

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The novel is one of the most prominent forms of Literature that represents human experience through narrative. As a form of prose fiction, the novel allows writers to explore various aspect of life, including social conditions, cultural values, personal conflicts, and inner experiences. Unlike shorter forms such as short stories, novels provide a broader narrative space that allows for the development of complex plots, multidimensional characters, and layered meanings.

According to Watt (1957, p. 13), the novel emerged alongside the development of modern society, emphasizing realism, individuality, and everyday experience. This literary form focuses on the representation of ordinary life, distinguishing it from earlier literary forms such as epics or romance, which often centred on heroic or idealised narratives.

In a similar vein, Abrams (2015, p. 226) defines the novel as an extended work of narrative fiction written in prose, which presents characters and actions that resemble real life. This definition highlights two crucial elements of the novel, the length of the narrative and its attempt to create a sense of realism. Through this realism, readers can engage with the story in a way that reflects human experience.

One of the main characteristics of a novel is its narrative complexity. Its extended form allows for detailed character development, where individuals are depicted with depth of characterisation and internal conflict. Forster (2005, p. 73-81) distinguishes between flat characters and round characters, emphasizing that

novels tend to present round character who evolve and exhibit emotional complexity. This complexity makes the novel a suitable medium for exploring inner experiences, including memory, identity, and trauma.

Furthermore, novels can be categorized into various genres based on their thematic focus and narrative structure. These include romantic novels, social novels, historical novels, and novels of characterisation. Among these genres, the novels of characterisation are highly relevant to this research, as it focuses on the inner lives of characters, including their thoughts, emotions, and memories. In such novels, narrative techniques play a crucial role in representing subjective experiences.

Another important aspect of the novel is its narrative structure, which includes elements such as plot, character, setting, point of view, and time. Among these elements, time plays a significant role in shaping how a story is told and understood. In many traditional narratives, time is presented in a linear and chronological order. However, in modern and contemporary novels, this linearity is frequently disrupted.

Non-linear narrative structures are commonly used to represent complex conditions, such as human consciousness/the human mind. Event may be presented out of sequence, repeated, or fragmented, reflecting how individuals actually experience and recall events in reality. Memory, for instance, does not operate in a strictly chronological manner, rather, it shifts between the past and the present, often triggered by specific experiences. Ricoeur (2004, p. 20-24) explains that memory reconstructs rather than reproduces experience, making remembrance selective and fragmented.

In narratology, the study of narrative structure achieved a strong theoretical foundation through the thought of Gerard Genette. In his monumental work *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1980), Genette divides the narrative system into a complementary three-dimensional framework: Tense (narrative time), Mood (narrative mood), and Voice (narrative voice).

Tense focuses on the temporal relationship between the story (*Histoire*) and the discourse (*Recit*), which includes Order (chronological order), Duration (narrative speed), and Frequency (frequency of repetition). Mood governs the regulation of narrative information through Distance (the gap between direct presentation and summary) and Focalization (the filtering of perception: who sees). Voice unravels the narrating instance, which includes The Time of Narration, Narrative levels (diegetic and metadiegetic), and The Status of the Narrator (the narrator's position and participation within the story world) (Genette, 1980, p. 35-262).

Genette's framework demonstrates that a text not only manipulates the chronological order of time (Tense) but also restricts the subjective perception of the characters (Mood) and organizes the narrator's storytelling structure (Voice). By integrating these three core categories, this research utilizes Genette's concepts to analyse how the structural configuration of a text represents inner/emotional fractures and recurring memories. In this research, the term inner refers to the main character's mental condition insofar as it is shaped by, and directly connected to, past events and/or trauma, rather than to an isolated present-time state. Through this

approach, the structural mechanics of the narrative can be precisely mapped and examined.

The use of non-linear narrative structures and these technical manipulations is closely related to the representation of trauma. Caruth (1996, p. 4) explains that trauma is not experienced as a single coherent event, but rather as a fragmented and repetitive process. Traumatic experiences often return in the form of intrusive memories, flashbacks, or delayed responses (belatedness), indicating that the past continues to influence the present.

This relationship between narrative form and trauma makes narrative structure crucial in literary analysis. Trauma is not only conveyed through the content of the story (what is told) but also through how the story is structured (how it is told). Whitehead (2004, p. 3) asserts that trauma fiction often mimics the symptoms of trauma through fragmented chronology, repetition, and narrative disruption. Temporal disruptions, restricted perception, and the isolation of the narrative voice can reflect the inner condition of a wounded character.

In literary works that explore women's experiences, trauma is often associated with gender issues, such as inequality, subordination, and emotional conflict within a patriarchal system. These experiences are expressed not only thematically but also structurally, through the organisation of narrative elements.

The novel *La Barka* by Nh. Dini presents the story of Rina, an Indonesian woman living in Provence, Southern France, while awaiting the finalisation of her divorce from her French husband. The novel highlights issues of gender inequality,

marital conflict, and emotional struggle, reflecting the challenges faced by women in unequal relationships.

The narrative structure of *La Barka* is non-linear and fragmented. Rina's present life, as she isolates herself in *La Barka*, is constantly interrupted by memories of her previous marriage. Technically, these temporal shifts are formed by the interplay of analepsis (flashback) and ellipsis (narrative omissions), which are strictly limited by the fixed internal focalization of Rina's point of view.

Furthermore, the narrative emphasises the acts of remembering and writing as central processes. Rina's experiences are presented through inner reflection, diary writing, and drafted letters. These memories and narrations do not appear in a stable or chronological order, instead, they emerged unexpectedly, reflecting the instability of her inner/emotional state driven by past trauma.

By analysing the temporal structure through Tense, and by tracing through Mood and Voice who perceives and who tells the disrupted time, this research aims to examine how narrative form functions as a representation of gendered trauma. This approach goes beyond mere thematic analysis and focuses on how the structural form of the text contributes to the construction of inner/subjective meaning.

Therefore, this research focuses on temporal disruption, analysed through Genette's category of Tense, Mood, and Voice to examine how narrative structure and disruption represent gendered trauma in *La Barka*. Caruth's trauma theory provides the interpretive lens for trauma, and Vicroy's work on women's trauma narratives supports the reading of its gendered dimension.

In this research, temporal disruption refers to the deviation of narrative time from the linear chronology of the story, which Genette (1980) classifies under the category of Tense: order (anachrony), duration (narrative speed), and frequency (repetition). Temporal disruption is therefore the main object of analysis. Mood and Voice are not analysed as independent objects, they are used to identify through whose perception and from which narrating position the disrupted time is presented, since a narrative cannot be accurately described without considering all of Genette's categories together.

Based on this rationale, the writer is interested in conducting a study titled "Temporal Disruption as a Representation of Gendered Trauma in Dini's *La Barka*: A Narratological Study." This research is expected to provide a clear picture of how disruptions in temporal structure, as framed by restricted focalization, and narrating instances are used to represent gendered trauma and the inner fractures of female characters in literature, as well as to serve as the foundation for the formulation of the research problem in the subsequent section.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

In the novel *La Barka*, Nh. Dini presents the story of an Indonesian woman living abroad through a narrative that does not follow a linear timeline. The narrative frequently shifts between the present (Rina's life in *La Barka*, her diary writing, and interactions with other characters) and the past (memories of her failed marriage, conflicts, and experiences of subordination).

Structurally, this narrative pattern presents complexity at three levels of storytelling. Temporal shifts (Tense): The presence of flashbacks (analepsis), narrative omissions of the past (ellipsis), and the recurrence of memories (repetitive narrative) that disrupt the continuity of the story. Restriction of Perspective (Mood): Narrative information that is strictly filtered through Rina's subjective perception (fixed internal focalization) along with variations in emotional distance (distance). Isolation of Narrative Voice (Voice): The use of letter and diary writing (interpolated narration) at an isolated narrative level (metadiegetic level) by an autodiegetic narrator.

This narrative pattern reflects the nature of trauma as described by Caruth, who argues that trauma does not manifest in a linear or coherent manner, but rather returns unexpectedly through fragmented and repetitive memories. To analyse these aspects comprehensively, this research applies Genette's narratological model Tense as the main focus, while Mood and Voice specify through whose perception and from which narrating position the temporal shifts are presented, in order to examine how the narrative reflects the inner condition and gendered trauma experienced by the main character.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

This research is limited to the analysis of temporal disruption in the novel *La Barka* by Nh. Dini, that is, the deviation of narrative time from linear chronology as captured by Genette's category of narrative tense (order, duration, and frequency). Narrative mood (distance and focalization) and narrative voice (time of

narration, narrative level, and status of the narrator) are included only as supporting categories to identify who perceives and who narrates the disrupted time. Other literary aspects such as language style and socio-structural background are considered outside the scope of this research. Although trauma theory is referenced in Chapter II to provide a conceptual foundation in understanding gendered trauma, this research does not conduct a psychological interpretation of the characters; rather, gendered trauma is examined as a narrative representation within Gérard Genette's structural framework.

1.4 Research Question

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How are the structural elements of Tense, Mood, and Voice constructed in the novel *La Barka* by Nh. Dini?
2. How does the convergence of these three narratological dimensions (Tense, Mood, and Voice) function as a formal representation of the gendered trauma experienced by the protagonist?

1.5 Objective of the Study

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To identify and analyse the temporal disruption in *La Barka* through Genette's categories of narrative Tense (order, duration, frequency), with narrative Mood and Voice as supporting categories.

2. To examine and explain how the temporal disruption represents the gendered trauma of the protagonist, using Caruth's trauma theory (belatedness, intrusive memory, and repetition compulsion).

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute both academically and practically.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This study contributes to the integration of narratology and trauma theory by demonstrating that narrative time is not merely a formal element, but a meaningful structure that reflects trauma. By using the concept of narrative time layers, this study offers an analytical framework to understand how narrative time operates in complex and non-linear ways.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

For Indonesian literary studies, this research provides a focused analysis of NH. Dini's *La Barka*, particularly in relation to narrative technique and women's issues.

For readers and literary critics, this study enhances the understanding of non-linear narrative as a meaningful strategy in representing inner experiences, especially trauma.

For academics, this research can serve as a reference for future studies on narratology, trauma representation, and feminist literature.