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Allegory of the Human Condition: Reading the 12th-Century Islamic Philosophical Tale *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān* Within the Interpretive Model of Erik Erikson

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Abstract

This paper examines the Andalusian philosophical tale *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*, written by the 12th-century philosopher Ibn Tufail, through the lens of Erik Erikson's theory of the eight stages of human psychosocial development. In his book *The Childhood and Society* (1950), Erik Erikson offers eight key insights into how humans progress through different stages of development across their lifespan. The paper argues that Ibn Tufail's allegory of the titular character, Hayy, is fundamentally a philosophical romance that examines various phases of Hayy's philosophical development while also reflecting his complex psychosocial evolution. The paper highlights that Hayy's early nurturance by a doe and his life among animals and plants correspond to Erikson's stages of trust, autonomy, and initiative. His later intellectual and ethical development aligns with the psychosocial stages of generativity and integrity—though there are notable differences from Erikson's model at some crucial stages. The Eriksonian model is applied heuristically, not exhaustively, as the overarching aim is to shed light on the classical Islamic philosophical tale by applying a modern theoretical framework to demonstrate how it prefigures contemporary discussions of the human condition, identity, and spiritual integrity. It contributes to ongoing interdisciplinary discussions on Islamic philosophy and developmental psychology by showing how *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān* can be read as a narrative of psychosocial growth.

Keywords: allegory; philosophical romance; modern psychosocial model; Erikson

1. Introduction

Abu Bakr Ibn Tufail was born in the 12th century near Granada. He served several rulers of the Almohad dynasty in Spain and was the chief physician to Almohad Sultan Abu Yaqub Yusuf. He was actively involved in the political and intellectual movements of his time and wrote on religion, medicine, and metaphysical philosophy. Born into a vibrant medieval Islamic intellectual culture where figures like Ghazali had already made their mark, Ibn Tufail continued within this flourishing Muslim tradition. He sought to foster a critical environment of ideas, aiming to facilitate dialogue between political leaders and individual Muslim thinkers across borders. "Ibn Tufayl made it his practice to gather scholars from all over the world and saw to it that they obtained the interest and favour of the ruler. It was he who recommended, to the Sultan, Ibn Rushd, who first became known and appreciated" (p. 2, [1]). A. S. Fulton (1929) believes that, due to Ibn Tufail's good relations with Sultan Yaqub, "this curious tale of Hayy Ibn Yaqzān would probably have never seen the light had its author not been the special protege of this same prince" (p. 9, [2]).



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This tale had a profound influence on both Islamic and European intellectual traditions, circulating widely through successive translations and interpretations. The text was widely translated and adapted over time. Pocock first published the Arabic text alongside the Latin translation *Philosophus Autodidactus* in 1671. His translation was subsequently rendered into Dutch in 1672. Simon Ockley, a professor of Arabic at Cambridge, translated directly from the Arabic and released his version in 1708. In 2005, some key sections were translated into refined language as part of the Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy series, in the book titled *Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings*, edited by Muhammad Ali Khalidi [3].

Although Ibn Tufail's tale is a vital classical Islamic narrative, few systematic efforts have been made to examine it from modern critical perspectives. Building on this rich history of transmission and interpretation, this paper argues that Ibn Tufail's *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān* can be read through Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, revealing Hayy's intellectual and spiritual journey as a staged process of human psychosocial growth. The article aims to demonstrate how key episodes in Hayy's life map onto, and at times diverge from, Erikson's psychosocial stages, using close textual analysis and a conceptual-analytic reading of the narrative.

There are some fragmentary commentaries available that focus on the tale's significance and examine its intertextual connections. In his commentary, Khalidi discusses how a solitary human being acquires the fundamental truths of philosophy solely through intellect and a disposition toward virtue. Khalidi (2005) states, "Ibn Tufayl aims to illustrate that such an individual can transcend the rational realm, entering a mystical state that grants him a vision of the supernatural" [3]. This passage highlights the tale's general perspective and emphasises its main theme of discovering philosophical truth. Similarly, Fulton (1929) places the method of *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān* within its historical context, noting [2];

In terms of the status of mystical insight and the potential for a nonrational mode of understanding, Ibn Tufail's position appears to lie between those of Ibn Sina and Ghazali. He does not go as far as the latter in asserting that mysticism offers insights unattainable through reason. However, he does not seem to agree with Ibn Sina's notion of the prophetic faculty merely as an enhanced ability to formulate deductive arguments. (p. 30, [2])

Moreover, A. S. Fulton (1929) suggests that although it is widely accepted that Ibn Tufail maintained good relations with most rulers, he occasionally showed resistance [2]. He argues that even if Ibn Tufail reiterated the Almohad principle of withholding philosophical teachings from the masses, "it is clear that he opposed its overly stringent application, recognising an intelligent segment of the populace who merited instruction, to whom allegory was the best means of conveying it" (p. 18, [2]). Lenn Evan Goodman (2009) is among the few who attempts to raise some broader thematic questions [1]. He argues that prominently among the subject matters posed by the premise of Ibn Tufayl's book are the challenges of educational philosophy: "'What is education?' 'What is personal development?' 'How does human growth take place?' 'How can a man attain fulfilment?'" (p. 5, [1]).

Goodman does not systematically address these questions and, in passing, alludes to the timeless relevance and significance of Ibn Tufail's tale. To address these research gaps, this paper aims to analyse Hayy's character and thoroughly explore his intellectual development, drawing on Erik Erikson's key insights into the eight stages of psychosocial development. However, before such exploration, it is worth noting that the paper does not aim to present Ibn Tufail's narrative as a case study for the direct application of the 20th-century Western psychosocial model, as that would collapse historical distance and amount to cultural insensitivity. The aim is to initiate a dialogue between a Classi-

cal Islamic text and modern psychology to highlight convergences and divergences in key discussions of an individual's psychosocial development.

Through a close reading of the text, the paper highlights *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān's* allegorical examination of human experience by tracing his gradual evolution through Erikson's psychosocial stages. It argues that Hayy's quest for truth grants his personhood psychological integrity, and, in certain stages—particularly Identity vs. Role Confusion and Intimacy vs. Isolation—Hayy's character evolves as reflected in Erikson's psychosocial model.

The story of Hayy Ibn Yaqzān is told in two versions, each offering a different account of his birth. The first account describes Hayy's formation without a father or mother. "In that Island, in a piece of low Ground, it chanced that a certain Mass of Earth was so fermented in some period of Years, that the Hot was so equally mixed with the Cold, and the Moist with the Dry, that none of them prevailed over the other" (p. 44, [4]). The next stage is described in detail in the following words;

The matter being thus disposed, there was, by the Command of God, a Spirit infused into it, which was joined so closely to it, that it can scarce be separated from it even so much as in thought. For this Spirit emanates continually and abundantly from the Most High and Glorious God, and may be compared to the Light of the Sun which is sent forth continually and abundantly over the World. (p. 46, [4])

In contrast, the second account narrates a tale of forbidden love and an illicit marriage, in which an infant is thrown into the river within a wooden chest. Some critics believe that this narrative bears a specific intertextual influence from classical Egyptian and Arabian folk traditions. Khalidi (2005) suggests that it is "a fanciful story of forbidden love, illicit marriage, and the dispatch of a newborn infant in a wooden chest over the waves, a tale that might almost have been drawn from the *Thousand and One Nights*" [3]. Fulton (1929) also emphasises the influence of Ibn Sina and Ibn Bajjah on this medieval tale [2]. He notes that Ibn Bajjah's work *Tadbir al-Mutawwihid* (The Governance of the Solitary) might have influenced Ibn Tufail because Ibn Bajjah was his elder Spanish contemporary. This work is available in different forms. We have Miguel Asin Palacios's Arabic edition (1946), Maan Ziyad's modern edition in the original Arabic along with his English translation (1978), Massimo Campanini's bilingual Arabic-Italian edition (2002), and some important partial translations by Berman and Dunlop. Among these, we had access to Maan Ziyadah's edition and Berman's English excerpts. Apart from these, a long analysis of it is preserved in the Hebrew of Moses of Narbonne, which shows that Ibn Bajjah's theme was to demonstrate how man, by the unaided improvement of his faculties, may attain a union with the Active Intellect. This book was well known to Ibn Tufail (p. 24, [2]). Given the theme of Ibn Bajjah's work regarding the strategic withdrawal from the corrupt city and people to achieve the union with the active intellect, it seems that this tale had a foundational influence on Ibn Tufail. Ibn Tufail was the immediate successor of Ibn Bajjah and had access to his works, even paying a debt to his predecessor. He says, "There was none among them (i.e., the philosophers) of more penetrating intelligence, sounder in investigation or with truer views than Abū Bakr b. al Sa'igh" (p. 68, [5]).

Despite the similar theme of a philosopher seeking the ultimate truth outside society, Ibn Tufail's tale departs significantly by embracing mystical and religious paths to attain it. In his dissertation on Ibn Bajjah, Ma'an Ziyādah also mentions that "Ibn Tufayl's philosopher ... follows a mystic path and turns into a speculative mystic instead of continuing his intellectual discovery and remaining a rational philosopher. This is the departure point between the two men, Ibn Bajjah, the first philosopher in Islamic Spain and his successor Ibn Tufayl" (p. 46, [6]).

Even when recognising all plausible influences on Ibn Tufail's narrative, Fulton does not fail to acknowledge that no other didactic tales achieved the success of *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān* in clothing his dissertation in the form of a romance. Goodman, in his comparison of *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān* with other preceding tales, reiterates the point that following Ibn Sina, Ibn Tufail takes an entirely different path and addresses pertinent questions: "What would human thought be like in the absence not of a body but of culture and tradition? What would a curious, insightful, and dedicated human being think about God and the world, the self and its place in the cosmos, without the help or interference of religion, or even language?" (p. 9, [1]). These deeper philosophical questions are not found in other tales that are considered to have influenced Ibn Tufail's narrative.

Apart from Goodman, Sami S. Hawi (1974) in *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism: A Philosophical Study of Ibn Tufail's Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*, conducts a thorough and systematic analysis of *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān* and argues that it is indeed a genuine philosophical treatise [7]. He claims that "our author belongs to the great naturalistic tradition of the Pre-socratics, Aristotle, Avicenna, al-Razi, Bruno, Dewey, and Teilhard de Chardin" (p. 2, [7]). He criticises Fulton and Ockley, who "by not considering the work as a treatise wrongly omitted the Introduction and thus crippled the superstructure, clouded the author's intentions, and made it appear a purely romantic adventure of some medieval hero of chivalry" (pp. 28–29, [7]).

The paper takes a middle path. Although Ibn Tufail's text can be regarded as a philosophical treatise in its aim and purpose, it cannot be overlooked that Ibn Tufail presents his ideas through a fictional story. *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān* employs a narrative with characters, settings, and a plot to illustrate his concepts, drawing on the lived experiences of his protagonist, Hayy. Hawi contends that, through such reading, the tale loses its philosophical substratum, but he overlooks that it does not adhere to traditional philosophical argumentation or the formal exposition of ideas and debates. The use of fictional and narrative elements renders these philosophical concepts more tangible and symbolic, open to narrative and psychosocial dimensions without merely treating them as psychological. Therefore, it would be helpful to examine this philosophical story, which symbolises key psychosocial developmental stages. This paper aims to systematically explore significant aspects of Hayy's character through Erikson's psychosocial theories, thereby enabling cross-cultural dialogue. Despite having a different aim and context, following the likes of Ibn Bajjah to attain the truth away from social conditioning through rational and mystic methods, the aim is to show the convergence of self-progression while negotiating important corporeal and psychological anxieties and tensions between Ibn Tufail's philosopher and Erikson's individual on the path towards integrity.

Erikson himself applied his model by interpreting cultural and historical figures such as Gandhi and Luther, highlighting its cross-cultural relevance and importance. Through this exploration, it helps us to push forward the tale's importance beyond Goodman's and Hawi's philosophical interpretations. It is acknowledged that these comparisons are merely illustrative and will serve as a starting point for exploring psychological convergences across different cultures and histories. The following framework and methodology will serve to achieve these objectives.

Erik Erikson's psychosocial model was developed within the Western psychoanalytic paradigm; however, his analysis was also significantly informed by cross-cultural references and fieldwork. During the 1930s, Erikson's fieldwork among the Sioux, Lakota, and Yurok tribes of Northern California helped him understand how individuals cope with psychological crises through culture-specific practices and activities. Beyond this, Erikson also advanced his model and examined Eastern philosophies and traditions through a psychobiographical reading of Gandhi in his book, *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Mil-*

itant Non-Violence (1969). Sudir Kakar, known as the father of Indian Psychoanalysis, also highlighted the universal appeal of Erikson's model early in 1968 in his paper, "The Human Cycle: Traditional Hindu View and Psychology of Erik Erikson." Kakar [8] provides a parallel between Hindu Ashramas (life stages) and psychosocial stages. Not limited to Hindu traditions, Erik Erikson, in his character sketch of Luther, draws an intriguing parallel between Luther's theological development and his psychological development. He argues:

The characteristics of Luther's theological advance can be compared to certain steps in psychological maturation which every man must take: the internalization of the father-son relationship; the concomitant crystallization of conscience; the safe establishment of an identity as a worker and a man; and the concomitant reaffirmation of basic trust. (p. 339, [9])

Erikson offers valuable insight into Luther's intellectual and spiritual growth by carefully examining his step-by-step psychological development. It is a compelling character study that explores every subtle aspect of character formation. In such studies, he mapped personal development processes and devised an intriguing psychosocial model that can be applied to other historical and fictional characters, thereby underscoring the universal appeal and importance of Erikson's model of life stages.

Consequently, this paper draws on Erikson's psychosocial model of the eight stages of human development. In his book *Childhood and Society* (1950), Erikson outlines the stages of Trust vs. Mistrust, Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt, Initiative vs. Guilt, Industry vs. Inferiority, Identity vs. Confusion, Intimacy vs. Isolation, Generativity vs. Stagnation, and finally, Integrity vs. Despair [10]. This demonstrates "that each critical item of psychosocial strength ... is systematically related to all others, and that they all depend on the proper development in the proper sequence of each item; and ... that each item exists in some form before its critical time normally arrives" (p. 244, [10]). However, Erikson's eight-stage cycle is not claimed to be directly aligned with Ibn Tufail's heptadic sevenfold structure (seven periods of seven years each), culminating at the age of 49, as this is symbolic of mystical and metaphysical ascent common to the Semitic hierarchy of knowledge. Rather, this paper builds on these crucial stages and insights, illustrating how Hayy experiences these social modalities on his journey from rational speculation to spiritual intimacy, and how Ibn Tufail's classical tale shows convergences, differences, and distinctions with the modern psychosocial developmental model. The approach is formally comparative and illustrative, and it significantly affirms the universality of Erikson's modern psychosocial model despite its limitations and inconsistencies.

The study conducts a detailed qualitative analysis of the philosophical tale *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*. The protagonist, Hayy, is the focal point, and the analysis examines various aspects of his growth from childhood to adulthood. For this purpose, the research employs a psychosocial framework derived from Erik Erikson. The analysis will be supported by textual evidence from the primary text, and Hayy's development will be examined by coding relevant passages and themes. This approach aims to highlight Hayy's intellectual evolution alongside his psychosocial maturation.

2. Erikson's Stages

Erik Erikson's eight-stage psychosocial model is an important developmental theory in modern psychology. Building on Freudian psychoanalysis, Erikson provides a template for development from infancy to adulthood, encompassing the entire lifespan. The theory holds that each stage contains a central crisis that must be overcome for mature growth and development. Emphasising cultural and social influences, Erikson describes each stage as building on the previous one, with stages constantly interacting with one another so that

resolutions of crises lead to integrity and failures to resolve them lead to vulnerability. Erikson's theory was shared within the broader Western context, but he himself applied his model to non-Western cultures and figures. His studies of Gandhi and Luther are well known. However, his theories have been criticised as suitable only for Western, middle-class, individualistic contexts and as showing limitations when applied to non-Western societies. Carol Gilligan (1982), an American feminist and psychologist, in her book *Different Voice* argued that Erikson's psychosocial sequential model is largely male-centred, especially in its conceptualisation of the identity and intimacy stages [11]. The model has also been criticised for failing to provide an adequate account of the role race, colonialism, and oppression play in individual development, where crises are often externally imposed rather than internal. Despite these limitations, the model has been continuously revised, adapted, and applied cross-culturally to demonstrate its partial universality and appeal. Early on, Sudhir Kakar, known as the father of Indian psychoanalysis, applied Erikson's model in his study of the traditional Hindu life cycle. Erikson also applied his model while studying Sioux in South Dakota and Yurok in California, and the psychosocial effects of abrupt cultural and social change upon them. Drawing on this, the paper applies key insights from Erik Erikson to a medieval Muslim philosophical tale to highlight convergences and divergences, and to show how such a dialogue helps illuminate cross-cultural narratives of psychosocial development in its varied contexts and variants.

2.1. Trust vs. Mistrust: Beginning of Hayy's Formative Development

Erikson (1950) writes in *Childhood and Society*,

The first demonstration of social trust in the baby is the ease of his feeding, the depth of his sleep, the relaxation of his Bowels. The experience of a mutual regulation of his increasingly receptive capacities with the maternal techniques of provision gradually helps him to balance the discomfort caused by the immaturity of homeostasis with which he was born. (p. 222, [10])

Erikson's first stage, Trust vs. Mistrust, usually occurs during infancy (from birth to 18 months). The psychosocial task for the infant is to seek a certain level of trust from the primary caregiver(s), as well as to depend on the caregiver(s) to provide a sense of security [12]. Hayy Ibn Yaqzān is born without a mother or father and lives on an island tended and cared for by a doe. The doe takes care of him, and gradually, Hayy's curiosity is aroused, leading him to explore himself and the nature around him. Ibn Tufail, in an allegorical, third-person narrative, provides subtle yet concrete details about the growth and maturation of Hayy. His development of the titular character progresses through different intellectual stages—from vegetative and animal to spiritual. By positioning Hayy on an isolated island devoid of any cultural and religious influences, Ibn Tufail tests how one attains divine realities and comes to understand God through self-discovery. Hayy finds himself immersed in the intricacies of the natural world, observing how plants and animals eat and sleep. The food chain, along with the categories and classes of the plant and animal kingdoms, further ignites his curiosity. Day by day, he learns to protect himself from attacking beasts and comes to understand that he should wear leaves and animal skins. The first developmental stage of trust and mistrust begins with the infant Hayy's dependence on the doe, which serves as a mirror of trust for the infant. Erikson (1950) argues, "What we here call trust coincides with what Therese Benedek has called confidence [10]. If I prefer the word 'trust,' it is because there is more naivete and more mutuality in it: an infant can be said to be trusting where it would go too far to say that he has confidence" (p. 222, [10]).

Initially, like a blank slate, the impressionistic Hayy finds shelter and training under the care of the doe. The doe provides sustenance through her maternal instincts and em-

bodies a sense of trust and affection. When the child Hayy cried in the wooden chest, the doe heard him and regarded him as her child: “She bent over and caressed him, giving him her nipple to suck until the tasty milk quenched him. Then she began to care for him, nurture him, and protect him from harm” (p. 102, [3]). Erikson contends that the first stage can be extended to 17 months, and if the child finds a favourable environment with their first caregiver, they can develop trust. This elucidates Hayy’s stage of trust and first maturation, lasting up to 2 years, under the profound care of the doe. The child sucks her milk and cries if she is not nearby. The child’s self is utterly indistinguishable from the doe: “When the child wanted milk she fed him, when he yearned for water, she led him to water, when he was exposed to the sun she shaded him, and when he was cold she warmed him” (p. 105, [3]). This created trust and a favourable impression in the infant, and gradually he began to imitate the doe.

In Erikson’s framework, this is one of the most vital phases in a child’s development. Hayy begins to receive nourishment, and an essential fabric of his mind begins to develop. Drawing on Erikson, Suedfeld et al. (2005) suggest that a favourable outcome for the infant is the establishment of a sense of security and a positive approach to the world, which is seen as a healthy attachment [13]. Furthermore, this stage lays the foundation for a healthy personality, as motherly care is the most critical factor. In this regard, Erikson (1950) states, “The amount of trust derived from earliest infantile experience does not seem to depend on absolute quantities of food or demonstrations of love, but rather on the quality of the maternal relationship” (p. 224, [10]). Not only that, it also “provides a foundation for the child’s development and how the child develops intimate relationships, which are a continuation of how individuals interpret and reinterpret the environment throughout their lifetime” (p. 2, [14]). “This forms the basis in the child for a sense of identity which will later combine a sense of being ‘all right,’ of being oneself, and of becoming what other people trust one will become” (p. 224, [10]). Not only with his first caregiver, the doe, Hayy also managed to create a trustworthy bond with some birds and animals, and “imitate closely whatever sounds he heard made by birds and other animals, for he was passionately motivated to do so” (p. 105, [3]). However, in this initial stage of Trust vs. Mistrust, Hayy also exhibited signs of mistrust towards certain animals and beasts. He seemed to develop primary sensory feelings of withdrawal from those animals. Hayy begins to feel repulsion towards some animals, and as Bishop (2013) argues, mistrust means “failure to create these bonds [which] leads the infant to an inability to trust, and to isolation, withdrawal, and a negative attitude about life” (p. 2, [14]). This defines the first formative period of Ibn Tufail’s titular character, revealing a complex relationship with his initial caregiver and with other wild animals, eliciting multiple stimulus responses. This stage reveals some universal tropes about the importance of reliable, amicable nurturing across different contexts. Erikson foregrounds the crucial role that human maternal care plays in the development of an early sense of security, whereas Hayy receives non-human nurturance but also expects a similar, qualitatively amiable care that creates in him a sense of belonging. Trust emerges in varied ways across human, non-human, secular, and religious contexts, but what matters is the character of the primary caregiver. For example, Glòria Durà-Vilà and Gerard Leavey, in their ethnographic study of Catholic monasteries in Spain, argue that early trust in a spiritual teacher established during the formative years of monastic initiation and sustained throughout the whole journey fosters a sense of security among nuns and monks who live in seclusion [15]. These guiding spiritual teachers do not function as a parental substitute, but in their adult stage, they help these nuns and monks negotiate the emotional and psychological crises encountered in their secluded lives. However, it is pertinent to note, in exploring the first stage of Erikson’s model, that the absence of human culture and anxieties in Ibn Tufail’s solitary Hayy constitutes the most pivotal divergence

and alternative pattern. Hayy develops outside the human ecology of ideas and tensions and does not experience the sense of cultural shame that Erikson's individual does. Hayy does not have to cope with the baggage of cultural shame in the initial stage of defecation and toilet training, as he is developing instinctually and intuitively from the sensory stage to the intellectual stage. He does not get peer toilet training, but he does learn some of the dynamics of defecation that will be discussed in the next stage. Nonetheless, in this stage, what is essential across cultures is the need to develop trust, and much depends upon the early qualitative nurturer.

2.1.1. Negotiating Shame and Doubt: Hayy's Path to Knowledge

Hayy reaches a stage of binary attitude towards life, characterised by positivity in a secure environment and negativity in a threatening habitat. "He looked at himself and observed that he was naked, weaponless, sluggish in motion, and lacking in aggression when beasts competed with him over fruit. They would seize the fruits from him and would always get to them first, for he was unable to defend himself or to elude any of the beasts" (p. 106, [3]). Hayy also begins to develop a sense of shame and guilt: "Shame supposes that one is completely exposed and conscious of being looked at: in one word, self-conscious. One is visible and not ready to be visible; which is why we dream of shame as a situation in which we are stared at in a condition of incomplete dress, in night attire, with one's pants down" (p. 227, [10]). This observation in Hayy created a feeling of vulnerability while watching for excrement in all animals and finding that they were always covered. Tails covered the openings for solid excrement, while those for urine were covered by fur and similar coverings; their genitals were also more hidden than his (p. 106, [3]). Hayy begins to grapple with his nakedness with a concomitant sense of incompleteness. He is now able to compare his body to that of animals, which leads to a certain uneasiness.

This is the pivotal point in comparison with Erikson's idea of development. Erikson's individual grows up in the broad daylight of a social and cultural environment, undergoes proper toilet training, and acquires primary ideas about defecation, nakedness, and the concomitant presuppositions of shame. By contrast, Hayy, living asocially, does not encounter such cultural baggage about defecation and nakedness. It is completely absent from his conceptualisation of the human body. He learns about the body and genital dynamics in a broader sense, understanding the limits and incompleteness of the corporeal realm. The aim and purpose of Ibn Tufail's solitary individual are more epistemological than Erikson's character, which is more moralistic and punitive. It also suggests that Hayy gains primary sensations about the design of human and animal bodies. He realises that animals use certain parts of their bodies to cover their nakedness, whereas he lacks those parts. This points towards Hayy's early development of his inquisitive mind and steers his journey into a new phase of life. This phase significantly reveals that, despite fundamental divergence with respect to the sense of body and shame, the comparison of two models—medieval Muslim and modern Western—shows the anxieties and tensions an individual has to negotiate when growing up in a human culture, and what psychosocial implications they have for a child's development, and, contrary to it, what deficiencies may arise when a child is growing up without social and cultural interaction. The nature vs. nurture debate is clearly evident here, with its pros and cons, but that is not the primary focus of this paper. It is the efficiency of the dialogue between a medieval classical philosophical tale and a modern psychosocial developmental model. In both discourses, what is reflected at the core is a universal sense of vulnerability in the stage of body shame and a pertinent drive towards a sense of completeness sought through varied means.

2.1.2. Thinking and Planning: Journey of Initiative vs. Guilt

Erikson (1950) writes, “There is in every child at every stage a new miracle of vigorous unfolding, which constitutes a new hope and a new responsibility for all. Such is the sense and the pervading quality of initiative” (p. 229, [10]). Following this stage, Hayy becomes an active planner and thinker. He develops some new habits and strategies to adapt to nature. In this stage, the “child suddenly seems to ‘grow together’ both in his person and in his body. He appears ‘more himself,’ more loving, relaxed and brighter in his judgement, more activated and activating” (p. 229, [10]). Hayy embodies such Eriksonian ‘activated and activating’ spirit in his self-defence, he trimmed and straightened tree branches to use as sticks to fend off the animals, attacking the weak and resisting the strong, thereby establishing his security and dignity. He found that his hands were far superior to theirs, for they enabled him to cover his genitals and use sticks to protect his possessions (p. 106, [3]). Apart from discovery and responsibility, in this stage, “the most fateful split and transformation in the emotional powerhouse occurs, a split between potential human glory and potential total destruction. For here the child becomes forever divided in himself” (p. 230, [10]). The first major conflict in Hayy’s intellectual development arises when he learns that doe has passed away. This marks a stage for the separation of the child and the caregiver. Not knowing what death means, he concludes that there might be something responsible for the bodily inaction of the doe, which leads him to the discovery of the heart. He concludes that the heart is the centre of the human body and regulates all other actions. After this, Hayy also explores how he can think. What faculty is responsible for this? And, gradually, he matures into the realm of intellect, moving from simple matter to corporeality. He considers the mind and its processes and undergoes a significant transformation.

In his pursuit of wisdom, the mortality and death of his caregiver diverge from the general psychosocial conflicts and rage a child undergoes. In this stage, it is a crucial departure from Erikson’s stage of rage in a child. The death serves as a pointer to move beyond the impermanence of corporeality towards the intellectual realm while completely transcending the common trait of rage and aggression towards the parents. Erikson notes that in this stage, it is most likely that the child may develop instincts of rage and aggression as he sees his fantasies being submerged and suppressed, “One of the deepest conflicts in life is the hate for a parent who served as the model and the executor of the superego, but who (in some form) was found trying to get away with the very transgressions which the child can no longer tolerate in himself” (p. 231, [10]). Conversely, something different occurs in Hayy’s development. Since he was not born of a mother and father, Hayy does not exhibit rage or frustration towards the doe, who acted as his foster mother; instead, upon her death, he displayed utmost concern and love towards her. This conflict helped him transcend bodily vulnerabilities and seek autonomy through the realm of intellect. It leads us to the idea that diverse possibilities exist for expressing rage and trauma after separation from a caregiver, often influenced by the child’s culture and nurture. Weisner and Gallimore (1977) found that children aged 5 and younger among the Dusun of Malaysia tend to assume supportive roles for their caregivers, such as caring for younger siblings, rather than seeking independence [16]. Kakar (1968), in his comparative study of Erikson’s model, points out that in the Indian tradition, such rage and aggression are often diverted or tempered by the collective ideal of filial piety and respect for elders [8]. In the Muslim tradition, the primary focus is to discipline the child at every stage through religious and moral principles to temper later-stage rage and aggression, and the guardian bears a significant responsibility. For example, Ghazālī notes in his chapter on disciplining the child that “For the child who is neglected in the early years of his growth will usually grow up to be ill-natured, dishonest, envious, obstinate, inclined to theft, backbiting, and excessive

chatter and laughter, and slyness and immorality, from all of which things he can be protected through a sound upbringing. Next, he should be busy at school learning the Quran, the Traditions, the tales of devout men, so that love for the righteous may take root in his heart" (p. 77, [17]). Apart from religious pedagogy, in the Arab Muslim world, the presence of an extended family system, often living within the rubric of a particular tribe, means that filial respect and command remain the foundational catalyst for the growing adult to express his freedom and aggression, contrary to the Western modern-day individualistic expression of rage against parents.

These are instances of cultural nuances that counterbalance the modern Western psychosocial model in delineating key developmental stages. Drawing on this, Hayy's love and care in his attempt to resurrect the doe, as well as his subsequent development, emphasise that, having grown up in the doe's particular environment, he adopts the same patterns of care and nurturing. He is not sharing any cultural affiliation nor any filial duty, but in his nurturing stage, he imitates some common patterns of care he received from the doe, and then moves on to seek other possibilities in his journey to attain wisdom and joy.

It is the archetypal figure of a doe, the limits and impermanence of corporeality, and the curiosity that drives his seeking that inform Hayy's subsequent psychosocial and intellectual journey and help mitigate growing conflicts and tensions.

2.1.3. Achieving Competence: Path Through Industry vs. Inferiority

"What was it? How was it? What connected it to this body? Where is it now? Which exit did it take when it left the body? What was the cause of its distress—in case it left unwillingly? And what caused it to have such an antipathy towards the body and to separate from it—in case it left willingly?" (p. 110, [3]). These are some of the pertinent questions and queries Hayy Ibn Yaqzān considers after he discovered that the soul of the doe was separated from her lifeless body. This marks the most significant stage in his life, and interestingly, this is somewhat close to Erikson's stage of Industry versus Inferiority. Erikson (1950) explains that at this stage, a growing child "experiences a sense of finality regarding the fact that there is no workable future within the womb of his family, and thus becomes ready to apply himself to given skills and tasks" (p. 233, [10]). With this realisation, a child "develops a sense of industry i.e., he adjusts himself to the inorganic laws of the tool world" (p. 233, [10]).

Subsequently, Hayy's attachment to the doe shifts as he realises that the body is valueless and subject to decay. This becomes a decisive factor in his development and sense of identity. He moves beyond his attachments and "transferred his relationship from the body to the owner of that body and its motive force, and all his longing was now directed towards it" (p. 111, [3]). Ibn Tufail captures this distance and withdrawal in Hayy's development through the symbol of grave digging. At this stage, Hayy becomes a sophisticated learner; his "inner stage seems all set for 'entrance into life,' except that life must first be school life, whether school is field or jungle or classroom" (p. 232, [10]). Nature becomes Hayy's first school. When he witnesses a raven burying a dead raven beneath the earth, Hayy likewise "dug a hole, laid his mother's body in it, and covered it with earth, continuing to reflect on that thing that had caused the body to function, which he still did not know" (p. 111, [3]). This signifies a decisive exercise of will and autonomy in Hayy's development, as he no longer remains obsessed with infantile care. There are certain dangers of "man's restriction of himself and constriction of his horizons to include only his work to which, so the Book says, he has been sentenced after his expulsion from Paradise" (p. 234, [10]). Hayy moves forward, defies any self-imposed restrictions, and lends an air of industry to his evolving spirit of skill.

Hayy's development does not remain restricted to the solitary act of burial and digging; beyond that, it alludes to his engagement with nature as a site of experimentation. For him, nature becomes an open laboratory, and he learns his skills through observation and by recognising the underlying patterns in his surroundings. Hayy achieves mastery, as Erikson notes, through observation, reflection, experimentation, and perseverance. Beyond this, it can be argued that, outside human socialisation, animals such as the doe and the raven serve as psychological and socio-educational allegories for Hayy. Without contact with human social roles, the doe appears not only as a surrogate mother but also as a pre-social model that supports Hayy's primary emotional development without social anxieties. Furthermore, the raven serves a pre-linguistic and pre-institutional role, educating Hayy without formal social schooling. These animals serve a pedagogical role in the absence of socialisation, helping Hayy transcend early role confusions imposed by society. This points to the crucial problem of how social and ideological role confusions are imposed on the growing child, which are absent in a natural environment. Hayy here defers all such identity confusions, which help us critique such ideological crises, but Hayy later grapples with them when he finally comes into contact with the human environment. Erikson also acknowledges that some crises may occur later, when an individual assumes new social roles.

2.1.4. Hayy's Journey of Definite Identity and Meaningful Role

In Erikson's model of psychosocial development, the stage of Identity vs. Confusion marks the transition into adolescence and is a crucial preparation for adulthood. The earlier drives of puberty and growth are enhanced, placing individuals' struggles in the broader context of body image and the environment. Erikson (1950) argues that adults are "now primarily concerned with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are, and with the question of how to connect the roles and skills cultivated earlier with the occupational prototypes of the day" (p. 235, [10]). At this stage, Hayy Ibn Yaqzān begins to put his acquired skills to use. He is now not only a passive observer but also enters into the phase of cultivation and domestication. He differentiates among the animals' multiple roles and temperaments and subsequently develops a sense of belonging to them. "The most successful course, he thought, would be to domesticate some of the swiftest animals, treating them kindly by bringing them their proper food, until he was capable of riding them and using them to chase other types of animals" (pp. 114–115, [3]). In addition, "he mastered all these things at the same time as he was occupied with dissection and desired to understand all the properties of the organs of animals and their peculiarities. All this took place within the period specified, namely 21 years" (p. 115, [3]).

Erikson notes that during this time, a person starts to develop a sense of personal and social identity. A person, for the first time, experiences certain social demands, and multiple factors can influence his identity, and a "sense of the technological ethos of a culture develops at this time" (p. 234, [10]). These demands and pressures can lead to role confusion in the adult. "It is the ideological outlook of a society that speaks most clearly to the adolescent who is eager to be affirmed by his peers, and is ready to be confirmed by rituals, creeds, and programmes which at the same time define what is evil, uncanny, and inimical" (p. 236, [10]).

Significantly, Hayy does not grapple with these social role anxieties in this phase. Erikson argues that some creedal and cultural roles defined by various social ideologies might lead to a split identity. In Hayy's case, living in complete isolation from any human society, with a total absence of ideological, doctrinal, and social imprints on his identity, he does not struggle to fit into any defined role. This indicates the nature-nurture debate, and

Ibn Tufail suggests how Hayy remains free from general social roles and prejudices within the bosom of nature. Hayy gradually integrates into the natural habitat and negotiates his relationship with animals and plants. It can be said that Hayy does not face the role confusion that humans face in society. In this regard, Erikson (1950) argues, “In searching for the social values which guide identity, one therefore confronts the problems of ideology and aristocracy, both in their widest possible sense which connotes that within a defined world image and a predestined course of history, the best people will come to rule and rule develops the best in people” (p. 236, [10]). If not this, Hayy begins to realise his role within different species of animals and plants. He observes his differences and distinctions from animals, given his physiology, and seeks knowledge of the body-spirit duality.

Away from socialisation, for Hayy, it is animals who function as substitute allegories for his roles in the natural habitat. For example beasts can be read as powerful competitors; swift animals which he domesticates and rides come across as his allies, and animals for dissection function as symbol of inquiry; however, it is pertinent to mention that even if Hayy negotiates his role in contradistinction to animals and plants, his personality is not proximally affected by the sociological and political ideologies and does not show any signs of split identity and crisis. This crisis becomes evident later in his life when Hayy is first exposed to human language, culture, creed, and religion.

The deferred crisis is also a significant feature at this stage, pointing to its occurrence in other cultures when they come into contact with new norms. Ahmed and Gielen (2007) argue that, in most Muslim Arab communities, social rule confusions and crises are tempered by the tribal and Islamic emphasis on obedience and fidelity to the community [18]. Britto and Amer (2007) highlight how such crises are later triggered in Muslim Arab American adolescents when they are exposed to the host culture [19]. This suggests that, in Hayy’s case, even at some stages, the crisis is deferred because Ibn Tufail situates his character outside social demands and corruption, enabling him to fully realise his potential, influenced by Ibn Bajja’s solitary philosopher. Despite this, he does undergo Eriksonian tensions when he is later assimilated into the culture and creed after meeting Absal. This points towards the universality of modern psychosocial identity crisis across cultures, with particular variants and nuances.

2.1.5. Quest for Belonging: Hayy’s Path Through Intimacy vs. Isolation

Christopher Bishop (2013) argues, “Adults have to negotiate their own identity as they seek out intimate relationships [14]. Generally, they are searching for similar qualities in others that will lead to healthy and long-lasting relationships” (p. 5, [14]). This stage begins with a yearning for belonging, the forging of intimate relationships, and the expression of one’s latent drives and fantasies. Erikson points out that the demands of genitality are domineering and shape one’s sense of identity, and an adult is “willing to fuse his identity with that of others. He is ready for intimacy, that is, the capacity to commit himself to concrete affiliations and partnerships and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments” (p. 237, [10]). Following this, Hayy qualitatively seeks to forge new relationships with the natural environment and critically examines the stages of his bodily development alongside those of animals and plants. He speculates about the specific and general forms of animal and plant bodies, asking questions like, “Is there a single attribute that generalizes over all bodies, both animate and inanimate?” (p. 122, [3]), which leads him to questions of ‘single abiding form’ and the ‘spirit.’

Hayy’s stage of intimacy is markedly different from any modern psychosocial intimacy model, which is more relational, sexual, and emotional. However, Hayy points towards alternative ideas of intimacy found in some animistic belief systems and Islamic mystic traditions. Hayy shows care for animals, domesticates them, and often feels a sense

of unity with all natural species. This echoes the belief in nature as kin, as a mother, and as a manifestation of divinity, offering an intimate sense of belonging. Schimmel (1975) notes that in some Muslim mystic traditions, nature is considered a divine mirror, and the seeker contemplates the beauty of God, forming an intimate relationship with nature [20]. However, this intimacy is spiritual rather than corporeal.

Hayy's interactions with his body and those of animals and plants are notably different from Erikson's perspectives. In this stage, it is evident that Hayy exhibits attributes that are completely different from what Erikson would expect. The aim of *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān* becomes clear in that Hayy is concerned with the limits of corporeal forms and considers corporeality an initial stage towards the higher stage of spirit. Given Ibn Tufail's background in philosophy and context, he would consider the stage of intimacy as a corporal stage that must be transcended for ultimate happiness. His predecessor Ibn Bajja, who decisively influenced Ibn Tufail, also holds a similar idea that "The great majority of people remain in the darkness of corporeal forms, and only a few individuals can see the light and attain perfection, happiness and eternity. These are the philosophers of the perfect city, which, if it does not exist, the philosopher is advised to withdraw to his own within the imperfect city itself" (p. 8, [6]). This highlights the potential for cross-cultural dialogue, in which the modern psychosocial model is counterbalanced by alternative indigenous and medieval Muslim philosophical ideas of intimacy, which are more contemplative and spiritual, redirecting latent drives toward contemplating the beauty of divine forms.

2.1.6. Will to Contribute: Journey of Generativity vs. Stagnation

The generativity and stagnation stage, roughly spanning the ages of 35 to 60, is a crucial psychosocial phase. It encompasses middle adulthood and marks a shift from self-focus to community involvement. As Erikson (1950) rightly states, it involves the 'teaching' and 'instituting' motives of mature adults: "Generativity, then, is primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation" (p. 240, [10]). In a society lacking these drives, a regression to an obsessive need for pseudo-intimacy occurs, often accompanied by a pervasive sense of stagnation and personal impoverishment. Such a society is characterised by philosophical and religious motivations that inspire individuals to act for the good of others rather than for themselves. Erikson (1950) affirms this, saying, "As to the institutions which safeguard and reinforce generativity, one can only say that all institutions codify the ethics of generative succession" (p. 241, [10]). At the age of 35, Ibn Tufail depicts Hayy Ibn Yaqzān, who, through rigorous reasoning, attains knowledge of non-corporeal entities, abstracted from physical realities. Ibn Tufail notes, echoing the Quranic words, particularly chapter 112 (Sura Ikhlas), that Hayy now realises, "There is no existence but Him: He is existence, perfection, completion, goodness, magnificence, ability, and knowledge ... He achieved this level of cognizance at the end of five seven-year periods after his birth, which was thirty-five years" (pp. 131–132, [3]). With this revelation, Hayy's development closely aligns with phases of knowledge-seeking and reaching the ultimate realisation of God. He undergoes significant stages of generativity in close relation to the divine, experiencing pleasure through meditations on the divine. He does not feel the stagnation Erikson describes; rather, he experiences fleeting moments of despair about physical reality. "He wished that God would relieve him of his body, which required him to relinquish that station, so that he could dedicate himself permanently to his joy and be free of the pain that he encountered when he abandoned his station for bodily needs. He remained in this state until after the seventh seven-year period following his birth, which was fifty years" (p. 153, [3]). Hayy displays signs of anxiety in his preaching and guidance of others, and for the first time, Ibn Tufail places his protagonist within the human realm. Ibn Tufail evaluates Hayy's knowledge and development when he chooses to share his in-

sights with others. This pivotal moment occurs when he encounters other humans, Absal and Salaman. Absal prefers contemplation, while Salaman favours external activities. Ibn Tufail skilfully introduces Hayy to human culture immediately after his spiritual enlightenment, utilising his reason and intellect. Absal exposes him to the scriptures, prophets, and their teachings. Hayy finds parallels and intersections between his discoveries and the teachings of the prophets, but he struggles to accept them; however, some prophetic rationales cause confusion and perplexity.

Along with Absal, Hayy journeys to the human habitat where people reside. He is bewildered and confused by observing people pursuing their desires while ignoring higher and deeper spiritual realities. He begins to discuss the trivialities and superficialities of external actions and ritual ceremonies. However, he faces resistance and rejection. This failure to achieve his goal leaves him feeling regret. Bishop (2013) argues, “A failure to achieve at this stage leads to a life of regret about decision making, unfulfilled dreams, and a lack of altruism toward society” (p. 6, [14]). This reveals Hayy’s important growth later in his life. At this stage, Hayy begins to grapple with social roles and crises that were delayed till his acculturation and socialisation. As noted earlier, Erikson also acknowledges that some individuals may encounter social crises later in life. Hayy has reached his enlightenment, but a drive to assume a social role as an advocate for the people triggers a latent crisis. He is trying to reconcile different voices and social duties. Unlike other historical figures Erikson cites, such as Gandhi and Luther, Hayy seems to have no tangible contribution to society, either collectively or institutionally; rather, his generativity seems more private, individualistic, and beyond the scope of public manifestation.

This alludes to the significant problem of contributing to society, as Hayy, in his generative phase, seems to be failing to come to terms with people’s ideologies and creeds. His generative phase differs significantly from Erikson’s view. In this stage, Hayy is more contemplative and directs his awareness towards self-mastery and divine ecstasy, much like Sufi and monastic traditions. As Durà-Vilà and Leavey highlight in their ethnographic study of such sects, generativity often comes with spiritual attainment, mastery over lower selves, and preaching to select seekers who are ready on the path towards spiritual enlightenment, while stagnation is avoided through persistent inward contemplation of the truth. This significantly reveals the partial universality of Erikson’s model of generativity, while the monastic, Sufi, and philosophical nuances of generativity point to alternate ways of directing one’s inner drive toward self-mastery and toward guiding a select few select in order to preserve their knowledge and way of life.

2.1.7. Completing the Cycle: Achieving Ego Integrity

In his tale of *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*, Ibn Tufail exposes his titular character to an alternative system of inquiry and knowledge, evoking both subtle rapture and despair in his understanding. In his despair, Hayy looked down upon people and said, “despaired of doing any good upon them, and all his hopes amending them were defeated, because they were not willing to receive what he taught them” (p. 172, [4]). To achieve integrity, Erikson (1950) reiterates that one must adapt “himself to the triumphs and disappointments adherent to being the originator of others or the generator of products and ideas—only in him may gradually ripen the fruit of these seven stages” (p. 241, [10]). Hayy reaches the culmination of his journey in a quite interesting manner. He realises the merit and rationale behind observing rites and external activities, recognising that understanding and wisdom exist in varying degrees. People follow and attain the truth to different extents, and hierarchies do persist. There are diverse pathways to reach divine realities, and no single way to attain them. He understood a fundamental truth: those who follow rites and practices

and acquire knowledge through external sources should continue to do so. He should not indulge in unnecessary debates or ambiguous questions. Erikson (1950) similarly notes:

In order to approach or experience integrity, the individual must know how to be a follower of image bearers in religion and in politics, in the economic order and in technology, in aristocratic living and in the arts and sciences. Ego integrity, therefore, implies an emotional integration which permits participation by followership as well as acceptance of the responsibilities of leadership. (p. 242, [10])

In his path toward integrity, Hayy represents a fundamental exception to Erikson's view of leadership. Hayy does not follow or lead his people, but his integrity is reflected in his affirmation of human diversity and hierarchy while seeking the truth. Quite significantly, unlike previous philosophical narratives about a solitary individual reaching truth through rational and philosophical demonstrations—for instance, those of Ibn Bajja, who does not take into account image bearers or religious external activities in his final estimation of the truth—Ibn Bajja was significantly influenced by Aristotle and later had a considerable influence on Ibn Tufail and Ibn Rushd. However, Ibn Tufail takes a stark departure from this and situates Hayy at the end, a position that allows him to take a broader, more accommodating look at diverse pathways to the ultimate truth. Sharing partial universality with classical medieval Muslim philosophical conceptualisation of achieving integrity, Erikson's model is counterbalanced by alternate ways of ego integrity, not only achieved through a social role of leadership but also through inward reflection in accepting reality in its multiple forms, similar to what monastic and Sufi integration is about, a soul reaching the stage of perfection and being called a perfected soul (Insani Kamil).

Eventually, Hayy Ibn Yaqzān emerges as a truly integrated man, and, true to his powers of generativity and integrity, proclaims: "There were men appointed to every work, and everyone was best capable of doing that unto which he was appointed by nature" (p. 175, [4]). Thus, true to Erikson's (1950) declaration, "The style of integrity developed by his culture or civilisation ... becomes the 'patrimony of his soul,' the seal of his moral paternity of himself ... In such final consolidation, death loses its sting" (p. 242, [10]).

Situating a medieval philosophical tale alongside the 20th-century Western psychosocial developmental model proposed by Erik Erikson helps us engage in a dialogue that is atemporal and ahistorical, highlighting how classical tales prefigure modern debates about human development, condition, and identity. It also foregrounds how, through such comparative effort, alternative systems of thought counterbalance and broaden one another, often providing complementary insights that diverge in fundamental ways, highlighting cultural, historical, and geographical nuances. This paper thus highlighted the universal import of Erikson's model when applied heuristically across cultures and acknowledged some significant limitations and divergences.

3. Conclusions

This paper examined the psychosocial complexities and development of Ibn Tufail's titular character, Hayy, in his philosophical tale *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*. It demonstrated that Hayy's journey reflects his gradual psychosocial growth from infancy to the stage of attaining personal integrity. The analysis focused on relevant passages and themes from Erik Erikson's eight psychosocial stages of life and heuristically paralleled Hayy's developmental stages. The paper briefly traced Hayy Ibn Yaqzān's journey from his early years under the care of the doe to the attainment of generativity and integrity. This comparative approach brought a medieval philosophical tale into dialogue with a modern Western psychosocial model, highlighting how the classical tale prefigured modern debates about identity, the nature–nurture dialectic, socialisation, and acculturation. In this way, the paper highlighted how the concepts of childhood and adulthood have been historically imag-

ined and revealed cross-cultural currents with essential differences. The character sketch of Hayy often aligns with Erik Erikson's basic character model, thereby bringing the medieval text into dialogue with modern discussions of the human condition and concepts of childhood and adulthood.

This paper highlighted that Ibn Tufail's philosophical novel is also significantly different in its aim and purpose. It showed divergences from Erikson's conceptualisation of psychosocial growth. Hayy lives outside the boundaries of social and cultural touch until the final phase of his development, and this paper highlighted key differences, including the absence of the early adulthood crisis of social role and identity in the adult Hayy. Hayy's negotiation of his growing anxieties was described as more individualistic and private, sharing key similarities with monastic and Sufi-mystic ways of reflecting on the nature and divine beauty. The partial universality of Erikson's model reveals its efficacy across cultures and time, as well as how such a study brings together alternate narratives of growth and development, broadening the horizons of both systems. Both the convergences and divergences provide the rationale for a dialogue between medieval Muslim philosophy and modern Western psychosocial narratives. It advocates further research on other medieval Islamic texts that need to be translated, interpreted, and brought into dialogue with modern debates on childhood and the human condition.

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