

Cultural Signs in Toraja Novels; When Love Finds its Way Home; Charles Sanders Pierce Semiotic Studies

Syahrul Nur

Email : syahrulnuripaa@gmail.com

¹Makassar State University, Indonesia

Received: November 15, 2021

Received in Revised: December 24,
2021

Accepted: December 31, 2021

Abstract

The aims of this research are; (1) Describe the form of cultural signs in the novel Toraja; When Love Finds its Way Home based on Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic theory. (2) Describe the meaning of cultural signs in the novel Toraja; When Love Finds Its Way Home. This research is a qualitative research. The data in this study are data obtained from novels in the form of icons, indexes and symbols as well as data obtained from interviews. Sources of data in this study is a novel entitled Toraja; When Love Finds its Way Home by Endang, SSN, and also an informant who is the head of the Ke'te Kesu' tradition in North Toraja. The data collection technique used in this study is a documentation technique which includes observing and recording the various signs that are needed, as well as using open interview techniques. The results of this study indicate that the form of the sign is more dominant in the novel Toraja; When Love Finds its Way Home is a symbol consisting of five data. In addition to symbols, researchers also found signs in the form of icons (one data) and indexes (two data). As we know that based on his criteria, Pierce distinguishes signs into three, namely icons, indexes and symbols.

Keywords: Cultural Signs, Novel, Semiotics Charles Sanders Pierce

Introduction

Toraja is one of the tribes in Indonesia which has become a tourist spot on an international scale. The attraction that makes local and foreign tourists interested in visiting is because Tanah Toraja is rich in nature, culture, heritage, and culinary. However, the most popular are culture and heritage.

Throughout October 2018, the Ke'te Kesu tourist attraction was visited by 784 foreign tourists, consisting of 215 French citizens, 112 German citizens and 84 Spanish citizens while the rest were spread from various countries (Rahayu, 2018). No less than foreign tourists, the local tourists who visited the place in the same month amounted to 5,418 people. The largest number of tourist visits in 2018 occurred in September, with 1,473 foreign tourists visiting the Ke'te Kesu tourist attraction. Consisting of 419 French citizens, 176 German citizens, 116 Spanish citizens, the rest are from various countries.

One of the distinctive cultures in Tana Toraja is the Tongkonan traditional house (Manurung, 2017). Tongkonan has a unique shape resembling a boat. Tongkonan comes from the word tongkon which means to sit or sit (Tarrapa & Junaedi, I2021). In the past Tongkonan was a gathering place for nobles to discuss. One of the unique things is that the Tongkonan house is always built opposite the alang sura (rice barn).

Besides the traditional house, the most unique thing in Tana Toraja is the traditional ceremony. The most famous traditional ceremony is the Rambu Solo, a traditional ceremony performed

as a form of final respect for people who have died. In general, Rambu Solo consists of two ceremonial processions, namely the funeral procession and the art procession. The funeral process consists of several rituals, namely Ma'tudan Melabun, Ma'Roto, Ma'Popengkalo Alang, and Ma'Palao.

The cultural diversity and spiritual life of the Tana Toraja people, which are unique and become their own characteristics, certainly attract the attention of many parties (Adams, 2006). One of them is from the literary circle. Not a few writers who pour the culture of the people of Tana Toraja into a literary work. For example, Endang S.S.N, poured the culture in Tana Toraja into a novel entitled *Toraja; When Love Finds Its Way Home* (2014). The novel tells the story of two friends, Sandi and Tomi, they have the same hobby in the world of photography. They decided to go on an adventure to Toraja. In Toraja Sandi meets Bira, a village girl whom he falls in love with. They love each other, but their love must be hindered by different customs.

Of course there are various cultural signs in the novel which are full of meaning, so this research is deemed necessary to reveal the cultural signs contained in the novel, as well as a form of effort so that there is no shift in the meaning contained in the novel.

This research will be carried out using the semiotic theory of Charles Sander Pierce as the main theory. Charles Sander Pierce wanted his semiotic theory to become a general reference for the study of various signs. Pierce requires a more in-depth study of this matter, for that he divides signs into several classifications. The first classification is a sign based on Ground. Based on ground, Pierce in Rokmansyah (2014) distinguishes signs in three ways, namely qualisign or quality, sinsign or existence and actuality and legisign or norms contained in a sign. The second classification is based on the object. Based on the object, Pierce distinguishes signs into three, namely icons, indexes, and symbols. The third classification is the sign based on the interpretant, Pierce also distinguishes it into three, namely rheme, dicisign, and argument. Based on three classifications of signs according to Pierce, this study will use the second classification, namely signs based on objects.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative research method. Qualitative research is a research method that utilizes qualitative data and is described descriptively. Qualitative research aims to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects for example in the form of behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions and others. This study uses Charles Sanders Pierce's theory of semiotic analysis as the main theory, aiming to reveal the forms of cultural signs implied in the Toraja novel; *When Love Finds Its Way Home*. There are two data in this study, namely data from novels containing words, sentences or expressions that contain cultural signs in the form of icons, indexes and symbols, and data obtained from interviewees. The sources of data in this research are Novel *Toraja; When Love Finds a Way Home* by Endang S.S.N. published by de Teens in 2014 with 244 pages. Data collection techniques used are documentation and interview techniques.

Results and Discussion

Based on the results of research conducted by analyzing the Toraja Novel; *When Love Finds a Way Home* by Endang S.S.N., the following data were obtained.

Icon

Data 1

"This is my house! Welcome to *Tongkonan*! Sorry it's messy, you know." Said Tangke. (page 67)

Data 1 is classified as an icon. *Tongkonan* is classified as an icon because *Tongkonan* is the traditional house of the Tana Toraja people, by looking at the *Tongkonan* people can already know that the traditional house is a typical traditional house of Tana Toraja. Therefore, *Tongkonan* is an icon of Tana Toraja. *Tongkonan* consists of the root word *tongkonan* which means position. It is said to be a position because it is in the house that the community fosters kinship both in household matters, as well as in conducting deliberation in carrying out traditional ceremonies, both joy and sorrow ceremonies.

Index

Data 2

“Tangke has no desire to explain **Rambu Solo** in detail to Sandy and Tomy. He felt they had not had the time to know and experience the sacred ceremony”. (page 61)

Data 2 is classified as an index. The traditional *rambu solo* ceremony is classified as an index because the traditional *rambu solo* ceremony is a traditional ceremony of mourning for the people of Tana Toraja. The traditional *rambu solo* ceremony is carried out as a sign that a resident has died, therefore the *rambu solo* is done as a form of final respect for the deceased. It is called *rambu solo* because this traditional ceremony is held when the sun begins to decline (*solo*).

Data 3

“A unique *Tongkonan*, a different rice barn, until Sandy was shocked when he saw the **gua-gua** behind the *tongkonan*”. (page 115)

Data 3 is classified as an index. The people of Tana Toraja are famous for their burials in caves. Huge boulders and rock cliffs are deliberately perforated to be used as tombs. This is done because Toraja is located in the mountains which are dominated by rock mountains. So that's why the tomb is deliberately made on rocks or cliffs to save more land so that the land can be used for farming. The tombs contained in these stone caves have different levels. The tomb whose position is at the top is the tomb for people who are considered to have played an important role in society during their lifetime, such as village officials or traditional heads, while the tombs at the bottom are usually for ordinary people. This is done because the people of Tana Toraja believe that the higher a person is buried, the sooner he will reach the barzah (hereafter) realm.

Symbol

Data 4

“Crazy! The kid is very sensitive. In fact, this early in the morning the **buffalo horn** cannot be separated from its mystery”. (page 71)

Data 4 is classified as a symbol. Buffalo horns are usually displayed in front of the *tongkonan* house, classified as a symbol because the buffalo horn indicates that the owner of the *tongkonan* has carried out the traditional ritual of slaughtering the buffalo in the ceremony. The greater the number of buffalo horns displayed in front of the *tongkonan*, it means that more buffalo are slaughtered during the ceremony.

Data 5

“We call this **rante**. All the mourners who attend will gather together with the rice granaries and all the equipment for the ceremony is also prepared here, "explained Tangke. (page 148)

Data 5 is classified as a symbol. *Rante* is a place that is deliberately made to carry out the *Rambu solo* ceremony. *Rante* is classified as a symbol because it indicates that in that place the *Rambu solo* traditional ceremony will be held. Usually made in an open field, so that all ceremonial processions can run smoothly.

Data 6

"Oh, that's a **buffalo** carcass that has been slaughtered. Because they are from the aristocracy, many **buffaloes** are slaughtered. " (page 148)

Data 6 are classified as symbols. The buffaloes slaughtered in the procession of traditional ceremonies indicate that those who perform the traditional ceremonies come from well -to -do families or nobles. The buffalo slaughtered in the ceremony is believed to be a vehicle for the spirits of the dead to reach the barzah (hereafter) realm. The buffaloes that were slaughtered were not random. Must be a buffalo that already has horns. The longer the horn of the slaughtered buffalo, the better, because it is believed that the horn is used by the buffalo as a tool to remove obstacles on the way to the barzah realm.

Data 7

"What dance is that?" Sandy asked Tank

"**Ma'randing**, the purpose is to praise the courage of the deceased during his life. (page 150)

Data 7 is classified as a symbol. *Ma'randing* is a dance that is performed as a series of the *Rambu solo* ceremony. *Ma'randing* signifies that the person who dies is a man. *Ma'randing* is a typical dance accompanied by shouts of spirit.

Data 8

"Well, the one over there is called the **ma'katia** dance. The goal is to remind the mourners of the generosity of the deceased." (page 150)

Data 8 is classified as a symbol. Similar to *ma'randing*, *ma'katia* is also a series of solo *Rambu* ceremonies. But *ma'katia* signifies that the person who dies is a woman. *Ma'katia* is a typical dance accompanied by melancholy songs.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the discussion, it can be concluded that the cultural signs contained in the Toraja novel; *When Love Finds Its Way Home* is an icon, an index and a symbol. Consists of one data in the form of icons, two data in the form of indexes and five data in the form of symbols with a total of eight data found in the novel. These data were obtained from the analysis process that was carried out carefully when reading the novel. Based on the results of the research that has been done, the researchers hope that in the future research on culture should receive a lot of attention as an effort to prevent the extinction of the culture in an area.

References

- Adams, K. M. (2006). *Art as politics: Re-crafting identities, tourism, and power in Tana Toraja, Indonesia*. University of hawaii Press.
- Endang SSN. (2014). *Toraja; Saat Cinta Menemukan Jalan Pulang*. Yogyakarta: De TEENS.
- Manurung, P. (2017). Daylighting and architectural concept of traditional architecture: The Tongkonan in Toraja, Indonesia. *A/Z: ITU Journal of Faculty of Architecture*, 14(1), 111-26.

- Rahayu, R. N. (2018). *Toraja, Magnet Wisata Indonesia Penarik Turis Mancanegara*. Toraja: Okezone News.
- Rokmansyah, A. (2014). *Studi dan Pengkajian Sastra: Perkenalan Awal Terhadap Ilmu Sastra*. Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu
- Tarrapa, S., & Junaedi, I. (2021). The Legacy of Local Wisdom Education Models for The Next Generation of Toraja, Indonesia. *Technium Soc. Sci. J.*, 21, 765.