

**Literary Democracy in *The Songs of Maldoror***  
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**Abstract**

A contemporary French philosopher, Jacques Rancière, believes that literary democracy originated in the nineteenth century, especially in connection with the genre of novel. This research studies this concept in *The Songs of Maldoror*, one of the poetic works of the second half of nineteenth century, relying on the definition of democracy by some contemporary philosophers. The study investigates which types of notions were toppled down by this text, which ones were highlighted and bolded, and what the consequences of these shifts were. In fact, this text can be a clear example of a democratic literary text that ends the power of many ideas of the literature of the "elite" minority, and it starts a new literary plan. Dialogue becomes the fundamental notion of this modern text, and it delineates between literary genres, on the one hand, and the common and elite literature, on the other. *The Songs of Maldoror* needs an active reading without any previous horizon of expectation.

**Keywords:** literary democracy, *The Songs of Maldoror*, literary criticism, literary theory, genre, writing, reading

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