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**Exile and Expatriation in Ghālib Halasā's Novels;
*al-Ḍahīk, al-Khamāsīn and Sulṭāna***

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Abstract

The present study examines expressions of exile and alienation in the works of Ghālib Halsā (1932-1989), through three of his novels, *al-Ḍaḥik (Laughter; 1970)*, *al-Khamāsīn (1975)* and *Sulṭāna (1987)*. The study basic premise is that modern man lives in a state of cultural shock and alienation, due to the enormous and sudden changes that have taken place in various aspects of life and in elements of social and cultural existence. In the Arab world this was also accompanied by political changes after World War II, which produced a number of small countries that were subjected to Western mandates or colonial rule. Subsequently these countries fought for their independence, but also suffered a series of disappointments in their war against Israel in 1948, the war against the "tripartite aggression" on Egypt in 1956, and the defeat by Israel in 1967. All these reversals caused Arabs as individuals to withdraw within themselves, suffering as they did from a sense of frustration, defeat and failure. Writers made use of their pens to express this loss, to reflect the Arabs' concerns and sense of alienation. Arab novelists served as historians and documented their national defeats through the vicissitudes experienced by Arab individuals in their everyday lives, describing prisons and prisoners, émigrés, the weak and the defeated, worn down by an accumulation of disasters.

In light of the above, this study hypothesizes that Halsā's modernist novels will be found to contain expressions of alienation, to express estrangement through their protagonists, be it existential, personal, spatial, social or other. We assume that Halsā's novels will be found to make use of new linguistic, stylistic and formal

devices in order to express his own profound psychological crisis, and that the writer will have adopted a stream-of-consciousness approach, as a device that reveals the alienation of the individual and his flight into himself, where dreams, nightmares and hallucinations play a major role, as substitutes for an external description of society, and where the ego replaces objective reality and the individual replaces the type.

Before undertaking the analysis of Halsā's novels, we discuss the meaning of the terms "exile" and "alienation". In the Introduction we dedicated an entire section to defining them. We found that the definition of "exile" which best conforms to Halsā's personality and the contents of his novels is "leaving one's homeland, voluntarily or unwillingly, because of one's political affiliation and activity". Indeed, Halsā was exiled even within his own country, Jordan, because of his political views. Later he fled to Egypt, then to Iraq, whence he was exiled once more to Egypt, then to Lebanon, and finally to Syria, where he settled and remained to the end of his days. Exile, estrangement and living on the margins that accompanied him constantly. His continuous migrations aroused in him a constant sense of living out of context and a continual yearning for the past, the land and the cultural heritage that he had lost in exile.

In the theoretical introduction we also discuss the term "alienation" at length. The term was used by numerous philosophers and thinkers, including Descartes (1596-1650), Hegel (1770-1831) and Marx (1818-1883), all of whom used it in the sense of a dissociation between an individual and his society, or between an individual and his own self.

Existentialism treats alienation as distancing oneself from one's deep being. When one is alienated, one is not oneself, but merely a nothing in the masses' collective existence. It warns against the destructive effects of technology on human freedom

and humanity. The psychoanalytical school represented by Freud (1856-1939) has the same view of alienation as existentialist philosophy. It views alienation as the result of a struggle between the self and the forces of social control.

We then turn to the concept of alienation as it appears in modern philosophy. We survey the social contract approach developed by Hobbes (1588-1679), Locke (1632-1704) and Rousseau (1712-1778), all of whom argued that this concept refers to the individual transferring sovereign control over himself to another person.

Turning now to contemporary thinkers, we find that al-Shaqīrāt (1987) mentions a number of meanings of the term alienation, among them: detachment, powerlessness and lack of control, meaninglessness, declining norms, isolation, estrangement from oneself. We also note the theoretical background of the various types of alienation and the features of each type, for example geographical, social, political, cultural, existential, personal, economic and religious alienation.

After this survey of the concept comes Chapter One, entitled "Alienation in the Modern Arabic Novel", in which we examine the history of alienation in general in modern Arabic novels. In the first section we deal with the phenomena of exile and alienation in Arabic novels, beginning with Egyptian writer Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm's (1898-1987) *ʿUṣfūr min al-Sharq* (*A Sparrow from the East*; 1938), until Egyptian writer Bahā' Ṭāhir (b. 1935) *al-Ḥubb fī l-Manfā* (*Love in Exile*; 1995). In particular, we relied on Niyāzī's (1995) account of the three stages in the evolution of émigré novels. In the first stage, the protagonist transferred his entire stock of local habits to his new environment in exile. The most representative example of this stage is Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm's novel *ʿUṣfūr min al-Sharq*.

In the second stage the protagonist studied in Europe and then returned to his home town, but was unable to reintegrate himself into his original environment. This stage is represented by the novel *al-Ḥayy al-Lāḩīnī* (*The Latin Quarter*; 1953) by Suhayl Idrīs (1925-2008), *Sittat Ayyām* (*Six Days*; 1961) by Ḥalīm Barakāt (b. 1933), and *Mawsim al-Hijra ilā al-Shamāl* (*Season of Migration to the North*; 1967) by al-Ṭayyib Ṣālīḩ (1929-2009). In the third stage, the novel's protagonist does not return to his homeland. Rather, he studies and resides in Europe, and coexists with his new environment. This stage is represented by the novel *al-Sābiqūn wal-Lāḩiqūn* (*Predecessors and Successors*; 1972) by the Iraqi woman writer Samīra al-Mānī' (b. 1935).

We decided to add a fourth stage to Niyāzī's three, to wit, novels composed by émigrés after they had left their homeland, willingly or not, among them: *Mā Tabaqqā Lakum* (*What You Have Been Left*; 1966) by Ghassān Kanafānī (1936-1972); *Sharq al-Mutawassit* (*East of the Mediterranean*; 1975) by 'Abd al-Raḩmān Munīf (1933-2004); *al-Baḩth 'an Walīd Mas'ūd* (*The Search for Walīd Mas'ūd*; 1978) by Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā (1920-1994); and *al-Ḥubb fī l-Manfā* (*Love in Exile*; 1995) by Bahā' Ṭāhir.

This stage was characterized by manifestations of rejection and alienation on the part of the novels' characters, especially those who had been forced to emigrate from their homeland unjustly, and suffered from having been deprived of their contact to their land, their families and their friends. The reactions of these characters in émigré novels are very varied. Some of them became resigned to life in exile and lost all hope for change and reform. This is the case of Ghassān Kanafānī's characters in his novel *Mā Tabaqqā Lakum*, as well as those of *al-Ḥubb fī l-Manfā*. Other characters in émigré novels refuse to acquiesce to their humiliating situation and try to change it.

This is the case in the novel *Sharq al-Mutawassiṭ* (*Middle of the Mediterranean*), which resounds with the shouts of Arabs deprived of their basic rights by inhumane Arab regimes. The main character in the novel *al-Baḥth ‘an Walīd Mas‘ūd* (*The Search for Walīd Mas‘ūd*), too, refuses to yield and suffers torture and imprisonment. However, he ultimately fails to bring about change and dies of disappointment.

We argue that the evolution of the Jordanian novel must be divided into four stages, 1912-1950, 1950-1960, 1960-1970 and 1970-1980.

The first stage (1912-1950) was one of beginnings. ‘Uḡayl Abū al-Sha‘ar (1893-1914) produced his first attempted novel, *al-Fatāt al-Armīniyya fī qaṣr Yildiz* (*The Armenian Girl in the Palace of Yildiz*) in 1912. In the second stage (1950-1960) the Jordanian novel began to flourish. As al-Nābulṣī (1994) points out, this was a stage that witnessed fundamental social, economic, political and cultural changes, in the wake of the Palestinian emigration to the West and East Banks in 1948 after the establishment of the State of Israel, in addition to the emigration of Palestinians from the West to the East Bank, following the declaration of the unification of the two Banks in 1950.

However, the novels of this period were structurally quite weak, among them Sulaymān al-Mashshīnī’s (1928-2018) first novel *Sabīl al-Khalāṣ* (*Road to Salvation*; 1955), ‘Īsā al-Nā‘ūrī’s (1918-1985) *Mārs Yahriqu Ma‘addātihi* (*Mars Burns His Gear*; 1955) and others. The third stage (1961-1970) may be considered the first branch in the tree of Arab novels, the true foundation stage of serious novels in the modern sense, in both structure and content. This period saw the emergence of four outstanding novelists: Amīn Shunnār (1933-2005), author of *al-Kābūs* (*Nightmare*; 1968); Taysīr al-Sabūl (1939-1973), author of *Anta Mundhu l-Yawm* (*You Are Since Today*; 1968); Sālīm al-Naḥḥās (1940-2011), author of *Awrāq ‘Āqir* (*Pages of a*

Sterile Woman; 1968); and Ghālib Halsā, author of *al-Ḍahik* (*Laughter*; 1970). These novels constitute the true foundation on which Arab novels in Jordan were composed in the 1980s. The authors of these novels succeeded in acquainting themselves with the modern techniques adopted in novels in the Arab world, Latin America and elsewhere. The last and fourth stage (1970-1979) saw the publication of thirty-five novels, among them twelve of considerable artistic importance. However, the great majority of these novels were published outside the country: Halsā's novels were published in Cairo, Yaḥyā Yakhliḥ's (b. 1944) and Rashād Abū Shāwir's (b. 1942) in Beirut, and Saḥar Khalīfa's (b. 1942) in the Occupied Territories.

It is therefore fair to say that the Jordanian novel was fully launched in the 1980s, when about sixty-five novels were produced, among them more than thirty-five of some significance, among them Mu'nis al-Razzāz's (1951-2002) two novels *Aḥyā' fī l-Baḥr al-Mayyit* (*The Living in the Dead Sea*; 1982), *al-Dhākira al-Mustabāḥa* (*Appropriated Memory*; 1991), and Halsā's novels: *al-Bukā' 'alā al-Aṭlāl* (*Weeping on the Ruins*; 1980), *Thalāthat Wujūh li-Baghdād* (*Baghdad's Three Faces*; 1984), *Sulṭāna* (1987) and *al-Riwā'iyūn* (*The Novelists*; 1989).

The 1980s witnessed a qualitative and quantitative revival of the novel. The two most prominent currents in Jordanian novel were arguably traditional realism and modernism. Jordanian novels of this period can thus be divided into classical and modernist, although numerous gradations between the two can be discerned in many novels, for example in the works of Mu'nis al-Razzāz and Ibrāhīm Naṣrallāh (b. 1954).

Modernist novels quite obviously express human loneliness and alienation by means of several different devices, including monologues, discontinuities and

numerous surprising transitions in characters and places, multiple persons, poetic depictions and apprehensions, obscurity, and more.

All of these elements of modernist literature can be discerned in novels of alienation and exile, which express the psychological and intellectual state of their characters, resulting from their exile, whether inside their homeland or abroad, and whether the latter is the result of the character's decision to journey abroad in order to study or because he has been expelled from his homeland because of his political opinions. Whatever the reason, the individual psyche is the focus of the novel, which describes the protagonist's desire to overcome his sense of alienation and his striving towards individual, social, political and cultural change, or to become ensconced within himself and become immersed in his isolation and his incapacity to achieve any change.

Chapter Two, "Alienation in the Contents of Ghālib Halsā's Novels", deals with three of this writer's novels, *al-Ḍaḥīk*, *al-Khamāsīn* and *Sulṭāna*. Before discussing the selected novels themselves, we provide an introduction which gives a brief account of the contents of each novel. We then deal with each novel separately and discuss the way in which manifestations of alienation are expressed in them. We conclude that all three express their respective characters' social, political, economic, geographical, personal and existential alienation. The novel *al-Ḍaḥīk* may be said to deal mainly with political and geographical alienation. In fact, the narrator feels out of place even in his own home town, proof of the fact that an individual's sense of alienation does not of necessity have to be associated with forced expulsion from one's homeland, but may also be due to many other factors. Alienation may arise because of certain aspects of the society in question, for example poverty, lack of freedom, or the actions of the dominant establishment. The protagonist lacks a name

and suffers from political and social alienation as well. He is a stranger to Cairo, to which he has been banished with his hands tied. Although he encounters students in the Egyptian army during Egypt's war against the Tripartite Aggression, his comrades call him "the foreigner". Even his girlfriend Nādiya treats him as a foreigner, this exacerbating his sense of social alienation. Social alienation can also be seen in *al-Dahik*, in the documentary chapters, especially in the third document ("M. N. Condemns the Age"), which describes the strange indifference shown by the people on the bus towards cases of sexual harassment and bestial attacks against one of the passengers, which they made no attempt to prevent.

In the same novel political alienation can also be seen. It describes the crisis experienced by intellectuals who pay an enormous price for defending their party's principles. Many of these fighting patriots are put in jail, including the narrator and his girlfriend Nādiya, whom the party accuses of being agents. The narrator (who is also the novel's protagonist) describes scenes in which he and other patriots were tortured in his cell and in the interrogation rooms of the Ministry of the Interior, just because they did not agree with the political positions of the ruling party. In the novel *al-Khamāsīn* even the title (literally: "hot winds from the desert") evokes a sense of suffocation and stress. It is therefore no wonder that most of the novel's characters suffer from self- and existential alienation, as can be seen, for example, in the fact that the protagonists do not conform to their external environment, and in their feelings of rejection, rebellion and desperation. In this novel the author deals with the concerns of the Arab individual in a world of foggy vision and an atmosphere that frays the nerves, in keeping with the muggy weather which dominates the novel. Ghālib, the main character, seeks to discover himself and makes an effort to communicate with others, but fails in his attempts to belong, just as he fails in his romantic and sexual

relationships, exacerbating his personal existential alienation. His muse dies and he is incapable of completing the novel that he tries to write throughout the story.

The novel *Sulṭāna* reflects the situation in Jordan until the mid-1950s and the social, economic and political changes that occurred there. As a result, social alienation is a significant element in the novel's characters' lives, for example Sulṭāna, her daughter Amīra, Ṭu'ma and Jiryis. In the wake of the changes that occurred in Bedouin society, which was transformed into a society of merchants, the way was open to earn a living by transporting hashish from Turkey and Lebanon through Jordan directly into by the Bedouins of Sinai, or through Israel. Diamonds were also smuggled into Israel through the Gulf of Aqaba. All these changes gave rise to an acute sense of social alienation in the novel's characters, some of whom collapsed, for example Ṭu'ma, while others deteriorated into prostitution in order to achieve power and money, for example Sulṭāna and her daughter Amīra. The novel's contents also reflect political alienation, exemplified by Ṭu'ma, who suffered greatly due to his expulsion from the Communist Party. He attempted to regain the Party's approval by committing crimes, but his efforts were in vain.

Chapter Three, "Narrative Techniques and Their Role in Highlighting the Experience of Alienation", describes the narrative devices used in the three novels *al-Ḍaḥik*, *al-Khamāsīn* and *Sulṭāna* to present manifestations of alienation. In light of the fact that the present study hypothesizes that Halsā was influenced by literary modernism and the stream-of-consciousness novel that uses new linguistic and stylistic elements that are in keeping with the protagonists' disturbed psychological states, one should not wonder that Halsā uses such techniques in his novels. The influence of these schools can be seen in the narrative structure, time, place, the protagonists, language, symbolism and themes. These can be summed up as follows:

- Multiple narrators: Most parts of these novels are dominated by introspective narration, in which the protagonist is also the narrator. In all three novels the narration moves between the first person, used to evoke an impression of realism, and the third person. In *Sulṭāna* specifically the anonymous narrator predominates and the style of narration involves the concentrated use of narrative devices typical of novels, autobiographies and histories.

The novelist also uses drama, events from both personal and general histories, narration from multiple points of view, and change of location between passages.

In the novel *al-Ḍaḥīk*, on the other hand, the dominant device is that of stream-of-consciousness. The style which the author uses is that of documentation, memoires, news items, personal and physical themes, and narration in the first person, focusing on the protagonist's inner emotional world, including hallucinations, confidences, nightmares, recollections, associations and daydreams, which dominate the novel's pages. In *al-Khamāsīn*, too, some of the narration is in the first person: Ghālib is the narrator and also the main character.

However, most of the novel's chapters are told in the third person. Yet in these chapters Halsā breaks with common usage and allows the third-person narrator to describe the protagonist's inner feelings, motivations and concerns.

- Halsā uses psychological time in all three novels. His usage reflects the novels' protagonists' experiences at work, their dreams, fears and apprehensions, which contributed to their feelings of alienation, having withdrawn from reality and fled from their actual time to another time, in which they felt more secure and satisfied.

This time could be in the past, represented by one's parent's Bachelardesque home, or prostitution, or it could be a rosy future. We also find that time in his works is fragmented, inverted and winding, and does not adhere to the kind of continuity which with which we associate our natural concept of time. Halsā creates multiple times inside the text, which clash with each other and constitute one of the basic sources of tension in the plot and of the shattered nature of the characters' experiences and the problematic nature of communication with them. This temporal intertwining and fragmentation reflect the characters' own fragmented and alienated reality. Time is thus used as a device that conforms to the characters' disturbed, fragmented psyche.

Time in this study is shown to appear through flash-backs, dreams and monologs, which occasionally appear together in a single artistic fabric that reveals the secrets of the soul and exposes its thoughts. The narrator in *al-Ḍahīk* returns in his dreams, inner dialogues and flash-backs to his village and his mother, to the prison where he was tortured, producing a mixture of beautiful and peaceful scenes in the village and other scenes, filled with fear, especially the night scene in his village that was filled with spirits, and the terrifying scenes in the interrogation room. In *al-Khamāsīn* we found that the author used the hot winds as a point in time which takes the narrator into his past and his sad reminiscences, which combine with the suffocating wind to increase his feelings of tension, suffocation and impotence. In *Sulṭāna* the story's time is split between past, present and future, with the narrator experiencing situations that move between wakefulness and dreaming, visions and dreams, nightmares and hallucinations.

This use of time is typical of stream-of-consciousness novels, in which time appears compressed. The novelist makes time manifest through a cinematic

presentation that uses devices that serve to show the intertwining and association of ideas. Among these devices are quick successions of images, superposition of images, or surrounding one image with others that belong with it. This temporal and spatial presentation appears most prominently in the novel *al-Daḥik*.

- This study discusses numerous places mentioned in Halsā's novels and the feelings they evoke in the characters that find themselves in these places, be it a village, a city, a prison, a garden, a street, a mountain, dark tunnels, cellars, the sea, a forest, etc.

Perhaps the places which left the strongest impressions on the characters were prison, the village and the city. In *al-Daḥik* the prison is the place of torment and psychological alienation, a place that gives rise to dreams and hallucinations. In *al-Khamāsīn*, Ghālib celebrates his Egyptian surroundings. His descriptions of Alexandria and Cairo, their streets, coffee shops, prisons, prison cells and offices are dramatic and dynamic. Place in this novel, is intertwined with time and the hot winds that play an important role in evoking a sense of solitude and suffocation, which in turn lead to a feeling of psychological alienation on the narrator's part. In *Sulṭāna* there is a geographical contrast between "the village" and Amman, in keeping with the course of events, which move from the village to Amman. The city is depicted as a hostile place, giving rise to worry, tension and alienation, so that one is driven to dreams of fleeing its constriction, whether in the general sense of the city's suffocating atmosphere, or constriction due to being observed by the security forces. At the same time, the village is depicted in all three novels through the memories of the protagonists as a warm motherly place, which formed, together with time, a duality of reminiscence and absence.

In his description of places, the author uses flash-backs, monologs and dreams to reflect the characters' inner burning love, torment, alienation and exile, creating exciting spatio-temporal scenes filled with imaginative descriptive language and clear indications of alienation, objectification and instability, in addition to the loss of protection and intimacy.

The numerous different devices used by the author to describe places may be said to conform to the disturbed psychological state in which the novels' characters find themselves. The devices clearly reflect the crises, alienation and exile experienced by the characters in the places where they are located, thus leading us to the conclusion that manifestations of alienation and exile are here expressed through place.

- Halsā's characters appear to us to be victims. The main character in *al-Ḍaḥik* suffers from recurring disappointments. He is overburdened with aches, dreams and inner conflicts, and when he collides with political and social reality he disintegrates and begins to hallucinate. This is represented also by the character of Ghālib, the main protagonist of *al-Khamāsīn*, an educated but miserable person, who lives in a state of constant alienation and repeated defeats in romance and in politics. The hero of the novel is pulled by two tendencies, a profound desire for communication and reconciliation within the existing social structure, and fear of withdrawal and an attempt to flee the hot winds.

In *Sulṭāna* Jiryis feels that his life has lost its meaning and senses a split between thought and action. His character is Oedipal in nature, continually seeking a maternal model with its two contradictory aspects, consisting of the overt romantic world of Āmina, and the secret lustful world of Sulṭāna. As a result, this

protagonist was psychologically disturbed and suffered from worry, helplessness, alienation and exile, making him incapable of forming emotional attachments.

Halsā's characters in all three novels also suffer from political oppression, which exacerbated their alienation from the regime and their feeling of being in exile. Many of the characters were therefore emasculated, whether by political, patriarchal, religious or social authority. This, in addition to other factors, gave rise to deviant sexual tendencies in some of the characters.

The characters who suffer the most in Halsā's novels are probably those among the educated whose progressive political views lead them to attempt to introduce social reforms, but are oppressed and opposed by other parties and by the regime. One example of this is provided by the narrator in *al-Ḍaḥik*, who was imprisoned and exiled because of his political views. Such scenes also recur in *al-Khamāsīn*, where the author provides descriptions of torture in prisons and interrogation rooms. Arrest, exile and rejection of dissenting views broke the characters in *al-Ḍaḥik* and *al-Khamāsīn*, who were unable to overcome their disappointments, failures and shattered dreams. It is thus no wonder that these characters fled from their shattered reality into hallucinations, daydreams and nightmares, or were driven to suicide, for example Maḥmūd in *al-Ḍaḥik*, who took his own life because of his political helplessness, or 'Īsā in the same novel, who lost his sanity after having been tortured in prison merely because he wanted to write a true history of the city and to expose its false face.

The female characters in all three novels show a multiplicity of traits. They are presented variously as good and evil, strong and weak, lustful and moderate. While most of them are victims, they are also those who restore balance to frightened and alienated spirits. This is clearly the case with the main character of

al-Daḥik, who turns to Nādiya, in whom he saw both a lover and a perfect woman, a symbol of love, motherhood and the homeland. Āmina in *Sulṭāna*, too, symbolizes beauty and femininity, while Fāṭima in *al-Khamāsīn* is a peasant woman who makes the narrator feel secure.

- Halsā's language highlights a variety of issues, including the dilemmas of human existence and its attendant alienation. His narration is descriptive and poetic in much of its psychological and cultural contents, while the dialogues are couched in street language, corresponding to the various characters' educational level.

His language offers numerous examples of generic constraints. Disrupted sentences that appear unconnected and incomplete point to distraught thoughts and mental and emotional confusion. Verbs in the imperfect tense describe the present while verbs in the past tense take the reader into the domain of reminiscence and background. Words and expressions are repeated, indicating the narrator's interpositions. Other linguistic devices are the use of the language of journalism and advertisements, and monologs, used to penetrate into the inner workings of the self.

In addition, the author used expressions and phrases associated with alienation and exile, for example: Rupture, terror, suffocation, hallucination, nightmares, worry, grief, solitude, fear, the language of disgust, the language of nightmares, prison and torture, the language of ridicule, and words associated with dreams and sex. Halsā's style profited from Western philosophy, especially Freudianism, which sheds light on the effects of the Oedipus and Electra complexes, or the castration complex, which causes its victim to withdraw within himself and to develop feelings of helplessness, frustration and failure. These expressions appear with

considerable frequency in both *al-Ḍaḥik* and *al-Khamāsīn*, reflecting the complexes from which the characters in them suffer.

Another characteristic of Halsā's language is his use of intertextuality, folklore, folk songs, historical tales and fables. These raise questions about existence, being and certainty, as demonstrated, for example, by the harvesters' songs in *al-Ḍaḥik*. In the same novel, Halsā in a chapter entitled "Al-Dalāl's Castration" quotes passages from al-Aṣṣfahānī's *Kitāb al-Aghānī* and al-Jāḥiẓ's *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*. In the chapter, he explains the meaning of castration and describes the situation of those who had this done to them.

Another aspect of Halsā's language is his use of multiple themes, including the Oedipus complex and castration, both of which symbolize oppression, violence and impotence. Then there is the theme of the absolute woman, an objective correlative representing the soil, the homeland, existence and life, as well as platonic love which one does not want ever to decline or end. The woman as mother symbolizes innocence, naivety and absolute contentment. She is the bearer of village values and traditions, as well as the lover who represents city values and its changeable character, ideas and conceptions, as depicted in *al-Ḍaḥik* and *Sulṭāna*.

Expressions associated with obscurity, fear and defeat appear in all three novels, including prison, dark tunnels, dropping curtains; also rats, who symbolize interrogators and the security forces in general, walls, which stand for the obstacles which prevent the characters from realizing their aspirations and living as they wish, and suicide, symbolizing the individual's inability to continue to live in the face of defeat.

The hot winds are a unique theme of the novel *al-Khamāsīn*. The winds symbolize the suffering of humans in an atmosphere of loss of social cohesion and the spread of sharp contradictions. The novel's title itself is a symbol of suffocation and tension, or perhaps of the unfulfilled promises of the July 1952 Revolution, which the people dreamed of in terms of a coming spring, but which only produced hot winds. The title of *al-Ḍaḥīk* (= "laughter") is associated with ridicule and contempt, for the novel contains nothing that would arouse laughter, except as an expression of disappointment, impotence and an inability to belong, as in the folk saying: "laughing at one's misfortunes".

The present study found that Halsā's novels exhibit manifestations of alienation and exile through narrative devices, and the author's language and style, creating an authentic reflection of social, political, economic and cultural changes wrought in the presence of modern technology, which played a significant role in alienating the human soul and filling it with worry, uncertainty and pain, especially in the wake of the weakening of the social bonds between human beings. In this sense, literature is nothing but an expression for the human search for meaning in life, in an attempt to extricate oneself from the cycle of exile and alienation.

Lastly, the study finds that the Jordanian-born novelist Ghālib Halsā is a modernist writer who emerged in the 1960s and presented works in which he expressed his sharp criticism of the ruling regimes in the Arab world. He did so through the themes and devices that are so prominent in his novels, and which forced him to emigrate and constantly move from one Arab country to another. He benefited greatly from European culture and from Western writers, whose influence can be seen in his narrative style and his literary themes, to the point of distancing himself from the Jordanian environment and its literature in the 1960s.

