



## The Narrative of Democracy in Classical Arabic Literature: According to Ibn al-Daya in al-Mokafat

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### Abstract

This study explores the complexity and narrative of democracy in classical Arabic literature through the lens of Ibn al-Daya's "al-Mokafat." The research addresses how Ibn al-Daya integrates democratic principles into his storytelling by highlighting the political and social dynamics of the Tulunid era in Egypt. By adhering to realism, Ibn al-Daya presents the issues faced by ordinary people and various social classes, offering a polyphonic narrative that reflects diverse voices, cultures, and ideas. The analysis reveals that "al-Mokafat" embodies key democratic characteristics, such as polyphony, pluralism, inclusivity, and the reconciliation of diverse thoughts and cultures. The narrative approach adopted by Ibn al-Daya liberates the story from dogmatism and unilateralism, fostering a pluralistic interpretation and integration of cultural perspectives. This study underscores the significance of examining democratic narratives in classical Arabic literature and their impact on cultural and intellectual integration. The findings contribute to the understanding of how classical Arabic literature can serve as a medium for expressing democratic values and addressing social issues. By providing a democratic perspective within a historical context, Ibn al-Daya's work offers valuable insights into the application of democratic principles in literature, promoting a deeper appreciation for the complexity and diversity of classical Arabic storytelling.

**Keywords:** Democracy, Narration, Classical Arabic Literature, Ibn al-Daya, al-Mokafat

### Introduction

Democracy is a concept widely applied from the Renaissance onwards; this concept is used more in politics than in culture and literature.<sup>1</sup> Literature

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<sup>1</sup> Hankins, James. "The Virtue Politics of the Italian Humanists." *Beyond Reception: Renaissance Humanism and the Transformation of Classical Antiquity* (2019): 95-114; Ketcham, Ralph. *The idea of democracy in the modern era*. University Press of Kansas, 202; Van Dijk, Jan.

and literary works are no exception, especially, literary works and periods that have been established under the shadow rulers as well as free thought political developments. Hence, literature and culture, like politics can turn to a democratic structure adhering to the pluralism of thought and ideas diversity while accepting different tastes and groups, if regarding flexibility and viability as well as avoiding individualism, authoritarianism, avoiding dogmatic and authoritarian thinking.<sup>2</sup>

A topic that was interested in the contemporary period by writers and critics, and Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) as the main theorist in the field of literature introduced it as a polyphonic theory while emphasizing dialogue, exchange of opinions and voices and the frequency and different readings in the literature.<sup>3</sup> Earlier, Karl Mannheim (d. 1947) and others seriously pursued and debated the topic of democratization of culture in the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> In this study, the author focused on the narrative of democracy or tracing of democratic culture in Arab-Islamic thought and culture in one of the lesser-known of classical Arabic literature, namely "Al-Mokafat" by Ibn al-Daya.<sup>5</sup>

Abu Ja'far Ahmad ibn Yusuf (died. 340 AH / 951 AD) known as Ibn al-Daya, the scribe, and secretary of the Tulunids court in Egypt was a prominent writer for recording details and accurate descriptions of events and happenings.<sup>6</sup> These recordings are seen in his historical event and biography works especially the famous book "Biography of Ibn Tulun".<sup>7</sup> There are some results in his work; while there are not in any classical Arabic literature including the narrative of democracy. Although Ibn al-Daya's realism has realized the democratic thought in his works, the author himself has made great

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"Models of democracy and concepts of communication." *Digital democracy: Issues of theory and practice* 54 (2000): 69.

<sup>2</sup> Laborde, Cécile, and St. Anthony's College. *Pluralist thought and the state in Britain and France, 1900-25*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Björklund, Martina. "Mikhail Bakhtin." *Philosophical perspectives for pragmatics* 10 (2011): 38-52. Holloway, Julian, and James Kneale. "Mikhail Bakhtin: dialogics of space." In *Thinking space*, pp. 71-88. Routledge, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Mannheim, Karl. *Sociology as Political Education: Karl Mannheim in the University*. Routledge, 2018. Kettler, David. *Karl Mannheim and the crisis of liberalism: The secret of these new times*. Routledge, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn al-Daya, Ahmad ibn Yusuf (Bita), al-Mokafat and Hassan al-Aqbi, by: Ali Muhammad Umar, Cairo: Maktab Al-Khanji.

<sup>6</sup> AlSayyad, Nezar, Irene A. Bierman, and Nasser Rabbat, eds. *Making Cairo Medieval*. Lexington Books, 2005. Beinun, Joel. *The dispersion of Egyptian Jewry: culture, politics, and the formation of a modern diaspora*. American Univ in Cairo Press, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Conermann, Stephan. "Ibn Tulun (d. 955/1548): Life and Works." *Mamlūk Studies Review* 8 (2004).

efforts in democratic narration and has avoided political and religious orientations following specific circumstances of his life.<sup>8</sup>

Ibn al-Daya narrates various problems and events meticulously and assesses his specific narration adopted by the fate of characters in three main categories discarding religious or limited cultural principles. The fates indicating interactions and actions of the characters logically and realistically and the author has avoided intervening and directing the story to a destination contrary to the mainstream. Therefore, his literature is full of subtleties and various democratic components that this study aims to analyze. The author does not adhere to a specific theory to extract the components of a democratic narrative, because this process occurs in classical works due to various factors and cannot be examined in the light of a single democratic approach and theory.

Some classical Arabic writers have subconsciously created narratives with a democratic nature, in which democratic thought is used as intangible and hidden sparks.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, we have tried to introduce the democratic components, various and important writings in this field from theorists such as "Karl Mannheim"<sup>10</sup> from the nineteenth century and others such as "Van Acker and Timopost". (Van den Akker's and Timotheus) in the 21st century, who tried to analyze the concept of democracy in culture and literature to achieve an accurate and comprehensive picture of the most important democratic principles in the work of Ibn al-Daya. In this article, we analyze three important components of the characteristics of the narrative of democracy in the al-Mokafat book written by Ibn al-Daya.

### **Polyphony and Plurality Tone as one of the components of democratic**

The polyphony and plurality tone as one of the components of democratic thought leads to inclusion and unilateralism.<sup>11</sup> According to this model, Ibn al-Daya has used different narrators and personalities in narration.

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<sup>8</sup> ناجية عبد الله ابراهيم ندى عبد الرزاق محمود "Ibn Tulun's personal and scientific biography Shams Id-Din Mohammad Ibn Ali AL-Dimashqi Al-Salihi (953 A. H/1546 AD)." *Journal of the College of Education for Women* 26, no. 4 (2015).

<sup>9</sup> Badran, Dany. "Democracy and rhetoric in the Arab World." *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 4, no. 1 (2013): 65-86. Elsadda, Hoda. "Arab women bloggers: The emergence of literary counterpublics." *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 3, no. 3 (2010): 312-332. Mahrooqi, Rahma, and Christopher Denman. "Arab identity and literature in translation: The politics of selection and representation." *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Special Issue on Translation* 5 (2016).

<sup>10</sup> Shils, Edward. "Karl Mannheim." *The American Scholar* 64, no. 2 (1995): 221-235.

<sup>11</sup> Van den Akker, Robin, Alison Gibbons, and Timotheus Vermeulen, eds. *Metamodernism: Historicity, affect, and depth after postmodernism*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2017: 2.

He delicately and meticulously as well as explaining the narration of narrators accurately makes a boundary between his voice and the voices of others; while bringing to mind that his writing is not the product of one thought and one narrator, but the result of a collective and shared thought. In this way, Ibn al-Daya takes himself aloof from the all-knowing narrator who affects much of classical literature.

This type of narration dominates all matters and describes time and place, identifies and defines characters, creates time summaries, expresses personal statements".<sup>12</sup> This type of narration is faded or ignored in the story by Ibn al-Daya. Although the author is hidden behind the story, he asks the narrators inside the story to tell what they have done or seen independently. In this case, the author is assumed as an observer and does not intervene in the story except in necessary cases such as the beginning or end of the story and does not impose his ideas on all the components and events of the story.

Instead of narrating stories using a single narrative style, like many common stories and storytelling techniques, Ibn al-Daya has avoided individualism and personal domination in the narrative and by observing polyphony has asked the narrative and characters inside the story to describe the scene. Although the principle of realism is involved in creating such a process, and the author, relying on this principle, tries to narrate the characters in their language and narrative and to reflect their events from their point of view, Ibn Al-Daya tried to intensify the dynamics of the story and create a narrative consisting of polyphony and plurality tone by playing the characters and creating a narrative focus. Thus, his narrative scene is full of numerous and varied forms of speech, which leads to decentralization at the narrative level like a parliament with several representatives and the author has only the role of the speaker of the parliament to record and aggregate votes and presenting them.

Following this component, Ibn al-Daya refers to the exact narration of the narrator, determines the boundaries of what is said and written as well as the narration of the series of narrators, and does not try to remove mediate and secondary narrators who relate to the story, even if their connection to the story is weak. For example, the following section is the sixth story of the book contains the concepts that have been discussed so far:

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<sup>12</sup> Raymond Kenan, Shlomith, *Narration, Contemporary Poetics*, Tehran: Niloufar, 2009: 130.

حدثني يوسف بن ابراهيم والدي، قال حدثني ابراهيم المهدي عن اسحاق بن عيسى بن علي بن عبدالله العباس، عن أبيه أنه كان مع ابي عبدالله محمد بن علي -ابي الخلفاء - برصافة هشام بعد وفاة أبي محمد علي بن عبدالله، وأنه أقام ثلاثة أشهر برصافة هشام لا يأذن له هشام عليه، إلا أن بلغ أبا عبدالله إجماع مسلمة القدوم على هشام، فلتقاه على أميال من الرصافة، وشكى إليه جفوة هشام وتأخير الإذن عليه. فقال له مسلمة: أرجو أن يترول هذا بقدمي، وأمره أن يقيم بباب هشام إذا دخل عليه مسلمة، ولا يريم ما أقام مسلمة عنده فأقام ابو عبدالله إلى وقت زوال الشمس. قال عيسى بن علي: فخرج مسلمة إليه، فقال له: «قوض رحلك ابا عبدالله! فما لك عند الرجل من خير، لأنني خاطبته في أمرك، بعد ما تقضى سلامي عليه: محمد بن علي بن عبدالله على شابكة رحمه برسول الله (ص) يقيم ثلاثة أشهر ببابك فلا يؤذن له عليك: فقال أله عنه أبا سعيد، فأمسكت حتى حضر الطعام، فأعلمته أنني لأستجيز الأكل وإنه قائم على الباب! فغضب غضباً زاد به حوله، وقال: يسمي أبنيه عبدالله وعبدالله، ويرجو بهذا أن يلي الخلافة، ثم يطمغ في خير مني، والله لولا ماسة رحمه برسول الله (ص) لقطع من وسطه شبراً.<sup>13</sup>

The above story explains the character of Muhammad ibn Ali and Amir Muslim ibn Abdul Malik (685-738 AD), one of the Umayyad sultans. This story consists of polyphony and a multiplicity of tones. Ibn al-Daya first mentions the series of narrators and states the position of each of them in the narration process. He heard the narration from his father, but it is precisely reminded who is the main owner of the narration. This polyphony and the narrator's sensitivity in mentioning all of them, which is common in the principles of religious narration and hadith narration is a comprehensive and correct method in narration that is consistent with the democratic approach and is interested in Ibn al-Daya in social and educational narrations.

The author does not limit himself to mentioning the narrators in the introduction of the story and or leave the story to only one person and narrator, but the characters are collaboratively involved in the narrative with the main and secondary narrators. Therefore, the author has avoided the narrative reporting method and has used the direct free narration method. "In this method, the character's statement is included in the story without any introduction or explanation from the narrator, and as a dialogue, the narrator does not show himself and the reader encounter characters and their speech directly.<sup>14</sup> In this story, characters such as "Muhammad Ibn Abdullah", "Muslim Ibn Abdul Malik", "Isa Ibn Ali" and "Hisham Ibn Abdul Malik" have contributed to the formation of the narration and their speech have been narrated directly.

<sup>13</sup> Ibn al-Daya, al-Mokafat...14

<sup>14</sup> Al-Kurdi, Abdul Rahim, Al-Sard Fi-Revayate Almoaser, Cairo: Maktab Al-Adab, 2006: 203

Such a process indicates a lack of authoritarianism in the narrator in the story. Therefore, distinguishing the knowledge of Ibn al-Daya from other narrators who use a chain narration is not only mentioning the narrators but also their practical application in the narration process. Although the book of Al-Mokafat is not literature in the category of hadiths or traditions and is a purely fictional work, by focusing on the polyphony and plurality of tone, chain narration has been applied and avoiding the usual expression and methods included in the classical Arabic stories such as "Bulghani", "Hadathni", "Za'mwa", "Qal al-Rawi" and so on.

Ibn al-Daya selected a democratic and impartial narrative by avoiding individualism and free their story from personal and emotional orientations based on innate emotions and desires. In particular, in the stories that are intended to have a good ending, the stories are not designed in a fictional and miraculous way. As we see in the story of prophets, mystics, and heroes, they are based on real relationships and the real context of the episode, liberation from bondage and salvation from adversity. With this trick, the reader believes the story seriously and not dealt with irrational and imaginary matters.

For example, in the story of Ibn Nasir and al-Waraq, the good thing that happens to the Baghdadi bookseller is the amount that Ibn Nasir pays to the bookseller, in addition to the sums that should be paid for al-Thalab and the Mubarrad and this indicates knowledge cultivation of the desired government. Now, by passing through the story of Abu al-Abbas Mubarrad (826-900 AD) and Abu al-Abbas al-Thalab (815-904 AD) and focusing on the story of the bookseller, the story tries to highlight the subject through dramatic visualization.<sup>15</sup> Because the book narrates the conditions of distressed personalities who are released from adversity due to natural and human social factors. In the final episode of this story, we read:

حدثني أحمدُ بن وليد، قال، ودّعت إسحاق بن نصير العبادي في بعض خرجاتي إلى بغداد، فأخرج إليّ ثلاثة آلاف دينا وقال: إذا دخلت بغداد، فادفع ألف دينار إلى ثعلب، وألف دينار إلى الميرد، وسر إلى قصر وضاح، فأنظر إلى أول دكان للورّاقين، فإنك تجد صاحبها، إذا كان حيّا لم يمُت - قد شاخ، فاجلس إليه وقلّ له: إسحاق بن نصير يقرأ عليك السلام: وهو الغلام الذي كا يقصدك كلّ عشية، راجلا إلى دار الروميين، بدّاعة، وعمامة ونعل رقية، فيستعير منك الكتاب بعد الكتاب، فإذا اقتضيتّه كراء ما نسخ منه، قال، اصبر عليّ إلى الصنع، فإذا استقرت معرفتي في نفسه دفعت إليه هذه

<sup>15</sup> Ibn al-Daya, al-Mokafat...14.

الألف الدينار وقلت له: هذه ثمرة صبرك علي... قال لي أحمد بن وليد:  
واجترت بعد ذلك دكانه معمورة، وهو متصدر فيها على أحسن حال وأوفاه

This story is a democratic experience based on the reflection of silent voices that could be ignored forever. But Ibn al-Daya, by referring to social solitudes and critical moments, shows fictional characters, oscillations, and surprises between events. The fact that the Baghdadi old crooked bookseller is not forgotten by an important government figure is not just a chance or a magical event but is a special arrangement of events and humanitarian response to his previous actions. This is seen by keeping rewards and rewards alive. The fate of a person who has lost all his books due to the credit of books to the people of knowledge and has gone bankrupt is thus achieved prosperity by one of his knowledgeable friends. The help of one of the borrowers of the book to him after reaching the presidency and government responsibility shows the author's avoidance of idealism and turning to natural and social relations that arise from the actions of individuals throughout life.

Relying on the principle of creating a participatory narrative based on polyphony, Ibn al-Daya has avoided the stereotypical and unitary structure of storytelling that is specific to ancient stories and does not conform to the spirit of democracy. Hence, unlike many Arab novelists, such as Tanookhi Ghazi (941-994). In the book "Al-Faraj Baad Al-Shadda", he narrates a story that has a happy ending and classified the stories into three main formats relying on a realistic and democratic approach. In fact, contrary to popular belief, it does not only refer to good destinies but also includes failed and tragic destinies in the narration.

This style of storytelling distinguishes him from the idealism pursued by many Arab storytellers and mythological and religious storytellers. As his stories are not limited to tragic or merely sad stories, they are a mixture of both approaches. As what we face in external reality. Ibn al-Daya ignored the narrative tyranny narrative and ruling culture and created a different and new story. The democratic spirit, polyphony, and the creation of multiple readings are seen in Ibn al-Daya's classification model. The reader with any interest and taste can find and read the stories he wants and judge and evaluate them. "In this type of story, the audience or possible categories of reading to the potential audience, this pluralistic approach provides the future or countless possibilities of reading for the text for to the audience.

The reason is that literary types have nature form and the way they work

is like a horizon for readers and writers are like writing patterns".<sup>16</sup> With such a trick, the author was able to retell what is tragic and comedic in the heart of society to reproduce all the concepts in society, not a specific group. In this regard, Ibn al-Daya has provided a comprehensive picture of the situation in his community and has not censored and removed part of what has happened or is happening in the community by classifying the stories.

### **Public Reflection and Citizenship Rights**

Another manifestation of narrative democracy by Ibn al-Daya is to remove the gap between the aristocracy and the general public, and looking them in a view so that there is no between the two groups in the Book of Al-Mokafat. As in democratic political systems, people have an equal role in the formation of governments, one of the influential manifestations of democratic thought in the narration is their public reflection and participation in the formation of the fictional world alongside properties and elites. Because the goal of democracy is to treat all people equally, and the creator of the narrative makes no difference between the aristocracy and the general public and, practically uses the process of democracy in the narration.

Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832 AD), an English legal theorist in one of his writings criticize the aristocratic theory that the lives of some people are inherently superior to the lives of other human beings. He said, "Each member of society should be considered as one person and no one should be considered more than one person. According to the principle of equality, the government should pay equal attention to the interests of the people, in addition, to respect their opinions equally".<sup>17</sup> Thus, a democratic narrative with a realistic and panoramic camera records all events and characters. Although centering or zooming is one of the hallmarks of narrative, it does not mean paying attention to one part and leaving out the other. Rather, it is necessary to determine the share of each of the two groups, the central and marginal groups in the narrative.

In classical Arabic stories, the pulse of the narration is in the hands of kings, aristocrats, heroes, mystics, and supernatural beings, and traces of the common people are rarely seen in official Arabic classics, although this was common in oral literature such as the tales of the Thousand and One Nights and Sireh. Although, Al-Mokafat book is a official and governmental Arabic

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<sup>16</sup> Todorff, Tzotan, *The Concept of Literature*, Tar: Katayoun Shahparrad, Tehran: Qatreh Todorff, 2008: 43

<sup>17</sup> Bethlehem, David, *What is Democracy*, Tehran: Ghoghnoous, 1995: 22



literature, has the common people and their issues been used in different ways. According to his job as a secretary and his service in the court of Altolon, it was expected that he would only monitor and record government events, but he was both amid political and governmental anecdotes and independently and separately he has considered a part of the narrative table for the common people. In this regard, Ibn al-Dayā, in scenes from the narration, has recorded the conditions of ordinary people and their problems. For example, economic problems, especially inflation and high prices that followed the economic disruption in the government of Ibn Tulun have been concerned by Ibn al-Dayā, where he says:

اضطربت الرعية لنزاع السعر، وقد بلغ ثلاثة أراب حنطة بدينار، فركب  
ويعقوبة القمّاحين، وازحمت النظارة من السطوح عليه<sup>18</sup>

In the above paragraph, the anxiety of peasants or the people is used precisely in the words of Ibn al-Dayā [the anxiety of the people]. The anxiety is caused by a sharp rise in inflation in society. Such scenes - about Ibn al-Dayā's conservatism - although not accompanied by critical or bitter social satire, cannot be considered completely devoid of confrontation in general. Instead of collaborating with the ruling power, or endorsing their actions, the author has tried to subtly reflect the silent voice of the people in the unhealthy situation of that day, although the main focus and goal of Ibn al-Dayā in the book *al-Mokafat* is to address these problems or in other words commitment. And it is not a political protest, but it has presented anecdotes in a special format and framework. But thinly and marginally at the heart of anecdotes that express another purpose of expressing the happiness or misery of human subjects, it informs the reader of the state of society and the face of the people under the burden of inflation and other economic problems. It reflects inflation so that the reader can access the relevant information behind the hidden meaning of the text. In some cases, Ibn al-Dayā's opposition to the oppression of the people by the tax authorities is commendable in its way.

One of the most important examples of democracy about the reflection of citizenship rights by Ibn al-Dayā is the priority of the majority vote, which is known as one of the main foundations of democracy and in Ibn al-Dayā's narration in various ways. This is a pillar in which the importance of citizens' rights and their opinions are involved in the decisions and destinies of society and individuals. Ibn al-Dayā is interested in reflecting and propagating such a

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<sup>18</sup> Ibn al-Dayā, *al-Mokafat*...71

concept and has recorded the events in which the majority vote was accepted and accepted in the first part of the book. For example, in the thirteenth section of the book, which narrates the anecdote of "Ahmad ibn Yusuf and his subordinates", the subject of the submission of "Ahmad ibn al-Tululun"<sup>19</sup> against the public will of a group of people is narrated:

حبس احمد بن طولون يوسف بن ابراهيم والذي في بعض داره، وكان اعتقال الرجل في داره يؤيس من خلاصه – فكاد سنزّه، ينهتك لخوف شمله عليه. وكان له جماعة من أبناء الستر يتحمل مؤنها، مقيمة عليه لاتنقطع إلى غيره. فاجتمعوا وكانوا زها ثلاثين رجلاً، وأسأذنوا عليه فأذن لهم... فأمرهم احمد بن طولون بالجلوس، وسألهم تعريفه ما قصدوا له، فقالوا: «ليس لنا أن نسال الأمير مخالفة ما أمر به في يوسف بن ابراهيم، لأنه أهدى إلى الصواب فيه، ونحن نسأله أن يقدّما إلى ما اعتزم عليه و... ونحن والله أيها الأمير نرتفض اليقاء بعده من السلامة من شيء من المكروه وقع فيه، وعجوا بالبكاء بين يديه. قال احمد بن طولون، بارك الله عليكم، فقد كأفأتم إحسانه وجازيتم إنعامه، ثم قال: عليّ بيوسف ابن ابراهيم، فأحضر. فقال: خذوا بيد صاحبكم وانصرفوا.

Ibn al-Daya's keen eye is reflected in the objection he made at the beginning of the narration. He first states that house arrest is more dangerous and more durable than imprisonment. This conveys the king's insistence and his great anger on the besieged person. What initially kept alive the notion that breaking this command was largely impossible. However, a sarcastic point and a bitter critique are also seen in this short protest phrase, revealing the deceptive actions of dictators who use the siege, not for the sake of mercy and compassion for the besieged, but for his eternal imprisonment. But in the same narration, in the of government events, Ibn al-Daya focuses on the things that strengthen the narrative democracy.

Items such as acceptance and respect for the people by the rulers, as well as the manner of speaking with people and the rulers are narrated and its effect as a result of a part of the fate of the characters, which Ibn al-Daya narrates subtly. In the end, the ruling asks the opinion of the people and their preference over their own opinion is the last mechanism to strengthen democracy in this story. This subject has been narrated with great interest by Ibn al-Daya, and considering the confinement that conveys the end of anger and hatred and the release of the confined person, after hearing the opinion of the people, which shows the end of generosity as well indicates the efficiency of people opinions in government decisions.

Although the use of common language in contemporary literature was

<sup>19</sup> Ibn al-Daya, *al-Mokafat*...26

a modernist and democratically oriented movement used in many of the world's literary works, this is linked to the direct use of ordinary people and their language in literary works. But, Ibn al-Daya broke these rules earlier and used several words from the language of folklore and the Egyptian dialect in his literary work during the narration. The author seeks to break the literary norm in terms of style, structure, and language and forms a new contract and new legislation for narrative works. Contemporary novelists, especially writers of realism, resorted to the use of slang in literary works in order to make their works more in line with reality and social and cultural characteristics and positions.

Such an approach clearly shows the impact of the democracy current as a cultural and political current on the body of literature. However, this method was not used in the old literature due to the lack of democracy, and even the Arab traditionalists in the new era resisted and strongly condemned it. But Ibn al-Daya, aware of the effectiveness and efficiency of this method, sooner or later these popular modern writers, regardless of the oppositions and prejudices of the traditionalists, used such an approach in their language. For example, the use of slang in the following example from the first part of the book *Al-Mokafat*,<sup>20</sup> has been used following the structure of the narrative and the social status of the characters:

قل لمولاك: يا سيدي! محلى عند الأمير دميانة محلّ الدخ، فاطهر واركب إليه، فقد  
أمنك الله على نفسك ومالك. فسأل الغلام: ما كان زيّه، فقال كان عليه كساء صوف  
مما ينام فيه وتحتة خفتان. فأحضرت بعض مضايغ الضيعة، وحملت معه إليه دراعه  
خز كحلية ومطرف خز، و خمسين ديناراً، وسألته أن يقبل ما يحتاج إليه من ناحيتي

As can be seen, the author uses local words to describe his clothing in this section, which describes rural agriculture; A word as "Khaftan" or "Mutarf" which is a common dress in Egyptian villages. Khaftan, which means iron armor in Persian, is certainly not considered here, and it cannot be considered as the Persian word for Khaftan, which was used in battle. It is as if an expression of a garment similar to Khaftan, which is common with the same name in official literature and Arabic culture but is used in slang in a slang form, the criterion for choosing a word in the narration of Ibn al-Daya is the slang use of the word. Mutarf is another dress that is not seen in this way in the official Arabic culture and language. Therefore, in the narrative world of Ibn al-Daya, a class has not been eliminated and has not been set aside. The whispers of the lower people

<sup>20</sup> Ibn al-Daya, *al-Mokafat*...22

and attention to their understanding of the story have been taken into consideration. Political hegemony and the domineering and dominant view fade in this collection. In addition to the use of slang and oral language by Ibn al-Daya, the simplicity and fluency of the author's language in comparison with other works written in his time, such as authorities and works of Jahez, etc. are important pillars of the author's interest in communicating with people and understanding.

### **Democracy's emphasis on the principle of Compromise and Coexistence**

One way to manifest a democratic culture is to promote coexistence and compromise. Democracy is based on free debate, persuasion, and reconciliation between different cultures and intellectual societies. "Democracy's emphasis on the principle of compromise not only reflects the acceptance of differences in most political matters but also shows that the right to express and listen to these differences must also be granted. Thus, the premise of democracy is the acceptance of the existence of pluralism and diversity within society and its citizens. When this diversity is expressed, the issue of persuasion and compromise is a democratic one, not a strong imposition of an opinion or a show of force.

Democracy, therefore, is often seen as an excuse to talk, while the fact is that the ability of a democracy to tolerate public debate is its advantage, not its disadvantage or weakness. Such a capability is the best means of maintaining satisfaction with policies and is not necessarily in conflict with decisive decision-making".<sup>21</sup> According to this principle of Democracy, people and group want to be or whatever they want to do" without other intervention.<sup>22</sup> Such a concept does not accept works that try to apply a framework with narrow-mindedness and orientation and negate other frameworks and ideas, and only works that look at Introduces liberalism, trying to digest all ideas and issues and putting them together, as a democratic work.

Dogmatic thinking and a single religious and intellectual view have no place in Al-Mokafat book by Ibn al-Daya. In this work, the author has not used a limited jurisprudential-religious framework, unlike those such as Ibn Hazm (996-1064) in the book "Tawqa al-Hamama". To prove this point, looking at the work of Ibn al-Daya, we will find that this work, unlike many classic Arabic fictions that are full of verses and martyrdom of the Qur'an and hadith, is empty of these testimonies except in very rare cases.

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<sup>21</sup> Bethham, 2009...37

<sup>22</sup> Lidman, 2005...26

Despite the fact that Ibn al-Daya focused on the punishment and reward of individuals, it is a criterion that exists in many religious stories and a collection of Qur'anic verses to establish or strengthen such a story, but Ibn al-Dayayah told his story far from Religious-Islamic testimonies, with a humane and universal approach. He did not even use verses and hadiths to reinforce or summarize his anecdotes, or he did not consider the reason for such destinies to depend on religious and unreal factors, but only based on social actions that shape the destinies of characters. Hence, the ending of his stories is based on a rational and realistic dimension that any reader with any taste, religion, and school can read and enjoy.

In this regard, following the avoidance of religious narrow-mindedness, we see that the author narrates the story of non-Muslim and Christian personalities, and in such cases, he completely removes religious prejudices and promotes generosity. In the twentieth story, the story of a fugitive from the court of "Mutawakel" (822-861 AD), the refuge of a Christian to him is narrated. The rejected person gains an important place in the story when "Almontasar" came to power and the friendship between the Christian and the fugitive man becomes stronger. The end of the story is narrated as follows:

قل لمولاك: يا سيدي! محلى عند الأمير دميانة محلّ الدخ، فاطهر واركب إليه،  
فقد آمنك الله على نفسك ومالك. فسأل الغلام: ما كان زيّه، فقال كان عليه كساء  
صوف مما ينام فيه وتحتة خفتان. فأحضرت بعض مضايغ الضيعة، وحملت معه  
إليه دراعه خز جحلية ومطرف خز، و خمسين ديناراً، وسألته أن يقبل ما يحتاج  
إليه من ناحيتي.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, Ibn al-Daya, not only in this work but also in a large number of sections, by eliminating the grudges that existed between the various religious sects at the time, made a great effort to express the principle of coexistence between the two personalities. Muslims and Christians say that despite their religious differences, they help each other in this way. The author does not target religious criteria as he does not refer to it; like an author living in the 21st century who to do regard religion while narrating and just focus on characters based on interaction and coexistence, regardless of the differences in narration like Ibn al-Daya. Avoiding dogmatism is such that in the fifth story when a woman with a non-Islamic appearance appears naked, the narrator is not angered and hated, and like other Arabic narrators does not apply blind

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<sup>23</sup> Ibn al-Daya, al-Mokafat...22

expressions and not send the woman to hell and flames. The narrator and other fictional characters, despite being government officials, rise up to help the woman instead of questioning the veiled figure:

فركبتُ إليها يوماً فالقيتُ في الصحرا جمعاً من العامة، وقد ضاقت بهم، وعهم عامل  
المُعونة. واستقبلني امرأة قد هتكت سترها، وكشفت شعرها، فقالت: يا سيدي! أخي  
وواحدى و كافلى، يُعرض على القتل الساعة! فعدلتُ إلى صاحب المُعونة وسألته  
عن حال الناس فقال: اجتمعنا لضرب خناق بالسوط.<sup>24</sup>

Or in the eighteenth narration, which tells the story of the shepherd's slaves, Ibn al-Daya introduces him as a free person because of the many good deeds he has done, which shows the breadth of the author's opinion in recording these matters and his opposition with slavery. In this anecdote, the main character of the story tries to free the slave because of his good deeds and buys and frees him from his master with any amount of money:

فقلتُ: جمع علي ضالَّةً، فنذرتُ أن أعتقه وابتاع الغنم التي يرهاها، وأملكه  
إياها، فقال: «نذرت أن تفعل به هذا لفعلة واجدة من الجميل أو لاكها، ولنا في  
كل يوم منذ ملكناه حسنة تقتضي أكثر مما نأتيه له؟ وأنا أشهد الجماعة أنه حر  
لوجه الله، وأن ما يرهاه له. فانصرفت عن الشيخ وقد بلغ بي ما أمثله له.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, Ibn al-Daya's opposition to slavery is seen in such stories. His compassionate view of slaves and their freedom is one of the things that Ibn al-Daya's attention to in his exquisite work. Especially when the slave is one of the people of knowledge and grace. In the story of "Ali al-Muttatabib and the Plato", Ali, a scholar and be aware of Plato's works, encounters a Roman slave who is a descendant of the Greek philosopher. He then buys it and sends it to his homeland (ibid., 41). Behind all these anecdotes and realistic categorizations, Ibn al-Daya seeks social reform with a democratic and free-thinking approach. His goal is not to make the audience laugh like Jahez (776-868 AD) or to entertain him in nightclubs, but to improve the social functions of the audience. Although the purpose of the book is not directly stated, indirectly, the author tries to convince the reader that doing good deeds has good consequences, encourages him to do such things, and invites him to give up bad deeds.

As Ibn-Al Daya promotes ideas that reinforce this issue by the model of democratic coexistence, in some cases it expresses its opposition to heinous acts that oppose freedom and democracy, such as espionage and informing. In the

<sup>24</sup> Ibn al-Daya, al-Mokafat...13

<sup>25</sup> Ibn al-Daya, al-Mokafat...34

story of Kasra and Nu'man, Ibn al-Day constructively expresses his opposition to the heinous act of espionage, and by including this story in the category of ugly rewards, he condemns such an act. In this anecdote, although Kasra Anoushirvan (501-579 AD) is depicted as a selfish monarch, contrary to the common method in Islamic traditions, he is talking about espionage and forbidding such acts.

Because Adiyabnazid (550-600 AD) is killed for not accepting espionage by Nu'man ibn Munther (418-582-609 AD) (Ibid., 64). But in the continuation of the story, it is Numan who is killed by the Sassanid king under the poison of elephants and horses for requesting espionage from the translator of Kasra court. Such an anecdote by Ibn al-Daya is quite appropriate given the social and political conditions of the Al-Tulun era when espionage was an important social process approved by the government and many people were engaged in receiving funds and approval from the government. And it is logical, and in addition to his reformism, his protest view of this ugly political current can be seen, which causes division and lack of compromise among the people.

In the story of "Ibn al-Zanq and Qasim ibn Shu'bah" from the first part of the book, we see the abundance of this group of spies; When the nephew of Ibn al-Zanq, who was close to Qasim, went to his house, unaware that Qasim was under siege, he saw a group of spies around his house trying to escape. Identify people close to him and listen to government officials. (Ibid., 18) In fact, espionage, which is an ugly act of destroying freedom and coexistence between thinking and cutting off freedom of expression, has been banned by Ibn al-Daya in several places due to the prevalence of this moral depravity in his time.

Because in his area, espionage has become a value that threatens the integrity of society: "a value that not only the individual but the society in which he lives, in general, attaches to it".<sup>26</sup> But despite the use of facilities and privileges by the spies, this issue has been indirectly denied by Ibn al-Daya, a government figure in the court of Al-Tulun, by narrating anecdotes from the past, and the author confronts it.

## Conclusion

Contrary to the prevailing norm of fiction at the time, Ibn al-Daya showed that Arabic literature using its mechanisms based on realism and freedom enjoys polyphony and is out of the dominance of an all-knowing narrator. In this book, the stereotyped structures are fade. The story format is

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<sup>26</sup> Berlin, Isaiah, *Four Articles on Freedom*, Tar: Mohammad Ali Movahed, Tehran: Kharazmi Publishing, 1989: 248

innovative and has a great ability to reflect sounds and ideas and reconcile different thoughts. Such a structure powerfully incorporates all the characters and narrators of the story into the narrative and does not lead to the elimination, censorship, or even summarization and thoughts of the characters and narrators. In addition to the capacity of this structure, Ibn al-Daya keen eye and realistic sensitivity in using all the sounds and tones related to the narrative is another factor in the inclusion and unilateralism of the story. Avoiding aristocracy and dealing with the lives of ordinary people are other goals of the author in the book of *Al-Mokafat*, which has given it a democratic spirit. In this series, the participation of ordinary people in social affairs is considered and the pulse of the story is in many cases subtly taken from rulers and tyrants and left to ordinary people.

Ibn al-Daya is trying to create an intimate and friendly atmosphere between the rulers and the common people and to create a collaborative and interactive relationship between these two groups in the story, which are complementary to each other and can develop the community. The notion that the works of classical Arab government are only in the service of power and aristocracy has been refuted, and important traces of the presence of the people and its issues have been recorded in the work. The book of *Al-Mokafat* can be followed. According to Ibn al-Daya, the principle of compromise and coexistence between thoughts and individuals is the basis for having a free and peaceful life.

Efforts are being made to remove the gaps between individuals and power relations and to place everyone in a general and inclusive framework. Although the work of Katib Tulunian is not a work of pure democracy, many sparks of it can be seen in the narrative and structure of the work. From social goals and reform to story classification and not eliminating a specific group and a realistic and comprehensive view of all individuals and groups and promoting thoughts and ideas that create a close relationship between people of different classes and solve the problems of those who are socially in a bad position to return to the main body of society, all following the process of democratization of the narrative has been considered.

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