



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"<sup>140</sup>. 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

<sup>140</sup> 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





































