



A Semiotic Study of the Novel *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye

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ABSTRACT

The background of this research is based on the importance of understanding the hidden meaning in literary works through icons, indexes, and symbols that construct social, moral, and ideological messages in the novel. This research is supported by Peirce's semiotic study on the relationship between signs, objects, and interpretants, and strengthened by Roland Barthes' semiotic study on denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings. This research aims to analyze semiotic signs in the novel *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive method with content analysis techniques. The research data are in the form of quotes, phrases, sentences, and dialogues in the novel that contain semiotic elements. Data collection techniques are carried out through document studies by reading, recording, and grouping data based on the categories of icons, indexes, and symbols. The results of the study show that this novel contains various forms of semiotic signs that represent social life, life struggles, injustice, and the search for identity of the main character. Icons are found through descriptions of settings and real objects, indexes appear in cause-and-effect relationships in events, while symbols depict ideological meanings and social criticism. Thus, this novel not only functions as a work of entertainment, but also as a medium for conveying moral and social messages through a complex system of signs.

Keywords: semiotic, novel, tanah para bandit

INTRODUCTION

Literary works are the result of human creativity which is born from observation, experience and reflection on life. Through literary works, authors not only convey stories, but also present various values, ideas and views of life related to the social reality of society. Literature is a medium that is able to describe human life in a complex manner through the use of language that is aesthetic and full of meaning. According to Pambudi (2023:3), literary works not only function as a means of entertainment, but also as a communication medium that conveys social, cultural and moral values to readers. Therefore, literary works can be understood as representations of life that

contain various messages and meanings that need to be interpreted in depth.

One form of literary work that is much in demand by the public is the novel. A novel is a literary work in the form of prose that presents a long story about the lives of characters with various interrelated events. Novels have the ability to describe social reality more broadly because they are supported by complex intrinsic elements, such as characters, plot, setting, theme and point of view. According to Cobley (2021:28), a novel is a long narrative structure that combines various story elements and symbols so that it is able to present various layers of meaning that can be interpreted

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by the reader. The presence of these various elements makes the novel a literary work that is rich in signs and symbols that contain certain meanings.

In its development, the novel not only functions as a medium of entertainment, but also becomes a means of conveying social criticism, moral messages and the author's ideological views on various phenomena that occur in society. Through the characters, events and settings created, the author can describe various life problems, such as poverty, injustice, social conflict, and human struggles in facing various life challenges. Therefore, understanding the meaning contained in the novel requires an analytical approach that is able to reveal the various signs used by the author in constructing the story.

One approach that can be used to reveal meaning in literary works is semiotics. Semiotics is a science that studies signs and the process of forming meaning through these signs. In literary studies, semiotics is used to understand how a text produces meaning through various symbols, symbols and certain representations contained in the story. According to Luthfianthi, Kuswara, and Sukmana (2023: 104), the semiotic approach allows readers to understand the relationship between signs and meaning contained in literary works so that the message the author wants to convey can be understood in more depth. Thus, semiotics is a relevant approach in literary research because it is able to reveal meanings that are not always directly visible in the text.

Charles Sanders Peirce is a key figure who made significant contributions to the development of semiotics. Peirce proposed that a sign involves a triadic relationship between the representamen (the sign itself), the object, and the interpretant. In his theory, he classified signs into three types: icons, indices, and symbols. An icon is a sign that bears a resemblance to the object it represents. An index is a sign characterized by a causal relationship or existential proximity to its object. Mean-

while, a symbol is a sign whose meaning is established through social conventions or agreements within a society. These three categories of signs can be employed to uncover the meanings embedded in literary works, particularly novels.

One Indonesian novel that offers an interesting subject for analysis using a semiotic approach is *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye. This novel is part of an action series penned by Tere Liye and addresses various social issues concerning injustice, power, poverty, and the struggle for survival. Through a complex plot, the novel presents a variety of characters, settings, and events rich in symbolic meaning. Tere Liye is known as an Indonesian author who frequently weaves moral messages and social critiques into his works. Consequently, *Tanah Para Bandit* is not only compelling in terms of its narrative but also abounds with signs that lend themselves to analysis through a semiotic lens.

Tanah Para Bandit depicts the lives of people existing amidst profound social inequality and injustice. The various conflicts arising in the story illustrate how power is frequently wielded to oppress the vulnerable. Furthermore, the protagonist's struggle to overcome numerous obstacles serves as a vivid portrayal of the human quest for justice and the preservation of humanitarian values. Through these events, the author introduces signs that function not merely as narrative elements but also as vehicles for conveying social and moral messages to the reader. The use of icons, indices, and symbols in the novel *Tanah Para Bandit* is evident through various narrative elements constructed by the author. The characters can be understood as representations of specific social groups within society. The settings depicted in the story serve not merely as locations where events unfold but also as symbols of the social conditions experienced by the characters. Similarly, the events within the story function as indices, revealing a cause-and-effect relationship between the characters' actions and the underlying social reality.



Therefore, a semiotic analysis is required to uncover the meanings embedded in these various signs.

Extensive research has been conducted on semiotics in literary works. In their study of the novel *Saga dari Samudra*, Kumala and Supratno (2024) found that icons, indices, and symbols play a crucial role in establishing the story's atmosphere and conveying moral messages to readers. Another study by Islamiati, Juidah, and Bahri (2023) on the novel *Merpati Biru* demonstrated that the use of semiotic signs effectively reveals values such as friendship, sacrifice, and the characters' struggles in life. Meanwhile, Nur (2021), in a study of the novel *Bidadari Berbisik* by Asma Nadia, found that symbols serve as the dominant element in conveying the story's spiritual and religious values.

Despite the abundance of research on semiotics in literature, studies specifically addressing icons, indices, and symbols in Tere Liye's novel *Tanah Para Bandit* remain relatively limited. Most research on this novel has focused primarily on themes, conflicts, characterization, and the moral values embedded in the story. Consequently, the various meanings constructed through the novel's sign system have not yet been deeply explored. Yet, an analysis of icons, indices, and symbols can help uncover social, moral, and ideological messages hidden beneath the narrative.

Given this context, it is important to conduct this research to examine the icons, indices, and symbols present in Tere Liye's *Tanah Para Bandit*. By employing Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach, this study aims to reveal the meanings embedded in the various signs the author uses to construct the narrative. Furthermore, this research is expected to contribute to the development of Indonesian literary semiotics and serve as a reference for future studies examining literary works through a similar approach. The research questions addressed in this study are: (1) the nature of the iconic aspects found in the novel *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye; (2) the nature of the

indexical aspects found in the novel *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye; and (3) the nature of the symbolic aspects found in the novel *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye. The objective of this research is to describe and analyze the iconic, indexical, and symbolic aspects present in the novel *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye. The findings are expected to offer theoretical benefits for the development of literary semiotics, as well as practical benefits for readers, educators, students, and other researchers in understanding the meanings embedded in modern Indonesian literary works.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method utilizing Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach. A qualitative approach was selected because the research focuses on understanding and interpreting the meanings of signs found within the novel *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye. According to Sugiyono (2023:63), qualitative research is used to understand a subject in its natural setting, with the researcher serving as the primary instrument and data analysis conducted inductively. Therefore, this approach is deemed appropriate for examining the meanings of icons, indices, and symbols present in the literary work. The method employed in this study is content analysis. Content analysis is used to systematically examine message content, meaning structures, and sign patterns within the literary text. Sugiyono (2023:63) explains that content analysis assists researchers in observing message structures, hidden meanings, and symbolic patterns found in written documents. Through this method, the researcher can identify and interpret the various semiotic signs that appear in the novel.

The research strategy utilized is the case study. The case study approach was chosen because the research focuses on a single object of study: the novel *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye. According to Yin (2018:21), a case study is a research strategy that enables the researcher to comprehensively

understand a phenomenon within a real-life context. Similarly, Creswell (2018:102) states that case studies are used to examine a "bounded system," thereby allowing for an in-depth analysis of the research object. Thus, the case study strategy is considered relevant for uncovering the meanings of signs found within the novel.

The data for this study consist of words, phrases, sentences, dialogue, narrative elements, settings, and events that contain semiotic elements—specifically icons, indices, and symbols. The primary data source for the research is the novel *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye. Secondary data sources were obtained from books on semiotic theory, journal articles, previous studies, and various scholarly references supporting the data analysis.

Data collection was conducted through a documentation study. This technique was chosen because the research data consisted of written text. Data collection involved reading the novel intensively and repeatedly, marking passages containing semiotic elements, recording relevant data, and subsequently classifying them into the categories of icon, index, and symbol in accordance with Charles Sanders Peirce's theory. The documentation technique enabled the researcher to obtain data directly from the text, thereby facilitating a more in-depth interpretation process.

The data analysis technique employed in this study was the interactive analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman, which encompasses data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The first stage involved reading the novel thoroughly to comprehend the story's content. The second stage entailed marking and selecting data pertinent to the research focus. Subsequently, the selected data were classified into the categories of icon, index, and symbol. Following this, the data were analyzed and interpreted based on Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. The final stage involved drawing conclusions based on the results of the analysis.

Data validity in this study was verified using triangulation techniques. Moleong (2017), Razak

(2017) defines triangulation as a technique for verifying data validity by utilizing elements external to the data itself as a point of comparison or a means to cross-check the obtained data. This study utilized both data triangulation and theory triangulation. Data triangulation was carried out by comparing various data found within the novel to ensure consistent interpretation. Meanwhile, theory triangulation involved comparing the analysis results—based on Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory—with other relevant theories and research.

Furthermore, data validity was reinforced through data triangulation, theory triangulation, method triangulation, and researcher triangulation. According to Fikri, Murhayati, and Darmawan (2025:13060), data triangulation is conducted by comparing various data sources to enhance the reliability of the research findings. Wiryanto (2024:6) explains that theoretical triangulation is conducted by employing more than one theoretical perspective to interpret research phenomena. Meanwhile, Mekarisce (2023, p. 105) states that methodological triangulation is carried out by combining several analysis techniques to verify data credibility.

RESULTS

This study aims to describe forms of semiotic signs—specifically icons, indices, and symbols—in the novel *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye, based on the theory of Charles Sanders Peirce. Research data were obtained from narrative excerpts, dialogue, and events found within the novel. The analysis results indicate that the novel *Tanah Para Bandit* contains various semiotic signs that serve to construct social, moral, and ideological meanings.

1. Analysis of Iconic Aspects in the Novel *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye

Based on the previously outlined theory, the analysis of icons from the perspective of Charles Sanders Peirce explains that an icon is a type of



sign that bears a direct resemblance to the object it represents.

example, in the sentence "At the age of fifteen, I discovered a secret place," the phrase "at the age of fifteen" functions as an icon because it directly resembles the actual state of a child in early adolescence. Below is an analysis of the iconic aspect in Tere Liye's novel *Tanah Para Bandit*:

Data

A patch of oasis in the dense forest. Right at the edge of a ravine lay a stretch of flat ground, resembling a small field. In its center grew a wild mangosteen tree (Liye, 2025:6).

Signifier: Oasis, dense forest, ravine edge, stretch of flat ground, small field, wild mangosteen tree.

Signified: An image of a real place—a hidden area within the forest that is relatively safe and tranquil, serving as a stopover or a refuge.

The semiotics of the iconic aspect in the data above lies in the relationship of resemblance between the signifier and the signified. The data essentially describes a hidden location amidst a harsh natural environment that serves as a sanctuary for the character. The dense forest setting near a ravine suggests a situation fraught with danger, hardship, and pressure. Yet, amidst these conditions, there exists a stretch of flat ground—likened to a small field—that evokes a contrasting impression of safety and comfort.

This indicates that the location is not merely a physical backdrop but holds deeper significance within the narrative. It can be understood as a space where the character escapes the various problems they face—whether internal emotional pressures or conflicts in their life. The presence of an "oasis" reinforces the idea that, even in difficult circumstances, there remains a space offering tranquility and a chance to rest.

Data

Impenetrable thickets (Liye, 2025:5)

Signifier: Impenetrable thickets

Signified: A forest condition that is extremely dense, tightly packed, and difficult to traverse

The semiotic iconic aspect in the data above lies

in the relationship of resemblance between the signifier and the signified. The data describes a wild forest environment filled with obstacles. The impenetrable thickets indicate that the location is not easily traversed, thereby illustrating the difficulties the character faces while inside the forest. Furthermore, this excerpt shows that the character must confront physical obstacles during their journey. The dense, enclosed forest reflects a challenging and inhospitable atmosphere.

Data

A *Rafflesia arnoldii* corpse flower is in bloom. It is massive, with five red petals. (Liye, 2025:31)

Signifier: A blooming *Rafflesia arnoldii* corpse flower—massive, with five red petals

Signified: A rare and striking natural beauty amidst the forest

The semiotic iconic aspect in the data above lies in the relationship of resemblance between the signifier and the signified. This data describes the presence of a unique and rare natural phenomenon within the forest: a blooming red corpse flower. Its massive size and striking red color make the flower a focal point within its surrounding environment. This data reveals that the forest depicted is not merely wild and fraught with challenges but also harbors extraordinary natural beauty. This enriches the story's setting by presenting another facet of nature: its uniqueness and splendor. Furthermore, the blooming corpse flower signifies a rare occurrence, thereby lending a sense of special significance to that moment in the narrative.

Data

The jeep sped... along the narrow path. (Liye, 2025: 85)

Signifier: Jeep speeding, narrow path

Signified: A journey undertaken by vehicle across narrow, difficult terrain

The semiotic iconic aspect in the data above lies in the relationship of resemblance between the signifier and the signified. This data recounts a character's journey through a hard-to-reach area, such as a forest or remote hinterland. The "narrow

path" indicates that the route taken is not a main road but a small, constricted track likely filled with obstacles. The use of a jeep clarifies that the terrain is rugged, necessitating a robust vehicle capable of navigating uneven ground. This demonstrates the character's effort and determination to press on despite facing difficulties. It also depicts a dynamic, tension-filled situation, as traveling along narrow paths often entails risks—such as handling difficulties or inherent danger.

Data

My *rengcong* was drawn once more, held at the ready. (Liye, 2025:409)

Signifier: Rengcong drawn and held at the ready

Signified: The character's readiness to face a threat or resistance

The semiotic iconic aspect in the data above lies in the relationship of resemblance between the signifier and the signified. This data describes a tense situation confronting the character, placing them in a state of readiness for combat or self-defense. The act of drawing the *rengcong* indicates that the character perceives a threat that must be confronted, prompting them to prepare for a fight. This data also illustrates the character's state of alertness and mental readiness in the face of danger. As a traditional weapon, the *rengcong* serves not merely as a physical tool but also signifies the character's courage and decisiveness in conflict situations.

Data 6

Dozens of monkeys were feasting atop it. (Liye, 2025:6)

Signifier: Dozens of monkeys, feasting in the trees

Signified: Natural animal activity within an undisturbed, free forest habitat

The semiotic aspect of the icon in the data above lies in the relationship of resemblance between the signifier and the signified. This data depicts natural life within a forest that remains pristine and wild. The presence of dozens of monkeys "feasting" indicates that the environment is the animals' natural habitat, where they live

freely without human interference. The word "feast" evokes an atmosphere that is bustling, active, and vibrant, thereby reinforcing the impression that the forest is teeming with life. It also suggests that the location is far removed from human crowds and retains its unspoiled nature.

2. Analysis of the Index Aspect in the Novel *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye

Based on the previously outlined theory, Fadhillah (2022:14) explains that an index is a sign indicating the existence of an object through a cause-and-effect relationship or through factual cues observable within a text. An example is: "The location is in the middle of a dense forest, on the steep slopes of the Barisan Mountains."

In the sentence "The location is in the middle of a dense forest, on the steep slopes of the Barisan Mountains," the place described is extremely remote, difficult to access, and far from human settlements. These geographical conditions function as an indexical sign because they directly indicate the character's separation from social life. The dense forest and steep slopes serve as concrete evidence that the character is situated in an isolated space, both physically and socially. The following is an analysis of the index aspect in the novel *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye:

Data

I was sad, so I left home. (Liye, 2025: 5)

Signifier: Sad, left home

Signified: A cause-and-effect relationship between the feeling of sadness and the action of leaving home

This data constitutes an index because it demonstrates a direct relationship between cause and effect. The sadness experienced by the character is the primary reason for the decision to leave home. In other words, the character's action did not occur by chance but was a response to their emotional state. This excerpt illustrates that the character is facing a significant problem or intense internal pressure, prompting the choice to distance



themselves from their home environment. The feeling of sadness here serves as a sign pointing to the existence of conflict—whether with oneself or with others.

Data

My legs, my hands, and other parts of my body bore scratches from thorns. (Tere Liye, 2025:5)

Signifier: Scratches/wounds on the legs, hands, and body caused by thorns

Signified: The impact of traveling through thickets or a forest filled with obstacles

This data constitutes an index because it demonstrates a clear cause-and-effect relationship. The wounds or scratches on the body serve as a sign that the character has traversed difficult terrain, such as dense thickets or a thorny forest. These injuries did not appear spontaneously but rather as a direct consequence of the environmental conditions encountered. The excerpt reveals that the character's journey was fraught with physical obstacles and was far from easy. The injured state of the body stands as tangible evidence of the struggle the character endured.

Data

My back was covered in rattan-whip marks. (Liye, 2025:8)

Signifier: Back covered in marks from a rattan whip

Signified: An act of violence that caused injury to the character's body

This data constitutes an index because it demonstrates a clear cause-and-effect relationship. The whip marks on the back serve as a direct indication that the character has been subjected to physical violence. These injuries resulted from being struck with a rattan cane. The excerpt depicts the character's physical suffering. The visible marks serve as tangible proof of the harsh treatment the character received, thereby revealing the pressure or conflict they experienced.

Data

My mother wept every time she saw me being beaten. (Liye, 2025:39)

Signifier: my mother weeping, seeing me being beaten

Signified: Emotional reaction resulting from an act of violence against the character

This data constitutes an index because it demonstrates a clear cause-and-effect relationship. The mother's weeping arises as a direct consequence of the event in which the character is beaten. In other words, the act of violence serves as the cause for the mother's emotional reaction of sadness.

This excerpt reveals that the violence experienced by the character impacts not only their physical self but also the emotional state of those closest to them. The mother's weeping signifies a broader suffering within the family.

Data

My heart pounded faster—a fear of loss. (Liye, 2025:85)

Signifier: Heart pounding faster

Signified: Fear or anxiety experienced by the character

This data constitutes an index because it shows a cause-and-effect relationship between an emotional state and a physical reaction. An accelerated heartbeat serves as a sign that the character is experiencing fear or anxiety—specifically, the fear of loss. This excerpt illustrates the character's unsettled inner state. The bodily reaction of a rapid heartbeat arises as a natural response to the feeling of fear. This indicates that the character is in a tense situation filled with worry.

Data

I sobbed again, staring at my hands—the hands that had spilled the poison. (Liye, 2025:72)

Signifier: Sobbing, staring at hands

Signified: Guilt and regret resulting from an action committed

This data constitutes an index because it demonstrates a clear cause-and-effect relationship between an event and the character's emotional reaction. The sobbing arises as a consequence of the action committed: "spilling the poison." Gazing at one's own hands reveals the character's

awareness of their actions. This excerpt illustrates the character's inner state, which is consumed by guilt, regret, and profound sorrow. Such an emotional reaction does not arise without cause; rather, it is the direct result of an action perceived as wrong or one that has had adverse consequences.

3. Analysis of Symbolic Aspects in the Novel Tanah Para Bandit by Tere Liye

Based on the previously outlined theory, Romadhoni (2023:31) explains that a symbol is a sign whose meaning is established not through visual resemblance or a cause-and-effect relationship, but through cultural agreement and socially understood conventions.

Consider the sentence: "The only place for me to flee was that forest."

In the sentence "The only place for me to flee was that forest," the word "forest" refers to more than just a physical space—a natural area filled with trees. The following is an analysis of the symbolic aspects in the novel *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye:

Data 5

Secret place (Liye, 2025:5)

Signifier: Secret place

Signified: Something hidden, private, and unknown to others

This datum constitutes a symbol because its meaning refers not merely to a physical location but also encompasses a deeper, conventional significance. A "secret place" implies more than just a hidden spot; it can symbolize a private space that harbors specific experiences, feelings, or memories. This symbolic meaning arises because, in everyday life, a "secret" is typically something guarded, protected, and withheld from others. Consequently, a secret place can be interpreted as a safe haven where a character can be alone, harbor their feelings, or escape from their problems.

Data 7

I am a murderer. (Liye, 2025:72)

Signifier: I am a murderer

Signified: A self-admission carrying a sense of guilt, regret, or a moral burden

This datum constitutes a symbol because the phrase "I am a murderer" is not interpreted merely in the literal sense of someone who has killed; it also holds a deeper meaning regarding the character's psychological state. The sentence can symbolize profound guilt, regret, or an internal burden stemming from a past event. In a literary context, such an expression is often used to illustrate intense inner conflict. The character may feel culpable for something—whether directly or indirectly—making the act of labeling themselves a "murderer" an affirmation of that guilt.

Data 11

The last fighter. (Liye, 2025:72)

Signifier: The last fighter

Signified: A figure who endures until the end, possessing strength and resilience, and who does not give up.

This data constitutes a symbol because its meaning extends beyond a person engaged in physical combat to encompass a broader significance. "The last fighter" can symbolize someone who perseveres in the face of various hardships, conflicts, or challenges right to the end. This phrase is often used to depict mental strength, steadfastness, and a high fighting spirit. A character referred to as "the last fighter" is typically someone who refuses to surrender, even when facing dire circumstances or standing alone.

Data 12

Land of bandits. (Liye, 2025:9)

Signifier: Land of bandits

Signified: A territory dominated by violence, crime, and a chaotic way of life.

This data constitutes a symbol because it refers to more than just a geographical location; it carries a broader meaning. "Land of bandits" symbolizes a region synonymous with danger, conflict, and illegitimate authority. The phrase depicts a harsh social environment where the rule of law may not function normally and life is fraught with threats. Furthermore, this symbol can reflect a reality filled with struggle and uncertainty for the characters inhabiting that space.



Data 16

"We are the padma; we are the queen of flowers." (Liye, 2025:72)

Signifier: *padma*, queen of flowers

Signified: Beauty, purity, distinction, and high status

This data constitutes a symbol because the expressions "*padma*" and "queen of flowers" do not merely denote a flower in the literal sense but carry deeper meanings. The *padma* (lotus) often symbolizes purity, beauty, and the ability to thrive in challenging environments. Meanwhile, "queen of flowers" symbolizes something truly special, superior, and of higher status than others. The use of the phrase "we are..." asserts an identity, implying that the character or group possesses specific values, strengths, or unique qualities. It can also be interpreted as a form of motivation or self-assurance—a resolve to remain strong and valuable despite facing difficult circumstances.

DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings, the novel *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye incorporates the three semiotic aspects defined by Charles Sanders Peirce: icon, index, and symbol. These three aspects appear prominently throughout the novel, playing a crucial role in constructing the story's meaning, reinforcing characterization, and conveying social and moral messages to the reader. These findings demonstrate that the use of signs in the novel serves not merely as an aesthetic element but also as a vehicle for conveying deeper meaning.

Regarding the iconic aspect, the research found that iconic signs are frequently manifested through the depiction of settings, characters, and objects that bear a direct resemblance to the things they represent. Elements such as stilt houses, dense forests, small rivers, ravines, fallen trees, the *Rafflesia arnoldii* flower, and footpaths serve as icons that realistically portray the lives of remote communities. These findings align with Peirce's theory, which defines an icon as a sign that shares

a relationship of resemblance with its object. The presence of icons in the novel helps readers visualize the atmosphere and environmental conditions serving as the story's setting. The use of these icons also demonstrates how Tere Liye concretely portrays the reality of life in remote areas, enabling readers to gain a clearer understanding of the characters' social backgrounds. These findings align with the research of Kumala & Supratno (2024), which established that icons in novels serve to reinforce the depiction of settings and characters through representations of objects that mirror reality.

From another perspective, the use of icons in the novel functions not merely as a visual representation but also as a cultural one. The depiction of stilt houses and the remote environment reflects the identity of a community that remains closely connected to nature and upholds traditional ways of life. Thus, the icons in the novel do not simply present a resemblance in form; they also represent the social life of the community that serves as the story's backdrop.

Regarding the indexical aspect, the research findings reveal a strong causal relationship within the various events experienced by the characters. The wounds on Padma's body serve as an index of the grueling training imposed by Abu Syik, while Agam's tears and fear index the suffering caused by his father's violence. Furthermore, the silent, dark atmosphere of the forest indexes the danger, tension, and uncertainty facing the characters. These findings align with Peirce's theory, which defines an index as a sign possessing a direct connection to its object or cause.

On one hand, the use of indices in the novel intensifies the story's conflict and emotional atmosphere. Readers not only learn that the characters are suffering but also grasp the causes of that suffering through the various signs presented by the author. The presence of indices lends the plot a sense of logic and realism, as each event is clearly linked to others. This finding is consistent with research by Fadhilla (2022), which

states that indices in literary works serve to demonstrate the factual connection between an event and its underlying conditions.

On the other hand, indices also serve to reveal the characters' psychological states. Fear, tears, physical injuries, and various emotional expressions in the novel act as indicators of the pressures the characters endure. Through these indices, readers gain a deeper understanding of the inner conflicts experienced by Padma and Agam. Thus, indices play a crucial role in developing character depth while reinforcing the novel's social significance.

The symbolic aspect emerged as the most dominant finding in this study. The various symbols identified do not merely complement the narrative; they also embody profound social, moral, and ideological meanings. A fallen tree at the edge of a ravine symbolizes both the balance of life and the threat of danger. The character Padma stands as a symbol of struggle, courage, and female resilience in the face of life's hardships. Additionally, a secret location deep in the forest symbolizes freedom and a sanctuary from the pressures the characters face. The findings indicate that the author employs symbols in the novel to convey messages indirectly. According to Peirce's theory, a symbol is a sign whose meaning is derived from social convention or specific interpretation; consequently, the meaning of symbols in the novel can only be grasped through the story's context and the reader's experience. These results align with the research of Islamiati, Juidah, and Bahri (2023), who found that symbols in novels serve to implicitly convey life values, themes of struggle, and moral messages.

From a social perspective, the symbols found in the novel reveal a critique of the injustice and harshness of life in remote communities. The character Padma, who perseveres amidst various pressures, embodies the resilience of the human spirit in the face of suffering. Meanwhile, other symbols—such as the "land of bandits," marijuana fields, and poison—depict a reality fraught with

conflict, power struggles, and social deviance. Through these symbols, Tere Liye does not merely recount the character's life journey but also offers a social critique regarding various issues affecting the community.

The findings of this study align with those of Nur (2021), who identified symbols as the most dominant semiotic aspect in literary works due to their capacity to convey broader meanings compared to icons and indices. However, this study possesses distinct characteristics, as the symbols identified relate primarily to the struggle for survival, social injustice, and the character's quest for identity within a harsh, remote environment.

A key strength of this study lies in its application of Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory, which enables the systematic classification of data into the categories of icon, index, and symbol. This approach facilitates a structured uncovering of sign meanings, allowing for a clear explanation of the relationship between signs and their significations. Furthermore, by focusing the analysis on a single novel, the study allows for an in-depth examination of each piece of data identified.

Nevertheless, the study has limitations stemming from its reliance on a single semiotic theory as the analytical framework. Consequently, meanings related to ideological and cultural aspects have not been explored in depth through other semiotic perspectives. Additionally, as the research is confined to one novel, the findings cannot fully represent the use of signs across Tere Liye's entire body of work. Therefore, future research is encouraged to employ a more diverse range of semiotic approaches or to conduct comparative analyses across multiple novels to gain a more comprehensive understanding of sign usage in Indonesian literature.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings regarding Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis of the novel *Tanah Para Bandit* by Tere Liye, it can be



concluded that the novel contains three types of semiotic signs: icons, indices, and symbols.

First, icons in *Tanah Para Bandit* are found in various depictions of characters, objects, and settings that bear a resemblance to the objects they represent. These icons appear in the descriptions of stilt houses, dense forests, rivers, ravines, fallen trees, *Rafflesia arnoldii* flowers, and other natural elements that realistically portray the lives of remote communities. The presence of icons helps readers grasp the setting, atmosphere, and the characters' living conditions in a more concrete manner.

Second, indices in the novel are identified through cause-and-effect relationships arising from various plot events. Indices are evident in the characters' injuries, weeping, fear, and the tense atmosphere, as well as in actions demonstrating a direct link between an event and its consequences. The presence of indices serves to clarify conflicts, plot progression, and the characters' psychological states throughout the story.

Third, symbols in the novel are found in various objects, characters, and events that carry meanings extending beyond their literal interpretations. These symbols appear in elements such as a secret location deep in the forest, a fallen tree, the character Padma, and events representing struggle, courage, freedom, hope, and resilience. Symbols constitute the most dominant element, as the author employs them to indirectly convey moral, social, and humanitarian messages.

Thus, the research results indicate that icons, indices, and symbols in *Tanah Para Bandit* function both as a means of constructing the story's meaning and as a medium for conveying the life lessons the author wishes to share with readers. These findings demonstrate that Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach can effectively reveal the meanings of signs within literary works, specifically in Tere Liye's *Tanah Para Bandit*.

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