

The Status of Women in the Novels of Najib Al-Kilani (Based on Two Novels of *Jakarta's Virgin* and *The Man Who Believed*)

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Abstract—Committed and contemporary Egyptian writer, Najib al-Kilani, is considered as a leader in Islamic literature in the Arab world due to the multitude of writings. Islam and promotion of Islamic principles is a major concern in most of his works. Using a descriptive-analytical method, this article tries to investigate the status of women in his novel 'Jakarta's Virgin and The Man Who Believed'. The findings suggest that Kilani, unlike its predecessors and even his contemporary writers, has not described the superficial and banal aspect of women, but he has tried to promote true status appointed for a Muslim woman. Najib's novels are taken from the real facts of his time. For him, women have the ability to participate in all social, economic areas by maintaining the moral values and standards of Islam as well as men. Kilani has also given women the right to select their own husbands; he insists much on the presence of common moral, cultural and religious points among couples to survive and continue sharing life.

Index Terms—status of women, novel, Najib Al-Kilani, Jakarta's Virgin, The Man Who Believed

I. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, women have been deprived of many valuable individual and social rights in the Arab world whereas all sublime divine teachings have respected woman and his position. In this regard, many intellectuals have tried to help women to achieve their rightful places in Arabic-Muslim countries. This intellectual movement has begun in the Islamic countries by individuals such as Jamal al-Din Asad Abadi, Sheikh Muhammad Abduh, Qasim Amin. In the meantime, Najib Kilani, the Egyptian Muslim and committed writer, released various works in the world of literature. Because of the large number of works on the one hand and the Islamic formula of his writings on the other hand, he is a leader in the field of contemporary literature in the Arab world. Since novel is influenced by the community's situation more than any other literary work and it can reflect social structures in itself better than any other literary work, Kilani has tried to portray the contemporary Islamic countries using the art of novel writing. While the Najib's novels are full of intellectual and practical battle between Islamic and colonial movements, most of his works refer to the status of women in family and society. Using a descriptive-analytical method, this article tries to investigate the status of women in his novel 'Jakarta's Virgin and The Man who Believed'. However, it is inescapable to call for the help by other novels written by Kilani.

Kilani particular attention to the status of women from the perspective of Islamic teachings as well as the spirit of realism in his works is the importance and necessity of this research.

The questions that will be discussed in this article include:

1. What is the status of women in the novels of Najib Kilani?
2. Which aspect of women's personality is focused in Kilani's novels?

It should be noted that no novel has ever investigated the status of women in the Najib Kilani's novels as an independent factor.

II. NOVEL AND ITS BACKGROUND

As this research aims to investigate the status of women in Najib Kilani's novels, it is necessary to introduce his novels in brief.

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It is not easy to define novel or determine its distinguishing boundaries from other types of literature, especially fictions. The fledgling nature of novel in comparison with other literary types has disabled us to establish such firm conventions and principles as the framework of other literary types. It is told that poetry was thousands of years old when Jesus left home at the age of twelve and hundred years passed the birth of play; but novel was born 1500 years later. Moreover, novel has been subject of many fundamental changes from the very beginning in a way very different from other literary genres (Khojasteh, 2008, p. 62).

Short stories and novels are short-lived comparing to fiction. In fact, novel is the most important and famous literary form of our time. As mentioned, novel is younger than two and half centuries; it is known that novel has begun by Don Quixote by Cervantes (1547-1616) the Spanish writer and Princess Chloe by Madame de la Fayette (1634-1693) (Mir Sadeqi, 2004, p. 152).

Nowadays, the term novel refers to a variety of works whose common point is just their long and prose story. Since novel is a long literary narration, it differs from short stories and works with medium length called novelette. Hence, it is not possible to present a comprehensive definition of novel to cover all types. Here, just two definitions will be presented:

It is an innovative prose in a considerable length and specific complexity accompanied by human experience dealing with imagination expresses the sequence of events where a group of the characters involved in a certain scene (Mir Sadeqi, 2013, p. 24).

Harry Shaw's *Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines Novel as a long prose narration organizing characters and their presence in a chronological order. A work of fiction that have less than 30 to 40 thousand words is called short story or novelette but novel has no limitation in the number of length. Every novel is a description of life, conflicts, characters, actions, scenes, and theme (ibid).

III. NAJIB KILANI'S BIOGRAPHY

Najib bin Kilani bin Ibrahim ibn Abdol Latif Al-Kilani was born in Sharshabeh of al-Garbiyah Province in Arabic Republic of Egypt (Al-Arini, 1425, p. 11). Kilani's family was a large family inhabited in Sharshabeh and the neighboring villages. His father was a farmer headed a family consisting of his wife and three sons. The first son is Najib and the others are Amin and Muhammad. When Najib was eight, the Second World War began; thus, his village faced a severe economic crisis. Haji Abdul Qadir Al Shafei, Najib's paternal grandfather was an influential person in his life. He was a Philanthropist man who remembered Quran as the region's biggest cotton merchants. He paid much attention to Najib's moral deeds. Encouraged by his grandfather, Najib began learning memorizing the Quran in a school in his village in four (ibid).

In his book *Glimpses of my Life*, Najib says about his grandfather that he has been influenced by the morals and manners of his grandfather more than any other person; he encouraged Najib's father to educate Najib and gave him gifts (Kilani, 1998, pp.1-33).

In eight, he went to an American school called Sanbat in the nearby village. He finished high school in Tanta. This period lasted 5 years (Al-Arini, 1425, p. 12).

After completing high school, he entered Cairo University Fetal Medicine; he preferred literature or law; but his father forced him to study medicine despite the propensity. Shortly after, he was interested in the field (ibid, p. 13).

In the fourth year of university (1955), he was arrested on charges of orientation to the Muslim Brotherhood and he was sentenced to 10 years in prison. He suffered tortures in jails of Hazmi, Asiyout, Qanatir, Misr al-Omoomi, Cair, Abu Za'bal, and Watreh (Hadian, 2011, p. 20).

At this time, he composed his first collection of poems called *Aghany Alghoraba'* (Songs of Strangers). He spent four years in prison but he was released from prison in late 1958 due to neurological disease of legs. After this event, he continued his studies and graduated in 1960 in Medicine. In the wake of President Gamal Abdel Nasser order to arrest all members of the Muslim Brotherhood, he was imprisoned again in 1967. After two years, following the 1967 Arab defeat against Israel (June Event), he released. After his release from prison, Najib traveled to the United Arab Emirates, where he spent more than twenty years. Finally, he died in 1415 after illness and severe pain in the King Faisal Specialist Hospital in Riyadh (Al-Arini, 1425, p. 17).

Najib Kilani loved reading, especially literary journals published during that period such as Al-Resaleh, Al-Theqafeh, Al-Helal, and Al-Moqtatif. He became familiar with many scholars like Sayyid Qutb, Mustafa Sadiq Rafeay, Manfalouty, Taha Hussein and Tawfiq Hakim.

In the beginning, he had no certain tendency; but he read due to extreme poverty every available text including Universal and Arabic stories and poems of many poets like Mutanabbi, Shawqi, Hafiz, etc. (ibid, p. 13). Kilani was memorized a lot of the Holy Quran. In addition, he was attracted by the Muslim Brotherhood's invitation, he believed in the Muslim Brotherhood. Hence, No wonder to see the soul of Islam the religious nature in his scientific and literary works. It is noteworthy to point out that his Islamic orientation is not limited his novels and stories but in all of his charts. (Al-Arini, 1425, p. 17)

IV. NAJIB KILANI'S WORKS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Kilani is considered a pioneer of contemporary Islamic literature in terms of multiplicity and diversity of works. Another unique feature is the heroes of his stories who are often concerned with religion and the conflict between intellectual and scientific Islamic currents and colonial requirements. He is also the only Arab writer whose stories cover beyond the Arab world and portray the oppression of Muslims in Indonesia, Turkestan, Nigeria and....

Kilani is considered as a realistic novelist because his style is a need in the Arab world, especially Egypt's society. He has described literary fiction as the need for the Islamic world; that distinguishes him from other religions and contemporary authors are addressing the situation of women in society of that day in addition to the religious spirit and color. At a time when many rights of women were unknown or deliberately ignored, he tried to clarify public opinion in their actual knowledge of women and their place in the Islamic community. Most of events in Kilani's novels are taken from real events of his time (Khosravi, 2014, p. 27). A short and chronological view on Kilani's novels represents that fiction works of this Egyptian writer is divided into three categories:

First, romantic novels talking indirectly about the grief of the people, social problems such as poverty, ignorance, backwardness and disease; they are *Spring Storm*, *Burning People*, *Vanguard of Dawn*, *Slaves' Night*, and *Jadallah's Story*.

Second, historical novels including fiction works inspired by the prophetic tradition and the history of Islam and in which the author intends to aware the reader of the rich civilization of Islam and religious values such as jihad and defense.

Third, Islamic realistic novel including the stories about the problems and heartache of Muslims out of Islamic lands such as *Turkestan Nights*, *Jakarta's Virgin*, *Black Shadow*, and *Giants of North* as well as novels about political and social issues having been encountered by the oppressed people in Egypt such as oppression, violence and tyranny where the writer talks about freedom, justice, security, comfort and vision. Novels like *Abdul Motajali's Confessions*, *Abdul Motajali's Wife*, and *Queen of Grapes* (Khazali & Basiri, 2008, p. 82).

Doctor Kilani has written more than 70 books in the fields of novels, stories, poetry, criticism, thoughts, and medicine. Four of Kilani's books have been translated into Persian:

1. *In search of Freedom*: A book with eloquent prose and fascinating story about Hazrat Hamza's killer, Vahshi.
2. *Second wife*: A collection of stories explaining instances of ordinary issues of a society so that the writer tries to convey moral and social implications in interesting forms.
3. *Quds in Separation of Farouk*: Imagination of a Palestinian who met the second Caliphate.
4. *Heroes of the North*: Scenes from the Jihad of the Muslims of North Africa in the fight against colonialism.

V. THE ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S POSITION IN AL-KILANI NOVELS

As mentioned, Najib's novels talk about women and their problems; but women are not first character neither in the novels that have been called by the name of women nor in other novels. Nevertheless, women are playing roles alongside men. Sometimes, men are involved in several scenes during a time and the name of women does not hear. It does seem that Najib aims to tell the reader that the body of the community is constructed by of men and women at interaction. It should be noted that women sometimes act quite independently. In his novels, Najib pays attention to women and their problems from different aspects, which will be discussed in this research.

A. *Women in Politics and Resistance*

Four of the novels written by Najib Kilani are discussing situation of Muslims in other countries *Jakarta's Virgin* is a political-moral charter portraying Indonesian Muslim movement against the Communist Party. The novel introduces a religious and committed family whose girl *Fatemeh* is present in various resistance scenes. A student movement has been formed at the University of Female Students; the leaders of the Communist Party try to tarnish the sacred realm of Islamic teachings by deceptive slogans of equality between men and women, equality of people etc. In this situation, *Fatemeh* prefers oral struggle rather than the silence, presents a logical and principled debate with the party's representative, and succeeds to some extent to clarify the opinions. He proceeded to fight and defend the fundamentals of Islam at a time when most female students have been fooled by glamor of the party. Following the arrest of her father and her fiancé, *Fatemeh* thinks about the armed struggle where subsequent events makes her more determined in her decision. Party leaders resorted to assassination, looting and plundering of innocent people's properties, and they not turn away from any crime. *Fatemeh* initially joins honorary to the editorial office. Although Chief disagrees with an armed operation at the beginning, he armed his colleagues finally to defend their reputation. In scenes that the office is surrounded by communist agitators, *Fatemeh* acts bravely so that few women can act like her. In this regard, she criticizes even some of his colleagues because of negligence and disregard for the fate of the country and their fellow citizens. Shooting the assailant to editorial office old guardian, *Fatemeh* pushes rioters away for a moment (Kilani, 2005, p. 229).

Meanwhile, she tells the reporter of art section huddled on his desk passively and does not make use of his arms:

Are not you ashamed?

Her colleague answers that he does not like to die as he has ever fought against politics and kept himself away from it.

Fatemeh said to him: Go tell it to them, because there is no difference in artist and politician, innocent and guilty for the enemy; art has no place at this point in time (ibid, p. 231).

Fatemeh is present in many scenes along with men and even a few steps ahead of them in politics and resistance; finally, she waters the nascent three of revolution with her red blood.

B. Woman in Marriage

Marriage of girls with men aged as their fathers had been a mysterious and common tradition in Eastern Islamic communities, especially the Arab communities. Poverty and greed in pursuit of wealth led the girls' supervisors to exchange them with Dirhams and Dinars like goods without considering the interest and satisfaction of young girls. Although marriage and divorce laws in the nineteenth century in Arabic countries were based on the Islamic law, they were ignored in many cases. Lack of attention to the equal situation of both parties in addition to lack of common interest in this matter imposed irreparable harm to the body of the society. Najib Kilani paid much attention to this need of the community for women. He has spoken of many women's capabilities in his novels. In *The Man Who Believed*, he describes three main female characters. Arrian is a performer heading to the United Arab Emirates with the intention of playing in a hotel. At departure, he proposes his fiancée Sophia, who is a girl with Western manners and ideas believing in marriage as restrictions and end to the pleasures of life while promiscuity is freedom, and notes that salary is enough for adequate living; but Sophia declares that she is not going to get married soon and wants a taste of life (Kilani, 1997, p. 6).

Thus, Sophia separates her way from Arian at the beginning of the novel. After staying in Dubai, Arian met a Muslim woman named Shams who is a dancer. Therefore, Shams cause a spark in Arian and leads him to search about Islam with an unquenchable thirst. The investigation leads him ultimately to turn to Islam. He is too involved with the foundations of this right religion that refuses marriage with Shams. In his vision, Shams is a Muslim in words and not accordance with the standards of marriage in Islam. In his familiarity with Islam, Arian, who changes his name to Muhammad Ali, gets acquainted with a pious and noble woman named Mason who complies with the standards of religion and Islamic values; this introduction leads to marriage.

In Jakarta's Virgin, exposing to unfair charges due to counter the Communists, Fatemeh decides to marry a classmate, Abol Hasan, to protect the reputation of her family; in this regard, she consults with her father. Haji Mohammad Idris notes that she has postponed the affairs herself. He states that marriage is a serious action and has specific criteria; she should be careful that harsh conditions do not compel her to this decision (Kilani, 2005, pp.49-50).

Stating the dialogue between the father and the daughter, the author aims to instill the idea that mature girls should be free to select their future husbands, what was the need of Arab community at the time. In a dialogue between Zaim and Fatemeh, Zaim proposes marriage to Fatemeh; Fatemeh makes him aware of Islamic principles and commands, "محرمٌ له شرعاً الزواج من رجلٍ لا دينَ له" (meaning, it is forbidden in Islam to marry a man with no religion) (ibid, p. 31).

Every page of the novel propagates Islamic beliefs and values through the real and tangible the events required for society. In *The Man Who Believed*, Arian refuses to marry Shams because the spiritual, moral and religious mutual understandings are very important in marriage. After being informed of Arian's Islam, Shams goes to him to provide marriage arrangements; but Arian notes that Shams is strange to Islamic criteria he has learned, her wearing is not suitable and his harsh make up is not proper (Kilani, 1997, p. 87).

For the same reason, in response to excitement emotional that perhaps somehow rose from the torment of conscience in connection with the Shams, he murmurs that he cannot live with a woman who is an inherited Muslim because she has learned just some common practices of religion. As she has not a deep understanding of religious affairs, she does not differs from any European and American women or with Christian, Jewish and other nations' women who are submitted to only a superficial shell of religion. For him, true love is nothing but a continuity of spirit in the shadow of religious beliefs. In his novel, Najib believes in a love leading to marriage in the light of Islamic teachings away from vulgarity and promiscuity because love and lust are very different. The more love can lead woman and man to peace coast, the more will damage to pure human emotions. Matrimonial alliance is royal road followed by comfort and mental and emotional peace; it keeps people safe from social unhealthy injuries.

C. Equal Rights for Men and Women

The freedom of men and women has been proposed in the contemporary period; but equality of men and women's rights has a long history. Arab world oppress women a lot in this respect and many women has been deprived of their true rights. May Ziade, the famous Christian writer, argues that the first person who was kindly to woman was Jesus Christ who established equality between man and woman. Then, the woman's position was enhanced with the advent of Islam because it regards man and women equal in all cases except witnessing and heritage in an Arab environment where no prestige had been defined for women. It dealt severely with false belief that is a shameful stain on the forehead of Arab history. Instances of this type of belief are "Death is better than living for woman" and "The highest glory is the survival of boys the death of girls" (Amin, p.72).

Modern Arab history is full of events that are indicative of violations of women's rights, especially in the lower classes. One can articulate the deprivation of employment, lack of financial independence, not having the right to choose a spouse and so on as some examples. Clearly, the foundation of all this inequality is gender discrimination while each gender has unique privileges in particular fields and common attributes in many other fields. Thus, one cannot speak of the equality of men and women regardless of the characteristics of each gender. Surely, the most correct way is to put each one in its own proper place, not to put woman instead of a man or a man instead of woman.

It is a mistake by intellectuals who want to teach girls to live the same as boys; in this regard, they will suppress their feminine qualities and they will impose a dangerous damage to society (Pamela, Wallace, & Tyler, 2001, p. 86).

This claim is seen in some parts of the novel; when the party leader speaks to students:

“Women’s chastity is not different from men; it is cruel not to assign limitations for men in this regard while we have determined some for women. It is necessary for our new life to continue equal rights for both men and women.” (Kilani, 2005, p. 18)

With these demagogic and seemingly plausible slogans, Communist Party officials stimulating emotions and try to tarnish the sacred realm of Islamic values. They are fully aware of the dire need of Muslim communities, especially women and their annoying restrictions. Hence, they choose the defenders position and by pointing to the weaknesses. In this way, people suck their poisonous ideas over time in the community. In such circumstances, Fatemeh goes on the scene to illuminate the minds; she states:

“Surely, we are wrong if we think that women are exactly like men because science also insists that each of men and women has particular nature. Male hormones are different from women. They have different muscular strength; their physiological functions are not the same. It is not possible to disregard these facts; is this physical and mental combination without affecting? These epic sermons and speeches are not scientific; I am going to deal with facts (Kilani, 2005, pp. 18-19).

According to the above, it can be found well that the writer tries to argue that the difference between creations of men and women cannot be denied; but this difference is not an obstacle to the participation of women in social and economic affairs.

It was announced earlier that Fatemeh’s father has authorized him in marriage; this is another reason for the equal rights of men and women in every walk of life.

D. Women’s Chastity and Avoidance of Indecency

In Arabic culture, women were confined in the four walls called the house; it prevented him to go out to pay only to domestic affairs. Perhaps, this has defined their dress. Many contemporary Arab scholars such as Hafez Ibrahim, Qasim Amin, and Jamil Sedghi al-Zahawi have been against this idea and they agree with women’s liberation because they believe that hijab is the root of women’s backwardness and their unqualified restrictions. They argue that hijab is cumbersome for women and prevent their activities in community. From the perspective of this group, hijab has not a place in Sharia and Muslims’ habit from some other nations. In fact, when one talks about women’s freedom, people call for Western freedom that is equal to promotion of promiscuity. Contrary to these authors, some moderate intellectuals have risen in recent history of the world with remarkable ideas. For instance, May Ziade states that:

“Femininity is the noblest and greatest blessing that has been given to woman; if she goes away from it and moves out of the circle, everything will suffer, her life be disturbed, and she will get away from the purpose for which she has been created. He says: we need strongly women with male innovation regardless of losing their refined femininity such as affection, sweet mood, and dilution.” (Ziade, 1983, p. 181)

Freedom, from the perspective of this latter group, is releasing from ignorance and freedom of choice, which is contrary to the Western concept of freedom.

May Ziade states in describing woman’s chastity:

“A woman should be like flower surrounded by thorns; thorns are nothing but her chastity, purity and latency.” (Ziade, 1913, p. 60)

Kilani has frequently underlined the genuineness of chastity and modesty of Muslim women in his novels. He tries to induce the reader that women’s freedom is compatible with their covering in Islamic communities. As a committed writer to Islamic principles, he has understood in his life, especially after membership in the Muslim Brotherhood and staying in towns away from home, to respect Muslim women. He has never presented a vulgar description of female appearance; when needed, he refers to few points in short. His portrayal of Fatemeh wearing in the novel represents his view on this issue:

“A young unknown girl will dig down the path while he is going to the platform from where the party’s leader speaks, about 20 years old, more beautiful than anything are her eyes shining vitality of life, faith and greatness. She wears loose clothing with long sleeves, she has a long white scarf covering all her hair; her face seems bright and beautiful (Kilani, 2005, p. 18).

According to Kilani's remarks, it can be found that Fatemeh’s hijab and wearing is more prominent than her other appearance characteristics; he just refers to the shining of her eyes in few words. The description about Fatemeh’s hijab indicate that hijab is not an obstacle to progress and fighting; but it is a favorable factor against all ethical principles.

Elsewhere, when Fatemeh has no choice but to meet with the leader of the party for saving her father and her fiancé she goes to his palace; she must go to the palace due to the invitation of the representative’s wife. The party’s leader describes Fatemeh in these words:

“It was near ten when the leader returned home at night. He saw a young girl sitting with her husband; she wore loose clothing with long sleeves, she had a long white scarf” (ibid, p. 170). Fatemeh’s wearing is mocked many times by his friends during the fighting:

“Eyes care for her when Fatemeh came into office; a girl approached him and said: the saint declines; then she laughed. Another person murmured: she wears angels’ clothes in the age of Satan; the third one said: I swear his face is beautiful and impressive; but why she is here?” (ibid, p. 125)

Chastity and the veil of Muslim women stand out more than anything in these meetings. Fatemeh’s meeting in prison with her fiancé brings both joy and vitality. Abul Hasan says “الانفجار المنظم له اتجاه واحد يا حبيبي”; he uses the word beloved. Fatemeh is embarrassed after hearing this word, fells her head down from modesty and looks less to her fiancé (Ibid, p.150). This is an instance of Muslim women’s chastity and decency, which is stated in Al-Noor Sura in Quran. In the final scene of the novel, which is Fatemeh’s martyrdom, sentences and phrases are full of spiritual sanctity of the character of Fatemeh:

“Fatemeh returned in a wooden coffin while her white and clean clothes were soaked in blood. In the dark of night, the criminals shot her and ended her life. Jakarta’s virgin became a martyr while he had a red rose with some thorns in her hands, smile of satisfaction on her lips, and a tiny Quran in her pocket. Her long eyelashes were wet with tears of eternal love.” (Ibid, p. 264).

Referring to the Quran in Fatemeh’s pocket, Najib tries to insist on the firm faith and true belief of Fatima in the valuable principles of Islam.

Najib’s novel *The Man Who Believed* is not void of these types of descriptions. Muslim women’s modestly covering is declared many times by Arian:

When Shams goes to meet him in a mosque, Arian warns him in a blaming view; because you have not hijab, it is not proper to meet me in this wearing (Kilani, 1997, p. 87). In this way, he affirms the reason for lack of his consent to marry with Shams. He says that because Shams has decided to quit drinking, dancing, ..., and even she has decided to say prayer and fast, her deeds are not for God, but for Arian’s satisfaction. These deeds are hypocrisy and dissension, which is against real virtue of a Muslim woman.

E. Women in Public Life and Family

Mother of has a special sanctity in all human societies. This status is more important in Islamic Eastern societies. She has a great influence in the upbringing of children. Righteous woman is a key to survival and prosperity of family and the society. Woman in family influences on three basic axes:

First axis relates to the status of women that is very important in the strength of the society. Education system should arrange accurate and consistent plans in this regard to foster a generation emblazoned with intellect and literature.

The second axis relates to the impact of women in the economy and the income and expenditure of family life.

The third axis relates to the sensory and emotional impact of women on family spirit. A righteous woman streams the fragrance of purity and honesty in the statue of the family.

Women are not one-dimensional in the vast majority of Kilani’s novels; but most of them can rise and shine in the economic, political, and social fields. However, all the abilities are formed and fostered in the context of home and family. Accordingly, the existence and identity of the women in Kilani’s novels are realized through the presence in family. Islam strictly repeats it. In economic affairs, women of Kilani’s novels try to support the family as the men. This is observable clearly in Abdul Motajali’s *Wife*. The household wife cope with economic affairs as well as administrating fostering children. In Najib’s novels, women always thought of the welfare of his family and they have a close relationship with every member of the family. Family is a sweet and friendly haven in which potential talents are realized. Setting such families close each other together will naturally form an ideal society.

In Jakarta’s *Virgin*, traces of Fatemeh’s love to her father, mother, fiancé and other family members are remarkable. Heroic efforts of Fatemeh in selling everyday life accessories to pay for the release of her father reflect this love. Occasional Fatemeh’s whispers with her father, listening to advice by her father in the chaos of life like when she is tired of many accusations. In such situation, when she resorts to her father and complains about her weakness, the father says, “Leave them to die from anger” (Kilani, 2012, p. 47). These few words calm her. It shows continuous and helpful communication between family members. Because Fatemeh grew up in a family of scholars and ethics, the writer tries to suggest for the society that Islam is not opposed to women’s social activities. Giving these patterns, Kilani aims to clear the way for contemporary Arab women in these areas because female characters in his novels are exactly taken from Indonesia during the years of the Communist Party presence in this Muslim country.

Another important female character in his novels, as stated before, is Arian’s wife, Mason, in *The Man Who Believed*. She is an instance of a Muslim, committed and family-loving woman who is regarded as a helper for her new Muslim husband. Kilani’s portrayal of Mason represents his view about woman:

“Mason was a Damascene with deep and sincere emotions. She had been fostered in a home full of knowledge and grace while she had cleverness, intelligence and pure nature. Mason worked in a school in Dubai; she took part in social and religious activities with other women. She was a member of Social Reform Society in Dubai and um al-Nian Population in Ajman. Compliance with truth could be found in her activities. She participated in meetings, held conferences, criticized new books, wrote materials for Islamic pages of newspapers and magazines; she had released some short publications about women’s issues.” (Kilani, 1997, p. 105)

Perhaps, it can be acknowledged that by describing Mason, Najib tries to promote religious and social activities although only this novel talks frankly about women participation in social affairs. Due to these few lines, Arab women thank to his hard work and effort in fertilizing culture of Arab societies by their involvement of women in social affairs.

Clearly, Kilani has valued highly the role of women in other economic, educational and emotional areas. Maybe, his precaution in the significant absence of women in social affairs results from his fear of undermining women's very original essence in fostering an educated generation.

VI. CONCLUSION

Studying the novels of Najib Kilani, especially *The Man Who Believed* and *Jakarta's Virgin* shows that Kilani is a Muslim and committed author who employs all his concerns for promotion and dissemination of Islamic values. Kilani discusses women and their issues in most of his novels.

What can be taken from his novels, are as follows:

Female characters of Najib Kilani's novels are not one-dimensional characters; but they can present and take part in all social, economic, and political areas. Contrary to previous authors and some contemporaries, Kilani seeks to describe the appearances of woman to highlight vulgarity; but he describes female appearances in short when needed. In his perspective, hijab will not hinder the development and it is not an obstacle for participating in community.

Female characters of his novels take part in many social, political, and economic activities; sometimes independent of men. However, women's personality and identity is formed only in the context of home and family; she finds mental and emotional peace along with other members of his family. Deep emotions exist among all members of the family and women are the center of this type of relationship. A household wife copes with economic affairs as well as administrating fostering children.

For Kilani, marriage is a very important issue calling for the assistance of both men and women in selecting the partners; in addition, the key for survival and salvation of marriage is the availability of common cultural, religious and social areas. Kilani believes that the presence of significant differences in ethos and attitudes of women and men is a fundamental obstacle to the continuation of life. In most of his novels, Najib tries to propagate the principles of Islam; he has never allowed destroying Islam's holy realm by superstition and insults. Kilani's novels are adoptions of actual events of his time. His characters are usually in conflict with oppression and colonization; they are preoccupied with religion and religious principles.

Since women form half of a society, it is suggested for researchers as well as lawyers to focus on job security for women in their community because most of the theories have never gone further than paper sheets in Arab countries, especially Egypt, that one sees many oppression and contempt for women. These ideas have been admirable only in books and journals; but they have no voice in minds and reality. It is necessary for educated women to prove that they have no decision to occupy men's positions; but they aim to lead family and therefore society towards excellence and growth by two amazing wings of men and women.

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