



## Representation of Inheritance Law in the Film *Gara Gara Warisan*

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### ABSTRACT

Family films function as a medium of communication, entertainment, and a social mirror that reflects the dynamics and values of family life. One example is *Gara Gara Warisan*, an Indonesian comedy-drama that raises the issue of inheritance disputes and highlights the importance of communication, justice, and togetherness within the family. This study aims to analyze the representation of inheritance law in the film through Roland Barthes' semiotic perspective and the Indonesian inheritance system. The research is a descriptive-qualitative study employing a semantic approach and inductive analysis, using secondary data derived from the film *Gara Gara Warisan*. Dialogues in the film are classified based on semiotic parameters, then analyzed using Roland Barthes' theory and the Indonesian inheritance system to identify consistent patterns of meaning. The findings indicate that the concept of inheritance in *Gara Gara Warisan* presents multiple layers of meaning from Roland Barthes' semiotic perspective and reflects the dynamics of inheritance law in Indonesia. This study implies that the understanding of inheritance law is closely related to concepts perceived by society. Such concepts must embody principles of togetherness, justice, and utility.

### Keywords:

Film;  
*Gara Gara Warisan*;  
Inheritance Law;  
Roland Barthes;  
Semiotic

### INTRODUCTION

Film serves as a medium for human beings to express themselves and convey particular messages to the wider public. Over time, film has developed not only as a medium of communication but also as a source of entertainment for diverse audiences. Films are subsequently categorized into various genres according to the themes they present, one of which is the family-themed film.

Family-themed films often serve as a reflection of social realities, portraying diverse dynamics of family life such as conflict, communication, togetherness, and the pursuit of justice. Through these narratives, films not only entertain but also provide audiences with insights into the values and challenges that shape familial relationships (Gribaldo, 2022). In family-themed films, the relationships among characters serve as the primary

contextual element that drives the narrative and aims to evoke emotional resonance in the audience (Hsu & Li, 2022).

The narrative in family-themed films typically addresses issues such as communication, generational differences, sacrifice, and the search for the meaning of togetherness. In addition, family films often serve as a medium for conveying moral messages, such as the importance of honesty, mutual understanding, and maintaining harmony. Thus, family films function not only as entertainment but also as social mirrors that illustrate how family values are practiced and preserved within society.

One example of a family-themed film is *Gara Gara Warisan*. This Indonesian family comedy-drama raises the issue of inheritance disputes as its central theme. The story revolves around three siblings who must confront reality when their father passes away, leaving behind a guest house as an inheritance with certain conditions. This inheritance arrangement triggers conflict, rivalry, and emotional tension among them. The film demonstrates how differences in character, ambition, and perspectives on inheritance can affect family harmony. Wrapped in humor, the film not only entertains but also conveys moral messages about the importance of communication, justice, and togetherness in addressing family issues.

One of the problems that often arises within families is inheritance conflict. This occurs due to the low level of understanding of inheritance law among the public. In addition, the existence of multiple inheritance law systems creates confusion in society regarding which concept should be applied. The film *Gara Gara Warisan* attempts to visualize the reality of inheritance conflicts that occur within society.

This study is a continuation of previous relevant research on inheritance law and film. Among these studies are: Mukhammad Nur Hadi conducted a study entitled “The Narrative of Islamic Family Law in Indonesian Films” and argued that Islamic family-themed films represent the values of Islamic family law in Indonesia, based on his content analysis of several films (Hadi, 2021). Vincent Mubangizi and colleagues, in their study entitled “Assessing Changes in Knowledge, Attitudes, and Intentions to Use Family Planning after Watching Documentary and Drama Health Education Films: A Qualitative Study”, concluded that by watching family-related films, audiences receive entertainment that is educational, informative, and persuasive, which in turn leads to positive changes in knowledge and attitudes within the family (Mubangizi et al., 2022).

Jamaluddin Aziz conducted a study entitled “Say Cheese: Family Photos, Modern Malay Masculinity and Family Narrative in Some Malaysian Films”. According to Aziz, family-related films serve as portraits of family life within a nation, closely connected to the value systems and cultural traditions upheld by society (Aziz, 2020). Syabbul Bachri and colleagues, in their research “Sociological Dimensions of the Application of Islamic Inheritance in Indonesia”, argued that inheritance law in Indonesia is guided by principles of justice and public benefit, with its application remaining flexible depending on the social context of Indonesian society (Bachri, 2024). Similarly, Ismail and colleagues, in their study “The Contribution of ‘Urf to the Reform of Islamic Inheritance Law in Indonesia”, concluded that the system of inheritance distribution in Indonesia is strongly influenced by customary practices embedded within the community (Ismail et al., 2022).

Despite these contributions, the aforementioned studies have not specifically examined the representation of inheritance law in Indonesian films. This gap provides the opportunity for the present research to explore in greater depth the representation of inheritance law in cinema, particularly in the film *Gara Gara Warisan*, through the lens of Roland Barthes’ semiotics and the Indonesian inheritance system.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research is a descriptive-qualitative study that employs philosophical assumptions (Puspitawati, 2018) concerning the representation of inheritance law in the film *Gara Gara Warisan*. It focuses on a semantic study that examines language as a science of signs in order to uncover the meaning and function of those signs (Muhadjir, 2011). This descriptive-qualitative approach emphasizes the researcher’s close engagement with the collected data. Through in-depth analytical procedures and specific interpretive frameworks, the study seeks to dissect the data to identify consistent patterns or themes (Creswell, 2022)

This research adopts a library research design. Secondary data are obtained from the film *Gara Gara Warisan*. The initial step involves classifying the film’s dialogues based on predetermined semiotic parameters (Rahayu, 2017). The study applies an inductive analysis model. Inductive analysis is a reasoning approach characterized by a limited scope that subsequently leads to general conclusions (Yusuf, 2017). This concept is then

specifically applied to the study of *Gara Gara Warisan*. The data are analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory and the Indonesian inheritance law system.

## FINDINGS

### Description of the Film *Gara Gara Warisan*



**Figure 1. Movie Poster**

Film is a cultural artwork that functions as a social institution and a medium of mass communication. Films are produced based on the principles of cinematography, with or without sound, and can be publicly exhibited (*Pasal 1 Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 33 Tahun 2009 Tentang Perfilman*). To understand film, there are also theories that provide analytical frameworks. Film theory functions to help us interpret the medium more effectively. Theorists explain how films operate, transmit meaning, and offer various functions, as well as how films influence audiences. In the context of film, theory serves as a tool that enables us to deconstruct a film based on the questions that arise within viewers. Film theory is required to read, dismantle, and interrogate the signs and linguistic codes that are represented as a cinematic spectacle (Lukmantoro, 2016).

*Gara-Gara Warisan* tells the story of three siblings—Adam (Oka Antara), Laras (Indah Permatasari), and Dicky (Ge Pamungkas)—who have lived separately since the death of their mother. When their father passes away, the three are reunited to contest an inheritance in the form of a family-owned restaurant. Conflict arises as each sibling has different interests and distinct personalities: Adam is serious, Laras is empathetic, and

Dicky is self-centered. This rivalry leads to frequent quarrels while simultaneously reopening old wounds within the family.

Behind its lighthearted comedy, the film delivers a profound message about the meaning of family, togetherness, and how inheritance often becomes a source of conflict. Directed by Muhadkly Acho in his directorial debut and produced by Ernest Prakasa, the film successfully combines the humor of stand-up comedians with emotionally touching drama. *Gara-Gara Warisan* is not merely about the struggle over property but also about the journey of three siblings to rediscover the essence of family relationships and to embrace differences (Sekarmayang).

### **Semiotika Roland Barthes**

Understanding language as a tool of communication largely depends on how meaning is constructed. Roland Barthes, through his semiotic theory, divides the process of meaning-making into four key elements: denotation, which refers to the most basic literal meaning; connotation, which represents secondary layers of meaning influenced by culture; ideology, understood as a set of codes that reinforce social power structures; and myth, which functions as a recurring and profound cultural narrative (Barthes, 2020). For example, an advertisement does not merely sell a product but also conveys certain values such as social status or lifestyle. This approach renders Barthes' semiotics highly relevant in the study of communication, literature, and media (Ashri, 2025).

Barthes expanded Ferdinand de Saussure's concept of semiotics by introducing the notion of myth as a second-order system of signification. He emphasized that signs are not only interpreted at the denotative level but also possess connotative layers of meaning that are often unconscious. Myth functions to normalize certain ideologies so that they appear natural to society, while in reality they are cultural constructions. Thus, Barthes' semiotics serves as a method for uncovering the hidden ideologies embedded within texts or cultural objects (Urfan, 2019). Barthes demonstrates that media plays a crucial role in shaping societal perspectives through symbols and narratives that appear natural but are in fact laden with ideology. This approach has been widely applied in media analysis, advertising, and cultural texts because it reveals how power and hidden ideologies are reproduced through signs. Consequently, Barthes' semiotics has become an essential

framework in the study of communication, literature, and contemporary cultural studies (Yohana & Valentina, 2024).

### **Inheritance Law in Indonesia**

Inheritance law is the rules and principles governing the transfer of property, rights, and obligations of a deceased person. Inheritance law is a component of civil law and a sub-component of family law. In Indonesia, inheritance law is highly diverse and pluralistic. This is reflected in the various existing inheritance law systems, namely customary inheritance law, Islamic inheritance law, and Western inheritance law, as outlined in the Indonesian Civil Code or *Burgerlijk Wetboek* (BW) (Riyanto, 2024).

Customary inheritance law prioritizes cultural values and diverse kinship systems. Islamic inheritance law, later adopted in the *Compilation of Islamic Law*, stipulates inheritance distribution based on sharia principles, with a greater share favoring sons. Meanwhile, the Civil Code provides formal and balanced distribution rules for sons and daughters. Although these three systems operate together, they are not always harmonious and require legislative and jurisprudential processes to harmonize inheritance regulations for social justice and legal certainty amidst legal pluralism in Indonesia (Salas et al., 2025)

The pluralism of inheritance law in Indonesia provides space for legal choices, but also presents challenges in terms of certainty and dispute resolution. (Rukniyah et al., 2026) Legal pluralism is not an obstacle to justice, but rather a basis for the reconstruction of adaptive and contextual inheritance law in Indonesia (Hidayat et al., 2025).

### **Customary Inheritance Law in Indonesia**

Inheritance law in Indonesia prioritizes the principle of deliberation and consensus in its application. This is reflected in the familial nature of inheritance distribution. The presence of traditional leaders is even required to ensure agreement between heirs. The goal is to maintain the continuity of relationships among heirs and to respect and preserve the customs of their traditional group (Faradila, 2023). Customary inheritance law is a living law and has become part of the legal culture of the community regarding the timing of inheritance distribution, the amount, and its legal impact (Maimanah et al., 2024).

The customary law inheritance system in Indonesia is influenced by the kinship system of each indigenous community. Patrilineal, matrilineal, and bilateral systems are forms of kinship that underlie the concept of customary inheritance law. Patrilineal inheritance is a system of inheritance passed down through the male line, for example, in the Lampung and Batak indigenous communities. Martilineal inheritance is passed down through the female line, for example, in the Minangkabau and Semende traditions. Meanwhile, the bilateral inheritance system, adopted by the Javanese indigenous community, provides equal shares for male and female descendants (Rusli, 2025).

### **Islamic Inheritance Law in Indonesia**

The basis and main source of Islamic law on inheritance are the texts contained in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (Alvani et al., 2023). The implementation of Islamic inheritance law in Indonesia is related to the social, cultural and legal aspects that apply in society (Suryantoro, 2025). The Islamic inheritance system or faraidh is a legal framework that has been methodically compiled from the classical to the modern era with very detailed and hierarchical rules in order to realize a fair distribution of assets in accordance with the principles of divine justice and the objectives of sharia in protecting family assets. Systematically, this division classifies heirs into three main complementary groups: dzawil furudh as holders of fixed portions based on explicit evidence (such as 1/2, 1/4, 1/6 or 1/8), 'ashabah who are entitled to the remaining assets or residue, and dzawil arham which includes relatives with more distant lineages (Ghafur et al., 2025).

The Compilation of Islamic Law exists as a legal guideline that seeks to unify pluralistic inheritance laws scattered across various local interpretations. The enactment of the Compilation of Islamic Law provides a stronger and more uniform legal basis for religious courts in guaranteeing the rights of heirs and resolving inheritance disputes. However, the implementation of the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) also takes into account civil and customary law (Djamud et al., 2024). The solution is to contextualize Islamic inheritance values and customary inheritance laws, which have long existed in Indonesia (Hariati, 2024).

When inheritance cases arise, religious court judges take the position of deciding the case. Judges typically use a legal positivism approach, which is a continuation of the application of the civil law system in Indonesia. (Zaman et al., 2024) However, judges can

also refer to the opinions of Islamic scholars regarding the problems of inheritance law. (Roslina et al., 2025) The application of inheritance law in Indonesia actually prioritizes the principles of justice and benefit that adapt to the environmental and social conditions of society (Bachri, 2024).

### **Indonesian Civil Inheritance Law**

In Indonesian civil law, inheritance issues have long been regulated through the Civil Code (KUHPerdata), which provides a framework for the mechanism for transferring inherited assets to heirs. The Civil Code regulates three principles governing heirs: the principle of personal inheritance, the principle of bilateral inheritance, and the principle of devolution. It also regulates elements of inheritance law, such as heirs, testators, and inheritance assets as assets passed by the testator to their heirs. The Civil Code also divides heirs into four groups: Group I, Group II, Group III, and Group IV (Adam, 2024).





The first group consists of the longest-living husband or wife plus their children and their descendants (regulated in Articles 832 and 852 of the Civil Code). The second group consists of the biological father and mother (if both are still living), the father or mother (if one has died), and brothers or sisters and their descendants (regulated in Articles 854 to 857 of the Civil Code). The third group consists of maternal grandparents and paternal grandparents (regulated in Articles 850 and 853 of the Civil Code). The fourth group consists of the testator's other relatives and is regulated in Articles 858 and 861 of the Civil Code (Adisiswanto, 2022). This regulation has not fully adapted to the new dynamics that have emerged as a result of the rapid development of technology in the contemporary era. (De Aprilia et al., 2025).

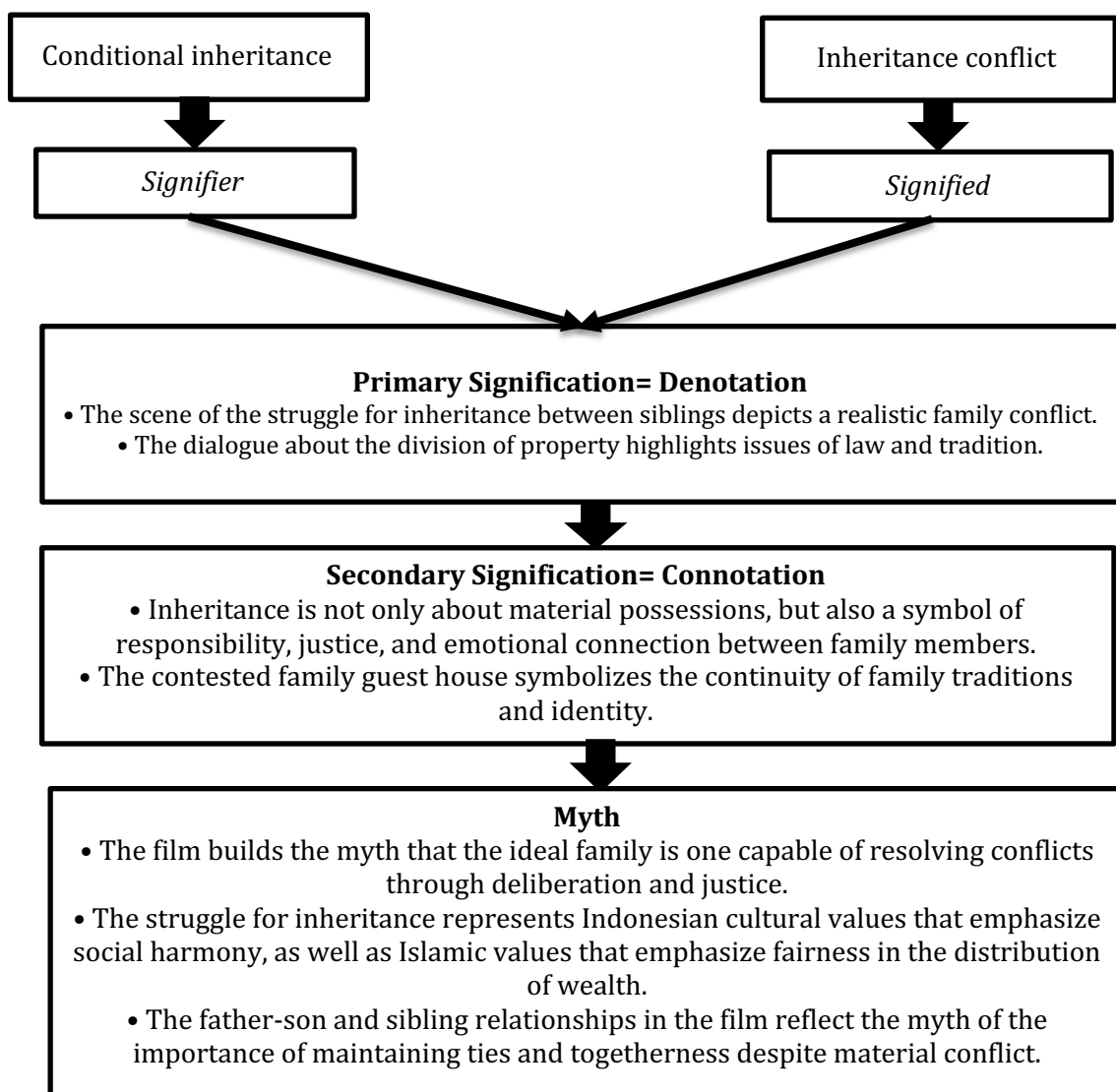
## **DISCUSSION**

### **Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis in the Film *Gara Gara Warisan***

Roland Barthes's semiotic concept in the film *Gara-Gara Warisan* can be used to interpret how the signs in the film shape meanings about family, heritage, and Islamic and local cultural values. The film not only presents a story but also constructs myths about family relationships, inheritance conflicts, and the values of justice and togetherness.

**Table 1. Scenes from the Movie *Gara Gara Warisan***

No.	Scene	Duration (in minutes)	Screenshot
1.	Delivery of inheritance with conditions	25:06	
2.	Inheritance conflict	1:27:57	
3.	Testator's will	1:40:01	
4.	Inheritance conflict resolution	1:40:25	



**Figure 1. Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of Inheritance Conflict in Gara-Gara Warisan**

### **Analysis of Inheritance Law in the Film *Gara Gara Warisan***

Inheritance law is essentially flexible. It can be interpreted in various inheritance systems prevailing in society. However, the principles of inheritance cannot be removed from the inheritance system used. The goal is to guarantee the rights and obligations of the inheritance process.

The inheritance law system in Indonesia is inseparable from the history of the Indonesian nation. The customary inheritance law system in Indonesia is a living law that has existed since before Indonesia's independence. Islamic inheritance law emerged with

the arrival of Islam in Indonesia. Meanwhile, inheritance law under the Civil Code (KHUPerdata) has existed since the colonial era.

The application of an inheritance law system in Indonesia is not mandatory; rather, it is a choice. The reasons for using a particular inheritance law system must be agreed upon by all heirs. Furthermore, the process must not conflict with the adopted inheritance law system.

The film "*Gara Gara Warisan*" does not clearly describe the inheritance system used. However, the story suggests that inheritance is subject to certain conditions: if a child is willing to live in and manage a guest house, they will receive 7% of the profits. In the Islamic inheritance system, there is no such requirement. Islam only stipulates that a murderer is not entitled to inherit the property of someone they kill. However, some customary inheritance laws have similar requirements: obtaining a home requires living in the house, such as in the Semendo customary inheritance concept, known as "tunggu tubang."

The concept of inheritance from the perspective of the Civil Code (KUHPerdata) in this film is evident in the determination of heirs. In the film, heirs fall into Category I, namely, wives and children. This category of heirs is considered priority heirs within the context of the Civil Code. The personal and bilateral principles of the Civil Code inheritance concept are reflected in the dialogue regarding inheritance.

The Islamic inheritance concept in this film considers men to receive twice the share of women due to the various obligations they bear. The heirs are determined to be his wife, two sons, and one daughter. The distribution of assets received by each heir is calculated based on the provisions of faraidh. The distribution of inheritance under Islamic law is as follows:

**Table 2. Islamic Inheritance Distribution in the Film *Gara Gara Warisan***

Heir	Number of Heirs	Divider Calculation	Percentage
Second wife	1/8	5/40	12,5%
2 boys	Asobah	28/40 (each 14/40)	70% (each 35%)
1 daughter	Asobah	7/40	17,5%
Total		40/40	100%

The scene presented in the film between minutes 100–104 illustrates that the testator continues to consider the welfare of his children and wife. This aligns with the provisions of Islamic inheritance law, which emphasize that one should not leave behind

weak descendants, as stated in Q.S. An-Nisa (4): 9. Weakness in this context includes financial vulnerability after the death of parents. The testamentary messages delivered at the end of life also serve as an example of how to prevent conflicts in inheritance distribution, as depicted in the subsequent scenes.

*Gara Gara Warisan* does not reflect the life of a specific customary community. Therefore, the inheritance system in the film cannot be analyzed from the perspective of customary inheritance law. What can be observed, however, is the concept of property being inherited. Customary law views inheritance as ancestral property that must be managed across generations and should not be divided or sold. This perspective is evident in the conclusion of the film.

The film conveys the importance of planning inheritance distribution within families. The purpose is to avoid potential conflicts that may arise after the death of the testator. The use of various media as part of testamentary communication regarding inherited property should serve as an example for audiences and society at large. The expectation is that society will better understand inheritance concepts and prevent conflicts arising from the inheritance process.

## **CONCLUSION**

The representation of Roland Barthes' semiotic meaning in *Gara Gara Warisan* positions the inheritance distribution scheme as the signifier, while the conflict arising from this scheme serves as the signified. The denotative meaning is the contestation over inheritance with the condition of managing the family guest house as the inherited property. The connotative meaning suggests that inheritance is not merely material wealth but also a symbol of responsibility, justice, and emotional bonds among family members. The contested family guest house symbolizes the continuity of tradition and family identity. The myth that emerges is that the resolution of inheritance conflicts must prioritize family values, justice, responsibility, and the preservation of relationships among family members.

The inheritance system depicted in *Gara Gara Warisan* is not explicitly stated. Although initially the father, as the heir, imposes certain conditions for the transfer of property, the film's portrayal of inheritance distribution encompasses principles of customary inheritance law, Islamic inheritance law, and civil inheritance law

(KUHPerdata). This reflects the dynamic implementation of inheritance law in Indonesia, which is influenced by both internal and external factors.

This research carries two implications: theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it demonstrates that the understanding of inheritance is closely related to the concept of distribution within society. Practically, it highlights that the foundation of inheritance lies in togetherness, justice, and utility. Thus, any model of inheritance distribution—regardless of the legal framework—can be accepted as long as it is grounded in these principles.

Nevertheless, this study is not without limitations. Methodologically, the application of Barthes' semiotic analysis is highly dependent on the researcher's subjectivity in interpreting signs, which may lead to interpretive bias. Furthermore, the data are limited to a single film without comparison to other works, resulting in less comprehensive insights into the dynamics of inheritance law in Indonesian cinema. Another limitation is the absence of audience perspectives, which prevents the study from capturing how meanings are received and interpreted by viewers.

Based on the discussion, this research recommends further studies that extend the object of inquiry to fieldwork. For instance, future research could examine the influence of inheritance concepts in *Gara Gara Warisan* on specific communities, or investigate the perspectives of the film's producers to uncover the creative sources behind the narrative. Moreover, socialization and guidance in inheritance processes within society are necessary to prevent conflicts in the practice of inheritance law in Indonesia.

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