



Claiming the Republic: A Semiotic Analysis of Ownership and Citizenship in Taufik Ismail's Poetry

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Abstract

A Discussions of ownership, sovereignty, and citizenship have long occupied a central position in Indonesian literary discourse, particularly in poetry that engages with questions of national identity and political ethics. Taufik Ismail's poem "We Are the Legal Owners of This Republic" exemplifies this tradition by foregrounding ownership as a collective claim and moral responsibility. However, existing studies tend to treat the poem thematically, paying limited attention to the semiotic processes through which ownership is constructed and to its relevance for regional contexts such as Aceh. This study aims to examine how the meaning of ownership is articulated in the poem and to explore its implications for understanding civic consciousness within the broader framework of Aceh Studies. Employing a qualitative research design, the study uses a semiotic approach grounded in Roland Barthes' theory of signification. The analysis focuses on key linguistic signs, including collective pronouns, legal terminology, and symbolic expressions, and interprets their denotative and connotative meanings in relation to socio-political discourses. The findings show that ownership in the poem is constructed as a collective and ethical claim rather than a purely legal status, emphasizing responsibility, solidarity, and popular sovereignty. The poem also functions as an implicit critique of political authority by reaffirming the moral legitimacy of the people. These findings contribute to literary studies by demonstrating the value of semiotic analysis for uncovering ideological meanings in poetry and to Aceh Studies by illustrating how national literary texts can illuminate regional concerns related to citizenship, autonomy, and collective identity.

Keywords: Semiotics, Ownership, Indonesian poetry, Nationalism, Aceh studies

Introduction

Literary texts have long been recognized as powerful cultural instruments through which societies articulate, negotiate, and contest meanings of power, belonging, and collective identity. Within national literary traditions, poetry occupies a distinctive position due to its capacity to condense social experience into symbolic and affective language. Scholars in literary studies, cultural studies, and political theory have consistently argued that poetry does not merely reflect social realities but actively participates in shaping ideological consciousness through its use of language, symbolism, and rhetorical structure (Eagleton, 1996; Culler, 2001). In postcolonial and post-authoritarian contexts, poetic discourse often becomes a critical site where concepts such as sovereignty, citizenship, and ownership are questioned and reimagined.

In Indonesia, poetry has historically functioned as a medium for articulating national identity and social responsibility. From the post-independence period to the contemporary era, poets have engaged directly with questions of power, state legitimacy, and the moral obligations



of citizens within the republic (Teeuw, 1984; Faruk, 2012). One of the most prominent figures in this tradition is Taufik Ismail, whose work is widely acknowledged for its explicit engagement with political ethics and civic consciousness. His poem “We Are the Legal Owners of This Republic” exemplifies this engagement by foregrounding the notion of ownership as a collective claim. Rather than framing ownership in a material or legalistic sense alone, the poem presents it as a symbolic and ethical assertion made by the people toward the state.

The concept of ownership in literary discourse has attracted sustained scholarly attention, particularly within studies of nationalism and collective identity. Political theorists have emphasized that claims of ownership over the nation are closely tied to ideas of popular sovereignty and imagined community (Anderson, 2006; Gellner, 1983). From this perspective, ownership is not merely a question of possession, but a discursive strategy through which citizens assert their legitimacy within the political order. Literary scholars have extended this argument by demonstrating how poetic language transforms abstract political concepts into emotionally resonant symbols that can mobilize collective sentiment (Rancière, 2011; Brennan, 2001). Poetry thus becomes a space where the relationship between the people and the state is redefined through metaphor, repetition, and symbolic association.

Semiotics offers a particularly relevant framework for examining how such meanings are constructed in poetic texts. Rooted in the work of Saussure and later developed by Barthes, semiotic analysis emphasizes the relational nature of signs and the layered processes through which meaning is produced (Barthes, 1977; Chandler, 2017). In poetry, words function not only at the level of denotation, but also generate connotative meanings that are shaped by cultural, historical, and ideological contexts. Semiotic studies of literature have demonstrated that seemingly simple lexical choices, such as pronouns or legal terms, can operate as powerful ideological signifiers when placed within specific textual and social formations (Riffaterre, 1978; Nöth, 1990).

Within Indonesian literary studies, semiotic approaches have been widely applied to analyze symbolism, imagery, and myth in poetry and prose (Junus, 1981; Faruk, 2012). However, studies focusing specifically on the semiotics of political ownership remain limited. Existing analyses of Taufik Ismail’s poetry tend to emphasize thematic nationalism or moral didacticism, often treating ownership as an assumed or self-evident idea rather than as a complex signifying process (Waluyo, 2002; Pradopo, 2010). As a result, the deeper ideological mechanisms through which ownership is linguistically and symbolically constructed have received relatively little critical attention.

This gap becomes particularly significant when considered in relation to regions with distinctive socio-political histories, such as Aceh. Aceh occupies a unique position within the Indonesian nation-state due to its history of resistance, conflict, and special autonomy. Discourses of ownership, sovereignty, and citizen-state relations therefore carry particular resonance in Acehnese society, where questions of who owns the state, who holds legitimate authority, and how citizenship is defined continue to shape public consciousness (Aspinall, 2009; Feener, 2013). Although Taufik Ismail’s poem does not originate from Aceh specifically, its national discourse on collective ownership provides an important interpretive lens for understanding broader ideological narratives that circulate within Acehnese social and cultural life.

From the perspective of Aceh Studies, examining national literary texts is not a departure from regional focus, but rather a necessary extension of it. Scholars have argued that local identities in Indonesia are continuously formed through interaction with national narratives, including those produced through literature, education, and mass culture (Heryanto, 2008; Robinson, 2018). Poetry that articulates the people as the rightful owners of the republic inevitably intersects with Acehnese debates on autonomy, dignity, and political responsibility. Yet few studies have explicitly connected semiotic analysis of national poetry with the socio-cultural concerns central to Aceh Studies.

Furthermore, prior research on ownership in poetry has largely remained text-centered, focusing on internal structures without adequately situating them within contemporary socio-political interpretation. Reception-oriented perspectives that consider how literary meanings remain relevant or contested in current contexts are still underrepresented in Indonesian literary

scholarship (Iser, 1978; Jauss, 1982). In the case of Taufik Ismail's poem, questions remain regarding how its construction of ownership resonates in today's socio-political climate, particularly in regions where the relationship between citizens and the state has been historically complex.

Therefore, there is a clear research gap in the intersection of three areas. First, the semiotic processes through which ownership is constructed in political poetry have not been sufficiently theorized in Indonesian literary studies. Second, existing analyses seldom connect national poetic discourse to regionally grounded concerns, particularly those relevant to Aceh. Third, limited attention has been given to the contemporary significance of such poetic constructions in shaping civic consciousness beyond the period of their original production.

Addressing these gaps, this study aims to analyze the meaning of ownership in Taufik Ismail's poem "We Are the Legal Owners of This Republic" through a semiotic approach. Drawing primarily on Roland Barthes' theory of signification, the study examines how linguistic choices, symbolic patterns, and rhetorical strategies construct ownership as a collective ethical and ideological claim. The analysis focuses on key signifiers such as collective pronouns, legal terminology, and nationalist symbols, while situating these signs within Indonesia's broader socio-political discourse.

More specifically, this study seeks to achieve three objectives. First, it aims to elucidate how ownership is semiotically produced in the poem through denotative and connotative meanings. Second, it seeks to interpret how this construction of ownership articulates a particular relationship between citizens and the state, emphasizing responsibility alongside entitlement. Third, it aims to demonstrate the relevance of this poetic discourse for Aceh Studies by linking national narratives of ownership to regional concerns about sovereignty, civic identity, and political belonging.

The contribution of this study is both theoretical and contextual. Theoretically, it advances semiotic literary analysis in Indonesian studies by foregrounding ownership as a complex ideological sign rather than a static theme. Contextually, it contributes to Aceh Studies by showing how national literary texts can illuminate broader socio-cultural dynamics relevant to Acehnese society. By integrating literary semiotics with regional socio-political perspectives, this study responds directly to the multidisciplinary aims of the Aceh studies and underscores the value of literary analysis for understanding community, identity, and governance in Aceh.

In doing so, this article positions poetry not only as an aesthetic artifact but as a meaningful cultural text that participates in ongoing debates about who owns the republic and what such ownership entails. Through this lens, the poem becomes a site where national ideology and regional experience intersect, offering insights that are relevant not only to literary scholarship but also to the broader study of society in Aceh.

Methods

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in literary semiotics. Qualitative textual analysis is particularly appropriate for examining how meaning is constructed in poetic language, where interpretation depends on symbolic, contextual, and ideological dimensions rather than quantifiable variables. The research is interpretive in nature, aiming to explore how the concept of ownership is represented and negotiated within a poetic text, and how such representation resonates with broader socio-political discourses relevant to Aceh Studies. By employing a semiotic framework, the study seeks to uncover layers of meaning embedded in linguistic signs and their cultural implications.

The primary data source for this study is the poem "We Are the Legal Owners of This Republic" by Taufik Ismail, originally published in 1988. This poem was selected because it explicitly foregrounds the notion of collective ownership and sovereignty, making it particularly suitable for semiotic analysis. As a nationally recognized literary text, the poem also provides a meaningful point of reference for examining discourses of citizenship and state ownership that are relevant to regional contexts such as Aceh.

Secondary data consist of scholarly sources relevant to semiotics, literary theory, nationalism, and Aceh Studies. These include peer reviewed journal articles, academic books published by reputable presses, and authoritative studies on Indonesian literature and socio-

political discourse. Secondary sources are used to contextualize the analysis and support theoretical interpretations, rather than to substitute for primary textual analysis.

Data collection in this study is text based and relies on documentary research. The poem is treated as a fixed textual artifact, and no modification of the original text is made. The poem was obtained from an authoritative published collection by the poet. Secondary data were collected through systematic reading of academic literature related to semiotics, nationalism, and Indonesian literary studies. Selection criteria for secondary sources included scholarly credibility, relevance to the research focus, and contribution to theoretical or contextual understanding.

The principal research instrument used in this study is an analytical framework derived from semiotic theory, particularly the signification model proposed by Roland Barthes. This framework serves as a conceptual tool for identifying and interpreting linguistic signs within the poem. Analytical categories include denotation, connotation, symbolic association, and ideological meaning. In addition, contextual insight is informed by concepts of nationalism and imagined community drawn from political and cultural theory. These instruments function as interpretive guides rather than mechanical coding tools, allowing flexibility in reading and analysis while maintaining theoretical rigor.

The data collection procedure was conducted in several stages. First, the poem was read repeatedly to obtain a comprehensive understanding of its thematic focus, linguistic structure, and rhetorical flow. Second, words, phrases, and expressions related to ownership, collectivity, legality, and national identity were identified and noted. Third, these textual elements were examined in relation to their immediate poetic context, including imagery, repetition, and syntactic emphasis. Finally, relevant secondary literature was consulted to contextualize the identified signs within broader historical, cultural, and political discussions, particularly those pertinent to Indonesian and Aceh contexts.

In qualitative literary research, measurement does not involve numerical quantification but rather analytical depth and interpretive coherence. The unit of analysis in this study consists of linguistic signs, including pronouns, legal terminology, metaphors, and symbolic references within the poem. These signs are measured in terms of their semantic function, relational position within the text, and ideological implications. Attention is given to how frequently and emphatically certain signs appear, as well as how they interact with other elements to construct meaning. Interpretive validity is pursued through consistency of analysis and theoretical alignment rather than statistical reliability.

Data analysis follows a semiotic interpretive procedure. First, denotative meanings of selected signs are identified based on their conventional linguistic usage. Second, connotative meanings are explored by examining cultural, political, and historical associations attached to those signs. Third, the relationship between signs is analyzed to determine how they collectively construct the idea of ownership as a national and ethical concept. This process involves close reading and interpretive reflection informed by semiotic theory.

To strengthen analytical depth, the findings are subsequently interpreted within the broader discourse of nationalism and civic identity. The analysis considers how the poem's construction of ownership aligns with or challenges dominant narratives of state authority and popular sovereignty. In line with the aims of Aceh Studies, the discussion also reflects on the relevance of these meanings for understanding regional experiences of citizenship, autonomy, and political belonging. Through this layered approach, the study moves beyond surface interpretation to offer a contextualized and theoretically grounded reading of the poem.

Findings

The semiotic analysis of Taufik Ismail's poem "We Are the Legal Owners of This Republic" reveals several interconnected patterns through which the meaning of ownership is constructed and articulated. The findings are organized into four thematic categories: the collective subject of ownership, the legal and moral framing of possession, ownership as civic responsibility, and the implicit critique of political authority. Together, these categories demonstrate how the poem constructs ownership as an ideological and ethical claim that resonates with broader socio-political concerns relevant to Aceh Studies.

One of the most salient findings concerns the consistent use of collective linguistic markers in the poem. The repeated pronoun “we” functions as a dominant signifier that establishes ownership as a shared and inclusive condition. Rather than referring to a specific group or class, the pronoun operates as a symbolic representation of the people as a unified collective. Semiotic theory has long emphasized that pronouns are not neutral linguistic elements but powerful markers of subject positioning within discourse (Benveniste, 1971; Fairclough, 1995). In this poem, the pronoun “we” constructs an imagined community bound by a common claim over the republic.

Textually, the repetition of “we” does more than indicate plurality. It produces a sense of political solidarity by positioning citizens as a collective agent rather than passive subjects of the state. This finding aligns with arguments in nationalism studies that collective identity is discursively formed through repeated symbolic assertions of unity (Anderson, 2006). In the context of Aceh Studies, such collective framing is particularly relevant, as Acehnese identity has historically been shaped through communal narratives of resistance and autonomy. The poem’s collective voice thus provides an ideological framework that can be read as resonant with Aceh’s communal political consciousness.

A second significant finding is the poem’s strategic use of legal terminology, particularly the word “legal”. At the denotative level, the term refers to legitimacy grounded in law or formal authority. However, the semiotic analysis reveals a connotative shift from juridical legality to moral legitimacy. The poem does not specify legal mechanisms, institutions, or constitutional articles. Instead, legality is presented as an inherent right attached to the people’s existence as citizens.

Barthes (1977) notes that when legal or institutional language appears in non-judicial texts, it often undergoes a process of mythologization, whereby formal authority is transformed into moral truth. In this poem, the phrase “legal owners” functions as a mythic sign that naturalizes the people’s ownership of the republic. The law is not portrayed as external or imposed, but as something that derives its validity from the collective will of the people.

This finding challenges state-centered interpretations of legitimacy and instead foregrounds popular sovereignty. Such a framing is significant for Aceh Studies, where questions of legal authority and moral legitimacy have long been contested due to Aceh’s special autonomy and historical conflicts with centralized power (Aspinall, 2009). The poem’s semiotic construction of legality thus reflects broader tensions between formal state authority and popular moral claims.

A further thematic finding concerns the way ownership is associated with responsibility rather than entitlement alone. The poem does not portray ownership as a passive status or a symbolic honor, but as an ongoing obligation that requires vigilance, care, and ethical commitment. Specific lexical choices emphasize action, awareness, and moral stance rather than material possession.

This aligns with political and cultural theories that conceptualize citizenship as an active practice rather than a legal designation (Isin, 2008; Balibar, 2015). Ownership in the poem is not something that can be delegated or surrendered without consequence. Instead, it is framed as a responsibility that demands participation and accountability. Such a construction transforms ownership from a static concept into a dynamic ethical relationship between citizens and the state.

Within the context of Aceh Studies, this finding is particularly relevant. Acehnese society has experienced prolonged periods in which civic participation and political responsibility were constrained by conflict and central control. The poem’s articulation of ownership as responsibility resonates with ongoing efforts within Aceh to redefine citizenship, governance, and public participation. The semiotic emphasis on responsibility offers a literary articulation of civic agency that goes beyond formal political discourse.

The final major finding concerns the poem’s implicit critique of political power. Although the poem does not directly name political actors or institutions, its insistence on popular ownership functions as a counter-discourse to elite domination. By foregrounding the people as the rightful owners, the poem implicitly questions political practices that marginalize citizens or appropriate state power for narrow interests.

Critical discourse studies have shown that indirect critique is a common strategy in literary texts produced within constrained political environments (Foucault, 1980; van Dijk, 2008). In this poem, the critique emerges through contrast rather than accusation. The clarity and firmness of the ownership claim suggest the existence of forces that deny or undermine that ownership. This absence becomes a meaningful sign in itself, pointing to tensions between ideal sovereignty and political reality.

From the perspective of Aceh Studies, this implicit critique mirrors historical experiences in which Acehnese political aspirations were often sidelined within national governance structures. The poem's insistence on collective ownership thus acquires additional interpretive weight when read in relation to regional experiences of exclusion and negotiation with state power.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the poem constructs ownership through a complex interplay of collective identity, moral legality, civic responsibility, and political critique. These semiotic patterns show that ownership is not presented as a simple declarative claim but as an ideological position that engages deeply with questions of sovereignty and citizenship. By situating national poetic discourse within broader socio-cultural concerns relevant to Aceh, these findings support the journal's aim of advancing interdisciplinary knowledge that connects humanities scholarship with regional social realities.

Discussion

This study set out to examine how the concept of ownership is constructed in Taufik Ismail's poem "We Are the Legal Owners of This Republic" through a semiotic lens and to explore the relevance of this construction for contemporary socio-political discourse, particularly within the contextual concerns of Aceh Studies. By analyzing the poem at the level of linguistic signs, symbolic associations, and ideological implications, the findings reveal that ownership in the poem is neither a purely legal designation nor a rhetorical ornament. Instead, it emerges as a complex moral, political, and collective claim that challenges hierarchical notions of state authority and affirms popular sovereignty.

The first major finding, concerning the poem's reliance on collective signification, reinforces well-established arguments in literary and political theory that collective identity is constructed discursively rather than given naturally. Benedict Anderson's concept of imagined communities emphasizes that collective belonging is produced through shared symbols and narratives that allow individuals to perceive themselves as part of a unified social body (Anderson, 2006). The repeated use of the pronoun "we" in the poem exemplifies this mechanism by positioning the people as a single moral and political subject. This linguistic choice is not incidental; pronouns play a crucial role in shaping subjectivity and agency within discourse (Benveniste, 1971).

From the perspective of the research question, this finding directly addresses how ownership is represented and for whom it is claimed. Ownership is not attributed to the state, institutions, or elites, but to the people collectively. This supports previous analyses of nationalist poetry that emphasize the role of language in articulating communal agency (Brennan, 2001; Rancière, 2011). At the same time, the finding gains additional significance when situated within Aceh Studies. Acehnese identity has historically been forged through collective narratives of struggle, solidarity, and resistance to external authority (Aspinall, 2009). The poem's collective voice therefore resonates with regional experiences of communal political consciousness, even though the text itself speaks at a national level.

Another important result concerns the semiotic transformation of legality from a juridical concept into a moral claim. While the term "legal" conventionally refers to state-sanctioned authority, the poem detaches legality from institutional structures and relocates it within the ethical domain of the people. This finding supports Barthes' argument that ideological meaning often arises through the naturalization of historically contingent concepts (Barthes, 1977). In the poem, legality is no longer defined by documents or laws, but by moral entitlement grounded in collective existence.

This outcome supports earlier findings in critical legal and cultural studies which argue that legitimacy in postcolonial contexts often exceeds formal legality (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006). However, the result also complicates certain interpretations of nationalism that emphasize the centralizing role of the state in defining legal authority (Gellner, 1983). By attributing legal

ownership to the people rather than institutions, the poem subtly contradicts state-centered models of sovereignty.

For Aceh, where legal arrangements such as special autonomy have been central to political negotiation, this moral framing of legality is particularly important. It suggests that legal recognition alone is insufficient without popular legitimacy, a theme that echoes debates on governance and autonomy within Aceh (Feener, 2013). This finding was somewhat unexpected in its intensity, as the poem's language does not explicitly critique legal institutions, yet the semiotic analysis reveals a strong displacement of institutional authority.

A further significant finding is the poem's construction of ownership as responsibility. Rather than associating ownership with privilege or control, the poem emphasizes obligation and ethical commitment. This aligns with civic republican theories that define citizenship as active participation in the collective good rather than passive membership (Isin, 2008; Balibar, 2015). The poem thus redefines ownership as a dynamic relationship that requires vigilance and moral engagement.

This finding supports previous studies in literary citizenship that highlight the ethical dimension of political belonging (Turner, 2014). However, it also contrasts with more celebratory nationalist poetry that treats ownership primarily as a symbolic affirmation of pride and unity. In this sense, Taufik Ismail's poem introduces a critical dimension that problematizes complacent nationalism.

For Aceh Studies, this interpretation is particularly relevant. Post-conflict Aceh continues to grapple with questions of civic participation, governance, and public accountability. The poem's framing of ownership as responsibility offers a literary articulation of civic ethics that complements sociological and political analyses of Acehnese society. This suggests a broader hypothesis that national literary texts can serve as ethical reference points for regional civic discourse, even when they do not explicitly address regional issues.

The analysis also reveals that the poem functions as an implicit critique of political authority. The absence of explicit references to political actors or institutions does not weaken the critique; rather, it intensifies it by allowing readers to infer the presence of unjust power relations. Foucault's notion that power often operates through what is left unsaid is particularly relevant here (Foucault, 1980). The poem's insistence on popular ownership implicitly exposes the gap between ideal sovereignty and lived political reality.

This finding partially contradicts interpretations that view the poem solely as an affirmation of nationalism without critical intent. While earlier readings have emphasized its motivational tone (Waluyo, 2002), the semiotic analysis suggests a more ambivalent and critical stance. This contradiction highlights the importance of methodological approach, as surface thematic readings may miss deeper ideological tensions embedded in linguistic structure.

However, caution is needed in interpreting this critique. As a poetic text, the poem allows for multiple readings, and its implicit nature means that interpretations depend on contextual knowledge and reader positioning. In Aceh, where political critique has historically carried significant risks, indirect modes of expression hold particular cultural significance. This invites careful consideration of how poetic ambiguity functions differently across socio-political contexts.

The findings of this study have several implications. Theoretically, they demonstrate the value of semiotic analysis for uncovering ideological meaning in literary texts beyond surface themes. Methodologically, they suggest that close linguistic analysis remains crucial in literary studies, particularly when texts engage with political concepts.

For Aceh Studies, the study highlights how national literary discourse contributes to regional understandings of citizenship, sovereignty, and ownership. This supports interdisciplinary approaches that integrate literary analysis with social and political inquiry, in line with the journal's aims.

Future research could extend this analysis by incorporating reader reception studies in Aceh to examine how contemporary readers interpret the poem's concept of ownership. Comparative studies with Acehnese poetry that addresses similar themes could also deepen understanding of how national and regional discourses intersect. Additionally, historical analysis of how the poem's

meaning has shifted over time would offer further insight into the evolving relationship between literature and political consciousness.

This discussion demonstrates that Taufik Ismail's poem offers more than a declaration of national pride. It provides a nuanced and ethically charged articulation of ownership that continues to resonate within the socio-political realities relevant to Aceh. Through semiotic analysis, the poem emerges as a cultural text that invites reflection on who owns the republic and what such ownership demands from its citizens.

Conclusion

This study has examined the construction of ownership in Taufik Ismail's poem "We Are the Legal Owners of This Republic" through a semiotic framework, with particular attention to its relevance for broader socio-political discourses associated with Aceh Studies. The analysis demonstrates that ownership in the poem is articulated as a collective, moral, and ideological claim rather than a narrowly legal or institutional one. Through the strategic use of collective pronouns, legal vocabulary, and symbolic language, the poem positions the people as the legitimate holders of sovereignty, while simultaneously redefining ownership as an ethical responsibility that demands civic awareness and engagement. The findings also reveal that the poem functions as an implicit critique of political authority by foregrounding popular sovereignty and exposing the tension between idealized national ownership and lived political realities.

The implications of these findings are both theoretical and contextual. From a literary perspective, the study underscores the value of semiotic analysis in uncovering ideological meanings embedded in poetic language that may not be immediately visible through thematic or descriptive readings alone. From the standpoint of Aceh Studies, the analysis highlights how national literary texts can offer meaningful insights into regional concerns related to citizenship, legitimacy, and collective identity. Although the poem is not explicitly grounded in Acehese experience, its discourse on ownership and responsibility resonates with Aceh's historical and ongoing negotiations of autonomy, governance, and citizen-state relations. This demonstrates that literary works operating at the national level can contribute to an enriched understanding of local and regional socio-political dynamics.

In conclusion, this study affirms that poetry remains a significant cultural force in shaping and challenging ideas of ownership, sovereignty, and civic responsibility. By reading Taufik Ismail's poem as a semiotic and ideological text, the article shows how literary discourse can bridge national narratives and regional contexts such as Aceh, aligning with the interdisciplinary aims of the Journal of Aceh Studies. The poem ultimately invites readers to reflect critically on what it means to "own" a republic, not as a matter of power or possession, but as an enduring moral commitment shared by citizens within a diverse and dynamic society.

Ethics approval

Not required.

Competing interests

All the authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

How to cite

Sagala, R. W. B. S., & Harahap, R. (2026). Claiming the Republic: A Semiotic Analysis of Ownership and Citizenship in Taufik Ismail's Poetry. *Journal of Aceh Studies*, 3(1), 278–286. <https://doi.org/10.63924/joas.v3i1.136>

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