

# Unearthing Ideology in Najib Al-Kilani's *Adhrā' jākrtā* (*Jakarta's Virgin*): A Critical Study

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**Abstract** While existing scholarship has extensively examined various aspects of Al-Kilani's works, a critical analysis of the ideological dimensions within *Adhrā' Jākrtā* (*Jakarta's Virgin*) remains underexplored. This study seeks to fill this gap in literature. By delving into the novel's ideological underpinnings, the study contributes fresh insights into the existing body of literature. Our analysis will illuminate the complex interplay of ideologies within the narrative, enriching our understanding of Al-Kilani's literary contributions and their significance within the socio-political context of contemporary Jakarta. This study explores the novel's complex ideological landscape and challenges dominant power structures in Jakarta through literary analysis, close reading, and critical and postcolonial theory. The analysis centers on Al-Kilani's utilization of Islamic ideology as a lens to critique the shortcomings of communist policies, particularly concerning social justice and individual freedoms. The study illuminates how female characters, portrayed as agents of change, defy traditional constraints, and actively pursue social and personal growth. The work examines how Islamic community and social equality principles are presented as a potential alternative to the divisive elements inherent in communist class structures. The analysis concludes that the narrative is a committed investigation into Islamic ideology set within a work of fiction. The characters, particularly female characters are represented in line with Islamic beliefs, highlighting Al-Kilani's distinct creative voice.

**Keywords** Communism; Gender role; Islamic Ideology; Najib Al-Kilani; Social critique

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## Introduction

Literature and ideology have a long-standing, complex relationship. Creative works can be shaped by the prevailing ideologies of their time, even if the author isn't consciously intending to promote a particular viewpoint. Barada says: "Any conception of literature, no matter how much it distances itself from ideology or declares its denial and opposition to its concepts, inherently involves a clear ideological dimension, whether intended or not" (114-115). This means humans have relied on ideology as a theory that encompasses all literary works, including poetry, theatre, and novels, since the early 20th century (Belhasna 92). The influence of ideology has permeated literary works, as humans have relied on ideology as a theory that encompasses all literary works, including poetry, theatre, and novels, since the early 20th century, starting with the epic works of Homer (Ragheb 80). Novels, regardless of style or content, are inevitably shaped by the prevailing ideologies of their time. However, the most successful novels transcend mere ideology by weaving artistic beauty and imagination into their exploration of reality.

In this way, the novel becomes a powerful vessel for conveying the author's cultural perspectives, ideas, and messages to readers. Furthermore, from the novel's inception until today, the presence of ideology in novels is more prevalent than in any other literary genre (Halawani 28). Al-Kilani presents his ideological message through characters who engage in dialogues, express their viewpoints, and react to events. This interplay creates a dynamic exploration of ideas within the novel's aesthetic framework. Readers are drawn in by the characters' interactions, encouraging them to engage with the various perspectives and potentially identify with those that resonate most (Rumaisa 20).

Al-Kilani, a prominent Egyptian novelist, infused his diverse literary works with Islamic ideology. Exploring the struggles of Muslims beyond the Arab world, novels like *Jakarta's Virgin* and *Nights of Turkistan* depicted their resistance against colonialism and communism in Indonesia and Central Asia. Al-Kilani also addressed social and political issues within Egypt, tackling themes of oppression and the yearning for freedom in works like *Confessions of Abdel-Motjalli*. A prolific writer with over seventy works, he championed tolerance, Islamic values, and the triumph of good. Drawing inspiration from Islamic history, his works, while avoiding explicit depictions, often reflected the realities of Muslim nations, as exemplified by *Jakarta's Virgin* which highlights the plight of Indonesian Muslims caught in the ideological conflict between communism and Islam.

Al-Kilani's *Jakarta's Virgin* is more than just a captivating story; it's a canvas

of competing ideologies. This study delves into the novel, analyzing its ideological underpinnings. By examining Al-Kilani's presentation of diverse perspectives and the socio-political context, we aim to understand the novel's deeper meaning. We explore how *Jakarta's Virgin* portrays identity, power, and social transformation within postcolonial Indonesia. Through a close analysis, we will uncover the ideological influences that shape the characters, the narrative, and the novel's message. This study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the novel's engagement with social and political issues and the role of literature in reflecting the realities of contemporary Indonesia.

To understand the novel's ideology, this study draws on postcolonial theory, cultural studies, and literary criticism. These frameworks will allow us to critically analyze power dynamics, cultural hegemony, and resistance within the novel. We will also examine how *Jakarta's Virgin* explores identity formation and social stratification. By situating the novel within Indonesia's literary and socio-political landscape, considering its history, culture, and social issues, we aim to understand the specific ideologies embedded in the narrative. This multifaceted approach will provide a deeper appreciation of *Jakarta's Virgin* as a commentary on contemporary Indonesia. While existing studies may touch upon pertinent themes or elements, a thorough investigation that meticulously dissects the novel's core ideology and its intricate network of interconnected ideas is lacking. This present study endeavors to bridge this critical gap.

### **Analysis**

Al-Kilani's gripping novel, *Jakarta's Virgin*, transports readers to the heart of Indonesia's tumultuous 1965, a period marked by a fierce ideological struggle. Set against this volatile backdrop, the narrative delves into the plight of Muslims caught between a burgeoning communist movement and a rising tide of secularism. Al-Kilani sharply critiques manipulative politicians who exploit the anxieties of the masses to further their agendas, igniting the flames of religious and political division. The story centers around Fatemeh, a young Muslim woman navigating this complex and perilous landscape. Thrust into the ideological storm, Fatemeh embodies the struggles of a generation caught in the maelstrom of change. With fiery pronouncements dripping with disdain for religion and a troubling undercurrent of sexism, Comrade (leader) captivated the university. A charismatic communist leader, he weaved promises of liberation into his speeches, stirring the youthful yearning for change within the student body. However, beneath the surface of his passionate pronouncements lurked a disquieting view of women—mere pawns in the grand

game of revolution. The opening of the novel sets the stage for this clash, with the communist leader's speech advocating a radical agenda, including a distorted interpretation of women's liberation.

The narrative highlights a striking contrast between Islamic and communist ideologies. From an Islamic perspective, female chastity is portrayed as a fundamental aspect of a woman's identity (Talibi 46). This clash of worldviews fuels the novel's central tension. The communist leader's anti-religious rhetoric, while seductive to those seeking liberation from tradition, creates a dilemma for characters grappling with their faith and societal expectations. The novel becomes a battleground for ideologies, forcing characters like Fatemeh to confront their values amidst immense societal pressure. The communist leader's speech ignites violent clashes between Islamists and communists, leading to bloodshed and the imprisonment of innocent people, including members of the Masjumi party. Fatemeh fiercely defends her faith, disrupting the leader's agenda. Facing resistance, the leader resorts to a smear campaign to silence dissent and damage Fatemeh's reputation within the college. "It suffices to stir up the rumor, saying that her father is a former Dutch spy and receives foreign aid. Weave stories around her" (Al-Kilani 37). Fatemeh's unwavering defiance incurs a heavy price. Ostracized within the university, she faces the agonizing reality of her father and fiancé abducted by the Communist Party, likely orchestrated by the vengeful "Leader." Yet, her spirit remains unbroken. Her courage, derived from her trust in God and His justice, made her cry out to the president, saying "You tyrant, you who know no mercy. You beasts, God will surely take revenge on you!" (107). Fatemeh issued a chilling warning, invoking divine retribution from the Quran, citing the tale of the unjust village as a reminder of God's wrath (213). However, the President's response reflects a harsh reality: a policy of zero tolerance for Islamists (222), mirroring the Communist ideology's emphasis on material force over compassion (169).

Fatemeh here emerges as a symbol of unwavering faith, courageously defending Islam. Rooted in her religious principles, she finds strength and resilience. The narrative hints at a potential path of martyrdom, reflecting her father's influence, who mourns her loss but finds solace in her status as a national and Islamic symbol. *Jakarta's Virgin* portrays a violent clash between communism and Islam, culminating in a thwarted attempt to overthrow the government. It exposes the brutality of communism through acts like the killing of scholars and the destruction of Islamic institutions. "But you kill your enemies...you kidnap your opponents, or you persecute them" (28). The brutality of communism is evident in the propaganda they instill in the minds of their followers. This is exemplified in the party pamphlet that

the electrical engineer pulled out of his pocket and read aloud, "Whoever does not support our movement and does not help us is a sinful reactionary, and the only solution for such people is their annihilation" (68).

### **The Ideological Significance of the Title.**

Titles function as gateways, offering glimpses into an author's vision. Batqa says, "Upon interpreting the title, the features of the text, and the space of the author's intellectual and artistic visions become clear" (196). *Adhrā' jākrṭā* is no exception. This seemingly straightforward noun phrase acts as a cornerstone, shaping our initial understanding of the novel and its central conflict. The Arabic word "adhrā" means "virgin," and it frequently denotes innocence or purity. Given that the story is set in an era of ideological turmoil, Jakarta or its people may be perceived as having lost their innocence or as struggling to uphold traditional values. The word "virgin" carries a strong symbolic weight, suggesting purity, innocence, and perhaps even vulnerability. In a religious context, it evokes the Virgin Mary, hinting at a character embodying these qualities. However, the possessive structure of *Jakarta's Virgin* introduces a sense of ownership and potential threat. This title piques our curiosity, prompting us to question who the "virgin" is and the dangers she might face within the turbulent city of Jakarta. An additional religious meaning for the term "adhrā"(virgin) is a woman who has never been married. This could represent the possible danger that the increasing tide of secularism or communism poses to traditional religious beliefs in an Islamic environment.

The term "virgin" can symbolize a pivotal female character, embodying purity and innocence. In *Jakarta's Virgin*, Fatemeh embodies this, struggling to uphold morals amidst opposing philosophies. The term also evokes the Virgin Mary, suggesting a character with similar virtues. However, the possessive "Jakarta's" introduces a sense of ownership and a potential threat to this purity. "Jakarta" stands for the vibrant capital of Indonesia, a microcosm of the nation's intricate social and political environment. "Jakarta's virginity" may represent a society on the verge of transformation, torn between the appeal of emerging ideologies like communism and the stability of the status quo. Alternatively, it may imply a loss of innocence for Jakarta's people, a lost and simpler era before the ideological upheaval.

The title, *Jakarta's Virgin* serves as a gateway to the novel's core themes. It signifies purity, honor, and potentially, the protagonist's vulnerability. Beyond a literal interpretation, it suggests a threat to Indonesia's national integrity. The novel explores the clash of ideologies through diverse characters. Al-Kilani masterfully utilizes this multiplicity to showcase the interplay between Islamic principles and

contrasting ideologies, particularly communism. By leaving the interpretation open, he encourages readers to discuss the richness of the book's subjects and the effects of ideological upheaval on people and society.

### **Conservative Ideological Fundamentalism:**

*Jakarta's Virgin* explores the intricacies of conservative Islamic ideology, underscoring its focus on preserving traditional values. The story introduces a group of intellectuals who champion Islam as the ultimate solution to the societal challenges facing the nation. This can be seen in the words of the novelist when he says: "The advent of Islam in our country was a revolution against corruption, injustice, subservience, and slavery. It was a catalyst for noble values in the hearts of individuals and the birth of our civilization. This is a fact that remains constant throughout ancient and recent history" (20). *Jakarta's Virgin* explores the complexities of conservative Islamic ideology within the context of Indonesia's social unrest. It introduces a faction of intellectuals who believe a return to stricter Islamic principles could offer solutions to the nation's problems, including corruption. This notion is reinforced in the novel through the words of the writer when he says: "The true mujahid is the one who liberates himself from delusion, fear, and polytheism before stepping onto the battlefield. War does not become jihad unless its goal is to elevate the word of God. Then, people will rejoice in freedom, dignity, and security. The word of God is justice" (111). In another powerful statement, Fatemeh underscores the importance of returning to foundational principles. She fervently emphasizes the benefits of reclaiming core values, suggesting it could be a path towards societal betterment. In one of the passages, she says: "The concept of Halal (lawful) and Haram (forbidden) is a religious belief originating from Allah and conveyed through His noble prophets. It surpasses human thought and imagination. Murder is forbidden, theft is forbidden, and no philosophy can undermine these fundamental principles" (19). Fatemeh embodies the belief that a return to, and unwavering adherence to, divine law offers the answer to Indonesia's social and political turmoil. However, her conviction is coupled with a keen eye for hypocrisy. She boldly declares, "You are not representative of Sharia. Sharia is not a philosophy that accepts truth and falsehood, but it is a divine reality" (28). This statement, directed likely at those who manipulate religion for their gain, reveals a nuanced understanding of Islam. The novel, through Fatemeh, appears to advocate for Islam as a comprehensive way of life, one that emphasizes the pursuit of truth and rejects distortions of its principles (Talibi 28). This ideology advocates for the universal application of Islam's divine principles, potentially as a solution to the social and political issues plaguing Indonesia.

The narrative delves deeply into the intricacies of conservative Islamic ideology, highlighting its strong emphasis on preserving traditional values. It likely examines how this perspective interacts with, and potentially conflicts with, other belief systems, such as Christian missionary endeavors. By incorporating this broader viewpoint, the story would offer a richer portrayal of Indonesia's diverse religious landscape during this tumultuous period, shedding light on the dynamic interplay of faiths and ideologies.

Active missionary groups that possess schools, hospitals, rice, flour, money, and books operate freely. They release media filled with religious propaganda and historical falsehoods, organize public conversion celebrations, and distribute food aid and clothing to those who support or convert to Christianity. (83-84)

The novel transcends a singular focus on Islam, presenting a compelling counterpoint in the form of communist ideology. The novelist unveils the core tenets of this ideology, driving the rebel faction to dismantle the existing government. A glimpse into their ideology can be gleaned from the words of the coup leader, who likely proclaims:

We will make the president a bridge that we cross to reach the pinnacle of power, and then we will crush him like an insect. He is the remnant of retrogression and bygone eras, and the banners of revolution will wave triumphantly in the streets of Jakarta and across thousands of green islands. (11)

The narrative highlights the growing tension between communism and Islam in Indonesia, as revolutionaries aim to establish a communist state, conflicting with the nation's Islamic identity. It exposes the core principles of communism, which reject metaphysics, religious texts, and traditional values. It advocates for their dismantling and a singular focus on material gain, challenging the moral and ethical frameworks traditionally set by religion. This is confirmed by what the president said in this context, "What a devil you are. I only believe in the material power that I possess, while they believe in God. But God is not material, and the only true material that shapes and influences is..."(169). This highlights an explicit call for atheism, rejecting supernatural faith as a foundation for life. This call is made by the highest pyramid of power, showing flexibility and cooperation with the revolutionaries. Communist ideology in the novel employed espionage, surveillance, and the moni-

toring of ideas within Indonesian society to achieve its political objectives.

The leader would quietly and swiftly move within the section of the party's intelligence agency, glancing at the numerous massive files that filled the horizon, hiding their serious content. The intelligence section was divided into departments, each specialized in religious, political, or cultural factions across the country. They did not forget the files related to prominent writers, poets, and even influential Sufi sheikhs. (33)

The veneer of idealism in the narrative is stripped away to expose the brutality of communist ideology. The vision, forged in "iron" and fueled by "fire," promises radical societal change, but at a devastating cost: the purging of religious beliefs, cultural identities, and political dissent—a chilling echo of "ethnic purification." The narrative suggests a connection between these harsh tactics and the repressive policies employed by Stalin and his successors. This is confirmed by the leader of the revolutionary movement:

Anyone who does not support our movement and does not assist us is a backward and wicked individual. The only solution for people like them is death. Religions are destined to disappear, and old beliefs and traditions are on the path of extinction. Those who hold religions sacred and cling to their coattails are nothing but flawed individuals, failures in life, or deviants among humans. (68)

The passage exposes a chilling aspect of communist ideology: its iron fist of conformity. Dissent is ruthlessly extinguished, with any deviation from the communist method or ideology dismissed. This likely extends to the realm of religious faith, particularly Islam. The narrative depicts communism as a rigid and intolerant system, incapable of fostering dialogue or collaboration with opposing viewpoints.

Al-Kilani's novel explores the ideological clash between Islamic faith and secularism. This conflict hinges on the concept of divinity. Secularists, exemplified by the Muslim detainee, reject religious tenets and the supernatural. Their materialistic worldview denies the validity of religious faith, viewing it with skepticism as the "opium of the masses." For religious characters, faith offers a moral compass, a source of solace, and a connection to a higher power. Secularists, however, view religion as an impediment to progress and a tool for social manipulation. "Those who sanctify religions and cling to them are nothing but the disabled, the failures in their



lives, and the deviants from humanity” (68). This clash of perspectives drives much of the novel’s emotional tension, forcing characters to grapple with their own beliefs in the face of opposing ideologies.

### **Ideology of Colonialism**

While religious fundamentalism and communist ideology dominate Al-Kilani’s novel, a subtler yet significant force lurks beneath the surface—colonialism. This ideology presents colonial powers as the custodians of order, masking their exploitation and controlling nature. Al-Kilani narrates through Fatemeh’s mother how the Indonesian people confronted Dutch and Japanese colonialism. Her mother recounted her memories of Dutch colonialism, the brutal battles it fought against oppressed citizens, and how Japan expelled the Dutch, occupying the country. She described the fierce war between the Japanese and the Dutch on land and at sea (86).

*Jakarta’s Virgin* excels in its exploration of a multifaceted ideological landscape. Through a skillfully crafted cast, the novel brings contrasting viewpoints to life. Characters’ interactions and debates, expressed through powerful dialogue and actions, form the foundation of the narrative’s aesthetic appeal. The richness of world-building stems not just from evocative language but also from the tapestry of diverse beliefs held by its characters, reflecting the intricate ideological conflicts that define the real world.

### **Ideology Through Fatemeh’s Eyes**

The novel showcases the creative power of the human mind, meticulously crafted by an author to bring imaginative ideas to life. As a skilled storyteller, the novelist immerses readers in a vibrant world filled with characters and their inner struggles. These characters represent a range of ideas and ideologies, often clashing due to conflicting beliefs or contradictions between their ideals and actions. Through its diverse characters and perspectives, the novel serves as a bridge, fostering empathy, understanding, and a deeper appreciation for the complexities of human thought and behavior in our multifaceted world.

Al-Kilani’s *Jakarta’s Virgin* goes beyond a straightforward story, crafting a diverse cast of characters that serve as windows into the novel’s core conflict: ideology. Through their varied backgrounds and beliefs, their interactions and debates reflect broader societal tensions. Fatemeh, a college student steadfast in her Islamic faith, embodies this dynamic, representing the Islamic viewpoint amidst the novel’s ideological battles.

Concerns itself with the body and its health and satisfies its needs and desires within the boundaries set by Sharia, while simultaneously holding firmly to faith in Allah, the Almighty. It performs religious duties, does everything that pleases Allah, and avoids anything that angers Him, all in a balanced and harmonious manner that aligns with human nature. It achieves the true essence of the human self in its complete human perfection, which is in harmony with the elements of the universe and life. (Khalifa 25)

Fatemeh embodies the unwavering commitment to Islamic principles. Her convictions are not mere pronouncements; they are woven into the fabric of her being. This is evident in her resolute refusal of alcohol, a seemingly trivial act that takes on profound significance in the face of societal pressure. “By Allah (God), I will never drink alcohol! Why? Because it is forbidden” (Al-Kilani 109). These challenges, such as difficulties at university and repercussions for her family, only solidify her resolve. The weight of social and personal hardship seems to refine her faith, making it an even more potent force in shaping her actions.

Fatemeh contemplated performing the obligatory prayer and entered through a side door designated for women. She was alone, her heart pounding as she performed bowing and prostration, tears welling up in her eyes. Memories crowded her mind, trying to impose themselves on the clarity of her thoughts. She made a determined effort to push them away and focus on reciting the verses and supplications. (175-176)

Fatemeh emerges as a linchpin in the novel’s ideological war. Driven by her steadfast Islamic faith, she ventures into a treacherous world, a resolute champion against conflicting ideologies. Educated and principled, this Jakarta University graduate embodies a powerful moral compass. The narrative highlights her unwavering faith and extraordinary resilience. Her most striking features are her eyes, radiating with vitality, conviction, and a hint of regal bearing. Long-sleeved garments and a white headscarf frame a radiant and captivating face. This evocative introduction perfectly captures Fatemeh’s essence: “A strange girl made her way through the ranks. The most beautiful thing about her was her eyes, which shone with vitality, faith, and majesty. She wore a white shawl on her head that concealed her hair”. As she approached the leader, she inquired respectfully, “May I comment, sir?” (18).

Fatemeh’s initial portrayal establishes her as a young woman (twenties) embodying vitality and promise. Her eyes reflect faith and strength, while her mod-

est attire adheres to Islamic principles of virtue and purity. In her youth, she also symbolizes the potential future of Islam, a beacon of guidance and progress. Fanon notices that “the veil becomes one of the many codes of resistance to the colonizer, an attitude that applies to every human act against forms of repression” (Al-Musawi 221). This indicates her commitment to Islamic modesty, as Islam requires women to cover their entire bodies except for the face and hands. Allah (God) has forbidden women from revealing their bodies and displaying their beauty to non-mahram individuals (those who are not close relatives) to prevent them from becoming an object of attention and to avoid causing temptation and mischief in society. Fatemeh’s character shatters the misconception that Islamic dress, such as the hijab, restricts a woman’s agency. Her active engagement in the social, political, and economic arenas serves as a powerful testament to the compatibility of religious attire with female empowerment.

Delving into the psychological makeup of Fatima Haji, we find a proud and highly self-confident character, strong in argument and logic, intelligent, rising above temptations, a woman of principle and message that makes her shout in the face of the atheist leader: “There are no half-solutions in principles” (27). Her awareness enables her to understand the nature of the conflict and its entrances, and the twisted methods used by atheist culture to deceive and mislead the masses.

The narrator intensifies our appreciation for Fatemeh’s unwavering commitment. In a subsequent passage, we witness the sacrifices she makes to defend her homeland and religion:

During that time, Fatemeh stood at the top of the stairs, witnessing the bloody scene unfold. In response, she fired shots from her pistol, causing one of the three comrades to fall to the ground, drenched in his blood. With determination in her voice, Fatemeh uttered, “An eye for an eye.” (Tit for Tat) (229)

Fatemeh’s actions and beliefs are rooted in her unwavering faith as a Muslim woman. Her every word resonates with a deep love for her religion, a love that serves as the driving force behind her convictions

The concept of halal (permissible) and haram (forbidden) is a religious doctrine originating from Allah. It comes through the noble prophets, and it surpasses the limited understanding and imagination of human beings. Killing is haram, theft is haram, and no philosophy can justify these actions in the core of the image. (19)

This quote not only exemplifies her commitment to Islamic principles but also sheds light on her motivations. Her adherence to modesty extends to her interactions with men. This is evident in her encounter with the “leader” in his office. When he attempts physical contact, she issues a firm rebuke, stating, “Do not touch me” (Al-Kilani 28). This behavior indicates that she understands the boundaries between men and women. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) prohibited men from touching foreign women, as mentioned in the narration from Mu’awiyah ibn Haydah who said: the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “For one of you to be stabbed in the head with an iron needle is better for him than that he should touch a woman who is not permissible for him”) Al-Minawi 258). The leader placed his hand on her shoulder and said, “My dear.” She recoiled and moved away, saying, “Don’t touch me”(Al-kilani 28). She loves her country “For how much I love my country, oh mother...” (86). Her ethics are noble. A Muslim woman must adorn herself with noble morals and treat people with kindness. These qualities are portrayed by Fatemeh, especially when she visits Al-Hasan’s mother and offers her food and money. Therefore, the research concludes that Fatemeh demonstrates noble morals and genuine concern for the well-being of others through her actions. “He sighed with some unease and said, ‘Father, Fatemeh brought me food and water. She left us with this food and a hundred rupees, then she left’ (159). Fatemeh’s mother and Al-Hasan’s mother emerge as strong figures who raise their children with Islamic values. Their dedication reflects the importance placed on Islamic ethics within the narrative.

Fatemeh’s commitment to Islam is what Allah (God) says in the Quran. “And despair not of the mercy of Allah; for none despairs of Allah’s mercy save the unbelieving people” (The Qur’an,12: 88). This Quranic verse clarifies to us that a Muslim believer must be optimistic in facing the challenges of life and should not despair of the mercy of Allah. Fatemeh’s unwavering determination is further emphasized by her relentless pursuit of a meeting with the leader. Despite initial obstacles, she persists until she achieves her goal. This characteristic exemplifies her strong will and resilience in the face of opposition. Likewise, Fatemeh’s mother and Al-Hasan’s mother are committed to Islamic ethics, as Allah states in His noble book: “O ye who believed save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones...” ( The Qur’an, 66:7).

Fatemeh, a humanities student at the university, exemplifies the Islamic emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge. Her academic pursuits resonate with the wider Islamic concept of lifelong learning and intellectual growth. Anas ibn

Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim" (Ibn Mājah 81). Thus, Islam emphasizes the equal importance of nurturing and educating both females and males, ensuring their righteous upbringing. In matters where the genders are equal, Islam treats them equally. However, in matters where there are biological and psychological differences between them, the Sharia mandates that each gender receives appropriate nurturing that aligns with his respective characteristics. The novel features characters like Tanti, Za'im's wife, described as a beautiful woman in luxurious clothing and captivating fragrance, even outside her home. Another character, Morni, the lover of the guard commander, is depicted as a morally corrupt woman who engages in illicit relationships with Za'im in a nightclub. These descriptions contradict Islamic values emphasizing modesty, simplicity in appearance, and righteousness in behavior and relationships.

### ***Jakarta's Virgin & Resistance***

*Jakarta's Virgin* foregrounds the theme of resistance, potentially echoing the historical struggles of Muslim-majority nations against external forces like colonialism and communism. This resistance could encompass social and human rights issues arising from these external influences. The novel might delve deeper into the fascinating intersection of these challenges with the perception of women's roles within Islamic ideology. This exploration could reveal how external forces influence, or perhaps even redefine, the expectations and limitations placed upon women in a Muslim-majority society.

### **Fatemeh's Character Serves as a Potential Focal Point for This Exploration.**

Pamela (Al-kilani 86) argues that "teaching girls to live like boys is a mistake," suggesting a societal pressure to conform to a singular ideal. Fatemeh, with her deep faith and pursuit of education, might represent a counterpoint to this notion. Her beliefs could lead her to challenge the communist ideology's claims of equality, particularly regarding gender roles.

Indeed, we are mistaken if we believe that women are exactly like men because science also insists that both men and women have distinct natures. Male hormones differ from female hormones. They have different muscular strengths, and their physiological functions are not the same. These facts cannot be ignored. Does this physical and mental combination not have an impact? These grand speeches and epic speeches are not scientific. I will

address the facts. (18-19)

The novelist argues that differences in creature between men and women should not hinder women's participation in social and economic affairs. He highlights Fatemeh's father permitting her to choose her husband as an example of needed rights and equality. These ideas stem from an enlightened Islamic ideology embodied by Fatemeh. Al-Kilani emphasizes the importance of the Islamic dimension in global revolutions. The novel suggests that ideology can be a powerful motivator for characters to make sacrifices and resist oppression. As she navigates a rapidly changing environment marked by the imposition of communist ideology, Fatemeh's core principles evolve, allowing her to embody more advanced Islamic principles and engage in conscious resistance against deviations introduced by the ruling authority. The novel weaves Islamic ideology and values throughout its narrative using real-life situations. Fatemeh's decision to marry Abul Hasan emphasizes the importance of thoughtful consideration of Islamic principles. Her rejection of Zaim's marriage proposal educates readers about Islamic marital restrictions, such as the prohibition against marrying someone outside the faith. The novel presents Islamic ideology in a way that is both informative and embedded within the characters' actions and choices.

The unnamed communist leader is a key figure, symbolizing the manipulative nature of his ideology. He exploits the president's vulnerabilities, using flattery to orchestrate a political takeover (Al-Kilani 24). By leaving the leader unnamed, Al-Kilani transforms him into a broader symbol of deceit and danger. This character rejects religious values, focusing solely on indulgence in alcohol, women, and power. He promotes communism and atheism, dismissing all religious beliefs, and argues that basic needs, like hunger, justify any means to satisfy them. "The stomach shows no mercy. The same goes for sexual desires; it is just the same"(129). This text demonstrates how "the leader" is portrayed as an animal, demonstrating his moral depravity. He's portrayed as a self-centered, evil unbeliever who wants to hurt other people. This is seen in the passage that follows: "How dare you leave without informing me? It is a disgraceful act that I cannot tolerate for myself. Perhaps I can tolerate it for others. But leadership has its criteria, and this audacity will shatter my pride and reputation" (134). The passage underscores the potential for the leader to embody a harmful ideology. The unnamed communist leader's cunning manipulation and disregard for others lay bare the ruthless self-interest that can fester within communist ideology. This portrayal stands in stark contrast to Fatemeh's unwavering commitment to her principles. Her resolute resistance against

external pressures, including those potentially aligned with communist ideology, becomes a microcosm of the larger ideological conflict that drives the narrative.

The tension between religious morality and materialism is explored. Adeed, a committed Marxist, challenges traditional Islamic values by redefining “halal” (permissible) and “haram” (forbidden) through a utilitarian lens. He claims that actions advancing the communist revolution, even if they defy religious teachings, are justified (Al-Kilani, 17). This perspective, where the ends justify the means, clashes with the traditional Islamic framework, which prioritizes moral and religious principles. Fatemeh, representing steadfast faith, is poised to oppose Adeed's views, defending a more conventional interpretation of Islamic morality. She is heard saying:

Halal and haram are religious beliefs with their source being Allah. They were conveyed through the noble prophets and represent the highest example of human thought and perception. Killing is haram, theft is haram, and no philosophy can alter this reality. (19)

Fatemeh's anticipated response to Adeed's utilitarian interpretation serves as a powerful lens through which we can witness her unwavering convictions. Her words, likely laced with a keen awareness of the social and religious tensions surrounding her, will unveil a strong sense of self and an unyielding commitment to her beliefs. This dialogue promises to delve into both her psychological and behavioral aspects, painting a vivid portrait of a woman whose faith serves as the bedrock of her identity. Al-Kilani crafts Fatemeh with meticulous details, establishing her as the embodiment of a dedicated Muslim girl. Her adherence to Islamic principles permeates both her thoughts and actions. The narrative emphasizes her role as a beacon of faith, one who tirelessly calls others to the path of God. This dedication extends to a willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice in defense of her beliefs. However, Al-Kilani portrays Fatemeh's approach not through forceful coercion, but through wisdom and gentle guidance. She embodies the ideal of calling others to God with compassion and understanding. She tirelessly tries to convince Adeed of her enlightened Islamic ideas, advocating for goodness and peace. Despite their differing ideologies, Fatemeh accepts the leader's invitation for dialogue and travels to the palace for a discussion (Al-Kilani 22). However, the attempt at communication ultimately proves unsuccessful.

The dialogue between Fatemeh and Adeed highlights a key tension in the narrative: the clash between materialism and steadfast faith. Adeed, influenced by his Marxist ideology, appears unable to comprehend the depth of Fatemeh's devo-

tion, reflected in her Islamic dress and beliefs (Al-Kilani 22). Her unwavering faith contrasts sharply with Adeed's wife, who represents a more secular way of life. Through these opposing female figures, Al-Kilani invites readers to explore the profound impact of religious conviction on identity and the challenges of maintaining faith in an evolving society.

Haji Muhammad Idris stands in sharp contrast to the materialistic Adeed. Rooted in Islamic thought, he is committed to defending and spreading the principles of Sharia. His dedication goes beyond personal faith, as he actively teaches these principles to others, ensuring their preservation and relevance in society. In response to the accusations made by his captors, he would say, "I have nothing to do with all of this. I am a man who loves knowledge and progress, and I want freedom, justice, and all citizens to be brothers for my country... under the law of Allah"(76). Haji believes that those who are with God will never lose hope, as hope "beats in the hearts of believers" (119). Despite the injustice he has faced, he still says "May God forgive you" (122). A fervent advocate for the preservation and resurgence of religious principles, Haji Muhammad Idris embodies unwavering devotion that extends beyond personal practice. He actively champions Islamic law (Sharia) through mosque sermons and even engages in confrontation with revolutionary figures. This steadfast advocacy ultimately culminates in his imprisonment.

Haji Muhammad Idris's imprisonment symbolizes his steadfast faith, underscored by his resilience amid adversity. A striking detail is his inability to perform the dawn prayer call (adhan), emphasizing the importance of religious rituals in his life. The narrative likely uses metaphorical language to highlight his unyielding spirit. Denied water in his cell, his thirst recalls Prophet Jonah's prayers from the belly of the whale, suggesting that, like Jonah, Idris draws strength and solace from his faith during profound hardship. "He cried out in depths of darkness, saying, 'There is no God but Thou, Holy art Thou. I have indeed been of the wrongdoers' (The Qur'an 21:88). In another situation in prison, the man says, "I have not committed any crime. I am an elderly man, and I have surrendered my affairs to God. I will not escape until God decrees what has been destined" (Al-Kilani 195). This picture conveys the grandeur of Islam, its tenacity, and the genuineness of its adherents. The hands of those in charge have worked hard to guarantee that this picture will always be brilliant. On the other hand, communism does not acknowledge God or religion; this is clear from the jailer's comment to Hajji, "Let your God get you out of this place" (122). The communist leader states further, "I can lead a revolution against heaven itself" (41). Overall, the novel utilizes the experiences of Haji Muhammad Idris to illustrate the central conflict between religious faith and a materialistic, re-



volutionary ideology.

*Jakarta's Virgin* reveals a growing conflict between the conservative Masyumi movement and the communist agenda, heightened by the President's apparent alignment with the communist leader. Both sides utilize similar strategies, leveraging sermons and publications to spread their ideologies and rally supporters. The unnamed communist leader launches his campaign with a university lecture, laying the groundwork for his agenda. This calculated move reflects an effort to penetrate the intellectual realm and influence the younger generation, highlighting the ideological battle for dominance. In this excerpt, he states, "The chastity of women is not different from the chastity of men, and the feudal era was oppressive as it did not provide the necessary conditions for female chastity as it did for men. Our new way of life should be guided by the principle of no differentiation between men and women" (16). Then he proceeded to launch a direct attack on the divine religions, mocking them, saying, "The vague fear of hell and gods is the source of psychological complexes, nervousness, hesitation, and stagnation. It is the primary cause of the harmful negativity prevalent in various countries" (17). While the leader continues to explain his ideas and perspectives, Fatemeh intervenes by saying:

We deceive ourselves when we think that women are exactly like men. Science confirms that each has its own nature. The hormones of men are different from the hormones of women, their muscle strength is different, and their physiological functions are different. Is it correct to consider their organic and psychological makeup without any influence? (18-19)

From this excerpt, we can observe how the ideological conflict started between the two parties through their clear ideological opposition. Haji calls for peace to prevail by prioritizing Islamic principles of goodness over others that humans have imposed. The most important beliefs of Haji are evident in his statement: "I know that the conflict between truth and falsehood will persist as long as life exists." He refers to the verse in the Quran: "as to the foam, it goes away as rubbish, but as to those which benefits men, it stays on the earth. Thus does Allah set forth parables" (13:18). The conflict continues to oppose capitalist regimes, communism aims to bring the working class together, regardless of national or racial origin. Rather than national or religious identity, the proletariat and their fight against the bourgeoisie are the main subjects of attention. Communism "believes in the unity of the working class" (Alkilani 26). Fatemeh who stands for Islamic ideology says: "I believe in the unity

of all people” (27). The leader says: “We are dedicated to creating a more fulfilling life for all”. Fatemeh replies “You boast about slogans of a dignified life for all, while you practice arresting those who oppose you! How does one achieve justice by killing the innocent?” (28).

The novel highlights potential contradictions in Adeed’s communist ideology. Despite championing social equality, his behavior toward his wife reveals a stark inconsistency. The narrative suggests Adeed engages in extramarital affairs and imposes restrictions on his wife’s freedoms, exposing a disconnect between the principles he promotes and his personal actions.

Where were you?

At a party?

Why didn’t you tell me? And at Subanrio’s house specifically?

Don’t you go there every week?

But for you, it’s a different matter.

With that, he slapped her across the face, leaving behind the residue of his revolution and anger. (136)

Through the communist leader’s wife, Al-Kilani critiques the ideology’s failure to fulfill its promises. While the leader promotes a vision of equality, his wife’s demand for divorce reveals a gap between theory and practice. Her accusation—“Divorce me, I refuse injustice... You allow yourself what you don’t allow for others” (137) highlights the leader’s hypocrisy, as he restricts her freedoms while exempting himself from the same rules. This portrayal exposes a potential double standard within the system, undermining its ideals.

*Jakarta’s Virgin* explores the exploitation of women within the communist system, particularly through the leader’s casual sexual encounters, which suggest a disregard for women’s agency and their objectification. This contrasts with Tanti’s internal struggle, reflecting the tension between communist ideals of female liberation and the realities of patriarchal society. The leader’s justification—“It is purely a physiological matter... Sex is no different” (129)—reduces intimacy to a basic need, devoid of emotional or moral considerations. Influenced by this mindset, Tanti attends a party at the Foreign Minister’s residence, defying her husband’s disapproval, and justifies her actions by echoing the leader’s words: “Sex is a physiological matter.” The novel juxtaposes these perspectives, revealing how communist ideology, as embodied by the leader, risks degrading and exploiting women rather than empowering them. In contrast, the narrative portrays women

within the Islamic framework as holding a central and respected position. This respect is rooted in their understanding of their life's purpose, encompassing both rights and responsibilities. The passage specifically highlights Fatemeh as an embodiment of the Islamic ideal. She is described as a "cherished gem," valued and protected from exploitation. Fatemeh's choice to marry Abu Al-Hasan, irrespective of his financial standing, underscores her agency and commitment to Islamic values. Their exchange of the Quran during the ceremony can be interpreted as symbolizing the foundation of their life together, with the Quran serving as a guiding light against moral transgressions. "He took out a small Quran from his pocket and handed it to her, saying, "A gift from heaven... the best friend... it will fill your life with meaning." She took the Book of God and kissed it, then pressed it to her chest as her tears flowed even more" (58).

Fatemeh's martyrdom stands as a profound testament to her steadfast faith, enriched by symbolic imagery. The red rose with thorns symbolizes her passionate commitment to her beliefs, even in the face of suffering. Clutching a Quran and bearing a serene smile, she embodies peace and acceptance in her final moments. The description—"Jakarta's Virgin fell as a martyr, a red rose with thorns in her hand, a smile of contentment on her lips, and a small Quran in her pocket" (264)—highlights her solace and strength in faith. The phrase "tears of eternal love" (264) invites interpretation, possibly reflecting her devotion to God, her nation, or her ideology. Through this portrayal, Al-Kilani elevates Fatemeh's martyrdom to a symbol of reverence, celebrating her unyielding faith.

The Quran in Fatemeh's hand symbolizes her deep religious convictions, while the red rose, representing Islamic romance and noble sacrifice, contrasts sharply with the communist sickle's destructive imagery. The rose's thorns signify the suffering endured by the faithful under oppression. These symbols highlight Fatemeh's unwavering commitment to her faith and ideals. The Quran, gifted by Abu Al-Hasan, transcends its role as a religious text, embodying their pure love, shared faith, and righteous path. Clutching it in her final moments, Fatemeh's connection to the Quran suggests it accompanies her into the afterlife, reinforcing her steadfast devotion. The characters' names—Haji Muhammad Idris, Fatemeh, and Abu Al-Hasan—evoke echoes of Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Fatima, and his son-in-law Ali (Ali Ibn Abi Talib), though the novel does not explicitly present them as direct representations. This subtle allusion enriches the narrative by linking it to Islamic history and themes within a contemporary framework.

The title *Jakarta's Virgin*, linked to Fatemeh, carries profound thematic significance, evoking purity, innocence, and chastity, which aligns with her unwav-

ering moral integrity. Fatemeh is portrayed as a paragon of Islamic virtue, and her martyrdom, marked by her father's heartfelt words, "May she rest in peace... and there, there is eternity" (264), powerfully reinforces these ideals. Her sacrifice in the novel's climax symbolizes the ultimate devotion to a higher ideal, resonating deeply with Islamic values. This pivotal moment suggests the author's alignment with Fatemeh and her father's ideology, which views Islamic law as a comprehensive guide for life. The narrative's resolution, favoring this perspective, appears to advocate for a return to a traditional, holistic understanding of Islam, encompassing religion, governance, and political order.

### **Narrative Techniques**

Al-Kilani skillfully employs storytelling techniques—dialogue, foreshadowing, flashbacks, symbolism, and contrasting characters—to delve into the novel's ideological tensions. Multiple narrators offer diverse perspectives, enriching the portrayal of complex conflicts. Dialogue underscores the stark divide between communist and Islamic ideologies. For instance, Haji's exchange with his captor vividly illustrates the strength of faith against communist oppression. Through these methods, Al-Kilani effectively underscores the core principles of each ideology and the resulting clashes.

Using multiple narrators and shifting viewpoints, Al-Kilani offers a layered exploration of ideological clashes. By presenting the perspectives of characters like Fatemeh, the leader, and Haji, the narrative deepens understanding of their motivations and the forces shaping their choices. This approach builds empathy and enhances the reader's connection to the story's complexities.

Al-Kilani elevates the setting beyond mere backdrops, using enclosed spaces as potent symbols of social and ideological strife. Each location becomes a microcosm of broader societal struggles: Fatemeh's house shifts from a sanctuary to a reflection of turmoil, the palace embodies elitism and inequality, the prison represents totalitarian oppression, the newspaper office underscores media's influence, and the mosque transforms into a politicized battleground. Through these contrasting spaces, Al-Kilani crafts a vivid portrayal of societal tensions, immersing readers in the ideological conflicts at the heart of the narrative.

The novel masterfully intertwines place and time, using flashbacks to delve into characters' histories and reveal the roots of their motivations, traumas, and ideological drives. These glimpses into the past, such as Indonesia's colonial struggles under Dutch rule and Japanese occupation (20), provide essential context for understanding the present conflicts and the forces shaping the characters' actions.

Foreshadowing is a key technique in the novel, used by Al-Kilani to build tension and anticipation. Subtle hints, like Haji's uneasy observations on a near-empty ship, foreshadow a dangerous and arduous journey (61), while the title itself hints at Fatemeh's eventual martyrdom. Symbolism also plays a significant role, with enclosed spaces like Fatemeh's house reflecting societal upheaval, and the palace symbolizing elitism and inequality. Martyrdom emerges as a powerful symbol of steadfast faith, while Fatemeh's red rose with thorns can represent Islamic ideals of noble sacrifice, the suffering of the faithful, or resistance to oppression. The Quran in her hand underscores her piety and devotion, and the title's reference to "Virgin" emphasizes her purity and alignment with traditional Islamic values. These elements deepen the novel's exploration of faith, struggle, and ideological conflict.

Al-Kilani enriches his narrative through intertextuality, weaving Quranic quotations and references to hadiths to bridge his fictional world with Islamic scripture. For instance, allusions to the 'Ifk' incident, involving Prophet Muhammad's wife, add depth to the story (47). Haji's reflections on the conflict between truth and falsehood evoke the Quranic verse: "as to the foam, it goes away as rubbish, but as to that which benefits men, it stays on the earth. Thus does Allah set forth parables" (Quran 13:18). Similarly, Haji recalls the words of Prophet Dhun-Nun from the Quran: "And remember Dha'l-Nun, when he went away in anger... he cried out in depths of darkness, saying, 'There is no God but Thou, Holy art Thou. I have indeed been of the wrongdoers'" (Quran 21:88). These references create a layered narrative, connecting characters' actions to Islamic teachings and highlighting the ideological struggle at the story's core. For readers versed in Islamic tradition, these allusions deepen understanding, while for others, they underscore the characters' moral grounding and the centrality of faith in their lives.

Al-Kilani's novel utilizes repetition as a powerful tool to evoke a visceral sense of oppression and fear. The recurring phrase "capable...capable..." (32) by the leader emphasizes the constant threat looming over Indonesian Muslims. Stark terms like "executioners and the oppressors" (160) vividly depict the regime's cruelty, while the repeated comparison of religious scholars to "sheep" being slaughtered (12, 166) dehumanizes them, underscoring their perceived expendability. This repetition goes beyond conveying information; it creates urgency and emotional depth, immersing the reader in the language of oppression. The relentless use of such phrases mirrors the suffering of the Indonesian Muslim people, leaving a lasting impression. Ultimately, Al-Kilani's deliberate repetition is not merely stylistic but a compelling device to engage readers emotionally, forcing them to confront the brutal realities of oppression and the profound human toll of ideological strife.

Al-Kilani's novel rises above simple storytelling, using a blend of literary techniques to explore the intricacies of ideological conflict. Vivid metaphors deepen characterizations, dialogues, and descriptions, tackling abstract ideas like "halal" and "haram." The title of the novel serves as a metaphor for a nation wrestling with ideological clashes and seeking identity, mirroring the internal struggles of its characters. By disrupting traditional narrative structures with flashbacks, fragmented storytelling, and non-linear timelines, Al-Kilani invites readers to delve into the story's layered meanings. This approach reflects the messy, multifaceted nature of ideology itself, challenging readers to question assumptions and engage deeply with the characters' struggles. Through this innovative structure, the novel forces readers to confront the harsh realities of oppression, the human toll of ideological battles, and the complexities of navigating competing belief systems. Al-Kilani's masterful use of language and narrative form transforms the novel into more than entertainment—it becomes a profound call to reflection, sparking critical thought and encouraging readers to grapple with the complexities of the world around them.

### Conclusion

*Jakarta's Virgin (Adhrā' Jākrṭā)* by Al-Kilani is more than a compelling novel; it is a meticulously crafted exploration of ideological conflict set against Indonesia's turbulent history. Through nuanced characters like Fatemeh and Haji Muhammad Idris, the novel contrasts the rise of communism with unwavering Islamic faith. Al-Kilani employs diverse methods—preaching, publications, and imprisonment—to underscore the deep divides between these ideologies, particularly regarding societal structures, individual freedoms, and religion's role in society.

The novel's strength lies in its nuanced portrayal of ideologies. While criticizing communism's potential disregard for traditional values and individual agencies, it also acknowledges its role as a force for social justice. Fatemeh's journey illustrates how Muslim women can navigate social change with autonomy while staying grounded in their faith. Ultimately, *Jakarta's Virgin* weaves a complex ideological tapestry, highlighting humanity's enduring struggle to reconcile tradition, social justice, and personal freedoms in a world shaped by competing beliefs.

Al-Kilani strategically positions characters like Fatemeh as voices for specific ideologies, using her pronouncements to critique communism's potential flaws and dangers. Fatemeh's character arc is central to this critique. Initially depicted as a sheltered young woman rooted in Islamic values, she evolves into a vocal opponent of communism's impact on traditional beliefs. Her journey highlights the potential

for Muslim women to defend their faith and advocate for social change while staying true to Islamic principles, offering a nuanced exploration of faith, agency, and resistance.

Al-Kilani's depiction of Fatemeh challenges traditional stereotypes of Muslim women. Her steadfast faith and growing activism highlight the potential for female agency within Islamic frameworks. Fatemeh moves beyond clichés, actively opposing deviations from Islamic principles and demonstrating her dedication to social reform. Her vision extends beyond individual efforts, advocating for a united approach where both women and men work together to tackle societal issues and forge a better future. By defying rigid gender roles, Fatemeh's activism suggests Al-Kilani's support for a collaborative model that harnesses the strengths of all individuals for the collective good.

In conclusion, *Jakarta's Virgin* highlights the lasting impact of ideology on society and individuals. This analysis has deepened our understanding of the novel's exploration of faith, justice, and power in a shifting world. By uncovering the ideological tensions within the story, it reveals the complexity and enduring nature of these conflicts. The novel's rich themes encourage further study, providing insights into the relationship between ideology, social change, and human experience, and opening avenues for future exploration.

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