

**Kurdistan: A Land of Longing and Struggle  
Analysis of 'Home-land' and 'Identity' in the Kurdish Novelistic Discourse  
from Turkish Kurdistan to its Diaspora (1984-2010)**

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## **Abstract**

A comparative analysis of 100 Kurdish novels (written in Kurmanji dialect) examines how Kurdistan, the homeland of Kurds and Kurdish identity, is constructed within the territory of Turkish Kurdistan and in its diaspora. Stateless, mostly displaced and constantly in movement, Kurds lack a real territorial homeland, yet base their national identity on the notion of Kurdistan as their mythical homeland. Kurdish novelistic discourse suggests that definitions of Kurdish identity and 'home-land' are relative, depending on ideology and personal experiences, and that 'Home', 'homeland' and 'landscape' as social constructs, are not static entities but change constantly over time.

A humanistic geographical approach sees literature, particularly the novel, as an instrument of geographical inquiry into a society or a nation. Using that model, and employing textual and contextual approaches, the study shows how and why the nation/society is constructed and clarifies the sense of home-land and identity embedded in the texts. The novelistic discourse in which 'home-land' becomes an ideological construct is mainly shaped by the political views of the novelists. However, compared to the novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan, the Kurdish diaspora novelists have gathered around more diverse ideologies and politics that have led to diverse 'home-land' images.

The novelistic discourse in Turkish Kurdistan also offers more nostalgic elements whereas diaspora theorists and scholars had identified these as exclusive to the literary works in exile. It can be concluded that feelings of nostalgia are invoked as much by the reality of living in fragmented territory and in a situation of statelessness, oppression and domination, as they are when living at a distance, removed from such experiences. In other words, although living in home territories, the literary characters still experience a sense of migration and detachment from home, which is infused with alienation and loneliness as if they are physically away from their homeland.

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