

INTERPRETING VIOLENCE ON RELIGIOUS STORY

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A. INTRODUCTION

Violence has been the problem of humanity which is not easy or clearly explained. Many tragedies show that roots of violence could not be reduced to a single cause. There are multiple parts that endorse conflict and rivalry which stimulate violence. These parts jumble together and mix up. Any explanation about root of violence that indicates only a single factor is not sufficient. There are perspectives that identify violence as explainable phenomenon based on various studies and their particularities. Roots of violence may be linked to psychological, political, cultural, neurological, and/or religious elements.

It is a hard fact that violence has been part of religion in its historical records. Studies and researches on relationship between religion and violence has been increased, especially, after 9/11 tragedy. Those studies can be classified into two categories. First, religion is not seen as the source of violence. This response basically says that people rarely kill each other for reasons of religious difference alone. The problems were often rooted in land, oppression, discrimination, economic, politic, or other social injustices.

In this category, the response mostly sounds too diffident by saying that religion is misused and exploited for another (secular) reason. Some similar excuses will say that people, who do violence, by definition, are not religious; in the sense they misunderstood the main teaching of religion. The argument would be like this “any one possibly has reason which is not come from religion for doing evil, such as beating, mugging, robbing, stealing, murdering, and even bombing.” Even if all religions are removed from the world, it will still have people killing each other. This kind of perspective is seen as an apology way to exclude religion from its contribution to violence.

The second category explains that religion is prone to violence. Based on this perspective, religion more or less has contributed in stimulating and nurturing a culture of violence. Religion is often called on to justify violence with reference to sacred texts, divine missions, or moral purposes. Nelson-Pallmeyer argues that the problem is actual violence at the heart of sacred texts that can reasonably cited by people to justify their own recourse to violence. Scriptures are filled with stories in which a violent God approved of war and teach hatred to the others. In every faith tradition, people can find sufficient ambiguity in founding texts and stories that may be perceived as “justification of killing” for the glory of God.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer. *Is Religion Killing Us? Violence in the Bible and the Quran*. (New York: Trinity Press International, 2003), p. 10

It seems that there is an ambiguity of religion in viewing violence. Sometime it is condemned, but in another time it is praised. In the story of *Habil* and *Qabil*, for example, violence is condemned, but it is praised in the story of *Daud* and *Jalut*. Our moral judgment to violence has been raised in such ambiguity. The construction of morality toward violence is complicated. On the one side, religion teaches its follower to respect humanity and virtue. On the other side religion also instructs them to fight against evil, even by using its kind, in attaining goodness.

Popular religious stories in this paper are narratives which come from sacred texts and reproduced by people (authors) in daily (popular) language for general public "consumption". One type of these stories is mostly (re)written for children and for educational purposes. The stories are collected randomly from available sources that written in Arabic, Bahasa Indonesia, and English.

This research is focusing on the story of *Qabil-Habil* which is narrated in Muslim culture. The story is assumed had passed through several levels of interpretation and seen as one of cultural devices in delivering religious teachings on 'the discourse of violence'. The aim of this paper is to describe images of violence from religious perspective through literary device that is religious story. How is violence depicted on the story of *Qabil-Habil* will be framed in narrative analysis.

Using narrative analysis to the story as a reading method is intended to investigate more deeply on the content, figure, plot, setting, character, and complication of the stories. Consequently, images of violence, i.e. its root, forms, response and resolution will be discovered through this analysis. In order to reach the objective, I would like to introduce some issues of theoretical framework and concept which is used in this paper, i.e. the meaning of violence, religious stories, and narrative analysis in the following passages.

B. THEORETICAL ISSUES

1. Violence: Discourse and Definition

It is not easy to define violence as acceptable definition for everyone. The meaning of violence is a cultural construction (and also political construction) which varies in meaning from one region to the other. For example, in Western regions the concept of rape nowadays includes forced sexual intercourse within a marital relationship; while in Eastern regions, rape is still defined as "forced to have intercourse outside their marriages"¹⁴⁰. The other difficulty for defining violence is that one has to make distinction between power, violence, and constraint.

We should consider that what is perceived as cruel (violent) is dependent on context and culture. A doctor who causes harm or pain to a patient in surgery could not be perceived as violent act. Magnani gives another example, "why is targeted assassination by dropping a one tone bomb from a plane on the house of alleged enemy not cruel, whereas a suicide bomber who immolates himself together with his victims is

¹⁴⁰ Freek Colombijn and J. Thomas Lindblad. *Roots of Violence in Indonesia Contemporary Violence in Historical Perspective*. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), p. 8

cruel?”¹⁴¹ It seems that violence is interchangeably meaning which depend on who has power. Cruelty or violence then is simply political words campaign that attributed to powerless party so that it is seen as enemy, evil, and immoral. Hasan Hanafi criticizes the use of this term (violence) to be more careful¹⁴². It is a dialectical power relation between one who has power and the powerless. We should be more aware that there is another form of violence which inherent in structures where injustice and domination are dissimulated so that seen as a “good” violence.¹⁴³

In order to have an understanding on violence that universally shared across cultures we have to explore several definitions. These are some dictionary meanings for violence: ‘swift and intense force’, ‘the use of physical force to injure somebody or damage something’¹⁴⁴, ‘unjust or unwarranted exertion of force especially against the rights of others’, ‘exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse’¹⁴⁵, ‘physical attack of another person’, ‘the illegal use of unjustified force, or the effect created by the threat of this’ and ‘behavior involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something’¹⁴⁶. De Vries points out the concept of violence as both empirical and transcendental or metaphysical. According to him, violence entails any cause, any justified or illegitimate force that is exerted – physically or otherwise – by one thing (event or instance, group or person, and perhaps, word and object) on another.¹⁴⁷ Based on those definitions, we may conclude that violence is “aggressive behavior with the intent to cause harm (physical or psychological) another person”.¹⁴⁸

General approaches about the root of violence can be found in two opinions: (a) violence is inherently seen as human nature; and (b) violence is socially and culturally constructed. The former argument assumes that violence is inherently implanted biologically and psychologically in our humanity. Human is essentially potential to be violent. In another word, violent behavior has its root in human nature. This nature is potentially inside human as unconscious feeling which can emerges as expression of frustration, anger, jealous, shame, and hatred. Some theories (e.g. psycho-analytic, evolutionary-biological) are built from this point of view that shows human nature has similarity to animal instinct.

The second view assumes that violence is built through cultural construction. This perspective is built upon human relationship with each other in social system so that influence people’s customs. Some theories which build their argument based on this assumption show that works of organization, division of labor, political and economic contestation for power, demography, and resources of domination have significant relation to violent behavior.

¹⁴¹ Lorenzo Magnani. *Understanding Violence: The Intertwining of Morality, Religion and Violence: A Philosophical Stance*, (Heidelberg: Springer, 2011), p. 10

¹⁴² Hanafi, Hassan. *Agama, Kekerasan, & Islam Kontemporer*. Yogyakarta: Jendela, 2001., p. 41-42

¹⁴³ *Op.cit.*, Lorenzo Magnani. *Understanding Violence ...*, p. 4

¹⁴⁴ “Violence”, Microsoft Encarta, 2004

¹⁴⁵ “Violence” Merriam-Webster, 2000

¹⁴⁶ “Violence” Lingea Lexicon, 2002

¹⁴⁷ Hent De Vries. *Religion and Violence: Philosophical Perspectives from Kant to Derrida*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 1

¹⁴⁸ Englander, Elizabeth Kandel. *Understanding Violence*, New Jersey – London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2003) p. 2

We have to consider that not all violence is the same. Assmann's typology to the variety of violence is useful to understand the differences. He suggests making distinctions between physical violence and other types of violence. Assmann's typology is merely applied to physical violence, they are: (a) the first type is *raw violence* that springs from three affective sources, namely anger, greed, and fear. This violence is typically used in one's own name and for one's own sake. (b) The second form is *legal violence* which is used against raw violence. In other words, legal violence is counter-violence that distinguishes between just and unjust. (c) The third type is *political violence* which is used to preserve power. This violence distinguishes between friend and foe. (d) The fourth form is *ritual violence* which is used by religion to offer sacrifice to God. This kind of violence was abolished by monotheism. Ritual violence rests on the distinction between pure and impure. (e) The fifth form of violence is *religious violence*, meaning violence with reference to the will of God. It stems from the distinction between friend and foe in religious sense.¹⁴⁹

2. Religious Stories

Why stories? For some (or many), the effect of story is more powerful than regular sermon. A story can touch people in one moment of life so that he/she has to make a change.¹⁵⁰ In literary field, story is an art expression from one's experience. In addition to that many diverse phenomena of spiritual culture are hidden in story, specifically, folklore.¹⁵¹ Al-Siba'i al-Bayumi defines story as a literary work of an author (or narrator) that contains art value in order to draw an event. The event could be historical, literature, social, or any thing. Portrayal of the event is written based on author's perspective, opinion, and feeling in which the story reflects his/her specific expression.¹⁵²

Another description regarding to story by Khalafallah is related to creative imagination. For him, a literary work is a product of author's creative imagination to events that are truly happened with characters that are probably fictitious; or it narrates a real character but the event is not really happened; it may narrate a real character and a real event but it is written by a specific literary style so that the story order is different from the reality, even it seems to be more likely as an imaginative character rather than the real historical character.¹⁵³

Gerald Prince says that a story consists of at least three ingredients: an initial situation, and action or event, and an outcome.¹⁵⁴ Polkinghorne treats story and

¹⁴⁹ Assmann, Jan. *Of God and Gods: Egypt, Israel, and the Rise of Monotheism*. (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008) p. 142-144

¹⁵⁰ E. Gerrit Singgih, *Exegese Kritis-Naratif*, (Yogyakarta: Fakultas Theologia Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana (UKDW), p. 10

¹⁵¹ Propp, Vladimir. *Theory and History of Folklore*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 1

¹⁵² A. Hanafi. *Segi-segi Kesusastraan pada Kisah-kisah Al-Quran*. (Jakarta: Pustaka AlHusna, 1984), p.13-14

¹⁵³ Ibid., p.13

¹⁵⁴ Luc Herman & Bart Vervaeck. *Handbook of Narrative Analysis*, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraskas Press, 2001), p. 13

narrative as synonyms. He defines both story and narrative as “the fundamental scheme for linking individual human actions and events into interrelated aspects of an understandable composite”.¹⁵⁵ In story there are important elements, such as event, literary style, structure, character, place, time, ideas, and purpose.¹⁵⁶

In the broad field of literary, story is classified into several types, they are: classically structured stories, well-made stories, minimalist stories, anti-stories, fragmentary stories, stories with no ending, stories with multiple endings, stories with multiple beginnings, stories with endings that circle back to the beginning, comedies, tragedies, detective stories, romances, folk tales, novels, theater, movies, television mini-series, and so on. The other type of story namely: anecdote, fable, parable, folklore, myth, legend, epic, drama, tragedy, comedy, parody, and satire. We can make another category for types of story regarding to its relation to other field, such as: political story, educational story, philosophical story, religious story, and so on.

Religious story from Islamic perspective is connected to the Qur'an and the hadith. This paper uses religious story as a term in which story comes from the Qur'an. Fakhrur Razi defines quranic stories as a comprehensive collection of narratives which signify to the religion, guide to the truth, call to the ultimate salvation.¹⁵⁷ There are four categories of religious stories that is mentioned in the Quran, (a) *Qasasul Anbiya* stories of the prophets, (b) stories which is related to people from the past before Islam, (c) metaphysical stories, (d) symbolic stories and parables.¹⁵⁸

Similar to Khumais classification of Quranic stories, Khalafallah points out three kinds of story in the Quran that each one has different function. The first category is story that illustrates facts with real historical characters, such as in the story of prophets. In the second category of Quranic story is allegorical story by using real historical data that aims at describing or as an easy explanation for certain (complicated) cases. The third category is story which comes from folktale or myth because of its influential effect to society (Khalafallah 2001: 120).¹⁵⁹

3. Narrative Analysis

Narrative is system of stories. It is not single story, but a collection of stories, and a collection is systematic because the stories are components that relate to one another with coherent themes, forming a whole that is greater than sum of its parts.¹⁶⁰ Genette describes three distinctive meaning for narrative. The first meaning refers to narrative statement that is the oral or written discourse that undertakes to tell of an event

¹⁵⁵ Polkinghorne, Donald E. *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*, Albany N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1988), p. 13

¹⁵⁶ A. Hanafi, *Segi-Segi Kesusastraan ...*, p. 19

¹⁵⁷ Sayyid Khumais. *Al-Qasas al-Dini baina al-Turats wa al-Tarikh*. Cairo: Maktabah al-Usroh, 2001, p. 47

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.15-17

¹⁵⁹ Khalafallah, Muhammad Ahmad. *Al-Fannu al-Qasas(i) fi al-Qur'an al-Karim*. (Cairo: Sina lin-Nasyr and Al-Intisyar al-Arabi, 1999), p. 120

¹⁶⁰ Halverson, Jeffry R., Goodall Jr., H.L., Corman, Steven R. *Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 1

or a series of events. The second meaning refers to succession of events, real or fictitious. The third meaning refers to an event the act of narrating taken itself.¹⁶¹ Traditional meaning for narrative is considered to be a sequence of events.¹⁶²

It is also helpful to make distinction between story, plot and narrative. According to Forster, story is the chronological sequence of events. Plot refers to the causal connection between those events. A narrative is the semiotic representation of a series of events meaningfully connected in a temporal and causal way.¹⁶³ It is a meaningful relation and has significant connection that constitutes narrative.

Narrative analysis constitutes two significant words, “narrative” and “analysis”. The English verb “to narrate” was defined by the Concise Oxford English Dictionary as ‘a spoken or written account of connected events, a story’. In the other side, the word ‘analysis’ derived from the verb ‘to analyze’ means ‘to consider in detail and subject to an analysis in order to discover essential features or meaning’. In this paper, narrative analysis is used as an approach to discover essential features that is consisted in a story.

In Biblical scholarship, narrative approach is used as a reading method to the sacred texts respectfully to the plot and the expression. This approach perceives context of story is one important element. In narrative approach, world and situation within the story is not directly clear. Having a respectful reading to the story is not meant uncritical reading.¹⁶⁴

Labov (1982) retains the basic component of narrative’s structure: the abstract (summary and/or point of the story); orientation (to time, place, characters, and situation); complicating action (the event sequence, or plot, usually with a crisis and turning point); evaluation (where the narrator steps back from the action to comment on meaning and communicate emotion – the “soul” of the narrative); resolution (the outcome of the plot); and a coda (ending the story and bringing action back to the present).¹⁶⁵

Another suggestion to component of narrative’s structure is described by Singgih as follow: (a) structure: it consists of sections (about action, characterization, setting, and point of view) that relate one to another; (b) plot: it is a behavioral pattern which consists of story order: introduction, development, and closing part; (c) character or characterization: a figure in the story who described as good or bad, rich or poor, and so on; (d) conflict/contrast: it could be a conflict between figures or characters in the story, or it is an inner conflict of one character; (e) setting: it is about a place of the story; (f) time: is it refer to natural order or narrative order?; (g) language style: what kind of language style is used in the story; (h) narrator: in written form of story, narrator is never show up.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶¹ Genette, Gerard. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 25-27

¹⁶² Op.cit., Luc Hermaen & , *Handbook of Narrative ...*, p. 11

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 13

¹⁶⁴ Op.cit., E. Gerrit Singgih, *Exegese ...*, p. 12

¹⁶⁵ Op.cit., Riessmann,, p. 3

¹⁶⁶ Op.cit., E. Gerrit Singgih, *Exegese....*, p. 16-18

In this paper, narrative analysis as an approach is intended to discover images of violence in religious stories as a representation of interpretative devices of Islamic culture. Narrative reading is also mean taking pleasure in reading to the story so that at the same time I could get a deeper understanding on constructions of violence. The truth of narrative accounts are not in their faithful representation of a past world, but in the shifting connections they forge among past, present, and future.¹⁶⁷

C. Qabil-Habil in Muslim Narratives

Most of religious stories have been well known among Arab before Islam.¹⁶⁸ These stories are one historical component of Arabic oral tradition. Religious stories in Muslim society are mostly originated from dynamic interaction between traditional culture, divine revelation (the Qur'an), and prophetic tradition. In the story of Qabil-Habil there would be different types of narration (various types of story) in different places. We may find several types of Qabil and Habil's story in various versions, e.g.: Biblical version¹⁶⁹, Quranic version¹⁷⁰, Palestinian version¹⁷¹, Turkey¹⁷², Armenian-Turkey¹⁷³, Italy¹⁷⁴, Poland¹⁷⁵, and Mormon version¹⁷⁶. This story is dispersed to many places and has developed (or absorbed) into specific version in each traditional culture. In literary field, we also find fable version for the story of Qabil and Habil¹⁷⁷.

In Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religious traditions, Qabil and Habil are the first and second sons of Adam and Hawwa (Eve). Qabil and Habil are Arabic originated name for the two sons of Adam, while Cain and Abel are traditional English rendering of the Hebrew names *Qayin* and *Havel*. In the Quranic accounts Qabil and Habil are not named explicitly. In all versions, Qabil is a crop farmer and his younger brother Habil is a shepherd. In the Qur'an this story is counted as a short story which is mentioned in a sequence (Q.S. Al-Maidah (5): 27-32) which is revealed for a specific purpose to encounter Jewish people in Madinah. Below is Quranic presentation of the story:

¹⁶⁷ Op.cit., Riessmann, p. 6

¹⁶⁸ Op.cit., Sayyid Khumais, p. 14

¹⁶⁹ Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) in Genesis 4:1-17

¹⁷⁰ The Qur'an in sura Al-Maidah (5):27-32

¹⁷¹ J. E. Hanauer, Folk-Lore of the Holy Land: Moslem, Christian, and Jew (London: Duckworth and Company, 1907), pp. 69-70, cited by Ashliman 2009

¹⁷² The History of the Forty Vezirs; or, The Story of the Forty Morns and Eves, written in Turkish by Sheykh-Zada, translated into English by E. J. W. Gibb (London: George Redway, 1886), p. 395, cited by Ashliman 2009

¹⁷³ Lucy M. J. Garnett, The Women of Turkey and Their Folk-Lore (London: David Nutt, 1890), pp. 273-74, cited by Ashliman 2009

¹⁷⁴ Charles Godfrey Leland (Hans Breitmann) Legends of Florence, collected from the people and retold, first series (London: David Nutt, 1895), pp. 263-266, cited by Ashliman 2009

¹⁷⁵ Otto Knoop, "Das erste Grab," Ostmärkische Sagen, Märchen und Erzählungen (Lissa: Oskar Eulitz' Verlag, 1909), no. 73, p. 149, cited by Ashliman 2009

¹⁷⁶ Pearl of Great Price, Moses 5:16-41

¹⁷⁷ See for example Ahmad Bahjat. Qasasul Hayawan fil Qur'an, Cairo: Dar El-Shorouk, 2000; Abdul Hamid Abdul Maqsd. Gurab Habil wa Qabil, Cairo: Al-Muassassah al-Arabiyah Al-Haditsah,

Recite to them the truth of the story of the two sons of Adam. Behold! they each presented a sacrifice (to Allah): It was accepted from one, but not from the other. Said the latter: "Be sure I will slay thee." "Surely," said the former, "Allah doth accept of the sacrifice of those who are righteous.

"If thou dost stretch thy hand against me, to slay me, it is not for me to stretch my hand against thee to slay thee: for I do fear Allah, the cherisher of the worlds.

"For me, I intend to let thee draw on thyself my sin as well as thine, for thou wilt be among the companions of the fire, and that is the reward of those who do wrong."

The (selfish) soul of the other led him to the murder of his brother: he murdered him, and became (himself) one of the lost ones.

Then Allah sent a raven, who scratched the ground, to show him how to hide the shame of his brother. "Woe is me!" said he; "Was I not even able to be as this raven, and to hide the shame of my brother?" then he became full of regrets-

On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people. Then although there came to them Our messengers with clear signs, yet, even after that, many of them continued to commit excesses in the land.

(Q.S. Al-Maidah [5]: 27-32)

The story is taken as an object in this research for several reasons, i.e.: (a) it is believed among Muslims that the story was the first homicide (crime/murder) that took place on earth; (b) it is assumed that as the first tragedy, we may study root of violence from the story; (c) form of the story has been transformed into different style and expression while has similar pattern (plot); (d) since its dispersion to many regions, the story is belong to many cultures and perceived as inter- religious cultural heritage that meets in literary field.

In this paper, story of Qabil-Habil will be presented and analyzed through following sections order: abstract, orientation, complicating action, resolution, and coda. The sections are taken from basic component of narrative's structure suggested by Labov with some variation. The story of Qabil-Habil that is analyzed here taken from popular book stories such as: "Kisah 25 Nabi dan Rasul"¹⁷⁸, "Kisah-Kisah dalam Al-Qur'an untuk Anak"¹⁷⁹, "Kisah Menakjubkan dalam Al-Qur'an"¹⁸⁰, and several other relevant sources.

¹⁷⁸ Yudho Purwoko, *Kisah 25 Nabi dan Rasul*, (Bandung: Dar Mizan, 2011)

¹⁷⁹ Hamid Ahmad ath-Thahir, *Kisah-kisah dalam Al-Qur'an untuk Anak*, translation from *Qashasul Qur'an lil Athfal*, (Bandung: Irsyad Baitus Salam, 2006)

¹⁸⁰ Ridwan Abqary, *99 Kisah Menakjubkan dalam Al-Qur'an*, (Bandung: Dar Mizan, 2008)

1. Abstract

This section is a summary version to the Qabil and Habil's story. The story of the two sons of Adam tells about one of the brothers fought against the other and killed him out of envy. The story begins with the pregnancy of Hawwa. In every pregnancy Hawwa used to give birth to twins, one male and one female. Qabil is the first born son and her first daughter, Iqlima (Qabil's twin sister). Later on, Hawwa gave birth to cross-twin, Habil and Labuda, as the second son and daughter.

Adam and Hawwa realized their sons were now grown up, and so were the girls, Iqlima and Labuda. Allah ordered Adam to marry his daughters to his sons crosswise. So Adam should marry his daughter to his son who was not her twin brother. In this case, Qabil would marry Labuda, and Qabil would marry Iqlima. Habil's sister was not beautiful while Qabil's sister was beautiful. As a result, Qabil wanted his twin sister for himself. Qabil refused to accept Almighty Allah's command because he in love with his twin sister, Iqlima. He judged that his father's pronouncement was not fair. Iblis (the devil) had been watching Qabil's disagreement to his father, and then whispered in his ear that he must use whatever means so as to marry Iqlima.

Countering Qabil's negative response, Allah ordered Adam to ask Qabil and Habil make a sacrifice to Allah. If Qabil's sacrifice is accepted by Allah, he will have the right to marry Iqlima, and if Habil's sacrifice is accepted, then he will marry her. This command was not well responded by Qabil who unwillingly to do so. Qabil took his poorest wheat to the hill, but Habil took his fattest and most prized sheep to be sacrificed. Adam prayed to Allah to accept the sacrifices of his sons.

Habil's sacrifice was accepted while Qabil's was not. As a result Qabil became really furious with Habil and threatened to kill him. Habil on the other hand who was stronger out of the two men said to his brother that he will not commit the same evil act as Qabil rather he will endure patience because of his fear for Allah. Qabil still felt hatred for Habil in his heart. Qabil could not accept the result of the sacrifices. He became bad-tempered and paid no attention to his father or mother. He sat lost in his own thoughts, pitying himself. Qabil's heart is muzzy. Habil was his brother, but he was also the barrier to Qabil's love for Iqlima. In that situation, Iblis came to visit him again. Qabil decided that he really wanted to kill his brother but did not exactly know how and when.

In that time, Adam had to go to Mecca for obeying Allah's command. Iblis appeared beside Qabil to persuade him again in order to kill his young brother. Iblis made a gesture to show how to kill Habil. Qabil understood Iblis' meaning. He raised his head and flexed his muscles. Qabil found Habil was sleeping on a rock. He lifted a stone and shut his eyes. He brought the stone down on Habil's head. Habil's skull was crushed and his blood spattered on the rock. For the first time in history man lay murdered in the dust, and for the first time the Earth was stained with the blood of man. Iblis smiled and was gone.

Qabil was afraid and did not know what to do. For days Qabil carried Habil's body. But Allah is the God of Love and Mercy. He showed Qabil what to do by using a bird. He dug a grave and buried Habil's body. Fear now gripped Qabil's soul. Fear, and sorrow for what he had done, made him hide himself from man. He wanted to forget

what he had done but his thoughts tormented him. He had lost everything. He had lost his brother. He had angered of his father, his mother and his family. He was shunned by Allah.

2. Orientation

- (a) *Place (Location)* : The story took place on the earth with no specific region, though one version mentions India as an area for Adam, Hawwa and their family had lived.¹⁸¹ It is still fresh in reader's memory that the earth was the second place for Adam and his wife Hawwa after broke Allah's rule. Both were sent down to the earth after broke the law, i.e. ate forbidden fruit. In this second place (the earth), history of mankind was begun. It has been a place for struggle, work for food, and compete with each other to gain Allah's favor. Some locations which are mentioned in the story are: a home (as an implicit place for this family gathered), top of the mountain or the hill as a place for sacrifice¹⁸², field or hillside (a place where Habil grazed his sheeps) where is the fratricide happened¹⁸³, one version mentions Habil's room where Qabil murdered his young brother¹⁸⁴, and a random place where Qabil ran away from home. This story is started from home and ended by a random place where far away from home.
- (b) *Time (Sequence)*: The story tells about Qabil and Habil who were grown up together. Until a specific time, their age was ready to have a marriage and they were proposed to marry by Adam's arrangement (as what Allah's order). Disagreement appeared from Qabil's side for the arrangement. In order to solve the problem they were asked to offer a sacrifice to Allah and wait until they saw a light poured down to one of the two offerings. It was a sign for who was accepted by Allah. Following Habil's offering acceptance, conflict aroused between Qabil and Habil. There was a strained situation when Qabil's still did not accept the decision. Qabil wanted to kill Habil as a protest. After waiting for a good opportunity, he eventually killed his brother. After the murder, Qabil was bewildered about what had to do. It was time when God sent a raven to show what Qabil should do to Habil's body, and so he buried Habil's body. As a murderer, Qabil worried to came back so that he ran away from his family. The beginning of the story is a time of harmony (living together), followed by moment of conflict, and the ending is a restless period of a runaway murderer.
- (c) *Figures and Character*: There are nine figures in the story: Allah, Adam (father), Hawwa (mother), Qabil, Habil, Iqlima, Labuda, Iblis, and raven. Qabil is the main character who showed almost in every scene. (1,2) Iqlima and Labuda were only mentioned with their specific image. Iqlima was beautiful, and Labuda was not. The two daughters were never showed up again, except in the last scene Iqlima was taken away by Qabil. (3) Hawwa as a mother was also given a minor participation in the story. (4) Raven was only showed up in the end of story as an example for

¹⁸¹ Ath-Thahir., p. 15

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 30

¹⁸³ Op.cit., Yudho Purwoko., p. 13

¹⁸⁴ Op.Cit., Ridwan Abqary., p. 44

burying a body. (5) Allah the Almighty God showed in four scenes, i.e. giving an order to marry crosswise of Adam's twin sons and daughters, asking the two sons of Adam to offer a sacrifice to Allah, sent a white light to choose Habil's sacrifice, and sent a raven to show how to bury a body. (6) Adam (father) appeared in the story as a family leader who led his family under God's rules. He made a marriage arrangement, delivered God's command to make a sacrifice, but then he disappeared from the scene which narrated to go to Mecca. (7) Iblis (the devil) showed three times: whispered in Qabil's ear to reject the arrangement, persuaded Qabil to give poor sacrifice, induced him to kill his own brother in order to get Iqlima for himself. It was illustrated that Iblis a hidden figure. (8) Habil's character was portrayed as pious, obedient, quiet, and peaceful. He did not want to confront or fight against his brother because of fear to Allah. He would still not fight back against Qabil, though Qabil threaten him. (9) Qabil as a protagonist in this story was characterized as stubborn, bad tempered, envious, crude, and stingy. It was almost bad things belong to him. A few things that may be perceived as positive personality are: his religiosity (in term of following God's command to sacrifice) and his regret after the fratricide.

- (d) *Situation, Structure, and Plot*: since the beginning, Qabil appeared dominantly as the first son of Adam. After that Habil showed up as his younger brother. It was only then an arrangement of marriage initiated by Adam. It is pictured in the story suddenly they were grown up and have to marry. Arrangement plan for marriage initiated by Adam was rejected by his first son, Qabil. The structure of this story would be illustrated like this; (1) the marriage arrangement: Qabil and Habil were arranged to marry their cross twin sister – Qabil rejected; (2) the sacrifice event: Qabil and Habil were commanded to offer a sacrifice – Qabil's offering was rejected while only Habil's offering was accepted; (3) the conflict period: Qabil and Habil were in a strained situation – Qabil wanted to kill Habil explicitly – Habil rejected to do the same. The situation of Qabil and Habil was not like "kill or being killed". The peaceful reaction from Habil did not extinguish Qabil's desire to kill him. (4) The murder: Qabil killed his brother in a peaceful situation; (5) the perplexing period: Qabil did not know what to do after the murder, he also afraid to go back home and decided to runaway by taken away Iqlima with him.

3. Complicating action

In this component, I will analyze three things, they are: motive, conflict, and murder. These three things are essential to the story.

- (a) *Motive*: in the story, the inherent selfishness of Qabil, his jealousy, sibling rivalry, and aggression are perceived to be psychological background for he killed his brother. He was portrayed to resist his father's decision of marrying Labuda. The resistance was based on his love and attracted to his twin sister, Iqlima. He loved her for the reason that Iqlima was more beautiful than Labuda, and he had more right to marry her than Habil since Iqlima was his twin sister. The second scene illustrated his stinginess in offering a sacrifice so that it is logically understood that

his offering was rejected. The rejection of the offering made him more furious. It was a culmination point so that he killed Habil.

If we put in order, the motive that made him committed murder is like this: (1) the desire of woman – Qabil loved Iqlima very much; (2) the marriage arrangement was not in his favor – Qabil felt was treated unfairly, his father was seen on Habil's side; (3) the rejection of Qabil's sacrifice – Qabil frustrated, God was not on his side too!; (4) a culmination point – Qabil slew his brother in a complicated bad feeling. One thing that should be mentioned here is Iblis (the devil) as the hidden character who also had a strong influence on Qabil's bad attitude almost in every phase in the story.

- (b) *Conflict*: we may ask which conflict that really happened in this story, Was it conflict between Qabil and Habil? Was it conflict between Qabil and Adam? Was it conflict between Qabil and Allah? Or was it conflict between Qabil and his own desire? The story told us that in the first scene Qabil was not consent to the arrangement, it was his first conflict to Adam and Allah's command. The second conflict happened when Qabil's sacrifice rejected, it was between Qabil and Habil for jealousy. In some versions, Qabil did not directly kill his brother rather he thought several times to do so. It was a conflict between his desire to marry Iqlima and his pity to his own brother. It seems to me that Qabil encountered multiple conflicts in this story.
- (c) *Murder*: there are different versions of which one between Qabil and Habil is stronger, though in all versions illustrated that Habil was killed from backside. These some illustrations of how Qabil slew his brother: Habil was sleeping when Qabil smashed Qabil's head with a huge rock¹⁸⁵; Habil was grazing his sheep in a hillside when Qabil attacked him by a huge rock from backside¹⁸⁶; Habil was tied up before killed by Qabil with a big rock.¹⁸⁷ It was depicted that Qabil is a coward. If this is believed to be the first murder in the earth, so how Qabil was knew how to kill his brother? It was Iblis that taught him how to slay.

4. Resolution

In one version of the story, it is mentioned that Iqlima was taken away after Qabil killed his brother,¹⁸⁸ while in the other is not explicitly clear.¹⁸⁹ Murdering his brother was intended to have the right for marrying Iqlima. So if it is not clear whether Qabil married with Iqlima or not then the killing was out of nothing. The last scene of the story in all versions tells about Qabil's psychological situation which represent in confusion, uncertainty, and insecurity. He did not know what to do. Then he saw a raven scratched and dug the ground to look for food. In another version tells he saw two

¹⁸⁵ Op.cit., Ridwan Abqary, p. 44

¹⁸⁶ Op.cit., Ath-Thahir, p. 32

¹⁸⁷ Op.cit., Yudho Purwoko, p. 13

¹⁸⁸ Op.cit., Ath-Thahir, p. 34

¹⁸⁹ Op.cit., Yudho Purwoko, p. 13; Ridwan Abqary, p. 46

ravens fought each other, and then a raven that kills dug the ground buried the other killed. Qabil learnt from that event and then buried Habil's body.

The story is closed by various interpretations and explanations. Purwoko simply tells the reader that Qabil leaved his father and mother and never came back¹⁹⁰; Abqary gives a mourning scene in the last part that Adam lost his son, Habil, while praying to Allah for patience and given more trust to Allah's will¹⁹¹; At-Thahir shows four scenes as the last part of the story: (a) After came back from Mecca, Adam knew that Qabil killed Habil, plants started to grow with thorn, and animals ran from human as the result of the bloodshed; (b) Iqlima was taken away by Qabil, and Adam expelled him out of home by God's angry and his angry; (c) Qabil was told killed by his own son as a punishment for what he had done; and (d) Adam was given a nice kid as a replacement, named Seth, after he lost Habil.¹⁹²

5. Coda

Reader expects religious lessons from this story since it is categorized into religious story. One of the lessons we learn here is the danger of envy, anger, and jealousy. When such emotions are persistent they may lead into disobedience to God and cause suffering. The person that has so much hate and envy in his heart he would not hesitate to kill, just like Qabil who became mad and then slew his brother by his own hand. He became a person who turned against his own family. Another lesson from that it is important to keep relationship between one to his/her relatives. Having good relationship with our family is a key to happiness, which is illustrated conversely in this story.

It is mentioned in the story about involvement of Iblis (the devil) in almost every moment of Qabil's wickedness: the desire for her sister, refuse to accept the arrangement, feeling mad to the sacrifice's result, and slew his own brother. This story illustrates that human is always be in eternal battle between good and evil. Qabil and Habil is the second chapter for Adam and Iblis meet in "ethical battle". Iblis used his power to persuade Qabil, while Adam used his parental authority to control both Qabil and Habil, but later he lost control on Qabil. I wonder in the story why Adam did not giving enough effort to alert Qabil. It was Habil's words in the story that advised him not to further his anger. In a symbolic interpretation, Qabil is a representation of negative side of human potential to be bad and Habil is representation of its positive to be good.

Sacrifice in this story is also could be seen as act of devotion to God or worship. Habil is taken as good example to give the best devotion to God when he selected the fattest and most prized sheep for sacrifice. That was the reason why his sacrifice was accepted by God. Here now religious people who devote God should give their best effort (in giving wealth, time, energy, knowledge) and loyalty in order to be accepted by God.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. Yudho Purwoko, p. 13

¹⁹¹ Op.cit., Abqary, p. 46

¹⁹² Op.cit., Ath-Thahir, p. 34

D. Images of Violence in Habil-Qabil's Story

As I mention in the previous section that the story of Habil and Qabil is belong to many regions, especially, those who have their cultural roots from monotheistic religious tradition. This paper uses popular story books from Muslim literary culture which assumed beyond its regional border. Narrative analysis is used for taking pleasure in reading to the story while at the same time intended to have a deeper understanding on constructions of violence.

The story is well known entitled by Habil and Qabil, though in some books is written conversely. Habil's name which is took place in the front before Qabil's may have different impression. In cultural psychological feeling the first mentioned person is better than the latter. This image is my personal impression that may differ from others. Images of violence from the story will be discussed in four parts: roots of violence, forms (types) of violence, responses to violence, and resolution from violence.

1. Roots of Violence

Apparently the story gives a simple consideration on causes that led Qabil to kill his brother. It was envy, anger, and jealousy in which murder became actual violence. The story illustrates that there was a sequential disappointment from Qabil's side that led him into frustration. From behaviorist perspective it was the frustration-aggression that made Qabil became a murderer. According to J. Dollard "the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and contrariwise, the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression".¹⁹³

It was not clearly explicit in the story whether human (i.e. Qabil) cruelty is inherently implanted or culturally constructed. Qabil is pictured having a strong intention to kill Habil. The intent of Qabil is essential to be categorized as violence.¹⁹⁴ Physical or psychological harm that occurs by accident is not considered as violence. If Qabil was depicted that killed Habil by accident, so it would not seen as violence. What other explanation that shed light on origins of violence in this account?

It is worth mention here that in theological discourse, violence is connected to the devil's existence. The story gives an explicit illustration on Iblis' appearance when Qabil was mad and frustrated. According to one narration by Ibn Jarir who said; when Qabil wanted to kill Habil he first tried by twisting his neck. So Iblis showed Qabil an example by taking an animal and placed its head on the rock and then Iblis took another rock and smashed the animal's head till the animal died. Qabil decided to follow his example. Where as in another narration by Ibn Hatim, Iblis told Qabil to take a stone and throw it at Habil's head. So Qabil did this and in the process Habil died. Iblis used to be pictured in Muslim narratives always persuades human to act cruel and evil.

2. Types of Violence

Qabil had started to threaten Habil when Qabil's sacrifice was rejected. The illustration is a psychological intimidation that could be seen as an early form of

¹⁹³ Fromm, Erich. *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. New York, Chicago and San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974, p. 66

¹⁹⁴ Op.cit., Englander., p. 2

violence. The threatening is used for psychological aggression in order the victim fear so that followed what perpetrator's intention. This is the first phase of violence in the story. The second phase which is the final is the actual violence where Qabil eventually killed his brother. It was implied that Qabil killed Habil in order to have the right of marrying Iqlima. In Assmann's typology, this is what precisely example of raw or affective violence. In this case violence is motivated by envy (or greed) which is usually masked as "might right", for which Qabil killed Habil for his own sake. Another explanation is also given by Englander types of violence, namely instrumental aggression which is characterized by motivation to achieve a separate goal.¹⁹⁵ So it is clear that in Muslim narratives Qabil killed Habil for marrying Iqlima. In other description this is the early form of physical violence which human and animals shared.

3. Responses to Violence

In the first phase of violence against Habil, he responded well by saying that he did not intend to against Qabil. This is similar with hadith narrated by Abdullah bin Amr who said that the Prophet (PBUH) said that when two Muslims fight with each other with their swords both the murderer as well as the murdered will go to Hellfire. So the companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) inquired that it was alright for the murderer to go to hell but why the victim. So the Prophet replied that the victim also had the intention to kill his opponent. Then someone asked the Prophet, what if someone enters my house to kill me. The Prophet replied be like the pious son of Adam (i.e. Habil).

The second phase of violence is depicted that Qabil killed his own brother by smashing a huge rock on his head unconsciously. It means that Habil did not know when Qabil smashed his head by a big rock. In Muslim cultural understanding that defending our life is essential in Islam so that in the story Habil was illustrated to be sleeping or similar to that situation.

4. Resolution from Violence

This story is generally perceived as the first crime on earth. In all versions to the story, Qabil was punished by expelled from his home and family. In some versions mention that later on Qabil was killed by his own son. Another punishment for him is he will carry sins of murder for he was the first person committed crime. In a hadith which Ibn Jarir recorded from Abdullah bin Amr who used to say "the son of Adam, who killed his brother will be the most miserable among men. For any blood shed on earth till the day of Resurrection, Qabil will carry a burden for it for he was the first person to establish murder."

E. Conclusion

This paper uses the story of Habil-Qabil as cultural devices that serve a didactic role. In using narrative analysis to the story we found religious-cultural construction of violence. We have a deeper understanding about violence merely through narrative reading to Habil-Qabil's story. From this story, we learn that roots of violence, forms of

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 2

violence, response to violence, and its resolution in Muslim narratives are connected to psychological and theological construction. It should be realized that narratives do not mirror, they refract the past.¹⁹⁶ Story is a way to re-imagine our lives, and build our connection to the past, present, and future. This is only a limited analysis to religious story which give a limited result. I wonder if this analysis could give another result when it applies on other religious stories.

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¹⁹⁶ Op.cit., Riessmann., p. 6

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