**The Literary Pen-Portrait of the Marginalized in Modern Arabic Egyptian Literature**

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* **Abstract**

This article connects between the literature of marginality that observes the life of the forgotten people who live on the margin of life and the Literary Pen-Portrait genre (al-Sourah al-Qalamiyya), that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century in the Arab press in general and the Egyptian press in particular. This study attempts to define this interesting genre and its characteristics through the exposition of literary samples that dealt with the class of the marginalized in the Egyptian society. The study focuses on two Egyptian pioneering writers in this genre. The first is the founder of this art, the writer Abd al-Aziz al-Bishri (1886-1943), who was called " Shaikh al-Sakhirin/ Leader of the Ironists" because his writing used to tend be humorous and provoke laughter. The second is the writer Khairy Shalabi (1938-2011), who was one of the most prominent writers who lived with the Egyptian marginalized classes since the sixties of the twentieth century. Shalabi was given the nickname of the 'popular historian of the marginalized classes.'

The study also deals with the most important artistic and structural characteristics of the Pen-Portrait art (al-Sourah al-Qalamiyya) as a literary genre and draws two main conclusions: the *first* is that the art of Pen-Portrait that was introduced by Abd al-Aziz al-Bishri and Khairy Shalaby in the twentieth century enabled us to know a new different reality about the marginalized people, which is that the literature of the marginalized is not a low or secondary literature but a realistic literature that is connected to the life of the ordinary people. Instead of seeing the marginalized as a trivial power in society, we see them as the power that makes the higher classes of society. The *second* conclusion is that the art of the Pen-Portrait in the form that was established by al-Bishri and Shalaby is still absent in modern Arabic literature. The Pen-Portrait, which is an image that parallels with the Portraiture Paintings in Plastic Arts, is a unique genre of literature, but it is less dealt with by Arab writers. In other words, the Pen-Portrait is still classified within the Marginalized Literature that does not enjoy popularity among writers and the literary institute and circles do not devote a significant place for it.

The critical sources differentiate between Literature of Marginality (Adab al-Hamish), Marginal Literature (al-Adab al-Hamishiyy) and Marginalized Literature (al-Adab al-Muhammash).

* **Literature of Marginality**

Somnath Sarkar (2016) defines ‘Literature of Marginality’ as the literature that "deals with the marginalized class of the world who are kept devoid of their fundamental rights to participate in the social, religious, cultural, political, educational and economic spheres of their lives and are kept aloof, alienated, or segregated physically from the general public [….] or the elite classes of the world"[[1]](#footnote-1).

* **Marginal Literature**

‘Marginal Literature’ is a term that refers to any literature that does not accept the ready-made forms that are imposed by the 'lobby of culture' in any society, whether on the level of dealing with subjects and the problematics of society that impose themselves on the artist or on the level of literary genres and techniques of creative writing and consequently, the creator rises against and diverts from the prevailing norms and standards in writing [[2]](#footnote-2).  The term can also be used to refer to the literature that is produced by a marginalized groups in a certain historical period such as al-Sa'alik or al-Shi'r 'Udhri (the 'Udhri love-poetry) in classical Arabic literature[[3]](#footnote-3) , or the Literature of the Nineties in modern Arabic Egyptian literature, which is associated with the concept of the 'marginal' and its associated thoughts of despair and isolation.

The term Marginal Literature necessarily supposes the existence of "Central Literature", which is the literature of the Ruling Institute or Authority. The term of "authority" here does not refer to the political authority of the State but the authority of the dominating writing trend that considers every type of creative writing that diverts from the familiar system as a 'marginal writing'. Thus, the 'marginal literature' does not mean 'secondary' or 'insignificant' literature; it means the innovative literature that is liberated from imitation and traditions and therefore, it is exposed to marginalization by the Writing Institute[[4]](#footnote-4).

* **Marginalized Literature**

Marginalized Literature (al-Adab al-Muhammash) is a term that refers to the "literature of those people whom the institute is angry with, either because they fight it or introduce alternatives for life through a progressive literature that sings for liberties." [[5]](#footnote-5) The literary meaning of this type is likely to refer to other sub-meanings. The Marginalized Person might be the writer himself or different literary subjects and themes that no one dares to deal with such as the subjects that are considered "taboo" mainly: religion, politics, and sex. The marginalized can also be the literary form that rebels against definitions of the prevailing literary genre. [[6]](#footnote-6)

This paper focuses on the first type, namely, theLiterature of Marginality, which observes the life of the forgotten people who live at the margin of life in the Egyptian society such as: poor people, beggars, homeless people, vendors, minor workers and clerks in the smashed classes as this literature observes their life and sufferings[[7]](#footnote-7).

The literary movement mentioned a number of writers who were interested in the marginalized people such as the Egyptian novelist Najib Mahfouz (1911-2006) in his novel *Malhamat al-Harafish/The Harafish* (1977). Al-Harafish is a colloquial vernacular word that is close in its meaning to the classical word "Sa'alik"[[8]](#footnote-8), which means 'highwaymen' or 'vagabonds'. His novel *al-Liss wa al-Kilab*/ *The Thief and the Dogs* (1973) also deals with similar subjects.

The Egyptian writer Yusuf Idris (1927-1991) also took interest in looking for the marginalized people in the Egyptian society and described their daily life and the difficult circumstances they live. Idris described the pressure of poverty and their deprivation of the elementary human rights; such as in his first collection *Arkhas Layali*/ *The Cheapest Nights* (1954) [[9]](#footnote-9).In addition, the Libyan writer Ibrahim al-Kouni (b. 1948) also deals in his novel *'Ushb al-Lail*/ *Night Grass* (1997) with a marginalized human layer 'Tuareg people', who represent the Amazigh people, who live in the Great African Sahara in the south of Algiers.[[10]](#footnote-10)

The novel *Tarmi Bi Sharar*/ *Throwing Sparks* (2010) by the Saudi novelist Adbo Khal (b. 1962), which won the 'International Prize for Arabic Fiction' (Arabic Booker Prize) in 2010, is considered to be a voice of the Marginalized because it introduces desperate and broken characters in a way that is unfamiliar to what is expected about the Saudi society, which is associated with exorbitant richness and conservative traditions. We should not forget the trilogy of the Moroccan writer Muhammad Shukri (1935-2003) called *al-Khubz al-Hafi*/ *For Bread Alone* (1982), *al-Shuttar*/ *The Shrewd Ones* (1992) and *Wujuh/ Faces* (2000). In this trilogy, Shukri skillfully observed the underground world of the Marginalized people in Tangier, where his life intersected with the life of his fictional heroes. The trilogy aroused a lot of controversy and was banned in some Arab countries due to the hard but true and accurate description of the hard and painful reality of the Marginalized people[[11]](#footnote-11).

* **Definition of the Pen-Portrait literary genre**

The Pen-Portrait is a literary work that parallel with the Portrait Paintings in Plastic Arts. It is defined as a description of a certain personality by pen instead of by the brush, where the topography of the face and body constitute an entrance to dive into the hidden secrets of the components of the person and describe its behavior and secrets in its life and fate. Thus, by diving into the depths of the person, the writer displays its psychological, ethical and intellectual dimensions. Besides, he introduces the connection of that personality with the system of the social relationships that prevail in society.

The Pen-Portrait became popular and well-developed in the Egyptian press in the first half of the twentieth century and played a role in the documentation of the public life in Egypt. The Pen-Portrait belonged to the aspect of "press-diary", as critic Mahmoud Adham called it. He defined it as "a creative type of writing in which the writer draws an image, not by a brush or paint or camera or light, but by drawing a pen-portrait which is mostly an image of persons that he knew and dealt with […] and if the word "image" is usually used to indicate everything that has connection to concrete expression […] we do not draw a complete literary picture as the writer or the poet does, but we transfer by our pen a complete and mostly real image of the people who live among us and we live among them, such as: an old friend from the days of childhood, a university friend asking where he is now, a friend from the village days, or the Ma'zoun of the village"[[12]](#footnote-12).

Mahmoud Adham put down the features of the Pen-Portrait and its characteristics in the following way:

* Concentration on one aspect of the character, attitude or scene.
* Concentration on the external features and internal psychological aspects.
* Realism in thought, treatment, description and expressions.
* A positive content that provides the reader with intellectual and meaningful knowledge through description of the events and details of the Portrait.
* Focusing on the elements of the hidden, strange, and marvelous in the field of the Portrait and its theme.
* Focusing on the element of the background and previous components and revealing them their impact on the main characteristic of the person[[13]](#footnote-13).

Some critics use the term 'Profile' to call the Literary Pen-Portrait[[14]](#footnote-14). Others classify it under the literature of 'Biography' or 'Autobiography'[[15]](#footnote-15). In modern criticism, several studies distinguish between 'Autobiography' and ' Literary Portrait'[[16]](#footnote-16) and between the 'Literary Pen-Portrait' and the 'Press Pen-Portrait'. While the Press Pen-portrait is mostly dominated by the imprint of 'news-report' , the 'Literary Pen-Portrait' deals with the feelings, emotions, aspirations, dreams, and sufferings that wave within the souls of people. It is also overwhelmed by the subjective impressionistic style.

* **The Main Technical Features Features of the Literary Pen-Portrait**

**The main characteristics of the literary portrait include: focusing on some distinguishing human attributes of each person; connecting the cognitive/ cultural with the human; connecting the character with the space that it belongs to and the symbolical indications of its relationship with the place; taking care of the beauty of the language and the description of the character considering that Portrait is a descriptive art that is dominated by the aesthetic function; formulating the description in a narrative language and a contemplative tone; depending on the memory and direct and real life experience; guaranteeing the artistic techniques of narration and imagination besides the historical events**[[17]](#footnote-17)**.**

* **The Pioneering Writers of the Literary Pen-Portrait**

The Arab literary movement witnessed the interest of some pioneering writers in writing about the marginalized and the smashed people within the art of literary pen-portrait. The pioneer of this art in the twentieth century was the Egyptian talented writer Abd al-'Aziz al-Bishri (1886-1943). al-Bishri was born in Cairo and died there. He studied at al-Azhar, worked in different jobs and occupied different ranks, the last of which was an 'administrative observer' at the Arab Academy for the Arabic Language in Cairo. He was called "The Leader of the Ironists/ Sheikh al-Sakhireen" due to his inclination to humor and sarcasm. Others called him 'Leader of the Rotten/ Sheikh al-Mu'affinin' due to his interest in writing about a lot of the groups of the poor people such as 'beggars', shoe-blacks, mourners at funerals, callers at weddings and Kor’an readers. He was influenced by the experiences of the classical authors such as Abd Allah Ibn al-Muqaffa' (724-759 CE) and al-Jahiz (775-868 CE).

Abd al-Aziz al-Bishri wrote a number of essays under the title *Fi al-Mir'ah /In the Mirror* and published it in the magazine *al-Siyasa al-'Usbou'iyya/* *The Weekly Politics*"[[18]](#footnote-18) and published these articles in a book that carried the same title. Al-Bishri dealt in these essays with different persons, who were mostly Egyptian celebrities in his age including, politicians, such as: Sa'd Zaghlul (1858-1927), Adli Yakan (1864-1933) and intellectuals such as: Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid (1872-1963), and authors such as: Hafiz Ibrahim (1872-1932), Ahmad Shawqi (1868-1932), and artists, such as Composer Sayyed Darweesh (1892-1923). Besides, he was well-known by his famous book *al-Mukhtar/ The Selected*, in which he introduced pen-portraits to a large number of marginalized and smashed human types. The wonderful introductions to the book *al-Mukhtar /The Selected* in its two parts were written by the Lebanese writer Khalil Motran (1872-1949) and the Egyptian writer Taha Hussein (1889-1973) [[19]](#footnote-19).

In his books *Fi al-Mir'ah* and *al-Mukhtar*, al-Bishri showed a talented critical descriptive sense and extraordinary ability to draw extremely accurate and beautiful portraits of a lot of authors, artists and creators whom he met and was acquainted with. Besides, he wrote about smashed human samples such as street sellers, vendors, shoeblacks, beggars and misers[[20]](#footnote-20). Some of the most exciting characters that al-Bishri described from the marginalized class in his book *al-Mukhtar* are: al-Tifl al-Shareed/ The Homeless Child [[21]](#footnote-21); al-Mutajawwiloun wa Masihu al-Ahdhiya / The Wanderers and the Shoeblacks[[22]](#footnote-22) ; al-Radio Kama Yassifuhu A'rabi Qadim min al-Badiya/ The Radio as it is Described by a Bedouin [[23]](#footnote-23); al-Shahhazoun/ the Beggars[[24]](#footnote-24).

A little has been written about al-Bishri in spite of his being a prominent figure in the Arab and Egyptian culture. In the modern period, some people consider the Egyptian writers Bilal Fadhl (b. 1973) and Omar Taher (b.1975) as adopters of the style of Abd al-Aziz al-Bishri, especially in employing 'irony and sarcasm as a tool in criticizing society.

The Pen-Portrait genre became popular and it spread in the first half of the twentieth century. The following Egyptian journalists were distinguished in writing in this genre: Ahmad al-Saawi Muhammad (1902-1989), Muhammad Zaki Abd al-Qader (1906-1982), Tharwat Abaza (1927-2002), Ahmad Shafiq Bahjat (1932-2011). Besides, the writer Yahya Haqi (1905-1992) excelled in writing Pen-Portraits, especially in his book *'Itr al-Al-Ahbab*/*Perfume of Sweethearts*, which constitutes an important station in the art of Literary Pen-Portrait[[25]](#footnote-25). Haqqi defined this genre under the title of 'Al-Lawhat al-Qalamiya (Pen-Paintings).

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He also praised the book of *Mudhakarat al-Sheikh Fazari* /*Memoirs of Sheikh Fazari* by the Azhari writer Mustafa Abd-al-Raziq (1885-1947) as one of the first writers of Portraits in the Arab Renaissance period[[26]](#footnote-26). In addition, the writer 'Abbas Mahmud al-'Aqqad (1889-1964) praised this art due to its contact and interaction with the Egyptian celebrities and the leaders of the literary, political and intellectual Renaissance[[27]](#footnote-27). However, the style of some other writers was close to the style of journalistic daily diaries. Others were closer to that of the autobiography.

In the second half of the twentieth century the Egyptian writer Khairy Shalaby (1938-2011) revived the art of the literary portraiture after al-Bishri. Shalaby was called ' The Story-Teller of the Marginalized/ Hakka' al-Muhammashin, and 'Malik al-Kahyanin/ King of the Poor'. He wrote hundreds of Pen-Portraits throughout his fruitful career in which he dealt with a crowded world of Egyptian communities including: vagabonds, smashed people, chased people, unemployed people, thieves, addicts to hashish, poor workers, cemetery dwellers and craftsmen such as: undertakers[[28]](#footnote-28)،, gravediggers[[29]](#footnote-29), coffeemakers[[30]](#footnote-30), carriage-drivers[[31]](#footnote-31), ironers[[32]](#footnote-32), and nurses[[33]](#footnote-33).

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He believed that person's face is the window through which it is possible to infiltrate into and reach his depths. Khairy Shalaby was influenced by the Egyptian writer Yahya Haqqi and he considered him his spiritual father. He said: "Haqqi is one of the pioneers who affected me most in knowledge, language and style besides the real Egyptian spirit that he revived in my generation[[34]](#footnote-34). Critics also consider him as the pioneer of the historical fantasy in the modern Arabic novel. His contribution was not limited to the short story or the novel but it expanded to include the historical research and literary criticism. Some of his works are: *'Ayaan Misr*/ *Egypt's Dignitaries* (1998); *Suhbat al-'Ushaq/* *Friendship of Lovers* (1996); *Fursan al-Dhihk/ Knights of Laughte; 'Anaqid al-Nur*/ *Clusters of Light* (2010) and *Burj al-Balabel/ Tower of Nightingales* (2009).

Khairy Shalaby had his special imprint that distinguished him from his teacher Abd al-Aziz al-Bishri in his Pen-Portrait writing about the marginalized people[[35]](#footnote-35). *First*, he actually lived among this class for such a long time that his writings became connected to its individuals and their life. Consequently, he remained the documenter of this smashed classes. *Second*, he always searched in his works about the aesthetics of the character and his history that distinguished him[[36]](#footnote-36).

Shalaby introduced the art of Pen-Portrait into his novels, too. For example, he wrote long sections that contain penetrating observation of the characters and their psychological and ideological dimensions[[37]](#footnote-37). The Pen-Portraits in his novel do not include description only to the faces and the characters but to the place and time and popular neighborhood as we see in his works: a*l-Awbash/ The Bastards* (1978); *Wakalat 'Atiyya/ Attiyya's Agency* (1999) and *Mawal al-Bayat wa al-Nawm/ The Bayat Folk Song and Sleep* (2005) [[38]](#footnote-38).

The language in Shalaby's literary Pen-Portraits is characterized by transparency and simplicity. Shalaby tended to break the authority of language and its centrality by diverting from the official, standard elite rules of language. Shalaby combines between colloquial Egyptian and standard Arabic (Fusha). He uses allusions to the oral heritage and local dialect. Besides, he relies on the techniques of similes, metonymy and simple metaphors.

Shalaby's Pen-Portrait writing was not limited to the Marginalized people in society but it introduced historical and political personalities, too, such as: singer Um Kulthoum (1898-1975), Sa'd Zaghlul and the writer Yusuf Idris. Shalaby also wrote about non-Egyptian celebrities such as: singer Fairuz (b. 1935), poet and author Jibran Khalil Jibran (1883- 1931) and Georgi Zaidan (1861-1914). All these luminaries are Lebanese. [[39]](#footnote-39)

* **Samples of the literary Pen-Portrait**

The following sections introduce two samples of literary Pen-Portraits; one was written by Abd al-Aziz al-Bishri and the other by Khairy Shalaby.

1. ***Al-Tifl al-Sharid/ The Homeless Child* by Abd al-Aziz al-Bishri**

A dusty deformed face, as if it is covered with soil of a grave; two cavernous temples, as if they are caused by the effect of a collapse; two protruding cheeks that look like two knees of a camel; his skin is so stuck to his bones that his grave would not be able to peel it to the Resurrection Day; these are two eyes that are constantly puzzled and confused; they steal looks at all sides [ …] this is a bare leg and those are shabby rags that are ripped and torn; they were made of torn pieces and rips; they reveal of the body more than they hide; uncover of more flaws than they conceal […], here he observes the piece of bread in your hand if you are eating and the cigarette butt if you are smoking; his eyes might be drawn by a low thrown remnant of food, which the raven might hate and dogs would not eat […]; he is always afraid, constantly frightened; fears everything and is even scared of anything; he expects harm from anyone and expects that someone would attack him; the poor man had been deprived of the father's and the mother's emotions; and he had been deprived from presents of the uncle and his assistance […] O abled people of power, have mercy on those on land so that He who is in Heaven would have mercy on you! "[[40]](#footnote-40).

1. ***Al-Hajja Zahra* by Khairi Shalabi**

Since my aunt Tawhida got married and my uncle Abd al-Rahman Amr, who was the most famous barber in our village, died, Hajja Zahra has sat on the sidewalk of the shop day and night and no one has talked to her from an hour to the other except one of the children of her son, Arafat […] she spends her time sitting at the entrance of her home leaning her elbow on the pavement of the shop […] Hajja Zahra has a large body and she looks like a bread-oven in her sitting; she's thick, built, and as black as coal. Her head, which is encircled by black gauze, looks like a turned black frying pan […] She is always bending her head and no one of those who see her knew if she was awake or was in deep or everlasting hibernation. She has been in this position for many years […] people think that she is either asleep or dead while she is gazing from below her dropping eyelids at those who go and those who come.

If she laughs, you will think she is weeping; you will be frightened at first sight, probably because you might think that her face is as hard as a rock and will not be soft, and you will suddenly see it live again and become like a dough that is full of curls and topographic relief; her constantly dropping eyes have become like two splits that shed heavy tears […] For me, when I used to remember her at night when I was alone; my body would shake because of wild hidden laughter because her shape would look identical with the shape of my uncle Zakariya when he laughs or gets excited and my father's shape when he shows his disgust at anything"[[41]](#footnote-41).

* **The Characteristics of the Artistic Structure of the Literary Portrait**

An in depth reading of these literary sections will make us conclude that writing of Pen-Portraits requires a special skill especially in the process of organizing this literary genre. As to B.K Bazylova: ”An important component of a portrait poetic is a way of organizing his perceptions. The perceptions of literary portrait is not just in a process of interpretation of verbal sights, which has its own specific sequence, designed to develop the reader the law of semantic and syntactic hierarchy. [...]There goes a hierarchical restructuring of impressions that is characterized by the fact that in a process of narration every reader discovers something new”[[42]](#footnote-42).

The main characteristics of the structure of the literary portrait are summarized in the following points:

1. **Narration in the Service of Description**

Generally, description is connected to narration or complementary to it. However, in the case of the Pen-Portrait, the discourse is mainly descriptive and aims to shed light on the character and draw its features and essence. Therefore, the employment of the narration follows the description and not followed by it as it is commonly said. The character’s description is considered one of the most important elements of the successful narrative work, like plot and style. Through the description and narration together, the writer leads us on a journey in which we know the character and its experience in life in a gradual way.

1. **From the General to the Particular**

The description movement in the Pen-Portrait is not arbitrary; it is a systematic process that depends on organization, selection and choice. When the writer describes the character, he has two choices: either to start from the general to the particular or the opposite. For example: the writer might start by describing the appearance of the character, its temper in general and then gradually describes the special attributes such as the character's height, face, skin color, features of the eyes, the nose and mouth and so on. In this gradual description from the general to the particular or from the whole to the part, we notice an operation of a clear and amusing branching. Sometimes, we find that the specific particular part of the described character becomes general, and other attributes are integrated under other specific that parts. For example, the character’s face might be a specific part when we describe the appearance of the whole character, but from a different angle, it becomes general in relation to the other parts such as the eyes, the nose and the mouth as these parts constitute the sub-parts from which the whole face is formed.

1. **From the External Form to the Internal Essence**

The human being is a form and essence, a body, a mind and conscience. Good description of the character should include the two sides and connect between them tightly. In the Pen-Portraits samples that are mentioned above, we have seen that each writer gradually and skillfully describes the external appearance of the character, and then moves to its internal structure of soul, mind, and the way of thinking that makes the character a distinctive person. Sometimes, the external description serves as a tool that symbolizes the internal world of the character. For example, the employment of 'white hair' symbolizes wisdom and dignity. Similarly, the use of the wrinkles of the face symbolizes originality and belonging to the place, and the look of the eyes symbolizes 'intelligence' and so on.

**4 Strict Investigation of Details**

One of the reasons for the success of Pen-Portrait is that its writer's accurate description and strict investigation of the details that are related to the character. Generally, each character has specific good or bad characteristics that distinguish it from other characters. The Portrait writers focus on describing these physical details. For example, snub-nosed, wide mouth, obese body, wrinkled or furrowed face. The writer focuses also on the shape of the face, calmness, elegance and shyness of the character. No doubt, these characteristics become distinguishing marks of the person and leave good impressions on the reader. Besides, they constitute a productive material for the writer. Therefore, some writers elaborate on describing the details in order to create special effects on the reader. By detailed investigation and description, the writer responds to the receiver's desire and his expectations. No doubt, the reader would like to know everything about the described character, especially the well-known public personalities and celebrities.

**5. Poetic Description and Correlation of the Senses**

Language is the only tool that the writer of the literary Portrait possesses. Therefore, he needs the pen of a poet and the brush of an artist. The Pen-Portrait depends on poetic language that depends on intensification of meanings and embodiment and personification of the abstract qualities. Poetic language is characterized by a prominent presence of the senses and the impressive language is the one that motivates the senses of the reader. In the literary Pen-Portrait, the writer resorts to the employment of the concrete tactile elements of description and chooses the suitable forms, colors, sounds, smells, tastes and clothes. There is no doubt that correlation between senses has its effect in lending a poetic atmosphere on the description and approximating it to the reader's perceptions and realizations. When the details appeal to the reader, they create experience and knowledge in his consciousness and make him understand the character and perceive it better.

1. **Irony**

Irony is considered one of the strategies that the writer leans on in the art of literary Pen-Portrait, especially the portraits of the marginalized helpless people, who have to face lots of difficulties as we see in the Egyptian society. Irony requires sharp intelligence that enables the reader to see the essence of things that are concealed behind the external superficial things and understand the critical dimension that the writer directs. In addition to that, writing in an ironic style requires practice in writing and mastery of the language in such a way that allows the writer to choose the vocabulary and phrases that are able to arouse laughter in the receiver[[43]](#footnote-43).

**Conclusion**

In view of the above review, samples, and discussion of the genre of literacy Pen-portrait, we can draw the following conclusions:  *First*, the art of Pen-Portrait that al-Bishri and Khairy Shalaby introduced in the twentieth century allowed us to be acquainted with a new different reality about the marginalized people, mainly in Egypt. The phenomenon of 'marginalization' is not limited to the deviants only as the marginalized person can also be any ordinary person. The common characteristic of the two groups, as Ali Fahmi pointed out, is that they are "far from the productive process" in society[[44]](#footnote-44). Besides, al-Bishri and Shalaby corrected our conception about 'marginalization'. Instead of seeing the marginalized as a trivial mass of people in society, we find them as the power that makes the higher classes in society that lead the social relationships. Without gaining from the marginalized classes, the higher classes would not be able to achieve their high status. The literature of the marginalized and the bottom classes is not a low level or trivial literature as much as it is a realistic literature that is connected to these people. Its main function is to introduce the problematics of the life of human beings and his sufferings in the real sense of the word.

*Second*, the Pen-Portrait genre in the form that al-Bishri and Khairy established had spread and became popular in the first half of the twentieth century. However, it disappeared from modern Arabic poetry and the writers of our age rarely deal with it. In other words, the Pen-Portrait today is still in the frame of Marginalized Literature, which is not sufficiently dealt with by contemporary writers and critics. Besides, the dominating literary institute and authority does not show interest in it despite its significance and aesthetics.

Undoubtedly, there are brilliant samples of the art of Pen-Portrait in modern Arabic literature. Some of them are devoted to the class of the marginalized and introduce human samples that have significant role in society. Yet, these are few samples in relation to other types of writing. Some of these samples include: *Wujuh Marrat: Portrihat Iraqiyya/ Faces That Have Passed: Iraqi Portraits* by the Iraqi writer Abd al-Rahman Majid al-Rabi'i (b.1939). The book includes the biographies of a number of Iraqis, most of whom come from the social margin; the book *Sayyed al-'Ashira: Nusus Sardiya/ Head of the Clan: Narrative Texts* (2011) by the Moroccan poet Muhammad Bo Jubairy (b. 1956), in which he introduces biographies of people who belong to the village environment and space in which he was born, has grown and has lived so far [[45]](#footnote-45); the book: *Hikayat Suwar: Ta'weelat Naqdiya*/ *Stories of Pictures: Critical Interpretations* (2009) by Sharaf al-Din Majdolin is a combination between the style of the Portrait and critical analysis in which he recounts the life of Moroccan novelists and poets that influenced him[[46]](#footnote-46); the two books of *Fi Hadhrat al-Baha: Portrihat bi Hibr al-'Unutha*/ *In the Presence of Gorgeousness: Portraits by the Ink of Femininity* (2015) and *Mubdi'un la Yantiqun ‘an al-Hawa: Portrihat Ashiqa/ Creators who Do Not Speak about Love: Portraits in Love* (2015) by the Moroccan writer Hassan Birish (1971). The books includes portraits of men and women writers from the world of culture and literature in Morocco [[47]](#footnote-47); the book *Portrait* (2006) by the Lebanese journalist Marline Khalifa in which she wrote biographies of more than forty Lebanese persons from the fields of politics, society, literature and art. Its style is closer to the journalistic style[[48]](#footnote-48).

To sum up, we can say that what has been written in the frame of Pen-Portrait deserves all respect though it is still relatively minor. Probably, this is so due to the little treatment by the writers and critics of this genre, which results from the fact that writing on this type of literature needs a lot of courage as the literary Portrait is considered a source of abundant information about the biography of a certain personality and its impact. This requires observation of the positive and negative aspects of the character, which constitutes a specific risk whether at the social or the legal level. From the social perspective, the Portrait writing can become a defamation of a person and a cause of complete separation or a reason for taking a legal action against the writer or rupture of relations between the writer and the critic.

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1. Somnath Sarkar, “What is Marginality in Literature?”, in *All about English Literature*, 2016, Website:

   [http://www.eng-literature.com/2016/08/what-is-marginality-literature-examples.html#](http://www.eng-literature.com/2016/08/what-is-marginality-literature-examples.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. La'la Sa'adah, "Adab al-Hamish: Naghma li al-Ghina' wa Ukhra li al-Buka'", in *Aswat al-Shamal*, 8 May 2011, Website: <http://www.aswat-elchamal.com/ar/?p=98&a=17311>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See: Hassan Bahrawi, "Adab al-Hamish: Adab Muhammad Shukri min al-Hamishiyya ila al-Markaziyya", in *'Alamat* (Morocco), 18 (2002),, p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. About the subject of Center and Margin literature, its concept and types see: Dalila al-Bah & Tibermasin Abd al-Rahman, "al-Markaz wa al-Hamish: Its Concept, Types and Roots", in: *Majallat Qira'at: Makhbar-Wahdat al-Takween wa al-Bahth fi Nazariyyat al-Qira'a wa Manahijiha*, )Algeria: University of Baskara(, 4 (2012), pp. 297-317. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Kamal Al-Riyahi, "al-Falsafi fi 'Ushb al-Lail li Ibrahim al-Kuni", in *Diwan al-'Arab*, June 12th 2007. Website: <http://www.diwanalarab.com/spip.php?article9391> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See: Majdi Ahmad Tawfiq, "Adab al-Muhammashin", in *Jihat al-Shi'r*. Website: <http://www.jehat.com/ar/JanatAltaaweel/drasatnadaryah/Pages/majdai_a_tawfeeq.aspx#1> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. ### The last years of the twentieth century witnessed an increased interest in studying the marginalized social groups and layers in Egypt by critics of literature and sociologists, politicians and advocates. These studies tried to refer to the historical roots of the marginal groups in the Egyptian society, their types, and social and economic conditions. About this subject, see: Ibtisam Allam, *Al-Jama'at al-Hamishiya al-Munharifa fi Tarikh Misr al-Ijtima'i al-Hadith*, (Cairo University: Faculty of Humanities- Markaz al-Buhuth wa al-Dirasat al-Ijtima'iya, 2002); Huwaida Saleh, *Al-Hamish al-'Ijtima'i fi al-Adab: A Socio-cultural Reading*. (Cairo: Dar Ru'ya li al-Nashr, 2015); Ali Fahmi, "al-Muhammashoun fi Misr al-Mahrousa" in: *al-Kitaba al-'Ukhra* (Cairo), January 1993. Website:

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   [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. In a TV interview with Najib Mahfouz and al-Harafish Group, the player Ahmad Mazhar explained the meaning of the nickname "Harafish" saying that it is a Turkish word that consists of two parts (Hara = which means = neighborhood) and "fish" (does not exist), i.e. "without a neighborhood". Thus, al-Harafish are groups of people that have no neighborhood or where to live. It is close to the term "Sa'alik" (the vagabonds) in the Pre-Islamic period. See the TV interview with Najib Mahfouz, Ahmad Mazhar and others:”Ya'ni Eh Harafish?/ So, What does it mean "Harafish"? Najib Mahfouz and Ahmad Mazhar reply in a rare interview”, in *al-Yawm al-Sabi’* newspaper, January 12th 2017. Website: [http://www.youm7.com/story/2017/1/12/](http://www.youm7.com/story/2017/1/12/%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%86%D9%89-%D8%A5%D9%8A%D9%87-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D9%86%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A8-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%81%D9%88%D8%B8-%D9%88%D8%A3%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%B8%D9%87%D8%B1-%D9%8A%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%89-%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A1/3049335) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Most of the writers of the sixties in the twentieth century wrote about the marginalized classes in the Egyptian society such as: Muhammad Mustajab (1938-2005), Abd al-Hakim Qassem (1935-1990), Yusuf al-Qa'id (b. 1944) and others. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See: Kamal al-Riyahi, "al-Falsafiy fi 'Ushb al-Lail li Ibrahim al-Kouni", in *Diwan al-'Arab*, June 12th 2007. Website: <http://www.diwanalarab.com/spip.php?article9391> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. About the presence of the Marginalized in the Arab Novel, see: "al-Muhammashoun: Kayfa Ya'ishoun fi al-Sard al-'Arabi", in *Middle East Online*, 13/12/2012. Websiet: <http://www.middle-east-online.com/?id=152919>.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Mahmoud Adham, *Al-Maqal al-Sahafi*, (Cairo: al-Anglo al-Misriya, 1984), pp. 185-186. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ibid., p. 207. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Ismael Azzam, "al-Profile…Tariquka li Kitabat Qissa Sahafiyya Hawla Shakhsiyyat fi Uslub Hayy", in *Shabakat al-Sahafiyyin al-Dowliyyin*, April 15th 2015. Website: https://ijnet.org/ar. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The Tunisian critic Jalila Turayter refers the art of Portrait to the 'Self-Literature', which includes the biography, autobiography, memoirs, diaries and private letters. See: Jalila Turayter, *Adab al-Portrait: al-Nazariyya wa al-Ibdaa'*, (Tunisia, Dar Muhammad Ali li al-Nashr, 2011), pp. 9-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. About the difference between Autobiography and Portrait, see: Michel Beaujour, *Poetics of the Literary Self-portrait*, Trans. from French by Yara Milos (New York and London: New York University Press, 1991), p.25. See also: Abd al-Wahab al-Rami, *Al-Ajnas al-SahafiyYa: Miftah al-'Ilam al-Mihani*. (ISESCO: Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2011), pp. 143-144. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See: B. K Bazylova and Zh. D. Suleimenova, "The Model of the Genre of Literary Portrait in Modern Literary Criticism", *Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering*, Vol. 6, No. 6, 2012, pp.1110-1113; Jalila Turayter, *Adab al-Portrait: al-Nazariyya wa al-Ibdaa'*, (Tunisia, Dar Muhammad Ali li al-Nashr, 2011), pp. 36-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. *al-Siyasa al-'Usbou'iyya :* A political and cultural newspaper that was published in 1926, which dealt mainly with political issues but published also essays on philosophical, intellectual and social topics. It was established by The Constitution Party in Egypt and its chief editor was Muhammad Hasanin Haikal (1888-1956). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. About the life of al-Bishri and his literature, see: Jamal al-Din al-Ramadi, *Min A'lam al-Adab al-Mu'asser*, (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi, n.d.), pp. 64-72. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Al-Bishri says that his purpose in writing these essays is "to analyze one of the well-known characters that are appreciated by people, to infiltrate into its temper and deal with what is seen through it and introduce it to the reader in an amusing and humorous way." He adds that "this type of rhetorical writing is borrowed from the West and we are still imitating them in it, though some of the Arab writers like al-Jahiz preceded them to a certain kind of this metaphorical description." See: Yosri Abd al-Ghani Abd Allah, "Al-Sheikh Abd al-Azizal-Bishri: Min al-Adab al-Sakher ila Al-Naqd al-Adabi", in *al-Majalla al-'Arabiyya* (Saudi Arabia), March 10th 2016. Website: http://www.arabicmagazine.com/Arabic/AboutUs.aspx [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Abd al-Aziz Al-Bishri, *Al-Mukhtar*. (Cairo: Mu'asasat Hindawi li al-Nashr, 2014), pp. 151-154. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Ibid., pp. 427-431. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ibid., pp. 187-196. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Ibid., pp. 437-439. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. See: Yahya Haqqi, *'Itr al-Ahbab* . (Cairo: Nahdhat Misr li al-Tiba'a wa al-Nashr, 2008), pp. 160-185. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. See: the texts of "Mudhakarat al-Sheikh Fazari", in Ali Abd al-Raziq, *Min Athar Mustafa Abd al-Raziq*, Rev. by Taha Hussein Cairo: Dar al-Ma'aref, 1957), pp. 79-121.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. See Chapter of "al-Surah al-Shakhssiya wa al-Qalamiya li al-Aqqad", in Isma'il al-Minshawi, *Fan al-Maqal wa Tatawuruhu 'Abr al-'Usour*. (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Azhariya li al-Turath, 2000). Website: <http://vb.mediu.edu.my/archive/index.php/t-40306.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Al-Hanuti: the Undertaker who takes care of the dead body and burying it. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. al-Turbi: the Gravedigger. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Al-Qahwaji: The Coffee-Maker. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Al-Arabji: the Carriage-driver. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Al-Makwaji: the Ironer. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Al-Tamarji: Service –worker at the Hospital/ Nurse. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. See: Muhammad Sayyed Barakah, "Khairy Shalaby: al-Hakka' Watad al-Riwaya al-Misriya", in *al-Islam al-Yawm,* July 3rd 2012. Website: <http://magazine.islamtoday.net/m/art.aspx?ID=731> [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Khairy Shalaby wrote about his teacher an eloquent portrait in which he confirmed his pioneering role in the literary Renaissance. Besides, he dealt with the art of Portrait, saying: "We should know that Abd al-Aziz al-Bishri is the founder of the art that we call today "Art of Portrait in the Modern Journalism. In fact, this art is an Arab one in its foundations in relation with the literary pen as a competitor with the brush of the painter, which is considered taboo in the Islamic faith. The writers used to draw the faces with pens in such a way that the brush of the painter could not do sometimes, but al-Bishri excelled them all because he combined between the shades of the colors of the brush and the eloquence of the pen in literature." Khairy Shalaby, *'Anaqid al-Nur*. (Cairo: Dar al-Usra, 2010), pp. 75-86. See also: Khairy Shalaby, *Kutub wa Nas*. (Cairo: Dar al-Hilal, 2009), p. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. The Egyptian famous Journalist Zaki Mubarak (1892-1952) wrote a severe criticism about al-Bishri, hinting that al-Bishri described the class of the marginalized people but he did not live among them or what they feel; he described them as sculptures and phenomena rather than samples of live human beings. He said: "He is one of the most skilled describers of visual things; you would think that his pen is a brush of a painter that moves between colors but […] where is the writer who tells us about what we know or do not know about the secrets of the souls and the feelings of the hearts? I looked for this writer in the essays of Abd al-Aziz al-Bishri but could not find him […] al-Bishri's essays tell you that he accompanied lots of people and when you read, you find their appearances but you do not find him aware or alert to the indications of those features. Al-Bishri the writer has eyes that see colors and ears that hear sounds but he lived without a heart and did not realize the minute differences between the colors and sounds from the perspective of their indications of meanings […] I am asking about the writer who describe human feelings, and what concerns us as Egyptians as well as human; the human poet finds echo to his emotions everywhere in the country".

    See: Zaki Mubarak, "Al-Mukhtar li Abd al-Aziz al-Bishri", in *Majallat al-Risala* (Cairo), No.394, November 20th 1941, in *Wiki Masdar*. Website: [https://ar.wikisource.org/wiki](https://ar.wikisource.org/wikiD9%84%D8%AA%A9) [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. See: Amani Fouad, "Al-Portrait fi al-Nass al-Riwa'i Inda Khairy Shalabi: Mawal al-Bayat wa al-Nawm Namuzajan", in *al-Hiwar al-Mutamadden,* No. 4214, September 13th 2013. Website: <http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=377689>. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Hatem Hafiz points out that Putting Khairy Shalaby in the square of Literature of the Marginalized made injustice to him to a great extent, "not because he wrote about the Marginalized but because his writings about the marginalized exceeded the direct concept of the 'marginalized" and he set it free to wider spaces and he does not write about the marginalized only but about the marginalized in the human soul, too. […] Khairy explores this marginalized in the human soul and soon he discovers that he is the main corner in the character and his marginalization because of his unaware of it or refusal to it as part of what we refuse of our features or for fear of being a clear page or easy bit among people who live in a way as if they were not human." Hatem Hafiz, "Na'na' al-Janayin: Riwaya Tusa'il al-Tarikh al-Mawruth", in *Majallat al-Hilal* (Cairo), December 2010), p. 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. See: Khayri Shalaby, *Anaqid al-Nur*. (Cairo: Dar al-Usra, 2010); Khairy Shalaby, *A'yaan Misr: Wujuh Misriya Mu'assera*, (Cairo: al-Dar al-Missriyya al-Lubnaniyya, 1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Abd al-Aziz Al-Bishri, *Al-Mukhtar*. (Cairo: Mu'asast Hindawi li al-Nashr, 2014), pp. 151-153. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Khairy Shalaby, *Na'na' al-Janayin*. (Cairo: Dar al-Hilal, 2006). pp. 50-51 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. B. K Bazylova & Zh. D. Suleimenova, " The Model of the Genre of Literary Portrait in Modern Literary Criticism”, *Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering*, Vol. 6, No. 6, )2012(, p.1113. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See: "Abd al-Aziz al-Bishri Mathaf al-Suwar", in *Montada Tawasul*, May 17th 2010. Websie: http://alsontwasol.yoo7.com [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Ali Fahmi, "Al-Muhammashoun fi Misr al-Mahrousa", in *Majallat al-Kitaba al-'Ukhra*, (January, 1993), Cairo, p. 15. See also:

    <http://archive.sakhrit.co/newPreview.aspx?PID=2129797&ISSUEID=196&AID=59933> [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. See: Hamid Said, "al-Soura al-Qalamiya", in *al-Ra'I*, June 15th 2012. Website: <http://alrai.com/article/520546.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. See: "Hikayat Suwar: Kitab Jadid li al-Naqid Sharaf al-Din Majdolin", in *al-Dustour Newspaper* (Amman), April 26th 2009. Website: <https://www.addustour.com/articles> [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. See: Nizar al-Qurashy, "Portraihat bi Rishat Hassan Bireesh", in *Majallat Tanja al-Adabiya* (Morocco), July 1st 2015. Website:

    <http://aladabia.net/m/article.php?id=13745#sthash.gmjCwHTK.dpuf> [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. See: "Portrait: Siyar Dhatiyya li Wujuh Ma'rufa fi al-Siyasa wa al-Adab". in *al-Ghad Newspaper* (Amman), August 8th 2006. Website: <http://alghad.com/articles/> [↑](#footnote-ref-48)