

## **A Comparative Literary Criticism of Avicenna's *Hayy ibn Yaqdhan* and Tolkien's *The Hobbit***

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### **Abstract**

With the surge in translation of Islamic scientific works by the Europeans in the 12 and 13 centuries, a large number of these translations became available in Europe when Muslims were at the height of their scientific glory. The translation of philosophical and literary works from Arabic into Latin constituted one of the main branches of this trend. Avicenna was a celebrated Iranian scholar whose works in medicine and philosophy were well-received in Europe. Avicenna's *Hayy ibn Yaqdhan* (*The Improvement of Human Reason*) is an ancient dramatic work that was translated to French in 1889. It is possible that the English translation of Ibn Tufail's book of the same name and his direct reference to Avicenna's *Hayy ibn Yaqdhan* led to the first contact of Tolkien with Avicenna's book as inspiration for the writing of his novels. *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien is one of the most fascinating contemporary fantasy fictions that enjoys immense popularity. This research uses a descriptive-analytical method, touching upon the American-style comparative literature, to demonstrate that Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (2006) is influenced by Avicenna's *Hayy ibn Yaqdhan* irrespective of difference in their content and studies this influence.

**Keywords:** Hayy ibn Yaqdhan, Avicenna, The Hobbit, Tolkien, comparative literary criticism.

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