

# BUDI DARMA'S "CHARLES LEBOURNE" AS REPRESENTATION OF MAN'S DARKSIDE AND WEAKNESS OF THE INNERSIDE: A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

Alviani Permata \*

## ABSTRAK

*Tulisan ini bertujuan memaparkan sebuah telaah cerita pendek dalam kumpulan cerita pendek Orang-Orang Bloomington (1980) karya Budi Darma. Cerita pendek "Charles Lebourne" dipilih karena menampilkan dengan jelas ceritheme-ceritheme yang sangat berguna bagi penelaahan struktural. Pada prinsipnya, analisis struktural terhadap suatu karya sastra bertujuan untuk membongkar dan memaparkan dengan cermat, teliti, dan rinci keterkaitan antarunsur antaraspek suatu karya yang bersama-sama menghasilkan makna menyeluruh. Dengan menganalisis keenam episode dalam cerita pendek, pendekatan struktural ini menghasilkan dua Struktur. Struktur I yang merupakan Struktur perjumpaan antara tokoh dalam cerita menunjukkan proses bagaimana para tokoh hidup bersama setelah terpisah sekian lama. Sementara struktur II yang merupakan struktur konflik batin menampilkan konflik batin manusia terhadap penderitaan yang dialaminya, sisi buruknya, kelemahannya. Akhirnya, "Charles Lebourne" merupakan model kegelisahan manusia dalam mencari jati dirinya, identitas dirinya, dalam dia berhubungan atau "bertransaksi" dengan manusia lainnya.*

**Kata Kunci:** *ceritheme, episode, intratekstual, model, struktur*

## ABSTRACT

This research is to analyze a short story of Budi Darma's short story anthology *The People of Bloomington* (1980). "Charles Lebourne" was chosen because storythemes<sup>1</sup> in the text can be clearly analyzed by a structural perspective. A Structural analysis on a literary work thoroughly explains and exposes the linkages of elements and aspects of the work to form a whole meaning. By analyzing six Episodes in the story, this structural approach produces two structures. Structure I as the "Structure of Encounter" between the characters shows the process of how the two finally live together before separated for a long time. While Structure II as the "Structure of Inner-Conflict" reflects the inner-conflict of man in opposing pain, misery, the weakness, and the dark sides as a human being by comparing how the characters treat each other showed in the episodes. Finally, "Charles Lebourne" is seen as a model of an anxious man pursuing his identity and interacting with others.

**Keywords:** *episode, intratextual, model of, storytheme, structure*

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\* Humanities Studies Department, Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana, Yogyakarta

## INTRODUCTION

A literary work is seen as a human expression of life experiences, feelings, or reflections. In fact, it is a life expression through language (Hardjana, 1981:10). As a form of language, we can see that a story has a communicative aspect, and according to de Saussure, writing can be considered as a sign (Teeuw, 1988:46). This is the beginning of Linguistic Structuralism, pioneered by Ferdinand de Saussure. For de Saussure, the main quality of a sign system is its relational nature. Applied in a literary work, this has to be understood in the context of all the elements in it. Structuralism corresponds with a pattern and analysis method of work, *explication de texte* (in Junus, 1988:85). In reading literature as a text, we have to relate all of its elements. This is an intertextual work. Structural analysis of a text needs to thoroughly explain and expose the interrelationship of aspects and elements which form a whole meaning. (see Teeuw, 1988: 135)

Related to sign, de Saussure states that language is not the only sign system in a community; there are other sign systems which embrace all aspects of human life. Therefore, the study of sign is also a focus of Anthropology. Levi-Strauss was the first scientist to focus on social phenomenon as a sign system. He applied de Saussure's theory on language as a model in explaining social and culture phenomenon in a community.

A short story is seen as a representation of its community (through the author) which can be analogue as a sign in Levi- Strauss' Structuralism understanding. So was "Charles Lebourne" in *The People of Bloomington* (1980). This short story will be analyzed by mapping its life episodes of the characters. From the episodes we learn about the absurdity which was one of the philosophical positions offered by atheist-existentialism. In appreciating this, an individual negates the transcendent, the upper-being. Man in his life is to question the cultural problems, so that when he faces something he does not wish to happen, he

will be motivated to stand up again and again. The characters in "Charles Lebourne" try to face and interacts each other by adapting their individualities. They learn to face their problems not in easy ways. As Sindhunata (1982: 19) said that for atheist- existentialism, to look for answers to world problems from the transcendent is for lazy people who only seek easy answers.

"Charles Lebourne" is actually a picture of our culture. Culture is dynamic, always changing. It is like an unfinished story. Imanuel Kant (van Peursen, 1993) once wrote that the characteristic of culture is the ability of man to teach himself. Human life is in the middle of life's process tides (the immanence), but is always to value nature and change it (the transcendence). As a human being, he or she will not let him or herself float off of the nature's process, he or she resists it. Man follows nature and also his mind and conscience.

## SIGN SYSTEM AND MYTH IN LEVI-STRAUSS' STRUCTURALISM

Levi-Strauss analogues a community with a language by referring to de Saussure's opinion on two aspects of language, *la langue* and *la parole*. *La langue* is language as a sign, and *la parole* is the individual form of language as a sign. A sign has its meaning because of its relation with the others in the system. There has to be a rule which relates one sign to another. In this case, there are two relationships or associations: syntagmatic and paradigmatic (associations) (Cremers, 1997:44).

In a creative and original way, Levi-Strauss applied a Linguistics perspective in an Anthropological study as an appropriate model in searching for the natural unconsciousness of the human mind. This was based on a reason that Linguistics is the first science on humans which successfully formulates nature-like rules. By analoging Anthropology with Linguistics, it becomes part of Semiology and General Communications Science.

One of social and cultural phenomenon in

Levi- Strauss' research was about myths. Related to Linguistics, Levi-Strauss saw that phenomenon in myths are the same as in language, because myths, as languages, are delivering messages. Messages in myths can only be understood if we recognize the structure and element of meaning in the myths. Levi-Strauss created a number of rules as a method in myth analysis based on Linguistics.

As in language, myths are characteristically double- structured, which means historical and a historical at the same time; synchronous and diachronous; reversible and irreversible (Cremers, 1997: 63). Methodically, myths have to be cut into smallest units called mythemes which show elements in relationship to myths. For example, intertextual analysis in literary work shows a binary opposition, nature- culture as logical thinking. Thus, through this kind of analysis, myths are no longer considered as human imagination which is no meaning, illogical, and „weird“. Neither are they spontaneous products of fantasies which are wild, arbitrary, and chaotic, but they are manifestations of the products of the real (un)-conscious human mind.

### **“CHARLES LEBOURNE” IN THE PEOPLE OF BLOOMINGTON AS REPRESENTATION OF MAN’S DARKSIDE AND WEAKNESS**

Budi Darma's short story collection entitled *The People of Bloomington* is very simple in style and uses straight forward language. Bambang Subendo in the back cover wrote that “*In a very simple way, he (Budi Darma) is capable to ‘force’ the reader to finish the lines till the end...*”

This short story collection is Budi Darma's way to understand the people he faces, the people of Bloomington, Indiana, in the United States. This following statement is Budi Darma's observation on the situation and condition of the city where he lived and how he reacted to what he saw.

*While doing the everyday work, I liked to have a little walk... and I see a lot which attracted me.* (p. ix)

*One day, I met a girl in the lift. She was very attractive. Suddenly, I got in my room, I took my*

*typewriter, and I just wrote about her right away. Then, I finished a novel, Olenka* (p.xi)

Budi Darma added that... “*in the short stories I wrote, including Olenka, the narrator is the people of Bloomington themselves, not a stranger*” (p.xvi). Budi Darma in *The People of Bloomington* (abbreviated as OB) was an actor who made the interpretation as the result of his involvement in the everyday life of Bloomington people. It is interesting to read Ikranagara's opinion of OB in the back cover of it.

“...It seems that Budi Darma got his acknowledgment not only from books or scientific approaches..., but through direct appreciation in the community and western life itself ...”

There are some similarities among the short stories. “Charles Lebourne” (p.153-188) is one of them. The stories involves only two to three characters, focusing on only two of them and on diseases and deaths. Following the research of Ahimsa Putra on Umar Kayam's novel (1988), *Para Priyayi*, this structural analysis tries to discover the hidden meanings of “Charles Lebourne” as a symbolic expression of the author's inner-conflicts

### **Episodes and Storythemes in “Charles Lebourne”**

Based on analysis of “Charles Lebourne”, some episodes are found. They are the episode of Self- Identity; the episode of Residence; the episode of Work Life; the episode of Encounter; and the episode of Living Together. In these episodes, we can find units of storythemes (see Ahimsa- Putra, 1998:49) which describe certain relation of elements in the story. The storythemes found are compiled diachronically and synchronically based on syntagmatic and paradigmatic elements, which form the different or similar storythemes. The interpretation of the meaning of the story will depend on the whole relationships of the storythemes.

### **Self-Identity Episode**

This episode explains the qualities of the two

characters in the story: James Russel (JR) and Charles Lebourne (CL).

**JR:** the son - young - wealthy - saving - educated - healthy- name initial is opposition of CL

**CL:** the father - old - poor - spendthrift - uneducated - unhealthy – name initial is opposition toJR

Opposition is the theme of the episode. The two persons are in contrast financially, physically, and even in their initials. It is proved in these statements below. Physically, of course JR is younger and healthy compare to his father. ... *And now I am thirty years old.* (p. 170). The statement, “*When you were born, he was forty*” said my mother. (p. 170) is to show CL’s age, which is seventy years old. According to JR, his son, CL is an unhealthy person. ... *It seems to me that he is unhealthy.* (p. 171). *This man’s gallbladder is not in a good condition.* (p. 172)

Financially, JR is capable to pay his father’s living cost. *I paid his debt on his apartment rents, car credits, bought him number one clothes, brought him to chic restaurant, and paid all his shopping.* (p. 176). While, CL’s financial condition is on the contrary. ... *With \$400 from Social Security Fund he should have lived in other apartment... Then he confessed that he have lived in Hoosier Apartment, ugly, cheap, and located in poor area.* (p. 177). CL also spends his money a lot, he *is a compulsive shopper, likes to spend money...He imposed his debts to the victims* (p. 174).

Even their initials show the contrast. J and C are called palatal phonemes. J is a voiced palatal phoneme, while C is voiceless palatal phoneme. Besides, R and L are alveolar phonemes. R is voiced alveolar phoneme and L is voiceless alveolar phoneme<sup>2</sup> (*Tata Bahasa Baku Bahasa Indonesia*, 1988). So, the initials pairs show the opposition to each other.

### Residence Episode

The storythemes are the following.

**JR:** Apartment Evermann (simple and small) –five levels- face to face with Tulip Tree (TT) – its windows reflects the sunlit up TT - its windows reflects the light of the lamp in apartment number 1515 of TT.

**CL:** Apartment TT (big and luxurious) –fifty levels- the opposite of Evermann – the sunlit up TT reflects to JR’s room in Evermann- the light of the lamp in apartment 1515 in TT projects to JR’s room windows.

The two apartments in residence episode are in opposition to each other. JR’s rooms get sunlight from TT and gets lamplight from apartment 1515 in the big and luxurious apartment. ... *From there (TT), the light reflects to Evermann* (p. 159). ... *And this lamp is from apartment number 1515 which its windows reflect the sunlight aimed at mine.* (p. 160)

JR’s apartment is simple, as shown in this statement. ... *Then, I moved in Evermann, a five level humble apartment which had a long shape and two hundred small rooms.* ... (p.153), while CL’s is glamorous. ... *and across the street, in front of the apartment, there is a wide grass field...meets with another apartment. It is called Tulip Tree, big, tall, elegant, glamorous with fifty floors, where five hundred families lived.* (p. 153)

From the residency, the two persons are in opposition.

### Work Life Episode

In this episode, there are some homologies shown by the storythemes in the following.

**JR:** moody – busy but has no direction- always gets compliments from his boss or colleagues.

**CL:** moody- busy but has no direction – a good job performance and gets compliments

From the residence aspect, they are opposite to each other. *From a work life aspect, they are relatively the same. Both of them are moody people, so they do their job not in an optimum way. The two tend to have images as busy persons but, in fact, they finish none of their tasks. From the face, I can see myself: gloomy, disappointed, fail in completing*

all the tasks given which according to me not neglected, obedient, not having a courage and an ability to rebel. "I feel that I haven't finished all my works, as if I am forced to be busy but had no direction," said JR (p. 155). While CL, according to JR, is like him. "He looks busy because he is good to show himself as if he is always occupied" (p. 181). Unexpectedly, JR always get compliments from his employers and colleagues: *In work, my boss admires me as a 'good boy' or a „good worker”*. ... (p. 156). While CL's boss, Jameson, always trust him on what he suggests (p. 166- 167).

### Pre-Encounter Episode

**JR:** always looks at TT – buys binoculars – checks the name list – asks neighbors – observes CL's habits – followed CL's car

**CL:** to be looked at (the apartment) - to be watched (by binoculars) – to be checked (the name list) - to be asked about (the neighbors) – to be followed (his car) - to be observed (the habits)

Inversion is the theme of this episode. JR is someone who never had a father, so he tries so hard to meet his father. The position of the father is as an object. CL is the one who is watched, looked at, observed, asked about, checked, and followed. Therefore JR is the subject because he watches, observes, checks, and follows his father's car. The statements in the story of this episode are below. They belong to JR as the subject. The statement *I can make a conclusion that the window belongs to apartment 1515* (p. 160) is an indicator that JR always looks at Tulip Tree. Then he buys binoculars ... *I want to find other way, I want to buy strong and long binoculars.* (p. 160) JR also checks the name list in Tulip Tree, shown by this statement. *I was upset because I could not see the face of the man. Finally, the easiest way is to compromise, like what I used to do. I walked across the field to Tulip Tree to see the name list. When I saw the number 1515, I was surprised. Charles Lebourne is the name. Isn't he my own father?* (p. 164) ... *On the wall, there are two name lists of the occupants. One on the top was based on the alphabets, and*

*the second below, was on the number of the apartments.* (p. 164). ...

JR tries to ask about his father to the neighbor in Tulip Tree. It is clear from the statement below.

*... I pushed the door bell of apartment number 1517, Lebourne's neighbor... "Do you see him lately?" I asked the owner... From apartment number 1513, right neighbor, and apartment number 1514, front neighbor, I got answers. Then I went home.* (p. 165)

Even, JR also buys a car to follow his father's car and observe CL's habits as revealed by the statement below.

*... I will buy a car... A week later, I already have a car and I plan to go to Tulip Tree.* (p. 165). ... *From the television, I find out that amongst the people who were stuck in the elevator, there was no one who are fifties... In the next morning, I skip my work. Lebourne must go for a shopping. I have to get him...* (p. 169)

### Post-Encounter Episode

In this episode, the two characters are changeable in position as subject and object. JR was an object when he had to bring his father's shopping bags and begged to be accepted as a son to CL. ... *I encourage myself to help him to bring the shopping bags till the front of his apartment's door.* (p. 171); *A father who I never tried to look for, I found. .... I only offered my willingness to be his son, admit my obligation to treat him, and accepted his rights to be my burden. Then, Lebourne and I are friends.* (p. 176)

At the same time, in page 173, the situation shows that CL was the subject, because he got help from his son and he bravely denied himself as a father and JR as his son. But, their positions were exchanged afterwards. JR became the subject when he intimidated CL with his disease and he acted like he knew everything about it. CL thought that JR was a doctor or a nurse. At this situation, the position of CL was the object.

The storythemes found are below.

**JR:** brings CL's stuff – introduces his name

– concerns about CL’s illness – intimidates CL about his illness – has to struggle to be admitted as a son - accepted as CL’s son.

**CL:** accepted as JR’s assistant - admits JR’s self-introduction – to be concerned on his illness – to be intimidated on his illness – denies on having a son – accepts himself as a father and JR as his son.

### Living Together Episode

“Finally, I moved Lebourne and lived with me.” And both of them live in a two level house at Fess Street, a quiet but cozy area that was close to some important places (p. 179). In episode of Living Together, the two are also interchangeable in their positions. After living in one house, both of them are dependent on each other. CL depends on JR about his welfare, his illness: the cancer, the brain injury, the half paralysis. ... “At last, he depends on me,” said JR. Thus JR becomes the object when he has to fulfill all CL’s needs and in his effort to reduce CL’s pain by carrying his leg on JR’s shoulder day and night till he suffers from hunger, fatigue, and so on. Inversion is the theme of this episode.

#### JR as subject – CL as object

**JR:** stabs CL’s car tire – poisons CL’s food – the person who takes care of CL - puts some insects on CL’s bed – bangs on CL’s room door.

**CL:** gets his car tire stabbed – gets his food poisoned – the person who was taken care of – gets some insects on his bed – gets his room door banged.

Some statements show the situation of both JR and CL as shown by the storythemes above.

...Before going home, I stab his car with a needle. (p. 178).

While, I put some dirt’s in his food and drinks. Any dirt which cannot be tracked in a laboratory investigation. (p. 182) ... Sometimes, on his bed, I put some insects, crickets, grasshoppers which are so disgusting. (p. 183). ... Sometimes, I put off the light at

nights. He is terrified. I also bang on his door. (p. 184).

#### CL as subject – JR as object

**CL:** insists to have a good meal- insists to have neat and clean clothes – asks for his leg to be carried over and over to reduce the pain.

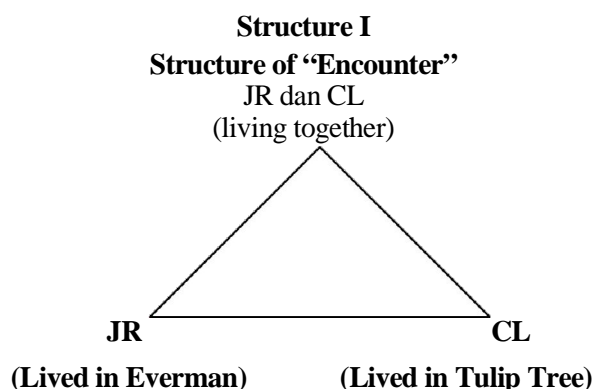
**JR:** cooks a good meal for CL- prepares neat and clean clothes – carries CL’s leg nonstop.

Those storythemes are proved by some statements in the story below.

“After I wash his clothes, he insists that I prepare some clean, perfumed, and ironed clothes.”... . (p. 182).

“Every time I put his leg down, he felt very much in pain. He cried out viciously. Then I had to take his leg on my shoulder again on the right shoulder to the left, back and forth. I was tired and a bit dizzy. His leg was heavier. I felt that he made it heavier to break my shoulder.” (p. 186)

Thus, the episodes in the story develop a structure in triangular shape, which follows the culinary triangle of Levi- Strauss in his analysis on kitchen procedures of Native Americans (via Agus Cremers, 1997:79). The structure of “Encounter” as Structure I is the following.



### “CHARLES LEBOURNE” AND BUDI DARMA’S INNER-CONFLICT

As explained above, Structure I abstractly describes how CL and JR live together in one place

with their joys and sufferings. To portray the inner-conflict of Budi Darma, this part firstly, explains the existentialism of Albert Camus. Without knowing the concept of Camus' existentialism, the real inner-conflict of the author cannot be understood.

### Absurdity of Albert Camus

Physically, the short story is about human relationship which is like a contract, as the author said (p. xvii). It represents the hard life and misery of the characters in it. It also portrays how difficult it is for people to communicate and convey their identity. In fact, for Budi Darma, *every person is always in the process to find his or her self-identity and having hard times to interact with the others.* (p. xii)

"Charles Lebourne" describes the conflict of JR and CL in trying to communicate. It is so clear to see. Yet, there is a deep structure that the author is consciously aware of and in fact, he admits that the story is about self-identity seeking. It is JR's identity. Self-identity searching is an existential problem of humans. This appears in many ways.

Absurdity, indeed, is typical of Budi Darma though this is not seen explicitly. We can see that he was influenced by Camus' absurdity. The exact formulation on Camus' absurdity is rebellion (Sindhunata dan Sudiardja, 1983:24). The rebellion is on the absurdity itself, on death, and on futility. To Camus, a human being has to be tough in facing the absurdity; he or she has to be persistent in having such contradictory situations. Once, Camus said that loss does not deny what the rebel has done (in Suhartono, 1979:85). The uprising for Camus in fact is total self-involvement. This can be done by someone suppressed or someone who sees the suppression though he does not experience it. The self-identification to the other in this case is not psychological identification, which is like a sense of common fate; nor identification because of any good relationship to the people being suppressed, but this is a self-identification based on humanity. There is solidarity in a rebel. Thus, sorrows are seen as co-experience.

### The Inner-Conflict of Budi Darma

A human being is a social being. He or she experiences conflict with the others. According to Berne, who followed Freud with his identity institution concept on *id*, *ego*, and *superego*, in one's transaction with others, his or her identity structure appears together with other person. Berne also states that there are two kinds of inner-conflict, which are a separation and contamination problem (Verhaar, 1989:61 and 66).

In the case of Budi Darma, his problem is separation inner-conflict, which is the self-separation to be exact. Being always bothered with his own face reflected in his room window symbolizes JR's anxiety. The story themes that appear in the episode of Living Together show the separation inner-conflict problem. JR lives in Evermann, a place apart from the one he longs for and sees over and over, Tulip Tree. At this place he wants to reach is actually one and the same, according to Budi Darma. That Evermann and Tulip Tree are one symbolizes JR himself, who is full of contradiction.

When JR realizes that someone who lives in Tulip Tree is his own father<sup>3</sup>, CL, he tries to "reach" him by buying binoculars, a car, and other efforts (see Episode of "Pre-Encounter"). JR also realizes that he and his father are two contradictive persons. Thus, they are contradictive in soul as well. CL, who symbolizes JR's past, is someone who wishes to be pursued in order to handle the separation problem; hence, JR can "make friends" with his past and accept it.

The efforts JR has done to reach his past succeed; these are efforts that he admitted as difficult, though he finally compromised when he met some obstacles. His success in "reaching" CL does not make the situation easier, because the conflict between them is continuing when they live together. They exchange the position of being object and subject all the time. They both are objected to each other.<sup>4</sup>

The essential part of the story of Charles Lebourne is when JR has to continually carry CL's





positions offered by atheist-existentialism. In appreciating this, an individual negates the transcendent, the upper-being. For atheist-existentialism, to look for answers to world problems from the transcendent is for lazy people who only seek easy answers. JR's struggle to keep carrying his father's leg through his discomfort and suffering shows loyalty to others in his life. The 'loyalty' shown by JR is precisely the same with what Sisyphus did in Camus' myth of Sisyphus, who was cursed by gods to push a big stone up a hill while the stone kept rolling down.

"Charles Lebourne" from deeper within is a philosophical story that describes the human problems as written by Budi Darma himself ... *the narrator is the abstraction of many people's type whom I met everywhere*. "Charles Lebourne" has taught the readers that as human beings, we have to rebel to gain a better life or situation. It is reachable by embracing and compromising not only the joy, but also the suffering, sorrows, and pain and accepting the past.

A literary work can be a *model of* and *model for* the reality faced by human beings. In the case of the story of "Charles Lebourne", it is a *model of* man's anxiety in seeking his identity when interacting and transacting with others. When related to Indonesians as a corruptive society and always seeking the easiest way to solve their problems, then "Charles Lebourne" is relevant to read. It teaches us not to find simple ways in solving problems and to be more faithful, loyal, and staunch in life. As Karlina Supelli wrote in her paper, Indonesians tend to jump to find miracles in facing their problems rather than relying on their own efforts instead. (Supelli, 2012)

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