish Kurdistan, popular Kurdish leftist groups, both legal and underground, arose in the 1960s and 1970s in Turkey and Turkish Kurdistan as a consequence of rapid urbanisation, and publications by these groups were very common. However, none of them survived for any length of time due to internal and external factors. For instance, the Kurdish and Turkish journal entitled *İleri Yurt* (*Advanced Homeland*), published by Kurdish journalist and writer Musa Anter, was closed down after a few issues by the Turkish government. Similarly, *Özgürlük Yolu* (*The Road to Freedom*) affiliated to TSKP (the Kurdistan Socialist Party of Turkey) could only publish between 1975 and 1979. Again the cultural magazine *Tîrêj* was published in 1979 by *Devrimci Demokrat Kültür Derneği* (DDKD, the Organisation of Revolutionary Democratic Culture), but only four issues appeared before its

publishers fled to Sweden because of the 1980 military coup; thus the fourth issue was the last. Hence, with the 1980s military coup, Kurdish publication, which became impossible in Turkey, moved to European countries. As well as a wide range of Kurdish journals, Kurdish grammar books, and children's books, exiled Kurdish intellectuals with a political background published research on Kurdish epics and Kurdish fiction books, mainly in Germany and Sweden.

Yeni Ülke (*Free Country*) was one of the first of the remarkable newspapers to have the courage to mention the Kurdish issue freely. It was published weekly between 1990 and 1992. Out of the 110 editions, 40 were confiscated by court orders. It was succeeded by *Özgür Gündem* (*Free Agenda*), which was published daily between 1992 and 1994. Even though this was shut down in 1994, the name '*Özgür Gündem*' is still used commonly to refer to the same line of publications that started with *Yeni Ülke* and continued with many different names due to the frequent bans. After the closing of *Özgür Gündem*, another daily newspaper with the name *Özgür Ülke* was established in 1994.[20] This was closed in February 1995, and was then published under the name *Özgür Ülke* (*Free Country*), from April 1995 until being closed down in August 1995. Then came *Yeni Politika* (*New Politics*), followed by *Demokrasi* (*Democracy*), *Ülkede Gündem* (*Agenda in the Country*), and then *Özgür Bakış* (*Free View*), which was closed down in April 2001. The first three versions were distributed both in Turkey and in Europe. After the closure of *Yeni Politika* the European publication took the name *Yeni Özgür Politika* (*New Free Politics*, 2006) which is a daily Kurdish newspaper published in both Turkish and Kurdish, and based in Germany. It is the successor of *Özgür Gündem* (*Free Agenda*) and *Özgür Politika* (*Free Politics*), which were closed down by the German Interior Ministry for their contribution to money transfers from Europe to the PKK in 2005 (Eccarius-Kelly 2010: 173). Currently the newspaper is distributed all over Europe, but internet access to the publication is prohibited in Turkey.

Like the PKK-affiliated *Yeni Özgür Politika*, the Kom-Kar publications, which are close to the Kurdistan Socialist Party (PSK)

of Kemal Burkay, benefit from the internet as a means of circulating their party ideologies and views. Another prominent Kurdish publication based in Turkish Kurdistan is *Azadiya Welat* (*Free Homeland*), a daily newspaper in the Kurmanji dialect which started publication in 1996 as the successor of two other Kurdish newspapers, *Welat* (*Homeland*, 1992–4) and *Welatê Me* (*Our Homeland*, 1994–5), which were closed under Turkey's Anti-Terror laws. Up to June 2011, *Azadiya Welat* had been suspended nine times on the pretext that it was disseminating propaganda for the PKK. Internet access to the newspaper is currently prohibited in Turkey.

Kurdish broadcasting, specifically in the form of satellite channels, has dramatically increased since the start of the 1990s. Broadcasting has mainly been from European countries, and constitutes a challenge to the state-owned television stations of the countries with sovereignty over Kurdish regions. As Ayata (2012: 525) states, the case of Kurdish satellite TV in Europe provides an important image of how Kurdish transnational politics in the diaspora are effective means to counter some of the most resilient taboos and policies in Turkey.

Through Kurdish satellite channels, Kurdish internet websites, and social media, Kurds share information with other members of the Kurdish community worldwide. It was only Kurdish TV stations that reported constantly on the destruction of Kurdish villages and Turkey's depopulation policy in the Kurdish region at a time when the mainstream media in Turkey was completely silent on these issues (Ayata 2012). In addition to this, in an attempt to cover up the massacre, the government imposed a broadcasting ban on news and reports on the Roboski massacre, a Turkish air raid on a Kurdish area near the Iraqi Kurdistan border that killed at least 34 civilian Kurds in 2011, but news was circulated through Kurdish media sources.[21]

The Kurdish satellite channel, MED-TV, which was the first-ever TV station broadcasting in the Kurdish language to over 30 million Kurds in the Middle East, and had a great influence on Kurdish consciousness, first started broadcasting in England in 1995. There followed new channels, and others directly replacing MED-TV, with the aim not only of promoting Kurdish culture and language but of

creating a sense of national consciousness. Kurdish musicians and groups such as Koma Berxwedan (Group Resistance) and Şivan Perwer became increasingly visible, first on MED-TV and then on subsequent channels. Their songs, disseminating Kurdish nationalism and language, reinforced the Kurdish ethno-nationalist identity.

Modern communications, printing, radio, and the cassette recorder contributed much to the creation of the Kurdish 'nation'[22] as an 'Imagined Community', that is, as a community of people whom one never meets face to face but whom one knows to exist and to be like oneself (van Bruinessen 1992b: 48). The statelessness and constant experience of migration beyond national territories has contributed to Kurds' dependence on media and communication technologies. This in turn has contributed to the development of the Kurdish language and fostered solidarity among the deterritorialised Kurds. Thus, the launching of the Kurdish satellite channel MED-TV, as a crucial transnational activity, constituted the launch of a new phase in the construction of Kurdish national identity.[23]

Like the development of a written tradition in the native tongue, the transition to print culture was motivated by ethnic, or later nationalist, awareness (Hassanpour 1996: 52). Apart from the language of the channel and the content of the programmes, even the term 'Med', refers to the ancient Medes, who are considered by many Kurds to be the original Kurds. Again, the three colours of the Kurdish flag (red, yellow, and green), which is still banned in Turkey, have been constantly used in order to challenge bans and other Turkish policies against the Kurds.

However, shortly after the capture of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, London-based MED-TV was also closed, resulting in heated protests against the Independent Television Commission (ITC), the TV watchdog that closed it down. It is believed by many Kurds that the closure of MED-TV was the outcome of a long-running campaign against the station since its launch in 1995. However, shortly after its closure it re-emerged as MEDYA TV, which was licensed by France. MEDYA TV too was later shut down, as a result of pressure from the Turkish state over its transmission of PKK propaganda; however, in 2004 it was continuing to broadcast from Denmark, under yet

another new name, Roj TV, with its central production studio being located in the town of Denderleeuw not far from Brussels. Roj TV's broadcasts were transmitted in all the dialects of Kurdish, as well as in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian. On 10 January 2012, following a trial against the channel that had begun on 31 August 2010, the Copenhagen City Court found Roj TV guilty of spreading propaganda for PKK and it was heavily fined. Its appeal against the fine was rejected, and the Paris-based television satellite provider, Eutelsat, duly suspended broadcasts by the station. However, the channel is still broadcasting with two satellite channels, Stêrk TV, and also Nûçe TV, which was closed and replaced by Med Nûçe TV, the latter starting to broadcast in late 2013. Since 2009 Stêrk TV has followed in the footsteps of Roj TV, broadcasting predominantly in both Kurmanji and Sorani dialects, and aiming to reach out to Kurds from different regions of Kurdistan as well as Turkish Kurdistan.

David Romano, in his article 'Modern communication technologies in ethnic nationalist hands: the case of the Kurds' (2002), argues that revolutionary advances in communications applied through Kurdish media have impacted enormously on the development of ethnic nationalist challenges towards the state. However, in some cases, a sovereign state can also use the media to fight back or against opponents or minority groups that it wishes to pacify. As well as struggling for Kurdish satellite broadcasting channels to be suspended by diplomatic means, Ayata (2012: 530) argues that the 'Turkish state has now entered into a competition with Roj-TV [one of the Kurdish satellite channels mainly aimed at Turkish Kurdistan and its diaspora viewers] through TRT 6'. Turkey's state-run radio and television corporation, TRT's new TV channel TRT 6, launched a 24-hour broadcast in Kurdish on 1 January 2009 with an image of the Turkish flag and the Turkish national anthem.[24] Rather than a means of democratisation, it is commonly believed that the main aim of establishing such a government-controlled channel was to reduce popular support for Kurdish satellite channels based in Europe, and to offer cosmetic solutions to the Kurdish question rather than genuine ones.

Apart from Kurdish broadcasting, the number of Kurdish websites has also dramatically increased since the 1990s, as the use of the internet is more common. Before 1995, the number of Kurdish websites numbered less than 20. In January 2001, however, an AltaVista keyword search for 'Kurd' produced 463 results, and 75 of the first 100 of these referred to either news articles on the Kurds or to Kurdish websites. The same search discovered 23,972 references to web pages related to the Kurdish issue (Romano 2002: 138). Now, all Kurdish political organisations and groups have their own websites. This is despite the fact that almost all access to Kurdish websites and pro-Kurdish media from Turkey and Turkish Kurdistan is blocked by legal censorship on the grounds that it insults Turkishness and contains expressions of political extremism.[25] Many users attempt to access these websites through resetting the DSS (Digital Sending Software) of their devices. Despite such prohibitions and blocks on access, under different names the Kurdish media continues to grow, especially the press, as well as information sources, and takes a resilient stand against the mainstream Turkish media outlets and press which censor a range of Kurdish-related issues. In addition, social media are becoming increasingly popular among Kurds, replacing broadcasting as the most influential means of widely promoting the Kurdish imagined community.

CHAPTER 4

THE KURDISH NOVELISTIC DISCOURSE IN DIASPORA: CONSTRUCTING 'HOME-LAND' AND 'IDENTITY'

Analysis of diasporic novels of Turkish Kurdistan reveals that Kurdish authors clearly present 'homeland' as being of great significance for their Kurdish identity. Many of the 64 novels are either set in Kurdistan or rely on Kurdistan-related content. The authors generally place their subject matter within a historical context, or base it on the current political and socio-cultural environment in Kurdistan, while their ethnic identity, country of origin, and history are regarded as more significant than concern for the identity and history of the host nation and the authors' experiences within that context. Few authors mention how their experiences in exile are infused with a sense of non-belonging, isolation, and alienation. Failure to adapt, cultural differences, and the uncertain state of the homeland all encourage them to concentrate on the country of origin they have left behind, rather than on their countries of settlement.

Diasporic authors make extensive use of both factual and memory elements in order to represent the Kurdish historical past, including crucial incidents, war, state oppression, and personal traumas. I will interrogate how the use of the Kurdish historical past and personal

memories in the novelistic discourse reveals diasporic reflections on 'home-land' and Kurdish identity, and argue that it is essential to underline the autobiographical aspects of the novels that are involved in transforming personal experiences into an attempt to create social and collective memory. The narrative articulation of traumatic experiences, such as the harsh conditions of Diyarbakir prison and the fallout from the 1980 military coup, also conveys communal memories and didacticism, revealing the novelistic discourse as a 'vehicle of memory' (Yerushalmi 1982). I argue here that the narrativisation of remembered experiences, based on autobiographies and personal recollection of events, is an attempt by modern historiography to create social and collective memory.

Between 'Implied Author' and 'Overt Narrator': Purposeful Narratives

'I wrote this book in order to reveal the impact of politics in Kurdistan, and the effect of Turkish teaching on children and adults, and if I have achieved this even a little, I will be very happy' (7)[1] says Fergîn Melîk Aykoç in the foreword to *Mamostayê Zinaran* (The Teacher of Mountains, 1999). So the purpose of writing the novel was to unearth the assimilative influences of Turkish education on Kurdish students. As an 'implied author', Aykoç 'chooses, consciously or unconsciously, what we read' (Booth 1983: 74). The realist portrayal of actual spaces or events in diasporic novels is generally employed for a purpose, with the obvious presence of an 'implied author' and 'overt narrator' in the texts. With an authorial voice, the overt narrator, as a personified agent writing of the burdens of authorship (Chatman 1978: 248), narrates the author's values, views, and ideological stances.

The 'implied author' who 'communicates a message disengaged from an immediate situational context to an addressee (implied reader)' (Leech and Short 1981: 261), sends such messages directly or indirectly to the receivers. In some cases, the narrator addresses the reader directly. The message is overtly directed at the reader as if the reader is expected to share experience(s) with the narrator. In this

section, I question the voice of the authors behind the narrations and examine the authors' reasons (which are usually expressed explicitly or implicitly) for writing these novels. It is important to focus on this, as it indicates the differences between the novels from Turkish Kurdistan and also helps us examine and understand the configuration of identity and 'home-land' based on the novelists' intentions.

In parallel with the phenomena of 'implied author' and 'overt narrator', diasporic novelists often ask their readers (mainly in their forewords) to perceive their novels as a primary source, or sometimes inform them directly that their stories are based on real lives. For example, in *Dîlên li ber Pûkê* (Captives in the Snowstorm, 2002), the writer explicitly states in the foreword that the story is from real life and not imagined: 'these adventures in the novel are based on real lives. In other words, they are not stories of imagination' (5).[2] Similarly, Mezher Bozan in his novel *Asim* states openly that he wishes to give a picture of the Kurds through the main character, Asim, who has been subjected throughout his life to discrimination, migration, and conflict because of his Kurdish identity. It is also clear that *Gardiyan* (The Guardian, 2006) portrays conditions in Diyarbakir prison and the way Kurdish prisoners were treated in the 1980s. In the foreword to the novel the author himself, Bûbê Eser, emphasises that his aim is to highlight the difficulties experienced by the prisoners in Diyarbakir prison after the 1980 military coup. He approaches the novelistic discourse with a didactic perspective intertwined with personal traumas, so that in a way the novelistic discourse is treated as a source for national and historical issues rather than as a literary work.

In this sense, Lokman Polat in *Robîn* (Robin, 2004) takes an extract from Flaubert (a realist writer) to demonstrate that 'the writer should be like the owner of the world during his/her novel writing [. . .] So that the readers will rely on the novel' (4).[3] It is implied that a novelist should, at the time of writing, give priority to facts rather than fictions in order to be more reliable. As Suleiman (1983: 7) notes, in relation to such authoritarian narratives, this should be undertaken 'in a realistic mode [. . .] which signals itself to the reader

as primarily didactic in intent, seeking to demonstrate the validity of a political, philosophical, or religious doctrine'. Here fiction, under the authority of the author, becomes an agent for manifesting the values and perspectives of the novelist.

Involvement in novel-writing for specific purposes, relying on facts and lived experiences through journalistic technique, also appears as a central aspect of the Kurdish novelistic discourse in diaspora. Thus it is clear that Diyar Bohtî in *Mexmûr* (Makhmur, 2007) attempts to narrate the conditions of Kurdish refugees in the Makhmur camp through journalistic and documentary means based on real lives and stories, as the novelist confirms in the foreword. In the author's foreword in *Veger*, Reşad Akgul reveals that the novel is based on true stories of guerillas, while Mehdî Zana, through *Oy Dayê* (Oh Mum, 2005), shares a similar purpose in his attempt to record past experiences and fill gaps in Kurdish history. This aim is once more clearly announced in the foreword. Since the novelist wishes to narrate the true story of a Chaldean man during the 1915 Armenian genocide who he encountered in the Diyarbakir prison, there is a publisher's note to this effect:

> All the incidents in this novel were experienced and it was created out of these memories. With this book, one voluntarily or involuntarily rambles through the last century and arrives at today. One brings them together and the truth comes to earth; the picture of cruelty (6).[4]

The stories narrated in the novels are delineated as lived experiences which aim both to increase credibility from the reader's perspective and to function as a record of collective experiences and history. In *Xidê Naxirwan û Tevkuştine Dêrsim* (Genocide in Xide Naxirwan and Dersim, 2001), Çolpan mentions in the foreword that the story is based on facts in an attempt to uncover truths about a particular period:

> No imaginary things were written at all. It is a real life and a real story. I witnessed many things, and also became familiar

> with the life of Xidê Naxirvan's family. I went with his youngest son Ali, to graze the sheep and goats and the calf (3).[5]

The narration of lived experiences can go beyond the territories of Kurdistan, as occurs in another of Çolpan's novels, *Serpêhatiyên Rustem û Namerdiya Namerdan* (The Adventures of Rustem and the Vileness of the Viles, 2004), which is set mainly in Istanbul. In a foreword by Celîlê Celîl we are explicitly told that the lives of all Kurds are portrayed through the story of Rustem, the main character of the novel. In other words, it appears that Çolpan's purpose in writing this novel is to reveal aspects of the migration experiences of Kurds in Istanbul.

Adopting a personal and intimate tone in almost all his novels, Lokman Polat, too, underlines the purpose of his writing, which is generally to inform others about the experiences of Kurds and to document the history of those Kurds who lack an official record. The characters do not speak only for themselves; instead, the narrator also intrudes, comments, or directs the discourse. In the author's preface to *Rojnamevan* (The Journalist, 2002), the novelist, rather than focusing on literary concerns, reflects on the realist aspect of the novel, which is considered to be the most important component of novel writing. Polat says, 'this novel for assessing the conditions of Kurds draws a broad picture and can be a useful introductory source but I think it was written for foreigners who have no knowledge of the Kurds, rather than for Kurds themselves' (4).[6] Another of Polat's novels, *Fîlozof* (The Philosopher, 2002), has no fictional characterisation or settings; in other words it is like a history book. It discusses the Sheikh Said rebellion and the Khoybun organisation. The narrator himself often interferes in the text with such comments as, 'Dear Readers! Up to here I have talked about the adventures of a literary man, a knowledgeable, intellectual Kurd, assistant to the immortal Sheikh Said, and a philosopher and great patriot, Fehmiye Bilal. The things I mentioned were true and historical' (43).[7]

Similarly, in Polat's *Kewa Marî* (The Partridge Mari, 1999), the book's aim is expressed in the foreword: 'Novels in Kurdish are few. Patriotic Kurdish writers need to produce their output in Kurdish.

It is a condition of patriotism' (6).[8] During a conversation with Marî, the central character, one of the minor characters argues about the significance of novel writing for Kurds, saying that the Kurdish national struggle and all the conflicts should be recorded through novel writing. Marî therefore asks Serhad to write in novel form about her experiences as a Kurd, so that people can learn the sorts of obstacles that Kurds have faced because of their identities.[9]

Like Polat, Medenî Ferho, in the forewords of *Xaltîka Zeyno* (Auntie Zeyno, 1997) and *Xewnên Pinekirî* (The Patched Dreams, 2001), explicitly states that his intention in these novels is mainly to reveal and record the sufferings and struggle of the Kurds. Although not referred to directly, the content of Ali Husein Kerim's *Şopa Rojên Buhurî* (The Trace of Blazing Days, 2008) with its instructive and informative features narrated from the perspective of Kalo Cimşîd (literally 'elderly' Cimşîd), is very didactic in style; the text includes several interruptions to allow for the inclusion of sections providing information on Kurdish literature and history. Clearly Kerim's novelistic discourse attempts to offer guidance towards understanding the Kurdish past in its cultural and social aspects.

On some occasions, the character becomes the voice of the author, combined with a response and criticism, as in Lokman Polat's *Kewa Marî*. When Marî asks Serhad to write a novel based on her life, he explains, 'if I write this novel, such people will sharpen their swords and attack me. They will make nonsensical and empty criticisms. Because the people who stand up as critics do not understand literature' (263–4).[10] These words reflect ideas which the author has addressed in certain articles he has published on websites.[11] This argument is reinforced by the fact that Polat refers in almost all his novels to internal conflicts among Kurdish writers; the verbal duels fought through his novels should be taken into consideration.

Importantly, developing Kurdish is among the main concerns of the novelists, and is mentioned either in the authorial foreword to their novels, or implied throughout the narrations. For example, in *Bigrî Heval* (Cry Friend, 2007) and *Fîlozof*, there are discussions among the characters about the significance of Kurdish literature in terms of its contribution to the development of Kurdish. *Bigrî Heval*

in particular provides some background for the lack of expansion in Kurdish literature through the words of the female protagonist, Avjîn: 'very few have sacrificed their lives for the research and development of Kurdish literature. Also our Kurdish institutions have never done that' (88–9).[12] Avjîn then quotes her father's words about those who value Kurdish literature, since it is a crucial component of Kurdish national identity: 'You must keep the Kurdish culture alive, you must improve and enrich my Kurdish library, and if our country is rescued one day, you will donate this library to the ministry of culture of our free, united government' (89).[13] The narrator in *Pêlên Bêrîkirinê* (1997) also underlines the necessity of writing in Kurdish as a form of resistance against oppression and assimilation. In this regard, writing in Kurdish becomes the duty of everyone: 'our homeland is fragmented and oppressed. Therefore, patriotism requires writing, it is a mission to use it [. . .] As long as it is written in our language, it does not matter what it is, but it needs to be written' (9).[14] The narrator explains the importance of the mother tongue by offering explicit advice: 'first of all, everyone must learn their language and use it everywhere. It is especially very important for people who are in the same situation as we are' (12).[15]

Similarly, at the beginning of *Serhildana Mala Eliyê Ûnis* (The Rebel of the House of Eliye Unis, 2001), the novelist advises readers to learn their language. The novel deals with the rebellion of Eliyê Ûnis, which occurred at the end of the Ottoman Empire and the beginning of the Turkish Republic, and is based on a story that the novelist heard from his father. Thus, writing about this rebellion is rather like implementing his father's will. It is clear that writing about this event in Kurdish serves the main function of the novel genre, as it is both didactic in content and beneficial in terms of contributing to the development of the Kurdish language. In *Rojnamevan* by Lokman Polat, there are again explicit messages to the Kurds to struggle for the preservation of their mother tongue from assimilation:

> All the criteria and borders of our brain must be destroyed. We must get out of our own prisons. We must follow the bright

> and correct road, and we must also be free. We must stop all the conflicts inside ourselves. The stars in the sky of our souls must not fall anymore. All the forests of our heart must wake up. Black clouds must be cleared away from the mountains of our heart. For the sake of our happiness and humankind's happiness, we must have clear rivers and tall mountains in our pockets (20–1).[16]

In the examples given above, the implied author, who is 'given an overt, speaking role in the story' (Booth 1983: 71), explains the mission of the novelistic discourse. Literature is regarded as a vehicle through which one can deliver messages to others, or transmit crucial incidents related to a nation. In *Siya Dema Borî*, Berjîn, to whom certain values are attributed, asks her father: 'why do they not write about the heroism of Kurdish women? Thousands of Kurdish women have lost and are still losing their lives, fearlessly and impulsively, for the country's freedom, and even for creating opportunities for writers to write' (16).[17] Such discussions are informative and apparently also contain messages for readers, introducing a movement for the development of Kurdish. And on the back cover of *Ronakbîr*, Laleş Qaso emphasises his opposition, both politically and linguistically, to the translation of his novels from Kurdish into Turkish:

> No matter whoever tells me what; whoever gives me whichever nicknames; the biggest threat for my existence and my Kurdishness is to translate my books into Turkish and that Kurds will be reading it in Turkish before the Kurds in the North have set up a country, or a state similar to a country, and the Kurdish language is used in all areas. This would be my death and the ruining of all my efforts. I will never forgive that! And I do not want the Kurds to forgive it either. This is my will [back cover].[18]

Eser, in the novel *Gardiyan*, straightforwardly states that writing Kurdish is no different from any other missions or duties, since 'every product written in Kurdish serves to promote Kurdish language and

literature and enrich the Kurdish culture. That is why we need to struggle to create good products in the Kurdish language only' (5).[19] According to this notion, the novelistic discourse is featured prominently as a means of preserving and developing Kurdish rather than as a literary artefact.

All these examples show that the 'narratological' voice that is not distinct from the voice of the author disrupts the narration with commentaries conveying the perspectives and values of the 'implied author'. Thus, the real opinions of the Kurdish novelists in diaspora generally manifest themselves in the text by strong reflections of their personal political and ideological orientations, as we shall see next.

Ideological and Political Orientations of the Novelists within the Narratives

Either overtly or through some implicit or explicit narrative discourse, the implied author within the texts addresses the readers directly or indirectly and reveals his purposeful attitudes towards literature, particularly novelistic discourse as a suitable literary genre. In addition, novelists do not hesitate to 'present their ideological message or position in an "authoritarian" way' (Davis 1987: 25). In this context, diasporic novelistic discourse is highly influenced by the political and ideological orientation of the novelists. Furthermore, these orientations are explicitly uttered in the narratives through conflicting and critical attitudes rather than through a peaceful approach involving solidarity and unity amongst all Kurds.

This can be related to the notion of diaspora itself, which is defined as heterogeneous and de-territorialised, and includes a sense of multi-locality and multiple identities. As Sheffer (2003: 153–4) argues:

> Neither the members of state-linked diasporas nor the members of stateless diasporas will have uniform attitudes toward their national histories [thus] attitudes will differ according to the extent to which identities in various segments of the diaspora have been hybridized and to the extent which their experiences

in the host country have begun to take precedence over memories of their experiences in their homeland.

Accordingly, Kurdish exiled novelists demonstrate through their literary works that, in terms of the literary construction of alternative narratives of identities and politics, their own political positions and identity are often at odds, and a diversity of views and ideologies are consequently revealed. Examining the political and ideological affiliation of the novelists within the texts is crucial, not only in expressing the significance of politics in the narratives but also to show that Kurdish identity and 'home-land' will also be characterised according to such politics. This issue is discussed more broadly in Chapter Six.

In order to analyse the novels in diaspora, two main ideologies must be taken into account. One strand tends to support the ideology of the PKK (*Partiya Karkarên Kurdistan* or Kurdistan Workers Party),[20] while the other either rejects this ideology and promotes other options, or ignores the politics of the PKK completely. Thus, within diverse organisations and ideologies in diaspora, stress should be placed either on support for the PKK or on resistance against the PKK, since its position 'as an overarching orchestrator makes visible [. . .] a related characteristic of the Kurdish diaspora in Europe' (Soguk 2008: 182). However, different articulations of homeland politics can clearly be identified between diaspora novelists in Germany and Sweden, since the PKK has been more successful in Germany than in Sweden.

This lack of consensus in the diaspora means that different narratives can lead to conflicting attitudes and controversies about the PKK, and this is explicitly reflected in the novelistic discourse. In some novels, although socio-political conditions in Kurdistan are reported, there is no reference to the PKK and its struggle as a Kurdish national movement. Despite the references to the conflicts in Kurdistan in the following titles – *Sorê Gulê* (Red Rose, 1997) and *Pişti Bîst Salan* by Silêman Demîr, all of Mezher Bozan's novels *Av Zelal Bû I-IV, Zarokên Me* (Our Children, 2008), *Asim*, and *Zêna* (Zena, 2007), Qaso's *Ronakbîr*, Eser's *Gardiyan* and *Jiyanek* (A Life,

2006), and Cewerî's *Ez ê Yekî Bikujim* (I will Kill Someone, 2008), Aydogan's *Pêlên Bêrîkirinê*, and also Uzun's *Mirina Kalekî Rind* and *Tu* (You, 2005) – these novels do not refer to the PKK's national struggle in any way that would set it above or apart from the entire Kurdish national struggle against the Turkish state. In Mirzengî's *Sînor* (Border, 1995) and Uzun's *Ronî Mîna Evîne Tarî Mîna Mirînê* (Light like Love Dark like Death, 2007), the national struggle is narrated through the stories of guerrillas, although there is no attempt to promote the party's ideology by dramatising their stories. On the contrary, the narrations in these two novels aim to reflect the central characters' more personal experiences as guerrillas involved in political movements.

In addition to the novels mentioned above, others – such as *Gundikê Dono* (Dono's Village, 2009), *Hêlîn* (Helin, 2007), *Xezeba Azadiyê* (The Wrath of Freedom, 2000), *Belqitî* (Belqiti, 2004),[21] *Nado Kurê Xwe Firot* (Nado Sold his Son, 2001), and *Serpêhatiyên Rustem û Namerdiya Namerdan* by Çolpan – are set during a period earlier than the 1980s and therefore of course do not mention the national struggle of the PKK, which had not yet begun operations as an active political party. The remaining novels – *Siya Evînê, Hawara Dîcleyê I-II* (The Cry of Tigris I-II, 2002–2003), *Siya Evînê, Marê Di Tûr De* (Snake in the Sack, 1999), *Rojek ji Rojên Evdalê Zeynikê* (One of the Days of Evdalê Zeynikê, 2002), *Sê Şev û Sê Roj* (Three Nights and Three Days, 1999), *Serhildana Mala Eliyê ûnis*, *Tofan* (Flood, 2005), *Xidê Naxirwan û Tevkuştine Dêrsim, Dîlên li Ber Pûkê* and *Evîna Mêrxasekî* (The Love of a Young Man, 2008) – are historical, and naturally do not refer to any issues related to the PKK. Despite their engagement with political conflicts during historical times and in the more recent past, in the majority of diasporic novels the ideologies and actions of the PKK are effectively ignored.

However, some novelistic discourses, while portraying various political struggles, have determined their distanced attitudes to the PKK and do. Thus, in some novels it is also possible to observe severe criticism of its politics. For example, certain novels – such as Lokman Polat's *Robîn, Kodnav Viyan* (Nickname Viyan, 2006), *Fîlozof, Rojnamevan*, and *Kewa Marî*, Laleş Qaso's *Wêran*, Cewerî's

Payiza Dereng, Dehsiwar's *Çirîskên Rizgariyê,* and Xurşîd Mîrzengî's *Sînor* – deal with Kurdish national movements through fictional characterisation and plotting, and reference to the actions/ideologies of the PKK appears in the form of strong censure.[22] The main characters of the novels are either highly critical or pronounce the inadequacy of the PKK as a Kurdish national movement, and the novels thus convey the notion that there is no hope for national liberation through the PKK's politics. The novelists mentioned above reflect their real ideologies in their fiction, through various references to their resistance to the ideology of the PKK and their preferred affiliation to the politics of the Kurdistan Federal Region in Iraqi Kurdistan.

In some novels, the criticisms are so harsh that it seems the novel was written solely to criticise the PKK. Laleş Qaso, who lives in Sweden, is one of the writers who is severely critical of the PKK's politics. Qaso's statements and approach in real life also confirm this notion, while the Wikipedia page that includes his bibliography states 'the works of Laleş Qaso are in general satirical and severely critical towards both the Turkish state and the PKK'.[23] He is also a columnist for the online journals *Rizgarî* and *Kurdistan Aktüel*, through which he frequently criticises the PKK's political activities and ideologies. Accordingly, in all his novels, the party's system, its practices, and particularly its leader Abdullah Öcalan, are heavily criticised through the use of satirical language and veiled implications. He has even published a book in which he creates an imaginary character as the leader of a Kurdish party simply to satirise Öcalan. Although he castigates the PKK in his all novels, he does not mention Öcalan by name directly. His book *Serok Altaxus* (2006) is based entirely on mocking Öcalan through scathing language. Like Qaso, Lokman Polat, who has lived in Sweden since the 1980s, sets out to censure the PKK in his novels; he too is a columnist for the journals *Rizgarî* and *Kurdistan Aktuel*.

However, there are a few diasporic novels that have embraced the ideology of the PKK, and there are clear indications that this also reflects the actual ideology of the novelists. In the novels *Binefşên Tariyê* (The Violets of Darkness, 1999) and *Bigrî Heval* by Zeynel

Abidîn, *Rondikên Hêviyên Wenda* (The Tears of Lost Hopes, 2009) by Fergîn Melîk Aykoç, *Gul bişkivîn* (Rose Sprout, 2006) by Diyar Bohtî, *Veger* by Reşad Akgul, and *Xewnên Pînekirî* by Medenî Ferho, the central characters are guerrillas. In Ali Husein Kerim's *Şopa Rojên Buhurî*, a guerrilla character called Akif, whose courage is greatly admired by all the villagers, plays a crucial role. There is also explicit support for the party in *Mamostayê Zinaran* and *Siya Dema Borî*, by Fergîn Melîk Aykoç, *Mexmûr* by Diyar Bohti, and *Xaltîka Zeyno* and *Çiroka Me* (Our Story, 2009) by Medenî Ferho.

A quick glance at the personal background of these novelists shows that the correlation between the ideology in their fiction and the ideology in their actual lives is very striking. These writers believe that fictional writings should be used as an instrument both to improve the Kurdish language and to record the past, and in this context personal experiences have always been their starting point. For example, Medenî Ferho, all of whose novels mirror a tendency towards the PKK, was involved in founding the first diasporic satellite television channel, called MED-TV, which is generally regarded as being pro-PKK. He has also been a columnist in *Yeni Özgür Politika*, a pro-PKK daily newspaper published in Germany, and presented programmes on Roj TV (now called Med Nûçe TV) in Belgium, through which he explicitly declared his support for the PKK. Similarly Aykoç (1951), who fled to Germany after the 1980 military coup, strongly criticises those fighting against the PKK and attempts to defend the politics of the party in his column in *Yeni Özgür Politika*. Likewise Bohtî (1958) presented a programme called 'The Voice of a Nation' (*Dengê Gel*) on Roj TV, and published articles in *Azadiya Welat* that were severely critical of the oppressive policies of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) against the Kurds, and defended the PKK, which he regards as the representative of the Kurds.

Similarly Reşad Akgul (referred to in some sources as Sorgul), as a journalist himself, concentrates in his novel *Veger* on the full experiences of guerrillas, and makes direct references to the politics of the PKK: 'the PKK is the mechanism for the freedom travellers' (74–5).[24] He is also a presenter of news bulletins on the pro-PKK

satellite channel Stêrk. Jîr Dilovan, who has been living in Germany since 1995, wrote sketches for MED-TV and has translated two books by Abdullah Öcalan, while Abidîn disseminates his supportive views on the PKK through the website *Kurdistana Bakur.*[25] The internet is the usual mechanism through which these writers are able to declare their political stances, since nowadays each ideology usually maintains its own websites and publications.

Within these novels, the attachment to the PKK is not fixed, since the power of the PKK has clearly not remained static during the last 30 years, and 'PKK's hegemonic influence, as exercised in the 1980s and 1990s, has declined substantially since the capture and imprisonment of its leader' (Soguk 2008: 189). Indeed, it is possible to register such downturns in the texts. Abdullah Öcalan's capture and imprisonment caused fragmentation within the party and this led to a falling-off in the diaspora, particularly in Sweden. It also created despair and controversies among political figures and the Kurdish intelligentsia. Some terminated their contacts with the party and turned instead to the political movement in Iraqi Kurdistan; others were influenced by the disagreements within the party and become more critical of its actions. These changing attitudes can be observed through analysis of novels published by the same writer at different times.

Zeynel Abidîn's novels show clearly that ways of perceiving the PKK became more negative during the 1990s and the early 2000s. In *Binefşên Tariyê*, which focuses on the desperate passion between two lovers and their decision to go and fight in the mountains, the narrator reveals his ideas about saving Kurdistan and setting it free. In a jubilant tone, he addresses the existence of the PKK as the saviour of Kurdistan and the only hope for Kurds: 'Now the girls and boys of my homeland are making their country their own' (58).[26] He claims that Kurdistan is supported and defended by its people and that 'Kurdistan, the country of history and civilizations will no longer remain abandoned' (120).[27] However, in Abidîn's more recent novel, *Bigrî Heval*, it is easy to see that the narrator is critical of the PKK's politics, and his statements contain neither hope nor belief in the future. *Bigrî Heval* focuses on the personal struggle of a woman

guerrilla against her party, rather than the national struggle against the enemies which was the basis for *Binefşên Tariyê*. Most of *Bigrî Heval* deals with her escape from execution, which the party committee had confirmed because of her inappropriate attitudes, and through which the narrator expresses his disbelief concerning the party's politics.

It is also very easy to see such changes in Medenî Ferho's novels. Unlike other novelists living in Sweden, he paints a positive picture of the politics of the PKK in his novels. In those published in the 1990s, such as *Xaltîka Zeyno*, it is only through the heavily felt influence of the PKK that Kurdistan can be saved and set free. However, by the 2000s his attitudes and arguments, like those of Abidîn and Aykoç, have changed. In *Xaltîka Zeyno*, the protagonist, Zeyno, makes an explicit appeal for support for the guerrillas: 'it is enough, we also have to help them' (319),[28] because she thinks that 'from now on we have a protector' (ibid.).[29] In this novel, many characters quote directly from Öcalan's views in their statements about the war and conflicts. The novel also gives a rough outline of the emergence of the PKK, and there is a clear call for support for the guerrillas, in such a way that the novel can be even seen as a manifesto promoting, or propaganda for, the PKK. Like the main characters in other novels, Zeyno is idealised for adopting the ideology of the PKK, and throughout the novel it is implied that the only enemy is the Turkish state and its militias. Kurds are very 'patriotic' (*welatparêz*)[30] and are ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their Kurdistan.

However, the voice of complete loyalty towards and belief in the party is shattered in Ferho's next novel, *Xewnên Pînekirî*. Here the struggle is presented from the perspective of an injured guerrilla, and in contrast to the earlier novel's tone of strong determination for the struggle, here the descriptions tend to refer to its failure. The main character, Serdar, who is injured during one of the conflicts, does not perceive a positive future in his thoughts. Although the theme is not abandoned entirely, after 2001 there is no longer any direct support for the PKK in Ferho's novels, such as *Dora Bacinê Bi Dar e* and *Çiroka Me*, although it is still possible to see elements of the organisation, for example, minor characters as guerrillas. This time,

however, there are questions about other methods of struggle. Thus, in *Dora Bacinê bi Dar e*, a legal party system in the European Parliament is highly recommended and regarded as a successful step towards a permanent solution. Here it should be noted that the approaches of pro-PKK novelists are different from the pro-PKK novels written in Turkish Kurdistan.[31] The narrator, in 'implied author' attitudes, quite often sends messages about unification in his novels; nevertheless, he does not hold out the same hope of a positive future for Kurdistan as those in Turkish Kurdistan do.

Most importantly, following the success of the Kurdistan Federal Region in Iraq since 2003, a political solution that is outside both Turkish Kurdistan and the PKK has become central for many diaspora members. As an alternative to the PKK, the politics of the government in Iraqi Kurdistan are supported in most of the diasporan novels, and the idea of 'home' and Kurdistan is influenced by this affiliation to politics in Iraqi Kurdistan under the governance of the KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government).[32] There is praise for the system and a profound focus on places in Iraqi Kurdistan. For the reader of these novels, Iraqi Kurdistan is a reminder of the image of Kurdistan. It is also important to note that the novelists affiliated to the PKK do not necessarily reject the national struggle in South Kurdistan, since they recognise a unified struggle that includes all four Kurdish regions; however, the settings of these novels are mainly located in Turkish Kurdistan.

Through Laleş Qaso's trilogy, the novelist's political affiliation is clearly shown. Not only is the PKK severely criticised, but the narrators in the novels explicitly announce the position that they are supporting, which is the national struggle conducted by Mustafa Barzani and his supporters. In *Wêran*, the protagonist Circîs does not want to keep the guerrillas in his house as he is against their actions. He compares both sides. On the one hand, he praises Barzani who is 'held in high honour/treated with great respect' (40),[33] and celebrates his struggle: 'Mollah Mustafa Barzani was in the mountains together with his all people and because they feared him, the Arab army did not even dare to look at the mountain' (37).[34] He also criticises the party of the guerrillas: 'and why doesn't your party find rockets, just

like the falcons in the Kurdish mountains, to bring those war planes down?' (37).[35] On the other hand, he finds the politics of the PKK and the Turkish state to be the same (49).[36] As well as Circîs himself, other villagers also name the guerrillas as 'non-believing' (*kafir*) and terrorists. Nor, in this novel, are Kurdistan's image and village life glossed over, so that self-interest becomes more important than national solidarity. In Qaso's next novel *Ronakbîr*, the main character, Ronakbîr, an exile in Stockholm, decides to move to South Kurdistan, which he regards as an independent and free land.[37] In this sense, the character adopts the politics of Iraqi Kurdistan, considering it his homeland.

The same attitude can be observed in many other novels, particularly those of Lokman Polat and Bûbê Eser. In Eser's novel *Jiyanek*, the narrator praises the politics of Iraqi Kurdistan and considers Mustafa Barzani to be a leader of the Kurds. He idealises his struggle; as the character Îbrahîm says, 'we must work for our nation with all our power and strength. The voice of struggle is rising here in South Kurdistan with the leadership of precious Molla Mustafa Barzani' (156).[38] Similarly, in his novels Polat usually glorifies Iraqi Kurdistan and explicitly supports its political system. Furthermore, in *Robîn* and *Kodnav Viyan*, which follow each other, the main characters, agents Robîn and Viyan, take part in the struggle for Iraqi Kurdistan and support a political organisation in this region. For them: 'South Kurdistan [is the] part of Kurdistan that is now free' (133).[39] Both characters fight against the Ba'th regime for the freedom of South Kurdistan. Robîn and Viyan even marry and move into Dohuk. In Mirzengî's *Sînor*, the novelist reveals his personal perspective directly by dedicating his narrative to the memory of Mustafa Barzanî, saying, 'God rests his soul' (x).[40]

Mihemed Dehsiwar's *Çirîskên Rizgariyê* takes place largely in two of the big cities of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: Arbil (*Hewlêr*) and Sulemaniya. Arbil is considered to be the capital city of Kurds from South Kurdistan (*Paytexta Kurdên Başûr*) (247); however, the division between the regions of Kurdistan is very apparent in the novel, in which 'South' is used as a geographical concept, not in the sense of a unifying political concept. Again, in *Av Zelal Bû I*, Davud

remembers his childhood, when his family was assisting the Peshmergas (armed Kurdish fighters)[41] of South Kurdistan:

> His father and forefathers all have been subjected to the cruelty and repression of the Turkish government. His grandmother, his mother [. . .] everybody was always cursing the (Turkish) state and they secretly aided the Peshmergas from South Kurdistan (44–5).[42]

In the later stages of the novel, Davud, in his dreams, sees himself as a Peshmerga fighting against Arab and Turkish soldiers. Clearly the Peshmergas are considered to be the hope for national liberation, rather than the guerrillas. The novelists Laleş Qaso, Lokman Polat, Bûbe Eser, Mihemed Dehsiwar, Firat Ceweri, Hesenê Mete, Silêman Demîr, and Mustafa Aydogan have signed various petitions in support of the Kurdish Regional Government: these are published on the *Dengê Kurdistan* (The Voice of Kurdistan) website.[43]

Occasionally, however, imaginary political groups or organisations dedicated to saving the 'homeland' are created as an alternative to the PKK; alternatively the struggle is emphasised as resistance by the public rather than by an organised legal (or illegal) group. In his only novel, *Çirîskên Rizgariyê*, Mihemed Dehsiwar, who lives in Sweden, strongly disputes the strategies of the PKK; he does so by imagining the way it would be done by a new party he calls '*Parastina Mafên Kurdan*' (Defending the Rights of Kurds). This party is organised by the main character Sevdîn, who intends to reveal genocide, mass evacuations, killings, and human rights violations, and thus draw Europe's attention to the Kurdish issue. As the leader of this new political organisation, the main character attempts to spread the Kurdish issue to European countries, the mass media, and international news agencies worldwide. The PKK is not regarded as a political solution for the liberation of Kurdistan, and Sevdîn argues that his new party will not get involved in any terrorist activities; 'the barbarian and slaver state leaves the Kurds no chance but to defend themselves and resort to terror' (199).[44]

While referring to the fact that diasporic novelists are found in Europe, it is important to repeat that these authors are located only in Sweden, Germany, and Belgium. Only Medenî Ferho lives in Belgium, a few live in Germany, and the rest of them live in Sweden. While the novelists presenting an affiliation to the politics of the PKK are based in Germany, those strongly against it or who ignore its politics live in Sweden. Therefore we can see that there are different Kurdish political structures in Sweden and in Germany. Van Bruinessen (1999)[45] argues that the heightened awareness of the PKK in Germany or the failure to gain much support from diaspora members in Sweden depended on how much the identity of diasporic groups was politicised before the appearance of the PKK in Europe. Kurds in Sweden were already politicised when the PKK began its recruitment, which led to its obtaining less sympathy than it found in Germany where, since 'the large mass of workers were not politicized, PKK organizers found a much more fertile field for recruitment' (ibid.).

Kurdish diasporic novels are highly political novels in which the novelist, from an authoritarian standpoint, expresses his or her political and ideological affiliation in such a way that results in other novelists strongly debating the ideologies of certain political parties and organisations. 'Home' for the diasporic novelists is transformed into an ideological object. On the one hand, the novels tending to support the PKK as a national movement are produced by the novelists in Germany, while, on the other, those standing against or ignoring the PKK are produced by those in Sweden. This also shows that the prevalent movements in the host countries in which they live mostly shape the novelists' political perspective. While those opposing or ignoring the politics of the PKK adopt Iraqi Kurdistan as 'home-land' for Kurds, those affiliated to the PKK's ideology present more unifying attitudes towards the various regions of Kurdistan. However, in general the constructions of 'home-land' and 'identity' in the diasporic novelistic discourse are not only fragmented in parallel with different ideological agendas, but they are also intertwined with realist elements, with a pessimistic tone that is deprived of any idealisation. This issue is elaborated in the following section.

Diasporic Imagining of Kurdistan: Under the Lens of Realist Portrayal

In addition to the explicit statements of some novelists about the realist features of their novels and the expression of their political orientations, the novelists also attempt to draw a realistic picture of Kurdistan without idealising or imagining it differently from its actual status. This creates the idea that 'home-lands' in the diasporic narrations are real rather than fictive, and is again related to the arguments made in the earlier sections, in which I discussed the way diasporic novelists consider novelistic discourse as an appropriate channel through which they can contribute to improving the Kurdish language, share their political views, criticise other political orientations, and record personal and communal experiences. Accordingly, here I show how Kurdistan as the 'home-land' of Kurds in the majority of the novels is portrayed alongside realist and factual elements. The main thing is not to imagine that Kurdistan is united according to the concept of Greater Kurdistan,[46] but to recognise the existence of borders between each of the Kurdish regions.

Greater Kurdistan as a pan-Kurdish sovereign state refers to the establishment of a possible Kurdish state that could include Kurdish regions in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. When all the diaspora novels examined here are taken into account, it can be seen that most authors do not challenge Turkish national borders or the sovereignty of the nation states of the countries located in other Kurdish regions. Therefore, for example, Kurdish cities are perceived as parts of Turkey rather than as independent entities. In some novels, the Kurdish region is defined as 'Southeast Turkey', the officially recognised term for Turkish Kurdistan, while others, as already discussed, use the terms 'South' (*Başûr*), 'North' (*Bakur*), 'East' (*Rojhilat*), and 'West' (*Rojava*) as geographical terms, although not as political concepts. The division of Kurdistan into four parts and the lack of a state are spoken of to such a degree that the fragmentation of Kurdish identity as territories is revealed throughout the narratives. In this respect, the term 'Kurdistan' is generally used to describe the geography of the lands in which Kurds are located, and occasionally,

in just a few novels, for political purposes. The territorial expression of Kurdistan is an important issue, since the lack of recognised territories has led to different perceptions of and borders for Kurdistan; this is also related to the lack of any common national ideology. Analyses of territorial definitions of homeland in the novels therefore help in understanding the perception of 'home-land' and identity in general.

As noted above, most novels recognise the official territory of Turkey and narrate their story within this frame; in addition they usually aim to portray Kurdish cities and villages as being ruled by other sovereign countries. They mainly depict the tragic conditions of Kurds, and tend not to emphasise the creation of a possible independent Kurdistan in the future. Thus, it is difficult to talk in terms of a struggle to establish an independent Kurdistan. Even the novels that engage with the struggle and resistance focus mainly on ways of maintaining cultural and linguistic rather than political rights, or how to save the Kurds from oppression and repression by other nation states. For example, in Mihemed Dehsiwar's *Çirîskên Rizgariyê*, the protagonist constantly refers to the problems Kurds encounter living in Turkey. He sets up an organisation that explains the Kurdish situation to European countries and presses them to make the Turkish state impose democratic rights for Kurds. These demands are, however, restricted to cultural and linguistic rights only.

The main character in Lokman Polat's *Rojnamevan* is a Swedish journalist who pursues a similar path. By revealing the inhuman conditions of the Kurds to the foreign media, the protagonist attempts to raise awareness and compel the European countries to act to improve the Kurds' living conditions. This novel supports Kurdish demands, including such basic human rights as the freedom to speak their mother tongue, and while it does not pursue a political agenda for constructing an independent homeland, it constantly refers to Kurdistan's division into four parts, as a result of which the Kurds were deprived of their rights: 'Not only Turks, but Arabs and Persians also are like that. They divided Kurdistan into four parts and did not give them their democratic and national rights' (21).[47]

Similarly, Polat refers in several of his novels, including *Robîn*, *Kewa Marî*, and *Kodnav Vîyan*, to the fragmentation of Kurdistan, and emphasises the national struggle to gain rights within these officially recognised territories. This is also narrated in *Rojek ji Rojen Evdalê Zeynikê*, which is set during the nineteenth century: 'The Kurdish homeland is still separated, as it has always been. It was a country under Persian and Ottoman sovereignty without dwellings, without intellectuals or a state' (62).[48]

The concepts of '*Başûr*' and '*Bakur*' utilised in some novels generally refer to the map of 'Greater Kurdistan', but not to the *idea* of 'Greater Kurdistan'. It is important to note that the novels narrating stories related to the pre-1980s period do not draw on ideas such as 'Southern Kurdistan' (*Başûrê Kurdistan*) or 'Northern Kurdistan' (*Bakurê Kurdistan*). For example, Uzun, who usually concentrates on historical figures in his novels, does not use these concepts, but describes Kurdistan as 'The homeland of Kurds' (*welatê Kurdan*). Similarly, in his two novels *Nado Kurê Xwe Firot* and *Serpêhatiyên Rustem û Namerdiya Namerdan*, Rıza Çolpan focuses on the conditions of migrant Kurds in the 1950s and 1960s in Istanbul, acknowledging not only the official territories of Turkey but also limiting reference to the problems of the Kurds to those on cultural and social grounds.

Since the division of Kurdistan into four parts is often mentioned, the presence of borders as an image is also strongly felt in the narrations. Speaking about territories and borders is crucial for a realist perspective that destroys the vision of a metaphorical and imagined 'homeland'. Thus, 'home-land' becomes some pieces of land divided by the territories of four countries, which, in fact, reflects its actual position at this time. In most of the novels, events often take place on the borders or else there is strong emphasis on the existence of the borders, mainly of Syrian and Iraqi Kurdistan. In Silêman Demîr's novels *Piştî Bîst Salan* and *Sorê Gulê*, the focus is exclusively on the borders between Syria and Turkey that have separated Kurds from each other. In addition, Laleş's trilogy *Sê Şev û Sê Roj*, *Xezeba Azadiyê*, and *Wêran*, and Xurşid Mirzengî's novel *Sînor*, are all based on tragic-comic happenings on the Syrian and Turkish borders. People are involved in cross-border smuggling in order to make a

living; also many people are killed by landmines along the borders. In addition, soldiers subject villagers to suspicion and violent treatment. All these factors convey the meaning that borders simply destroy the lives of Kurds.

Some novels try to present the reality of 'home-land' through the perspective of any ordinary Kurd, which enables them to maintain a neutral stance. Through the protagonist's viewpoint, *Piştî Bîst Salan* reveals the chaos and tension in Nuseybin without explicitly discussing political issues. Generally speaking, without a romantic nostalgia, Kurdistan is described as somewhere in which one feels neither safe nor secure. Demîr's previous novel *Sorê Gulê*, however, refers more to economic than political matters in 1990s Kurdistan. Landowners' (*Aghas*) oppression against workers, the restricted conditions of students, and the Kurds' economic difficulties are emphasised as significant problems for Kurdistan. Diyar Bohtî's *Mexmûr* also presents a panorama of Kurdistan during the 1990s from the perspective of refugees who escape from Turkish militias to the Iraq border. The narrator shows the changes and developments, year by year, in the lives of refugees who are badly treated by all sides. The novel realistically and perceptively documents the misery of Kurdish refugees oppressed by both the Turkish and the Iraqi state. In poverty and hardship, the refugees move from one camp to another; thus 'one becomes a migrant in one's homeland' (*mirov di welatê xwe de bibe koçber*) (8). In Bohtî's other novel *Gul Bişkivîn*, the portrayal of Kurdistan is similarly realist, emphasising economic issues such as smuggling and migration to other places to survive. Even those novels affiliated to the politics of the PKK, such as *Xaltîka Zeyno*, *Xewnên Pînekirî*, *Çiroka Me*, *Binefşên Tariyê*, *Rondikên Hêviyên Wenda*, *Mamosteyê Zinaran*, *Gul Bişkivîn*, *Veger*, and *Şopa Rojên Buhurî*, refer to the idea of 'Greater Kurdistan' by including all parts of Kurdistan in their narratives, along with the achievements of the PKK as the party increasingly gathers Kurds from all four parts of Kurdistan for the national cause. Nevertheless, Kurdistan in general is still portrayed objectively alongside factual happenings and aspects, with neither praise nor idealisation of the conflicts; and betrayal among Kurds is reported in a negative or pessimistic tone.

Finally, Kurdish diasporic novelistic discourse can be considered as authoritarian fiction, in most of which the novelists, either explicitly in their forewords or implicitly throughout the novels themselves, express the notion that novelistic discourse is supposed to reflect reality and facts. Stretching back to the past, this discourse also confirms the fact of fragmentation and divisions amongst Kurds throughout the centuries. In addition, instead of an imaginary and fictionalised Kurdistan, Kurdistan images are based on facts, in an attempt to record the events of the past; thus dates and names are used for verification of their arguments. In 49 novels out of the 64 analysed, the predominant discourses on issues of borders and fragmentation show that Kurdistan is usually represented within the existing borders of four sovereign states, reflecting the political views of the novelists. As the majority of diaspora novels follow the line of the anti-PKK fraction, they do not accept the notion of 'Greater Kurdistan'. In contrast to these novels, despite the fact that the notions of homeland and belonging are imbued with emotions of loss and longing and of homesickness for particular places, however 'real' or 'imagined' they might be, the novels affiliated with the PKK project optimism in order to reinforce the movement's target for liberation as 'Greater Kurdistan'. In Chapter Six, I discuss the differences in the portrayal of Kurdistan between the novels written by PKK supporters and those strongly opposed to them.

Re-visioning Kurdistan within a Critical Frame

The mainstream Kurdish diaspora discourse most often portrays the 'homeland orientation' among diasporan Kurds in negative terms, such as '*azar* (trauma), *sitam* (oppression), and *qurbani* (victim)' (Khayati, 2008: 3, italics in original). Likewise, in relation to Kurdish novels as 'national allegory' (Jameson 1988) it can be argued that Kurdistan as the 'homeland' of the Kurds in the novels also evokes traumatic experiences, internal conflicts, a destructive feudal system, and conflicting ideologies with regard to national struggle.

Construction of a unified imagined community is prevented primarily by the continual emphasis on the Kurds' failure to achieve

statehood, and severe criticism of social-political and historical aspects of Kurdistan, with geographical, social, political, and cultural experiences repeatedly shown as negative. The narratives make clear that the descriptions of Kurdish places, or of identities surrounded by these places, involve either plain or realistic observations only, based on destructive facts, or depend on a pessimistic future for Kurdistan and Kurdish identity. This pessimistic portrayal of Kurdistan is formed by internal and external factors.

The significance of Kurdish as a component of identity is often underlined, and the degeneration of Kurdistan is narrated through a lack of use of Kurdish. When the novel's characters prefer to speak Turkish rather than Kurdish, this signifies their assimilation, according to the narrators. In *Payiza Dereng*, for example, returning to his hometown from Stockholm after 28 years of exile, Ferda perceives a damaged Kurdistan in which people ignore the necessity of their mother tongue. Throughout the novel, he criticises Kurds for speaking Turkish instead of Kurdish, and sometimes even regrets coming back, since observing the behaviour of his assimilated nation has made Kurdistan seem almost like a foreign land to him. As Ferda comments, 'I feel as if I have returned to a foreign country rather than to my own country, with foreign people, foreign culture' (221).[49]

In Cewerî's second novel, *Ez ê Yekî Bikujim*, Kurdistan is described in a similarly negative tone that addresses assimilation and reckless attitudes towards the national consciousness of Kurdish people. When Temo is released from prison after 15 years, the only thing left of his homeland is devastation and ruin, so that he begins to regret having wasted his life in struggling for homeland and nation. Most of the novel is formed from Temo's observations. He sees that Kurds speak Turkish even in daily life, and that the number of prostitutes has increased while Kurdish children are begging in the streets for money or stealing to survive. He feels that people have lost respect for their values and have forgotten about their identity and culture. The homeland is not as pure and united as Temo had imagined in prison, nor does he see any difference between prison and Amed; even the prisoners were friendlier than the people of Amed. He expects to be respected because he has been in prison in order to save his nation;

but after his prison experiences, his dominant emotion is disappointment. Returning after so long to his hometown, Temo cannot even feel happy about being released since he feels like an alien in Diyarbakir: 'I see myself as a stranger to this city after 15 years imprisonment [. . .] this city hasn't protected me [. . .] the city and its inhabitants do not care' (31).[50]

Again, Diana, the other leading character, who is a former guerrilla and appears as a prostitute in the novel, has the same attitudes as Temo. She too describes Diyarbakir: 'there are thousands of orphaned children on the streets of this city [. . .] Two thousand women sell themselves in this city' (74).[51] The negative picture of 'home-land' is so disappointing that, like Temo, Diana too frequently regrets sacrificing her life for the national cause:

> This ancient city has become hell to me. This city, in whose rescue I was involved, now eats me, makes me suffer. I thought to return as a hero to this city, but I have become a prostitute in it. This city whose honour I wanted to save from the boots [army] of foreigners, now has [crushed] my honour under its foot (107).[52]

A similar sense of assimilation in homeland is also apparent in the novels of Mezher Bozan and Lokman Polat. For example, Bozan refers in *Asim* to Kurdish soldiers who have adapted to the Turkish state system, ignoring their own national and cultural identity. In Polat's *Robîn* (2004), it is also argued that censure of Kurds for speaking Turkish rather than Kurdish results from a national deficiency in common sense that increases daily. The ignorance and negligence among Kurds about their national and cultural identity is emphasised through various criticisms.

In Xurşîd Mîrzengî's *Belqitî*, Kurds are deprived of their basic rights and there is no resistance to this destructive repression. The novel narrates life in Kurdish cities, mainly Diyarbakir, during the 1930s when speaking Kurdish was comprehensively banned. It focuses not only on the oppression of Kurds by the new Turkish state but also on the deteriorating relationships among Kurds who fail to

struggle at all. Although Kurdistan is controlled by the Turkish authorities, the Kurds do not launch any resistance movement against them, preferring simply to speak Turkish and avoid any problems. According to the circumstances in the novel, there can be no positive or optimistic prospects for Kurdistan.

In Diyar Bohtî's *Gul Bişkivîn*, the narrator explicitly mentions that speaking Turkish is regarded as a symbol of prestige (78), since Kurdish characters are involved mainly with their own needs rather than with national concerns. For instance, in Xurşîd Mîrzengî's *Sînor*, Kurdish characters either conform to the restrictions imposed by Turkish soldiers, or comply with the dictates of the Turkish state, or conceal their Kurdish identity and introduce themselves as Turks. Their economic concerns and personal safety are their priorities. To be able to survive becomes their main concern even if this leads to immorality or a betrayal of the national struggle. In *Nado Kurê Xwe Firot* by Rıza Çolpan, not only does Nado, the main character, ignore the national struggle but he also makes a deal with somebody over his son, whom he considers an obstacle in his life. In this case, Kurdistan does not refer to a land of struggle for independence, but a land of struggle to survive.

In this sense, the passive attitudes of Kurds towards the Turkish state system are seen as one of the internal reasons for the negative image of Kurdistan. In some novels, even if the protagonist is patriotic enough to struggle, the other Kurds do not support him. For example, in Fêrgîn Melîk Aykoç's *Mamostayê Zinaran*, the only patriotic teacher in Seydo's village cannot get help from other Kurdish villagers to fight against the assimilative Turkish education system. They are either too scared to become involved in any resistance or else they are easily compliant with the Turkish military and spy on the rebels. The increase in banning and oppression does not lead to a rise in resistance but to complete resignation.

Indeed, when all the novels in diaspora are taken into consideration, it is clear that the conflicts and discordances within different political parties stand as a significant obstacle to unity and solidarity. Diyar Bohtî's novel entitled *Mexmûr*, which focuses on the harsh conditions in Makhmur camp, is the main example

underlining this argument. With regard to the external reasons forcing Kurds to migrate from their lands to the refugee camps, the novel also considers how the conflicts between the KDP and PKK negatively affect the lives of refugees. The setting of the novel, which deals with political conditions during the 1990s, encompasses the borders of Turkish Kurdistan and reaches to the borders of Iraqi Kurdistan. Kurds from Turkish Kurdistan seeking asylum in Iraqi Kurdistan are forced to leave the refugee camp and go to Mosul, which is in the territories under the Ba'th regime.

These refugees live in poverty and difficulty due to the KDP Peshmergas, whose actions represent further opposition toward the PKK. The novel argues that different ideologies within Kurdish political parties complicate the lives of Kurds so that Kurds not only suffer at the hands of sovereign states, but are also victimised because of internal disunity. The Kurdish refugees are confused by the approach of the Peshmergas and question the reasons:

> Some used to say it is the fate of the Kurds; some used to say it is due to our stupidity; some used to swear to the KDP; some used to criticize the management of the camp; some of them even used to criticize the party itself (77).[53]

The narrator states that Kurds are caught between two fires: the KDP says 'the PKK is operating very openly in the south and as a result of this the Turks are aiming at us' (83);[54] while the PKK asks, 'why the KDP is collaborating with the enemy and attacking us' (96).[55] The narrator strongly criticises the Kurds but particularly the Kurdish political parties, which are in conflict with each other: 'the Kurds consider punching as children's play. If they do not smash each other's heads, break each other's arms, smash each other's noses they feel as though they have not had a fight' (ibid).[56] In these conditions, freedom appears as a weak option that drags all the characters, but mainly the protagonist, into hopelessness since, 'unless one has his own free country, it does not matter wherever he goes; all places are the same for him' (140).[57]

Like *Mexmûr*, Zeynel Abidîn's *Binefşên Tariyê* refers directly to the conflict between the KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party, in Kurdish

Partîya Demokrata Kurdistan [PDK]),[58] the Peshmergas and the PKK guerrillas. The novel's narrator states that in the past there was unity among Kurds as they used to support both the Peshmergas and PKK simultaneously; however, this was no longer the case: 'Many dear people among us at that time aided Molla Mustafa with loyalty. But today? [Look] What are we Kurds doing to each other? What are they doing against us?' (124).[59] Along with these novels, the main issue in almost all of Lokman Polat's novels is also the fragmented and divided counsels between ideologies, strategies, and objectives, along with the political deadlocks dictated by the Iraqi and Turkish states. In *Kodnav Viyan*, both the main characters, Robîn and Viyan, who are involved in the national struggle against these states, also struggle against various Kurdish organisations and parties. The narrator in *Zêna* describes the conflicts between the Kurdish parties in the villages of Kurdistan; 'there were two groups in the village. Wherever they came across each other, blood would be shed. The party that found a higher and more secure place would defeat the other' (70).[60]

In addition to all the novels mentioned above, Lokman Polat's *Fîlozof* is the main novel to portray the common negative image of Kurdistan. The novel, based mainly on the failures of Kurds rather than their glories, reconsiders Kurdistan under the lens of deficiencies and mistakes:

> Since the Kurds do not have their own state, they have lost everything. Kurds have been deprived of everything. Due to lack of a state and national bodies, all the Kurdish institutions are a mess. This chaos shows itself in everything from politics to literature. A council that includes all four parts of Kurdistan has never been established. No national institutions have been founded (146).[61]

This negative image of Kurdistan is due not only to the lack of a nation state and unity among Kurds but also to prevailing socio-cultural conditions. As well as politically, 'home-land' is also destroyed socially and culturally, and throughout the novels, issues

associated with the destructive aspects of the feudal system are often referred to. For instance, the honour killings, arranged marriages, oppression, and threats to which Kurdish women have been subjected, and through which they have been deprived of any rights and enterprises, are frequently narrated. Internal factors destroying the image of Kurdistan are also evaluated through different portraits of women who share the same sufferings. In addition to external factors imposed by sovereign states, emphasis is placed on the feudal, conservative, and patriarchal features of Kurdistan that have prevented Kurds from establishing a nation state or improving their quality of life.

Fêrgîn Melîk Aykoç in particular, in his two novels *Siya Dema Borî* and *Rondikên Hêviyên Wenda*, criticises the feudal system in Kurdistan, in which women are oppressed and killed in the name of honour. In *Siya Dema Borî* one of the characters, Leyla, tells Berjîn that,

> over there the wing of fairies were broken, their colours faded, and they were destitute. No one heard their groaning and crying [. . .] Those women in the south of the homeland have been killed, burnt up, and suffocated by feudal and backward men in the name of honour and grace (208).[62]

In *Ez ê Yekî Bikujim*, both Temo and Diana complain about the patriarchal personalities of their fathers, who refuse to let them speak about their lives or take any action based on their free will. In *Zêna* by Mezher Bozan, Zêna is forced to marry the son of a tribal leader who had previously kidnapped her. As the narrator says, 'Zena, like other Kurdish girls, has been deprived of luck and fate as well. She has not attained her desire [. . .] it has been the same everywhere and throughout all time' (176).[63] In this case, Zena is forced to separate from her beloved. In contrast to novels written in Kurdistan, separation between lovers does not always occur for political reasons; here it is due mainly to the conservative and feudal structure of Kurdish society.

In addition to negative reflections on conservative, patriarchal, and feudal elements, the narrations express how Kurdistan is corrupted

by immorality and betrayal. For example, *Xidê Naxirwan û Tevkuştine Dêrsim* by Rıza Çolpan, is based on the massacre in the Dersim region in the 1930s in which many *Aghas* betray the rebels and cause the rebels to lose their case. Similarly in *Gundikê Dono* by Mahmut Baksî, villages are described in relation to conflicts between tribes, the misuse of religion by shaikhs, and pressure from landowners against the peasants, while *Sê Şev û Sê Roj* and *Wêran* by Laleş Qaso both show that 'home' is not only destroyed by political conflicts and ongoing war. In fact, internal conflicts among Kurds also lead to the corruption of Kurdistan. As one of the characters in *Wêran* states, 'our homeland is also a hell' (*cehenemе jî welatê meye*) (293). *Gundikê Dono*, which recounts the oppressive behaviour of *Aghas* in Kurdish villages, ends on a pessimistic note when a character called Zibeyrê Ehmê says in the final sentence: 'Haci Zorav went away, his son replaced him [. . .] I know the land of Xerzan will change one day, but I will not [live to] see it' (94).[64]

Even in Diyar Bohtî's non-political novel *Soryaz* (2008), it is stated that betrayal is the worst situation in the world. In this respect, in Fêrgîn Melîk Aykoç's *Dîlên li ber Pûkê*, cooperation by Kurdish tribes with the Turkish state and joining the war as a member of the Turkish army are considered to be betrayals. These tribes are seen as the enemies of the Kurds and, like a disease, they need to be treated as soon as possible since 'the sense of tribe was above the sense of Kurdishness' (269).[65] The storyteller in the novel questions his role in the Dersim massacre and feels that he has betrayed his own nation, saying, 'I carried the gun of the enemy, isn't it betrayal?' (24).[66] He accepts the fact that the state has deceived them, but still regrets what he has done during this period and cannot forgive himself for believing this bloodthirsty country (269). In *Xewnên Pînekirî*, the narrator clearly emphasises that the issue of betrayal is very common among Kurds: 'betrayal has left its mark on Kurdish history as a filthy and besmirched label' (59).[67] She also emphasises the traitorous Kurds themselves rather than the enemy, asking, 'why do the Kurds produce so many traitors?' (96).[68]

In addition to betrayals that occurred in the historical past, *Bigrî Heval* shows a different kind of betrayal among the guerrillas in the

mountains. The novel suggests that even a guerrilla who does not obey the principles of the organisation can be denounced as a 'traitor' (*xayîn*) in a way that implies there should be 'death to traitors' (61).[69] This draws attention to the possibility of internal conflicts even in the mountains, with the claim that: 'the commander of the camp was abusing them for his own personal interest and for his malicious intention' (133).[70] Through *Mamostayê Zinaran*, Aykoç looks at more recent betrayals among Kurds by referring to imams and village headmen working as spies for the state against guerrillas. He emphasises how, 'aghas and sheikhs cooperate with the Turkish state against an independent Kurdistan' (109).[71]

Similarly, *Gundikê Dono* reveals that Kurds, in one way or another, have been disloyal to the notion of unity, as most *aghas* of Kurdish villages have collaborated with a gendarme to deter the Kurdish national struggle. In *Ronakbîr*, the narrator criticises Kurds in general, saying: 'Kurds are a corrupted nation. A nation surrendered to occupiers. A surrendered nation would not feel ashamed of this' (57).[72] Similarly, *Payiza Dereng*, with its highly critical attitudes and highly autobiographical elements,[73] responds to the fact that the reality of Kurdistan is reflected in the fact that one Kurd can be a guerrilla while his neighbour is a 'village guard' (*korucu*)[74] cooperating with the Turkish state. As Ferda, the protagonist says,

> this is a true picture of the country. This is a picture of the reason and result of a long history and centuries of slavery. This is our regular internal hostility [. . .] this is an evil worm and this worm is eating away our hearts and brain (254).[75]

In the novel *Kewa Marî*, a similar image of Kurdistan is portrayed, becoming clear as a former guerrilla speaks:

> Nobody will act with the same malignancy, as has been done by one Kurd to another Kurd. If the Kurds did not have betrayers and traitors, would they be failing in the revolts? If Sheikh Said's own brother-in-law had not been involved in informing, would Sheikh Said have been arrested? If village guards did not

> exist, what could governments do? And if some Kurds were not informers, would I have been convicted? (34).[76]

In Laleş Qaso's trilogy, *Sê Şev û Sê Roj*, *Xezeba Azadiyê*, and *Wêran*, the disloyalty of Kurds is often regarded as just as significant as the interference of external factors against national unity. In *Sê Şev û Sê Roj,* the main character states, 'we are the most profane and traitorous' (202);[77] similarly in *Wêran*, the protagonist Circîs holds Kurds directly responsible for their own failure by saying 'they neither let Kurds become united, nor do Kurds themselves get united' (36),[78] implying that he believes that 'even if they establish their own state, it will be worthless' (280).[79] In his novels, *Hawara Dîcleyê I* and *Hawara Dîcleyê II*, Uzun concentrates on the lives of the Bedirkhan family and also handles the issue of internal conflicts. The narrator not only criticises the emirates that negotiate with the Ottoman Empire, but also examines how Kurds fail to achieve their own statehood because of individual self-interests and betrayals. In his earlier novel *Bîra Qederê* (1995), Uzun refers to the tribes cooperating with the state against the Sheikh Said Rebellion[80] and denounces them as traitors.

Unlike those written in Turkish Kurdistan, in the novels written in the diaspora village traditions are generally not praised, but are considered backward and destructive. *Labîranta Cînan*, which concentrates on the experiences in a village school of a teacher called Kevanot, paints a very negative picture of rural life. The village is depicted as a place where lots of superstitions prevail and weird incidents are occurring, since the villagers make their livings through old traditions and are resistant to any developments brought in by newcomers such as Kevanot, when he comes to the village as a teacher. Villages are not the source of a naïve, pastoral life, but are seen as the root of backwardness and a battlefield for the skirmishes of landowners and shaikhs. The same criticism is made in *Kewa Marî* by Lokman Polat, who accuses villagers of narrow-mindedness for not questioning any taboos.

So the novels deconstruct the meanings attributed to the homeland by diasporan communities, as many scholars and researchers have explained. Generally speaking, because of a

geographical existence away from 'home', coupled with an idealised longing to return there, diasporas are frequently characterised as having an 'imagined' or 'mythical' home (Anderson 1983, Blunt 2003, Golan 2002, George 2003, Gowans 2003, Yeh 2005, Veronis 2007). It is argued that homeland-oriented diasporic groups locate their homeland within a mythologised, idealised, and historicised discourse. In this connection, Safran (1991) argues that diasporans articulate the original homeland, along with myth, memory, and vision, as an idealised place to which they will eventually return. In other words, the idea of 'home' includes a return to a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination, a place of origin (Brah 1996: 4, 192), and through the construction of alternative 'homes', the 'imagined "home" is a mythic place, imbued with the desire of the diasporic imagination rather than the real place' (ibid.: 192).[81]

Accordingly, diasporic literature in general is considered to be usually based on a painful displacement from the homeland; the cruel journeys experienced during the displacement; and adaptation to, or disintegration within, the new environment. Most importantly, the idea of 'home' left behind is reinvented through imaginary and mythical features within the narratives because, according to Mardorossian, exiled literature 'constructs a binary logic between an alienating "here" and a romanticized "homeland"' (2002: 16).

However, analysis of Kurdish diasporic novels shows that 'home-land' in these novels is not romanticised or idealised, a finding which challenges the fictionalised 'homes' model argued by leading theorists and scholars. It is possible to see the difference when comparisons are made with research conducted on diasporic articulations in literature. For example, with regard to the articulation of 'home' in East African Asian literature, Simatei (2011: 58) states that, 'writers as diverse as Moyez Vassanji, Peter Nazareth, Jameela Siddiqi, and Neera Kapur-Dromson, profile [diaspora's] essentialist and regressive self-portrayal as a guest community valuing myths of cultural purity, homeland and return'. Tay (2011: 110) examines the writing of Rushdie for its representation of India, noting that, 'India is a forsaken and idealized site of the past that he recreates textually for the global diasporic

present as an imaginary homeland'. Quite differently, in Kurdish diasporic discourse the novelists themselves often emphasise the role of reality in their fiction. It is clear that memory is used by both Asian and Kurdish diasporic writers, but from a different perspective. While Indian diasporic writings 'construct imaginary happy homelands (which in reality might be the opposite) from the fragmentary odds and ends of memory' (Jha and Ravichandran 2001: 196), Kurdish diasporic writing, from the tragic experiences of memory, concentrates on a fragmented homeland.

One might expect to encounter a similar portrait in Palestinian literature since their status is the same as that of the Kurds; however, research on Palestinian literature has produced a different picture, having more similarities with the cases mentioned above. Al-Nakib explains how, as a Palestinian diasporic writer, Yasmine Zahran, in her novel *A Beggar at Damascus Gate* describes 'actual Palestine [. . .] under siege, enclosed by walls, divided forcibly into unliveable cantons'; however, 'Zahran's novel traces the contours of a "virtual" Palestine not the "actual" one' (Al-Nakib 2005: 238, 266). Imaginary homeland in Palestinian diasporic literature often allows the exiled writer to create the sense of stability and security of his or her dreams, in contrast to the actual occupied and conflicted conditions of Palestine.

Thus, the portrayals of Kurdish homeland differ from the findings of ethnographic and anthropological research undertakings. According to Alinia (2004), whose PhD research was based on Kurdish migrants in Sweden, homeland meanings are multiple in a real as well as an imagined sense; and can be both idealised and/or associated with traumatic experiences due to conflicts with, and oppression by, the sovereign state. Similarly, for the diasporans in France, homeland is associated with movements, war, persecution, political instability, states of emergency, atrocity, assimilation, national struggle, and nostalgia (Khayati 2008: 158). Both Alinia and Khayati maintain that, in contrast to diasporic fictional narrative, the traumatic experiences narrated by the respondents are mainly based on external factors such as war, state oppression, and persecution. However, in diasporic novelistic discourse, we also find internal criticisms relating to the Kurds themselves.

Kurdish diasporic novels fashion a fairly negative portrayal of Kurdistan, which is based mainly on the lack of national awareness among Kurds themselves. In these novels, Kurdish characters ignore the significance of the national struggle and their Kurdistan is not fully politicised. Kurds either accept the superiority of the Turkish authorities or even (mainly tribal leaders and landowners) negotiate with the state for their own self-interest. Many characters are criticised for speaking Turkish, which again signifies lack of national awareness. The lack of a national struggle and the lack of support for other Kurds, accepting the existence of Turkish sovereignty, the cooperation of some Kurds with the Turkish authorities, along with social or cultural backwardness, all combine to construct a very negative image of Kurdistan. Literary 'home-land' is based not on a fantasy containing idealised features of 'home', but on factual experiences that even dismantle the idea of a unified 'home' through a constant emphasis on 'home's' negative aspects. In this respect, the assertion of Sarup (1994: 94), who associates 'home' with 'pleasant memories, intimate situations, a place of warmth and protective security amongst parents, brothers and sisters, loved ones', is strongly contradicted by the meanings of homeland in the novels.

It is also important to emphasise the fact that the writers discussed above are doubly displaced, being first stateless, and secondly diasporic, which leads to various complex 'home-land' configurations. There are two main reasons that account for the articulation of critical and negative portrayals of Kurdish 'home-land' or Kurdish identity: the first relates to the conditions of being exilic, the second is bound to the particular case of the Kurds. Despite coming from a similar background or sharing the same national concerns, writing within or outside national boundaries affects the view of 'home-land' and identity. These writers might share a sense of statelessness with the writers within the national borders; however, the actual physical distance from national borders sharpens their understanding of how it is 'back home' and turns their nostalgic aspirations into criticism. Angelika Bammer (1992: vii–xi) defines the critical narratives of exilic writers as 'instability of home as a referent', and adds that 'on

all levels and in all places, it seems "home" [...] is either disintegrating or being radically redefined'.

In relation to Bammer's definition, in terms of Kurdish diasporic writers, distance generates an awareness through which 'home-land' and identity are both disintegrated and radically redefined. Benefiting from the position of outsider and a sense of exclusion, the space of exile is transformed into a vantage point from which they self-critically view home, from its political aspects (lack of unity, betrayal within the national struggle) to the socio-cultural realms (the oppressive influence on Kurds of landowners and shaikhs, honour killings).

Secondly, these novelists represent certain groups of people who share similar characteristics. For example, they used to be involved in politics, fled to Europe mainly after the 1980 military coup, and suffered many traumatic experiences. As Alinia (2004: 239) mentions in relation to Kurdish migrants in Sweden, 'homeland, in the sense of the places to which they are emotionally attached, is inaccessible for many of them in different ways. It is also often associated with traumatic memories, danger, and risk.' Similarly Khayati (2008: 105), referring to the Kurdish refugees in France and Sweden as being diasporan, speaks of what is 'a traumatic experience that makes a deep mark on the memory of those Kurds who were forced to leave Kurdistan'. The arguments of Alinia and Khayati are also valid for the literary works mentioned in this book, which are based on traumatic experiences that caused the authors to leave their lands. The homeland constructed on traumatic and tragic experiences is, for sure, related to continuing socio-political conditions in the Kurdish homeland.

Although keeping their political ties with their political parties, the authors have been mainly involved in literary production in such a way that novelistic discourse has become a key site where they engage with and debate their political opinions and oppositions. Certainly there is no political and ideological unity regarding homeland that might become the focal point of their political critiques. On the whole they direct their critiques at conflicting national politics both in their homeland and their host country. As the majority of diasporic novelists are from Sweden, it is worth pointing out that there are various Kurdish organisations in Sweden,

that are at odds with each other. For example, the Federation of Kurdish Associations, influenced by Massoud Barzani's KDP, is known for its anti-PKK attitude; while the Council of Kurdish Associations in Sweden is for the most part dominated by sympathisers of the PKK. Then there is the Kurdish Union in Sweden, which consists almost entirely of members affiliated to the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (KDP-I) (cf. Khayati 2008).

Being already politicised migrants before their exilic life, the authors have produced their literary renderings of homeland in accordance with the organisation or party to which they are affiliated, with particular emphasis on critiques, which, in turn, depict the ideological representation. In other words, due to the absence of singular national politics, they invest their literary visions of homeland in the socio-political dilemma posed by political circumstances in both the homeland that they left behind and within the Kurdish circle in their host countries. They even criticise the other diasporic writers' political stands in their fictional and non-fictional books; this also shows that they limit themselves to developments in the diaspora. For example, Medenî Ferho's book of criticism, *Rewşa Romana Kurdî* (2011), includes, despite its overarching title, only the diasporic novelists. Furthermore, in his book he either criticises certain authors for their lack of attention to the national struggle of the PKK or accuses them of ignoring in their narratives the historical and socio-cultural aspects of the Kurds.

Therefore, the diasporic authors mentioned in this book are both physically distanced from the heated conflict and immediate developments in their homeland, and either cannot or have not cut their ties with transnational politics in Europe. This constantly creates a pessimistic and critical perspective in their prose narratives.

Autobiographical Memory: In the Shadow of the 1980 Military Coup and Diyarbakir Prison

> When I was in prison I was subjected to all sorts of techniques to make me confess and eventually I let my eyes escape from the

> light, which was filling them with tears. A vicious fear had already settled down in my heart and was torturing my soul. In order to be able to change the world one needed a great faith, however the gods of my emotions had already taken this sacred divinity away from me. For two years these inglorious [types] have trampled on me and taken my desire for life away (40–1).[82]

In the novel *Binefşên Tariyê* by Zeynel Abidîn, the protagonist, Bawer, cannot recover from his experiences in Diyarbakir prison and frequently refers in detail to the suffering caused by his imprisonment as noted above. The Kurdish diasporic novels play a part in the writing of history by aiming to construct 'collective memory' and identity. The historical and recent past employed in the novels provides elements of factual bases for them. Accordingly, analysis of the novels suggests that some particular experiences of the novelists themselves have considerable influence on the diasporic memory and lead to certain 'home-land' images. The biographies of the novelists reveal their experiences, which are reflected in their fiction. In this sense, it is also true that different memories construct different meanings of past and present; however, there are certain particular moments and periods, including the 1980 military coup and Diyarbakir prison, that may influence collective memories. Generally in the diasporic novels the 1980 Turkish military coup and the prison are intertwined; it is well known that the coup was largely responsible for the worsening situation in Diyarbakir prison that frightened all Kurds. Thus characters who suffer from the outcomes of the coup also suffer from the conditions in Diyarbakir prison.

It is essential to point out that, on the issue of narrative mode and techniques, Kurdish novels in diaspora usually have a conventional linear narrative structure, the straight line and chronological order of which is also closely linked to the autobiographical or biographical aspects of the novels; these document in sequence the experiences of a particular character. For example, in the biographical novels of Uzun such as *Siya Evînê*, *Hawara Dîcleyê I-II*, and others, in the semi-autobiographical novels of Bûbe Eser, such as *Gardiyan* and *Jiyanek*,

in Mezher Bozan's *Av Zelal Bû I-IV*, in Jîr Dilovan's *Zenga Zêrîn*, and in Aydogan's *Pêlên Bêrîkirinê*, the plots flow through a straight story line, incorporating a structure of cause and effect. Their involvement with social realism and their detailed depictions of socio-political conditions affecting the lives of Kurds at a concrete level, give the novels an understandable causal sequence. The novels offer a standard linear narrative form in which the story flows forward chronologically though possibly interrupted by abrupt flashbacks.

Since the use of memory and past narrations plays a significant role in the novels, the coexistence of past and present maintained by the use of flashbacks is also dominant. The structure is disrupted by a great range of flashbacks related to subplot details through story-telling techniques, examples being the Chaldean character Şemun in *Oy Dayê* narrating the 1915 Armenian massacre, Zeyno in *Xaltîka Zeyno* depicting the political conditions of Kurds, Apê Musa (Uncle Musa) in *Dîlên li ber Pûkê* describing the Dersim massacre, and the unnamed character in *Tu* who recounts his personal experiences before his imprisonment. Again, while there is a chronological order in *Payiza Dereng*, use of the epistolary format means the narrative mode is constantly interspersed with tales of the past through a whole sequence of letters.

It is well known that most Kurdish diasporan novelists had to leave their homeland in the early 1980s because of the unbearable impact of the Turkish military coup in 1980.[83] Baser (2011: 9) notes that: 'Among the measures taken [in relation to the coup] Diyarbakir Prison No.5 is particularly significant. Many Kurdish and Turkish politicians, artists, journalists and academics were put on trial and sent to Diyarbakir – both during and after the coup.' The coup and the conditions in Diyarbakir prison, which became increasingly harsh and dangerous, constitute a crucial aspect of diasporic memory through personal experiences of their malign influence. The prevailing conditions or the period during which the novelist leaves his lands form the dominant vision of his homeland, so Kurdistan is generally associated with the conditions witnessed by the novelist, usually during the 1980s and preceding the experience of exile.

The military coup in 1980 killed numerous people, including Kurds; however, through the narrating of memories, Kurdistan is imagined in relation to the military coup because it shattered unity in Kurdistan and fragmented lives, with many Kurds imprisoned, killed, or forced to flee into exile. The memories or narrations of this period locate Kurdistan in a negative and tragic environment. The nostalgic remembering and yearning for 'home-land' includes the miserable consequences experienced during the military coup and then its damaging outcome, incarceration in Diyarbakir prison; thus 'home' does not usually evoke the sense of belonging and prosperity. Agnew (2005: 10), who also reflects on the two opposite meanings that can be conveyed through the creation of an imaginary 'home' based on memories, notes that while,

> memories ignite our imaginations and enable us to vividly recreate our recollections of home as a haven filled with nostalgia, longing, and desire [sometimes] they compel us, as witnesses and co-witnesses, to construct home as a site and space of vulnerability, danger, and violent trauma.

Accordingly, 'home-land' in Kurdish diasporic novels is produced in the shadow of traumatic experiences that occurred under the impact of the 1980 military coup. Of the 64 novels studied, 34 refer to the tragic experiences arising from the coup and Diyarbakir prison. Of the rest, 18 are mythological, epic, and historical novels, and naturally enough do not refer to either the coup or the prison.

I noted earlier that most of the novelists migrated to Europe during the same period and experienced similar processes. The image of Kurdistan that confronted them before they departed can be conceptualised as 'frozen' in their memory. Most had to leave their lands after the military coup had rendered social and political conditions unbearable for them; many also spent several years incarcerated in Diyarbakir prison, and some, when released, had to flee to European countries as refugees. For the novelists, homeland evokes similar visions, related mostly to the coup and their incarceration. In most of the novels, the military coup is the defining

moment of diasporic memory, in which they display its effects on their social and political lives. The diasporic novelistic discourse shows that they have used these sorts of narration as resistance to and reaction against what they experienced in their homeland. In this respect, almost all the novels refer to the dark days of the 1980s shortly after the coup, when many Kurds were arrested, tortured, and ill-treated. Most of Mezher Bozan's novels, for example, focus frequently on the effects of the coup on Kurdish lives.

Autobiographical elements are also predominant since the narration related to the coup includes Bozan's personal experiences. Thus *Asim* includes a detailed account of a military coup and the character's subsequent arrest and imprisonment, while in *Av Zelal Bû II* and *Av Zelal Bû III*, Bozan considers how the coup has influenced the lives of the characters. His narrator describes the gradual changes in the system that entirely altered the picture of Kurdistan. The military coup, a turning point for Kurdish identity and politics, overshadowed the image of 'home-land', and reinforced the suppression of Kurdish language and culture. As social and political pressure on the Kurds intensified, so did Kurdish resistance and struggle. In addition, Kurdish politics were channelled in different directions. Bozan's novels show that following the coup all Kurds were under suspicion. In *Av Zelal Bû III*, when the protagonist returns after the coup to his home town, Mardin, he sees that everything has changed: Turkish symbols and the influence of Turkish nationalism are disseminated all over the town, and the Kurds face greater pressure for speaking in Kurdish. This is very much an autobiographical account of the novelist's experiences. Before exile Bozan (1957), like the protagonist in *Av Zelal Bû*, was a schoolteacher, and was transferred from one city to another because of his political views. He was prosecuted several times after the coup, and had to flee to Sweden in 1986.[84]

The same post-coup changes can be seen in Fêrgîn Melîk Aykoç's *Mamostayê Zinaran*. Here the Kurdish city in which the novel is set is now completely under military control and, due to more efficient integration policies and military investigations, Kurdish villagers face more pressure than ever to assimilate. Through the narrations of

the character Apê Riza (Uncle Riza), conditions in Diyarbakir prison, including torture and other mistreatment, are emphasised, and people become more stressed and frightened by the details. Certainly the tales spreading throughout the 'home-land' about the goings-on in Diyarbakir prison are more than enough to scare people, particularly villagers. Similarly, in Jîr Dilavon's *Zenga Zêrîn*, the narrator, as a teacher, witnesses and narrates the effects of a military coup, and as a result is also detained and subjected to torture. Both *Mamostayê Zinaran* and *Zenga Zêrîn* make complex use of the personal experiences of Aykoç (1951) and Dilovan (1956).[85]

Again, Laleş Qaso, like other diasporic novelists, in almost all his novels also captures critical elements of Diyarbakir prison and its socio-political impact on the characters. For example, in *Wêran*, the experiences in Diyarbakir are described as days that are impossible to forget. There is detailed information in *Xezeba Azadiyê* about conditions in the prison, while in *Ronakbîr*, the protagonist, as an exile in Sweden, cannot integrate with the new culture of his host country. Prevented from settling into his new environment by recalling his prison experiences, he positions himself instead between two cultures, in this way becoming, an 'in-between'. Affected by the tragic experiences caused by the coup and by incarceration in Diyarbakir prison, Ronakbîr finds himself in a situation of transition, unable finally to abandon the past. This is consistent with Bhabha's concept of 'beyond', which he describes as being,

> neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past [. . .] We find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion (Bhabha 1994: 1).

Ronakbîr's fear of the detention, authority, and police officials that he had left behind in the 'home-land' also pursues him wherever he goes, making it impossible for him to adapt to the new culture. Quite interestingly, the personal accounts of Qaso, who was in

prison for ten years and tortured during that time, endorse the narrations in his novels.

A similar example of the state of 'in-betweenness' found in *Ronakbîr* is seen in Mustafa Aydogan's *Pêlên Bêrikirinê*, which also informs its readers of the names and techniques of various methods of torture by listing them in a realist manner. Like Aydogan (1957) himself, who has been exiled in Sweden since 1985, the protagonist remembers his prison experiences and narrates the recurring memories of torture and fear that affect his new life in his new environment. He is torn by his painful past, and subconsciously fears the Swedish police, whom he always tries to avoid whenever he encounters any of them, underlining the fact that up till this time, 'he has not got rid of the effects of incarceration and torture in prison. This impact still carries on [. . .] Even after he had his passport, he was arrested in his city by the police many times in his dreams' (122).[86] As in *Pêlên Bêrikirinê*, the protagonist in Bozan's novel *Asim* not only lists methods of torture but also illustrates clearly the constant impact of those days on his current life. Supporting this, the novel ends on such a note: 'he did not forget the torture, *falaka*,[87] Palestinian hanging, the electric shock and the groaning of the prisoners. They clattered in his mind all the time. It did not get worse. However, it was such a saw that it could never become blunt' (107).[88]

In considering the literary representation of imprisonment and military coup, Bûbe Eser's novel *Gardiyan* concerns itself largely with the issue of Diyarbakir prison through the narrations of a guard who worked there in the early 1980s. The guard confesses to a journalist, telling him explicitly about torture techniques and methods. In an attempt to replace real documents or official records the novels even include drawings of some of the techniques so readers can visualise them more clearly. In his novel *Jiyanek*, Eser also shows that 'home-land' is associated with or remembered in relation to the experiences of imprisonment. Arrested following the 1980 military coup, the protagonist was imprisoned for three years, and this experience has influenced all phases of his life. Explaining the lasting nature of such awful conditions the narrator comments that,

> imprisonment and torture will continue until the freedom of the homeland of the ancestors. As long as the nation is not free, the sons of the nation will suffer from the same torture and persecution. Serdar knew this very well. He knew that he was neither the first one nor the last (2004: 237).[89]

These novels can be seen as the literary expression of the novelist's experiences, which are similar to the protagonist's. Eser (1955) was arrested too, during the 1980 coup, and subjected to torture while imprisoned in Diyarbakir. Even the dates of imprisonment mentioned in the novel match those of the author. In *Ez ê Yekî Bikujim* by Firat Cewerî, the same impact of prison experiences is presented through Temo, the central character. A protagonist who lacks heroic qualities, he has difficulty adapting to his hometown after his 15 years incarcerated in Diyarbakir. The sense of isolation and disaffection he experiences following his release and return to his hometown, is the novel's principal theme. When he looks at Diyarbakir he thinks,

> it is true that I have been living in this city, but except for the four walls [prison], I did not see any places in the city. I did not see the young people of this city growing up, I did not see the development of this city; for fifteen years I was deprived of the rising and the setting of the sun of this city (20).[90]

Many years of imprisonment have erected an unapproachable barrier between him and his hometown, to such an extent that he feels himself as a total stranger. Like his character Temo, the novelist Cewerî (1959), who has lived in Sweden since 1980, was also imprisoned and tortured as he has disclosed in an interview.[91]

Medenî Ferho, another exiled writer who fled to Europe after the 1980 military coup, like other diasporic novelists employs a narrative style driven mainly by autobiographical elements. *Xaltîka Zeyno* focuses on a typical patriotic heroine who, shut up in Diyarbakir prison, reviews her life in a series of flashbacks Through her reminiscences, readers are taken to different places, and 'home-land'

is depicted through her experiences in prison, which also reflect the novelist's own experiences: after the 1980 coup Ferho (1947) was imprisoned for more than six years. Similarly, in Uzun's *Tu* (You, 1985) the protagonist, like Zeyno, narrates his story from Diyarbakir prison, having been arrested when a Kurdish poem is found in his house during a raid. Half the novel contains his flashbacks to the past, the other half concerns his feelings and experiences during his time in prison. By the end of the novel, the reader clearly appreciates that such experiences will have turned this individual into a different person. Diyarbakir is in fact associated not only with its firm resistance in the past, but also with the infamous prison in which many Kurds have been confined, tortured, and killed.

In addition to the novels mentioned above, Sevdîn, the protagonist in *Çirîskên Rizgariyê*, who fled to England after the coup, returns to Kurdistan and becomes involved in political organisations, mainly as a way of taking revenge for the dark days that followed the coup. Through ideological and sociological criticisms that dominate his view of 'home-land', the protagonist often refers to imprisonment and the coup. Dehsiwar (1959), like other diasporic Kurdish writers, fled Sweden just after the coup in order to avoid political persecution. Experiences that preceded his exile tend to dominate the central themes of his novel.

Based on all these examples, it is worth mentioning that the novelistic discourse in diaspora somehow creates a link to the personal past of the novelists; through this they try to emphasise how the life of every Kurd has been affected by the military coup and conditions of imprisonment. It is apparent that the notion of 'home-land' is filtered through the views and experiences of novelists before their exile. The way Kurdistan is reflected changed completely after the 1980 military coup and the methods applied in Diyarbakir prison. Many of the authors had to leave their lands, and the coup led to an intensifying of struggle and resistance in Kurdistan. These two elements, through which novelists define their 'home-land' and construct an attachment to it, represent a crucial point and a driving force in their writings. Remembering and narrating the details of those days is significant, since memorising tragic experiences and

writing about them is a way for the characters to confront the inevitable effects on their present lives. Agnew links memories of 'homeland' with the present, noting, 'memories can be nostalgically evocative of imaginary homeland and places of birth and origins, as well as an antidote to the struggles of the present' (2005: 10). It can therefore be argued that memories darkened by the 1980 military coup and Diyarbakir prison constitute a traumatic sense of 'home-land' that sets Kurdistan as a place that is neither secure nor prosperous.

As analytical tools, novels offer important insights into an individual's identification, while revealing the connections between imaging place and defining the self. In so doing, Kurdish novelists mainly use their real-life experiences and ideologies to illuminate their critiques. Autobiographical items, in relation to the factual and documentary aspects of Kurdish identity and Kurdistan, become the main components of diasporic memories. The lived experiences of the novelists are either slightly or significantly altered, in an attempt to preserve the past. Their preoccupation with 'identity' and 'homeland' is mostly influenced by their traumatic experiences prior to their lives in exile.

Kurdish towns or cities used as the settings for the novels are mainly based in the novelists' hometowns or villages, while stories narrated in the novels are imagined on the basis of memories of their experiences before they left their homes. In this case, memories before exile (mainly experiences in Diyarbakir prison and the impacts of the 1980 military coup) seem to be more crucial than memories after exile. However, it is also true that the illusory plays a prominent part in the diasporic construction of homeland because, as time passes, the place of origin remains stagnant in the memory of the migrant while in reality it has evolved.

Kurdish diasporic novelists offer a reflection of actual Kurdistan intertwined with historical facts and internal critiques; these contribute to producing a negative portrayal rather than one that is 'mythic' and 'idealised' as tends to be the case in diasporic literature in general. The effects of diaspora, the traumatic experiences in the Kurdish homeland, and diverse and conflicting political agendas are

combined, resulting in these critical homeland portraits. The representation of 'home-land' in the diasporic novels is fundamental to the authors' political critiques and ideological views, which fail to confirm Kurdistan as an ideal 'home' conveying safety, solidarity, and socio-political freedom.

Finally, in answer to Clifford's question, 'is it possible to create a home away from home [?]' (1999: 302), I would also suggest that for Kurdish literary characters, it is not possible. Although a 'homing desire' persists: they do not give up the continuous search for the lost home, nor do they manage to accept the host country as the new one, since being displaced from the homeland and failing to find a place within the new environment appears to remind them constantly of Kurdistan. In addition, they cannot avoid the gap between the ideological rhetoric of longing for Kurdistan, and the daily struggle over collective and personal existence in the diaspora.

CHAPTER 5

THE KURDISH NOVELISTIC DISCOURSE IN TURKISH KURDISTAN: CONSTRUCTING 'HOMELAND' AND 'IDENTITY'

Discourse analysis of 36 novels from Turkish Kurdistan demonstrates that Kurdistan, as 'home-land', is differently formed in three different time zones. In the narration of the past, an unabashedly patriotic attitude intentionally selects certain memories to construct a specific national consciousness in the present portrayal of 'home-land'; at the same time this completes the tragedy of the Kurds as a nation. Current portrayal of 'home-land' reveals how Kurdistan falls apart, being altogether altered and torn to pieces by the impact of Turkey's provocative interventions. However, the pessimistic views expressed in the present version are projected to the future as optimistic ones, resulting in imaginary conceptions with no concrete or realistic prospects. The absence of a physical land due to movement or to circumstances of actual destruction is the essential backdrop to the novels set in Turkish Kurdistan. Furthermore, the nostalgic and sentimental elements of a portrait of Kurdistan do not change its significance, whether it is articulated from a distant location or from within the territory itself. It appears either as the loss of a once beloved woman, or is associated with a deep longing and yearning.

The Territorialisation of Kurdistan: Imagined 'Greater Kurdistan'

When all the novels (up to March 2010) from Turkish Kurdistan examined in this book are taken into account, it appears that the territorial elements (both implicit and explicit) within them, through which the vision of 'Greater Kurdistan' is created, idealised, and rooted in history, is a construction that elucidates the actual processes of political and cultural development of the Kurds as a nation. In other words, detailed mapping of the boundaries of Kurdistan or dividing it from other non-Kurdish places constitutes the central construction of Kurdistan as the homeland of Kurds. More simply, according to the Kurdish novelistic discourse, Kurdistan refers not only to Kurdish regions within the territory of Turkey, but includes Kurdish regions in Syria, Iraq, and Iran in parallel with the idea of 'Greater Kurdistan'. Thus, as O'Shea (2004: 2) explains, 'despite its divisions, despite its inadequacies, Kurdistan, and the concept of Greater Kurdistan survives the reality as a powerful amalgam of myths, fact, and ambitions'. Therefore, drawing the territory of 'Greater Kurdistan' in the novelistic discourse helps to emphasise the idea that 'Greater Kurdistan' exists, even if in an imagined form, and that Kurds are the community of this territory, despite the existence of four other sovereign countries.

Although there is no geographic definition of Kurdistan, the territoriality of Kurdistan remains central to the lives of all Kurds and on the basis of different contexts is also very changeable, because 'territories (not like states) are not things natural or fixed; rather they are created by people and subject to variations in space and time' (Holloway and Hubbard 2001: 97). Thus, different arguments regarding the geographical territory of Kurdistan reflect different expressions of Kurdish identity. By tracing the fictional and literary articulations of Kurdistan territory in the novelistic discourse, this section shows how the Kurds' ancestral homeland of Kurdistan is territorialised, and questions the contribution of this territorial construction to the construction of nationalist myth, ethnic solidarity, as well as to the changing formation of Kurdish identity.

Territoriality in the Kurdish novels is a way to create the organic link between Kurds as a nation and Kurdistan as their homeland. Territoriality, which refers to the 'the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area' (Sack 1986: 19), can be 'a political manifestation linked to the geographical expression of social power' (ibid: 5). Hence, it can be argued that a mental map of Kurdistan is constructed through spatial elements, and that a unified 'homeland' incorporating all Kurds (even those in the territory of sovereign states apart from Turkey, i.e., Syria, Iraq, and Iran) is the novelists' geographical expression.

This is apparent, implicitly or explicitly, in 29 of the 36 novels. Mîr Qasîmlo's two novels *Wêneyên Keserê* (The Pictures of Gloom, 2005) and *Giyanên Bahozî* (The Stormy Souls, 2009) are fundamental examples of novels in which there is territorial recognition of an imaginary 'Greater Kurdistan' uniting all four Kurdish regions. *Wêneyên Keserê* focuses on Kurdish migrants and refugees living in Germany, and contains diverse characters from different Kurdish regions. The geography from which the characters are fleeing for political reasons recurs many times as '*Başûr*' ('South') referring to Iraqi Kurdistan, and '*Bakur*' ('North')[1] referring to Turkish Kurdistan. Throughout the novel, the reader is reminded that Moyad, one of the minor characters, is from '*Başûr*' (139) and Narîn, one of the main protagonists, comes from 'Northern Kurdistan' (*Bakurê Kurdistan*) (12–13).

Throughout the novel, issues of homeland are central topics, and the characters reveal clearly that until independence and freedom are gained for all four parts of Kurdistan, their lives will not return to normal. Mîrza, the central character, who for political reasons is living in Germany, says, 'I will always be here, for as long as our mother [motherland] remains under the domination of four stepfathers, and there is no fairness, justice and mutual understanding among her wounded children' (408).[2] Although he is from Turkish Kurdistan, Mîrza does not differentiate between the four Kurdish regions. For example, when someone asks the name of the place he is from, he answers, 'I am a Kurd. Have you ever heard of

Kurdistan? It is the playground over which four dogs are fighting. That is where I come from' (313).[3]

Similarly, Qasîmlo's second novel, *Giyanên Bahozî*, contains territorial details concerning '*Başûrê Kurdistan*' (129–88) that also contribute to the portrayal of 'Greater Kurdistan'. As in his previous work, most of the novel takes place abroad, thereby further elaborating the experiences of Kurdish migrants who have been forced for political reasons to leave their homeland. The narrator frequently addresses socio-political conditions in other parts of Kurdistan, but particularly Turkish Kurdistan, through Artîn and Zerî who are the leading characters. The desperate love between them is so deeply interwoven in political matters that issues of homeland become their main priority in life. Such references to other parts of Kurdistan not only contribute to the construction of imaginary 'Greater Kurdistan' but also reflect Kurdistan territories as separate entities.

In this respect, Adîl Zozanî's *Mişextî* (Exile, 2009) not only distinguishes Kurdistan as a separate entity, with the concepts of '*Başûrê Kurdistan*' (94) and '*Bakurê Kurdistan*' (156) being used by Kurdish characters, but also confirms this territorial recognition through the character named Aykut, a former Turkish commander who regrets the cruel operations undertaken against guerrillas during his service in the Turkish army. While leading one of these operations Aykut, with other soldiers, is captured by guerrillas but eventually released. While in captivity, he listens to the story of Kato, whose sister and brother-in-law die because of the forced migration arranged by the Turkish army. Aykut is affected by this account and as soon as he is released, he gives up his job and, distressed and remorseful, begins work as a lawyer. To escape from his guilt, he takes the case of Kato, who has been arrested. When Aykut arrives in Amed (Diyarbakir)[4] for Kato's case, he feels that he is a foreigner, even writing in his notebook 'this city is not my city' (227).[5] This phrase contributes to the notion that Amed is a city of Kurds. In addition, Akyut uses expressions that acknowledge the existence of Kurdistan as a separate entity. He often remembers his past in the army and defines the geography of his past service as Kurdistan (235–7).

This confirmation and recognition of territory by another nation, exclusively by the Turks, strengthens the sense of Kurdish territory, which is also used to emphasise the distinct Kurdish identity.

In terms of creating unification within the territories of Kurdistan, Zozanî refers in his other novel *Kejê* (Keje, 2001) to the Kurds from '*Başûr*', who migrated to the USSR due to oppression by the Arabs. Koçero, the protagonist, gradually gains national awareness and feels sympathy towards the Kurds from South Kurdistan, while trying to help them to improve their lives and living conditions.

As in *Kejê*, the idea of 'Greater Kurdistan' is to the fore in Denîz's novel *Hêvî Her Dem Heye* (There is Always Hope, 2008), which narrates the struggle for survival of an unnamed guerrilla. The guerrilla has been injured and throughout the novel is waiting to be saved by his friends. While he waits he remembers his past, his political views, and his actions before he came to the mountains to fight. The novel is very ideology-oriented, and also strongly promotes the idea of 'Greater Kurdistan' through the thoughts of the central character, who at one point says, 'our graves remain half-complete anyway; until we add the South and East to the North, we will not rest in our graves in peace' (107).[6] The novel contains a great range of geographical descriptions and terms related to the territory in which the armed struggle takes place. Through the narrator's didactic descriptions of the environment, the physical features of 'Greater Kurdistan' are emphasised, thus, 'Kêla Memê [Mount Kel Mehmet] was a lonely mountain. One side of it faced Bestan [Besta Valley], the other side faced Qalban [Kilaban creek]. The Bestan side was North and West; the Qalban side was South and East' (204).[7] This detailed geographical information links the Kurdish regions with each other, just as the narrator links the Botan region with Serhad: 'some behind the Zagros Mountains, some behind Mount Ararat were hoping that the world would turn round and it would rise; and through the mountains extend its sunshine to Kurdistan' (48).[8] Throughout the novel geographical elements are presented that contribute to the identification of Kurdistan within territorial boundaries.

In addition to these direct references to the territories of 'Greater Kurdistan', some novels also engage in more symbolic language for

the construction of the mental map of Kurdistan. This symbolic narration of locations can be considered in relation to literary attempts to create imaginative fictional places; arguably, however, some of them have to be restricted for fear of the bans imposed by Turkish state policies. With regard to symbolic imaginative place descriptions, geographical terms can also be interpreted as building a picture of an imaginary 'Greater Kurdistan'. For example, Yunus Eroğlu's second novel *Otobês* (The Bus, 2010), which is set on a bus loaded with passengers, carries symbolic narration throughout the novel. Each passenger's personal life is narrated through monologues, some referring ironically and satirically to the Kurdish issue, that is engaged with in an implicit language that differs from other more explicit novels. In the story told by one of the passengers, an imaginary island is described that contributes to the constructing of an imaginary independent Kurdistan. On this island there are two conflicting groups; the oppressed group has the right to sue the oppressors. An imaginary free place refers implicitly to a utopian Kurdistan in which Kurds have gained their legal rights. The island is drawn physically with the geographical terms South, North, West, and East (91).

Mîran Janbar's short novel *Ardûda* (Arduda, 2004) can be classified as science fiction. It creates a completely imaginary and utopian setting that implies a future expectation of Kurdistan. It describes the experiments made by Ardûda, a professor who clones human beings. Set in the distant future of a galactic world, the story takes place in a galaxy that is united and free but has suffered greatly in the past through oppression and hunger. The same symbolic narration without detailed geographical descriptions is used in Îbrahîm Seydo Aydogan's second novel *Leyla Fîgaro* (Leyla Figaro, 2003). Here the city in which the novel takes place is described, as in *Otobês*, through the geographical directions of South, North, East, and West. Likewise, a symbolic narration related to a geographical description of Kurdistan is used in both of Şener Özmen's novels, *Rojnivîska Spinoza* (The Diary of Spinoza, 2008) and *Pêşbazîya Çîrokên Neqediyayî* (The Contest of Incomplete Story, 2010). Despite Özmen's highly symbolic narration, both can be seen as political novels in which the

socio-political conditions of Kurds and Kurdistan are addressed in a satirical manner. In *Rojnivîska Spinoza*, Özmen focuses on the fragmented lives of a group of youths through the central character Yasîn, who abandons his university studies and returns to his home town of Zexê, an entirely imagined place which possibly refers to Hezex (a district in Şirnak, in Turkish called Idil), which is also the home town of the novelist himself. Instead of Kurdistan, the term '*Kordoxiyan*' is used and the distinctions between '*Başûre Kordoxiyan*' and '*Bakurê Kardoxîyan*' are emphasised. Similarly, Kurds are described as *Kardoxi*.[9]

As mentioned earlier, the reason for these symbolic and implicit descriptions or narrations can be based on the literary concerns of the novels as much as on the restrictions imposed against writers by state policies. Another novel that involves an imaginary setting is Kemal Orgun's mythical *Li Qerexa Şevê Hîvron* (At the Edge of Night Moonlight, 2002). Through the mythical character Roberşîn, an old dervish living in the mountains, there is a constant swinging between fantasy/dream and reality. The novel addresses the issue of mother tongue, the beauty of places in Kurdistan, and the loyalty of Kurds to their traditions. The narrator states that the lands of Kurds are burnt down, but after he has climbed over the mountains Roberşîn manages to see a different world. This very dreamlike place is described with positive images that imply a free and united Kurdistan in the future.

In light of the above analysis, Kurdish novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan shows that that national attachment to 'Greater Kurdistan' does not require political control of neighbouring territories. As an ancestral 'homeland', Kurdistan can be constructed as an 'emotional space' that is not bound by the exclusive control of any specific territory since political control and the state need not be involved. A Kurdistan of free and united lands can be imaginative and mythic but the physical territories of this fictional Kurdistan are also drawn through diverse literary and geographical elements. In other words, the link with the land in a literal rather than an abstract sense of 'homeland' is a fundamental motif through which Kurdish novelists define their national identity. This can also be considered as a claim for a particular territory that also challenges the official

territories of sovereign states. To put it simply, the narratives reject the official territory of the Turkish state. It is important to emphasise that the imagined and fictional rendition of the Kurds as a nation in Kurdish novelistic discourse is constructed not only in relation to the imagined territorialised Kurdistan but also through constructing the dichotomy of 'we' and 'the other'.

The Construction of 'Kurdishness' as a Unified Entity

Kurdish national identity in the novels is presented as a type of commonality not linked to any particular region or dialect, but one that invokes national affection by insisting on the kinship of all Kurds from all other regions. Kurdistan, portrayed with diversity as a prominent attitude, appears in almost all the novels. Accordingly, the common point leading to the visualisation of literary characters from a single community is their ethnic identity, in which regional differences, such as diverse dialects, religions, and cultures, are appreciated. There are references to various Kurdish figures, each from a different Kurdish region but contributing overall to a sense of unity.

In addition to direct or indirect references to Kurds from different regions or social-cultural backgrounds, the narrators or the protagonists of the novels often imply the significance of solidarity and unity among Kurds from other regions, cultures, and beliefs. In *Wêneyên Keserê*, for example, when Narîn and Mirza meet for the first time in Germany and ask each other where they are from, Narîn says, 'there is no difference; it does not matter where one has to be from. Everywhere is Kurdistan' (154). Similarly, Şener Özmen, the protagonist in *Rojnivîska Spinoza*, comments directly that, 'for me all Kurds are the same [. . .] I am no different from them' (140).[10] Through the use of characters from different parts of Kurdistan, the novel *Kulmek Morîkên Şînbirik* suggests the sense of unification among Kurds from different regions:

> There are some writings that are like the spirit of a kind man, that circulate like the blood through veins, moan like the wild

> goat who became the symbol of Siyabend and Xecê's love at Mount Sliva, and are like a little child at Halabja who looks at its mother's breasts and expects a drop of milk. In other words, it becomes like the rope at the neck of the immortal Ghazi Muhammad in Mahabad, like the waves of the Tigris and Euphrates in the poetry of Cegerxwin. Like the great anger of the Gabar and Judi mountains (5).[11]

Here the narrator has combined specific figures and landscapes associated with Kurdish regions in the form of an integral narrative.

Most novels also address crucial developments and incidents in other Kurdish regions, thus maintaining the sense of nationhood and the promotion of a unified Kurdish identity. In this respect, *Giyanên Bahozî*, which focuses on the migration of a Kurdish woman and her national consciousness in exile, can be regarded as significant in terms of evoking one unified and collective Kurdish identity. Zerî, the female protagonist, attempts to conceal her hopes for her homeland through political activities aimed at creating solidarity among migrant Kurds. During a speech at a conference, she raises her concerns and her sorrow for the Halabja massacre in Iraqi Kurdistan as a way of calling attention to the suffering of Kurds in other Kurdish regions. In her speech, she proposes Mustafa Barzani as a crucial political figure for Kurds: 'with this in mind, I commemorate the immortal leader, hero Molla Mustafa Barzani and salute his very valuable and noble Kurdish feelings' (129).[12]

In a similar way, Adîl Zozanî's *Mişextî* also includes Kurds from Iraqi Kurdistan and Turkish Kurdistan in a way that ignores territorial divisions. The mother of one of the main characters, Sacoya Mitirb, who is originally from Turkish Kurdistan, is killed during the Halabja massacre; this is a nuanced attempt to show that every Kurd can be influenced by any incident in any Kurdish region. Similarly, in Zozanî's *Kejê*, a great range of dialogues and discourses can be regarded as implying unification for all Kurds. The novel focuses on the experiences of a group of Kurdish students in the 1980s, often referring to political figures from other regions as a significant symbol of the endurance of Kurdish identity. Again the

narrator promotes the unity of all Kurds by including symbols and elements specific to Iraqi Kurdistan throughout the novel. Mustafa Barzani becomes a symbol of the survival of the Kurdish nation, and the Kurdish struggle is promoted through him by one of the characters saying, 'we will struggle for the liberation of the Kurds, like Molla Mustafa Barzani' (67).[13]

This point is strikingly similar to that of *Hêviyên Birîndar* (Wounded Hopes, 2003) in which the Kurdish national movement in Iraqi Kurdistan unites with the movement in Turkish Kurdistan. Hejar, the protagonist, locates himself very close to the national struggles in both regions. The novel focuses how, on the one hand, Hejar takes an active role in the Kurdish national struggle as a guerrilla in the mountains; on the other hand, he does not hesitate to expose his connection with the Peshmergas. He reminisces continually about his childhood, is proud that his parents took his name from a peshmerga hero, and mentions how his parents used to bring peshmerga clothing from Duhok (18). He listens to singers from Iraqi Kurdistan such as Mohammed Arif Cizrawî and Isa Bêwarî, and tunes in to the Peshmergas' radio for news of their resistance for Kurdistan. After the Anfal operations and the Halabja massacre (64), Kurdish refugees who are mainly Peshmerga families, come to the border of Turkish Kurdistan. Hejar and his two friends visit and talk to them sympathetically in an attempt to encourage support and assistance for them (63–4).

The same approach to establishing understanding among Kurds in other regions can be directly observed in the novel *Mandalîn* (Mandarin, 2005), which narrates the adventurous experiences of two teenagers who have run away from home. When, due to a misunderstanding, Adar and Çeto, the two main characters, are put in prison they meet a Kurdish man from Duhok in Iraqi Kurdistan. When they tell him they are from Agirî, the man instantly remembers Îhsan Nurî Paşa, Ferzende Beg, and Besê Xanim. Neither Adar nor Çeto are aware of the significance of these names in Kurdish history and think that the man knows members of their family, all of whom carry these names. This shows not only that the names of historical figures are used by Kurds as a sign of value and respect, but

that a Kurd from another part of Kurdistan is aware of the nationalist movements in Turkish Kurdistan. During their conversation with the man, Azad and Çeto begin to recall the Halabja massacre and become extremely upset. These mutual memorisations of agonies and movements in different regions provide a common history and suffering that is shared by all Kurdish characters. The narrator explicitly points out that all these characters are from different Kurdish geographies, but they have managed to meet at the same point and share the same fate and hope: 'They were all far away from each other; their cities, roads, lives [. . .] Even so, their destiny was the same. And above all their hopes were the same' (188).[14]

Similarly, at the end of *Wêneyên Keserê*, Narîn arranges for her children to learn both Sorani and Kurmanji, thereby supporting the idea that all Kurds should know both Kurdish dialects. In the same novel, the main character lists all the crucial names for himself, including political and cultural figures from the four parts of Kurdistan:

> I am myself the sonnnnnn of mother Gutî, Lolo, Horo, Mîtan, Med, Mahabat, Hewlêr, Amed and Amûdê / I am myself the sonnnnnn of mother Cizîrî, Xanî, Cegerxwîn, Mem, Zîn, Xec, Sîyabend / I am myself the sonnnnnn of mother Qasimlo, Molla Mustafa, Xelîl begê Cibrî, Nûrî Pasayê Milî, Seyîd Rizo, Sheikh Said, Nêrî Dêrsimî, Selahaddin Eyyubi, Ghazi Muhammad, Leyla Qasim, god and goddess Zîlan, Sema, Bêrîvan, Vîyan, Egît [. . .] I am myself the son of [. . .] wise Ocalan (188).[15]

The repeated use of these names from different fields and regions shows Mîrza as someone who is not only familiar with Kurdish history and literature, but is also in favour of the unification of all Kurds, regardless of different regions, dialects, and beliefs.

It is important to note not only that Kurds from different regions are unified but also that past conflicts and disunity arising from different religious beliefs among Kurds are emphasised in the shape of warnings, and with guidance for avoiding them in the future.

Religious diversity is defined as prosperity. The diversity of Kurdistan is emphasised not only in the novels set at the beginning of the twentieth century, but in novels dealing with more recent times. One of these is *Qerebafon* (Gramophone, 2009), which takes place during the 1990s and, through Ronahî, the protagonist, exemplifies the desire for integration among Kurds. The novel portrays a Kurdish city under the influence of war and socio-political tension, and also speaks critically of discord between Muslim Kurds and Yazidi Kurds.[16] The text emphasises the inclusion of Yazidi Kurds in the territorial concept of Kurdistan and in nationalist discourses. It promotes the culture of the Yazidis and, by introducing them to readers, tries to reduce intolerance towards them. Highlighting the Kurdish identity of Yazidis conveys the view that there are not many differences between a Yazidi Kurd and a Sunni Kurd. Thus religious and cultural differences become nothing more than the diversity and richness of the structure of the Kurdish nation, which deserves respect and value.

Îhsan Colemergî's *Cembelî Kurê Mîrê Hekaryan*, an adaptation of the epic of Cembelî, is an example of a leading novel fictionalised in a way that, by praising the characteristic features of Yazidis, encourages readers to become unified and united (33). When Cembelî's father does not permit him to marry a Yazidi girl, he responds to his father's rejection by asking, 'aren't they Kurds too? Aren't they our brothers, from the same blood?' (55).[17] Indeed, he says, 'they are the original Kurds and became Muslim later' (33).[18] In an implicit attempt to promote unity among Kurds, he points out that, 'in fact they are the original and ancient Kurds. The pressure on them from the Arabs, Persians and Turks has not been strong enough to disperse and assimilate them' (33).[19] This positive and encouraging discourse on Yazidis is a response to ongoing conflicts among Kurds caused by differing values and beliefs. Cembelî defends Yazidis with the claim that Kurdistan is also their country, convincing his father by his arguments. He also stresses the significance of proving a Kurd is above religious prejudice and the necessity of incorporating all Kurds regardless of different religious beliefs. This meets with the father's approval and agreement. Cembelî has not only responded to the

claim that Yazidis are not Kurds, but has also evoked the necessity of supporting them since they are patriotic Kurds by origin.

In the novel *Kejê*, brotherhood between Yazidi and Sunni Kurds is also promoted. As the narrator explains: 'Yazidis are Kurds. The whole community was aware of it. The only difference between them was the religion. If it was not for the religion, relations between them would have been much better and they would be like brothers again' (62).[20] As with the Yazidis, the same novel also promotes 'Kurdish nomadic groups' (*mitirb*) in relation to their Kurdish identity, which is described as more important than cultural differences. The same novelist's second work, *Mişextî*, which focuses mainly on the lifestyle of the '*mitirb*', can also be interpreted as a response to ongoing prejudices against them. Kato, the son of a tribal leader, and Bozo, a '*mitirb*' in origin, support each other throughout the novel, confirming that any cultural differences are disregarded by these two characters.

Like the '*mitirb*' and 'Yazidis', Alevi Kurds are also employed in the narratives for the same purposes. For example, the protagonist in *Gitarê bê Tel*, Sadî, refers to the ongoing clashes between Alevi and Sunni Kurds and argues explicitly that the Ottomans created this discord to prevent the Kurds uniting for an independent Kurdistan (46). Similarly, *Pilingên Serhedê*, which is based on the life of a nineteenth-century Kurdish intellectual called Zeynel, also refers to conflicts between Alevi Kurds and Sunni Kurds. Zeynel is portrayed as favouring the unification of different Kurdish tribes when he says, 'we don't have any differences; Milî or Dumilî we are all the same and united' (231).[21] In response to the conflicts between Kurdish tribes, Zeynel proposes negotiation as a way of abolishing differences, and calls for them to meet around the same rallying point, that of Kurdish identity, because 'we are Kurds, and they are Kurds too' (239).[22] Throughout the novel, it is shown that the conflicts, believed to have been provoked by the Ottomans, should be ended since these internal fights and conflicts have hindered Kurdish independence and unification.

Thus, Kurdish novels written in Turkish Kurdistan aim to unite all Kurds, and encourage a certain sense of responsibility towards the collective, for past tragedy, and to the future. Territorial division does

not affect the sense of unity and solidarity. It is proposed that Kurdish fictional characters from different regions and beliefs can be unified in the absence of an acknowledged territorial Kurdistan.

Fictionalising Kurdistan in Different Time Zones

In this section, I will focus on the three versions of Kurdistan as reflected in different time zones, and will show how Kurdistan in the past is visualised and remembered with the nostalgic sense of a rural and idealised pastoral idyll evoking primordial Kurdishness. However, the vision of Kurdistan in the present is not different from a battle arena; it is a land of violation and destruction. On the other hand, the visualisation of Kurdistan in the future contributes to the development of an idealised and highly symbolic image of Kurdistan as it was in the past. For the future, there is a hope that the current tragic image of a destroyed Kurdistan will be replaced by a romantic image of Kurdistan enjoying independence and freedom.

'Home-land' in the Past: An Idealised Vision with Nostalgia

Subjective experiences of memory, or personal memories, are not employed in the novels from Turkish Kurdistan. Instead the narration of an agreed version of memory is used as a tool to construct a common image of Kurdistan and Kurdish identity. In this sense, analyses of the novels reveal that the construction of the historical past in relation to a sense of national identity contributes to creating the myth of an ancestral and sacred 'homeland'.

The historical stories about Kurdistan and national identity help in understanding the roots of homeland and identity. In this respect, the Kurds' historical past, as employed in novels in Turkish Kurdistan, is mostly narrated in an elevated tone which transmits the message that Kurdistan was fragmented by the actions of external forces, such as neighbouring countries and empires like the Ottoman Empire, but that the Kurds had been exhorted to struggle and to defend their territory.

Recalling the significance of the lands and linking this with the ancestors has also served to create the Kurdish social memory.

As Fentress and Wickham (1992: 25) argue, 'social memory is an expression of collective experience: social memory identifies a group, giving it a sense of its past and defining its aspirations for the future. In doing so, social memory often makes factual claims about past events.' In this respect, throughout the novels the employment of historical events and figures for national struggle is used to make factual claims about the past. For example, Yaqob Tilermenî's first novel *Kitim* is based on the life of Seydo, who had been an Imam before becoming a guerrilla and going to the mountains to fight. Seydo often combined his religious speeches with stories from the *Şerefname* (Sharafname) as a way of advising his audiences about supporting each other and protecting their lands. He explains that 'Sharaf Khan ruled Kurdistan for decades in the mid-sixteenth century; in his Şharafname he tells the stories of the Emirs of Kurdistan based on his own knowledge and experiences' (49).[23] Seydo tells his listeners that:

> Here [in the Şerefname] it says that the name of Kurd is appearing in the extreme courage of this nation. Mewlana Taceddin Kurdi who was known as Hayrettin Pasha, and the grand vizier of the Sultan of Ottoman, Sultan Orhan, were of Kurdish origin. Likewise, Idrisi Bitlisi and Selahaddin Eyyubi who served other nations and did nothing useful for their own nation were also of Kurdish origin (ibid.).[24]

This reference to Kurdish history is intended to promote the strength of the Kurds as a nation and to develop solidarity through praising Kurds as a people. Similarly, the narrator in *Cembelî Kurê Mîrê Hekaryan* praises Kurds during the nineteenth century as a nation with the capacity for autonomy, implying that Kurds already possess everything that a nation needs. Meanwhile Şener Özmen's *Rojnivîska Spinoza* not only quotes from the Kurdish intellectual Celadet Ali Bedirkhan (who attempted to develop the Kurdish language at the beginning of the nineteenth century), but also extols such significant historical figures as Evdî Rehmanê Rewandayî and Sheikh Ubeydullahê Nehri (73) for their patriotism and sacrifice in

maintaining their lands. In Aydogan's novel *Reş û Spî* (Black and White, 1999) references are also made to the historical past of the Kurds as a nation through the stories of Robîn's family, particularly his two grandfathers. One of his grandfathers, Silhedîn Mîrxo, had been a friend of Sheikh Said and they had fought together; the other grandfather, Elîxan Beg, had studied at a madrasah for many years. The narrator also mentions that, like his grandfathers, Robîn's own father, Resûl, struggled for the sake of Kurdistan and their identity.

As well as contributing to social memory, narration of the past in the novelistic discourse also engenders a process of constructing a collective memory on which to build a collective identity. Thus, historical novels, such as *Feqiyê Teyran* (Faqi Tayran, 2009) and *Pilingên Serhedê* (The Tigers of Serhad, 2005), refer to Kurdish struggles during the Ottoman era, and grapple with the suffering and sorrow of Kurds through the narration of destroyed and invaded lands and departed people. In *Pilingên Serhedê*, Zeynel, as a historical figure, brings to light other significant sheikhs, emirs, and tribal leaders who struggle against the Ottomans to defend their country: thus struggle for the sake of one's nation is promoted. The novel *Mişextî*, which deals with the cultural and political aspects of '*Mitirb*' and families subjected to forced migration, emphasises the significance of the history of the ancestors. Before his son Kato leaves for the mountains where the national struggle is happening as it happened in the past, his father Emir Qasîm Beg says to him, 'Oh my son, look at yourself, you are guarding the lands of *Avatezî* in *Girê Kejo* like all the brave heroes. These are the lands of your ancestors. The history of bravery has been written here many times' (86).[25] Similarly, in *Kulmek Morîkên Şînbirik*, the character named Xeftano speaks glowingly of the rebellion by Sheikh Said, who struggled and was executed for the sake of the Kurds.

Descriptive narrations such as these enable the historical past of the Kurdish national struggle to be reconstructed, indicating that the Kurds have been involved in that struggle for years. The central character in *Toqa Naletê* (The Strap of Curse, 2007) praises her village, where many of the villagers joined the rebellion of Sheikh Said: 'in the history of this village, only one graceful thing has been done.

During the Sheikh Said uprising, seventeen men of this village struggled against the state of Rome [Turkey] and were killed' (41).[26] In the novel *Kitim*, in parallel with the narrator's statement in *Toqa Lanatê*, the protagonist, in an attempt to be both informative and encouraging, often refers to the Kurdish historical past and praises certain crucial names, saying, 'Ahmad Khani [. . .] has written in the language of his nation and in terms of Kurdish narration he became the pioneer of the Kurdish [people]' (68).[27]

Certain historical references in the novels are formed in the shape of advice and suggestions about errors made by Kurds in the past, when they were manipulated and provoked by their enemies to turn against each other. These narrations also include warnings for the future, in terms of learning from such earlier mistakes. For example, in Zozanî's novel *Kejê*, the central character dreams of an old man holding a boy by the hand; through this the narrator creates a link with the Kurds' historical past. The old man in *Koçero* represents the voice of history, telling tales from centuries past, and speaking of the forest. In ancient times all was green and full of trees, but now the ground is spattered all over with blood. He explains the internal and external factors behind the invasion and fragmentation of the Kurds, talks of the Lausanne Agreement and the official divisions of territory, and accuses the traitors of being responsible for the division of Kurdistan, finally speaking triumphantly of the uprisings by Kurdish heroes such as Sheikh Said. Similarly, the old man in the novel *Bêhna Axê* (The Smell of Soil, 2005) tries to advise his readers always to be aware of their history by reminding them of their values and of the tragic experiences of Kurds in the past. Further, there is a teacher figure in *Mandalîn* who presents information about Kurdish history; he also mentions the debates about the origin of the Kurds, which is very interesting but somewhat didactic – he does tend to lecture the readers.

The images of the 'home-land' in the novels set in Kurdistan are recalled nostalgically as fleeting sensations or are preoccupied with memories of unfilled political desire. The term 'nostalgia' evokes a sense of homesickness in its linguistic origins, and it can be argued that nostalgia in the Kurdish novelistic discourse is employed as

signifying a yearning for the 'home-land' in the past. In other words, the novelists' depictions of Kurdistan are not simply reminiscences of a lost childhood but are attempts to reveal the current fragmented vision of that place which is no longer rural, beautiful, or pure but is filled with political and social tensions. Under such circumstances, nostalgic visions of the past are no longer protected. As Swedenburg (1991: 172) notes, recasting the past as wonderful is not simply an elective process of remembering, but includes a comparison with the present, with life as it has evolved to now, when life is unbearable. Accordingly, in Îbrahîm Seydo Aydogan's first novel *Reş û Spî*, the current 'home-land' has been subjected to destruction and intrusions. In Robîn's memory the image of Kurdistan is always the one left from his childhood. It is no longer what he has been dreaming during his detachment, since,

> his childhood remained in an old photo of this city. At that time, the number of high buildings was not so big [. . .] Maybe the city [that] came to his mind remained from the photos of his childhood. Both of them, along with many other photos, were put onto the shelf in a plastic bag (141).[28]

Here, the narrator exalts Robîn's past, conveying that it is no longer obtainable.

Similarly, the main character in *Gava Heyatê* (The Step of Life, 2007), who appears as a village boy, a guerrilla, an informer, and a desperate lover throughout the novel, draws two different portraits of 'home-land'. The first is from his childhood, which is portrayed as an idealised and romanticised rural life, full of fruits, green leaves, happiness, innocence, and joy. However, the image of his mature life contrasts with the image of his childhood and past. Memories of his village can evoke powerful feelings and exert great influence over his identity. He tends to reflect on his memories of childhood places rather than engaging with his immediate surroundings.

What is remembered is not just 'place' itself, but the whole life that the place represents. In *Giyanên Bahozî*, the central character, Artîn, who has lived away from his 'home' for many years, remembers

his lands filled with the 'songs' (*stran*) and 'ballads' (*klam*) that he heard in his childhood (359). He relates the 'home' image in his mind to memories from his childhood, which is very pure and innocent. By presenting this sort of nostalgia, Artîn obviously reveals how its innocence, purity, and beauty can be attributed to the sense of longing for it. Thus, 'home' in the past usually employs similar markers of beauty, peace, and rootedness. In Eroğlu's *Nameyek Ji Xwedê Re* (A Letter to the God, 2007), the unnamed protagonist keeps an image of 'home' as it was in the past fixed in his mind while he is away from it. The picture he remembers of his 'home' is the one from his childhood, which is very pure and uncorrupted.

It is worth mentioning that Kurdish novelists have different ways of referring to these idealised versions of Kurdistan in the past. However, these memories generally represent concrete examples of how Kurdish identity is essentially constructed through the past. As with the diasporic communities, the fictional characters 'regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home' (Safran 1991: 83–4). The meaning of 'home-land' in a 'past' constructed on the basis of a sentimental idealisation is not a simple longing for 'place' in the past, but reinforces the struggle to regain it. The overall spirit of the novels' themes is connected with nostalgia, which is often identified with an apparently pure, rural lifestyle that prevailed in the past just before the war. This nostalgia, in fact, remains one of the most dominant features of desire for a free and independent country. In this respect, nostalgia in the Kurdish novels reinforces the sense that the past was better, simpler and purer than the present. In his novel *Rojnivîska Spinoza* Özmen quotes from the well-known poet Qedrî Can: 'when someone is not happy with his current situation, he looks back to his earlier days' (23).[29] The concerns expressed constitute recognition of an idealised Kurdistan in the past, which necessitates urgent attention to Kurdistan as it is today.

'Home-land' Now: The Land of Destruction and Struggle

When analysing the novels closely, it becomes clear that images of 'home-land' in the present are very different from those versions based in the past. From a social constructivist orientation, the understanding

of a place is influenced not only by 'collective values, beliefs, and behaviors' (Najafi and Bin Mohd Shariff 2011: 189), but also by physical attributes, meanings, and activities (Proshansky *et al*. 1983). Accordingly, in simple terms, and very much influenced by socio-political conditions in the Kurdish regions, 'home-land' is depicted in the present time as the land of war and conflicts which has been violated and invaded by others so that it has lost its purity and beauty.

To start with, in *Gava Heyatê*, for example, the present-day 'home-land' is represented by evacuated, invaded, and destroyed villages. The loss of land, the oppression of the state, and the tragic consequences of the war become the dominant themes very soon after the protagonist's childhood. Throughout the novel, the main character witnesses Kurds migrating from their lands and villages to foreign places. Many people are executed and tortured, and the entire city is pervaded by a disgusting smell (121), which is metaphorical while serving also to strengthen the character's feelings of hopelessness.

Kyle and Chick (2007: 212) note that 'places are symbolic contexts imbued with meaning(s) [. . .] which emerge and evolve through ongoing interaction with others and the environment'. In this account, the meanings of Kurdish places described through expressive symbols in the novels are linked to bigger personal sentiments and emotions. In *Qerebafon*, for example, the adverse political conditions are associated with the smell of dirt. Returning to his hometown, Ronahî, the main character, comments that, 'my homeland was drowning in dirt and mess, according to the members of my nation' (21),[30] and despairingly observes the changes that have occurred since he left his home. The same desperate feeling is also dominant in the novel *Neynika Dilî* by Dilsoz. It begins with Mustafa, the main character, who has nightmares that the village, Xanê, has been invaded and destroyed:

> In my dream I saw that Xanê was in ruins [. . .] I was walking around and could see neither acquaintances nor households, there was nothing remaining of Xanê. If there had been no mountains or other familiar surroundings, I would not even have said [recognised] that this was Xanê (18).[31]

Religious figures in the village take his dream seriously and begin to think that Xanê will fall into 'ruins' (*wêran*) (20) in the near future. As the inhabitants are forced to leave their village it gradually becomes a place of destruction, like the one in Mustafa's dream. After returning from Istanbul to his lands, he recounts his observations about another Kurdish village '*Gundê Mizgeft*' (Mosque Village):

> Gundê Mizgef looks like a sunshade for scorpions, lizards and snakes were swarming there. The heat of fear was intensified there and the fear of death was rising from there. With this condition it was painful, like the suppurating wound of an injured person. I sat by the edge of a pool, my knees went weak, my breath was expelled from my body, my throat dried up from the sense of crying, and huge warm tears dropped, one by one, from my eyes (167).[32]

Another character in the same novel, named Feqî Huseyîn (Molla Huseyin), narrates an account similar to Mustafa's, when he says: 'they destroyed our village, killed our relatives, and now like bandits, they plunder some poor soul every day' (172).[33] Throughout the novel, Mustafa, as the narrator, recalls depressing 'home-land' visions that are rooted in communal and ethnic consciousness, while exploring the geographical and natural features of an invaded and tormented land.

Along with images of destroyed and evacuated villages, fear and anxiety permeate the 'home-land'. For example, the novel *Gitarê bê Tel* is set in the towns of Kiziltepe and Nusaybin, which are not only places of war but also places where people are scared to wander around (116). Terror and chaos have spread everywhere and according to Sadî, the main character, even the birds are frightened to live there (128). Apart from the fear and panic among the population, the war negatively affects people's relationships with each other. Now, they yearn for the stable and peaceful life that they enjoyed in the past. The narrator in *Xezal* (Xezal, 2007) also makes comparisons with the past, insisting that Kurds are not as they were in the days of their ancestors (46). They no longer trust each other as much (93) and

self-interest has become their priority. Before the war, they would gather at night and sing '*klam*' and '*stran*', but now they only talk about war and politics. War has becomes the only concern, and the stench of bombs and bullets replaces the fresh scents of nature, mountains, and snow. There is no longer any sign of goodness left from the past.

Along with the depressing 'home-land' images, there is also a move away from the mythical imaginings of the 'home-land' to the tragic reality found in Zozanî's *Mişextî*. 'Home-land' before the war is described with evocative words, 'flowers in the uplands raised their heads through the snow and the beautiful face of spring ornamented the slopes and valleys' (108);[34] 'for them, the coolness of the uplands is both an opportunity and reason for new hopes' (153);[35] and 'the rains of spring were charged with life. The clouds loaded with rain were changing the appearance of nature' (154).[36] Here we see the idealistic view of Kurdistan; however, with the raids and the interference of soldiers and state, villages are burned down and ruined (105). Addressing the beauty of the past simply makes the ugliness of today more stark. In *Reş û Spî*, 'home-land' is identified with war and conflicts, as Robîn explicitly reveals when questioning the connection between conflict and homeland: 'homeland? ... war? ... Diyarbakir?' (152).[37] There is also an implication that the natural beauty of 'home-land' is destroyed by conflicts, when Serhat in *Kejê* points out the difference over time. According to the narrator, 'Serhat is talking about the scent of irises and daisies. Yet there are no longer any irises or daisies in the country today' (220)[38] because wars and conflicts have destroyed them all.

In *Kulmek Morîkên Şînbirik*, for the central character, the 'home-land' of her childhood also evokes violation, migration, and destruction. During her childhood, she has seen her village invaded by soldiers and the inhabitants beaten. The soldiers offer the villagers two options: they must either take up guns to fight against the guerrillas or abandon their lands. They resist cooperation with the soldiers; they are forced to leave their village. In this case 'home-land' is also associated with migration and evacuation. In another account,

in the novel *Otobês*, the narrator, a passenger in the bus, looks through the window and describes what he sees:

> In my country, where sometimes everything turns upside down and a dreadful fear dominates our lives and sometimes a meaningless relief makes our lives boring, where all of a sudden natural disasters and strong storms empty the villages of people and dry up the land, the rivers that rise in neighbouring countries where we have never been, flow towards us and help me to go on breathing (39).[39]

With regard to the metaphors related to nature and to the ruined lives of the characters in the novels, the use of negative terms in the descriptions of the physical settings also confirms the constant conditions of war in the 'home-land' through the numbers of those killed and injured because of the conflicts. In *Bi Xatirê Te Enqere*, 'home-land' is described with an assortment of dreadful images. As the protagonist states, 'we have suffered silence, embarrassment, betrayals, prisons, denial, exile, distance, foreignness, hunger, disease, agony, and death' (97).[40] In this way the 'homeland' is depicted as victimised by the cruel hands of the state; it becomes 'a lake of blood' (*Keje*: 213) and 'divided' (ibid.: 202). In *Hêviyên Birîndar*, too, following invasion and evacuation, 'home-land' becomes 'the land of death' (124) and the beauty of the land fades away, while in *Wêneyên Keserê* there is 'blood scattered' (348) all over Kurdistan. Safety, innocence, peace, order, and stability are permeated by the dirt of war. In other words, 'home-land' is nice in its own way; yet with the intervention of others, it is destroyed and its beauty evaporates.

Moving away from a mythical picturing of the 'home-land' draws attention to the current circumstances of 'home-land'. Mîrza's narration in the novel *Wêneyên Keserê* portrays the destructive changes that have taken place:

> I am the son of the nation itseeeelf which lost its country, heaven, and lands of its ancestors in international agreements [. . .] They [people of this nation] are looking at the cemeteries

> which are daily expanding and they leave their hope next to these cemeteries and in groups they leave for the big mountains to seek shelter and I am the migrant himseeelf who endlessly migrates from one country to another (187).[41]

In this extract, the emphasis on international agreements, and the lack of a state, independence, and freedom are mentioned in relation to other European countries whose intervention has effectively deprived the Kurds of the freedom to live in their lands. Thus, present-day Kurdistan is portrayed as an oppressed country that has been violated and destroyed by others. In the setting of *Rojnivîska Spinoza*, *Kardoxî* (a symbolic expression for the term 'Kurdistan') is controlled by others and is no longer a free country. In this account, on most occasions, war and conflicts are the constant backdrop of the novels, even those set in the past, since political intervention and destruction constitute the tragic reality of 'home-land'. In *Cembelî Kurê Mîrê Hekaryan* Kurdistan is attacked and controlled by Iran and the Ottomans (71), and also becomes the land of wars and invasions (71–8); Kurds are suffering because of these conflicts.

However, the current narration of the violated and destroyed 'home-land' also promotes a struggle to defend 'homeland' against the occupiers and destroyers. The narrator in *Kejê* states that Kurdistan is occupied; however, there is also a struggle:

> They are the children of an oppressed nation. Their ancestors bequeathed this to them as a present. In other words they suffer oppression, helplessness, misery [. . .] Exploiters occupied the country. They suck the blood of people [. . .] There is a struggle in the country (202).[42]

In this context, the characters try to identify or recreate recent socio-political developments and incidents that are usually related to the emergence of the PKK and conflicts in the mountains. Being based on the conflict between the state and the PKK which goes back to the 1980s, they involve a static construction in which guerrillas are regarded as the saviours of Kurdistan. The PKK, a national

movement, is usually presented through various depictions rather than named directly. In *Hêvî Her Dem Heye*, *Kitim*, *Bêhna Axê*, *Mişextî*, and *Gava Heyatê*, for example, the protagonists are guerrillas; and in *Neynika Dilî*, *Kejê*, *Qerebafon*, *Bavfileh* (Proselyte, 2009), *Xezal*, *Rêwiyên bê Welat*, *Kulmek Morîkên Şînbirik*, and *Bi Xatirê Te Enqere*, the secondary characters who join other guerrillas are highly praised for their moral traits. *Wêneyên Keserê*, *Giyanên Bahozî*, *Li Qerexa Şevê Hîvron*, *Rojnivîska Spinoza*, *Hêvîyên Brîndar*, and *Reş û Spî* refer directly to a Kurdish party and promote the national struggle in which this party is involved. However, in *Otobês*, *Nameyek ji Xwedê re*, *Gitarê bê Tel*, *Pêşbaziya Çîrokên Neqediyayî*, and *Toqa Lanatê*, references to socio-political conditions and the national struggle are less direct, though they are supportive in tone and underline the necessity of fighting for national liberation. Accordingly, in *Kejê* and *Xezal*, villagers in Turkish Kurdistan are impelled by the frequent raids, interrogations, and arrests by the Turkish military to act to save their lands from invaders and foreigners.

Although the novels do not mention its name, sympathy towards the armed party and its rebels increases daily when the villagers see how their lands are controlled by others. In *Kejê*, encouragement to struggle to save Kurdistan becomes explicit mainly because they raise their voices as Kurds: 'I am telling you, we are Kurds. We are oppressed in our own country. We need to struggle and liberate ourselves from the oppressors. At least we should learn our language in our country' (27).[43] The novel also refers to a political party that is regarded as a means towards implementing defence and liberation: 'all these parties are patriotic, country-loving parties [. . .] while the nation is not united, there will be no liberation. The unity of the nation depends on this. If the leaders do not believe in marching together, than the people will have no faith in leaders' (26).[44] The novel also refers to the first attack by this party on 15 August:[45]

> Our country has been waiting for this day for a thousand years. Today is 15 August. Today the mother of Kurds gave birth to twins. One boy, one girl. Revolution has reached another stage. From now on, we will fight back until the occupants leave our

country. The enemies will no longer be able to hurt our honour. Freedom is closer now (100).[46]

It is possible in some of the novels to trace certain details about the PKK, either directly or indirectly. For example, *Wêneyên Keserê* refers explicitly to the names of the guerrillas as a symbol of respect, such as 'Zîlan, Sema, Bêrîvan, Vîyan, Egît, Mazlûm û Engîn', who die for the sake of Kurdistan (188), while Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the PKK, is referred as 'the scientist and intellectual Öcalan' (*Îlim û îldar Öcalan*) (188). Sometimes, the narratives become very didactic regarding the conflicts between PKK guerrillas and the Turkish state. In *Qerebafon*, for instance, the readers learn every detail of the conflict between soldiers and guerrillas from a journal left by a guerrilla called Nabî. Through his descriptions, readers are taken back to the 1980s and the tortures, ill-treatment, and hunger strikes in Diyarbakir prison. Again, the unnamed injured guerrilla in *Hêvî Her Dem Heye* refers not only to the political struggle of the Kurds in their country over many centuries, but also remembers the emergence of the political party in which he became involved after his release from prison. He never names the political party but the details suggest the PKK. His monologues stand as a historical documentation of the Kurdish nationalist movement and organisations during the 1980s, and of his own active involvement in the armed struggle. The narratives are presented as firsthand sources involving memoirs and experiences.

In addition, through either major or minor characters, the struggle for the preservation of the lands is encouraged: 'lions are fighting for the sake of their land' (42).[47] In *Bêhna Axê*, the narrator speaks about the former guerrilla Sozda, and explains her reason for going to the mountains: 'Why did Sozda run away; in order not to live out the unhappy fate of her mother. In order not to be the slave or servant of the dominant party [. . .] in order to live in the free and independent lands as she wishes' (128).[48] In *Qerebafon*, the central characters express their views about defending their 'home-land' through solidarity: 'We need to support them. We should preserve them as the treasure of our homeland' (59).[49] Here the sense of 'we' or

'us' in the narration of the struggle is very dominant, since each character speaks out in the name of the whole nation. The unnamed guerrilla in *Hêvî Her Dem Heye* says, 'as long as we don't slow down before we reach the 2000s we will have wedding ceremonies in a free and independent Kurdistan' (107).[50] And the protagonist in *Bi Xatirê Te Enqere* emphasises the reasons for struggling and uniting by saying: 'You also know that we were defeated in the first half of this century. All the Kurdish rebellions failed. Each defeat brings either vanishing or silence with it' (63),[51] which implies that Kurds need now to stand up more strongly than in the past.

Struggling against the effects of displacement and oppression becomes the ideological and routine meaning of 'home-land'. It is the lack of territory that defines the characters in these novels, and the presentation of their patriotism as the most crucial trait that they can possess. In doing this, the Kurdish novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan suggests that patriotic (*welatparêz*) characters as national signifiers are the most trustworthy and beloved figures, a fact that is often explicitly emphasised in the narrations and descriptions. For example, in *Bi Xatirê Te Enqere*, Selîm, who is respected by others for his patriotic attitudes, often talks about the significance of being patriotic, saying, 'I am also a Kurd, a revolutionary and a patriot. Kurdishness is tough. Patriotism is about sacrificing. Revolutionary means going against the benefit of discontent' (19).[52] He believes that the defence of 'homeland' can only be possible through being patriotic:

> Every day in this country many people were detained, injured and went missing. Every day, girls and boys were losing their lives in the country's mountains [...] There was a dirty war going on in the country. It was not just a matter of patriots or revolutionaries – anyone who is principled and honest could not just ignore this and pursue other things (90).[53]

Characters like Selîm who are found in other novels are highly celebrated and respected. In *Qerebafon*, one of the characters stresses that being a patriot is something to admire: 'in a short time, through

Cengiz, I became acquainted with all patriots. I began to admire him' (146–7).[54] Patriotic characters are presented as the ideal, their principles and attitudes should be taken notice of. In *Wêneyên Keserê*, the narrator praises Moyad, as he is a true patriot who works for Kurdish organisations in Germany. When Moyad first meets Narîn, he likes her very much; but when he learns that she is a Kurd, he starts to regard her as his sister. It is implied that no harm can come from a '*welatparêz*'; rather, it comes from others such as foreigners or people deprived of the love of 'homeland', such as village guards, traitors, and informers. This idea is strengthened by Narîn's experiences during her stay in Germany. She has been raped by a German man and this has led her into an immoral life. But Narîn's immoral life at the beginning of the novel does not affect the way she is praised throughout the narrative. The mistakes she may have made have not prevented her from being a protector of her nation and homeland. Her meeting with other Kurdish patriots makes her change her ways completely and she begins to lead a decent life. This indicates that patriotic Kurds like Moyad and Mîrza not only advocate the national struggle but also save the women around them from inappropriate or troubled behaviour. As Ivekovic and Mostov (2002: 10) argue, 'as the markers and as property, mothers, daughters, and wives require the defense and protection of patriotic sons'. Accordingly, the protagonist in *Bi Xatirê Te Enqere* saves Evîn from a man who abuses her; in *Wêneyên Keserê*, Mîrza saves Narîn from an immoral life. They struggle against corruption, injustice, and discrimination.

In this respect, it is clear that protagonists who are all '*welatparêz*', as a metonmyn for the nation, are also drawn with perfect features. They are also reminiscent of epic heroes. For example, there is not much difference between Cembelî, the character in the epic novel *Cembelî Kurê Mîrê Hekaryan*, and Robîn in the novel *Reş û Spî* that is set in the 1990s. Both characters have experienced the same processes, they participate in journeys, face many obstacles and defeat them, and either way, whether they return home or not, they are transformed into different people, becoming, for example, stronger and more patient. Both characters illustrate certain moral precepts that are

valued by Kurdish people, and they embody the cultural and political beliefs of the nation. Hesen, the character in *Xezal,* who is described throughout the novel as '*welatparêz*', has had no formal education; however, he is a very rational and knowledgeable individual and everyone takes him very seriously (26). Sadî, the central character in *Gitarê bê Tel*, is depicted as both a decent lover and a loyal '*welatparêz*' who graduates as a doctor and returns to his 'home-land' to benefit his own community.

Similarly, in *Neynika Dilî*, the protagonist's brother Ehmed, a guerrilla fighting for independence, is described like an epic hero who is intelligent, educated, respectful, and loving. His wife Dilşa praises his features as flawless, both physically and morally: 'he was a really trustworthy man, wise, loyal, protective, smart, mature, knew how to invade the heart, easy-going, sympathetic, knew how to love' (129).[55] The protagonist states that his mother is fond of Ehmed: 'Our mother loved Ahmet more than all of us. She was always saying that he would be a hardworking man and a leader of the Kurds' (16).[56] Accordingly, in a letter written before he goes to the mountains to fight, he says: 'I will fight for my country and my mother, to live in a brighter future [. . .] I am leaving for the sake of your freedom, for the free life of your children in these lands in the future, and for them to hold their heads up in front of history' (41).[57] His departure to struggle for his 'homeland' confirms the admiration others have given him since, by sacrificing his life, he achieves heroic status.

In the same author's second novel, *Bêhna Axê*, the protagonist's boss Salîh straightforwardly portrays the differences between a '*welatparêz*' and one who is not a '*welatparêz*', in terms of their characteristic features and moral manners. Salîh has two sons, one of whom, a former guerrilla, died in the mountains during a conflict (and was named a martyr) and is always praised in conversations; the other has no interest in any national issues and is described as a carefree drifter. For Salîh, the protagonist Dilgeş is a person worthy of respect (151), even though he fails to come to work for several days and does not bother informing his father. And although he knows Dilgeş is having an affair with a married woman, Salîh does not

change his favourable opinion of his son. His disreputable behaviour does not affect the positive image of him in Salîh's mind, as he is a former guerrilla who has struggled for the sake of Kurdistan.

Kurdish characters, mainly protagonists who are presented as 'national characters' (Bourdieu 1994), are highly celebrated for their decent and trustworthy behaviour; nor is it a coincidence that they also reinforce the national ideals. They speak Kurdish all the time and with the ideals of struggle and sacrifice they often explicitly encourage others to support the defence of Kurdistan.

Again, in relation to Kurdistan's two 'time zones' (past and present), it can be argued that Kurdistan has a double face, reflecting the ambiguity of the conflict. On the one hand, it used to be the peaceful 'home-land' of the Kurds, with emphasis on elements of its mythological history; on the other hand, it is a place in which fear and insecurity are dominant in a such a way that the characters are condemned to mediate between the glorified 'home-land' that has remained in the past and is destroyed, and a 'home-land' that in present times has been turned into a battlefield. There are no diverse interpretations of ideologies and politics in the novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan, but while the political and national struggle with the state is reconstructed in the form of mourning, it also reveals a glimpse of hope, which creates a linkage with dreams for the future.

Imagining the Future of 'Home-land': 'Newroz'[58] *and Heaven*

The novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan shows that being deprived of recognition in official territorial terms, along with unsatisfying and disturbing conditions in the present, means that 'home-land' has been transformed into a symbolic dream place in which to imagine its future. As Harvey (1996: 306) states, 'the preservation or construction of a sense of place is then an active moment, the passage from memory to hope, from past to future. And the construction of places can reveal hidden memories that hold out the prospects for different futures.' Kurdish novelistic discourse contributes to the development of an idealised and highly symbolic image of Kurdistan attributed to the future. The real impact of these texts lies in their concerted effort to recreate a mythology of national

consciousness, a collective memory of an idealised Kurdistan for the future.

The meanings of 'home-land' employ similar markers of beauty, peace, and rootedness as they were in the past, in contrast to the present portrayal of 'home-land' as not much more than a battlefield. This can be seen, for example, in *Neynika Dilî*, *Gitarê bê Tel*, *Kitim*, *Qerebafon*, *Bavfileh*, *Hêvî Her Dem Heye*, *Xezal*, *Kejê*, *Mişextî*, *Reş û Spî*, *Gava Heyatê*, *Hêviyên Birîndar*, *Rêwiyên bê Welat*, *Giyanên Bahozî*, *Wêneyên Keserê*, and *Kulmek Morîkên Şînbirik*. However, the 'home-land' in its future projection is explicitly imagined through familiar metaphors, such as a utopian vision of heaven, a celebration of Newroz, or an idealised village panorama. The scent of flowers and the fragrance of blossom are frequently used metaphors in the constructed image of Kurdistan in the future.

In *Li Qerexa Şevê Hîvron*, for instance, when Derdocan follows the ants that are carrying fire and water with them, he comes across some charred forests, which allude to the burnt forests of Kurdistan. However, there are new shoots appearing beneath the scorched trees and vegetation. This implies the rebirth of life in Kurdistan – in other words, Kurdistan reproduces itself like nature. After the burnt forest, Derdocan sees a barren mountain; when he climbs it he sees that its other side is green and full of flowers and plants, like an idea of heaven. Thus there are two sides of this mountain: one is the side ravaged by invaders and represents the present Kurdistan; the other side is like heaven and represens Kurdistan's future. Similarly, in *Wêneyên Keserê*, Narîn wishes to be buried in her forgotten country because she wants people to plough her soil and cultivate it (163). She wants the children to eat its fruits, and her grave to be covered with flowers and greenery, like the image of Kurdistan as heaven.

Similarly, in *Bêhna Axê*, Sozda and Dilgeş decide to return their lands, in a future that is projected with hope and optimism. As they march along they sing about their love of 'homeland': 'Move forward, move on, it is our time and age / the homeland is longing and waiting for us' (206).[59] Joyfully, Dilgeş calls to others to join them: 'Dear brothers, come along, you Kurds! You are brave men, let's go forward with the love of the homeland in our hearts' (ibid.).[60] He also tells

Sozda to get ready 'so that we can go to the land, so that the land can embrace us and we will build our home [nest] there. Yes, let's go and build our home in the shadow of the mountains, around crystal springs and rivers' (205).[61] They are very hopeful as Dilgeş muses about their future: 'We will spend a happy life together, a life that smells of soil, a life that good-hearted people deserve and enjoy after all the difficulties they have been through. Let's go to our village, colourful Gûzereş is waiting for us, Sozda, it's waiting for us' (207).[62] Their suffering and loneliness are over as soon as they step into their land of origin. For the first time they feel happy and peaceful. Their lives have a new beginning, like spring:

> Now the rain had stopped as well. A warming sun was shining on the earth. It was as if the rainbow was welcoming them, like a colourful belt wrapped around the body of the foggy mountain. The surface was tidy and fertile. Everywhere was wet, everywhere was blue, and everywhere was full of life. The smell of earth was bursting through the black rocks; an earth on to which the strong rain fell [. . .] The sun shone and spring smiled with all its beauty. Everything was behind them now, all the pain and grief were behind them [. . .] now they were smiling [. . .] it was the spring of their life [. . .] the new spring was smiling with all its beauty [. . .] (207).[63]

The narrator creates an image of a 'home-land' that has been waiting for them all the time and is ready to welcome them. Similarly, *Hêvî Her Dem Heye* has a happy ending, thus preserving the optimistic view of the future of 'home-land': 'there was always a hope in his heart and because of that hopeful heart, he survived on this earth [. . .] He had a hope for a new life [. . .] Freedom would be created from this life [. . .] It was a life full of difficulties, but a satisfying one' (223).[64] The narratives reveal that the happiness of the injured guerrilla is very much related to the conditions of Kurdistan, and his belief in its independent and free future. While he waits on the mountain to be saved by his friends, he often dreams about his future, in which the place refers to a mythical imagining of a

homeland. As he is distant from 'home-land', reminiscence and longing imply a fixing of the land in his mind as a symbolic portrait of uncorrupted and peaceful Kurdistan, set in the form of a colourful garden.

When Cembelî and Narîn marry at the end of the novel *Cembelî Kurê Mîrê Hekaryan*, the close connection between 'place' and 'person' not only shows how a happy ending influences the natural beauty of Kurdistan but also allows glimpses of a positive perspective on the future:

> The mountains and uplands of Hakkari embraced the lovers as if they were two sweet-smelling flowers. Hakkari castle nursed and embraced them like the cradle of a cosseted immortal. *Xenas* became the bride in the lap of the groom, Black Mountain. *Merzan* was beautified with leaves and flowers. *Gubsî* was applauding happily. *Tirmil* was dancing separately. The *Kilils* who were like cheering daisies were fluttering their scarves. *Simbî* was weeping for joy and her tears flowed over the stones and rocks and eventually reached the River Zap (195).[65]

In Arîn Zîn's novel *Ez Stêrka Sîpan im* (I am Star of Suphan, 2007), the description of the natural beauty of Mount Suphan is associated with the features of heaven and gives glimpses of a hopeful and optimistic future. Though identified with the epic tales of Siyabend and Xecê and Mem and Zîn, in which they meet an unfortunate fate, the love between Dewran and Nergîz results in a story with a happy ending, unlike the epics. At the end of the novel, the narrator describes the happiness of Dewran and Nergiz as 'the smell of grass and flowers flying from all sides. Green and red flowers are dancing for them. Dewran and Nergiz are together from now on. [Mount] Suphan is watching over them' (335).[66] The natural beauty of Kurdistan becomes part of the couple's happiness.

The beauty and purity associated with nature (usually in rural areas) often evokes the idea of 'heaven', and this is explicit in *Neynika Dilî*, in which the central character Mustafa associates the rural area around his village with 'heaven' (*bihûşt*). He describes what he sees:

'clover leaves on top of the rocks were swinging with the wind [. . .] Sunshine was gleaming on springs and waterfalls that were gushing from everywhere [. . .] An exceptional beauty. It might even be here itself which they call "eternal heaven"' (168).[67] Filled with emotion and sentimental thoughts, he recites poems related to the natural beauty of his village: 'in the valley nature descends to the *Xanê* river below. / No one knows whether the scent of roses or narcissus or iris or jasmine is better than tulips and daisies / or than the breast and body of my beloved' (170).[68] In the novel, the narrator also describes the beautiful *Geraşîn* upland (in Hakkari) in a mythicised mode that evokes the environment of 'heaven', which also appears as a fixed typology of the ideal Kurdistan, or Kurdistan in the future:

> *Geraşîn* was a beautiful highland where one could experience four seasons; the Geraşîn summer camp was set up around the green lake. There were ducks and geese swimming in the lake; on the shores jasmine, irises, narcissus, violets, and tulips were all flowering together. There were natural springs everywhere, and the meadows absorbed and wiped away thousands of pains from human beings; the cool breeze would make anyone fly there (20).[69]

So Kurdistan in its future perspective is represented as a place of blossoms, fragrance, and colour. It is experienced in highly aesthetic terms, and the landscape is encountered joyfully and with passion and love; it is also reminiscent of a peaceful picnic scene. For example, in *Giyanên Bahozî*, Artîn dreams about a place like a '*Seyrangeh*' (garden, picnic place) full of flowers and greenery. He wants to go there with his mother, to whom he describes it: 'It was a vast picnic place. You couldn't even see where it finished. It seemed to be endless. There were hundreds of kinds of flowers and trees on it' (427).[70] This can be interpreted as a desire to link the land of his birth with his mother who gave birth to him. In his first novel, *Wêneyên Keserê*, Qasîmlo creates a similar image of Kurdistan in the minds of readers that is visualised and associated with the notion of a fragrant heaven.

Dreaming about the 'home-land' of origin evokes the sense of a pure and natural life. Accordingly, in *Wêneyên Keserê*, when Cemşîd is put into prison, he expresses his longing towards his land, emphasising the natural landscape of Kurdistan, which is also transformed into an ideal 'home-land':

> There was only one way to escape, and it was to be a bird, a falcon, an eagle or a pigeon so that one could fly through the window and soar towards freedom [. . .] Yes, at the time I wished to be a bird, a falcon, an eagle or a pigeon so that I would fly through the window and pay a visit to the homeland of our ancestors. It's known that there are no cells or solitary confinement in the homeland of our ancestors. In the homeland of our ancestors there are uplands and mountains welcoming everyone with all their prosperity and beauty, and drawing everyone towards them with the warmest of hearts. The roses in the homeland of our ancestors shine on everyone's cheeks like happy and blissful smiles, and people are always lively (314–15).[71]

For Cemşîd, Kurdistan as the 'home-land' of his ancestors evidently refers to the lands of freedom and joy. Apart from its natural beauty, even the smell of Kurdistan is identified with pleasant scents; as the narrator says, 'the smell was nice, like the smell of Kurdistan' (333).[72] In the same way, in Zozanî's earlier novel *Kejê*, the beauty of the landscape is associated with the arrival of spring and love; however, despite the uniqueness of this beauty, the love of 'home-land' takes priority:

> Many things have been said about springtime in the country. For some, it has been the time for love and affection. But none of them can replace love for the homeland. That is why the vanguards of springs in the country cannot be explained with words or talked about. A springtime of patriots would make love stronger once again (31–2).[73]

By employing physical description of a fictional 'home-land', future prospects for a positively conceived 'home-land' can also be

symbolically narrated. For example, in *Otobês*, Eroğlu creates a completely fictive world that includes some factual elements but ultimately imagines Kurdistan in a fictitious context. In the novel, Kurdistan is likened to an island whose disconnectedness can be interpreted as an independent Kurdistan. According to the narratives, the people of the island can sue the oppressive group for its violent and repressive actions, which also implies that Kurds have gained their rights. The fictive future Kurdistan complies with the dreams of Kurds in relation to their 'home-land'.

Likewise, *Ardûda* by Mîran Janbar, like *Otobês*, contains completely fictional settings and times. All the names, characters, places, and even the era in which the story takes place are entirely imaginary. In *Ardûda*[74] Janbar creates a complete utopia in some distant future, which has conflicts similar to those of our world and our present. There are wars between galaxies and the weak are dominated and ruled by the powerful. Although it can be classified as science fiction, the novel also contains implications of and references to fact. The group of people defined in the novel resembles the Kurds. The novelist creates an imaginary city in the distant future in which people have suffered greatly from hunger and deprivation. However, they rebel against the system in their galaxy (which in effect is a country) and manage to live independently under a federal system (50), which can also be interpreted as an aspiration for the future of Kurdistan.

Almost all the novels reinforce the idea that 'home-land' can be placed in interpersonal relations with regard to certain houses, places, geography, and can be positioned in habits, traditions, memories, and rituals. In this respect, the narrators in some novels delineate the Newroz celebration, not only as a traditional Kurdish ritual but also as a perfect vision of Kurdistan. Newroz becomes a symbol of unification and the dream of all Kurds expressed with joy and solidarity. Interfering in Newroz celebrations is like interfering with Kurdish independence and unity. Newroz, without interference, is presented as the portrait of imagined Kurdistan. For example, in *Cembelî Kurê Mîrê Hekaryan*, the narrator likens the joyful wedding of Binevş and Cembelî, to *Newroz*: 'you would say that it was the 21st of March, the day of *Newroz*' (194).[75]

Newroz is presented in *Bi Xatirê Te Enqere* as the ideal atmosphere in Kurdistan, where the ideal is associated with independence and freedom. The narrator says, 'spring was the season of equality, freedom, peace, happiness and love [. . .] and today was *Newroz*, the most beautiful day of spring' (124).[76] According to the novel, the celebration of *Newroz* is a reminder of 'rebellion' (*Serhildan*) for the Kurdish identity and Kurdistan (131). The unnamed character portrays Kurdistan as a dreamlike place in the aura of Newroz: 'there's a country before us in which nobody has ever set foot. Nobody has yet passed its borders. It is far away from all the dreams and full of beautiful, weird, mysterious, frightening and spiritual things' (165).[77] Throughout the novels the narrators emphasise the characters' imaginative construction of a largely metaphorical 'home-land', established mainly in a peaceful environment. Thus, in the same novel, when the protagonist leaves Ankara for his lands, his lengthy interior monologues with his beloved can be linked to the future dreams concerning his country:

> All the criteria and borders of our brains must be destroyed. We must get out of our own prisons. We must also follow the bright and correct road, and we must also be free. We must stop all the conflicts inside ourselves. Stars in the sky of our souls must not fall any more. All the forests of our hearts must wake up. Black clouds must be cleared away from the mountains of our heart. For the sake of our happiness and humankind's happiness, we must have clear rivers and tall mountains in our pockets (200–1).[78]

The narrative above shows that in projecting its future, 'home-land' proves to be more metaphorical than real. Such a vision of Kurdistan taps into a yearning for a comforting image of the country by extending the imaginary 'home' into the realm of the fantastic. Strong collective images of the homeland linked to hopes and memories are waiting to be constructed.

Kurdistan in the novelistic discourse turns into a desired homeland, and Kurds rely upon the idea of a 'home-land' as a dream

and imaginary rather than being grounded in an actual territory. This mentally reconstructed Kurdistan is an aesthetic creation incorporating memories and ideals that can survive in peace in the imagination of Kurds in general. Kurdish identity is described as something that can only be accomplished in the future, when the terrible present has been changed, and when the Kurdish people have achieved what others already have – when waiting will have delivered a state and a passport.

The Meanings of Unattainable 'Home-land'

The agonising and ceaseless longing for Kurdistan is constant, in any place and in any condition, in the novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan. It is related as much to the condition of statelessness as it is to the sense of migration and displacement, which creates the sense of unattainable 'home-land' intertwined with powerful longing and yearning. In this regard, this research argues that the image of 'home-land' in Kurdistan resembles the image in the diasporic configuration, in which there is an 'imaginary re-creation of the unattainable home' (Rushdie 1991: 10). To put it simply, Kurdish novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan is similar to other diasporic texts. Due to the lack of a state and to constant political conflicts, and despite being produced within the territory of Kurdistan, the Kurdish novelistic discourse has the same sense of 'trauma', 'mourning', and 'loss of homeland' that Mishra identifies in the South Asian texts, but in such a way that the sense of 'unattainable home-land' is even stronger in the discourse within Turkish Kurdistan than it is in its diaspora. This is mainly because the sense of territorial uncertainty and statelessness in the everyday lives of Kurds increases the sense of the unattainability of 'home-land'.

In this part, I argue that the love of 'home-land' is shaped in a female form, and that its constant loss also shows the impossibility of rejoining it. Kurdistan appears as a beloved woman, not only unattained but also unforgettable; this creates deep sorrow in the characters, particularly among the main protagonists. The frequently emphasised sense of longing and yearning for the

'home-land' contributes to the perception of the 'unattainable home-land'. In this respect, because of the interrelatedness of the 'home-land' and the identity of an individual or of a community, Kurdish literary characters are usually migrants, travellers, refugees, and/or homeless.

'Home-land' as a Beloved Woman

> As well as being a graveyard for freedom fighters and brave men, the land of the Kurds has also been a graveyard for lovers. The greatest lovers were born in that land, but regrettably died before they grew up . . . Love . . . Love for homeland, love of people and love of being alive (134).[79]

As emphasised in these sentences in *Giyanên Bahozî*, Artîn, the protagonist, is desperately in love with Zerî, who is viewed as a patriotic and intelligent Kurdish woman (31). He explicitly combines love for Zerî with love of 'home-land'. Her Kurdish and patriotic side is frequently emphasised in such a way that, had she been neither, Artîn clearly would not have loved her so much (365). She knows Kurdish songs and poetry, which influences him a lot. He equates his love for Zerî with his love of 'home-land' because her authentic and loyal attitudes towards her traditions remind him profoundly of his lands. In exile Artîn feels warmer and less lonely knowing she exists, telling her, 'in this cold country I would like to warm your delicate fingers with my breath' (157).[80] In a letter to her he says 'that's right, because the smell of your breast is pure Kurdish' (225).[81] He tells her that she makes him recall his homeland: 'I know very well that your breast is full of the smell of my homeland' (157).[82] Suffering from this desperate love, Artîn goes to Paris to forget her, becomes ill due to their separation and dies soon after. The doctor diagnoses his illness as 'longing', thus one can say that longing for 'home-land' is represented by longing for the first beloved woman.

As the example above shows, together with the quest for a homeland and the struggle for constructing national identity, a frequent theme in Kurdish novels is love. The complicated nature

of the experience of Kurds with regard to their 'home-land' can be effectively identified with certain concepts and images associated with the theme of love.

'Home' signifies not only physical place but also memoirs, states of being, and activities (Moore 2000, Fox 2002). Accordingly, Kurdish novels in Turkish Kurdistan illustrate that 'home-land' is associated with a woman who is exclusively the first and former beloved. It is important to note that these beloved women are necessarily Kurdish or else remind the character of his own roots and traditions. Both the beloved woman and 'homeland' are regarded as subjects of protection by the main protagonists.[83] As noted by Ivekovic and Mostov (2002: 10), 'practices of nation-building employ social constructions of masculinity and femininity that support a division of labour in which women reproduce the nation physically and symbolically and men protect, defend, and avenge the nation'. Accordingly, in the novelistic discourse the beloved woman is treated as 'a body to love and be devoted to, to possess and protect, to kill and die for' (Najmabadi 1997: 445); similarly, Kurdistan is portrayed as a land to save, struggle and die for.

Regarding the role of women in Kurdish nationalist rhetoric in the novels, women as the symbol of the nation (Lutz, Phoenix, and Yuval-Davis 1995) and as the symbol of the 'spatial boundaries of the nation' (Ivekovic and Mostov 2002: 10) are always protected and loved by male characters. Thus most of the central male characters (who are mostly either guerrillas or involved in politics for the sake of their country) are usually portrayed as true lovers and very loyal to both 'home-land' and the beloved woman. For example, in *Bi Xatirê Te Enqere*, love for a woman is equated with love of country, and the love of Kurdistan begins with the protagonist's love for the girl called Evîn. Evîn is portrayed as someone who has had bad affairs with older men and is following a wrong path in life until the protagonist becomes her saviour. In *Feqiyê Teyran*, Cizîra Botan is described as feelings towards a beloved are described. Reaching Cizîra Botan is associated with rejoining a beloved, which produces the same excitement and joy. As the narrator explains: 'Whoever reaches Cizre feels as if they have re-joined their beloved one [. . .] they are talking

about Cizre with warm feelings and wisdom as if they are referring to love and the beloved' (55).[84] Similarly, in the epic novel *Saturn* (Saturn, 2002), the protagonist tries to reach a city where he hopes to find his beloved. What is ironic is that the city is called '*Nînşar*', which means 'non-existent city' in Kurdish. Throughout the novel, he tries to locate this city about which no one has ever heard. This implies the unapproachable side of the city and the beloved, both of which simply exist in the protagonist's imagination.

According to Najmabadi (1997: 442), 'in nationalist discourse representing the homeland [. . .] a woman's body has been used to construct a national identity based on male bonding among a nation of brothers'. However, in Turkish Kurdistan the significance in Kurdish novels of 'home-land' is expressed through the significant meanings and values attributed to the former, mainly first, beloved in the lives of the characters. Thus, in *Wêneyên Keserê*, while Narîn speaks of the significance of Mîrza in her life, she identifies him as a father, friend, land, and country (137). Again, in *Reş û Spî*, Robîn writes poetry about the natural beauty of Kurdistan and his former beloved. The narrator refers to 'a poem about a former beloved from Diyarbakir, the ten-arched bridge, Tigris and Robîn' (280)[85] in which an unforgettable former love and the protagonist's hometown are associated.

Analyses of the novelistic discourse show that although the characters have other affairs later in their lives, they never forget their first love. Whereas the first love is identified with 'home-land', any love that follows is associated with the foreign country to which the character migrates or flees as an exile. And just as the character feels estranged and alienated on returning to his lands, he feels equally detached on meeting the first love again. In *Reş û Spî*, Robîn never forgets his beloved Nûşin in Amed. He knows that his new beloved in the lands to which he migrated with his family could never take Nûşin's place, but when he returns to Amed (Diyarbakir) to see his lands, not only does he feel isolated in Diyarbakir, but he also feels distanced when he happens to see Nûşin in the street. A sense of belatedness prevails over all other sentiments. Robîn thinks of 'wounded loves, two loves from the fire on the shores of the Tigris are

reaching my lips' (282).[86] By 'two loves', he refers implicitly to both Diyarbakir and his former love. When he looks at Diyarbakir, he feels it is 'just like looking at the eyes of a former beloved' (284).[87] Likewise, in *Neynika Dilî*, although Mustafa marries someone else in the new place he and his family arrive at, he never forgets Bişeng, his first love. This similarly conflicting relationship with 'home-land' and 'beloved' can also be seen in *Bêhna Axê*, in which Dilgeş considers that love, like his homeland, is banned. Dilgeş and Sozda are separated by the Turkish state; this is likened to the figure of Bekoyê Awan[88] in the Kurdish epic *Mem û Zîn* (Mem and Zin).

The desperate conditions of 'home-land' are identified with the desperate love for the former beloved. For example, in *Bêhna Axê*, Dilgeş describes his love for Roza, his former beloved: 'In my loneliness you have always been my hope and desire. In freer times, I have sheltered under the threshing floor of your eyes with the shadow of sorrow and the pain of being orphaned' (161).[89]

In *Hêviyên Birîndar*, the protagonist, Hejar, explores his Kurdish identity and simultaneously falls in love. Later, having been released from prison, he suffers from the double loss of 'home-land' and his beloved. Not only has his village been evacuated and burnt down, but his beloved has also married someone else. Again, the narrator in *Rêwiyên bê Welat* associates the feelings of alienation and bitterness of Kanî, the central character, with his sense of 'home-land', as personified in his first love. Named Zozan, she, the beloved, is expressed through remembrance of scents and images of Colemêrg (Hakkari), his hometown. Leaving his lands refers to leaving her love too. Both Kurdistan and his beloved sadden him to an extent that he can find no other solution but escape.

Through the imagining of 'home-land' as the first beloved woman, there is also nostalgic reference to the remembered past. The scripting of 'home-land' as an unattainable beloved woman reinforces the discourse of separation from, or longing for, the 'home-land'. The novel *Hêvî Her Dem Heye* describes how the injured guerrilla, while waiting for other guerrillas to save his life, journeys back through memories of the past to his first love which is entangled with his political actions aimed at freeing his 'homeland'. In a sense

'home-land', in terms of its metaphorical meanings, has been lost, just as he has lost his first beloved because he has preferred to focus on the national struggle rather than following her. Thus, national issues and love are considered to be two different paths. Since love of Kurdistan is always conceived of as more crucial than love for the beloved woman, the character is expected to indicate his preference, and always chooses his country rather than his love.

There are also two different sorts of love in *Gava Heyatê*, one for a beloved woman and the other for 'home-land'. The protagonist decides to join the guerrillas to fight in the mountains instead of marrying his beloved. Similarly, in *Neynika Dilî*, the protagonist's brother, Ehmed, marries the woman he loves, but after a few months of marriage prefers to fight for the independence of Kurdistan (42) and goes off to the mountains. In the novel *Xezal*, Hesen has postponed marriage with his beloved for many years. Finally, he decides to struggle for independence and goes to the mountains, determined not to return until Kurdistan has been freed (208).

In *Kejê*, the heart of the protagonist, Koçero, is occupied by these two different loves. His love for his cousin, Kejê, is idealised and praised throughout the novel. As his relative and a Kurd she symbolises his lands and his identity, but he regards his love as eternal but impossible and leaves his lands for a foreign city. However, he never forgets her, and from time to time, with hope, he remembers her the way he remembers and longs for his homeland, involving all sorts of love:

> The smell of spring flowers and roses stimulates love. Many things have been said about the spring of homeland. For some people, it is the time for love and compassion. But none of these can replace the love of homeland [. . .] springs of the patriots connects love once more (32).[90]

No one can take the place of the former beloved but still the love of 'home-land' prevails: 'on the one hand, is love, and on the other hand again love [. . .] beloved Kejê [. . .] cousin Kejê [. . .] the greatest of all, is the love for homeland' (155).[91] And in *Bi Xatirê Te Enqere*, the

protagonist, despite his great love for Evîn, joins the guerrilla groups, musing to himself that 'there was only one love which was the love of homeland' (89).[92] The love of 'home-land' is always the priority.

Kurdistan is usually equated with a beloved woman who is viewed as impossible and distanced but beautiful. The novelistic discourse powerfully employs the story that the protagonist is somehow forced to stay away from both the country and the beloved. The protagonists are faced with two strong strands of love, but love of 'home-land' is always prioritised over love for the woman. Even so, they remember Kurdistan and the beloved woman, both of which are unattainable, in the same nostalgic manner, full of a sense of longing and yearning.

'Home-land': A Land of Longing and Yearning

'Home-land' in Kurdish novelistic discourse refers to a 'place' of displacement and migration rather than invoking the sense of a secure and safe 'place'. This leads to a constant sense of longing and yearning, which can be discussed in relation to Relph's notion of 'existential outsideness'. According to Relph (1976: 49),

> to be inside a place is to belong to it and identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is the identity with the place. [However] at the opposite extreme, existential outsideness involves the alienation from place, which is the antithesis of an unreflective sense of belonging that comes from being an existential insider.

In relation to Relph's conceptualisation of 'existential outsideness', even though the novelists live in Turkey or Turkish Kurdistan, their characters experience a sense of exile when abroad that evokes loss of 'home' and loneliness. Migration, journeying, homelessness, and the idea of return form the main backdrop of the novels, as if a sense of 'outsideness' is born out of the reality of evacuation, destruction, and persecution. Thus, it is possible to feel 'homeless' even at 'home'.

Most of the literary characters distanced from their 'home-land' dream about it during any phase of their life. Imagination becomes the primary location of 'home-land', involving both the

re-remembering and the re-covering of the past. For example, in *Bi Xatirê Te Enqere*, the unnamed protagonist who comes to Ankara to study at the university is desperately longing for his hometown. Even the mountains in Ankara remind him of the mountains in his country (176). In addition, he feels the heavy sense of homelessness even before he has left his home. In *Rêwiyên bê Welat*, Kanî has already begun to mourn for his lands before going away: 'without a leader and without a homeland, without soil [. . .] our deaths are being buried without praying. This is why our graves get mixed up and lost and we are drowning in this city' (26).[93] When he goes further afield, his feelings become more intimate and dense. The narrator describes his homelessness: 'like swallows, he also does not have a home' (29).[94] After a while, he is enveloped by the fear of not returning one day: 'in fact, he was afraid of his heart being changed. He was afraid of forgetting, not returning' (57),[95] and with his strong sense of yearning, even the sea in Istanbul reminds him of the mountains and uplands of Kurdistan.

In *Mandalîn*, two friends escaping from their hometown long for their 'home-land'. Even the stars in a foreign city, Izmir, make them sentimental and remember their lands. In *Cembelî Kurê Mîrê Hekaryan*, when Cembelî leaves his lands, he says longingly that the smell of homeland comes to his nose (188).[96] In the novels of Qasîmlo, the migrant characters (Zerî and Artîn in *Giyanên Bahozî*, and Mîrza and Narîn in *Wêneyên Keserê*) who reside in Germany long for their homeland and live with the hope of returning. Similarly, in *Pêşbaziya Çîrokên Neqediyayî*, Sertac flees to Europe, but yearning for his lands, he dreams constantly about returning. Not necessarily Europe – even being in the vicinity of Turkish cities such as Istanbul can evoke similar sentiments for the 'home-land' left behind. In the novels, Istanbul in *Bavfileh*, *Neynika Dilî*, *Reş û Spî*, and partly in *Rêwiyên bê Welat*, Ankara in *Bi Xatirê Te Enqere*, Adana in *Kejê*, Mersin in *Toqa Lanatê*, Izmir in *Mandalîn*, and unnamed Turkish cities in *Gava Heyatê* and *Bêhna Axê* make their appearance as cities that provoke longing in the leading characters for their lands of origin. During their stay in these cities, they live with the hope of return and are attached in their imagination to their original place rather than to their new environment.

Kurdish novelistic discourse emphasises the way migration has become an inseparable part of the lives of the Kurds. Displacement and mass migration are often addressed in the narrations. In *Reş û Spî*, the storyline is often interrupted by the main character's flashbacks and memories as he recalls his days in his hometown while leading a migrant life in Istanbul. In the novel there is also a great range of references to migration; one of the subsections in the text is even labelled 'Sometimes a person also abandons his homeland' (7),[97] while the epigraph of the same section is 'Yes, I saw them. They were going' (ibid.).[98] Later in the novel, the narrator explains that 'when their villages were completely destroyed, their lands and properties were ruined; it was unbearable for them, and they, like many others, left their lands, which had not been ploughed for years due to the cruelty, they loaded their belongings, migrated, and placed their stuff in another house' (64).[99] This shows that each character has certainly experienced migration or displacement during their lifetime, as if this is an inevitable result of being a Kurd.

As the title of Zozanî's novel *Mişextî* (Exile) suggests, it is also based on the migration of Kurds, in two ways: one as *mitirb*, or nomads, the other as exiles who were initially forced to leave their lands during the Ottoman period,[100] and again forced to leave their current lands because of conflict between the Turkish state and Kurdish guerrillas. The Emirate represents the old conditions of Kurds who were made to leave their lands collectively, while Kato represents the new generation of Kurds who can find no other way except by being guerrillas in the mountains. In both cases their identity as political migrants is regarded as the natural result of the policies of a sovereign state, and both are experiencing a condition of 'non-home'. In this account Kurds occupy a complex position, with the novel demonstrating the inevitability of displacement in the lives of all Kurds, regardless of different eras and authorities.

The predicament of alienation from land, territory, and place defines the tragic lives even of minor characters. For example, in *Mandalîn*, while focusing on the escape story of two Kurdish boys, the position of Kurdish migrant families in Izmir whose villages have

been evacuated by the Turkish state is also addressed. One of them even claims to have lost his honour and standing due to the migration:

> I had a village, I had a house, I had a hundred sheep, I had cattle, I was a master in my village, I was a ruler, I was a landlord, I had a reputation and honour. But the flood raged on us, we were ignorant, we were not able to protect ourselves, under duress we left our parents' possessions behind, became migrants and came to this deceitful country, lost our possessions and properties as well as our sons and daughters. Now I have nothing left. Neither dignity nor honour (105).[101]

The sense of displacement and alienation is depicted as the prevailing condition for Kurds generally, rather than for individuals. In recounting details of the migration of Narîn and her family to Germany, the narrator in *Wêneyên Keserê* comments that, 'like millions of Kurds, they too turned their faces towards luck for a better life and turned their backs on cruel fate' (13).[102] In *Toqa Lanatê* the protagonist also comments on the mass migrations of Kurds from their lands: 'today there are still millions of Kurds away from their homeland' (134).[103] In this regard, the characters in the novels have similar experiences of feeling rootless and displaced, which lead to a nostalgic view of 'home-land' in the past and accompany the search for identity and 'home-land' in different forms in the present.

The sense of hopelessness about reconnecting to territorial and cultural origins is apparent in the narratives. For example, in *Reş û Spî*, the narrator tells how Robîn's father, migrating to Istanbul, loses any hope of returning 'to the [traditional] songs that he listened to, his ruined country, the lands he cannot go back to with his family where he could sing them' (67).[104] The constant despair of the characters is largely due to the prevailing conditions of Kurdistan, which is under attack and occupation. Cemşîd in *Wêneyên Keserê* expresses his feelings towards the loss of 'home-land' due to migration: 'I am a foreigner and a migrant. I was happy in my country [. . .] I am a stranger in this foreign country, I don't have either an identity or a home that I can live inside as a free person with

my own colour' (187).[105] This because 'he lost his ancestor's homeland and residence' (ibid.).[106] Similarly, in *Bêhna Axê*, Sozda tells Dilgeş on one occasion that:

> I am looking at the homeland [. . .] I see its mountains and hills that have surrendered their spirits. I am looking at its villages I see the dust and ember that burned my heart. I am looking at its prisons where they broke my honour. I am looking at its cities; I see the love that I watered with my heart [. . .] I am looking at you Dilgeş; this time I see my disappointments in you. I see my injured hopes. And I see my lost love (199).[107]

Sozda feels desperate and dispossessed because of the conditions of Kurdistan:

> So, us; me and you, he, she [. . .] All of us, the pain of the lives of the forgotten ones. Faded wishes. Pain, our unresolved story in the system on the account [. . .] The song telling with the wind of moaning and grief [. . .] Our injured Kurdistan; our situation and reality bloomed in the heart of unwilling history (92).[108]

The condition of 'home-land' influences the individual's condition directly or *vice versa*. Thus, loss of 'home-land' through migrations or political conflicts mostly brings despairing pain for the characters. In the novel *Neynika Dilî*, for example, when their village is burnt down Mustafa's mother mourns and laments: 'Oh my heart! Homeland is good, why can you not stay away from it?' (82).[109] This is a very desperate expression which contains an intense longing and yearning even though she is within the borders of the homeland. Before leaving her lands, she begins to experience a desperate nostalgia. Mustafa and his family are forced to leave their village and move to Istanbul, yet even the winter conditions of their 'home-land' have become appealing to them. Again, in *Bêhna Axê*, the main character's thoughts about separation from 'home-land' clearly reveal the agony of longing and yearning:

> At that time, feelings fly away and my reality migrates from its land [. . .] I go out barefoot and walk in the streets. My love becomes an isolated place and trudges through the desert of my heart. She goes and I remain behind with sorrow, agony, and the pain of longing. I wail and scream with this anguish (72).[110]

Accordingly, for the characters in the novels, as 'existential outsiders', there is certainly a strong sense of actually living outside or without a place because 'for existential outsiders the identity of places represents a lost and now unattainable involvement' (Relph 1976: 62). In this sense, in *Reş û Spî*, when Robîn goes back to Diyarbakir from Istanbul, the narrator wonders, 'how many of those who came with him stayed so long away from this town? How many of them missed this city as much as he (Robîn) did?' (209).[111] In some novels, the sense of eternal longing, the sense of 'existential outsideness', refers to the difficulty or sometimes the impossibility of ending the desperate longing and yearning for the 'home-land'. For example, in *Bi Xatirê Te Enqere*, the main character describes his 'home-land': 'there is a country before us that no one has ever set foot upon. Nobody has yet passed through its borders. It is far beyond all the dreams. Full of beautiful, desperate, mysterious, frightening and spiritual things' (165).[112] 'Home-land' is described as very distant and dreamlike. Its complicated nature – it is mysterious and spiritual, as well as frightening – makes it more difficult to grasp.

When away from 'home' and in the mode of 'non-home', the sentiment surrounding this sense of migration and displacement always evokes the desire to return. Throughout the novels, 'return' (*veger*) is a central concept in relation to detachment, migration, and loss of lands. The intensity of the longing for return appears in most of the novels, particularly in *Wêneyên Keserê*, *Bêhna Axê*, *Qerebafon*, *Gava Heyatê*, *Hêviyên Birîndar*, *Neynika Dilî*, *Rêwiyên bê Welat*, *Giyanên Bahozî*, *Reş û Spî*, *Pêşbaziya Çîrokên Neqediyayî, Bi Xatirê Te Enqere*, and *Pilingên Serhedê*. But what exactly is the nature and identity of the homeland to which the characters are returning? Definitely there is longing for return but it must be to an uncorrupted Kurdistan. The emphasis on actual return is related to an aspiration and a myth of return to a free country.

In *Gava Heyatê*, the protagonist has been dreaming of returning to his 'home-land' and imagines it as free, safe, and peaceful, in contrast to exile, which to him means estrangement, isolation, and loneliness. Similarly, in *Bêhna Axê*, both former guerrillas wish to return to their 'home-land', which they dream of as green, peaceful, and free. In fact, actual physical return in the novels can also be replete with disappointment and frustration when it is becomes clear that the dreams about 'home-land' do not reflect present reality. Characters can also feel like strangers when they return, and are isolated and disappointed. As Chambers (1994: 74) comments, it is impossible to go home again because neither the migrant nor the home is the same. The dream of return represents a search for identity as much as for a place. However, in Kurdish novelistic discourse it results in total estrangement and distortion because 'home-land' has been polluted by destruction and corruption, mainly during the absence of the protagonists. Therefore, 'homecoming' describes the challenge of confronting the changed 'home-land', not the one that was left behind.

In *Bêhna Axê*, when Sozda leaves prison and returns to her hometown, what she sees reflected everywhere is her own alienation and estrangement. She feels distanced from her land of birth and thinks that nothing is the way it was before she left to go to the mountains and then to prison. People are not the same (12) and such changes affect her deeply (35). Her narrations show different visions of the homeland and her changing relations with 'home-land'. These include the changing conceptions and symbolisation over time of a 'home-land', of life under the rule of the Turkish state, dispersal, forced migration, and the struggle to adapt to these changes. Disappointment and estrangement become inevitable, even in the case of a return. Thus, 'home-land' in the narratives can be depicted as a place to escape to, and a place to escape from.

Qerebafon too, effectively captures the narrator's alienation and resignation as he struggles to endure despite being severely wounded in conflicts. The novel opens with Ronahî's return to his homeland after 15 years' absence. While looking at its streets, and remembering his childhood, he thinks that the city is now dirty and in ruins: 'my homeland was drowning in dirt and disorder by the

hands of my own fellow citizens' (21).[113] He expresses his disappointment forthrightly: 'I did not return to the land of the ancestors in order to subject it to pessimistic criticism. I returned to feel the deep happiness, and the contradictions and reasonings of the society. Otherwise my criticism would not have reached its target anyway' (22).[114] But there is no longer peace anywhere. Police officers are constantly checking identity cards and asking questions. Similarly, in *Pêşbaziya Çîrokên Neqediyayî*, when Sertac returns to his hometown Diyarbakir, he observes that banning has become the main symbol of his city, which shocks and disappoints him (147).

Therefore, returning to 'home-land' does not eliminate a sense of longing and yearning. Surprisingly, even if the characters return to their country, the sense of longing and yearning becomes more concrete. 'Home-land' can be depicted as the desired place that is fought for and established as the exclusive aim of the characters; but its purity and beauty do not remain while they are absent. In *Neynika Dilî*, Mustafa describes Colemêrg admiringly when he is away from it. However, when he comes back to his village, he finds it changed and ruined. He cries and mourns for his land that has been invaded and destroyed (167). Apart from the physical changes in his village, he also feels like a total stranger: 'Although I was going back to the homeland, each time more sorrows would be added to my existing sadnesss. However, the homeland was such a place that its pain was much better than any happiness in exile' (200).[115]

The protagonist Robîn in *Reş û Spî* experiences the same regret for leaving the lands behind, although he was forced to do so. When he returns to his hometown, he realises that it is not the place he has left behind. As an elderly minor character tells him, 'nothing has remained of the country's beauty' (198).[116] Robîn feels isolated and lonely in his land because of these changes during the years of his absence:

> When their village was completely destroyed, their lands and properties were ruined; and life became unbearable for them, they, like many others, left their lands, which had not even been

ploughed for years because of the cruelty, and took shelter with others (64).[117]

This extract shows that the actual existence of 'home-land' is not the antithesis of exile or migration. Furthermore, return to 'home-land' may also result in an impulse to escape and create the sense of homelessness. When Rey Chow (1993: 197) asserts that 'homelessness' is becoming 'the only home state' she implies the condition of being exiled or in diaspora in a general sense; however, her assertion unequivocally describes the characters' sense of 'home-land' as expressed in the novels. In this sense, Kurdish identity and belonging are constituted in a deterritorialised, stateless ground, which influences the characters' way of defining and describing themselves.

Through the connection between individuals and their social and cultural contexts (Canter 1977, Gifford 2002), characters and places intermingle with one another in such a way that the characters take on the conditions of the places. In the case of Kurdish novelistic discourse, the state of Kurdistan constitutes the identity of the characters. In this respect, in *Li Qerexa Şevê Hîvron*, the main character Roberşîn defines himself as a 'migrant and refugee' (*koçberî û penaberî*) (40), and in *Pilingên Serhedê*, Zeynel defines himself as a 'traveller' (*rêwî*) (226). Similarly, the narrator in *Mişextî*, describes the condition of migration as being identified with lost life: 'The life of exile in the foreign country [. . .] was a lost life' (27).[118]

Lack of official recognition is the main reason for feeling homeless. In the descriptions of the '*mitirb*' in *Mişextî*, there is a generalisation relating to the official status of Kurds who do not have their own national identity cards or documents. Being without an identity card is described as significant (76). Because of the legal position of Kurds and the war in Kurdistan, both before and after a period of imprisonment, the characters always feel as if they are foreigners and homeless, to such an extent that they even become suspicious about their own existence. In *Ez Stêrka Sîpan im*, Apê Hecî, referring to Kurds in general, says, 'We are the people of exile, without place and without lands' (97).[119] The characters' emotional relationships to Kurdistan also involve contextualised and politicised relationships.

Throughout the novels, and due to the social, historical, and political milieu of Kurdistan, the characters never cease to feel that they are migrants, refugees, travellers, and homeless; this is related to a larger context rather than to individual issues.

In light of the above, the novel *Rêwiyên bê Welat*, whose title also includes the term 'traveller' in a plural form, reveals throughout the narration the agony of leaving the lands of birth. The novel, which is based entirely on experiences of migration, strongly associates the lives of the characters with persistent dispersal, persecution, and related controversies. The hotel where the protagonist, Kanî, waits to hear from the smugglers, is full of migrant Kurds whose voices can also be heard, such as Şîyar, who recounts his painful experience of leaving his lands of origin. Kurds at the hotel have the frame of mind of refugees, and are suffering from despair due to the lack of 'homeland'. Kanî's departure from his hometown, his fear of the Turkish police and the border checkpoints, desperation, and suspense are the dominant motifs of the novel. Additionally, the general description of the railway station provides a metaphor that emphasises the sense of detachment and 'placelessness'.

Similarly, *Wêneyên Keserê* implies that all Kurdish migrants in Germany share the same fate because they have had similar experiences and they are from the same geography, which is mainly described as 'forgotten land', 'non-existent', and 'solitary' (135).[120] One of the refugees says that all of them left their destroyed and ruined homes (274–5), while another defines himself as a 'traveller' (*rêwî*). Again, Mîrza, the protagonist, considers himself as 'without country' (*bêwelat*) (382); he is constantly lonely and longs for life in his country, where everyone lived in groups (158).

Similar descriptions and feelings are clearly seen in *Bêhna Axê*. Sozda and Dilgeş, the former guerrillas, define themselves as 'travellers' in more pessimistic tones. Sozda sees herself as a 'defeated revolutionary' and a 'failed fighter' (117),[121] while Dilgeş speaks gloomily and miserably about his feelings to Sozda: 'Prison! Weakness! [. . .] Broken! [. . .] and injured [. . .] our destiny. You know. My pencil got exhausted. My papers turned into the cube of moan and grief. My heart is desiccated. I am broken. My hopes are injured by the hands of

time. Desires have abandoned me' (24).[122] The sense of alienation even in their own community is very dominant. They feel like outsiders and are isolated, even from their own community (34).

In *Mandalîn*, for example, '*welat*' (home-land) is defined as 'forlorn' (*bêkes*) and 'forgotten' (*jibîrkirî*) (36–7) like its characters. Similarly, in both *Hêviyên Birîndar* and *Gava Heyatê* the protagonists are orphans, which also indicates through the grandfather image in the novel that the characters have ancestors but not parents. The boundaries and meanings inscribed on Kurdistan constitute an image of a settled Kurdistan in the past, which, compared with the present, was better understood and preserved. This implicitly explains the way the young generation is described. In *Bi Xatirê Te Enqere*, Kurdish children are defined by 'injustice, deprivation, and no identity' (96).[123] It is the younger generation that is associated with homelessness and landlessness, not the older generation. As noted in the section on the portrayal of Kurdistan in the past, the memories related to the historical past of the Kurds suggest a more glorious Kurdish history than Kurdistan has had in the recent period. The ancestors are depicted as more bound to the land than the younger generations. In Aram Gernas's *Toqa Lanatê*, Gulizar describes herself as a passenger who has lost her way in a desert (83).[124] She says:

> I was asking myself who I was. In my search for the answer the question exhausted me. Where would I be able to recollect my pieces and fragments? Where would I pitch my tent and settle down? I was in the darkness and blindness of exile. I had become unaware, and a wanderer. Though I was looking for it there was no place or shelter for me (140).[125]

In the case of displacement and movement, 'home-land' in this account loses its boundaries and no longer represents a fixed, rooted, and stable space. Conversely, it is during the process of displacement, disruption, and migration that identity is shaped, or reshaped; but that process requires a sense of a place left behind. Likewise, the characters mostly detect the significance of their 'home-land' either in losing it or during migration. The characters who abandon their

place of origin either dream about it constantly or impatiently wish to go back. However, disappointment and resentment do not vanish in either circumstance, as 'home-land' itself can evoke the sense of 'homelessness' not necessarily in the case of migration or exile only. The chronic and deplorable sense of being homeless, orphaned, and landless as the essential attributes of the characters indicates not only the loss of 'identity', but also loss as a 'home'.

CHAPTER 6

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE NOVELS: FROM TURKISH KURDISTAN TO ITS DIASPORA

Kurdish novelistic discourse is formed from within the particular purposes of the novelists. Despite similarities between novels in diaspora and Turkish Kurdistan with regard to the emphasis on socio-political conditions in a factual setting vis-à-vis the typified characters, there is also a great range of differences. In this chapter, by identifying varied political motivations within the novels, I analyse assorted Kurdistan images that provide crucial sites for examining opposing ideologies and argue that the nationalisation of Kurdistan's landscapes and nature is usually associated with romanticised and idealised notions in Turkish Kurdistan and in some diaspora novels where Kurdish landscapes might become the centre of focus in relation to the novels' national purposes. However, most of the novels in diaspora are not overly involved in the celebration and idealisation of Kurdistan; instead, because of their intensely critical and realist perspectives, Kurdish national landscapes and places appear simply as backgrounds.

The chapter also contends that, although most of the novels examined here suggest confused and damaged identities, the sense of loss, despair, alienation, and homelessness in both individual and national contexts is more dominant in the novels in Turkish Kurdistan than in its diaspora. Although they live in their home

territories, the literary characters in the novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan still experience a sense of migration and detachment from home that is infused with alienation and loneliness, as if they are physically absent from their homeland. This conveys the idea that loss and dispersal are not necessarily related to detachment from a particular territory. Sometimes being in the territory of 'home' or 'not-at-home' does not change the mood of the literary character in the novels; in contrast, the narrations from Turkish Kurdistan show that the consequences of being a stateless nation within the national territory are embedded with stronger feelings of loss and homelessness compared with the diaspora.

The Intended Construction of Novelistic Discourse: Factual or Symbolic?

Kurdish novelistic discourse creates very subjective ideological texts. To be more precise, there are only four (out of 64) diasporic novels that do not refer to socio-political conditions in Kurdistan; these are Hesenê Metê's *Gotinên Gunehkar* and *Labîranta Cînan*,[1] Silêman Demîr's *Kassandra* and Diyar Bohtî's *Soryaz*. None of these four novels addresses any factual settings or events. With their mystic language, the novelists' narrations are entirely lacking in real places and time. All other diasporic novels are based on Kurdish historical writing, autobiographies, biographies, and Kurdish folkloric elements, shaped in relation to the particular ideology and purpose of the novelist. Settings in the other 59 novels are also realistic and on the whole are explicitly referred to by their real names and geographical features.

Similarly, among the 36 novels from Kurdistan itself, three attempt to go beyond actual settings: *Jar lê Sermest* (Miserable but Drunk, 2004) written in post-modernist form, *Ardûda* written as science-fiction, and *Saturn*, based on the epic 'Memê Alan'. Apart from *Jar lê Sermest*, their social environments appear to be fantastic, and in general, the geographical locations in these novels do not affect the characters and plot to any extent. The rest of the novels from Turkish Kurdistan offer a clear insight into the settings, albeit through more literary language and symbolisation.

The characters in the novels are generally typified, dominated by one specific trait that usually relates to the socio-political conditions of Kurds and Kurdistan. They suffer from oppression by either the Turkish government or the Ottoman Empire, or they fight in the national struggle. As a method of presentation of the characters, the technique of 'telling' is used, rather than 'showing', so the character is explicitly described by the narrator instead of being depicted through actions. More precisely, the novels, particularly those written in diaspora, usually offer flat characterisation in which the same personal features and actions are shared from the beginning of the novel to the end. Although flat characters, being relatively fixed and static, are not as imaginatively creative as rounded characters, Forster (2005 [1927]) points out the advantages of flat characterisation, which are that flat characters are easily controlled by the writer, and readers remember them afterwards. Flat characterisation is more suitable for the intense 'authorial intent' and 'implied author' aspects of the novels mentioned in earlier chapters, since this type of characterisation allows the author to guide the characters as he or she wishes. This places the narrator in the foreground, which is an indication that he or she is a prominent mediator between the reader and the action. This also explains the novelists' extreme use of the 'omniscient third-person narrator', whose insights into the thoughts and feelings of the characters ensures that the reader manages to penetrate the minds of the characters.

However, in contrast to diasporic novels, some novels from Turkish Kurdistan attempt to challenge the traditional narrative mode and conventional realist fiction. Non-linear, fragmented narratives and plot fragmentation in the novels of Özmen and Eroğlu, which are also close to the post-modern form, reflect the shattered lives of the characters. Lacking plots in the traditional sense, the main characters in Şener Özmen's *Rojnivîska Spinoza* and *Pêşbazîya Çîrokên Neqedîyayî*, respectively Yasin and Sertac, and the unnamed protagonist in Eroğlu's epistolary novel *Nameyek Ji Xwedê Re*, are all individualised and rounded characters with a high use of stream-of-consciousness and interior monologue techniques. Eroğlu's *Otobês* has no main character but the thoughts of each passenger in a bus are

framed during a brief period of time. Through multiple narrations, this novel challenges the conventional time and setting of novelistic discourse. Again, the protagonist Sermest in *Jar lê Sermest* is a rounded character, and *Leyla Fîgaro* with its modernist stream-of-consciousness techniques[2] and interior monologues can be regarded as producing more multi-layered critical reading. Mîran Janbar's *Ardûda*[3] as the only science fiction novel, and Kemal Orgun's *Li Qerexa Şevê Hîvron* with its mythical narration, both construct completely imaginary settings and periods that challenge the conventional concepts of location and time. The use of temporal disruptions as a feature of post-modern fiction can also be seen in the novels mentioned above.

The use of real settings is one of the common features of novelistic discourse in both Turkish Kurdistan and its diaspora. Again, however, novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan has an intense symbolic language through which most characters and events are fictionalised. However, compared with novels from Turkish Kurdistan, the diasporic novelistic discourse consists of pieces of literary writing based solely on the novelists' views and ideologies, and their lived experiences. Diasporic novels also tend to deal more with Kurds' and Kurdistan's past than do the novels from Turkish Kurdistan. The large number of epic, historical, and biographical novels from the diaspora also signifies the authors' preference for historical, cultural, and political elements rather than imaginary ones. Thus *Serhildana Mala Eliyê Ûnis*, *Xidê Naxirwan û Tevkuştine Dêrsim*, *Dîlên li ber Pûkê*, *Marê Di Tûr De*, *Hawara Dîcleyê I*, *Hawara Dîcleyê II*, *Evîna Mêrxasekî*, and *Oy Dayê* are historical novels based on crucial historical incidents and narrated from a particular viewpoint.

Broadly speaking, these Kurdish historical novels set in the distant past are an attempt to depict potent historical characters and influential events. As discussed in Chapter Four, the diasporic novelists regard the novelistic discourse as a continuum for recording Kurdish history and culture. As the novelist Ferho (2010: 50) comments, 'when the alphabets of nations are denied, the lives of nations are also locked [. . .] In such conditions the liability and responsibility of the Kurdish novel and short story is very

important.'[4] In this case, even adapting Kurdish epics into novel form is seen as a way of transforming Kurdish oral literature into a written one. By contributing a new account of Kurdish history, diasporic novels also attempt to challenge the historiography of the Turkish state. They tend towards 'classical' (realist) form and content in their portrayal of history, much in the style of the realist mode of writing that dominates Kurdish fiction in general, by offering the historiography of Kurdish rebellions, massacres, and the division of Kurdistan. Most of the diasporic novels, as noted above, use the historical backdrop of the early and mid-twentieth century as a setting to elucidate the quest for Kurdish national identity and the tragic experiences and struggles of the Kurds.

Apart from the historical novels in diaspora mentioned above, *Siya Evînê* and *Bîra Qederê* are biographical novels based on significant figures in Kurdish history, *Peyman* and *Kassandra* are mythological novels that involve symbolic narrations related to Kurdish history, while *Ristemê Zal* is based on the Kurdish epic of the same name. It is also possible to see the combination of history and epic tales in diasporic novelistic discourse. For example, in *Rojek ji Rojên Evdalê Zeynikê*, the literary struggle of Kamuran and the Celadet Bedirkhan brothers during the 1930s is combined with the story of the *dengbêj* Evdalê Zeynikê,[5] in which the epic tale of Siyabend and Xece[6] is also narrated in the novel. Apart from these, there are didactic references in almost all diaspora novels to the Kurds' historical past.

The decade of the 1980s, which is a vital period for diasporic novelists, has also become the main focus in these modern period novels. Most of the novels that take place in the modern period deal exclusively and in detail with the military coup and its harsh influence on people. In this way, the novelists in diaspora become the voice of the Kurds' history and socio-political reality, shaping their novelistic discourse by articulating more realistically the 1980 military coup and the conditions of Diyarbakir prison. Some diasporic novelists explicitly affirm the influence of Diyarbakir prison on their fiction. Uzun (2008: 340), referring to his autobiographical novel *Tu*, mentions how conditions in Diyarbakir influenced his writing since prison was a place where 'there was no freedom, law and

human rights' (ibid.: 330),[7] while Medenî Ferho (2010: 56) states that his prison experiences continue to fill his dreams, which he cannot get rid of despite his new life in exile.

As described earlier, language is one of the main components of Kurdish national identity. Accordingly, Kurdish language has been treated in the diasporic novels as an essential component of identity that needs to be developed, as well as a medium through which to transmit the oral literature, values, and culture of the Kurds. Diasporic novelists try to protect the language by expressing these explicit concerns in their novels; as Kreyenbroek (1992: 3) comments, 'when the identity of a people is in question [. . .] language can become a focus for nationalist sentiments'. Thus, even writing in Kurdish can, in many cases, be regarded as a political act aimed at maintaining Kurdish identity in Kurdish diasporic writing. Accordingly, as noted above, through various organisations and publications the diaspora (exclusively Sweden) has, since the 1980s, become the cornerstone of developments in the Kurdish language field. Publication of increasing numbers of Kurdish novels also indicates that the meanings and roles attributed to the novelistic discourse affirm its functions and achievements. Indeed, the diasporic novelists' concern for Kurdish is also explicitly reflected in their texts. Compared with the novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan, diasporic novelistic discourse has a greater tendency to offer sites for transmitting messages or to express the novelists' concerns, especially about maintaining the Kurdish language.

While the significance of Kurdish is expressed symbolically or implicitly in the novels of Turkish Kurdistan, in diasporic novelistic discourse either the narrators or the characters explicitly promote the use of Kurdish. Within the diasporic novels, *Rojnamevan*, *Pêlên Bêrîkirinê*, *Serhildana Mala Eliyê Ûnis*, *Bigrî Heval*, and *Siya Dema Bori* mention openly that the reason for writing novels is to preserve the language. Again, as well as political concerns, diasporic writer Laleş Qaso defends mother tongue usage, observing that the translation of Kurdish into Turkish prevents Kurds from reading Kurdish novels in their original language. In both his novels Firat Cewerî is also highly critical of the use of Turkish instead of Kurdish in Diyarbakir.

The novelists pursue the same notion in their daily lives, and so, for example, Ferho (2010: 55) in the Kurdish journal *W* explicitly criticises Kurdish authors for writing in Turkish, which he defines as the language of invaders (*zimanê dagirkeran*).

However, in contrast to the diasporic novelistic discourse, there are a few novels from Turkish Kurdistan in which the significance of Kurdish is narrated indirectly or implicitly. There is no direct interference by the authors concerning the use or the development of Kurdish. For example, in *Hêvî Her Dem Heye*, the unnamed guerrilla feels upset when he dreams in Turkish rather than Kurdish. In *Nameyek ji Xwedê Re*, the protagonist, a university student, describes himself as 'a broken-hearted linguist' (93)[8] since he knows very little about his mother tongue. In Tilermenî's novels *Kitim* and *Qerebafon*, some characters attempt to produce their literary works in Kurdish. In *Reş û Spî*, Robin teaches Kurdish to his brother, and in *Keje*, Koçero helps Songul to improve her Kurdish. While diasporic novelists explicitly incorporate their own views and perspectives in the texts, novelists in Turkish Kurdistan intersperse their thoughts implicitly through the use of literary imagination. The novelists in Turkish Kurdistan are more concerned with the subject matter or form of the novel; in other words, writing in Kurdish does not seem to be the main motivation behind their creative writings, whereas in the majority of diasporic novels, there is direct intervention in the text by the voice of the novelist, who considers literature to be a vehicle to improve or protect the language.

In addition to their linguistic concerns, the novelists in the diaspora are direct and explicit in explaining why they write their novels – usually their intention is to portray the national struggle and the harsh political and socio-cultural conditions imposed by the sovereign state and hegemonic powers. Their intervention in the text should be taken into consideration, since it creates certain 'intended' meanings through the 'implied author'. It is very common to hear the author's voice within the diasporic texts, at the centre of which he or she asserts his or her own reality and perspective. As Howe (1992: 21) comments, novels of this kind 'make ideas or ideologies come to life [. . .] endow them with the capacity for stirring characters into

passionate gestures and sacrifices'. They are concerned with the impact of ideological movements on characters and events. Through them, the novelists tend to be didactic and demonstrate the changing conditions with regard to their own political orientations and personal experiences. As discussed in a section of Chapter Four entitled *Between 'Implied Author' and 'Overt Narrator': Purposeful Narratives*, diasporic novelists often use a foreword to outline a framework of their ideologies or provide a background as to why they have written that particular novel. In novels from Turkish Kurdistan it is unusual to encounter forewords in which the novelists explain the reasons for writing their novels. However, compared with the diaspora, the novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan reveals its ideology more imaginatively and symbolically. For example, both *Hêvî Her Dem Heye* (Turkish Kurdistan) and *Veger* (Diaspora) promote the ideology of the PKK, but through different approaches. While the first never explicitly names the party but reveals it through certain references infused with creative and imaginary elements, the second, written more as a documentary than fiction, addresses the party directly, naming, for example, the commander, war tactics, and locations.

Against the comparative arguments emphasised above, there may also be a few reasons for the explicit language and approach of the diasporic novelists. The majority of the novelists embraced the freedom to write in their mother tongue in their host countries after having been banned from writing in their own language all their lives in the homeland. Also, being away from the homeland and facing a new culture, language and policies increased the value to them of their ethnic identity, which in turn encouraged them to write about their individual experiences and collective memories as a way of countering loss and forgetting in exile. They used the opportunity of being in free countries in Europe to write, using their mother tongue, about national/cultural issues, which Kurdish writers were unable to do in Turkey/Turkish Kurdistan. Exile is seen as an opportunity to write in the mother tongue about personal/collective experiences in the homeland and Turkey. Uzun, for example, is clear that life in exile enabled him to develop Kurdish literature and

language, and even the modern novel (2008: 21, 145). Thus, writing became not only the tool for resistance against ongoing assimilation and oppression in their now-abandoned country but also the arena in which to debate different views and ideologies, as is examined in the following sections.

It is also worth mentioning the generational difference between the novelists as another reason for the very different novelistic discourses in Turkish Kurdistan and diaspora. The novelists in Turkish Kurdistan are mostly young (most were born in the 1970s and 1980s) whereas those in diaspora are older (being born mainly during the 1950s).[9] After the ban on Kurdish publications was lifted in 2002, writing fiction in Kurdish became very common among the young generation of Kurds in Turkey and Turkish Kurdistan, who are mostly involved in some sort of literary occupation:[10] some studied literature as undergraduates, others are editors at publishing houses, which makes them aware of changes in the contemporary literary scene. They seek imaginative devices through which to narrate their stories, such as completely fictional settings and characters, or use of journals and letters throughout the narration. Political conditions in Turkish Kurdistan intruding on publications in Kurdish or about Kurds also compel the novelists to form their discourse in indirect and symbolic styles to combat censorship and prohibition.

The differences in approach by the novelists in Turkish Kurdistan from those in diaspora do not alter the fact that novelistic discourses in both contexts confirm the observation of Lennard Davis (1987: 25) that 'novels make sense because of ideology; they embody ideologies'. Almost all Kurdish novels deal with political actions, events, or ideologies in their narratives; however, some need to be labelled as political novels due to their intense political narrations. Political novels and their thematic preoccupation with 'political actors and political regimes [...] privilege a politics of hope and struggle' (Scheingold 2010: 2). Due to their politicised form they deal with ideas rather than emotions. Kurdish political novels such as *Hêvî Her Dem Heye*, *Çirîskên Rizgariyê*, *Kewa Marî*, *Bigrî Heval*, *Binefşên Tariyê*, *Fîlozof*, *Robîn*, and *Kodnav Viyan* are interwoven with the political milieu, and the characters are either actively involved in political acts

or their lives have been affected by political acts. Throughout the novels, the narrators either diverge from or support various political actions by Kurdish parties or the Turkish government, and Kurdish or Turkish political occurrences are explicitly described, analysed, and interpreted. From this perspective, novelistic discourse becomes the arena in which the novelists express their arguments and views concerning politics, culture, and socio-cultural matters, both past and present. This brings us to the fact that the literary output of these novelists that represents real life is neither neutral nor independent from the reality of the environments in which they develop their literary discourse.

Kurdistan and the Impact of Diverse Political Ideologies

Kurdistan, as a land of enduring struggle in the novels of Turkish Kurdistan and of its diaspora, reveals the ideological and political struggles engaged in by Kurds in their quest for a nation state and for worldwide recognition as a nation. The theoretical discussion of novelistic discourse in this book has shown how diverse ideologies can be represented through such discourses (Davis 1987). In this respect, in the Kurdish novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan and its diaspora, politics are generally centred on a desire for an independent homeland or sovereignty but through different ideological perspectives in which the sense of Kurdistan is also constructed. Not only is the political concern with 'home-land' not revealed in the diaspora in the way novels from Turkish Kurdistan deal with it, but there are also multiple political constructions within the diasporic novels.

In the case of the Kurds, as well as the impact of the host country on the construction of their identity, the changing dynamic of political views within the diasporic Kurdish community is also instrumental in producing different narratives, since the various Kurdish diasporic organisations have differing strategies in relation to the Kurdish cause (Natali 2007: 202–10). This constitutes one of the study's main arguments, since ideas of 'home-land' and the construction of 'identity' are usually based on these different

ideological manifestations and articulations. While diasporic novelistic discourse evokes multiple homeland politics, the novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan is involved in a more unified sense of national politics. This section analyses the multiple ways of expressing homeland politics in order to reveal the multiplicity of Kurdish politics articulated in the novels.

The difference between the novels of Turkish Kurdistan and of its diaspora can be seen repeatedly in the sense of the kinds of politics in which the novels might be involved. In both contexts the different approaches of the novelists are also related to their own backgrounds. In relation to the discussion on political diversities in the novels, analysis of the novelistic discourses indicates that national struggle and political ideology appear to be more homogeneous in Turkish Kurdistan. As noted, most of the novelists in Turkish Kurdistan were born during the 1970s or 1980s, and were raised in parallel with the activism of the PKK which, following the 1980 military coup and subsequent severe repression, became the most influential resistance organisation to engage with the Kurdish national struggle.[11] On the other hand, before their life in exile all the novelists in diaspora were involved in politics in Turkey and Turkish Kurdistan, where they were either prosecuted or imprisoned for their political activism before fleeing to Europe (mainly Sweden). Most of them continued to be involved in national politics, motivated by different ideologies, or were in dispute with their former ideologies in their host countries. As Van Bruinessen (2000) notes, 'a whole generation of young Kurdish intellectuals and politicians – most of the people of whom I am speaking were born between 1945 and 1960 and most [. . .] had had leading roles in political organisations in Turkey in the 1970s – was transplanted to Europe'.[12]

Accordingly, novelists as diasporic intellectuals act out their relationships with multiple notions of politics and national struggle, with literature as the main field for these political migrants to discuss or share their views. In this respect, the Europe-based novelists had already been politicised before arriving in Europe through various left-wing Kurdish parties founded during the 1970s, such as the DDKO (Eastern Revolutionary Culture Centres, 1969), the DDKD

(Devrimci Doğu Kültür Dernekleri; Revolutionary Cultural Associations of the East), the TKSP (Turkish Kurdistan Socialist Party, 1975), Rizgarî (Liberation, 1977), Kawa (1976), Tekoşin (1978), Yekbûn (1979), the TSK (Kurdistan Socialist Movement, 1980), and others.[13] The political programmes of these parties were influenced by Mustafa Barzani's KDP and various Turkish socialist fractions. Those who were forced to leave Turkey and Kurdistan for Europe mostly developed arguments against the PKK's ideology and strategies, even in exile. Certainly, the majority of diasporic novelists (again, mainly in Sweden) originated from anti-PKK fractions.

This emphasis on the political affiliation of the novelists is crucial here, since their different affiliations and ideologies reveal their different perceptions of the territory of 'homeland'. The territorial myth of homeland certainly strengthens the national consciousness; importantly, however, the approach to the territory of Kurdistan is ambiguous and diverse in the novelistic discourse because of the lack of a state and the unbounded territorial realities of Kurdish identities. As the theoretical framework of the research suggests, 'territory' is not static either, but is changeable according to different social-political and cultural contexts. In this case, the territorial aspect of a nation is not necessarily united and harmonious but can be contested and fragmented. In relation to this, Özoğlu (1997: 41) also argues that 'the boundaries of Kurdistan are in flux; hence, it is problematic to assume that Kurds refer to a fixed group of people and the boundaries of Kurdistan to an unchanging entity'. The blurring territorialisation of Kurdistan is not only caused by the absence of sovereignty and the lack of recognition of the territories internationally; it is also a matter that should be seen as an aspect of different ideological positions.

It is also the case that in general most novels refer, somehow, to other parts of Kurdistan in addition to Turkish Kurdistan; significantly, however, reference to other regions does not have the same meanings or implications. In some novels, the aim is to create the idea of a 'Greater Kurdistan' and implement brotherhood among Kurds from all the different regions. This view, which is entrenched within the political ideology of the PKK,[14] aims to construct a sense

of Kurdish unity and solidarity. Nevertheless, one can argue that in some novels the author does not aim to unite all parts of Kurdistan in terms of an imaginary 'Greater Kurdistan', but is simply trying to express the harsh conditions in other regions where Kurds are living, or else is emphasising the significance of certain political figures in Kurdish history. This view does not perceive 'Greater Kurdistan' as a national homeland project.

Returning to earlier discussion of the PKK's ideological influence on the novels, the movement tends to promote the belief in Kurdish brotherhood in all regions by treating the idea of 'Greater Kurdistan' as an achievable goal. Therefore, some novels have an added purpose when addressing other Kurdish regions or crucial names from these regions. Kurdish literary characters in the pro-PKK novels identify themselves with a broader geographical space that surpasses the borders of Turkish Kurdistan. Not only are there references to the division of Kurdistan into four parts, but there is also an attempt to encourage the Kurds to reunite around the same ideal and purpose. In other words, the emphasis on the territorial Kurdistan contains political purposes rather than being simply geographical. In doing this, the novels that lean towards the PKK's national struggle also demonstrate very strong sentimental ties with Kurdish places and landscapes, while personification and praise of nature are also more prevalent, compared with works by novelists with no PKK affiliation.[15]

For example, in the novels from Turkish Kurdistan, despite the divisions, unification is strongly encouraged, and although territorial bases are absent, there are more details of Kurdistan's geographical and physical features, which contribute towards producing its territorial unity. Among the novels from Turkish Kurdistan, *Giyanên Bahozî*, *Wêneyên Keserê*, *Keje* and *Mişextî*, *Hêvî Her Dem Heye*, *Kitim*, *Qerebafon*, and *Bavfileh*, *Neynika Dilî*, *Xezal*, *Rêwiyên bê Welat*, *Gava Heyatê*, *Bi Xatirê Te Enqere Bêhna Axê*, *Hêviyên Birîndar*, and *Gitarê bê Tel* approach Kurdistan as a country separate from Turkey, and draw a broad map of 'Greater Kurdistan' by the use of directions such as South Kurdistan and North Kurdistan, in a political context. Regional terms such as 'Serhat' (*Serhed*) and 'Botan' also assist in

constructing the idea of 'Greater Kurdistan'. Most of these novels refer to other Kurds in other parts of Kurdistan in a unified manner. Although *Rojnivîska Spinoza*, *Pêşbaziya Çîrokên Neqediyayî*, *Leyla Fîgaro*, *Otobês*, *Li Qerexa Şevê Hîvron*, and *Mandalîn* have more symbolic language, they also address Kurdistan as a unified entity and as a political project.

Similarly, the diasporic novels by writers affiliated to the politics of the PKK draw a similar unified depiction to those from Turkish Kurdistan. For example, novels such as *Veger*, *Şopa Rojên Buhurî*, *Zenga Zêrîn*, *Bigrî Heval*, and *Binefşên Tariyê*, which explicitly state affinity for the PKK, often present a message of solidarity among Kurds. Medenî Ferho tends towards the PKK's ideology in most of his novels; thus *Xaltîka Zeyno*, *Xewnên Pînekirî*, and *Çiroka Me*, express the need for unity that includes all parts of Kurdistan. The novels emphasise the positions of leaders from other Kurdish regions, such as Qazi Muhammad (1893–1947, founder of Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran) and Mustafa Barzani (1903–1979, leader of a political party and military leader against the Iraqi regime), but they do not distinguish the politics of these leaders from those of the ongoing struggle in Turkish Kurdistan, since they support a united national struggle.

However, diasporic novelistic discourse not affiliated to the PKK's politics expresses a view of Kurdistan that does not allow for a fixed and definite mapping. The spatial representations and constructions imply that Kurdistan is divided and that the hope of uniting under one state is no more than a vague possibility. These novels refer to the territories in geographical terms only, so that in Mezher Bozan's novel *Asim*, for example, Asim the protagonist describes Kurdish cities in the 1970s and 1980s with reference to Syrian Kurdistan, in order to emphasise how the Kurds are Arabised in Syria, just as Kurds in Turkey are Turkified because of the social and political system. This point does not imply any other notion; it simply depicts the conditions of Kurds in other regions with the aim of portraying them realistically. Thus, in *Fîlozof*, Lokman Polat chooses heaven as the setting of the novel; he presents the thoughts of dead literary and political figures in Kurdish history through which the narrator

stresses the significance of certain Kurdish political leaders from other regions, such as Ismail Agha Simko[16] (from Iranian Kurdistan), Mustafa Barzani (from Iraqi Kurdistan), and Abdul Rahim Ghamssemblou (from Iranian Kurdistan).[17] These individuals are made to comment on the historical Kurdish past in order to reveal the failure of Kurds in creating unity and constructing a unified Kurdistan, while sharing their opinions about previous mistakes.

In other words, Polat's novel does not try to encourage the Kurds for the future but aims merely to articulate the failures of the past. In some novels, there is also a complete imaginary political organisation whose aim is to liberate Kurdistan, as in two of Polat's novels, *Robîn* (2004) and *Kodnav Vîyan* (2006), and in Dehsiwar's *Çirîskên Rizgariyê*, created in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, to resist the oppression of the Turkish state. However, the national struggle of this new party embraces neither a united and unified Kurdish struggle, nor the idea of 'Greater Kurdistan', being instead strongly affiliated to Iraqi Kurdistan as homeland. The organisation's activities embrace each Kurdish region under the existing sovereign state, concentrating on the regions separately, not on a uniform level. In contrast to the PKK's demands during the 1990s, which had tended to cover all Kurdish regions, this imaginary organisation pursued only self-rule.

The novels that do not support the PKK nevertheless do not avoid mentioning the internal factors that have obstructed national liberation. For example, the historical novel *Serhildane Mala Eliyê Ûnis* by the diasporic writer Baksî is set towards the end of the Ottoman Empire and the early days of the Turkish Republic. Not only does Baksî give information about the Kurdish struggle and rebellions in this novel, but crucially he also exposes negotiations between certain Kurdish tribes and Atatürk. *Xidê Naxirwan û Tevkuştine Dêrsim* by Çolpan, another diasporic writer, focuses on the Dersim area during the 1930s, referring to Kochkiri, Sheikh Said, and the Ararat uprisings as a way of clarifying these events from the Kurdish perspective, thereby demonstrating that not all tribes supported the struggle; indeed many, out of self-interest, collaborated with the Turkish state.

However, novels sympathetic to the PKK's ideology are bound to glorify the historical past more than those in which internal conflicts are referred to extensively. In pro-PKK novels, depiction of the past lacks any critical scrutiny, and discourse on Kurdistan's past existence evokes the need to struggle to regain it and preserve its national values. For example, in Ferho's *Xaltîka Zeyno*, the old woman Zeyno represents the voice of history, since she can recall her experiences and describe conditions when the Empire ended and the Republic was founded; her narrative depicts the governing systems of the two regimes as she saw them. The novel recounts the ill-treatment of Kurds, the village evacuations, forced migration, arrests, and killings (there was no difference between the two historic periods since Kurds suffered for the entire century). But it does not refer to any internal factors related to the failure of the national struggle.

Thus, the novels in both locations demonstrate that the territorial boundaries of Kurdistan are very ambiguous and are interpreted according to the ideology or views of the novelists. While some novels emphasise the borders of all Kurdish regions in relation to the project of 'Greater Kurdistan', others perceive the four parts of Kurdistan in their existing sovereignties, and recognise their official boundaries. Such controversies and ambiguities occur not only as an aspect of displacement from the homeland but also because of multiple political and ideological motivations. In this respect, most of the novelists in diaspora, who are from the same generation (born in the 1950s), are already politicised figures due to their background before exile. Some were actively involved in politics, which was why exile was seen as the only rescue, and 'the associations of Turkish Kurds [in Europe] essentially stood alongside the political parties in their country of origin' (Schmidinger 2010).[18] Kurdish literary narratives in particular have become the sites where diasporic novelists contest and reinforce their claims, seeking various types of political activities that they have experienced themselves or are still facing in various political and social contexts.

The novels of Turkish Kurdistan do not refer to internal factors leading to the destruction of Kurdistan but only to external ones. This differentiates them from pro-PKK novels in diaspora since the

pro-PKK diasporic novels have no hesitation in criticising Kurds, although their negative criticism is less severe than from those not affiliated with PKK ideology. In other words, the novels that regard the political movement of the PKK as liberating for the national struggle retain a more optimistic outlook for Kurdistan. Despite the number of betrayals and internal conflicts, hopes for independence and belief in the national movement still exist. Therefore, narration of the story and depictions of Kurdish places do not correspond to the Kurdistan created in the novels affiliated with the ideology of the PKK. It can even be argued that in the majority of the diasporic novels, the image of Kurdistan associated with idealised rural areas produced in relation to the PKK's ideology, is challenged through descriptions, selected themes, and stories in their narratives.

In other words, the construction of Kurdish identity as patriotic and loyal produced in parallel with PKK-affiliated novels is also overturned in the majority of diasporic novels in which politics in, or related to, Iraqi Kurdistan is much favoured. In such novels, Kurds are not always brave and loyal towards their national struggle, as has been illustrated by examples of betrayal and deceit in the history of the Kurds. Kurdish nationalist rebellions are suppressed by the help of traitorous Kurds, or Kurdish shaikhs and landowners constantly negotiate with the Turkish state to diminish Kurdish solidarity. More specifically, villagers are necessarily as pure and uncorrupted as they are seen mainly in the novels of Qaso, Metê, Eser, and Mirzengî, in contrast to certain works that refer to them as the real owners of Kurdistan and that are found among novels from both Turkish Kurdistan and PKK-affiliated diasporic novels.

The Perception of 'Home-land': The Constant Sense of 'Outsideness'

Mass migrations, forced departures from lands, exclusion, and the sense of exile are very common phenomena in the general Kurdish novelistic discourse. In this discourse, 'home-land' is attributed to a certain territorialised location; however, it has been dislocated by division and fragmentation that has threatened the sense of

Kurdistan as a fixed, pure, and certain structure for Kurdish literary characters. Interestingly, comparative analyses suggest that voluntary or forced migration due to lack of sovereignty or socio-political conditions in Kurdistan, appear as more dominant experiences in forming the basis of a shared Kurdish identity in the novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan compared with what occurs in the diaspora. In other words, Kurds in Kurdistan territory are influenced more than diaspora members by the statelessness of their nation. Thus, the link that Kurdish characters in Kurdistan construct with their lands is more sentimental and spiritual, and this is usually expressed either through a widespread emphasis, infused with praise and celebration, on the topographical features of Kurdistan, or through a strong sense of the absence of 'home-land' strengthened by migrations and detachment. In addition, 'home-land' usually provokes a particular meaning of 'being Kurdish', that consists of feeling oneself to be a migrant, refugee, passenger, escapee, and orphan and, as a refugee, both migrant and homeless.

Broadly speaking, most of the novels, both from Turkish Kurdistan and diaspora, refer to internal and external displacements in which 'home-land' is not composed of bounded and fixed spaces. The image of 'home-land' and loss of 'home-land' are juxtaposed in most of the novels. However, the longing for 'home-land' is even more dominant in the novels from Turkish Kurdistan than it is in the diaspora novels. Kurdish characters in Kurdistan feel the sense of fragmentation and alienation in 'homeland territory' (insideness) sometimes more than the Kurdish characters in 'diaspora' (outsideness).

In his book *Place and Placelessness* Relph (1976) stresses the significance of different level of connections with 'place'. He coins four concepts to explain the intensity of the connection within the person and place: 'insideness', 'outsideness', 'existential insideness', and 'existential outsideness'. Through 'insideness', Relph suggests that if one feels oneself to be inside a place, one feels safe and distant from threats. The stronger sense of 'insideness' refers to a stronger identification of the individual with that particular place. On the other hand, the sense of 'outsideness' conveys completely the opposite

meaning, where the mode of alienation and separation is very dominant in the case of physical detachment from a place. 'Existential insideness' refers to a very strong mode of place experience when the individual is in his or her home, community, or region. To a great extent this is the highest degree to which one can experience a place positively. In contrast, 'existential outsideness' addresses the sense of strangeness and alienation when one is away from 'home' – one's original place. Thus the 'existential outsider' is the one who is away from home and feels disappointed after returning home because of unexpected changes.

The terms above will help in understanding how the sense of 'home-land' expressed by the literary characters is due to the political conditions of Kurdistan and the very ambiguous sense of 'home-land' among Kurds. In this respect, Kurdish novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan indicates that lack of statelessness and political ambiguity cause Kurds who are 'inside' (in Kurdistan territory), like those who are 'outside' (diaspora), to perceive their territory in the same manner. Often, the sense of 'outsideness' is dominated more by those who are actually outside as migrants or refugees, because 'home-land', in its current conditions, is perceived as more fragmented and distant. This poses challenges to the differentiation of 'insideness' and 'outsideness' developed by Relph. His classification can be valid for nations or peoples who achieve the formation of a state within a certain territory, but the case of the Kurds in novelistic discourse, despite the physical 'insideness', evokes a strong sense of 'outsideness'.

Thus, compared with the diaspora novels, in the novels from Kurdistan there is, thematically, more stress on loss of home, migration, evacuations, and journeys, which strengthens the sense of 'outsideness'. Several reasons can be listed for the excessive sense of 'outsideness' compared with diasporic individuals who are actually outside the homeland. In the Kurdish novelistic discourse in Kurdistan, the sense of 'outsideness' created by lost 'home-land' is often depicted as the condition of travel, migration, and mobility. The sense of 'homelessness', 'placelessness', and enduring longing for 'home' emerges as mobility which is coded in symbols and images of journeys such as roads and buses.

In 26 of the 64 diasporic novels that were examined, either the protagonist departs voluntarily or is forced to leave his lands, or there are narrations about the migrations. Thus, there are 38 diasporic novels that do not deal with any sort of migration or the absence of 'home-land'. On the other hand, out of 36 novels from Kurdistan, 29 focus on migration and journeys as the main issues. Significantly, methods of engagement with the issue of migration and absence of 'home' also differ between the two locations. In some of the novels from the diaspora, mass migrations and displacements are narrated as a way to inform of the facts rather than to express sentimental bonds between narrators and their lands of origin. For example, 12 of these novels refer to internal migrations, mostly for economic reasons, as in *Sorê Gulê*, *Nado Kurê Xwe Firot*, *Serpêhatiyên Rustem û Namerdiya Namerdan*, *Gul Bişkivîn*, and *Av Zelal Bû I-II-III-IV*, in which the characters move to Turkish cities to work.

In other novels, such as *Dîlên li Ber Pûkê*, *Marê Di Tûr de*, *Mexmûr*, and *Asim*, internal migrations for political reasons are narrated but, as noted earlier, the characters' sentimental bonds with the land are not emphasised as they are in the novels from Kurdistan. Through use of realistic language, migrations and the absence of home are narrated as part of Kurdish history. Fourteen novels in diaspora elaborate on diasporic experiences or address the issue of exile, although not in any detail. Also, in most of these novels, it is difficult to observe the desperate sense of a lost 'home'; exile only stands as a motif in novels such as *Pêlên Bêrîkirinê*, *Ronakbîr*, *Ez ê Yekî Bikujim*, *Siya Dema Borî*, *Piştî Bist Salan*, and *Çirîskên Rizgariyê*. The characters who either live in exile or return from exile express neither nostalgia nor hope for their lost 'home-land'.

Importantly within the diaspora novels, some of Uzun's novels (*Hawara Dîcleyê I-II*, *Bîra Qedere*, *Mirina Kalekî Rind*, and *Siya Evînê*) focus on Kurdish folkloric culture and biographies of various Kurdish figures, such as the Bedirkhan family, Memduh Selim Beg, a *dengbêj*, and others, and are exceptional in this, since Uzun elaborates on the sense of exile felt by individuals who lived at the beginning of the twentieth century. His central characters, who construct a nostalgic link with the lands that they are forced to leave, live with the

aspiration of home while the absence of that home becomes the dominant element in their lives. However, in his novel *Ronî Mîna Evîne Tarî Mîna Mirinê*, which is set in a more modern period, the sense of yearning for the lost lands cannot be felt. In a way the sense of longing is peculiar to the earlier period that he elaborates on in his other novels, and not the modern era.[19]

In light of the above, in the Kurds' case the assumed mutually exclusive dichotomy of being 'at home' or 'not at home' does not apply. In contrast, it is believed that the meanings of 'home-land' are created from the experience of lack of 'home'. In this respect, Dovey (1985: 46) mentions that the sense of 'home' is created through journeying or moving from 'being at home' to 'yearning for home'. Accordingly, Kurdish characters in the Kurdish novelistic discourse create their 'home-land' meanings when they are not at 'homeland', and one can easily detect the emphasis on the yearning over its loss. Most of the characters experience the lack of 'home-land' for various social, cultural, and political reasons that are mainly related to socio-political conditions.

Being transformed from villager to migrant also implies a sense of a shattered identity, because while being a villager refers to attachment to the land, being a migrant is breaking off at the roots, which leads to total destruction of the family. Indeed, in *Reş û Spî*, *Xezal*, *Hêviyên Birîndar*, *Mişextî*, and *Rêwiyên bê Welat*, the reader sees how migration destroys whole families and how the trauma of being deprived of their lands not only evokes a sense of 'placelessness', but even if they return home they are unable to get rid of the mood of being migrants; in other words, the sense of 'homelessness' remains under any conditions, the sense of which can be defined as 'existential outsideness' as Relph suggests. The destruction of the village through invasions and raids becomes the destruction of the natural and essential basis of identity. The treatment of destroyed and violated images of Kurdistan in the novels is coupled with destroyed and corrupted characters. Even if the characters are not actively involved in politics, their lives are constantly being changed due to the changing conditions in Kurdistan. The effects of these changes emerge in the form of a journey and escape. They neither can stay at

home, nor can they stay away from it. Indeed, belonging neither to their own 'homeland' nor to foreign lands is a common phenomenon in these novels. Kurdish characters are truly marginal and live in a 'homeless' and 'placeless' context, creating a strong sense of 'outsideness'.[20]

Kurdish characters in the novels of Turkish Kurdistan are always in a mental or physical state of 'not being at home' that impels them to move constantly from one place to another. Most of the characters' stories are framed by journeys from one place to another, and this strengthens the condition of 'outsideness'.

In this respect, *Bêhna Axê*, *Neynika Dilî*, *Giyanên Bahozî*, *Mişextî*, *Rêwiyên bê Welat*, *Bi Xatirê Te Enqere*, *Reş û Spî*, *Wêneyên Keserê*, *Pêşbaziya Çîrokên Neqediyayî*, *Rojnivîska Spinoza*, *Mişextî*, *Qerebafon*, *Toqa Lanatê*, *Otobês*, *Feqiyê Teyran*, *Li Qerexa Şevê Hîvron*, *Kulmek Morîkên Şînbirik*, and *Mandalîn* are strongly involved with a sense of journeying and movement. For example, *Rêwiyên bê Welat* opens with Kanî's decision to leave his village due to pressure from Turkish security, and throughout the novel Kanî struggles to escape from Turkey to Europe. Similarly, *Otobês*, *Feqiyê Teyran*, *Saturn*, and *Li Qerexa Şevê Hîvron* begin with a journey, and when the journey is ended, the novels end as well. *Li Qerexa Şevê Hîvron*, which refers to interminable migration and journeys, even starts by saying, 'the roads were exhausted but not the passenger' (5).[21] On the other hand, *Kulmek Morîkên Şînbirik* ends with a journey, due to the pressure of the Turkish military on the villagers who are forced to leave their lands. Nobody knows where they are going since here it is not the destination but the act of migration that matters. For them, as travellers on their way, territory and land may be more metaphorical and symbolic than real. The predicament of alienation from land, territory, and 'home' defines the lives of the characters who suffer from the mood of refugee, migrant, and traveller all at the same time.

Thus, the characters are usually forced to leave their villages, either for other Turkish cities or for Europe. What remains is the strong desire one day to return. In this case, even in some novels produced in Turkish Kurdistan, the characters migrate to Europe as exiles. The novel *Rêwiyên Bê Welat* is based on the story of Kanî's

escape to Europe for political reasons. Both Qasimlo's novels, *Wêneyên Keserê* and *Giyanên Bahozî*, narrate the experiences of Kurdish refugees in Germany. In *Bavfileh*, one of the characters cannot stand the political conditions in Kurdistan and escapes to Europe. But even if the notion of return to 'home-land' becomes a reality, it still does not change the condition of loss; instead it simply doubles grief. In the case of a return, feelings of disappointment are added to those of loss and defeat. Almost all novels in Turkish Kurdistan employ and intimate multiple meanings of longing, as mythical, lost, and existential outsiders. The continual instability, collectively as well as on an individual basis, has led to shattered families and communities. In general, forced separation from the homeland, the evolution of national sentiments evoked by state oppression, the constant idea of return, and concerns about the homeland's future begin to cloud the lives of them all.

The sense of 'outsideness' and 'homelessness' might also appear in some novels in diaspora; though, on the one hand, the disappointment and estrangement usually takes place as a result of the assimilative and repressive politics of Turkish state/military in the novels in Turkish Kurdistan, on the other hand, these notions occur in the diasporic novels due to internal factors such as the betrayal of the Kurds and the religious/political conflicts among them. For example, in both Firat Ceweri's novels, *Payiza Dereng* and *Ez ê Yekî Bikujim* (I will Kill Someone, 2008), the sense of 'outsideness' occurs along with feelings of disappointment that are very dominant in the lives of the novels' main characters. This sense of exile and loss of place does not vanish when both Ferda and Temo in Ceweri's novel return to their original homes; instead they experience different feelings of displacement in their homelands as their people have been assimilated. In Silêman Demîr's *Piştî Bîst Salan* the protagonist experiences similar disillusion when he returns to his lands to see his first sweetheart, and finds nothing but disenchantment. He returns to his lonely life in Europe leaving behind both lands and beloved. Abidîn's novel *Bigrî Heval* (Cry Friend, 2007) focuses on the struggle of two guerrillas in the mountains attempting to escape execution by the party they are fighting for. They define themselves not only as

'*bêkes*' (lonely) (19) but also '*sêvî*' (26) and '*bêhêvî*' (hopeless), a condition in which they are forced to live by the party that they have been fighting for. They can no longer maintain the same belief and hope for the future of their 'home-land', due mainly to the internal conflicts. Throughout the novel, there is an ongoing theme – the fact that other Kurds constantly destroy their hopes.

Broadly speaking, in the majority of the diasporic novels, the internal conflicts and betrayals among Kurds cause them to lose their lands and become hopeless, as is emphasised in Chapter Four. In addition to feelings of loss, defeat, and disappointment, a sense of regret can also be identified as one of the prevalent feelings experienced by characters in the novels. While expressing their grief for being absent from their lands, they also regret the sacrifice of years for their 'home-land' and community. As an example, the beginning of Lokman Polat's *Fîlozof*, which takes place in heaven, focuses on various Kurdish political and literary figures after their death. The narrator shares the regret and grief of each individual who begins to think that his community does not deserve what they have done during their lifetime. Similarly in *Ronakbîr* by Qaso (2003), the protagonist Ronakbîr regrets having been involved in all the political actions that have forced him to migrate to Stockholm. He loses all his hopes for the future and distrusts other Kurdish migrants around him in Sweden, which seems to be the main reason behind his lack of integration and adaptation to the host country. In this respect, the conditions of both Kurds and Kurdistan robustly affect the way the characters formulate their ideas of home, in whatever scenario; there is an intense exclusion both from their own community and from other foreign communities in diaspora.

Still, thematic analyses of diasporic novels also show that the novelists tend to focus on their lives before exile or else stretch back to the Kurds' historical past. Accordingly, in terms of the intensity of migration and displacement as the subject matter of the novels, the narrations on the absence of 'home-land' are a more common phenomenon in the novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan compared with diaspora. It is true that the Kurds in Turkish Kurdistan, particularly since the early 1990s, have been subjected to forced

migration from their villages to the big cities due to conflicts between the PKK and the Turkish military; however, a question still arises: how is it that Kurds in Turkish Kurdistan suffer from the absence of 'home' more than diasporans who have also been physically detached from 'home' for years? On some occasions, being in the 'home-land' might also involve being exiled. Direct confrontation with the lack of a state, censorship of the Kurdish language and culture, and evacuations of villages, all lead to a strong sense of 'outsideness', of an imaginary home that can be conquered through memory, and of postponed desire for the future. 'Home-land' is accessible through a nostalgic version of the past and an idealised future, which for now is beyond reach. Therefore, the novels from Turkish Kurdistan can be considered to speak for the exile at 'home', and the longing to be at 'home', as the current case of the Kurds shows, confirms that 'being home involves the condition of being away from home' (Stanford-Friedman 2004: 195).

In terms of similarities, it can be seen that according to the Kurdish novelistic discourse in general, Kurdistan in its simplest territorial meaning refers not only to one's birthplace and hometown but takes on an essential significance for all Kurds as an entity. They do not have merely an imaginary vision of Kurdistan, since by incorporating boundaries and distinctive landscape and regional features, a literal territory of Kurdistan can also be drawn: 'the homeland in this case is a lived experience of a territorial place, not a mythical land' (Alinia 2004: 212). Thus, the analyses of the novels confirm that Kurdistan, both metaphorically and physically, constitutes a central aspect of Kurdish national identity. The Kurds, as stateless and mostly displaced people, are constantly in movement and lack a real territorial homeland; however, they are at the same time part of the Kurdish community as an entity, and base their national identity on the idea of Kurdistan as their mythical homeland.

Broadly speaking, the Kurdish novelistic discourse constitutes various kinds of fiction, including epic, historical, social, and political novels. The Kurdish novelistic discourse in diaspora is based on facts and real events and is set at certain particular periods of time, as

compared with the novelistic discourse of Turkish Kurdistan. In other words, while the novels from Turkish Kurdistan refer frequently to the present conditions of Kurdistan, the diasporic novels usually refer to the past, which is why the number of autobiographical, historical, and epic novels is very high in diaspora. However, regardless of the kind of novel, a novelistic discourse can be seen as an ideological construct that serves particular ideological purposes. In this sense, in terms of similarities, examination of novelistic discourse also indicates that definitions of Kurdish identity and 'home-land' are relative and that meanings shift over time, depending on whose ideology and personal experiences are being scrutinised. Diverse political ideologies are reflected in the diverse portrayals of Kurdistan, as Alinia states in her doctoral thesis based on Kurdish migrants in Sweden: 'homeland is not concrete; it is mostly about subjective feeling and individual and political constructions based on lived experiences and political discourses' (2004: 232). Accordingly the novelists, particularly in the diaspora, intend to transfer their ideology, which is very subjective. Through the narrator, characters, or descriptions of events, Kurdish novelists in one way or another expose their ideologies regarding Kurdish national movements in the past and at present.

The novelists' political ideology, in prose or in metaphor, contributes directly or indirectly to creating a sense that the text is under the hegemony of the novelist. On the one hand, almost all novels in Turkish Kurdistan and some diasporic novels express explicitly or implicitly their ideological affiliation towards the PKK: Kurdistan and Kurdish identity are also constructed according to the ideological discourse of the PKK. On the other hand, most of the diasporic novels, which appear to oppose PKK ideologies, attempt to demolish the picture of Kurdistan constructed by that ideology. For example, the majority of diasporan novelists, who are strongly against the PKK's ideologies and achievements (such as Lokman Polat, Firat Cewerî, Laleş Qaso, and Mihemed Dehsiwar), fictionalise a negative Kurdistan in which failures and disloyalties are central, rather than express hopes for the future. Those who favour the PKK (almost all the novelists from Turkish Kurdistan, and some diasporan

novelists, including to some extent Zeynel Abidîn, Medenî Ferho, and Fêrgîn Melîk Aykoç) visualise a more positive picture of Kurdistan in which the struggle for freedom and independence is encouraged, and those who are patriotic are highly celebrated.

Furthermore, the topographical features of Kurdistan are emphasised in the pro-PKK novels, in which rural life is idealised and associated with the national struggle, and the characters are more connected to the land through sentimental and spiritual bonds. Inspired by real socio-political events, they are idealistic in their attempt to promote the national struggle of the PKK. However, novels in diaspora in which characters are shown as opponents of the PKK, or in which its politics are not emphasised, usually deal with either the characters' personal or the Kurdish historical past in a semi-journalistic form. Also, most diasporic novels by writers not affiliated to the PKK's ideology do not demonstrate any idea of an independent, united Kurdistan including all Kurdish regions. They approach the territory of Kurdistan realistically, recognising the territory of sovereign countries. Certainly a critical perspective on Kurds and Kurdistan does not allow many diasporic novelists to construct an optimistic picture of Kurdistan as the ideal 'home-land'. A strong sense of rupture, disappointment, angst, and regret overwhelm any optimistic prospects for the future.

Again, in the novels opposed to the PKK, the concept of '*welatparêz*' is used to draw attention to the failure to preserve Kurdistan by emphasising its lack; at the same time, for the diasporic novels that embark on the politics of the PKK, the concept is the central component of national identity, which is promoted for the success of the national struggle. This different approach to the concept of '*welatparêz*' also contributes to two different portrayals of 'home'. Narration of failure in relation to the lack of '*welatparêz*' in the anti-PKK novelistic discourse leads to a pessimistic view of Kurdistan. On the other hand, promoting the national struggle through stress on the concept of '*welatparêz*' in pro-PKK novels involves the provision of an optimistic view of Kurdistan for the future.

It can also be argued that while the anti-PKK novels usually elaborate mainly on Kurdistan's past, pro-PKK novels, apart from

the past and present, look at the future as well. This can also be seen through the time frame in which the anti-PKK novelists elaborate their narratives. There are some historical novels that stretch back to the Ottoman period, but most deal with the more recent period before their exile, mainly the end of the 1970s and the early 1980s. They construct Kurdistan in the exact context that they left behind because of exile, referring particularly to the effects of the 1980 military coup.

In this sense, it can be said that the autobiographical elements are more dominant in the novels written by diasporan novelists when compared with the novels written in Turkish Kurdistan. In fact, it has been observed that migrant literatures in general are usually based on the largely autobiographical works of migrants themselves. As White (1995: 9) comments, 'a very high proportion of creative writing relating to migration [. . .] is strongly autobiographical. [The literary works are] in many cases, strongly personal motivations drawn from a possible need for catharsis.' Similarly, the novelists living in the diaspora have a strong tendency to include data from their autobiographies, based on Kurdistan and the Kurdish question rather than on their exilic experiences. Compared with novelists from Kurdistan, diasporic novelists set out more consciously, through the agency of social information, to re-use the past as shared experiences and memories, and historical knowledge is constructed, shaped, and transmitted as part of Kurdish diaspora awareness. Thus, these autobiographical elements contain their tragic experiences of imprisonment, torture, and military coup before they left their lands of origin.

The anti-PKK diasporic novels also contain more autobiographical elements compared with the pro-PKK novels. For example, pro-PKK novels in diaspora set their narration to the period of intense war, mainly in the 1990s, through which they often narrate the conflicts and national struggle of the PKK quite explicitly. Similarly, the novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan, which is infused with more imaginary and fictionalised content, refers directly or indirectly to the conflicts. Unlike the diasporic novels opposing the PKK, the novelists' fiction here is not necessarily formed through their lived experiences.

One can argue that the intensive employment in both plot and characterisation of autobiographical elements within the generic identity of the diasporic novels strengthens the credibility of the social and historical data within the text. However, the novelists' intervention through references to political and historical issues creates a subjective and ideological text that is affected by the novelists' generation, while fiction written by Kurdish novelists also shows that the construction of identity and 'homeland' varies according to generation. Generational differences should be taken into consideration since the age differences between diasporic novelists and those in Kurdistan is very sharp. All of the novelists in diaspora who were born in the 1950s and 1960s represent the same generation. They are influenced by their political affiliations before they left their countries and by the diasporic context of the host country in which they have found themselves. In some cases, they continued to pursue the political fractions of the organisations that they had formerly been involved in, even in their exilic period. Their socio-political notions impacted their literary products, and their literary identity remained rooted in their political beliefs. The novelists in Kurdistan, however, represent the younger generation, as most were born in the 1970s and 1980s. These generational differences and the conditions prevailing at different periods have undoubtedly had an important influence on their writings. The most beneficial basis for comparing generations of individual novelists is to establish which socio-political and literary environment influenced them, by developing a wider contextual understanding of textual analysis.

Lastly, with regard to the migrants' link with their 'home' country, Kurdish novelistic discourse produced in Turkish Kurdistan territory is more compatible with the general diasporic discourses. This challenges the general literature on diaspora, which argues that nostalgia and longing for 'home' is a very frequent condition in diasporic writings. In this respect, being in the territory of a stateless 'homeland', directly facing oppression and assimilation, and being more involved in the national struggle, results in the sense of 'home-land' in a more mythical, distanced, and nostalgic perspective, similar to diasporic experiences. The descriptions of 'home-land' are

characterised by idealisation, an intense nostalgia for the 'home-land' of the past, and a strong sense of loss and return. The literary characters experience a sense of migration and detachment from 'home-land' that is infused with alienation and loneliness, as if they are physically away from their 'home' country. The celebration of physical geographical features is enforced by the sense of lost 'home-land' and nostalgia for the past. In other words, 'home-land' might be considered somewhere that is lost; however, the characters also maintain their hope of regaining it in the future through constant struggle and resistance, mainly in parallel with the ideology of the PKK.

CONCLUSION

Through an analysis of all the novels published between 1984 and March 2010 in both Turkish Kurdistan and its diaspora, I have shown that constructive imagining of 'home-land' also occurs in fictional texts. I have shown that 'home-land' is a multi-dimensional and symbolic concept, which does not refer wholly to physicality, being also linked directly with the political, social, and cultural aspects of personal or group identity. It is not a static concept preserving its features in time, but is exposed to changes that result from both individual and collective developments and regressions. People's actions and experiences influence the description and the idea of 'home-land' in their minds, resulting in different delineations and connotations of 'home-land' for each person and nation. Accordingly, not only should Kurdistan be conceived in its geographical context with specific physical and textual features; it should instead be considered as fluid, dynamic, and changeable, containing multiple meanings. It is also an integral part of the Kurdish identity process. The identity of the characters and their accomplishments depends on the 'home-land', which is either distant or under the control of others.

Despite some similarities with regard to 'home-land' and common thematic configurations, the novelists from diaspora and from Turkish Kurdistan differ in their configuration of 'home-land' and representation of Kurdish identity, as a result of ideological and

contextual differences. Therefore Kurdistan, which is regarded as the Kurds' 'home-land' in novelistic discourses in both Turkish Kurdistan and its diaspora, appears as mobile and changing according to different contexts, and this is expressed in relation to Kurdish identity. This book identifies the use of Kurdish literature as the tool for the majority of the novelists (particularly those in diaspora) to express their political views and ideologies. Each Kurdish novel constructs Kurdistan and Kurdish national identity in a distinctive way, because the authors perceive the aims and methods of nationalism and national struggle in widely different ways.

Generally speaking, the Kurdish novels manage to engage the reader at multiple levels, simultaneously presenting the full range of Kurdish experiences, from the physical and emotional to the political and social. Kurdistan, which is necessarily part of the political argument, is also the main subject of Kurdish novelistic discourse through the emotional attachment or specific disposition involved in belonging to the Kurds as a nation, and through its significance as the homeland in mobilising the national community (Conversi 2004). The socio-political conditions of the Kurds and their lack of a state force Kurdish novelists to reshape their emotional and spiritual attachments to their homeland. Accordingly, the complications and ambivalence caused by internal and external forces lead to a complex and multilayered discussion of representations of 'home-land' in Kurdish novelistic discourse.

In terms of novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan and in its diaspora, it can be argued that Kurdistan, as the ancestral Kurdish homeland, is one of the unifying elements uniting the Kurdish imagined community. However, Kurdistan is usually associated with oppression and insecurity, which invokes the sense of wars and conflicts in all the characters' life stages and in all periods in which the novels take place. The most crucial feature, which most of the novels have in common, is the use of memory as a source of themes and information. Thus, in relation to Anthony Smith's 'ethno-symbolism' (2009), Kurdish novels are part of the symbolic vehicle through which collective identity, symbolic representation of the ethnichistoric territory, and the shared memories of Kurds are

transferred. Hence, the memory of 'home-land' is verified by the continuous relationship between past and present in most of the novels published in both Turkish Kurdistan and diaspora. The link between memory and Kurdish identity is constructed differently, varying according to different time and place. Agnew similarly comments that 'the relationship between the past and present is complex and dynamic, with meanings and interpretations that shift with time, place, and social context' (2005: 3). In this respect, interpretations of the past differ from one novelist to another, depending on the date of the novel's publication, since levels of attachment to the home or meanings of 'home-land' are not constructed in the same way.

The analysis of novelistic discourse also established that the role of politics in relation to Kurdistan and Kurdish identity is very important, since not only do the meanings of 'home-land' and 'identity' shift according to location but so also do the political ideologies. Kurdish novelistic discourse is mainly shaped by the political views of the novelists, in which 'home-land' becomes a variable ideological construct. Therefore, through 'telling' techniques and explicit ideological statements, Kurdish novels in general contain a central and essential political and ideological intent. The ideological differences are the main influencing factor in terms of determining the articulation of 'home-land' and 'identity' in the novelistic discourse. Put in another way, the different political views, ideologies, inclinations, and deeds not only affect the themes and characterisation of the novels, but they also have an impact on the way Kurdistan and Kurdish identity are constructed.

In fact, compared with Turkish Kurdistan, novelistic discourse is more ideological in intent in diaspora where exiled novelists explicitly state their own suggestions for resolution, or their personal views concerning resistance, in the past as well as in existing conditions. Although the quest for the freedom of Kurdistan and narrations on the unhappy socio-political conditions in Turkish Kurdistan have become the common aim of expression in diasporic novelistic discourse, compared with the discourse in Turkish Kurdistan the diasporic discourse contains more diverse ideologies and politics

impacting on the imagining of 'home-land'. Through their literary works, exiled novelists demonstrate that, in terms of the literary construction of identities and politics, their own political position and its implications for identity are often at odds, because of a diversity of views and ideologies. Based on analysis of all the novels written in diaspora up to 2010, it can be seen that Kurdish novelistic discourse in diaspora confirms the position of Safran (1991), who emphasises that diasporas are more strongly affiliated with homeland than with the host country, and agrees with Werbner's statement about diasporas being 'highly politicised social formations' (2005: 544), since the literary expression of homeland politics in Kurdish diasporic novels shows how historical and current political activities are central to the construction of Kurdish identity and Kurdistan.

These notions are presented through diverse perspectives and views by the novelists, who openly declare their conflicting claims and ideologies. This is mainly related to the fact that diasporic novelists had already been strongly politicised in Turkey before they arrived in Europe. The interests of Western powers are also functional in shaping heterogeneous and shifting ideologies within diasporic subjects. However, in contrast to Safran's observation, it is difficult to conclude that the affiliation with homeland in the Kurdish diasporic novelistic discourse also contains ideas of return, loss, and nostalgia. In the majority of the novels, affiliation with homeland is conveyed in a more critical tone rather than as romantic nostalgia. The sense of estrangement and alienation is infused with a sense of disappointment and failure. The global conditions of diaspora, the personal issues of the novelists with national movements, and the physical separation from the homeland for a certain period of time are all reasons for Kurdistan to be expressed in this manner.

Therefore, it can be seen that mobility and displacement usually lead to diverse imagining of homeland politics that is expressed in literary narratives as a form of political act rather than as a literary performance. My line of argument here is based on the observation that in their texts, diasporic novelists perform and present more heterogeneous notions compared with the texts produced in 'homeland' territory.

The diversity and variations of political viewpoint within the Kurdish diaspora are based around the division between those who are affiliated to the politics of the PKK and those who are not, and this is one of the most influential factors in the Kurdish novelistic discourse. In the works of diasporic novelists who do not adhere to the ideology of the PKK, Kurdistan is perceived as the real 'home-land', grasping all aspects of reality. They also tend to base their texts on their experiences, particularly after the 1980 military coup. Most importantly, they challenge the idea that 'home-land' is not necessarily an ideal place to live. In the works of novelists not affiliated to the ideology of the PKK, there is a combination of both real and ideal home. In other words, the understanding of 'home-land' is both real and imagined, with the incorporation of elements of idealisation. In addition, the novels by those affiliated with the ideology of the PKK in diaspora, especially those published before 1999, defend the idea of a 'Greater Kurdistan', combining the Kurdish regions in four separate countries into its national liberation discourse. This discourse considers the Kurds as a uniform nation that has sovereign rights to create a 'Greater Kurdistan' because before 1999 the PKK's ultimate aim was to establish an independent, united Kurdistan.

However, after the arrest of Abdullah Öcalan in 1999 the PKK explicitly abandoned its demand for an independent Kurdish state and instead demanded the creation of a democratic republic within Turkey in which the cultural and linguistic existence of the Kurds was recognised. The idea of homeland and the belief in national liberation changed accordingly in the novels published after 1999 in diaspora. Even so, the novels defending the PKK national movement (almost all novels in Turkish Kurdistan and a few in diaspora) involve a more united approach to all parts of Kurdistan, aimed at creating a national consciousness for solidarity and liberation. In this context, a softer portrait of Kurdistan and Kurdish identity is drawn through the descriptions of places and characterisation.

By contrast, the novels criticising the PKK (the majority of the novels in diaspora) do not attempt to support an independent, united Kurdistan and tend to approach Kurdistan-related issues more

critically, as if they are constructing an anti-Kurdistan image in the sense of the PKK's discourse. These novels often criticise the Kurdish national struggle, and do not hesitate to present mistakes made by Kurds in the past. They demonstrate that betrayal of the national cause has been a significant issue in the history of Kurdistan. The enemies of Kurdistan are not only other nations, such as Persians, Arabs, and Turks, but are Kurds as well, in the form of village guards, Kurdish Shaikhs, landowners (*Aghas*), and others. Accordingly, these novels recognise the existing sovereign states and demand autonomous forms of government within them. In addition, these novels concentrate on the negative aspects of Kurdish identity, avoiding idealisation of any characteristic features.

On the other hand, in almost all novels from Turkish Kurdistan, Kurdistan is portrayed with idealistic features, which convey the notion that Kurdistan is pure and ideal unless there is intervention by others. The PKK-affiliated novels attempt to project optimism for the future of the national struggle, which is communicated through various mental projections of Kurdistan. The depiction of 'natural home' in many diasporic novels and 'ideal home' in the novels of Turkish Kurdistan can also be seen in the dichotomy between the constructions of destroyed urban Kurdistan against idealised rural Kurdistan.

The social and political discourse in which the novelists are involved is not independent from the formation of their novelistic discourse, contributing to the creation of different discourses. Mikhail Bakhtin in his essay *Discourse in the Novel* (1981) draws attention not just to the variety of social discourses activated in the novel but to the novelist's own attitude to these discourses. In this sense, changes taking place in Kurdistan in terms of the ongoing conflicts affect the outlooks and ideologies of novelists which, in turn, undoubtedly influence the production of the novels. I have applied an extrinsic approach to the textual analysis of the novels because of the profoundly autobiographical aspects and the socio-political contexts of the Kurdish novelistic discourse. Since extrinsic factors such as the personal memoirs of the novelists and the socio-political lives of the Kurds have greatly influenced the process of

producing these novels, it is essential to take the diaspora context of the exiled writers into consideration. Diverse factors shape a particular diasporic community, arising from both the country of origin left behind and the new environment in which the migrant now resides. Although the creation of the Kurdish diaspora in Europe is a relatively new phenomenon, dating back to the 1960s and consisting mainly of Kurds as workforce, it has expanded incredibly with high numbers of political refugees. The political, economic, and cultural structures and processes of the new country of residence have affected Kurdish diasporic members (lacking state/sovereignty and in the position of being de-territorialised voluntarily or by force) in various ways.

The diverse realities of the novelists' lives are reflected in their fiction. However, due to generational differences, the influence of the host country, the effects of political fractions before exile, and resistance to being forgotten through being away from one's origins, diasporic novelists in general tend to narrate more about their lived experiences. Memories become the main source for returning to the image of Kurdistan in the past for Kurdish novelists in diaspora who are in the process of creating an alternative version of the past to illuminate and transform the present through their narratives. In revising the past, memories and remembering associated with personal experiences are linked with particular moments and places. Certainly there are common features within these recollections that can reveal how memory interprets past events, and how 'home-land' is visualised within the context of their remembering. They are usually fictional autobiographies; they draw on the author's own experiences and do not choose to dramatise their exilic experiences.

Furthermore, what makes diasporic novels so diverse is that they are political critiques of 'home' in which the novelists invest their literary visions. In other words, diasporic novelists use their novels to critique their homeland. In fact, in the case of displacement, 'home' is usually considered to be a 'mythic place' and 'imaginary homeland' of diasporic imagination, as suggested by (mainly postcolonial) scholars and writers, such as McLeod (2000), Cohen (1997), Brah (1997), and Rushdie (1991); however, the majority of Kurdish diasporic novels

challenge this view as they attempt to portray an 'actual' picture of home based on facts, devoid of any praise and idealisation. 'Home' is not an idyllic place of safety and an ideal place to return to. The diasporic articulation of nostalgic discourse shaped in conditions of homelessness and non-belonging produces a pessimistic view of the present. In other words, sorrowful days in the past shape the present from a melancholic perspective. 'Home-land' is memorised along with its tragic past due to betrayals, its corrupted present due to the conflicts, and its lost future due to lack of solidarity. For almost all the diaspora novelists, 'home-land' lies under the shadow of past experiences, most of them having been subjected to imprisonment and torture before the departure into exile. For example, Diyarbakir arouses unpleasant memories of experiences that are usually associated with torture and imprisonment. This also produces the notion that the original homeland fails to satisfy the characters' need for a home; nor is the host country seen as a new place in which to be re-homed. Lack of adaptation to a new environment is related not only to a new culture (that has no relevance for them), but also to the lack of unity within the diaspora community (which is also very significant in constructing this sense of 'in between'). They fail to form an affective bond both within and beyond the borders of their community. In this case controversies and fragmentation, memories and imagining the past become the only strong response by the diasporic members to displacement and as a way of countering the harsh realities of exile.

In contrast to the characterists of diasporic novels described above, the novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan surprisingly includes more nostalgic elements, which are considered by diaspora theorists and scholars to be the exclusive preserve of exilic literary works. Kurdish novelistic discourse produced in the context of Kurdistan itself is more compatible with the general diasporic discourses with regard to migrants' links with their home country. Nostalgia usually applies to the migrants who moved and no longer have homes to go back to. The literary characters in the novels in Turkish Kurdistan usually express a more nostalgic, harmonious past and maintain an optimistic desire for a better future, which can mainly be achieved by

active political movement and national struggle. Kurdish novelistic discourse challenges the classic definition of 'home' as 'the stable physical centre of one's universe – a safe and still place to leave and return to, and a principal focus of one's concern and control' (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 6). The descriptions of 'home' include idealisation, an intense nostalgia for 'home' of the past, and a strong sense of loss and return. Although some novels are set in cities and urban areas, Kurdish ethnic identity as expressed in novels is still emphatically based in pastoral (mainly village) settings, which are considered to represent pure Kurdish identity and struggle. For example, the characters usually long for their villages or desperately wish to return there one day. Also, the unification of Kurds from all regions is accentuated, since it is regarded as a principal requirement for liberation and freedom. The sense of 'home-land' is not fulfilled within the worlds of the characters, which are mainly associated with migrations, constant journeys, village evacuations, and loss of the beloved. Although for now it is unapproachable and lost, the message is that, through constant struggle and resistance, 'home' can be regained for good in the future.

The notion of 'ethnoscape' and exploring the connection between ethnic perception and space (Appadurai 1991, Smith 1996) was also investigated in relation to the novels. It is true that in almost all of them, both from Kurdistan and the diaspora, Kurdistan is usually described in a context of constant war and conflicts, which is not different from a battlefield. However, a difference is revealed when Kurdistan is portrayed exclusively through its natural or idealistic aspects. The question arises, is 'home-land' in Kurdish novelistic discourse a 'natural' or 'ideal' place for its subjects? Tucker (1994) notes how 'most people spend their lives in search of home, at the gap between the *natural home* [conceived as the home environment conducive to human existence, i.e., dry land] and the particular *ideal home* where they would be fully fulfilled'.

In line with Tucker's observation, one can see that, while diasporic novelistic discourse not affiliated to the politics of the PKK tends to conceive Kurdistan as the 'natural home' which has a great range of negative features, it is far from being an 'ideal home' for the

characters under these circumstances. However, in the novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan and the diasporic novels embracing the politics of the PKK, there is a great range of references to the idea that despite the external factors turning Kurdistan into a battlefield, it is still the ideal 'home' that characters wish to live in for the rest of their lives. Indeed, the stress on the sentimental and nostalgic aspects of 'home-land' constructs Kurdistan as the ideal 'home-land'. In so doing, the evaluation of 'home-land' is not necessarily based on positive descriptions; instead it conveys that negative circumstances recur, due not to the natural conditions of 'home-land' but to the influence of others – without the intervention of others, Kurdistan is the ideal 'home-land' for the characters. In most of the novels, villages and pastoral areas are usually presented as the representation of the entire Kurdish land, which is usually fictionalised with its real topographic features.

However, in addition to stressing the beauty of the natural environment of Kurdistan or the identification of the characters with the natural beauty or landscapes of Kurdistan, it is also important to note that these novels also make evident that the pure and peaceful life in Kurdistan is never perfect, since this idealised and beautiful village also reflects the fragmented and violated environment caused by wars, conflicts, and migrations. In this case, the beauty of the village and landscape is evoked with a sad and dramatic undertone expressing the loss of the beauty and the security it embodied. The narrators usually recount the difficult life conditions of villagers arising from conflicts and the cruelty of the Turkish state. In other words, the sense of place and the allusions to the mountains, the clouds, the winds, and the uplands recall images of Kurdistan, reminders of a peaceful paradise which was raided and corrupted by others, mainly by soldiers.

The level of sentimental and nostalgic aspects related to Kurdistan in the novels of Turkish Kurdistan is much higher than in the PKK-affiliated diasporic novels. For example, although PKK-affiliated diasporic novels present a critique of Kurds with regard to issues such as honour killings, the suppression of Kurdish Shaikhs, and landowners, the novels from Turkish Kurdistan portray a Kurdistan

without any internal destructive sources but only external ones. Even though the depiction of 'home-land' in the novels of Turkish Kurdistan conflicts with the reality of the lived experience of 'home-land', it is still reflected in the form of idealised, romanticised, and nostalgic emotion embedded with mythical and symbolic elements.

Being in the territory of stateless homeland, directly facing oppression and assimilation, and being more involved in the national struggle places the sense of 'home' in a more mythical, distanced, and nostalgic perspective. In this respect, instead of distance, living in a fragmented territory in a condition of statelessness joins longing with nostalgia. Being in the territory of homeland does not destroy the sense of estrangement; by contrast, in the case of the Kurds, it increases it, since they constantly experience statelessness and political uncertainty in their daily lives, which leads to the novelists producing exilic literature. Thus, Kurdish novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan promotes Kurdistan as the ideal home through reducing the realist elements within the narrations.

In broad terms, on the one hand, in the novels from Turkish Kurdistan, Kurdistan is conceptualised as 'ideal', while, on the other hand, in the novels of diaspora, it is conceptualised more as 'reality'. However, the fact that changing global conditions, transnational relations, political transformations, and the evolving Kurdish national movements have a strong influence on the way authors approach the idea of 'home-land' and Kurdish identity, is a clear indication that in future new articulations of 'home-land' and 'identity' will be produced arising from changing politics and contexts.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Novels from the Diaspora

1) Silêman Demîr, (1997), *Sorê Gulê* (Red Rose), Stockholm: Nûdem.
2) Silêman Demîr, (2007), *Piştî Bîst Salan* (After Twenty Years), Istanbul: Doz.
3) Silêman Demîr, (2010), *Kassandra* (Kassandra), Istanbul: Avesta.
4) Firat Cewerî, (2005), *Payiza Dereng* (Belated Autumn), Stockholm: Nûdem.
5) Firat Cewerî, (2008), *Ez ê yekî Bikujim* (I will Kill Someone), Istanbul: Avesta.
6) Bûbê Eser, (2006 [2004]), *Jiyanek* (A Life), Istanbul: Doz.
7) Bûbê Eser, (2006), *Gardiyan* (The Guardian), Istanbul: Doz.
8) Xurşîd Mîrzengî, (2004), *Belqitî* (Belqiti), Istanbul: Komal.
9) Xurşîd Mîrzengî, (2005), *Sînor* (Border), Istanbul: Komal.
10) Mihemed Dehsiwar, (1995), *Çirîskên Rizgariyê* (The Sparkle of Liberation), Stockholm: Newroz.
11) Mehdî Zana, (2005), *Ay Dayê* (Oh Mum), Istanbul: Tevn.
12) Medenî Ferho, (1997), *Xaltîka Zeyno* (Auntie Zeyno), Istanbul: Doz.
13) Medenî Ferho, (1999), *Marê Di Tur De* (Snake in the Sack), Istanbul: Perî.

14) Medenî Ferho, (2001), *Xewnên Pînekirî* (The Patched Dreams), Istanbul: Perî.
15) Medenî Ferho, (2007), *Dora Bacinê Bi Dar e* (Bacin Amongst Trees), Istanbul: Tevn.
16) Medenî Ferho, (2009), *Çiroka Me* (Our Story), Istanbul: Do.
17) Hesenê Metê, (2000), *Labîranta Cînan* (The Labyrinth of Jinn), Diyarbakir: Avesta.
18) Hesenê Metê, (2007), *Gotinên Gunehkar* (Sinful Words), Istanbul: Avesta.
19) Hesenê Metê, (2007), *Tofan* (Flood), Diyarbakir: Avesta.
20) Mehmed Uzun, (2005 [1989]), *Siya Evînê* (In the Shadow of Love), Istanbul: İthaki.
21) Mehmed Uzun, (2007 [1995]), *Bîra Qederê* (The Shaft of Fate), Istanbul: İthaki.
22) Mehmed Uzun, (2007 [1998]), *Ronî Mîna Evîne Tarî Mîna Mirinê* (Light like Love Dark like Death), Istanbul: İthaki.
23) Mehmed Uzun, (2010 [2001]), *Hawara Dîcleyê I* (The Cry of Tigris I), Istanbul: İthaki.
24) Mehmed Uzun, (2010 [2003]), *Hawara Dîcleyê II* (The Cry of Tigris II), Istanbul: İthaki.
25) Mehmed Uzun, (2005 [1984]), *Tu* (You), Istanbul: İthaki.
26) Mehmed Uzun, (2002 [1987]), *Rojek ji Rojên Evdalê Zeynikê* (One of the Days of Evdalê Zeynikê), Istanbul: Avesta.
27) Mehmed Uzun, (2007 [1989]), *Mirina Kalekî Rind* (The Death of Old Rind), Istanbul: İthaki.
28) Îbrahîm Osman, (2008), *Evîna Mêrxasekî* (The Love of a Young Man), DiyarbakIr: Lîs.
29) Rıza Çolpan, (2001), *Xidê Naxirwan û Tevkustine Dêrsim* (Xide Naxirwan and Dersim Genocide), Istanbul: Perî.
30) Rıza Çolpan, (2001), *Nado Kurê Xwe Firot* (Nado Sold his Son), Istanbul: Perî.
31) Rıza Çolpan, (2004 [1996]), *Serpêhatiyên Rustem û Namerdiya Namerdan* (The Adventures of Rustem and the Vileness of the Viles), Istanbul: Veng.
32) Mezher Bozan, (2002), *Av Zelal Bû I* (Water was Clear I), Istanbul: Perî.

33) Mezher Bozan, (2004), *Av Zelal Bû II* (Water was Clear II), Istanbul: Perî.
34) Mezher Bozan, (2006), *Av Zelal Bû III* (Water was Clear III), Istanbul: Perî.
35) Mezher Bozan, (2008), *Av Zelal Bû IV* (Water was Clear IV), Istanbul: Perî.
36) Mezher Bozan, (2005), *Zarokên Me* (Our Children), Istanbul: Perî.
37) Mezher Bozan, (2007), *Zêna* (Zena), Istanbul: Nûbihar.
38) Mezher Bozan, (2007), *Asim* (Asim), Istanbul: Perî.
39) Zeynel Abidîn, (2003), *Peyman* (Deal), Istanbul: Gün.
40) Zeynel Abidîn, (1999), *Binefşên Tariyê* (The Violets of Darkness), Istanbul: Doz.
41) Zeynel Abidîn, (2007), *Bigrî Heval* (Cry Friend), Berlin: Evra.
42) Mustafa Aydoğan, (1999), *Pêlên Bêrikirinê* (Waves of Longing), Stockholm: Nûdem.
43) Laleş Qaso, (1999), *Se Şev û Se Roj* (Three Nights and Three Days), Stockholm: Nûdem.
44) Laleş Qaso, (2000), *Xezeba Azadiyê* (The Wrath of Freedom), Stockholm: Pelda.
45) Laleş Qaso, (2002), *Wêran* (Ruinous), Stockholm: Pelda.
46) Laleş Qaso, (2003), *Ronakbîr* (Intellectual), Stockholm: Pelda.
47) Mahmut Baksi, (2007 [1984]), *Hêlîn* (Helin), Diyarbakir: Lîs.
48) Mahmut Baksi, (2009 [1988]), *Gundikê Dono* (Dono's Village), Diyarbakir: Lîs.
49) Mahmut Baksi, (2001), *Serhildane Mala Eliyê Ûnis* (The Rebel of the House of Eliye Unis), Istanbul: Welat.
50) Lokman Polat, (1999), *Kewa Marî* (The Partridge Mari), Stockholm: Helwest.
51) Lokman Polat, (2006), *Kodnav Viyan* (Nickname Viyan), Stockholm: Helwest.
52) Lokman Polat, (2002), *Fîlozof* (The Philosopher), Stockholm: Helwest.
53) Lokman Polat, (2002), *Rojnamevan* (The Journalist), Istanbul: Perî.
54) Lokman Polat, (2004), *Robîn* (Robin), Istanbul: Veng.

55) Fêrgîn Melîk Aykoç, (2009), *Rondikên Hêviyên Wenda* (The Tears of Lost Hopes), Istanbul: Do.
56) Fêrgîn Melîk Aykoç, (2002), *Dîlên li ber Pûkê* (Captives in the Snowstorm), Stockholm: Rewşen.
57) Fêrgîn Melîk Aykoç, (1999), *Mamosteyê Zinaran* (The Teacher of Mountains), Stockholm: Rewşen.
58) Fêrgin Melîk Aykoç, (2009), *Siya Dema Borî* (In the Shadow of Past Time), Istanbul: Do.
59) Diyar Bohtî, (2008), *Soryaz* (Soryaz), Istanbul: Do.
60) Diyar Bohtî, (2006), *Gul bişkivîn* (Rose Sprout), Cologne: Mezopotamya.
61) Diyar Bohtî, (2007), *Mexmûr* (Makhmur), Cologne: Mezopotamya.
62) Reşad Akgul, (2001), *Veger* (Return), Stockholm: Rewşen.
63) Ali Husein Kerim, (2008), *Şopa Rojên Buhurî* (The Trace of Blazing Days), Stockholm: Rewşen.
64) Jîr Dilovan, (2003), *Zenga Zêrîn* (The Rust of Gold), Cologne: Mezopotamya.

Appendix B: The Novels from Turkish Kurdistan

65) Yaqob Tilermenî, (2005), *Kitim* (The Reckless), Diyarbakir: Lîs.
66) Yaqob Tilermenî, (2009), *Qerebafon* (Gramophone), Istanbul: Do.
67) Yaqob Tilermenî, (2009), *Bavfileh* (Proselyte), Istanbul: Do.
68) Şener Özmen, (2008), *Rojnivîska Spinoza* (The Diary of Spinoza), Diyarbakir: Lîs.
69) Şener Özmen, (2010), *Pêşbaziya Çîrokên Neqediyayî* (The Contest of Incomplete Story), Diyarbakir: Lîs.
70) Yunus Eroğlu, (2007), *Nameyek Ji Xwedê Re* (A Letter to the God), Diyarbakir: Lîs.
71) Yunus Eroğlu, (2010), *Otobês* (The Bus), Diyarbakir: Lîs.
72) Îbrahîm Seydo Aydogan, (1999), *Reş û Spî* (Black and White), Istanbul: Doz.

73) Îbrahîm Seydo Aydogan, (2003), *Leyla Fîgaro* (Leyla Figaro), Istanbul: Elma.
74) Hesen Huseyîn Denîz, (2008), *Hêvî Her Dem Heye* (There is Always Hope), Istanbul: Do.
75) Lokman Ayebe, (2004), *Jar Lê Sermest* (Miserable but Drunk), Istanbul: Belkî.
76) Lokman Ayebe, (2007), *Gava Heyatê* (The Step of Life), Istanbul: Belkî.
77) Nesîp Tarim, (2007), *Xezal* (Xezal), Istanbul: Belkî.
78) Adîl Zozanî, (2001), *Kejê* (Keje), Istanbul: Perî.
79) Adîl Zozanî, (2009), *Mişextî* (Exile), Diyarbakir: Lîs.
80) Remezen Alan, (2002), *Saturn* (Saturn), Diyarbakir: Avesta.
81) Mîr Qasimlo, (2005), *Wêneyên Keserê* (The Pictures of Gloom), Istanbul: Perî.
82) Mîr Qasimlo, (2009), *Giyanên Bahozî* (The Stormy Souls), Istanbul: Do.
83) Sabrî Akbel, (2006), *Evîna Pinhan* (Hidden Love), Istanbul: Nûbihar.
84) Kemal Orgun, (2002), *Li Qerexa Şevê Hîvron* (At the Edge of Night Moonlight), Istanbul: Sî.
85) Özgür Kıyak, (2009), *Rêwiyên Bê Welat* (The Travellers Without a Country), Istanbul: Do.
86) Mîran Janbar, (2004), *Ardûda* (Arduda), Diyarbakir: Lîs.
87) Eyüp Kıran, (2005), *Pilingên Serhedê* (The Tigers of Serhad), Istanbul: Elma.
88) Ömer Dilsoz, (2009), *Neynika Dilî* (The Mirror of Heart), Istanbul: Aram.
89) Ömer Dilsoz, (2003), *Hêviyên Birîndar* (Wounded Hopes), Istanbul: Aram.
90) Ömer Dilsoz, (2005), *Bêhna Axê* (The Smell of Soil), Istanbul: Berçem.
91) Atilla Barışer, (2005), *Mandalîn* (Mandarin), Istanbul: Elma.
92) Atilla Barışer, (2010), *Bi Xatirê te Enqere* (Good Bye Ankara), Istanbul: Do.
93) Aram Gernas, (2007), *Toqa Naletê* (The Strap of Curse), Istanbul: Doz.

94) Îhsan Colemêrgî, (1995), *Cembelî Kurê Mîrê Hekaryan* (Cembeli the Son of the Mir of Hakkari), Stockholm: Apec.
95) Nûrî Şemdîn, (1988), *Zeviyên Soro* (The Lands of Soro), Stockholm: Kurdistan.
96) Torî (Mehmet Kemal Işık), (2002), *Mendik* (Mendik), Istanbul: Berfîn.
97) Eyub Guven, (2010), *Kulmek Morîkên Şînbirik* (A Handful of Talismans), Diyarbakir: Ronahî.
98) Arîn Zîn, (2007), *Ez Stêrka Sîpan im* (I am the Star of Suphan), Istanbul: Berçem.
99) Abdusamet Yiğit (2009), *Feqiyê Teyran* (Faqi Tayran), Berlin: Han.
100) Cihan Roj (2009), *Gitarê bê Tel* (Guitar without String), Istanbul: Do.

NOTES

Introduction

1. Two articles by Kreyenbroek, 'Kurdish identity and the language question', in T. Atabaki and M. Dorlejin (eds), *Kurdistan in Search of Ethnic Identity* (1990); and 'On Kurdish language', in P. Kreyenbroek and S. Sperl (eds), *The Kurds: Contemporary Overview* (1992) provide a socio-linguistic assessment of the Kurdish language which, with its diverse dialects, is defined as an essential component of Kurdish identity.
2. There have been various articles and books published on Kurdish literature, though not specifically on the novel as a genre. Mehmed Uzun's *Despêka Edebiyata Kurdî* (An Introduction to Kurdish Literature, 2005 [1992]), and *Antolojiya Edebiyata Kurdî I-II* (The Anthology of Kurdish Literature, 1995); a short presentation by Lal Laleş on 'Kürt Edebiyatı' (Kurdish Literature, 2009);[1] a book by Feqî Hüseyin Sağnıç (who is mainly known for his work on Kurdish language), *Dîroka Wêjeya Kurdî* (The History of Kurdish History, 2002); and Qanate Kurdo's *Tarîxa Edebiyata Kurdî II* (The History of Kurdish Literature, 1983) – all provide historical background to the development of Kurdish literature, in both Sorani and Kurmanji dialect, from classical Kurdish poetry to modern Kurdish literature. In addition to the studies mentioned, two additional items (both unpublished PhD dissertations) are relevant to my focus in this book. The first is 'Conflit linguistique et champ littéraire kurde en Turquie' (2005) by Clémence Scalbert-Yücel who, in discussing the possible emergence and autonomisation process of a 'Kurdish Field of Literature' in Turkey, follows and challenges Bourdieu's theory of the fields (in, for example, *The Rules of Art*) in a context defined as a 'Linguistic Conflict'. She also analyses Turkish and Kurdish language policies from the 1900s to the present, examining Kurdish journals and the production, organisation, and autonomisation of the Kurdish literary field, in Turkish Kurdistan and in its diaspora. Joanna Bochenska's thesis, 'Literatura i język kurdyjski; jako zwierciadło

ewolucji kurdyjskiej tożsamości w Turcji' (Kurdish Literature and Language as a Mirror of the Evolution of Kurdish Identity in Turkey, 2009) presents the dynamically developing process of Kurdish national identity in the twentieth century with reference to the culture of the Kurds and especially to their literary achievements. She examines the works of chosen writers from Turkish Kurdistan who write in Kurdish or in Turkish, such as Yaşar Kemal, Mehmed Uzun, Seyit Alp, Ruşen Arslan, and Hesenê Metê. Because Scalbert-Yücel's thesis is in French and Bochenska's is in Polish, I was not able to read them, but thanks to discussion/correspondence with both, I was able to share their main arguments and research findings.

3. At the time of writing (2012), Hashem Ahmadzadeh's *Nation and Novel* (2003) can be regarded as the only specialised survey available in English of the Kurdish novel. In a strong study (built on a PhD thesis) that demonstrates the relationship between nation-building and the novel, Ahmadzadeh gives a general overview of Kurdish literature, analyses the rise and development of the novel, and compares five novels selected from Persian as well as from Kurdish literature; this comparison shows clearly that, when measured against the Persian novel, the Kurdish novel is just starting a long journey. By comparing Iranian and Kurdish novels, and with reference to Anderson's argument that novelistic discourse can be a useful field for investigating nationalist discourses, he examines the relationship between the development of novelistic discourse and nation-building. Because of the somewhat limited number of novels analysed in the book, the credibility of some arguments is perhaps suspect. Additionally, I believe that putting Sorani and Kurmanji novels from different regions of Kurdistan together and then comparing them with Persian novels might lead readers to make generalised assumptions rather than more complex conclusions specific to each region. In contrast to Ahmadzadeh's methodology and scope of research, my intention in the present study is to analyse the Kurdish novel, not in comparison with the novel in other dominant nations but in terms of its own development. I also approach the Kurdish novelistic discourse regionally (i.e., Turkish Kurdistan and its diaspora only) in order not to blur the contextualisation of the novels. Again, Ahmadzadeh's academic articles and essays, which are based on close readings of several Kurdish novels, are helpful in arriving at a broad understanding of the Kurdish novelistic discourse; however, in terms of theoretical perspective, the present study aims to go beyond general literary interpretation and to demonstrate particular thematic analyses on the construction of 'identity' and representation of 'home-land'.

4. Since this research focuses on the concept of 'home', it is necessary to consider the Kurdish equivalent of the concept and also the way it is depicted in Kurdish novelistic discourse. '*Mal*' in Kurmanji literally means 'home'. Another closer term, '*xanî*', is associated with a physical, structured dwelling house containing no mental or emotional meanings. In this study, however, 'home' is regarded as broader units of space, i.e., as '*welat*' rather than '*mal*' or '*xanî*', and 'homeland' is

considered to be a larger sphere of the 'home' territory, which is associated with '*welat*' in Kurdish. In the present study '*welat*' is perceived through wider meanings comprising physical and cultural landscapes together with the homeland environment including social relations. Different Kurdish dictionaries provide more or else similar meanings. According to Torî's *Ferheng Kurdî-Turkî* (2004), '*welat*' means '*memleket*, *ülke*' in Turkish, which refers to 'motherland, country'. Musa Anter's *Ferhanga Kurdî-Turki* (1967) defines it as '*vatan*, *memleket*', again in Turkish, and sharing similar meanings with Torî's 'homeland, country'. In Çelebî and Sipka's *Kurmanji Kurdish-English Glossary* (2002), '*welat*' refers to 'mother country, country'. In Michael Chyet's *Kurdish English Dictionary* (2003) it means, 'homeland, fatherland, country'. Dictionary meanings of '*welat*' almost all refer to one expression, which is usually 'homeland'. '*Nîştiman*' and '*war*' have also been used to refer to the homeland; however, whereas '*Nîştiman*' is not addressed at all in the Kurdish novelistic discourse, '*war*' is sometimes used, mainly with in the sense of 'land'. *Ülke* refers in English to 'country', and denotes physical and geographical location only. Quite differently, '*memleket*', which has similar connotations to '*welat*', refers to both symbolic and physical meanings related to a piece of land. Whereas '*vatan*' refers literally to 'motherland', it is usually associated with 'Turkish statehood, the regime and the official construction of history and identity in Turkey' (Demir 2012: 826). In this account, in the Turkish translations of '*welat*', *memleket* is closest in terms of meaning whereas '*ülke*' is very limited and '*vatan*' is mostly identified with the Turkish nationalist mode of expression of homeland or country.

5. One could compile a long list of Kurdish writers writing in the languages of their sovereign states. Use of the terms 'obliged to' or 'preferred to' is intended, first, to illustrate that until recently there has been a prolonged ban on Kurdish in Iran that continues in Syrian Kurdistan. Secondly, because of such prohibitions, Kurdish writers have been unable to attain the linguistic level for writing fiction in their mother tongue; i.e., they could not improve their Kurdish in its written form, being either limited to using it in daily life, or having never had the opportunity to learn their own language at all. Thirdly, they have had certain literary concerns, such as being acknowledged by the critics, institutions, and writers of the states in which they find themselves. Well-known writers such as Yaşar Kemal, Suzan Samancı, and Yılmaz Odabaşı from Turkish Kurdistan have written in Turkish, Salim Barakat from Syrian Kurdistan has written in Arabic, etc. One of the best-received Persian novels called *Mrs. Ahou's Husband* in the 1970s was written by a Kurd from Iranian Kurdistan. Again Yaşar Kemal, in origin a Kurd, is considered one of the best writers in Turkish literature.
6. In this research, the concept of 'home' appears as more of an idea than a physicality that conveys a stable place of residence in which one feels secure, comfortable and familiar. On the other hand, 'homeland' in a territorial sense refers to a place/land of origin to which one feels emotionally and physically

attached. If the text invokes both 'home' and 'homeland', the keyword 'homeland' will be used.

7. Two recent books on the Kurdish novel, published in the Kurmanji dialect, are Helîm Yûsiv's *Romana Kurdî* (Kurdish Novel, 2011) and Medenî Ferho's *Rewşa Romana Kurdî* (The State of the Kurdish Novel, 2011). Both authors are severely critical of Mehmed Uzun on the grounds of weak content and lack of textual analysis; they label him as a 'white Kurd' because of his relation to the project of the Turkish state aimed at creating 'their Kurds'; i.e., those who would comply with their politics. These books by Yûsiv and Ferho (who are also novelists) have been helpful for my research, not because they present a portrait of Kurdish novelistic discourse but because they make one aware of the political views of writers, and how the politics introduced in the novels are the main concern of the novelists; this is a factor that completely supports one of my arguments throughout. My own book with co-author Abidin Parıltı, entitled *Kürt Romanı: Okuma Kılavuzu* (A Companion to the Kurdish Novel, 2010), which includes 50 novels, may also be helpful in understanding the basic structure of Kurmanji novels. Rather than pursuing a specific subject, the book provides introductory information to some of the novels, concluding with a section that focuses on certain elements, such as exile, the death wish, characterisation, etc., in the novels examined. As its title suggests this book is intended simply as a companion and there is no theoretical or conceptual framework on which to construct an analysis. For more see also Nüket Esen (2009), 'Mıgırdiç Margosyan and Mehmed Uzun: remembering cultural pluralism in Diyarbakır', in Catharina Dufft (ed.), *Turkish Literature and Cultural Memory*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag. Esen's 2009 study had already been published two years earlier as a journal article with the same title, in *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No. 36, Spring 2007, pp. 145–154. Also, see Alparslan Nas (2011), 'Between National and Minor Literature in Turkey: Modes of Resistance in the Works of Mehmed Uzun and Mıgırdıç Margosyan', unpublished MA thesis, Sabanci University, Istanbul, Turkey.
8. Discussion is ongoing as to whether a work written in any language other than the writer's mother tongue should be regarded within the literature of its language, or within that of the original language of the writer. In this regard arguments differ from country to country, and even from person to person depending on circumstances. In recent years, new terms have been coined to describe different situations that include both categories. For example, the work of an English-language writer of Indian origin is categorised as Indian English literature; while works of the Indian diaspora are referred to as Indo-Anglian literature since, in terms of characterisation and thematic choices, such work reflects an Indian microcosm, including its culture and conditions. This debate regarding English language works written by writers of Indian origin is assessed according to the category of post-colonial literature, since India was formerly a British colony (Kumar and Ojha 2005, Naikar 2007). When thinking about the literature of nations such as the Kurds, who have been writing in sovereign

languages for years, the original language can clearly be seen to be a cornerstone of national identity (Hassanpour 1992, Yildiz and Fryer 2004, Fasold 2006). Therefore, this book regards Kurdish novels only as those written in the Kurdish language. However, one should mention Scalbert-Yücel's article 'Languages and the Definition of Literature: The Blurred Borders of Kurdish Literature in Contemporary Turkey' (2011*)* in which she argues that due to the specific conditions of Kurds or Kurdish language, Kurdish literature should not be considered to consist exclusively of works in Kurdish since it may also include Turkish-language writers. She notes that this assumption might well change in the future when socio-political and cultural conditions for Kurdish literature, both worldwide and within Turkey itself, have improved.

9. There are no reliable data on the total numbers of Kurds in Turkey because of the lack of recent census data for them. Estimates of the size of the Kurdish population have been the result of guesswork rather than based on accurate statistics. Although there is no any official survey or census, Kurds account for around 23 per cent of the population of Turkey. The majority of Kurds are Sunni Muslims alongside the Safi sect. There are also a number of Jews, Yazidi, and Christians.
10. The Kurdish diaspora extends over most of Europe, although the novels examined in this research show that Kurdish novelistic discourse has developed mainly in Sweden. While there are several novels from Germany, there is also one from a Kurdish author in Australia. Compared with earlier times, more relaxed conditions globally as well as at the individual level have undoubtedly made it easier for Kurdish authors to travel back and forth, although this does not change the fact that they are still diasporic writers. There are two novelists, Torî and Aram Gernas, who returned permanently to the homeland after some years in exile and who are placed in the Turkish Kurdistan category, both having written their only novels many years after their return, although most of the novels examined under the category of Turkish Kurdistan are written by Kurdish authors but are published either in Diyarbakir or Istanbul because of convenient publishing conditions. The research does not take the writers' current city of residence into consideration but categorises them as being from Turkish Kurdistan. Almost all of the novelists placed in this category currently live in various provinces of Turkish Kurdistan (mainly Diyarbakir, Mardin, and Hakkari).
11. For example, *Marê Di Tur De* (Snake in the Sack) by Medenî Ferho, who has lived in Sweden since the 1980s, was published in 1999 by Perî Publishers in Istanbul, although it was funded by the Kurdish Institute in Brussels. Similarly, Mehmed Uzun's *Rojek ji Rojên Evdalê Zeynikê* (One of the Days of Evdalê Zeynikê) was first published in Stockholm in 1991, and reprinted in Istanbul in the following year. Thus, place of publication of the novels does not depend on the location of the novelists but on available opportunities and suitable conditions.
12. There has been some discussion as to whether Nurî Şemdîn wrote the book first in Turkish or in Kurdish. The Turkish version published by Firat publisher in

1992, states that it is a translation from Kurdish. However, the Kurdish writer Îbrahîm Seydo Aydogan, who is also one of the novelists examined in this research, claims the opposite in the journal *Dilname* (2011: 6).

13. Colemergî wrote this book in 1992, managing to get it published in Sweden only in 1995 because of the Turkish ban on Kurdish publication. Even copies of the book posted to the writer by the Swedish publisher were embargoed. Colemergî was prosecuted over this case and released only in 1998.
14. In relation to transliteration throughout the book, I have used the titles of sources and names of figures in the original language with an English version in brackets on first use. Similarly, the English translation of novel titles is given on their first use, but subsequently they are only referred to by their original titles.
15. It should be emphasised that some of the lists of Kurmanji novels compiled by certain Kurdish writers that appear on websites are unreliable and inaccurate. In the course of this book, some of the novels that I examined from these lists were either originally written in Turkish or were in the Zazaki dialect but were listed as Kurmanji, while on other occasions, some of the short story collections were listed as novels. The list compiled for this book was created on the basis of comprehensive research as well as direct communications with either the novelist or the publishing house. Although there are some discrepancies, one should nevertheless acknowledge the list of Kurdish novels developed by Îbrahîm Seydo Aydogan and available at the *Dilname* website http://dilname.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/rojnameya-dilname-hijmar-4.pdf (accessed 14 September 2012), as well as the list compiled by Hêlim Yûsiv, included in the Kurdish journal *W* (no. 31, 2010) and in his book *Romana Kurdî* (2011). However, it should be noted that these lists include the same discrepancies and are not reliable; though it is claimed they indicate Kurmanji novels, they contain Zazaki novels and even novels written in Turkish. By contacting the publishers or obtaining the books, I was able to see these inconsistencies. For example, after contacting the editor (Azad Zal) of the novel *Doktor Dîno* (2009) written by Mehmet Yilmaz, I discovered that, although written by a Kurdish writer the book is, in fact, in Turkish.
16. It cannot be denied that even after his death in 2006, Mehmed Uzun is seen as the pioneer of the Kurdish novel (Allison 2007) and is reputed to be the best-known Kurdish writer among both Kurds and Turks. Because so many of his books have been translated into Turkish and published, and also because of his distant and sometimes reactionary attitudes towards the politics of the PKK, the Turkish media paid more attention to him than to other writers, to the extent that he has now become a subject for academic studies. For example, Nüket Esen's essay on Mıgırdiç Margosyan, Mehmed Uzun, and cultural pluralism in Diyarbakır (2009), and Alparslan Nas's unpublished MA thesis that examines the works of Mehmed Uzun and the Armenian writer Mıgırdıç Margosyan (2011), are both focused almost entirely on the works of Mehmed Uzun. See also Per Erik Ljung (2006), 'Inventing traditions: a comparative perspective on the writing of literary history', in Margaret Petersson (ed.),

Literary Interactions in the Modern World I: Vol. 3 of Anders Petersson et al. (eds), *Literary History: Towards a Global Perspective* (4 vols.), Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

17. Translated into English in 1986.
18. It is possible to find some useful articles and books that enlarge on interactions between real and imaginary geographies in various literary genres. For example, *Geography and Literature: A Meeting of the Disciplines*, edited by William E. Mallory and Paul Simpson-Housley (1987), focuses on realistic regional geography and symbolic landscapes in several literary works from Arnold Bennett to Thomas Hardy, an approach that can be applied to the geographical sense of Kurdish novels. The explicit goal of this research is not only to represent visibly the territorial aspect of the selected novels, but also to identify the connection of the characters with these textual places and attempt to answer how the particular national 'places' contribute to the construction of identities.
19. Îbrahîm Seydo Aydogan maintains that the novel *Hêlîn* was first written in Swedish and then translated into Kurdish (2011: 6). However, in relation to the way it emerged, the present research considers *Hêlîn* as a Kurdish language novel that was translated at a later date into Swedish.
20. Cassandra is a mythological Greek figure. The novel is based on the legend in which she is cursed by Apollo when she does not respond to his love. There are also many allusions to Kurdistan mainly with reference to the destruction of Troy.

Chapter 1 Kurdistan and Beyond: The Search for a Homeland

1. In this book, discourses on Kurdish identity are exclusively concentrated on Turkish Kurdistan, reflecting the focus of my research. More precisely, the model of identity that I include in this book is defined in accordance with the experience of displacement, that is to say diaspora, because a person's identity is constructed through, and with, that individual's interaction with his or her socio-cultural environment. For a comprehensive discussion of the construction of Kurdish identity in political discourse see Cengiz Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey* (London, 2012).
2. It is believed that the term 'Kurdistan' first appeared in written sources in the sixteenth century, being mentioned by the Kurdish prince Sharaf Khan in his *Sharafname* (1596–7). Şerefhan Bitlisi (M. Emin Bozarslan, trans.), *Şerefname* (Istanbul, 1975). However, McDowall argues, 'the term 'Kurdistan' was first used in the twelfth century as a geographical term by the Saljugs'. David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London, 2004), p. 6.
3. In this book, the regions of Kurdistan will be named Turkish Kurdistan, Iranian Kurdistan, Syrian Kurdistan, and Iraqi Kurdistan, thereby conveying geographical and demographic territory rather than political territory.

4. Although the maps encompassing the regions of Greater Kurdistan have a common core area, definite borders are not consistent. There are differing visions of the map of Greater Kurdistan: the one proposed by Serif Pasha for the Treaty of Versailles (1919), and the other proposed by the *Rizgari Kurd* Party (Kurdish Liberation Party) to the United Nations (1945).
5. Serefhan, *Serefname.*
6. For more on Newroz, the myth of origin, see Delal Aydin's MA thesis *Mobilizing the Kurds in Turkey: Newroz as a Myth* (Ankara, Middle East Technical University, 2005) Available at: http://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12606923/index.pdf (accessed 31 January 2014), Gürdal Aksoy, *Kürt dili ve söylenceleri üzerine incelemeler* (*Studies in Kurdish Language and Myths*) (Ankara, 1991), and *Bir Söylence, Bir Tarih: Newroz* (*A Myth, a History: Newroz*) (Ankara, 1998). These sources consider Newroz to be an ideological myth utilised in constructing the Kurdish identity, with which I concur. I discuss this further in the following chapters, in the context of my analysis of novels. Scholars and researchers such as Robert Olson, Martin van Bruinessen, Hamit Bozarslan, David McDowall, and Cengiz Gunes refer to the Newroz myth in their works.
7. MSF was established in 2008 as a solidarity network containing a number of civil society organisations, initiatives, trade unions, and local governances. Thousands of activists and international sympathisers (not only Kurds but other ethnic groups from the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America) are involved in the annual meetings of the MSF, with the aim of standing against colonialist, oppressive, and destructive powers. During panel sessions, they particularly refer to ecology, human rights, justice, migrants, and LGBT groups. Each forum takes place under a different slogan, the slogan for 2011 being 'For the Sake of Humanity, against Capitalism and Exploitation Freedom will Win'.
8. Mesopotamia Broadcast, which operated Kurdish satellite channels such as MMC (a music channel), *Nûçe* TV, and *Roj* TV, all broadcasting from Europe, was stripped of broadcasting rights by the decision of a Danish court in July 2013 based on alleged ties to the PKK. The decision to close and fine this Kurdish media organisation provoked strong reactions from Kurds, who believe that the Turkish government was behind it. The channels concerned were recently replaced by a new channel called *Med Nûçe*.
9. Mustafa Resid Pasa, the Ottoman Empire's Foreign Minister, was the principal author of the *Tanzimat* (a term originating from 'order') reforms, also known as the *Gülhane* decree. Mustafa Resit Pasa was educated in Europe, and this had a big impact on this series of governmental reforms, which included changes in the judicial and administrative bureaucracy, the creation of tax farms with a centralised revenue service, and a regular system of military conscription. But this is to exclusively emphasise financial reforms. Highly influenced by European notions, it also granted equality under the law to the non-Muslim community. Then *Islahat Fermani* (Reform Edict), the second reform decree, was issued in 1856, and this was an important step in the centralisation of the state. There were both advocates and opponents of these reforms. For more, see

Charles Issawi, *The Economic History of Turkey, 1800–1914* (Chicago, 1980), Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford, 1961), Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876* (Princeton, N, 1963), Erik J. Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement 1915–1926* (Leiden, 2004), Şevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism, 1820–1913: Trade, Investment and Production* (Cambridge, 1987).

10. It is also argued that the Ottomans needed the Kurds, not only on the front lines against the Safavid Persians, but principally as Sunni allies against the Alawite *Kızılbaş* (which means 'Redhead', referring to designated troops wearing red gear under the Shah of Iran) who constituted a threat to the Ottomans and were considered sympathetic to the Shia Safavids (Michael Eppel, 'The demise of the Kurdish Emirates: the impact of Ottoman reforms and international relations on Kurdistan during the first half of the nineteenth century', *Middle Eastern Studies* 44/2 (2008), p. 239). For more, see Ahmed Akgündüz and Said Öztürk, *Ottoman History: Misperceptions and Truths* (Rotterdam, 2011), Markus Dressler, *Writing Religion: The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam* (New York, 2013).
11. Molla Idris, son of Sheikh Husamüddin, was a key person in obtaining victory for the Ottomans by diplomatic means. Sultan Selim convinced Molla Idris to visit the ruling lords of the Mukri, Bradost, Babab, and Soran to fight against *Kızılbaş* troops. He then went on to other regions such as Imadiye, Cizre, Hizan, and Bitlis (Martin van Bruinessen, *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History* (London 1988), pp. 14–15).
12. *Eyalet* refers to the administrative units of Kurdistan province in the sixteenth century. See Mahmut Tezcan, *Turk Yemek Antropolojisi Yazilari* (Ankara, 2000), pp. 546–7.
13. The land during the Empire was divided into five essential categories. These were: Miri (State) land, Mülk (Private) land, Vakıf (Charitable and religious) land, Metruk (Tribal and collective) land, and Mevat (Waste) land. There were three forms of land holdings, represented by the administrative units entitled *timar*, *zeamet*, and *has*, and changeable according to their value. These were *miri* land, which means that the state was the owner and the right of usage was at the disposal of certain people operating within an established structure. *Timar* was the smallest one, and granted to *sipahis* (cavalryman); this was land granted by the Ottoman sultans with an annual tax revenue value of less than 20,000 akçes. If the revenues produced from *timar* was from 20,000 to 100,000 akçes, it was called *zeamet*; if it was above 100,000 akçes, it was called *has*. Both *zeamet* and *has* were granted to the military commanders or provincial governors by the Sultan. For more on the forms of tax collection during the Ottoman Empire, see Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert (eds), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge, 1994).
14. 'This military assistance was organised as *sipahi*, or 'feudal' cavalry, with ordinary *sipahi* receiving small landholdings within the *sancak*, and higher-ranking

sipahi receiving the yield of larger landholdings, or *zeamet*. On these fiefs [timar], *sipahi* were entitled to collect revenue from the sedentary and toiling peasants [...] had nearly exclusive hereditary right to cultivate the land though they did not own it' (Carl T. Dahlman, 'The political geography of Kurdistan', *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 43/4 (2002), pp. 276–7). For more on the social and political organisation of Kurdistan during the Ottoman Empire, see Wadie Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origins and Development* (Syracuse, N, 2006), Martin van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Society, Ethnicity and Refugee Problems', in Philip G. Kreyenboekand and Stefan Sperl (eds), *The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview* (London, 1992), Adem Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries* (New York, 2004).

15. Cited in Mehmet Öz, 'Ottoman Provincial Administration in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia: the case of Bidlis in the sixteenth century', in Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Borderlands* (Madison, WI, 2003), pp. 146–7.
16. During the Empire, the *medreses*, which were centrally administered organisations, played a significant role both in Kurds' life and their relationship with the state. Those educated at *medreses* could have a place in the Ottoman government as *kadi* (judges), *Müftü* (jurisconsults), or *mudarris* (teachers). Classical Kurdish poets such as Meleyê Ehmedê Cizirî (Malaye Jaziri, 1570–1640), the writer of *divan* (collection of poems), and Ehmedê Xanî (Ahmad-i Khani, 1650–1707), the author of *Mem û Zîn*, a romance based on the Kurdish national epic *Memê Alan*, taught at Kurdish *medreses.*
17. There are many reasons for the decline of the Ottoman Empire, including the corruption of the recruitment system (*devşirme*), failure of administration, increasing misrule, large population growth, and loss of control over most provinces and notables (called *ayan* or *derebeyi*). For more on the decline of the Ottomans, see James J. Reid, *Crisis of the Ottoman Empire* (Stuttgart, 2000), Alan Palmer, *The Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire* (New York, 1994), Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300–1600* (London, 2000), and Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2002).
18. After the revolt was suppressed, Bedirkhan Pasha was sent to another state with a different post. He was supposed to stay in Crete to suppress the Greek uprising in 1856.
19. For more, see van Bruinessen (1992a, 2002) and Olson (1989).
20. For more on the *Hamidiye* Cavalry, see Martin van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish society, ethnicity and refugee problems', in Philip G. Kreyenboekand and Stefan Sperl (eds) *The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview* (London, 1992b), Janet Klein, 'Kurdish nationalists and non-nationalist Kurdists: rethinking minority nationalism and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1909', *Nations and Nationalism* 13/1 (2007), pp. 135–53; Selim Deringil, 'The Armenian Question is finally closed: mass conversions of Armenians in Anatolia during the Hamidian massacres 1895–1897', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51/2 (2009), pp. 344–71.

21. Despite the name 'Young Turk', the group contained people of various ethnic backgrounds. Apart from some Arabs, Albanians, and Circassians, some elite Kurds even joined *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (the Committee for Unity and Progress, CUP) established by Young Turk against Abdülhamid's reign. See Ernest E. Ramsaur, *The Young Turks: Prelude to the Revolution of 1908* (Princeton, NJ, 1957), Ahmad Feroz, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908–1914* (Oxford, 1969), Sina Akşin, *Jön Türkler ve İttihat ve Terakki* (İstanbul, 1987).
22. The Kurdish Institute of Istanbul republished the journal *Rojî Kurd* in 2013. In this new version, the texts in Kurdish (in Arabic script) were transliterated into Latin script and Ottoman Turkish was transliterated into Modern Turkish.
23. Military general commanders or ministers such as Enver Pasha (1881–1922), Djemal Pasha (1872–1922), who was Mayor of Istanbul and involved in the Armenian Genocide, and Talaat Pasha (1874–1921), known as the Interior Minister who requested the Temporary Deportation Law (*Tehcir*) which in 1915 led to deportations and massacres of the Armenian population, played key roles in the Ottoman entry into the war on the side of the Germans. These three pashas are considered to be the rulers of the Ottoman Empire during World War I. For more, see Andrew Mango, *Atatürk* (London, 1999), Altuğ Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (New York, 2006), Sylvia Kedourie, *Turkey: Identity, Democracy, Politics* (London, 1996).
24. The British and French governments declared that the reason for their involvement in the Eastern war was 'the complete and final liberation of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks, and the establishment of national governments and administrations deriving their authority from the initiative and free choice of the native populations' (*Kurdish Problem*: Foreign Office Research Paper, 1946).
25. During the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s the Middle East hosted many independence movements including Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Palestine. For example, in 1919 in Egypt, a movement entitled 'First Revolution' was initiated by Egyptian revolutionary and statesman Saad Zaghloul (1859–1927), who served as Prime Minister for a short period in 1924. The anti-colonial riots repressed by the British resulted in hundreds of deaths. Again, in 1920, French forces defeated Syrian forces during the Battle of Maysalun (French control of Ottoman Syria, Lebanon, and Alexandretta was formalised by the League of Nations in the early 1920s, while the French mandate for Syria was established in 1923, and lasted until 1943). The 1936–9 Arab revolt in Palestine against British colonial rule contained demands for independence and resistance to mass Jewish immigration. The revolt resulted in thousands of Arab casualties. For more, see Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows: Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism, 1917–1948* (London, 2009) and Tamir Goren, 'The Judaization of Haifa at the time of the Arab Revolt', *Middle Eastern Studies* 40/4 (2004), pp. 135–52.

26. The names and numbers of the organisers of SAK are not certain. Each historian or researcher (for example, Tarih Zafer Tunaya, Ismail Goldas, or Aguz Aytepe) provides a list of SAK organisers, but they all contain different names.
27. After the split, the Bedirkhan family founded another organisation called *Teşkilat-ı İctimaiye Cemiyeti* (Society of Social Organisation).
28. Mehmet Serif Pasha (*Paşa* in Turkish) was an Ottoman ambassador to Stockholm in the 1890s. He was a close supporter of the Sultan, but went on in 1895, as a member of the Committee of Union and Progress, to oppose the Young Turk government, and became more attracted to Kurdish nationalist ideas. His publication in an opposition newspaper entitled *Meşrutiyet* (*Constitutionalism*) against the Young Turks led him to be excluded, and he even faced death at the hands of the CUP. According to Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, p. 112, like many other leaders of SAK, he was an Ottomanist until he realised that an Ottoman state was no longer possible. At the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, as the representative of the Kurdish delegation sent by SAK, his actions in support of Armenian rule (there was territorial overlap between the planned Armenian state and Kurdistan according to the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Sevres) and control by the British in Iraq provoked a severe reaction in some Kurdish circles (Kemal Kirisci and Gareth M. Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-state Ethnic Conflict* (London, 2004), p. 81). His notions on the territory of Kurdistan did not make much impact.
29. The Sykes-Picot Agreement (1915–16), known as the Asia Minor Agreement, was the result of a secret convention between France's Francois Georges-Picot and the UK Sir Mark Sykes, who discussed the division of Ottoman Arab lands after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire (Edward P. Fitzgerald, 'France's Middle Eastern ambitions, the Sykes-Picot negotiations, and the oil fields of Mosul, 1915–1918', *The Journal of Modern History* 66/4 (1994), pp. 697–725, Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London, 2004), James Barr, *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France and the Struggle that Shaped the Middle East* (London, 2012)).
30. The Tripartite Agreement, known as the St. Jean-de-Maurienne Agreement (concluded at Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne on the French-Italian border), was a further development of two previous agreements, the Treaty of London (1915) and the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916). The Sykes-Picot Agreement seemed to favour France over Italy in parts of Anatolia, so in St. Jean-de-Maurienne Italy's sphere of interest was incorporated, together with Italian control over the Adalia and Smyrna (Izmir) region (Fry, Goldstein, and Langhorne 2002: 184). However, this agreement was never enforced due to the situation of Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution, and the victory of nationalist Turkey. See also H. James Burgwyn, *The Legend of the Mutilated Victory: Italy, the Great War, and the Paris Peace Conference 1915–1917* (Westport, CT, 1993); David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York, 1989).

31. Although Mustafa Kemal joined the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in 1908 and remained until the dissolution of the organisation in 1918, he had many disagreements with the leadership before and during World War I (Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor*).
32. By the end of World War I the British army occupied the former Ottoman provinces of Baghdad and Basra, currently the central and southern area of Iraq. With the truce between the Allies and the Sultan, Britain also took up occupation of the Mosul region. After the end of the war in 1918, the League of Nations made Kurdistan within Iraq a British mandate. Great Britain and Turkey disputed control of the Ottoman province of Mosul in the 1920s. Under the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), Mosul fell under the British Mandate of Mesopotamia, and remained so until Iraq was granted independence in 1932.
33. The Constantinople Agreement, which was made between Britain, France, and Russia on 18 March 1915 in order to share out the Ottoman Empire, was made public by the Bolsheviks in the Russian newspaper *Izvestiya* in 1917, in order to gain support from the Armenian public for the revolution. The agreement was never carried out due to the Bolshevik Revolution, which resulted in Russia's withdrawal from the war. For more on this particular agreement, see Ian R. Manners, 'Constructing the image of a city: the representation of Constantinople in Christopher Buondelmonti's *Liber Insularum Archipelagi*', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87/1 (1997), pp. 72–102. Afterwards Armenia became an integral part of the Soviet Union.
34. The CUP replaced Turkish Hearths with the Turkish Homeland Society (*Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti*) in 1922 in order to counter the ideas of Ottomanism and Islamism, and to promote Turkish nationalism. The activities of the Hearths included history, language, and education, and they developed awareness of Turkish cultural heritage and language.
35. The Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti, DP) after winning the elections in 1950 took over the administration and ownership of the People's Houses (Başak Ince, *Citizenship and Identity in Turkey: From Atatürk's Republic to the Present Day* (London, 2012), p. 67.
36. In December 2008, the Turkish government launched massive police operations, including raids on thousands of people, under the label 'KCK operations', on the grounds that the KCK was an urban and political wing of the PKK. Those arrested and imprisoned during these operations included pro-Kurdish party BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) mayors, elected MPs, and municipal officials, as well as thousands of Kurdish political activists, advocates, and journalists.
37. In Azad Berwari and Thomas Ambrosio, 'The Kurdistan Referendum Movement: political opportunity structures and national identity', *Democratization* 15/5 (2008), pp. 891–908, the authors attempt to examine the lack of mass mobilisation by Iraqi Kurds with the aim of establishing an independent Kurdistan. They argue that neither the central authorities in Baghdad, the surrounding states, nor the United States are supportive of an independent

Kurdistan, so such a mobilisation may have resulted in Iraq facing military intervention. They also argue that due to the state-centric nature of international law, the United Nations would not welcome independent Kurdish statehood.

38. KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party, in Kurdish *Partîya Demokrata Kurdistan* [PDK]) is a Kurdish party based in Iraqi Kurdistan. The PDK was first established in Iranian Kurdistan in 1946 under the leadership of Mustafa Barzani, and currently plays a leading role in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). During the 1980s and even the 1990s, the two main Kurdish political parties, the KDP and the PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan), conducted a policy of aggression against each other, each claiming their own legitimacy to lead the Kurds toward freedom and accusing one another of treason and betrayal.
39. The term 'Kurdish diasporic community' is commonly used by researchers and scholars (Minoo Alinia, 'Spaces of diasporas', Ibrahim Sirkeci, *The Environment of Insecurity in Turkey and the Emigration of Turkish Kurds to Germany* (New York, 2006), Nevzat Soguk, 'Transversal communication, diaspora, and the Euro-Kurds', *Review of International Studies* 34/1 (2008), pp. 173–92) who specialise in the Kurdish diaspora. I also prefer to use this term as it includes all sorts of Kurdish migrants such as refugees, workers, exiles, etc. By diasporic novels, I mean the novels written by all types of Kurdish migrants in the diaspora.
40. By 'Kurdish diaspora', I mean Kurdish communities and settlements located in the West, but the term does not apply to all Kurds who live outside the territory of Kurdistan (e.g., Kurds living in Khurasan, Istanbul, Baghdad, Tehran, Damascus, Armenia, and so forth). Currently, the Kurdish diaspora is scattered throughout various European countries including Germany, France, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, and the Netherlands. For the Kurds from Turkish Kurdistan, Germany became the leading host country. However, Sweden leads in terms of the number of Kurdish publications, mainly novels.
41. There are no official figures for the number of Kurds in Europe. As Ayata points out, the actual size of the Kurdish diaspora 'remains an enigma [. . .] no recent reliable census of the Kurdish diaspora in Europe has been carried out'. Bilgin Ayata, 'The politics of displacement: a transnational analysis of the forced migration of Kurds in Turkey and Europe', unpublished PhD thesis, Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, MD, 2011), p. 143. However, the most widely accepted estimates suggest there are that some '850,000 Kurds in Western Europe, of which 500,000–600,000 live in Germany' (Bahar Baser, *Kurdish Diaspora Political Activism in Europe with a Particular Focus on Great Britain* (Berlin, 2011), p. 8). The socio-cultural and political conditions of Kurdish migrants differ from one European country to another. For example, although the Kurdish Institute in Paris, founded in 1983, has contributed to the development of the Kurdish language, there have as yet been no novels in Kurmanji (by Kurds from Turkish Kurdistan) written in France. The United Kingdom has hosted an increasing number of Kurds since the 1990s; however,

despite well-organised associational networks with a great range of political and cultural activities, studies or research on Kurdish language or literature do not go beyond individual efforts. As noted earlier, Sweden is the leading host country in relation to the number of publications and literary advances, due to generous state contributions, thanks to which most of the diasporic novels have been published in Sweden. In addition, there are four novelists living in Germany, Zeynel Abidîn, Fêrgîn Melîk Aykoç, and Diyar Bohtî, who have all produced several novels, and Jîr Dilovan, who has one novel. While Medenî Ferho and Reşat Akgül live in Belgium, Rıza Çolpan lives in Australia. The novelists living in Sweden are from the generation born between 1944 and 1963. It can be said that compared with the generation that migrated during the 1980s (almost all the diasporic novelists examined in this book), members of the younger migrant generation either do not produce literary works, or prefer to engage in more academic or scholarly studies. The easing of censorship of Kurdish publications in Turkish Kurdistan is also a factor behind the reduction in the diaspora's responsibility for preserving the Kurdish language

42. For more, see Joost Jongerden, *The Settlement Issue in Turkey and the Kurds: An Analysis of Spatial Policies, Modernity and War* (Leiden, 2007), and two reports for the Kurdish Human Rights Project (KHRP): Lucy Claridge and Sharon Linzey, *The Status of Internally Displaced Kurds in Turkey and Compensation Rights* (London, 2005) and Mark Müller and Sharon Linzey, *The Internally Displaced Kurds of Turkey: Ongoing Issues of Responsibility, Redress and Resettlement* (London, 2007).
43. Kurdish literature and press have mainly been developed in exile. For example, as well as the first Kurdish journal *Kurdistan* (1898), the seminal literary and cultural journal *Roja Nû* (*The New Day*) was published in Beirut, between 1943 and 1946, by Kamuran Bedirkhan (1895–1978), who is also originator of the Latinised Kurdish alphabet, and *Ronahî* (*The Light*, 1942–5) and *Hawar* (*The Cry*, 1932–45) were published by Celadet Bedirkhan (1893–1951) in Damascus. These journals contributed significantly to the development of modern Kurdish literature in the diaspora, as did the literary magazine *Nûdem* (*New Time*, 1992–2002), which was published in Kurmanji, with the support of writer and editor Firat Cewerî.

Chapter 2 An Overview of Kurdish Politics: Wars, Uprisings and Movements

1. For more on the revolts in the nineteenth century, see Kendal Nezan, 'The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire', in Gerard Chaliand (ed.), *People without a Country: The Kurds and Kurdistan* (London, 1993), David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London, 2004), Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion* (Austin, TX, 1989).

2. It is worth noting that there is less research and fewer sources on the Kurdish revolts than on those in the modern Turkish state. I believe Ottoman historians tend to consider other incidents (such as the Ottoman-Russian war and the Balkan quest for independence) to be more significant than the Kurdish revolts, which did not have much lasting influence and were suppressed soon after they broke out. Also such revolts have simply been considered to be tribal insurgencies rather than nationalistic ones, which again has led them to being less researched and emphasised.
3. Because of his eye disease he was nicknamed 'blind' (*Kor*), and the *vali* (governor) of Baghdad granted him the title of '*pasha*' (Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (Utrecht, 1978), pp. 221–2).
4. The political problems regarding the demands of Slavs in the Balkans, who were supported by Russia, led the Ottomans into military conflict with the Russians in 1877. Fought in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and some Kurdish cities, despite British support for the Ottomans against Russia, they were defeated and several regions became independent. Another outcome was the rise of Pan-Slavism (the peace treaty in 1878, the Treaty of San Stefano, included the establishment of a Bulgarian state stretching into Greek Macedonia).
5. See also Celîlê Celîl, *1880 Şeyh Ubeydullah Nehri Kürt Ayaklanması* (İstanbul, 1998).
6. The original citation of this letter is: 'Ubeydullah to Dr Cocharan 5 October 1880', in *Parliamentary Papers, Turkey* 5 (1991), pp. 47–8.
7. The Young Turk revolution of 1908, through a rebellion against the rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II, resulted in the establishment of the Second Constitutional Era of the Ottoman Empire (which maintained the freedom of establishment of Kurdish organisations and clubs), which lasted until 1918, the end of World War I. The Young Turks were considered to be the first perpetrators of a coup, the *Bab-i Ali Baskını* (*Bab-i Ali* coup) in 1913, which resulted in the replacement of the sultan's authorisees with three pashas (Mehmed Talaat Pasha as the Interior Minister, Ismail Enver as the War Minister, and Ahmed Djemal as the Naval Minister). Contrary to popular understanding, the Young Turks did not only consist of those of Turkish ethnic origin, but also people from many other Ottoman communities. For example, among the prominent leaders, Yusuf Akçura was a Tatar, Emmanuel Carasso Efendi was a Sephardic Jew, and Ziya Gökalp was Kurdish.
8. For instance, Ismail Hakki Baban became the Minister of Public Instruction and Sulayman Nadif became Vali of Baghdad.
9. The organisations established during the CUP period (1908–18) were: *Kürt Terakki ve Teavün Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Society for Progress and Mutual Aid), *Osmanlı Kürd Ittihâd ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Society for Kurdish Ottoman Union and Progress), *Kürdistan Muhibban Cemiyeti* (Society for the Friends of Kurdistan), *Ciwata Talebeyi Kurdan-Hêvî* (Society for Kurdish Students-Hope), and *Kürd Kadınları Teali Cemiyeti* (Society for Kurdish Women).

10. The Bitlis uprising is believed to have been a result of Russian provocation. It failed, suppressed severely by Ottoman government forces as Kurdish figures such as Abdurrezzak Bedirkhan and Sheikh Taha were not in the country when it erupted and Russia did not provide the support it had promised (Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires 1908–1918* (Cambridge, 2011)). Russia's Kurdish policy stretched back to the eighteenth century, and during the Ottoman period was highly controversial, as Russia aimed to abolish Ottoman control of Eastern Anatolia, which crossed Russia's Caucasian border (and was seen as a barrier to Russia's southern expansion), through gaining support of Kurdish leaders in the Ottoman territory. Kurdish cooperation with the Russians against the Ottomans or the Turkish state was not consistent. While Kurds cooperated with the Turks during World War I and the War of Liberation against the Russians, they were keen to collaborate with the Russian Bolsheviks against the Turks in the 1920s. Abdürezzak Bedirdan, a prominent Kurdish intellectual, was believed to be one of the leading supporters of Russia's campaign to expel the Ottomans from Eastern Anatolia. According to Reynolds, Russia's interest in the Kurds was threefold; first, its administrators had to deal with the Kurds in the South Caucasus; secondly, eastern Anatolia was becoming a greater concern to Russia; thirdly, due to the Armenian Question in the Ottoman Empire. For more, see Mikhail Semenovich Lazarev, *The Kurdish Question, 1891–1917* (Moscow, 1972), Manoug Joseph Somakian, *Empires in Conflict: Armenia and the Great Powers* (London, 1995), Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires* (2011), Michael A. Reynolds, 'Abdürrezzak Bedirhan: Ottoman Kurd and Russophile in the Twilight of Empire', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12/2 (2011), pp. 411–50, which mainly deal with Russian-Kurdish relations.
11. Sheikh Abdul Salam II (1882–1914) was the head of the Barzani tribe during the last decade of the Ottoman era, known for his nascent Kurdish nationalism (Michael M. Gunter, *Historical Dictionary of the Kurds* (Lanham, MD, 2010), p. 55). He had links with Kurdish political organisations, and was against the Young Turks' secular politics. Through a petition signed by several Kurdish tribal leaders, he asked for political and administrative reforms (making both religious and national demands) for five Kurdish districts which had clashed with the Ottoman authority at the end of the nineteenth century, during his father's rule. He was charged with conspiracy against the Ottoman government, resulting in a fierce war. Barzani village was stormed and the sheikh was compelled to flee in disguise to the Hakkari Mountain (Wadie Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origins and Development* (New York, 2006), p. 112). However, soon afterwards he returned and mobilised his *murids* and Kurdish tribesmen against the government, leading to a violent clash. Despite some agreements and reconciliation between the two sides, the Ottomans hanged Abdul Salam II along with a group of Kurds.
12. Serbia and Greece were two nations which formed part of the Ottoman Empire, and which, influenced by the French Revolution of 1789, rebelled against the

Ottomans. Serbia, an Orthodox nation and the most northern province of the Empire, fought against the Ottomans for its independence through numerous rebellions, mainly in the early nineteenth century, and was recognised as an independent state at the Congress of Berlin in 1878. The Greek War of Independence (1821–32) brought international recognition of Greek independence in 1931 and ended Ottoman Rule over the country, which had been continuous since the fifteenth century.

13. '*Alevi*' or '*Alawite*', a term referring to the prophet Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law, has been the issue of heated debates. While some define the Alevis as a separate ethnic group, some consider them to be a sect of the Islamic religion. However, many Alevis do not consider their religion to be a form of Islam. For more, see Martin van Bruinessen, 'Kurds, Turks and Alevi Revival in Turkey', *Middle Eastern Report* 200 (1996), pp. 7–10, Paul White and Joost Jongerden (eds), *Turkey's Alevi Enigma: A Comprehensive Overview* (Leiden, 2003).
14. Under this law, tens of opposition journalists were put on trial at the Independence Court, and most of them were exiled.
15. This is also the case in the Kurdish novelistic discourse, which will be addressed in the analytical chapters.
16. Through this reform, involving a number of special administrative arrangements for the Kurdish regions to be mainly Turkified, prominent Kurdish notables and religious leaders were relocated to other parts of Turkey. This forced resettlement was extended through the Law on the Transfer of Certain People from Eastern Regions to the Western Provinces (*Bazı Eşhasın Şark Menatıkından Garp Vilâyetlerine Nakillerine Dair Kanun*), which was passed in 1927. In addition, the Settlement Law (*Iskan Kanunu*) was passed in 1934, dividing Turkish society into groups and zones for the purpose of deporting Kurds (Welat Zeydanlioglu, "The white Turkish man's burden': Orientalism, Kemalism and the Kurds in Turkey', in Guido Rings and Anne Ife (eds), *Neo-colonial Mentalities in Contemporary Europe? Language and Discourse in the Construction of Identities* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2008). Also see İsmail Beşikçi, *Kürtlerin 'mecburi iskan'ı* (Ankara, 1977).
17. The Dersim uprising and massacres are still the subject of various research projects, each of which reveals new facts. In contrast to international law, many Kurds think that the massacres should be considered to be genocide. While some Turkish nationalist historians deliberately misinterpreted the rebellion and the massacres, some research was banned in Turkey, for example, İsmail Beşikçi's book *Tunceli Kanunu 1935 ve Dersim Jenosidi* (Istanbul, 1990), on the suppression of the rebellious Kurdish district of Dersim. In 2011 the Turkish Prime Minister apologised for the campaign against Dersim, describing it as one of the most tragic events in Turkish history, but this apology did not create any relief for the Kurds. It was considered to be a political attack on the Kemalist party, CHP (Republican People's Party), which was the only party at the time of the Dersim massacre.
18. During the last few years of the single-party period, the Law of Associations, adopted during the final year of Mustafa Kemal's rule, was amended to allow

some degree of liberalisation in political life, resulting in the creation of a number of political parties, such as the Democrat Party (DP), the Turkish Socialist Party (TSP), and the Turkish Socialist Workers and Peasants Party (TSWPP), after 1946. Thousands of new groups and associations and hundreds of unions emerged based on class and political party interests during the period of DP rule. For more, see Ergun Özbudun, *Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation* (London, 2000) and John M. VanderLippe, *The Politics of Turkish Democracy* (New York, 2005).

19. Aiming for socialism and a non-capitalist path, in the parliamentary elections in 1965 TİP, under the chairmanship of Behice Boran, won 15 seats in the Turkish parliament, which was a considerable gain. However, the majority system promoted by the Justice Party and applied during the 1969 elections considerably affected TİP, and it only gained two seats. The party had serious internal ideological differences and clashes, and these had an impact on its success. It was banned after the 1971 military coup, and was re-established in 1975. However, after the 1980 military coup, it was closed down again and party members had to go into exile in order to escape prosecution.
20. The first multi-party election (general election) took place in 1946. CHP took 395 of the 465 seats at this election, but it lost the 1954 election to DP (Democrat Party). DP was closed down after the military coup of 1960, and was replaced by the Justice Party (AP) in 1961.
21. Socialist and Marxist ideology has influenced Turkey from the nineteenth century. The first socialist party during the Ottoman period, the Ottoman Socialist Party, was formed in 1910. Then came the Marxist-oriented Workers and Peasants Socialist Party (WPSP), established in 1918 under the influence of the October Revolution, and succeeded by the Turkish Communist Party (TCP), which was established in Baku in 1920 (Igor Lipovsky, 'The legal Socialist Parties of Turkey, 1960–80', *Middle Eastern Studies* 27/1 (1991), pp. 94–111). After the Sheikh Said rebellion, which led to a state of emergency, both WPSP and TCP were closed down.
22. Twelve Eastern Meetings supported by TIP and other left-wing parties were held for the purpose of drawing attention to the economic and social problems in eastern Anatolia (the Kurdish region). These took place in 1967–9 in several Kurdish cities (first in Diyarbakir, followed by Silvan, Siverek, Batman, Dersim, and Agri), and the capital (Ankara). They were very important for Kurdish consciousness as they gathered thousands of people together. The relative deprivation of the 'East' (referring to Turkish Kurdistan or, as 'Eastern', referring to the Kurds) was emphasised throughout the meetings (Kemal Kirisci and Gareth M. Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-state Ethnic Conflict* (London, 2004), Cenzig Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey: From Movement to Resistance* (London, 2012), Başak Ince, *Citizenship and Identity in Turkey: From Atatürk's Republic to the Present Day* (London, 2012)). For more, see İsmail Beşikçi, *Dogu Mitinglerinin Analizi* (Ankara, 1967), Azat Zana Gundogan, 'Space, state-making and contentious

Kurdish politics in the *East* of Turkey: the case of Eastern Meetings', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 13/4 (2011), pp. 389–416.

23. Turkish accession has been on Europe's political agenda since 1963 when the country first became an associate member of the European Economic Community. Turkey achieved formal European Union (EU) candidate status only in 1999, and the accession negotiations between Ankara and Brussels were opened in 2005. For more on Turkey and EU relations, see Sedat Laçiner, Mehmet Özcan, and İhsan Bal, *European Union with Turkey: The Possible Impact of Turkey's Membership on the European Union (*Ankara, 2005) and Harun Arikan, *Turkey and the EU: An Awkward Candidate for EU Membership?* (Basingstoke, 2006).
24. The capture of Öcalan was not very easy or straightforward. He had to pass through several countries before ending up in Kenya. In October 1998, Öcalan had to leave Syria after Turkey threatened Syria with an invasion. He spent a month in Russia before flying to Italy. The Turkish state put pressure on these countries to enable his committal to Turkey and to not grant him political asylum. There is still some debate, mainly among Kurds, about whether several countries, such as Greece, Italy, Kenya, and the Netherlands, were involved in an international conspiracy along with Israel and the CIA to capture Öcalan.
25. A long-running trial of the legal representatives who were arrested in simultaneous police raids in November 2011 still continues. They have been accused under Turkey's anti-terrorism legislation.
26. AKP, with its conservative political ideology developed from Islamism and led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was founded in 2001, and won the 2002 general election by gaining over two-thirds of the seats in Parliament. In the subsequent elections of 2007 and 2011, AKP increased its vote, though the number of parliamentary seats it won decreased from 341 to 327. Since August of 2014, Erdoğan has been the president of Turkey.
27. The reforms declared on 30 September 2013 led to strong protests, mainly from the BDP. They only involved a few cosmetic changes rather than anything that could provide a stable and concrete foundation for peace. They include: limited freedom to use the Kurdish language by the lifting of restrictions on some Kurdish letters (x, w, q); lifting the headscarf ban for most female state employees; ending primary school recitation of the national oath of allegiance; lowering of the electoral threshold for political parties to enter parliament; decreased restrictions on rallies and demonstrations; the renaming of Kurdish villages with their original Kurdish names.
28. The Turkish government vetoed certain MPs for various reasons. For instance, BDP co-leader Selahattin Demirtaş was not allowed to join the delegation because of his critical statements about the peace process. Also, BDP Istanbul Deputy Sırrı Süreyya Önder was vetoed due to his attendance at the Gezi Park protests. The Gezi Park protests that erupted in Istanbul in May 2013 originated from an environmental protest (protecting trees which were to be cut down and replaced by a shopping centre in the park, which is located in Taksim-Istanbul), and turned into a nationwide pro-democracy movement. On

the morning of 28 May 2013, around 50 protestors were camping out in Gezi Park in order to prevent its demolition. The protesters, with the help of BDP MP Sırrı Süreyya Önder, attempted to stop the authorities bulldozing the park by refusing to leave. Police used violence in the form of water cannons and tear gas to end the protests, which left five dead and 5,000 injured.

29. Doğu Perinçek has been a very controversial figure, especially since the 1990s, due to his inconsistent statements, mainly promoting Turkish nationalism. Despite his background in left-wing organisations, his belittling and discriminative opinions about Kurds and Armenians have drawn strong reactions. He has been involved in various socialist parties including the Revolutionary Workers and Peasants Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İhtilalcı İşçi Köylü Partisi*, TİİKP) founded in 1971 (which originated in the *Dev-Genç*, Revolutionary Youth). TİİKP has been transformed into a legal party, the Workers' Party (*İşçi Partisi*), and Perinçek has been its chairman since 1992. His opinions on the Armenian genocide (he declared it 'an international lie') led a Swiss court to find him guilty of racial discrimination, having violated Swiss laws against genocide denial. In August 2013, he was sentenced to 34 years' imprisonment for being part of the *Ergenekon* (an alleged secularist clandestine organisation accused of plotting against the AKP government). He has also made public statements on the Kurdish language, stating that it is not sufficiently 'scientific' to be the language of education.
30. After the military coup in 1980, there was a ban on the politicians (lifted in 1987) and political parties (lifted in 1992) which had existed before 1980. After the ban was lifted on CHP in 1992, it resumed its activities under the leadership of Deniz Baykal, who was former deputy chair of SHP.
31. Lois Whitman, in his Human Rights Watch report *The Kurds of Turkey: Killings, Disappearances and Torture* (New York, 1993), provides a detailed chronology of the harassment that HEP underwent in 1990–2, including bans on HEP leaflets, the arrests of members, etc.
32. The Kurdish politician Vedat Aydın, Chairman of the Diyarbakir branch of HEP, was found dead in Malatya in 1991. His murder is believed to have been committed by JITEM (Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counterterrorism, which is the undercover wing of the Turkish Police – a military force that officially does not exist). Thousands of people from Turkish Kurdistan were disappeared during the 1990s (Uğur Erdal and Hasan Bakırcı, *Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights* (Geneva, 2006)).
33. For the list of murdered members of the pro-Kurdish parties, see HADEP Solidarity Office Brussels (ed.), *Information Booklet* (Brussels, 1996).

Chapter 3 Kurdish Literary and Cultural Productions: From Oral Literature to Digital Media

1. Broadly speaking, the Kurdish language is linked to the Indo-European language group, and consists of certain dialects and sub-dialects. As noted

earlier, Sorani and Kurmanji are regarded as the main dialects relative to Gorani and Zazaki (also called Dimili or Dimli). In her recent article (2011), Clémence Scalbert-Yücel defines Kurdish as one standard language, also noting that Kurmanji is the dialect most commonly spoken by Kurds in Turkish Kurdistan, Syrian Kurdistan, countries of the Former Soviet Union, and some northern parts of the Kurdish-speaking areas of Iraq and Iran. Sorani is spoken mainly in Iraqi and Iranian Kurdistan, Zazaki is spoken by Kurds in parts of Turkish Kurdistan, while Gorani is spoken by the Kurds in Kermanshah in Iranian Kurdistan. There are three different alphabets in use. While the Latin alphabet is used in Turkish Kurdistan and Syrian Kurdistan, an adapted version of the Perso-Arabic alphabet is used in Iraqi Kurdistan and Iranian Kurdistan, and the Cyrillic alphabet is also used in the countries of the FSU.

2. Two articles by Philip G. Kreyenbroek, 'Identity and the language question in Kurdistan', in Turaj Atabaki and Margreet Dorleijn (eds), *Kurdistan in Search of Ethnic Identity*: *Papers from the First Conference on Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity in the Middle East and Central Asia, University of Utrecht, June 1990* (Utrecht, 1990); and 'On Kurdish language', in P. Kreyenbroek and S. Sperl (eds), *The Kurds: Contemporary Overview* (1992) provide a socio-linguistic assessment of the Kurdish language which, with its diverse dialects, is defined as an essential component of Kurdish identity.
3. For more on oral Kurdish traditions and literature, see Abidin Parıltı's *Dengbêjler: Sözün Yazgisi* (Dengbejs: the Fate of the Word, 2006); Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Ulrich Marzolph (eds), *Oral Literature of Iranian Languages: Kurdish, Pashto, Valochi, Ossetic, Persian and Tajik: Companion Volume II* to Ehsan Yarshater (General Editor), *A History of Persian Literature* (2011). See also Christine Allison's *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan* (2001), and her 'Old and new oral traditions in Badinan', in Kreyenbroek and Allison (eds), *Kurdish Culture and Identity* (1996).
4. In Turkey, Şahin Gök directed a film called *Siyabend ile Heco* based on the epic in 1991.
5. A performer similar to *dengbêj* is also given names such as '*stranbêj*', '*shair*', and '*aşık*' in different regions. '*Dengbêj*' is normally used in Turkish Kurdistan and Bahdinan region. Bahdinan is the name of the former semi-independent Kurdish emirate, and the capital of the Kurdish principality was called Amadiya, which is now Dohuk in Iraqi Kurdistan. The term is still used to refer to the region. The repertories of *dengbêj* include songs, legends, and poems, as most of the population is illiterate and a great proportion of Kurdish folk literature is still unwritten. Wadie Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origins and Development* (New York, 2006), p. 24.
6. A project entitled *Dengbêj and Dengbêji Tradition*, aimed at protecting Kurdish oral production in Diyarbakir, has been conducted by the pro-Kurdish Diyarbakir municipality and Dicle Firat Cultural Centre based in Diyarbakir. For more, see Scalbert-Yücel's article 'The invention of a tradition: Diyarbakir's Dengbêj Project'.

7. Following the line of this argument, national symbols such as flags, maps, and national anthems seem to be defining components of a national identity (Billig 1995, Smith 2003, 2009, 2010).
8. *Medrese* are schools with an Islamic education system. The origin of the word *Medrese* comes from Arabic, meaning lesson (درس). The language of education was Arabic. Arabic grammar, the terms of Islam, the philosophy of Islam, arithmetic, and Islamic Law (*Sheri'a*) were taught. Reading and memorising the Quran was an essential requirement of *Medrese*. Kurdish was used in order for the students to understand the Arabic sources. *Mewlude Kurmanci* (*The Religious Night of Kurds*) which tells of the birth of the Prophet, by Mela Ehmede Bate (originally written in the Zazaki dialect), the Arabic-Kurdish dictionary called *Nubihar*, by Ehmede Xanî, *Tasrif, Zuruf w Terkip* by Nela Yunis, based on Arabic grammar, were sources used.
9. Q. Kurdo, (1992), *Tarîxa Edebiyata Kurdî 1*. 2nd Edition. Stockholm: Roja Nû Publisher.
10. Despite fragmentations and divisions, it is possible to identify similarities among the literary works emanating from different regions. For example, by looking at novels written in any part of Kurdistan, it can be seen that their themes and content are not confined to the specific socio-political and cultural aspects of a particular region, and that there is some sort of interlocking approach that covers and unifies all parts of Kurdistan through reference to political movements and changes in other regions. For example, Sidqî Hirorî, who is from Iraqi Kurdistan, refers in all three of his novels to political or cultural incidents that occurred in Turkish and Iranian Kurdistan. Similarly, Helîm Yûsiv, who is from Syrian Kurdistan, refers in his novels to Turkish Kurdistan in an attempt to avoid distancing the Kurdish issue in Turkish Kurdistan from that in his own region. It would appear that Kurdish novelists focus not just on Kurdish issues in their own region but combine them with those of other regions.
11. Opinions differ about the publication date of *Şivanê Kurmanca*. Some scholars assert that it was published in 1927; however, Ahmadzadeh (2003) and Aydogan (2011), both confirm the date as 1935.
12. The removal in 2002 of the statement in Article 26 of the Constitution on the prohibition of languages by law enabled some reforms in the use of Kurdish, and in August 2002 the Turkish National Assembly approved the rights of minorities to teach and to broadcast in their own languages. This change was considered to be related to Turkey's desire to meet the requirements for EU membership rather than to any desire to enhance the linguistic rights of Kurds (KHRP 2006, McDowall 2007, Uçarlar 2009).
13. For a detailed account of Kurdish linguistic rights in Turkey see Nesrin Uçarlar's work on the subject (2006: 264–5). Through interviews with Kurdish linguists, intellectuals, and publishers in Turkey and in Europe, she examines the links between Kurdish language and identity based on nationalist, cultural, and trans-national approaches. Whereas the nationalist approach favours

standardisation of the Kurdish language on the basis of the strongest dialect (Kurmanji) and considers the Kurdish language as a political ideal in the struggle for Kurdish identity and political unity, the cultural approach sees dialects as offering various ways of regarding the language from a perspective of cultural affiliation. The trans-national approach, in contrast, takes account of the European experience of democracy and pluralism by appreciating the diversity of the Kurdish language and rejecting the dominance of any dialects.

14. These publishers included Komal (established 1974), Deng (1989), Doz (1990), Weşanên Enstîtuya Kurdî (1992), Nûbihar (1992), Avesta (1995), Pêrî (1997), Aram (1997), Elma (2002), Vate (2003), Lîs (2004), Bîr (2005), Tevn, Do, Ronahî, Bajar, Veng, Aram, Berfîn and Belkî; most were set up by political organisations.
15. After the first Kurdish newspaper, *Kurdistan*, appeared in 1898, several other publications also emerged. For example, *Rojî Kurd* (*Kurdish Day*) was a monthly journal that was first published by the Kurdish political group Hêvî in Istanbul in 1913 in both Turkish and Kurdish. It had four issues. *Jîn* (*Life*) was the semi-official newspaper of the Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan (*Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti*), regarded as the first Kurdish nationalist organisation. *Jîn* appeared in 1918–19 and had 25 issues, the last of which was published on 2 October 1919.
16. For more on the bans on the Kurdish press and other publishing enterprises, see *Turkey: Violations of Free Expression in Turkey* (1999) by Human Rights Watch Organisation; *The Kurds: Culture and Language Rights* (2004) by the Kurdish Human Rights Project; and *World Report 2011* (2011) by Human Rights Watch.
17. For more on the Kurdish press during the early years of the twentieth century, see 'The Bibliography of Kurdish Press' (1944) by Bishop M. Lawrence Ryan.
18. Unlike in Iran and Turkey after the 1920s, Kurds in Iraq enjoyed limited freedom to have their own press, publishing in Kurdish. The first Kurdish press was established in Sulemania in 1920 by the government of the British Mandate (Hassanpour 1996: 52). However, the fall of the Iraqi monarchy in 1958 brought expansive political freedom to the Kurds. Iraqi Kurdistan has been autonomous since the end of the Gulf War in 1991, and Kurds launched their own radio and television broadcasting stations and publishing outlets related to the main political parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Now, there are tens of Kurdish channels and radio stations, mainly based in Arbil and Sulemania, broadcasting in different forms and representing various affiliations. However, there is a struggle by Kurdish independent journalists and writers concerned about freedom of speech. A number of opponents and journalists have been arrested due to their criticism of the government, leading to condemnation by Human Rights Watch in 2013. There is also great concern about the bias of some media outlets due to their various political affiliations, such as to the Goran

movement, PUK, and KDP. There have been several campaigns run by NGOs and action groups mainly based in Europe against the suppression of freedom of expression in Iraqi Kurdistan.

19. The state-owned press and broadcasting was not only limited by sovereign countries after World War I. Even before the twentieth century, presses belonged to state rulers. The first presses established in the Kurdish towns of the Ottoman Empire, for example, in Bitlis (1865–6 and 1893), Diyarbakir (1868–9), and Van (1889–90), were owned by the government, and published in Turkish (Hassanpour 1996: 52).
20. The Turkish government's response to *Özgür Ülke* was even harsher compared with earlier versions. On the night of 3 December, three offices of *Özgür Ülke* were bombed simultaneously: the head office in Istanbul, and two branch offices in Istanbul and Ankara. The attacks caused the death of one employee, heavy injuries to many other employees, and also serious damage to all these offices, making them unusable. Only days after the attacks, the newspaper resumed publication with the headline 'This fire will burn you too!' It was estimated that there have been around 50 of these 'independent media' organisations so far. More than 30 journalists and 46 other employees have been killed since 1990.
21. After the bans on Turkish media outlets, in order to increase censorship and surveillance online, the Turkish government has proposed changes to Law no. 5651, also known as the 'Code of Publications on the Internet and Suppression of Crimes Committed by means of Such Publications' in January 2014. The amendments to the law may lead to penalties on authors and content providers, and even users of the content. Social media, citizen journalism, and independent media websites were the sphere in which government opponents exchanged views and shared information after the Gezi Park Protests began in June 2013. On many occasions, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has complained about social media provoking the public against him and his government.
22. We can briefly explore some of the contentions underlying the Kurds' projection of themselves as a nation. The term 'nation' has the ideological connotation inherent in the political aim of nationalism, and has also ended up being fairly rigidly defined by political theorists in organic terms, ignoring the supreme effort of will that can create a nation. I prefer Smith's term 'ethnic', which involves the acceptance that 'the core ethnicity [...] resides in this quarter of myths, memories, values and symbols and that ethnicity is largely mythic and symbolic in character' (Smith, 1993: 15–16, quoted in Maria T. O'Shea, *Trapped between the Map and Reality: Geography and Perceptions of Kurdistan* (London, 2004), p.149).
23. Many scholars specialising in the Kurdish diaspora also stress the significance of satellite TV channels and other Kurdish media for creating the idea of a Kurdish imagined community (Amir Hassanpour, 'Satellite footprints as national borders: Med TV and the extraterritoriality of state sovereignty', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 18/1 (1998), pp. 53–72, Amir Hassanpour, 'Diaspora, homeland and communication technologies', in Karim H. Karim

(ed.), *The Media of Diaspora: Mapping the Globe* (London, 2003), Minoo Alinia, 'Spaces of diasporas, Kurdish identities, experiences of otherness and politics of belonging', unpublished PhD thesis, Department of Sociology, Gothenburg University (Gothenburg, 2004).

24. As a part of the EU accession process for strengthening minority rights, TRT began a weekly 30-minute Kurdish broadcast in 2004.
25. International attention has been paid to Turkey's internet censorship. According to reports by international censorship watchdog organisations, internet and press censorship has resulted in Turkey being marked down in the league tables on freedom of speech. Turkey ranked 138 in the Reporters Without Borders' *2010 Annual Worldwide Press Freedom Index*. In 2011–12, Turkey ranked 148 out of 169 countries in the Reporters Without Borders list. Apart from thousands of minor and major websites mainly reporting Kurdish issues, even YouTube was banned in 2008 and 2010 for some time as the result of Turkish court decisions, particularly arising from a video insulting Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic. The most recent censorship, which has resulted in heated protests, is the ban on access to SoundCloud, which had revealed private conversations involving the Turkish Prime Minister and certain other politicians.

Chapter 4 The Kurdish Novelistic Discourse in Diaspora: Constructing 'Home-land' and 'Identity'

1. Ji bo ku bikanibim li Kurdistanê bandora vê polîtîka û karê mamostetiya Tirk [. . .] yê li ser zarokan û mezinan zelal bikim, min ev pirtûk nivisand eger piçek jî be bi serketibim, gelek bextiyar bibim.
2. Ev çend serpêhatiyan di vê romanê de di rastiya ber çavî de hatiye jiyanê. Yanê ne çîrokên xeyalî ne.
3. Nivîskar di nivîsandina romanê de gereke bibe weke xwedayê cîhanê [. . .] ji bo ku xwendevan baweriya xwe bi romanekê bîne.
4. Bûyerên vê romanê hemû hatine jiyandin û ji wê bîranînê hatine dahûrandin. Bi vê pirtûkê mirov bixwaze nexwaze geryanekî li sere sedsala çûyî dike, ta îro tê. Mirov wan dide ber hev û wê gave rastiyek derdikeve holê; wêneyek zilmê.
5. Qet tiştek bi xem û xeyali va nehatiye nivisandin. Çirokek û jiyanek bi rastiye. Min bi çavên xwe va ji gelek tişt ditine, ez bûme nasê jiyana malbata Xidê Naxirvan, li tev kurê wî Alî ê piçûk çûme ber berx, kar û golikan.
6. Ev roman ji bo têgihîna rewşa gelê kurd wêneyek pir reng dide û dikare bibe serekaniyek baş lê bi baweriya min ew ji kurdan re zêdetir ji bo kesên biyanî, yên ku qet ji rewşa me ne agahdar in, hatiye nivîsîn.
7. Xwendevanên hêja! Hetanî vir, min qala serpêhatiya edîp, zana û ronakbîrê kurd, katibê Şêx Seîdê nemir, fîlozof û welatparêzê mezin, Fehmîyê Bîlal kir. Ev tiştên ku min behs kire hemû jî tiştên rast yên dîrokî bûn.

8. Romanên bi zimanê Kurdî gelek hindik in. Nivîskarên welatparêz yên Kurd divê berhemên xwe bi Kurdî biafrînin. Ev vatîniyek welatperweriyê ye.
9. Marî says 'bi deh salane ku şer dikin, hêj tu kesekî romana şer û şoreşê ne bi tirkî û ne bî jî Kurdî nenivîsandiye' (for dozens of years, they have been fighting, none of them has written any novel of this war and struggle neither in Turkish or Kurdish so far.) Serhad replies 'Dê roj bê ew kesên ku bi xwe di nav şer de, di çiyan de bi salan mane, şer kirine, têkoşiyane, ew dê romanên şer û şoreşê binivîsin (the day will come, those in the war, staying on the mountains for years, fighting, struggling, they will write the novel of war and struggle) (260–1).
10. Ez vê romanê binivîsim dê kesên weha şûrên xwe tûj bikin û êrişê min bikin. Dê rexneyên pûç û vala, rexneyên tewş li min bigrin. Çûnkî gelek kesên ku bi ser navê rexnegiriyê derketine holê ji edebiyatê fêm nakin.
11. See http://www.rizgari.com/modules.php?name=Rizgari_Niviskar&cmd = read &id = 1900, accessed 14 September 2012, and http://www.mesop.net/osd/?app=izctrl&archiv = 220&izseq = izartikel&artid = 1840 (accessed 14 September 2012).
12. Hejmara kesên ku jiyana xwe di rêya lêkolîn û pêşxistina wêjeya Kurdî de fêdakirî, pir kêm in. Rêxistinên me Kurdan jî ev tişt heta niha qet pêk neînane.
13. Hûn dê çanda Kurdî bidin jiyandin, hûn dê pirtûkaxana Kurdî ya min zêdetir û dewlementir bikin, û eger rojek welatê me rizgarbû, hûn dê ev pirtûkxana li Wezerata Çandî ya dewleta me ya yekgirtî û serbixwe bibexşînin.
14. [...] Welatê me bindest e û hatiye perçekirin. Ji ber vê yekê, welathezî nivîskariyê li ser me ferz dike [...] Hema bila bi zimanê me bê nivîsandin, çi tê nivîsandin, bila bê nivîsandin [...].
15. Divê herkes berê fêrî zimanê xwe bibin û di her warî de bi kar bîne. Ev nemaze ji bo yên ku di rewşa me de ne, bûyereke pirr girîng e.
16. Divê Kurd li hember asîmîlasyonê, çi bikin zimanê xwe biparêzin.
17. Çima li ser qehremaniya jina kurd nanivîsînin? Bi hezaran jinên kurd ji bo azadiya welêt, heta ji bo ku bikanin derfetên nivisandinê ji bo niviskaran biafirînîn, bê tirs, bê dudiliyekê cane xwe di wê rêyê dan û didin'.
18. Kî ji min re çi dibêje bila bibêje; kî çi navî li min dike bila bike; heta ku kurdên bakurê welêt nebin dewlet, yan jî tiştekî ku bişine dewletê bi best nexînin, û zimanê kurdî di her hêlê de geş nebe, bi insanetiya kurdayetiya min re dijminahiya herî mezin ew e ku kitêbên min wergerî tirkî bibin û kurd jî van kitêban bi tirkî bixwînin. Ev mirina min û binpêkirina keda min e! Ez ê tu carî efû nekim! Û ez naxwazim ku kurd jî efû bikin. Ew wesyetekî min e.
19. Her berhemeke ku bi Kurdî tê nivîsandin xizmetekê ji ziman û edebiyata kurdî re dike û çanda kurdan pê dewlemend dibe. Lew re jî, dive em hewl bidin bi tenê bi zimanê xwe berhemên hêja biafirînin.
20. The PKK, an armed Kurdish guerrilla organisation, was formally established in 1978 by Abdullah Öcalan; it began its guerrilla war with the Turkish military in 1984.
21. Belqitî is the name of one of the main characters. Literally '*Belqitî*' stems from the verb '*Belqitîn*', a slang word for dying, for which the English equivalent

might be 'crap out' or 'croak'. In this case, '*Belqitî*' means the one who is crapped out or has croaked, i.e., is dead.

22. The novelists' ideologies are also consistent with those of the publishers, the majority of whom are linked to Kurdish institutions or organisations in Europe. It is possible to know the ideology of a novelist by the choice of publishing house, and each publishing house is open about its specific ideology. Thus, for example, while Mezopotamya (Köln) and Rewşen (Stockholm) are known for their affiliation with the politics of the PKK since they publish various material for the organisation, it is equally known that publications from Pelda (Stockholm) and Roja Nû (Stockholm) are linked to Kom-Kar (Komela Karkerên Kurdistan – the Kurdish Workers' Association, first established in Germany in the 1970s), and to the PSK (Partîya Sosyalîsta Kurdistan – Socialist Party of Kurdistan founded in 1974, initially under the name of Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan); both of these are known to be opposed to the PKK.
23. 'Berhemên L. Qaso bi gelemperî satîrîk in û rexneyên tûj in hem li dewleta Tirkiyeyê û hem jî li PKKê'. Article available at: http://ku.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laleş_Qaso (accessed 23 August 2012).
24. PKK mekanîzma ye, jib o rêwiyên azadiyê.
25. Available at: http://www.kurdistana-bakur.com/modules.php?name=News&file = article&sid = 3000 (accessed 24 August 2012).
26. [. . .] Keç û xortên welatê min êdî xwedî li welatê xwedî derdiketin [. . .]
27. Kurdistan, welatê dîrokê, welatê şaristaniyê, êdî wê bêxwedî nemîne.
28. [. . .] Bes e, dive em jî bibin alîkar ji bo wan [. . .].
29. êdî em bi xwedî bûn.
30. *Welat*' has become part of a political vocabulary with a significant role in Kurdish national consciousness. The first Kurdish daily newspaper, founded in Turkey in 2006, is even called *Azadiya Welat*; it is very political and usually focuses on the Kurdish national struggle. However, use of '*welat*' is multidimensional and the diverse usage of '*welat*' regarding its physical boundaries, with borders of different sizes or mental nuances, is depicted differently in the novels. Accordingly, with regard to the use of '*welat*' in the novelistic discourse, the term in this book refers to the 'soil' or 'earth' that a nation inhabits, to a particular region, or to smaller scale locations such as towns and villages. Nevertheless, the place of origin is the central characteristic that principally determines the phenomenon of '*welat*'. Some novels broaden the boundaries of '*welat*' to include, as well as the particular place of origin, entire landscapes and other regions of Kurdistan, and in some of the novels the main settings, which are Colemêrg and Diyarbakir, are differentiated by the term '*welat*'. It is worth noting that it not only refers to physical land but also conveys meanings of bond and attachment. In the translations of '*welat*' that are used in extracts throughout the book, either conveying 'homeland', 'home' or 'country', such meaning is based on context. In some cases, as shown above, '*welat*' might even suggest more than one meaning at the same time, as in both 'home' (intimate relationship based on

attachment or bond) and 'homeland' (geographical location). In such cases, 'home-land' as a key phrase is used to cover both meanings.

31. It should be noted that the categorisation of novels as pro-PKK and anti-PKK in this book have been derived from both the content of the novelistic discourse (i.e., the direct statements, the choice of narration, and characterisation, etc.), and the political affiliations of the novelists who have not hesitated to reveal them on various occasions. The anti-PKK groups in Europe mentioned in this book are those who used to be engaged with other left-wing Kurdish organisations and movements in the 1970s and who were forced to leave Turkey and Kurdistan after the military coup. Even after leaving their lands, diasporic novelists have usually continued to support the political programmes of the parties with which they were involved.
32. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) is a self-government that had administered Northern Iraq since 1992. New legislation in the 2005 Iraqi Constitution gave official recognition to the KRG as a constituent state in a democratic federal Iraq (Gunter 2010: 184) that includes two main parties – Massoud Barzani's KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party) and the PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) led by Jalal Talabani – as well as others such as the KDP (Kurdistan People's Democratic Party), PASOK (Kurdistan Socialist Party), the Kurdistan Branch of the Iraqi Communist Party, the Assyrian Democratic Movement, and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (KHRP 2003: 65). The Kurdish federal region includes three provinces, Dohuk, Arbil and Sulemaniya, as legal autonomous regions. The conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK often affects relations between the KRG and Turkey, which has blamed the KRG for failing to eradicate the PKK from territory under its jurisdiction (Inbar and Gilboa 2009: 223) and for providing it with logistical and political support. However, there have also been many disputes between the KRG and the PKK. During the 1990s, for example, the PKK placed an embargo on trade between Turkey and Northern Iraq in order to pressure the KRG into removing its blockade of PKK camps. The KRG also accused the PKK of evacuating villages and collaborating with Iraqi officials against the Iraqi Kurdish movement. Tensions increased between the PKK, KDP, and PUK with the assault against the PKK in 1992, which was carried out in order to stem any threat from Turkey and retain Turkish support. With the interference of Turkish troops in the conflict, the situation worsened. In 1995, the KDP and PUK remained silent while partially cooperating with Turkish troops who were crossing into Iraqi Kurdistan to destroy PKK units (Gunter 1997: 119–22); after this, relations between the PKK and KRG became problematic, and party and organisation leaders regularly made allegations against each other via the media.
33. Taca sere me ye.
34. Mele mistefa Bezanî bi temamê xelkê xwe ve di çiyan de bû û ordiyên Ereban ji tirsa wî newêrîbûn li çiyan bineriyana.
35. Erê ev partiya te jî, çima wek wî bazê çiyayên Kurdistanê, topen ku teyaran dixîn peyde nake?

36. Exlaqê van û romîyan yek e.
37. Ronakbîr describes how, in Başûr (South Kurdistan), he could do many things: 'He was able to read and write as well. Society existed and society would appreciate his intelligence and wisdom' (Dikarîbû bixwenda û binivîsanda jî. Civat hebû û civatê jî wê bi qîmetê jîr û zanahiya wî bizanîbûya) (111).
38. Divê em bi tevahiya hêz û quweta xwe ji bo gelê xwe kar bikin. Wa ye dengê şoreşê li Başurê Kurdistanê, bi serokatiya Mela Mistefa Barzaniyê qedirbilind geş dine.
39. Kurdistana Başûr [. . .] perçeya Kurdistanê niha azad e.
40. Xwedê rehma xwe li wî bike.
41. Peshmerga (Pêşmerge in Kurdish means those who face death) refers to the armed Kurdish soldiers in Iraqi Kurdistan.
42. Bav, bapîrên wî tev zulm û tahdeya hikûmeta tirk dîtibûn. Pîrika wî, Diya wî [. . .] herkesî, her tim dij dewletê xeber didan û bi dizî jî alîkariya pêşmergêyên kurdên başûrê Kurdistanê dikirin.
43. Available at: http://www.kurdistan.nu/dk-yazilar/name.htm (accessed 14 September 2012); also at http://www.kurdistan.nu/dk-yazilar/nameyeke_vekiri.htm (accessed 14 September 2012).
44. Dewleta koledar û barbar gelê Kurd jî mecbûrî xwe paraztinê û terorê dikir.
45. See Martin Van Bruinessen's working paper on 'The Kurds in movement: migrations, mobilisations, communications and the globalisation of the Kurdish question' (1999), available at: http://www.hum.uu.nl/medewerkers/m.vanbruinessen/publications/Kurds_in_movement.htm (accessed 24 August 2012).
46. Although the maps encompassing the regions of Greater Kurdistan have a common core area, definite borders are not consistent. There are different visions of the map of Greater Kurdistan: the map proposed by Sharif Pasha for the Treaty of Versailles (1919), or the one proposed by the Rizgarî Party to the United Nations (1945). For more on this topic, see Maria T. O'Shea's 'Kurdistan, the mapping of a myth', in *Kurdistan: Political and Economic Potential* (1992).
47. Ne tenê tirk, ereb û faris jî weha ne. Kurdistan kirine çar perçe û tu mafê demokratîk û netewayî nadin kurdan.
48. Welatê kurdan, mîna her gavê, hingê jî, perçe û peregende bû. Welatê bêmal, bêkemal û bêdewlet di bin nîrên hukimdariyên Ecem û Osmaniyan de bû.
49. Wek ez venegeriyabim welatê xwe, lê ez vegeriyabim welatekî xerîb, nav mirovên xerîn, kultureke xerîb.
50. Piştî panzdeh salên hepsê, ez xwe xerîbê vî bajarî dibînim [. . .] vî bajarî tu xwedîtî li min nekiriye [. . .] Qet ne xema bajêr û bajariyan e'.
51. Aniha li vî bajarî bi hezeran zarokên bêxwedî li kuçan hene. Du hezar jin xwe li vî bajarî diforişin.
52. Ev bajarê qedîm li min bûye dojeh. Ev bajarê ku ez demekê li dû rizgarkirina wî bûm, niha min dixwe, êşê bi min dide kişandin. Ev bajarê ku min bawer dikir ez ê rojekê mîna qehremenekê lê vegerim, niha lê bûme qehpik. Bajarê ku min

dixwest rûmeta wî ji bin postalên biyaniyan rizgar bikim, niha rûmeta min lê di bin lingan de ye.

53. Hina digot; qedera me Kurdan wiha ye; hina digot; ji bêaqiliya me ye; hina dijûn ji PDKê re dikirin; hina rêveberiya kampê rexne dikir û hina jê partî rexne dikir.
54. PDK dibêje; PKK li Başûr eşkere xebatê dike; ev jî dibe sedem ku Tirk bi ser me de werin.
55. PKK jî dibêje; çima PDK bi dijminê Kurdan re dibe yek bi ser me de tê.
56. Di nav Kurdan de şerê bi kulman weke lîstoka zarokan tê dîtin. Ku serên hev nekin derav, destêan hev neşkînin, pozên hev neperçiqînin çawa ku li hev nexistîn. Bêhna wan bi tiştên piçûk dernakeve.
57. Heta welatekî azad yê mirov tune be, mirov bi kû ve jî biçe weke hev e.
58. A Kurdish party based in Iraqi Kurdistan, the PDK was first established in Iranian Kurdistan in 1946 under the leadership of Mustafa Barzani. The party currently plays a leading role in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).
59. Çi însanên me yên hêja di wê demê de bi dilsozî alîkariya Mele Mistefa kirin. Lê ev ro? Em Kurd çi tînin serê hev [. . .] Ew, çi li serê me tînin?
60. Li gund du partî hebûn ku li kûderê hevûdu bidîtana, xwîn dirijîya. Kê cihê asê û bilind, yanî kaş zeft bikira, zora partîya din bibir.
61. Ji bo ku dewleteke kurdan yê netewî tûne ye, kurdan her tiştê xwe hûnda kirîye. Kurd ji hemû tiştan bêpar mane. Ji ber tûnebûna dewletê û dezgeyên, sazgehên netewî di hemû tiştên kurdan de tevlihevî heye. Karên sîyasî bigir hetanî yên edebî tevlîhevî xwe dide nîşandan [. . .] Ji bo herçar perçeyên Kurdistanê Konseyek netewî nehat damezrandin. Dezgehên millî yên gelêrî nehatine avakirin.
62. Baskên periyên li wir şikestî, rengên wan kîmyaya xwe wendakirî û stûxwar in. Kesî axîn û hewara wan jî nebihîst [. . .] Ew jinên li başûrê welêt bi nave namûs û şerefê, bi hêla mêrên feudal û mêjîgeniyan ve hatine kuştin, hatine sotin, hatine fetisandin in.
63. Zênayê jî wek pir keçên kurdan bê sûd û bê qeder mabû. Miradê xwe nekiribû [. . .] Ev yek di her wextî de û li her deverê eynî bû.
64. Hacî Zorav çû, kurê wî ket cihê wî [. . .] ez dizanim, Warê Xerzan ê rojek biguhere, lê ez nebînim.
65. Hestê eşîrî li pêş hestê Kurdayetî bû.
66. Min çeka dijmin hilgirtiye ev ne xiyanet e!
67. Xiyaneta mîna demxeya reş î kirêt ku li pê çavên dîroka Kurdan ketiye [. . .]
68. Çima hewqasî xayin ji Kurdan derdikevin? [. . .]
69. Mirin jibo xayînan.
70. Fermandarê kampê ew bi berjewendiya xwe sexsî û nîyetên xwe yên gemarî bikar dianî [. . .]
71. Axa û şêx bi tevê dewleta Tirk bûbin yek û li dij Kurdistanek serbixwe ne.
72. Kurd miletekî xerabe ye! Miletekî ku bindestî qebûl kiriye. Û miletê ku bindestiyê qebûl bike jî ji xwe fedî nake.
73. Both the main character Ferda and the novelist Cewerî have lived in Stockholm since 1980. Ferda in the novel is between two different worlds (homeland and

host country); Ceweri̇̂ himself has expressed similar thoughts: 'When I am in Sweden, I say to myself I will go to my country, when I am in my country, I say to myself I will return home.' The interview is available at: http://www.nefel.com/articles/article_detail.asp? RubricNr=7&ArticleNr = 2827 (accessed 15 August 2012).

74. These village guards (*korucu*) are mostly Kurdish paramilitaries armed and paid by the Turkish state to fight the PKK. Jongerden (2007:21) comments that 'as Kurdish allies of the Turkish armed forces, the "*korucu*" enjoyed virtual immunity and could use their arms for the exercise of private violence as well'. A Turkish Parliamentary report in 1995 confirmed that village guards were involved in a wide range of illegal activities, including killing, extortion, and drug smuggling (Yildiz 2004).
75. Ev resimekî welêt yê rastîn e. Ev resimê dîrokeke dirêj e û sebeb û encama bindestmayîna me ya sedsalan e. Ev dijmininatiya me ya hundurîn û herdemî ye [. . .] ev kurmekî xerab e û ev kurm e ku ji dil û mêjiyê me dixwe.
76. Xirabiya Kurd bi Kurd kiriye û niha jî dike kes bi kesek nake. Heger cehş û xaînên Kurdan nebana serîhaldanên netewî yên Kurdsn têk diçûn? Heger burayê Şêx Seîd, Kasim sîxurî nekirina Şêx Seîd dihat girtin? Heger cerdewan nebana, hukumat dikaribû çi bike? Û heger hinek Kurdan îxbarci nebana ez dibûm mehkûm?
77. Kafir û xayinên herî mezin em in.
78. Ne wan Kurd kirîbûn yek û ne jî Kurd bi xwe bûbûn yek.
79. Bibin dewlet jî wê qîmet neke.
80. As mentioned earlier, discussion is ongoing as to whether the Sheikh Said rebellion was based on religious and tribal reactions to the modernity of Kemalists or had a nationalist base. A number of scholars and researchers depict the rebellion as a combination of Kurdish nationalism and Islamic grievances against the new Republic (e.g., Olson 1989, White 2000, Romano 2006), but for Kurds, the rebellion is part of their national struggle (Jongerden 2007: 25), as it is in the Kurdish novelistic discourse. For detailed research on the rebellion see Robert Olson's *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion 1880–1925* (1989), Hakan Özoğlu's *Nationalism and Kurdish Notables in the Late Ottoman-Early Republican Era* (2004), and Martin Van Bruinessen's *Agha, Shaikh and State*: *The Social and Political Structure of Kurdistan* (1992a [1978]) and his article 'Popular Islam, Kurdish nationalism and rural revolt: the Rebellion of Shaikh Said in Turkey' (1925) in Bak and Benechke (eds), *Religion and Rural Revolt* (1984).
81. Safran's definition of diasporic communities (1991: 83–4) is that they 'regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as a place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return'. Brubaker (2005: 5) considers the real or imagined homelands of diasporas as 'an authoritative source of value, identity and loyalty' and confirms that earlier diaspora writings position homeland as 'mythologised', 'idealised', and 'historicised'. Discussing the 'diasporic imaginary', Fludernik, among others, notes that this, 'suggests

that people who identify themselves as part of a diaspora are creating an imaginary – a landscape of dream and fantasy that answers their desires' (2003: xi). This argument incorporates the claim that physical spaces are not sufficient to enable migrants to identify with themselves and that they need to create imaginary images that represent 'what [they] should like to be' (Mishra 1996: 423). Brah's study emphasises the imaginary aspect of the diaspora concept, and suggests that diaspora 'delineates a field of identifications where "imagined communities" are forged within and out of a confluence of narratives from annals of collective memory and re-memory' (Brah 1996: 196). In relation to her argument, displacement encourages diasporic members not to limit themselves to accounts of their real world, since they are also involved in alternative versions of home through which they can 'express the imaginary, the dreams, the fantasies, the allegories, the desires, that usually find expression through metaphors' (Galván 2010: 6). Thus, according to Brah's argument (1996), diasporic members articulate metaphorical spaces in producing images of home instead of dealing with the delineation of real spaces. Accordingly, even for stateless diasporic groups such as Armenians (Payaslian 2010) and Basques (see Totoricagüena 2004), in the case of a geographical existence away from home coupled with an idealised longing for return, diasporic groups will construct romanticised images of homeland. In light of these assumptions, it is important to note that Kurdish diasporic literary writing reverses the arguments on configurations of imaginary homeland by diasporas.

82. Di zindanê de hemû îcadên pejirandinê liser min hatin ceribandin û min di dawiyê de çawên xwe, ji roniya ku hêsir ji laşê mirov diqetîne, vekişand. Tirsê, di dilê min de konên xwe yên gemar çêkir û giyana min herimand. Jibo guhertina cîhanê xwebaweriyeke bêqisûr diviya, lê xwedayên hestên min vê mizginiya pîroz ji laşê min kişandin û birin. Du sal, li binê lingên hovên qijikbav de daxweza jiyana min hate xesandin.

83. In the name of building political stability and restoring law to a situation of constant impotent governance and disorder, the military, promoting a Kemalist ideology, intervened in government on 12 September 1980 and remained in power for three years. General Kenan Evren, chief planner of the military coup in 1980, served as president for the next seven years. Under military rule, the unitary state with its ideology of a single national identity dealt a fatal blow to diversity and multiple identities, while oppressing Turkey's democratic civil society. The outcomes of the military coup included termination of the legal activities of a great range of left-wing parties, media censorship, economic liberalisation at the expense of labour, increased Islamic impacts, weakened relations with the European Union, and the denial of Kurdish identity. Under the junta's rule, thousands of people were arrested, including Kurdish activists, and half were severely tortured (Balci 2008: 179). Political parties were outlawed, and hundreds of writers, journalists, and scholars were either arrested or deported. Most importantly, the 1982 Constitution and further legal amendments in 1983 that led to decreasing politicisation of the groups and

violations of human rights and freedoms came into force during this period. In particular, Article 5 on the fundamental tasks of the Turkish state and Article 26 banning the use of Kurdish language resulted in heavy-handed repression of Kurdish identity. See Lipovsky (1992), Hebditch and Connor (2005), and Eligur (2010) for further in-depth analysis and details of the coup.

84. At the time of the research for this book, with a few exceptions, there were no reliable or adequate resources or research concerning the bibliographies of the novelists concerned. The bibliographical information I have provided is based on direct/personal communications with the novelists themselves or with their publishers.
85. Because of his political activities Dilovan, a teacher, was arrested in 1980, imprisoned for a couple of years and subjected to severe torture, before he was able to move to Germany.
86. Wê gave hîn tesîra girtin û lêdanên li girtîgehê, ji ser xwe neavêtibû. Ev tesir hîn jî dom dike [. . .] Piştî ku pasaport wergirtibû jî di xewna xwe de, li bajarê xwe, ji aliyê polîsan ve çend caran hatibû girtin.
87. Foot whipping, also known *inter alia* as bastinado, is a form of corporal punishment in which the soles of the feet are beaten. Though dreadfully painful it leaves few physical traces; thus it is a useful method of torture.
88. Ew êşkence, feleqe, asqîyên Fîlîstînê, şoka elektrikê û zare zara girtîyan jibîr nekir. Ew her tim di sere wî de zingirîn. Tûjtir nebû. Lê ji ber çi birekê jî ew kor nebû.
89. Girtin û lêdan wê heta ku azadiya welatê bav û kalan bê bidome. Heta ku gel azad nebe, kurên gel jî wê tadeyê û şikenceyê bikişînin. Serdar ev yek pak dizanibû. Dizanibû ku ew ne yê ewil û ne yê taliyê ye jî.
90. Rast e ku ez jî li vî bajarî dijiyam, lê ji çar dîwaran pê ve çavên min bi bajêr neketine. Ez nebûme şahidê bejinavêtina ciwanên vî bajarî, min mezinbûna bajêr nedît, ez panzdeh salan ji avaçûn û hilatina roja vî bajarî bêpar mam.
91. The text of an interview with Ceweri (in 2008) is available at: http://www.nefel.com/articles/article_detail.asp?RubricNr=7&ArticleNr = 2827 (accessed 15 August 2012).

Chapter 5 The Kurdish Novelistic Discourse in Turkish Kurdistan: Constructing 'Homeland' and 'Identity'

1. '*Başûr*' is the Kurdish equivalent of 'South' in English; '*Bakur*' means 'North', '*Rojava*' means 'West', and '*Rojhilat*' refers to 'East'. These terms are used to address the four regions of Kurdistan. Accordingly, '*Başûr*' is Iraqi Kurdistan, '*Bakur*' is Turkish Kurdistan, '*Rojava*' is Syrian Kurdistan, and '*Rojhilat*' is Iranian Kurdistan.
2. Heta dayika me di bin destê her çar zirbavan de be û heta dadî, adalet û jihevfêmkirin, di nav zarokên birînê de pêk neyê ez ê her û her li vir bim.

3. Ez kurd im. We qet Kurdistan bihîstîye? Ka ew cihê ku bûye meydana pêşbirka çar kûçkan heye ya, aha ez ji wê derê me.
4. In most of the novels, 'Amed' is used to refer to Diyarbakir, which is regarded as the capital of Greater Kurdistan. 'Amida' was the old name of the city. It can be argued that using 'Amed' instead of Diyarbakir is a political act, as well as a form of resistance to the changing of Kurdish placenames after the founding of the Turkish Republic. The use of 'Amed' or 'Diyarbakir' throughout this book depends on the choice of the individual novelist.
5. Ew bajar ne bajarê min e.
6. Ji xwe hîn tirba me nîvçe maye; heta em Başûr û Rojhilat jî bi ser Bakur venekin, em di gorê de rehet nakin.
7. Kêla Memê çiyayekî bi tena xwe bû. Milekî wê li aliyê Bestan dinêrî, milek li aliyê Qlaban dinêrî. Milê Bestan, milê Bakur û Rojava, milê Qlaban jî milê Başûr û Rojhilat bû. This extract basically maps the geographical location of Kel Mehmet mountain in Şirnak province; it is bounded by the Besta Valley, which lies between Şirnak and Siirt, and by the Kilaban creek which is located in Uludere, a district in Şirnak.
8. Hîn li pişt çiyayên Zagros, li pişt çiyayê Agirî li hêviyê bû ku cîhan fitlonekekê bide xwe û ew jî bejnekê bilind bibe; di navsera Zagrosan re tîrejên xwe dirêjî Kurdistanê bike.
9. There are various discussions regarding the origins and emergence of '*Kardoxî*'. It is commonly believed that it refers to the first term conveying the notion of 'Kurd'. It may have Assyrian origins and have come from '*qardu*' meaning 'strong' and 'hero'. There is no certainty that the terms '*Kardoukhoi*' or '*Kardu*' refer to Semites or to an ancient indigenous people, though they certainly inhabited the same areas as those in which Kurds live today (Jwaideh 2006: 12).
10. Kardoxî li ba min yek in [. . .] ez ci cudatî nakim di navbera wan de [. . .].
11. Nivîsîn jî hene wek ruhê laşê meredî nazik, wek xwîna di damarên mirov de diherike, wek li ser Çiyayê Slîva pezkoviya ku bûye qesasê evîna Siyabend û Xecê ku dinihure bi şewat û wek zaroka Helepçeyê li pêsîra dayika xwe dinihêre û li benda niqutek ava spî ye. Bi awayekî din, li Mehabadê dibe kindira stûyê Qazî Mihemedê nemir, di dîwana Seydayê Cegerxwîn de dibe wek pêlên Ferat û Dîcleyê. Bi hêrseke mezin dibe wek Çiyayê Gebar û Cûdî.
12. Bi vê minasebetê, ez serokê nemr, xweşmêr Mele Mistefa Barzanî bi bîr tînim û bejna xwe lê hemberî hilmetbilindî û hestên wî yên resen kurdî direwînim.
13. Em dê li ber rizgarbûna kurdan bigerin. Wekî Mella Mistefa Barzanî.
14. Ji hev dûr bûn, bajarên wan, rêyên wan, emrê wan, serhetiya wan. Lê dîsa jî qedera wan yek bû. Ya en girîng jî ew bû ku hêviya wan jî yek bû.
15. Ez kurê dayika Gutî, Lolo, horo, Mîtan, Med, Mahabat, Hewlêr, Amed û Amûdê bi xwe meee/Ez dayika Cizîrî, Xanî, Cegerxwîn, Mem, Zîn, Xec, Sîyabend bi xwe meeee/Ez kurê dayika Qasimlo, Mela Mistefa Mustafa, Xelîl begê Cibrî, Nûrî Paşayê Milî, Seyîd Rizo, Şêx Seîd, Nêrî Dêrsimî, Selahetîne Eyûbi, Qazî Mihemeh, Leyla Qasim, xweda û Xwedawend Zîlan, Sema, Bêrîvan, Vîyan, Egît [. . .] Ez kurê îlim [. . .] Ocalan bi xwe meee.

16. The Yazidis are Kurmanji-speaking people with their own heterodox religion, Yazidism. They live mainly in the surroundings of the Mosul region in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and until very recently in the Mardin-Midyat area of Turkish Kurdistan. Yazidis have had to migrate several times to escape from religious and ethnic intolerance: to Russia at the end of the nineteenth century because of rising pan-Islamic movements, and from Turkish Kurdistan to Germany during the past 30 years because of increasing oppression. As Christine Allison notes, 'their religion contains elements originating in various majority religions, but cannot be defined as purely, or even principally, Christian, Islamic or Zoroastrian; it appears to be truly syncretistic' (2001: 26).
17. Ma ne kurd in? Ma ne birayên me, xwîna me nin.
18. Kurdên qedîm in û pişt re musulman bûne.
19. Ma jixwe ew in kurdên xasiyet û kevnare. Ji aliyê ereb, fars û roman ve jî qewî nehatine helandin û bişavtin.
20. Ezidî Kurdin. Civat tev li ser vê yekê bi meqeyet bû. Tiştek din jî heye ku olê wan û Ezidîyan neyek e. Eger ev jî nebe, bawerin ku navbera wan dê hêsta xweştir, dîsa birayên hev bin.
21. [. . .] Ferqa me nîne, ha Milî, ha Dumilî em yekin [. . .]. 'Milî', also known as Milan, refers to a historical Kurdish tribe, which dissolved and re-established itself in various configurations over time. The Milan tribe is considered to live in the southwest of Turkish Kurdistan (Jongerden 2007: 26), although after the death of the leader Milli Ibrahim (Ibrahim pasha), the confederation fell apart (ibid.: 27). It is also considered that Zilan is another branch of the Milan tribe. See M. Sykes (1915) and Van Bruinessen (1992 [1978]). The term 'Dumilî' (Dimili) is historically considered to refer to a large tribe dispersed around in the Iraqi, Iranian, and Turkish regions of Kurdistan. However, in its current meaning, it refers to Zaza (Van Bruinessen 1992b). Alevi speakers of Dimili are divided into two parts, speaking sub-dialects of Kurdish: Zaza and Kirmanci or Kirmancki (spoken by (Kızılbaş) Alevis from Dersim), which is different from Kurmanji, one of the main dialects. According to Malmîsanij's research called *Kırd, Kırmanc, Dimili veya Zaza Kürtleri* (Kird, Kirmanc, Dimili, or Zaza Kurds), Kurds live mainly in cities such as 1) Semsûr (Adıyaman); 2) Çewlig (Bingöl); 3) Bedlis (Bitlis); 4) Diyarbekır (Diyarbakır); 5) Xarpêt (Elazığ); 6) Erzirgan (Erzincan); 7) Erzirom (Erzurum); 8) Mûş (Muş); 9) Sêwas (Sivas); 10) Sêrt (Siirt); 11) Dêrsim (Tunceli); and 12) Ruha (Urfa). Further details can be found at http://www.scribd.com/doc/44991767/Kırd-Kırmanc-Dımıli-veya-Zaza-Kurtleri-Malmisanıj (accessed 14 September 2012). See also P. White (2000), Romano (2006).
22. [. . .] Em jî kurd in û ew jî kurd in.
23. Şerefxanê ku di navbera sedsela şazdemîn de bi dehan sal rêveberiya Kurdistanê kiriye, bi Şerefnameya xwe, çîroka mîrên Kurdistanê li gora bîr û boçûnên xwe vegotiye.
24. Di wir [Şerefname] de tê gotin, navê 'kurd' ji cesareta zêde ya wî miletî tê. Sedrazamê Osmanî yê Siltan Orhan, ku bi navê Xeyreddîn Paşa deng dabû, Mewlana Taceddînî Kurdî bi eslê xwe kurd bû [. . .] Wekî din Îdrîsê Bedlîsî û

Seleheddînê Eyyûbî ku ji bo miletên din xebitîne û ji miletên xwe re nebûne jî, bi eslê xwe kurd in.

25. Kurê min, berê xwe bidê tu îro wekî egîdekî li serê Girê Kejo notirvaniya wargehê Avatezî dikî. Ev der wargehê bav û kalên te ye. Li vir gelek caran dîroka mêrxasiyê hatiye nivîsîn.
26. Di tarîxa vî gundî da tenê tiştekî bi şeref hatiye kirin. Di terqa Şêx Sêîd Efendî da hijdeh mêrên vî gundî li hember dewleta Romê ketine şer û hatine kuştin [. . .]
27. Ehmedê Xanî [. . .] bi zimanê gelê xwe nivîsandiye û di hêla vegotina kurmancî de jî bûye pêşrewê wêjeya kurdî.
28. Zaroktiya wî weneyekî vî bajarî yî kevin de mabû. Wê gavê, hejmara avahiyên bilind ne ew qasî zêde bû [. . .] belkî ew bajarê ku dihat bîra wî, jî êdî di wêneyên zarokatiya wî de mabû. Herdu bi hev re, di nav gelek wêneyên din de, di torbeyekî naylon de, li refika pirtûkxaneya wî mabûn.
29. Gava meriv ji hale xwe ne razî be û ji pêşiya xwe biguman, dizivire li rojên xwe yên derbasbûyî dinêre.
30. Welatê min ji hêla hemwelatiyên min ve, di nava pîsî û gemarê de difetisî.
31. Di xewna xwe de min dîtibû ku Xanê kavil bûbû [. . .].
    Ez li der û doran digeriyam, ne min nasek didît, ne maleke ava, ne jî tiştek ji Xanê, heke ji çiya û semtên wê nebûya min ê bigota qey ev der ne Xanê ye.
32. Gundê Mizgeft bi wî halê dişibiya berojê kimkiman (gumgumok), kêlûle û beqmaran dîlan lê digerand. Têhna tirsê lê hêwirîbû, bêhna mirinê jê difiriya. Bi wî halê xwe wekî birîna birîndarekî kêmgirtî jan vedida. Ez li ser tenişta birkê rûniştim, qidûm li min şikestibûn, bêhna min çikiyabû, qiriktaliya giriyê gewriya min ziwa kiribû, rondikên germ û sû, li.
33. Gundê me da xirabkirin, mirovên me dane kuştin û niha jî wekî nijdevanan her roj talana xwelîserekî radikin.
34. Li zozanan gul û kulîlkên biharê serê xwe di nav keviyên berfê de hilatîne û teşeyê biharê yê xweşik dol û nevalên zozanan xemilandi ye.
35. Hûnikatiya zozanan ji bo wan hem fersendeke.
    hem jî derîveyê hin hêviyên nû ye.
36. Baranên biharê jiyan diherikand. ewrên baran barkirî xemla xwezayê diguherand.
37. Welat? . . .Şer? . . .Diyarbekîr?
38. Serhat behs ji bêhna Sosin û Beybûnan dike. Lê belê îro li welêt Sosin û Beybîn tunin.
39. Li welatê min ê ku carê diqulibe ser û binê hev û bi lezeke sawnak digindire ser jiyanên me gişan, carê jî di rihetiyeke bêwate de hewîna wî nayê, di binê pêla qewamên xwezaya xezebdar, bagerên bixişm, şewatên tenûrekî, ku carê gundan dide valakirin û erdê direpisîne û deng jê nabir re, ava ku li keviyên welatên cîranên me yên ku em hîç neçûnê dize û her nêzîkî me, bi ser me de tê, ev yek bêhna min derdixe.
40. Me bêdengiyan, rûreşiyan, durûtiyan, xayîntiyan, girtîgehan, tenêbûnan, tunebûnan, sirgûniyan, dûriyan, xerîbiyan, birçîbûyan, nexweşiyan, janan, mirinan tevli dîtiye.

41. Ez kurê netewa di peymanên nevwelatan de welatê xwe bihûşta xwe, xaka xwe, war û wargehên kal û bavên xwe windakirî, bi xwe meeee [. . .] li goristanen her ku diçû zêde dibûn dinerîn û hêvîyên xwe li nik goristanan dihîstin û kom bi kom xwe dispartin çîyayên mezin û ji welatekî koçî welatekî din dikir, bi xwe meee.
42. Zarokên gelekî bindestin. Bav û kalê van ev ji wan re dîyarî kirî ye. Anku bindestî, jarî, perîşanî [. . .] Kedxwaran welêt dagirtîye. Xwîna mirovên wan dimêje. Zarokan di zikê dayîkan de dikuje. Têkoşîn li welêt tê kirin.
43. Bêjim te, em Kurdin. Em li welatê xwe bindest dijîn. Pêwiste ku em xebatê bikin da ku i bindestê dijmin derkevin. Bi kêmasî li welatê xwe bi zimanê xwe hevisîn bikin. There is an ambiguity in the word 'hevisîn' in this sentence, which appears have been misspelled. *Hewisîn*' refers to 'to learn' and 'hêvişîn' means 'to preserve'. The author could have intended to intend to use either of them, as both would make sense.Either way, the author implies the signifigance of the Kurdish language for the national struggle.
44. Ev partîye tev welatparêz in, niştiman perwer in [. . .] heya netew nebe yek, rizgarî jî nabe. Yekbûna netewê niha girêdayî vê yekê ye. Eger rêber bi hevre bawerî nebe ku bi hevre bimesin gelê jî bawerî bi wan rêbera nabe.
45. The date suggests that the party referred to is in all probability the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party). The PKK launched its first attack on 15 August 1984.
46. Welatê me ji hezar salan û vir de li hêvîya vê roje bû. Iroke 15 ê tebaxê ye. Dayîka me Kurdan îroke cêmikek anî dinê. Yek kur, yek keçe. Şoreş ket tayek û bayek din, ji îro û paşve emê hêriş bikîn dagirkeran heya welatê me berdidin. Edî desrê dijimin nagehê namûsa me. Ne dûre nêzîke azadî.
47. Şêr ji bo warê xwe têdikoşin.
48. Ma Sozda ji ber çi reviyabû; da ku qedera reş a dayika xwe dubare nake. Da ku nebe kole û xidama serdestan [. . .] Da ku bikaribe bi dilê xwe, li ser axa xwe azad û serbixwe bijiyî.
49. Û divê em xwedîtiyê li wan bikin. Em, wan weke gencîneya welatê xwe biparêzin.
50. Ger em xwe sist nekin, hîn em negihiştine salên du hezaran emê di Kurdistaneke serbixwe û azad de, dawetan li dar bixin.
51. Tu jî dizanî ku em di herdu caryekên serê vê sedsalê de di bin ketin. Hemû berxwedanên Kurdan têk çûn. Her têkcûnek bi xwe re yan tunebûnê yan jî bedengiyê tine.
52. Ez jî Kurd im, welatparêz û şoreşger im. Kurdbûn serêşî ye. Welatparêzî fedakarî ye. Şoreşgerî jî li dijî sûdê nerazîbûn e.
53. Her roj li welat gelek mirov dihatin girtin, birîndarkirin û wendakirin. Her roj keç û xortan li çiyayên welat jiyana xwe ji dest didaz. Li welat şerekî qirêj dewam dikir. Di vê rewşê de ne welatparêzek yan şoreşgerek, mirovek bi wijdan û durust jî nikarîbû vana tevli bavêta pişta gohê xwe û bi dû yekî/ê biketa.
54. Ez di wextekî kin de bi xêra Cengiz bûbûm nasyarê hemû welatparêzan. Ez bûbûm heyranê Cengiz.

55. Ew mêrekî bi rastî jî camêr bû, zana bû, dilsoz bû, dizanî lê xwedî derkeve, biaqil bû, serwext bû, dizanî, dilan fetih bike, cirxweş bû, xwîngerm bû, dizani hez bike.
56. Dayika min, ji me hemûyan bêhtir ji Ehmed hez dikir, her digot ew ê bibe mirovekî jêhatî û dê bibe serkêşekî kurdan.
57. Ez ê her dem ji bo ku dayika min, welatê min di siberojên geştir de bijîn têbikoşim [. . .] Ez ji bo azadiya we, ji bo ku siberojê zarokên we li ser vê axê azad bin, ji bo ku li hemberî dîrokê serbilind bin diçim.
58. Newroz refers to the traditional celebration by the Kurdish community of the Iranian New Year according to the Iranian calendar. Held around the spring equinox, 21 March, Newroz occupies a much more important place among the Kurds in terms of Kurdish identity than a mere spring festival. According to Kurdish myth, Newroz is associated with the legend of Kawa, a blacksmith who defeated the evil ruler Zuhak (also known as Dehak). Under Zuhak's rule, Kurdish people had every day to sacrifice two young men and serve their brains to Zuhak's serpents. Zuhak's vile reign also kept the spring away from Kurdistan. Traditionally 20 March is marked as the day that Kawa defeated Zuhak; the next day spring returned to Kurdistan. From the 1980s, because of its association with freedom Newroz became the single most important symbol of the Kurdish uprising, and the Newroz celebrations were constantly suppressed by the Turkish authorities. During the 1992 Newroz celebrations, the Turkish state killed over 50 Kurdish participants, and two were also killed in 2008. Similarly three Kurds were shot dead by Syrian state forces in Syria. In a desperate effort to preempt this Kurdish national festival, the Turkish government tried to reclaim and reinvent the event by announcing that Newroz (which is called Nevruz in Turkish) was in fact a Turkish holiday and commemorated the first day that Turks left their Central Asian homeland. In 2000 it became legal to celebrate this day with the name Nevruz, although its Kurdish name, Newroz, is still forbidden.
59. Herne pêş, werne pêş; dewr û dem ya me.
60. Birayên delal hûn werin kurdino! bi eşqa welat em herin merdino!
61. [. . .] De xwe hazir bike da ku em ber bi axê ve biçin. Da ku xwe bavêjin hembêza xakê û li wir hêlîna xwe bikolin. Erê, em biçin bin sîbera çiyayên bilind û li dor kanî û rûbarên zelal hêlîna xwe deynin.
62. Emê pêkve jiyaneke bextewer derbas bikin. Jiyaneke ku bêhna axê jê difûre. Erê, jiyaneke ku di dawiya her zehmetkêşiyê de mirovên dilçak bidest dixin û pê şadibin. De were, em biçin gundê xwe; Gûzereşa rengîn li benda me ye Sozê, li benda me! [. . .]
63. êdî baran jî vewesiyabû. Êdî hetaveke tînde li ser jîngehê dibişirî. Bûka baranê heçko pêşwaziya wan dikir, wisa wekî kembereke rengîn xwe bi gerdena çiyayê Rêjgareyî pêçabû. Rûbar şêlû û boş bû. Her dever şîl bû, her dever şîn bû, her dever tijî jîn bû. Bêhna axê ji Gûzereşê difûriya; axa ku baraneke xurt lê bariya [. . .] Hetav geş bû û bihar bi hemû spehîtiya xwe dibişirî. Êdî her tişt li pey mabû, êdî hemû xem û keserên wan li dûv wan mabûn [. . .] Rûyê wan êdî

dikeniya [. . .] Bihara umrê wan bû [. . .] Bihara nû bi hemû xweşikiya xwe dibişirî [. . .].

64. Di dilê wî de hêvî herdem hebû û bi saya vî dilê xwe yê hêvîdar li ser ruyê erdê, di jiyanê de mabû [. . .] hêvîya wî bi jiyana nû hebû [. . .] ji vê jiyanê wê azadî hatiba afirandin [. . .] Ev jiyaneke têr zor û zahmetî bû; lê jiyaneke têr bû.
65. Çiya û zozanên Hekarya ev herdu evîndar wekî du gulên bêhnxweş dane ber singê xwe. Kela Colemêrgê ya mîna dergoşê nazdarên nemir nava dilê xwe de mêjandin û hejandin. Ji keyfan de Xenanis bû bûk ber hembêza Çiyayê Reş yê zava. Merzan xemilîbû belga kulîlka. Gubsî ji şahiyê ra çepik lêdixistin. Tirmilên Cete cuda ketibîne geriya govendê. Kilîlan wekî beybûkekî dilgeş destmala xwe li şahiyê tejand. Keyfa de rûndikên Simbî bibûn rêzik, zinar û latên bilind de dihatin nav rûbarê Zê.
66. Bêhna giya û kulîlka li her hêlên wan difirîya. Kulîlkên kesk û sor dîlana wan digirt. Dewran û Nêrgiz êdî li cem hev bûn. Sîpanê Xelatê jî li wan temaşe dikir.
67. Dav û ûşiyên nefelê li sere zinaran dihejiya bi bayê re [. . .] Tîrêjên hetavê li ser Ava Spî û kanî û sûlavên ku ji her derê hilvatên leylan didan [. . .] bedewiyeke nedîtî. Dibe ku ya digotinê ‘bihûşta baqî’ ev der bû.
68. Li geliyê xwarê rûbarê Xanê xwerik dikevinê/kes nizane ka bêhna/gul û nêrgizan/sosîn û asmînan/ alal û beybûnan xweştir e/ an sing û ber û bedenên şengedosta minê.
69. Geraşîn zozanekî gelekî xweş bû, mirovî li wir, çar demsal bi hev re dijiyan. Zozanê Geraşînê li dora gola şîn hatibû danîn. Li ser golê werdek û qaz hebûn; li rexûrûyên wê asmîn û beybûn, nêrgiz û binevş, alal û sosîn, nesrîn û gulgever bi hev re şîn dibûn. Ji her derê wê kaniyek hiltavêt, mêrgên wê bi hezaran êş di giyanê mirovî de dikuştîn; hûnebayê wê mirov wekî pilîtê li balan difirand.
70. Seyrangeheke bêber û bêser bû. Dawiya wê nedixuya. Bêdawî [. . .] bûn [. . .] bi sedan gulên cur bi cur û darên terikî lê hebûn.
71. Tenê rîyek revê hebû û ew jî divîyabû ku mirov biba cûkek, bazek, teyrek an jî kevokek ku kariba di ber wê pencerê re bi fire biketa û ber bi azadîyê ve bifirîya [. . .] Erê min wê gavê xwest ku ez bibim çûkek, teyrek an jî kevokek ku kariba di ber wê pencerê re, bifirim û serîlêdanakê li ware kal û bavan bidim. Weke tê zanîn, li welatê kal û bavan ne hucre û ne jî tenêbûm heye. Li welatê kal û bavan deşt, zozan û çîya bi hemû dewlemendî û xweşikbûna xwe pêşwazî li mirovan dike û bi dilekî herî germ, merivan di singe xwe de, diezimîne. Gulên li welatê kal û bavan weke kenên şadî û bextewarîyê, li ser hinarekên miroven leylan didin û her û her jîndar in.
72. Bêhneke xweş a Kurdistanî bû.
73. Gelek tişt li ser biharên elat hatîne gotin. Ji hinan re bûye demê eşq û evînê. Lê belê tu ji can cîhê evîna welat bixwe nagre. Lewra pêşdariyên biharên welatî bi gotin nayê ziman, naye gotin. Biharin welatparêzan cardin girêdidin evînê.
74. Ardûda is a professor who experiments in cloning human beings. He has been successful, and during his career has cloned several of them. Finally, he clones

himself with the same physical features. However, he cannot control his clone, who takes his place and starts to kill people. In the novel, place names like '*Axsor*' (Redsoil), '*Zorder*' (Craggy Place), '*Cotsterk*' (Wooden Plough Star), and '*Ser*' (Top) are completely fictional, but they are in Kurdish. Another professor named Saxî remembers his poverty-stricken childhood, without family, friends, or toys. He witnessed the war between galaxies and speaks about a kind of people who lacked the facilities of technology while the dominant galaxy possessed high technology. These people had been struggling in a united uprising but were isolated by the system and deprived of development. He saw many deaths among his people. Saxî compares his city's present with its past. Before it was magnificent but now, after the invasion, it is no different from a battlefield (38–9). Sarba is another professor who talks about the city, which is now controlled by a half-live galaxy called Warderan. Ardûda and Sarba were childhood friends. The city, which is not named, is invaded by another planet. In their city, dozens of people were killed daily (65). In one of her interior monologues, Sarba tells how she and Ardûda stole food to give to children, who were deprived of everything and outside the system (ibid.).

75. Te dê bigota 21 Adar roja Newrozê ye.
76. Bihar, demsala wekheviyê, azadiyê, aşitiyê, dilşadiyê û evîniyê bû [. . .] û îro roja biharê ya herî xweş Newroz bû.
77. Li pêşiya me welatek ku hê pê û pêgav lê nehatiye avêtin heye. Hê kes neketiye sînorên wî. Ji hemû xeyalan dûrtir dibin. Rind, zerîb, bi raz, bi tirs û bi tiştên xwedayî tijî.
78. Dibê hemû pîvan û sînorên mejiyên me bihilşên. Em ji zîndanên xwe derkevin. Dibê em jî bikevin rêya ronahî û rastiyê û em jî êdî azad bibin. Dibê em hemû şerên di hundirê xwe de rawestînin. Dibê êdî stêrkên esmanên ruhê me neşemitin. Hemû daristanên dilê me hişyar bibin. Ewrên reşên xemgîniyê ji çiyayên dilê me dûr herin. Ji bo dilşadiya xwe û ya mirovatiyê dibê di bêrîkên me de çemê zelal û çiyayên bilind hebin.
79. Xaka Kurd, çawa ku bûye goristana azadîxwaz û mêrxasan, her wisa jî, bûye goristana evîndaran. Evînên herî mezin li wê xakê zan, lê cihê mixabiniyê te ku bêyî ku mezin bibin, mirin [. . .] Evîn [. . .] Evîna welat, evîna gel û evîna giyandaran.
80. [. . .] Dixwazim bi hilma devê wan tiliyênn te yên ziravîn ên qelemî li wî welatê sar germ bikim.
81. Erê lê, çimkî bêhna singûberên te, xwerû kurdî ye.
82. [. . .] Ez pak dizanim ku paxila te bi bêhna welatê min ve tijî ye.
83. Similarly, Kennedy in a doctoral thesis on reimagining Armenian, Kurdish, and Palestinian national identity in film, argues that in the context of films, '"homeland" is routinely gendered and love of land is displaced onto the female body – something that is to be protected against violation' (2007: 35–6).
84. Mirov ku xwe gihandibihêne Cizîra Botan weke ku xwe higandibihêne evîndariyekê [. . .] Cizîra Botan dikirin weke ku behsa evînê, evîndarekî bikin ku wilo xweş bi dil, hest û zane behs dikirin.

85. [. . .] helbesteke li ser hezkiriyeke kevin a Diyarbekirî, pireya dehderî, Dîcle û Robîn [. . .].
86. Li qiraxa Dîcleyê du evînên kêrkirî, du evînên ji êgir, û xwe digihînin lêvên min [. . .].
87. Mîna ko mirov li çavên hezkiriyeke xwe ya kevin binere.
88. Bekoyê Awan is the sinister character in Ehmedê Xanî's well-known and lengthy seventeenth-century epic, *Mem û Zîn* (Mem and Zin). It is a masterpiece of Kurdish literature, and is also considered a symbol of the Kurdish nation because of its widespread absorption by the Kurds over the centuries. The protagonists Mem and Zin fall in love with each other, but they can never be together due to a conspiracy by the villain Beko (shortened form of Bekir). In fact the epic is a metaphor for the division of Kurdistan: Mem and Zin, pure and noble hearted lovers, are separated by the evil Beko just as the Kurdish nation has been victimised and divided by its neighbours. The influence of *Mem û Zîn* is so strong among the Kurds that the term Beko is still used to describe a vicious person.
89. Tu her dîsa hêvî û xweziya bêkesiya min î. Min, di wextên xwe yên şikestî de, di nava sîpelên kul û kovanên êtîmî û bêkesiyê de xwe spartibû bêndera çavên te.
90. Bêhna gul û kulîlken biharê gîyan dide evînê. Gelek tişt li ser biharên welat hatîne gotin. Ji hinan re bûye demê eşq û evînê. Lê belê tu ji van cîhe evîna welat bixwe nagre [. . .] biharan welatparêzan cardin girêdidin evînê.
91. Li alîyekî evindarî, li alîyek din dîsan evîndarî [. . .] Evîndarî Kejê [. . .] dodman Kejê [. . .] herî meşin evîna welêt.
92. Tenê yek evînek hebû ew jî evîna welat bû.
93. Bê serî û bê welat, bê ax [. . .] Miriyen me bê dia tên veşartin. Gorên me ji ber vê, her diçe rast dibin û wenda dibin û em li van bajaran difetisin.
94. Mîna hechecikan, mala wî jî tunebû.
95. Ya rastî guherandina dilê xwe ditirsiya. Ji jibîrkirinê, ji venegerê ditirsiya.
96. Bêhna welat dihête kepê min.
97. Carinan mirov welatê xwe jî terk dike.
98. Bele, min ew dîtin; diçûn.
99. Lê gava gundê wan bi temamî hat hilweşandin, cih û war li ber wan hat xerakirin û bi vî awayî kêr gihîşt hestî, wan jî wek gelek kesan, erdên xwe yên ji ber zilmê, bi salan nehatibûn çandin, li dû xwe hiştin û mala xwe ya mayî jî bi temamî bar kir û anî dani ser mala din.
100. Referred to in the original text as the Alî Osman State.
101. Gundê min hebû, xaniyê min hebû, sed serî pezê min hebû, dewarê min hebû, ez li gundê xwe axa bûm, beg bûm, xwedî erezî, mal û milk bûm, şan û şerefa min hebû. Lê tofan li me rabû, em jî nezan bûn, me nikaribû xwe biparasta, ji mecbûriyeta dinyayê me mal û milkê dê û bavan hişt em koçber bûn hatin vî welatê bênamûs, me mal jî winda kir, milk jî, kur jî, qîz jî. Niha qet tiştek min nema. Ne şerefa me ma, ne jî heysiyeta me.
102. Wan jî mina bi milyonan kurdan, ji bo jîyanek xweştirîn berê xwe dabûn oxirê û pişta xwe dabûn felekê.

103. Û îro jî, bi mîlyonan kurd ji cîh û warê xwe, ji axa xwe dûr ketine [. . .].
104. Ew kilam û stranên ko wî lê guhdarî dikir, welatê wî yê jihevbelavbûyî, warê wî yê ko niha nikare tevî zarokên xwe vegerê û tê de bistire [. . .].
105. Ez xerîb û penaber im. Li welatê xwe ez serxweş û meş bûm [. . .] Li vî welatê bîyanî ez xerîbim, ne xwedîyê nasnameyekê û ne jî hêlîneke min heye ku tê de weke mirovekî azad û bi rengê xwe bijim.
106. War û wargehên kal û bavên xwe windakirî.
107. Ez dinêrim li welat [. . .] Li çiya û baniyên wê yên ku min ruhê xwe lê ji dest daye, dibînim. Li gundên wê dinêrim; xwelî û bizota ku dilê xwe min lê dax daye, dibînim. Li zindanên wê; cihê ku min rûmeta xwe lê pêpes kiriye, dibînim. Li bajarên wê dinêrim; evîna ku min dilê xwe pê avdaye, dibînim [. . .] Li te dinêrim Dilgeş; hingê jî xeyalên xwe yên şikestî dibînim. Hêviyên xwe yên birîndar dibînim. Û evîna xwe ya winda dibînim [. . .].
108. Yanî em; ez, tu û ew [. . .] Em hemû, janên jiyana me jibîrbûyiyan. Jivanên me yên bêmirazmayî [. . .] Xweziyên me yên çilmisiyayî [. . .] Jan, navê tevnê me yê vereşiyayî, çîroka me ya bêencam-mayî [. . .] Strana bi bayê axîn û kovanan çerxvedayî [. . .] Kurdistana me ya birîndar; doz û rastiya me ya pîroz a di dilê dîroka bêdil de zîldayî [. . .].
109. Welat şirîn e dilo, tu bo çi neşê jê dûr bibî.
110. Hingê, hest difûrin û rastiya min koç dike ji warê xwe [. . .] Ez pêxwas dibim û dikevim kolanan. Evîndara min dibe biyabaneke dêmî û li çolistana dilê min digevize. Ew diçe û ez li şûnê wê, bi dax û kovana wê ve, di nava janên hesretê de diêşim. Bi wan êşan ve dinalim û dikim hawar û fîxan! [. . .].
111. Gelo çend kes ji van mirovên ku bi wî re hatibûn, bi qasî wî ji vî bajarî bi dûr mabûn? Çend kesan bi qasî wî bêriya vî bajarî kiribû?
112. Li pêşiya me welatek ku hê pê û pêgav lê nehatiye avêtin heye. Hê kes neketiye sînorên wî. Ji hemû xeyalan dûrtir. Rind, xerîb, bi raz, bi tirs û bi tiştên xwedayî tijî.
113. Welatê min ji hêla hemwelatiyên min ve, di nava pîsî û gemarî de difetisî.
114. Ez ne ji bona ku rexnekariyeke reşbîn li welêt bibarînim, vegeriyabûm ser axa bav û kalan; min dixwest êşên civakê kêfxweşiyên wê, gengeşî û nakokiyên wê heta kejiyên xwe hîs bikim. Naxwe, wê rexnekariya min negihîşta armanca xwe.
115. Ligel ku her cara ez li welêt vegeriyabûm êşeke dîtir li êşen min zêde bûbûn jî, welat wisa bû êşên wê jî ji bextewariya xerîbiyê xweştir bûn.
116. [. . .] ji wê bedewiya welatê we tiştek nemabû.
117. Lê gava gundê wan bi temamî hat hilweşandin, cih û war li ber wan hat xerakirin û bi vî awayî kêr gihîşt hestî, wan jî wek gelek kesan, erdên xwe yên ji ber zilmê, bi salan nehatibûn çandin, li dû xwe hiştin û mala xwe ya mayî jî bi temamî bar kir û anî danî ser mala din.
118. Li welatê xeribiyê, jiyana mişextiyê [. . .] jiyaneke windabûyî bû.
119. Em mirovne mişextin. Bê cî û bê war in.
120. Ez keça welatê jibîrbûbîyan Narîn im. Narîna navê welatê wê qedexe û tune û bêkes lê danîne [. . .].

121. Ez şoreşgereke têkçûyî me. Ez şervaneke serneketî me.
122. Zindan! …Lawazî! …Şikeste! …Û birîndarî!…Çarenûsa me. Tu dizanî. Pênûsa min westiyaye. Kaxezên min bûne kupên keser û kovanan. Dilistana min behî ye. Ez şikestî me. Hêvîyên min di destê demê de birîndar ketine. Xweziyan ez terikandime.
123. Bêdadî, bêparî, bênasnametî.
124. Wek rêwîyeke ku li çolê rîya xwe winda bike.
125. Min ji xwe pirs dikir, gelo kî me ez? Li xwe digerîyam, pirs ez qedandibûm. Ka min ê li ku derê berhev bikira pirtî û parîyên xwe? Min ê li ku derê vegirta cîh û konê xwe? Li xerîbîya kor û reş bûm. Bûbûm bêhiş û eware. Li xwe digerîyam, min nemabû text û stare.

Chapter 6 A Comparative Analysis of the Novels: From Turkish Kurdistan to its Diaspora

1. However, there are also some exceptions. Metê's two novels *Labîranta Cînan* and *Gotinên Gunehkar*, which involve spiritual and visionary plotting, take place in imagined settings such as D city, E city, or Argon village. In his novel *Ronî Mîna Evîne Tarî Mîna Mirinê* Uzun too uses symbolic names for the setting, such as Mountain Country, Big Country, etc. All the details in the novel signify the fact that Mountain Country refers to Kurdistan. However, Metê avoids any sort of indications that might enable readers to discover the locations of his symbolic settings.
2. A literary device, which refers to the random flow of thoughts in the mind of a character.
3. *Ardûda* is the name of the protagonist. It is not a proper name but is a compound word that conveys the sense of 'giving fuel'. It would appear that the meaning of his name symbolises his character traits since he takes his place in the story as a professor who is cloning humans. It may be that Ardûda is a scientist who, through his experiments, mobilises inanimate entities.
4. Dema ku alfabeya gelan were înkar kirin, jiyana gelan jî tê kilîtkirin […] Di rewşeke wiha de, binbarî û berpirsiyariya roman û çîrok nivîsên kurd, helbet […] girîng e.
5. Evdalê Zeynikê was a renowned nineteenth-century Kurdish *dengbêj* or cantor who lived in Turkish Kurdistan. For more information, see Ahmet Aras's *Evdalê Zeynikê* (in Kurdish) (1996) and in Turkish, *Efsanevi Kürt Şairi Evdalê Zeynikê* (2004) translated by Fehim Işık.
6. '*Siyabend û Xecê*' (Siyabend and Xece) is a love epic similar to Mem and Zîn. It takes place in Suphan Mountain in Van and concerns a desperate love that brought death for both Siyabend and Xecê.
7. For more about the Diyarbakir prison, see M. Zana (1997), *Prison No. 5: Eleven Years in Turkish Jails*, B. Bozyel (2007), *Diyarbakır 5 Nolu*, and H. Kutlu

(1989), *12 Eylül Cezaevleri: Olaylar, Sorunlar, Çözüm Yolları*. Zeydanlıoğlu's article 'Torture and Turkification in the Diyarbakır Military Prison' (2009) is also relevant.

8. Zimanzanekî dilşikestî.
9. The novelists from Kurdistan include: Ömer Dilsoz (1978), Mîr Qasimlo (1980), Yakop Tilermenî (1972), Şener Özmen (1971), Eyub Guven (1963), Sabri Akbel (1950), Ihsan Colemergî (1944), Yunus Eroğlu (1984), Adil Zozanî (1970), Özgür Kıyak, Kemal Orgun (1970), Lokman Ayebe (1981), Îbrahîm Seydo Aydogan (1976), Naci Kutlay (1931), Hesen Huseyîn Denîz, Cihan Roj (1965), Nesîp Tarim, Remezan Alan (1968), Abdusamet Yiğit (1978), Mîran Janbar (1974), Atilla Barışer (1974), Eyüp Kıran, Aram Gernas (previously an exile), Torî (original name Mehmet Kemal Işık, previously an exile, 1931). The Kurdish novelists from diaspora are: Mehmed Uzun (1953), Mahmut Baksî (1944), Silêman Demîr (1956), Fergin Melîk Aykoç (1951), Lokman Polat (1956), Mihemed Dehsiwar (1959), Medeni Ferho (1947), Zeynel Abidîn (1961), Xursid Mîrzengî (?), Mustafa Aydogan (1957), Firat Ceweri (1959), Bûbe Eser (1955), Mehdî Zana (1940), Hesenê Mete (1957), Mezher Bozan (?), Rıza Çolpan (?), Diyar Bohtî (1958), Îbrahîm Osman (1963), Ali Husein Kerim, Jîr Dilovan (1956), and Reşad Akgul.
10. Mîran Janbar, Yunus Eroğlu, Yaqop Tilermenî, Lokman Ayebe, and Remezan Alan have been involved in editing and other editorial occupations in publishing houses. Hesen Huseyîn Denîz, Adil Zozanî, and Ömer Dilsoz work or have worked for Kurdish newspapers and other publications.
11. Apart from the suppression of other Kurdish organisations and parties, there were certain other organisational and methodological factors that led to the PKK being the only power in the Kurdish national struggle in Turkey. There are various arguments about the PKK's success between the 1980s and the 1990s. Some researchers consider the brutal 1980 coup as the primary dynamic clarifying popular support for the PKK (Romano 2006, Tan 2009); for others the suitability of Kurdistan's geography for guerrilla warfare (Gocek 2011) is also regarded as a factor behind its achievements. To some, the support received by the PKK from other states, e.g., Iran and Iraq (who, if they had issues with Turkey could punish the Turks by helping the Kurds), was another reason for its political success (Barkey and Fuller 1998). Accordingly, after the military coup and the suppression of other Kurdish organisations and parties, there was no alternative political vehicle for the Kurds in Turkey other than the PKK (Robins 1996), which made it the most influential Kurdish organisation in Turkey and Turkish Kurdistan.
12. Available at: www.hum.uu.nl/medewerkers/m.vanbruinessen/publications/transnational_Kurds.htm (accessed 14 September 2014).
13. Founded in 1965, the TKDP (i.e. Türkiye Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi, Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey) is one of the oldest Kurdish political parties in Turkey. TKDP was inspired by Iraq's KDP, led by the Barzani family. KIP (Kurdistan İşçi Partisi) and KUK (Kurdistan Ulusal Kurtuluşçuları) both

emerged later from the TKDP. Some other left-wing organisations such as Kawa, Rizgarî and Ala Rizgarî were also sympathetic to TKDP but were also inspired by the biggest Turkish left-wing political party of the time, TIP (Türkiye İşçi Partisi, Workers Party of Turkey). The TKSP (Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan) was also inspired by TIP; in fact TKSP's leader Kemal Burkay was previously a central executive committee member of TIP as well. Meanwhile the PKK, Tekoşın, and Sterka Sor were on the more revolutionary left-wing side of Kurdish movements. It is also important to note that all of those Kurdish parties were illegal. The legal front in Kurdish politics was usually dominated by the cultural associations, such as DDKO (Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları, Eastern Revolutionary Culture Centres) which was outlawed during the military coup of 1971; its successor, DDKD (Devrimci Doğu Kültür Dernekleri, Revolutionary Cultural Associations of the East), which was founded by people on the left-wing side of the TKPD; the DHKD, which was the legal side of TKSP; and many other smaller associations. Importantly, the PKK had no direct links with, nor did it emerge from, any of those major Kurdish political parties of the 1960s and 1970s. The PKK had its own unique ideology with inspiration from revolutionary leftist organisations of the time, namely the THKO (Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu, the People's Liberation Army of Turkey) and the THKP-C (Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Parti-Cephesi, the People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey). As noted by Akkaya and Jongerden (2011: 125–35) the PKK learned a lot from the armed struggle experiences of those two parties. Ideological differences and personal rivalries led to many divisions and conflicts among these organisations (Meho 1997: 11), to such an extent that they spent as much time in clashes with each other as they did in the struggle against the Turkish state and Turkish security forces. The PKK is considered to have had clashes with some of these organisations and eliminated its political rivals (White 2000: 148). With the military coup in 1980 and the massive operations to crush Kurdish organisations, party members were, as a result, either imprisoned or forced to escape to Europe. Despite the dispersal of other Kurdish parties and organisations, the PKK with its guerrilla war had, by the mid-1980s, managed to become central to the national struggle.

14. The PKK abandoned this political ideal, and demands for federalism and autonomy disappeared from its agenda. The myth and dream of a Greater Kurdistan is still in place.
15. As mentioned earlier, Uzun's historical and biographical novels can be considered as exceptional. Although Uzun is known for his detached attitude to the PKK's ideology, when he says, in his autobiographical book *Rojên Afirîna Romanê* (The Diary of a Novel) (2007: 129) that, 'I experienced my life between the two totalitarianisms, the state on the one hand, and the Kurds on the other', he is referring to the people from the PKK fraction, since his novel *Ronî Mîna Evînê Tari Mîna Mirinê*, which focuses on a love affair between a woman guerrilla and Turkish commander, has been much criticised by PKK sympathisers. However, instead of censuring the PKK in his writings as other

novelists do, he attempts to portray crucial historical figures and incidents rather than modern ones. Even in his novel *Tu*, which concerns Diyarbakir in the 1980s, he avoids any references to the PKK's ideology and actions, instead narrating political conditions in Diyarbakir from an individual perspective stripped of any organisational ideology. Similarly, in *Ronî Mîna Evînê Tari Mîna Mirinê*, in which the narrator recounts the relationship between the Kurdish guerrilla Kevok and the Turkish commander Baz, the conflicts between the PKK and the Turkish state are viewed from an emotional perspective that emphasises the centrality of individuals, something that is less common in other diasporic novels. With the conflicts as a background but without promoting any ideology, the novelist focuses on the tragic life of these two characters. In other words, identity in the novel is constructed as personal rather than collective. With symbolic names for the places (as well as for the characters: thus *Jîr* = hard-working and *Kevok* = Pigeon), there is a profound description of the geographical features of Kurdistan (called in the novel 'Mountain Country'). The intensely organic link between the characters and nature in Kurdistan is also very obvious through the names of the characters (*Çiya* = mountain).

16. Ismail Agha Simko (1887–1930) led a revolt in Iran from around the end of 1910 to the beginning of the 1920s, but this was suppressed and he was then executed by the government in 1930.
17. Abdul Rahman Ghassemblou (1930–1989), who was the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDP-I), was assassinated by agents of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Vienna.
18. Available at: http://blog.lib.umn.edu/gpa/globalnotes/The%20Kurdish%20Diaspora%20in%20Austria%20T_Schmidinger.pdf (accessed 22 August 2012).
19. The sense of loss and defeat attached to the 'home' in the novelistic account above appears to be related to Uzun's choice of stories about historic personalities in Kurdish history or his emphasis on the Kurds' historical past, in which the prevailing themes include the burden of being a migrant and hopes for a homeland. Most of the characters in his novels suffer from displacement and a longing for their abandoned lands, and in his novels, which are usually based on biographies of significant figures in Kurdish history, he emphasises how exile and displacement have always been part of Kurdish lives. *Bîra Qederê* (The Shaft of Fate, 2005) which concentrates on the Bedirkhan family and their political struggle, clearly exposes feelings of loss and despair. Throughout the novel, family members struggle to unite, but every attempt results in more fragmentation and discontinuity. They are all described as 'passengers without land and country' (146), since they spend their lives travelling from one city to another. They gradually lose any hope of reuniting with their ancestral lands, and by the end of the novel, the constant struggle has been replaced by a strong sense of disappointment. The tone of the narration becomes increasingly pessimistic as the characters experience the deaths of their loved ones and receive news of their continuing life in exile. They all experience what Celadet

Beg speaks of: 'I am a foreigner of a foreign land, have become a foreigner to everything' (*ez, xerîbê welatên xerîb, bûbûm xerîbê her tişti*) (269). Similarly, in *Siya Evînê* (In the Shadow of Love, 1989), Uzun focuses on the biography of Memduh Selim Beg who was a founder of the Kurdish Student Union *Hêvî* (Hope, 1912), and also played a crucial role in the Kurdish Khoybun Organisation and in Kurdish publishing during the 1920s and 1930s. Because of his politics he was forced to flee into exile and constantly to change locations. At the beginning of the novel, the hope of going home is strong, but by the end of the novel, he has stopped struggling to return. First he dreams about his 'home' as 'he wants to set up a nice small house with a garden by Lake Van' (*malraxistin û li qerexa gola Wanê xaniyekî spehî, biçûk û xwedî bexçe dive*) (31); later images of 'home' are usually associated with 'The Cemetery of Van' (*goristana Wan*) and with 'sighs' (*axîn*). 'Home' for the protagonist conveys the war, which doubles his despair because of exile. Similarly, in Uzun's *Hawara Dîcleyê II*, the massacre of non-Muslims during the Ottoman Empire is told from the perspective of a Yazidi *dengbêj* called Biro, who looks after a Chaldean girl called Ester. Both have had to escape from their lands in order to survive, and even though they have managed to do so, feelings of exile, isolation, alienation, and strong yearnings for their lands prevent them from living in peace. More than 20 years later, when Biro and the former emir of Botan meet in Damascus, they can only share with each other their disappointment and despair. Biro could not continue his life as *dengbêj* after he left his lands; nor could the emir carry on as ruler of Botan after being sent into exile. Biro cannot rid himself of feelings of loneliness and isolation, even after he returns to Botan many years later. In *Hawara Dîcleyê II* Biro describes himself as 'injured Biro' (*biroyê birîndar*) (8) due to 'homeland' being 'destitute' (*stûxwar*) and 'dependent' (*bindest*) (319). In *Mirina Kalekî Rind,* the main character, Serdar, is an exile who starts to visit his lands but is unable to get rid of feelings of disappointment and loneliness. He is described as a 'foreigner' (*biyanî*) (41), and Stockholm is described as 'the land of exile' (*warê min ê sirgûniyê*) (42). When he meets an elderly man named Kalo, who tells him old stories and epics, Kalo becomes his only hope for preserving the ties with his lands. After Kalo's death, Serdar feels he has lost all connection with his 'home'. The loss of Kalo indicates more otherness and foreignness, in addition to the total loss of home.

20. The characters' sense of 'homelessness' in the novels from Turkish Kurdistan is similar to the feeling within some Anglo-Irish and Irish characters in Irish literature. Brian Friel's play *The Home Place* as argued by Alison O'Malley-Younger in her article *There's No 'Race' Like Home: Race, Place and Nation in Brian Friel's The Home Place* (2006) argues that 'rootlessness and impermanence' is 'the inheritance of being a member of the Northern minority' as all sorts of education and socio-political elements are English rather than Irish.
21. Rê westiya, rêwî ranewestiya.

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‘*Imagining Kurdistan* is an invaluable source on the construction of identity, sense of place, (non)-belonging and home in Kurdish literature. Özlem Galip’s study illuminates this under-researched subject with clarity. Taking a multi-dimensional and dynamic idea of Kurdistan and challenging definitions of home as a stable centre, Galip examines how the idea of Kurdistan as home operates in Kurdish novels: it is glorified as a historic home in the past, shown as the destroyed home of the present and depicted as free in the future; it is imagined both as an ideal home and as a betrayed home. Portrayed as idealised future homeland in juxtaposition with the harsh socio-political reality, the idea of Kurdistan also comes to create a contemporary sense of lived homelessness. [...] Galip shows how literature produced in Kurdistan today stresses loss of home more than that produced abroad; and linking this to the subordinated status of Kurds in Kurdistan, she reveals how a physical insideness evokes an experience of outsideness. This book is essential reading for anyone interested in literature and multiple constructions of identity, sense of place, belonging and home.’

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