

**THE MEANING OF GAMBLING IN BEN MEZRICH'S
BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE**

THESIS

By:

Rois Burhanuddin Ashshofi

NIM 14320152



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

**UNIVESITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM
MALANG**

2020

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*BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE***

THESIS

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In Partial Fullfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Sarjana Sastra (S.S)

By:

Rois Burhanuddin Ashshofi

NIM 14320152

Advisor:

Dr. Mundi Rahayu, M.Hum

NIP. 19680226 200604 2 001



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2020

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I stated that the thesis entitled **The Meaning of Gambling in Ben Mezrich's *Bringing Down The House*** is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those ones that are cited as referencess and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is an objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, July 30, 2020

The Writer



Rois Burhanuddin Ashshofi

NIM 14320152

APPROVAL SHEET

This is to certify that Rois Burhanuddin Ashshofi's thesis entitled **The Meaning of Gambling in Ben Mezrich's *Bringing Down The House*** has been approved for thesis examination at the Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, as one of the requirements for the degree of Sarjana Sastra (S.S.).

Approved by
Advisor



Dr. Mundi Rahayu, M.Hum
NIP. 19680226 200604 2 001

Head of Department of English Literature



Rina Sari, M.Pd.
NIP. 197506102006042002

Acknowledge by
Dean of the Faculty of Humanities



Syafiyah, M.A.
NIP. 196812311994031022

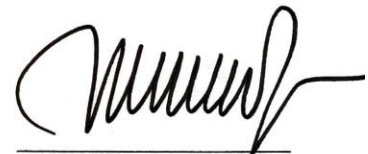
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This is to certify that Rois Burhanuddin Ashshofi's thesis entitled **The Meaning of Gambling in Ben Mezrich's *Bringing Down The House*** has been approved by the Board of Examiners as the requirement for the degree of Sarjana Sastra (S.S.) in English Letters Department.

The Board of Examiners

Signatures

1. Dr. Hj. Isti'adah, M. A. (Main
NIP. 196609101991032002 Examiner)
2. Muzakki Afifudin, S.S., M.Pd. (Chair)
NIP. 197610112011011005
3. Dr. Mundi Rahayu, M.Hum (Advisor)
NIP. 19680226 200604 2 001



Approved by
Dean,

Dr. N. Syafiyah, M.A.
NIP. 196812311994031022



MOTTO

If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way.

“ Napoleon Hill ”

DEDICATION

I dedicated my thesis to :

My greatest and beloved parents Drs. H. Abdul Rokhim and Dra. Hj. Roesti
zuroida

And

My beloved Families

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Finally, as an ordinary human being, I am aware of some limitation of this research I conducted. I hope that this research will give contributions to the improvement of the English learning process. However, the writer also realizes that this research is still far from being perfect. Therefore, all criticisms and suggestions will be appreciated.

Malang, July 30, 2020

Rois Burhanuddin Ashshofi

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ABSTRACT

Ashshofi, Rois Burhanuddin. 2020. **The Meaning of Gambling in Ben Mezrich's *Bringing Down The House***. Minor Thesis (Skripsi), Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

Advisor : Dr. Mundi Rahayu, M.Hum

Keywords : semiotics, denotative, connotative, myth, gambling

Novel is a form of literary work consisting of long narrative prose. In general, the novel tells the life of a main character with the people around him, complete with their respective characters. The writing style of novels varies greatly. Some novelists do not show the intended meaning directly, so the reader must grope what the meaning is to convey. The interesting novels to be explored is the meaning contained in the *Bringing Down The House* by Ben Mezrich. This study aims to answer the statement of the problem that is, what is the meaning of gambling represented in Ben Mezrich's *Bringing Down the House*.

In this study, the researcher uses a semiotic theory of Roland Barthes. Data is taken from Ben Mezrich's novel, *Bringing Down The House*. Researcher use the theory which states that everything has a second level semiotic meaning called a myth. Myth, according to Barthes, arises because of the unity between the meaning of denotation and the connotation of one object. This theory will be used by researcher to look for denotative meanings and connotative meanings of gambling in the novel. Furthermore, myths about gambling will be explained based on these findings.

The results showed that gambling myths varied greatly, depending on each of the characters in it. Denotatively, gambling in *Bringing Down The House* has three meanings, namely, an activity that involves betting, risk, and prizes, entertaining playing activities, and card counting. While connotatively, gambling is meaningful as a business, career, and way of life.

ABSTRAK

Ashshofi, Rois Burhanuddin. 2020. **Makna Berjudi dalam Novel Bringing Down The House Milik Ben Mezrich**. Skripsi, Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

Pembimbing : Dr. Mundi Rahayu, M.Hum

Kata kunci : Semiotika, Denotatif, Konotatif, Mitos, Perjudian

Novel adalah salah satu bentuk karya sastra yang terdiri dari prosa naratif panjang. Secara umum novel menceritakan kehidupan seorang tokoh utama dengan orang-orang di sekitarnya, lengkap dengan tokohnya masing-masing. Gaya penulisan novel sangat bervariasi. Beberapa novelis tidak menunjukkan makna yang dimaksud secara langsung, sehingga pembaca harus meraba-raba makna yang ingin disampaikan. Salah satu novel yang menarik untuk dieksplorasi adalah makna yang terkandung dalam novel *Bringing Down The House* karya Ben Mezrich. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjawab rumusan masalah yaitu, apa makna perjudian yang direpresentasikan dalam novel *Bringing Down the House* milik Ben Mezrich.

Dalam penelitian ini peneliti menggunakan teori semiotik Roland Barthes. Data diambil dari novel Ben Mezrich, *Bringing Down The House*. Peneliti menggunakan teori yang menyatakan bahwa segala sesuatu memiliki makna semiotik tingkat kedua yang disebut mitos. Mitos, menurut Barthes, muncul karena adanya kesatuan antara makna denotasi dan konotasi suatu objek. Teori ini akan digunakan peneliti untuk mencari makna denotatif dan makna konotatif perjudian dalam novel. Selanjutnya mitos tentang perjudian akan dijelaskan berdasarkan temuan tersebut.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mitos judi sangat bervariasi tergantung dari masing-masing karakter yang ada di dalamnya. Secara denotasi, perjudian dalam *Bringing Down The House* memiliki tiga arti, yaitu kegiatan yang melibatkan taruhan, risiko, dan hadiah, kegiatan bermain yang menghibur, dan penghitungan kartu. Sedangkan secara konotatif, judi bermakna sebagai bisnis, karier, dan gaya hidup.

الصافي. رئيس برهان الدين. 2020. معنى القمار في رواية Bringing Down The House للكاتب Ben Mezrich. أطروحة. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي. كلية الإنسانية. جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم مالانج.

المستشار: د. موني راهايو ، م هوم

الكلمات الرئيسية: السيميائية ، الدلالة ، الدلالة ، الأسطورة ، القمار

الرواية شكل من أشكال العمل الأدبي يتكون من نثر سردي طويل. بشكل عام ، تحكي الرواية حياة شخصية رئيسية مع الأشخاص من حولها ، كاملة مع شخصياتهم. يختلف أسلوب كتابة الروايات اختلافاً كبيراً. لا يُظهر بعض الروائيين المعنى المقصود بشكل مباشر ، لذلك يجب على القارئ أن يمس معنى المعنى. إحدى الروايات الشيقة التي يجب استكشافها هي المعنى الوارد في رواية Bringing Down The House للكاتب Ben Mezrich. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الإجابة على بيان المشكلة وهو ما معنى القمار الوارد في رواية Bringing Down The House للكاتب Ben Mezrich.

في هذه الدراسة ، يستخدم الباحث نظرية السيميائية لرولان بارت. البيانات مأخوذة من رواية Bringing Down The House للكاتب Ben Mezrich. يستخدم الباحث النظرية التي تنص على أن كل شيء له معنى سيميائي من المستوى الثاني يسمى أسطورة. تنشأ الأسطورة ، حسب بارت ، بسبب الوحدة بين معنى الدلالة والدلالة على موضوع واحد. سيتم استخدام هذه النظرية من قبل الباحث للبحث عن المعاني الضمنية والمعاني الضمنية للمقاومة في الرواية. علاوة على ذلك ، سيتم شرح الأساطير حول المقاومة بناءً على هذه النتائج.

أظهرت النتائج أن أساطير المقاومة تختلف اختلافاً كبيراً اعتماداً على كل شخصية فيها. من الناحية الدلالة ، فإن للمقاومة في Bringing Down The House ثلاثة معانٍ ، وهي النشاط الذي يتضمن المراهنات والمخاطرة والجوائز وأنشطة اللعب المسلية وعد البطاقات. بينما من الناحية الضمنية ، تعتبر المقاومة ذات مغزى كعمل تجاري ومهنة وطريقة حياة.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher divides into six elements is that background of the study, problem of the study, objective of the study, scope of limitation of the study, significance of the study, research method, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of Study

Throughout daily life, people often have an overwhelming need to gratify themselves, even because they want to maintain their status. Humans want to have the ease of getting something of great value, but the activities carried out should be light without hard work, complicated thinking, or spending a lot of money. In this case, gambling is one of the fastest ways to reach that goal. Talking about gambling, people immediately think about how to get money without had work. In other side, gambling violates the law and contradicts the religion's rules.

In some literary works, there are concepts and themes around gambling. Literature is one of the most universal and creative ways to communicate human emotions, spiritual and intellectual. Literature is a part of the arts that demonstrates off-real and imaginative values of beauty. It provides the readers consolidation and spiritual fulfillment. In *An Introduction to Literary Studies*, William Henry Hudson (1965:10) states that literature is one of the most important records, which holds all human thoughts and feelings about life. The novel is the result of human contemplation after going through the life.

The definition of literature is very diverse. There are several definitions presented by experts who then become the guideline to this day. However, the definition of what literature is often debated, it is not uncommon for new notions to emerge. According to Culler (in Aziz, 2015:1), literature is paradoxical institution because to create literature is to write according to existing formulas to produce something that looks like a sonnet or that follows the conventions of the novel but it is also to fault those conventions, to go beyond them.

In contrast to Culler, Wellek and Warren (1990: 3) regard literature more as a form of art and creativity. They argue that a literary work is born from a consequence of an emotion expressed by each author. The author expresses his emotions and imagination about life in a literary work.

With this background, literature or a literary work can provide many benefits for human life. Readers can learn through a literary work to avoid misfortune. The reader can also take an example to solve problems that might be encountered. Compared with science that requires more intelligence to understand it, literature prioritizes emotions and imagination of its readers. Almost all aspects of life are raised in literature. Starting from general aspects such as social, religion, education, to more detailed aspects such as romance, friendship, and others. A literary work requires a good author to put his life experience so that readers can engage in active expressions.

One form of literary work that is very popular is the novel. In literary works, novels are included in prose subgenres which are parallel to poetry and

drama. The use of the term novel has continued to expand considering that there are so many types of novels that have been developed since it was first introduced. Abrams (1981: 119) states if the novel is nothing but a form of prose itself. It's just that the novel has several attributes that make it a little different from prose. One of the most striking attributes of a novel is its ability to tell a story. Novels are not necessarily used to tell stories, but also convey messages to readers. Novelists generally use interesting real-life stories to write about. These interesting criteria vary. Some are interesting because of the conflict, some are interesting because of the uniqueness of the theme. One of English novel that need to be analyzed because the meaning is interesting to understand, is *Bringing Down The House* by Ben Mezrich.

Ben Mezrich is most well known as American writer. Ben Mezrich graduated magna cum laude from Harvard in 1991. Since then, he has published six novels with a combined printing of more than a million copies in nine languages (Threshold, Reaper, Fertile Ground, Skin, and, under the name Holden Scott, Skeptic and The Carrier). His second novel, Reaper, was turned into TBS's premiere movie, Fatal Error, starring Antonio Sabato, Jr., and Robert Wagner. *Bringing Down The House* is one of the best seller novel that have been written by him (Mezrich, 2002).

The object of this research is a novel entitled *Bringing Down the House* by Ben Mezrich. It is the story of six M.I.T. students who took Vegas for millions through one of the most famous card games, Blackjack. There are several things that make the story in the novel *Bringing Down The House* very interesting to be

analyzed. The first interesting thing is every character that is displayed by Ben Mezrich. Blackjack from the beginning of its appearance has always been synonymous with card games that are used by adults to spend money and have fun. However, this view was changed by Ben Mezrich. Instead of using a cliché storyline, he featured college kids playing Blackjack. More than that, these kids weren't just playing. They don't waste money like most Blackjack players. These students from MIT actually make Blackjack their source of income.

The next interesting thing is about the game techniques they do. With the guidance of Micky Rosa as a card counting legend, they managed to drain money every casino they went to. At first glance, Blackjack seems like the easiest card game to win than any other type of card game. Blackjack is like providing opportunities for players to win the game. After all, Blackjack in reality costs players a lot and, conversely, benefits dealers and casinos. However, Micky Rosa, who has studied the weaknesses of Blackjack for years, finally found a method and technique of counting cards that are effective and can be used to win bets. Micky Rosa then taught them (students from MIT) about these card counting techniques. The technique is quite simple. Each team member has their respective roles as spotter, gorilla and big player. The spotters are in charge of finding the table with the biggest stakes and counting the cards. From here, the Gorilla will continue to play as long as possible at the direction of spotters to avoid suspicion by the casino. Whereas the big players do all the tasks, from finding tables with big stakes, counting cards, and placing bets.

The last interesting thing about this novel is the unpredictable storyline. Ben Mezrich does not only present the adventures of a group of college kids playing Blackjack. More than that, he also shows another side with the deepening of the main character, Kelvin. The novel takes the reader through the gripping journey of Kevin's life including his success in Vegas and decisions after the all-time high of his college years. The suspense driven novel keeps the reader addicted, almost like a gambler, to the insane action happening at Kevin's blackjack table. It leads the reader through Kevin's struggles, triumphs, relationships and pain, all the while, taking you with him every weekend to Vegas. With a plan that was almost designed with flaws they strip countless casinos, of countless cash.

In this research, the researcher will explain that to present certain problems or ideas, and novels are the most effective tools in achieving these goals. Novel conveys several messages from the author or a certain social condition, as well as symbols and myths. The symbol has a close relationship with the history of social circumstances. By understanding the significance of the sign itself, we can discover the roots of the tale that has occurred.

Roland Barthes (in Al-Aziz, 2010:16) states that "*A Sign can be interpreted as a denotative, the meaning of marking conventions or agreements have a higher and a second layer of meaning (connotative)*". From Barthes's statement it can be concluded that a language system cannot be separated from the two meanings which encompass it, denotative meaning, and connotative meaning. A sign by default has a denotative meaning. But when this sign is influenced by

many aspects such as emotions, beliefs, behavior, and ideology, the connotative meaning will appear along with the denotative meaning. Furthermore, in particular, when the sign gets a strong influence from the cultural aspect, the classification of connotative meaning becomes more specific to the myth.

Roland Barthes's theory of semiotics has been commonly used for research in various fields, especially in literature. Some examples of previous research using Roland Barthes's semiotic theory are those by Muhammad Fatih Al Aziz who examined the myths about the Holy Grail in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. Then the research conducted by Hani Taqiya. He examined the connotative and denotative meanings found in the film *In The Name of God*, as well as myths about the life struggles of Muslims in the film. The use of the theory of semiotics Roland Barthes is widely used because the object is more flexible and broad.

This study is aimed to discuss about the meaning of gambling in the novel *Bringing Down the House*. Gambling is a play cards or other games for money; to risk money on future event or possible happening. Someone who plays the role of gambling is called a gambler. In truth gambling is clearly against with religion and also dangerous for people's lives. Not only do gambling leads to deeper covetousness, but it also leads to different types of sin. According to Starkley et al in Christianity (1983) thought gambling is an action that is not pleasing to God.

In other hand, one of the attractions of gambling is the chance to present a required identity to oneself and to others. That was the case, considering gambling as a kind of self-presentation can add to our knowledge of how and why

individuals are doing gambling. The researcher is interested to analyze the novel *Bringing Down The House* because the novel was well-known about gambling and this novel is very famous and also became best seller novel. This novel became best seller because of mysteries and controversial in it. Therefore, the researcher chooses *The Meaning of Gambling in Ben Mezrich's Bringing Down the House*.

B. Problem of The Study

According to the background of the study above, problem of the study in his research is “What is the meaning of gambling represented in Ben Mezrich’s *Bringing Down the House*?”.

C. Objective of The Study

Base on the problem of the study above, the objectives of this study is to find the meaning of gambling represented in Ben Mezrich’s novel *Bringing Down the House* using semiotics of Roland Barthes’s view.

D. Scope of Limitation of the Study

In this study, the researcher investigates the meaning of gambling from Ben Mezrich’s novel, *Bringing Down the House*. The researcher will use the semiotic theory of Roland Barthes to analyze the meaning of gambling in the novel, that is denotative and connotative meanings. The limitation of this research is that the researcher tries to explain only two part of Barthes’s theory, there are denotative and connotative meaning.

E. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to enrich and expand knowledge both theoretical and practical significance base literary studies. Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich knowledge and understand a literary work especially for Department of English Literature students.

Practically, the researcher hope this research to be a helpful reference for those who are interested in evaluating literature. it may assist other scientists to explore the semiotic aspect of a novel. This research will also be a lesson material and helpful information for educators who need to provide more empiric data in order to enrich their teaching.

Additionally, the researcher expects that this study can help the students to understand and comprehend the aspect of novel itself. The researcher also hope this research to provide fresh input to readers, especially the students who are interested in semiotics literary criticism. Next, this research may refer to general readers and certain parties, such as academics or literary critics who are interested in semiotics studies.

F. Research Method

The researcher explains about the research methods contains of research design, data sources, data collection and data analysis.

1. Reserch Design

The design of this research is literary criticism. The criticism here is not criticism which means finding a gap or error in a literary work. Literary criticism works as a tool of analysis, interpretation, as well as evaluation of a literary work. This is consistent with what was stated by Peck and Coyle (1984: 6). The researcher focuses on analysis in the semiotic field which means the researcher justifies all aspects and authentic factors that exist in a literary work. Semiotics is widely used to understand how literature works as a communication tool. While the semiotics used in this study are semiotic theories from Roland Barthes that focus on analyzing denotative and connotative meanings.

2. Data Source

In this study, the researcher is taken data source from a novel *Bringing Down the House*. This novel was written by Ben Menrizh in 2002. This novel is printed along 181 pages and published by Free Press in September 9th 2003.

3. Data Collection

The data is collected from the novel written by Ben Menrizh. The data in this study are chosen on the basic of the objective of the study. The researcher gathered the data by thoroughly reading the novel more than once, until the story was well understood. The researcher also requires notes on the text relating to the denotative and connotative content of the novel, indicating the statement of problems. Then, the researcher identifies

the text in the novel that related with denotative and connotative. Later, the data are arranged systematically in accordance with problem of the study.

4. Data Analysis

After collecting data that related with the meaning of gambling in novel. The researcher will analyze the results of the following steps:

- a. First, the researcher will analyze the denotative meaning of gambling in the novel "*Bringing Down The House*". It used to know the true meaning of gambling that has been used and believed in general.
- b. Second, the researcher will analyze the connotative meaning of gambling that contained in the novel *Bringing Down the House*. It used to know that there is another meaning that will revealed in this analysis.
- c. After all the data analyzed, the final step that needs to be taken is to conclude the study with the aim of creating a outline description so that readers can understand the research clearly enough.

G. Previous Studies

Having studied some research, the researcher found that students have not discussed the meaning of gambling in novel *Bringing Down The House*. Here, I will take the examples of other researchers as previous studies which described in the follow:

There is a lot of research that uses semiotic theory from Roland Barthes. First, Muhammad fatih Al Aziz in 2015 from UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang in this thesis entitled “*The Myth of Holy Grail in Dan Brown’s The Da Vinci Code*”. In this thesis, the researcher uses Roland Barthes semiotic theory as a tool to analyze the denotative and connotative meaning of Holy Grail. After that, the researcher analyze the myth behind the Holy Grail. Then the researcher also analyze the characters perceive of Holy Grail to determine the response of each character.

Second, Ayu Safira Aditya in 2018 from UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta in this thesis entitled “*Representasi Feminisme dalam Film Bergener Science Fiction*”. In this thesis, the researcher uses Roland Barthes’s model of semiotic analysis as an analytical tool to dissect feminism sign that are present in the film. It indicates that there are four main scenes in the movie “Arrival” that are able to represent feminism. those scenes contain the key elements of feminism, that is equality, difference, care, choice, time and experience.

Third, Hani Taqiya (2011) from UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in this thesis entitled “Analisis Semiotik Terhadap Film In The Name of God”. In this thesis, the researcher analyze the connotation, denotative and myth representing the concept of the struggle moslem in the film In The Name of God using Roland Barthes Theory.

By studying previous studies, the researcher would like to analyse about the meaning of gambling using Roland Barthes’s theory in the *Bringing Down*

The House Novel. Those previous studies have relationship with topic. Many researchers used the theory semiotics by Roland Barthes as a tool to analyse their research.

So, the researcher uses the source used to compare analysing by using the theory of Roland Barthes's semiotics in different object. Moreover, the researcher uses the previous studies as guidelines to analyse the Ben Mezrich's novel entitled *Bringing Down The House* which is used Roland Barthes's theory.

H. Definition of Key Terms

Here are some definitions of key terms which are very often appearing in the following part of this research:

Gambling: gambling is a play cards or other games for money ; to risk money on future event or possible happening.

Sign: sign is anything that represents someone or something else in capacity or definite view (Barthes, in Aziz, 2015)

Denotative: denotative is literal meaning which is agreed by whole of culture member (Barthes in Ariyadi, 2014).

Connotative: connotative is meaning which is resulted with relation between signifier and culture widely which involve belief, habits, framework and ideology of a social formation (Barthes in Ariyadi, 2014).

Myth: Myth is the second layer of the first layer of meaning (denotative meaning), where the sign on the denotative meaning turns into a marker. Myth is

basically a connotative meaning that has been influenced by external aspects such as aspects of culture and belief.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In order to support the development of the thesis, the aspect of the related literature are reviewed in this chapter.

A. Literature

Literature has several definitions because every people have their own their definition about literature. they define literature in diferent sentences and language but those definitions have similarity in meaning. According to Jones (1968:1) literature is simply another way we can experience the world around us through our imagination. Literature, in its extensive sense, includes all written materials. In other hand, Wellek and Waren (1990:3) states that literature is a creativity and art. It can be conclude that literature is a literary work which is a beautiful art that comes from human life. Literary work is the result of the expression of feelings and describes imaginations of the author's.

Literature is a description of human experience that has at once a private social dimension and a undstanding of humanity that is equivalent to the form of life itself. The important of literature studied in searching for and finding the reality of humanity as a means of sharing experiences (sharing). There is not much literature linked to writing, but to the language used as a vehicle for expressing certain experiences or ideas.

B. Semiotic as a Literary Criticism

Semiotic theory is an significant and commonly used theory of postmodern critique today. This theory claims that there are many signs in a text, so the reader must also comprehend what these signs are intended to mean.

Ferdinand de Saussure, who played a major role in structuralism, also introduced the concept of semiology (Saussure, 1972:33). Starting with his view of language, he produces a system of symbols that convey thoughts. However, he knew that there is also an alphabet sign system for the deaf and dumb, ritual symbols, a military sign, etc. Saussure stated that the language system is the most significant thing. In addition, that can be formed a science that studies signs in social life, it becomes a part of social psychology, he named it *semiologie*. The word *semiologie* comes from Greek *semeion* which means “sign”. Linguistics is a scientific component covering all the marks. Linguistics can be subject to semiotic guidelines. In 1956, Roland Barthes who read Saussure about linguistic position as part of semiotics. According to him, a part of the linguistic semiotic because the signs in other fields can be seen as a language that expresses the idea (meaningful), an element formed of signify and signifier that has continued in a structure.

Another definition comes from Umberto Eco (1976:07) stating that “semiotic is concerned with everything that can be taken as sign”. Semiotics involves the study not only of what we refer to as “sign” in everyday speech, but also anything which “stand for” something else. In a semiotic sense, signs take the

from words, images, sounds, gestures, and objects. Contemporary semioticians study not in isolation but as part of semiotic “sign-system” (such as a medium or genre). They study how meaning are produced and how reality is represented. Semiotic is concerned with meaning-making and representation in many forms, perhaps most obviously in the form of “text” and media (Chandler, 2002:2).

According to Peirce (Noth, *Handbook of Semiotics*.1995:42-43), sign is something which represents something else. He defines tradic relation of sign: *representament*, *object*, and *interpretant*. The sign stand as the representatement which represent something called *object* or *referent*. After the repretament is connected which the object and conceived by the perciever in his mind, it becomes interpreting. Peirce classified the relationship between the representament and the object into three kinds: *icon*, *index* and *system*. Icon is a sign which its relation to object is based on causal relationship. Symbol is a sign which its relationto object based on convention. *Interpretant* is the meaning of sign. On overall occasions, he used the term *significance*, *signification*, or *interpretation*. Sign itself can not be reveal anything but just show. The task of the interpreter to give meaning based on experience.

All expressions that told of the text have an important role to play in the implementation of a singel form of guidance system in the text. The third principle of semiotic understanding thus provides the author an understanding of what he has created. There are grounds for using any phrase that lead to the text, in which all things have their own meaning.

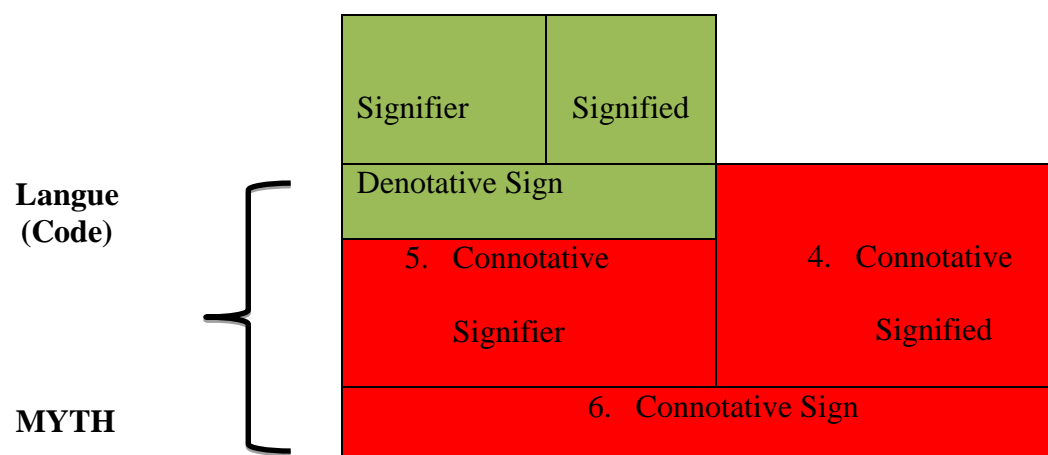
According to Piliang (in Ariyadi, 2014: 35), exploration semiotics as a method to study the various sub of science is a possible because there is a tendency to look at a variety of social discourse as a phenomenon of language. In other words, in defferent social discourses, the language used as a model. If all social practices can be considered as a phenomenon of language, all can be seen as a sign, based on the semiotic view. This is fesible because the sign itself is broadly defined.

In this research, the semiotics theory that will be used is a Roland Barthes thought theory. It specifies more on giving semiotic meaning to the result that gives more space to interpret the meaning of gambling. Accordingly, the researcher considers that this theory is the researcher consider that this teory is appropriate to be applied in this research.

1. Roland Barthes's Semiotic Theory

Barthes was born in Chevourg (1915) and died in Paris (1980). He studied French literature and Classical Laguanges at the University of Paris, and after graduating from university he taught in French at the university of Romania and Egypt then joined the National Scientific Research Cenntre, steeped sociology and lexicology. Some creations Baarthes which is a legacy of the intelectual world is (1) the concept of semiotic connotations which are key in analyzing the culture, and (2) the concept of myth is the result of the application of connotations in different fields in everyday life (Bertens,1985)

Kris Budiman (in Ariyadi,2014:20) explains the level of signification through the approach of Roland Barthes's semiotic. This semiotic approach particularly directed to the kinds of speech which is called with *the second order semiological system*. In the language level called *the first order semiological system*, signifiers which relating with signified can result a new sign. Then, signs which is in *the first order semiological system* in turn only becoming signifiers relating with signified in *the second order semiological system* then appears something that is called as a myth. The explanation of it can be seen this map.



Sign Map of Roland Barthes's Theory

In semiotic, denotation and connotation meaning hold a very important role where from this meaning can be found its myth. Denotation meaning is directive; it means the particular meaning which is in a sign or description of a signified. While connotation meaning is explicit meaning; meaning that is got from explicit culture in its envelopment, namely the meaning which contain in it (Ariyadi, 2014:21).

In semiotic thought, denotation or the first level of signification provides an authentic relation between signifier and signified that are referred to the use of language in which meanings are explicit, direct and literal. Meanwhile, according to Pierce in Noth (in Al Aziz, 2015:17). Denotative level is writing all the visual sign which exist. For example, there are images of humans, animals, trees, houses. The color is also noted, such as red, yellow, blue, white, and so on. At this step, only data information which is submitted. While Saussure identify that the denotative meaning is meaning which can be learned on the physical object (automatical principles, materials, function). For example the principle anatomically will have a meaning that snakes are one of reptiles which does not have legs. And the meaning of snake will be agrees by all the people because nature of denotative meaning is conventional.

Connotative is signification level which explains between signifier and signified which in both operates meaning that is not explicit, indirect and indefinite (opened for all interpretation). Connotative opens the possibility of interpreting the board. In general, the connotation has relation with personal experience or community speakers that react and give meaning amotive connotations.

In addition, Roland Barthes taught sociology signs, symbols and collective representation in semiology. The most popular statement by Barthes is “La Mort de L’auteur” or “The Death of the Author.” From this statement, he points out that no authorisation can continue to exist.

Roland Barthes in his book titled *Mythology* (Barthes, 1957:107) *that myth is a system of communication, that it is a message. This allows one to perceive that myth cannot possibly be an object, a concept, or an idea; it is a mode of signification, a form.* In his explanation, myth is meaning behind an object which is talked about, it is not a concept or idea, but it is myth; meaning behind an object a concept or idea. That is why Barthes previously said that myth is a communication system, signifying a communication process, which is implicit or out of conscious.

The study of myth focuses not only on the exposure of the ideological position, but also on the analysis of how the message was constituted. In this case, Barthes discussed myths more seriously and poured it on *Myth Today* in his book *Mythologies*. Myth is a form of a message or speech that should believe true but not provable. Myth is not a concept to ride but away of giving meaning. Etymologically, the myth is a kind of speech, of course, not just any speech. One thing that should be noted is that the myth is a communication system, namely a message. Myth is not defined by object but it means of said message.

Understanding the myth in the context of old mythologies has the sense of forming a community-oriented past, or of forming a history of static, eternity. Myth is, in his time, the same long history and the same society. According to Roland Barthes mythological narrative not only shaped oral speech, but speech that could take the form of writing, photography, film, scientific reports, sports, shows, advertising, painting. Myth is basically all that's in the representation mode. Exposure examples above have meanings that cannot be directly captured.

For example, to capture the meaning or interpretation of a painting that is required. Mythological narratives created for communication have a process of meaning that is unacceptable to think about.

What is said by myth is essential, if it is added together with myth, it will offer camouflage. There is nothing hidden in the myth that is formed, just conveying something through ideology. Therefore, in uncoring an object's myth, contemplation must be performed profoundly.

2. Gambling in Christianity

Starkley et al in *Cristianity* (1983), the Bible does not specifically condemn gambling, betting, or the lottery. Nevertheless, the Bible advises us to stay away from the love of money. Gambling definitely focuses on money love and tempts people with promises of fast and easy riches.

A careful reading of Scripture makes it clear there are numerous biblical principles which indicate gambling is an evil to be avoided. When people recognize God's authority they will honor the principles which indicate gambling is evil.

First, Gambling is wrong when liability is not taken into account. The Bible teaches simply that everything is God's. "The earth shall be the almighty, and all that is therein, the world and all that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1). Because everything is God's, people stand as stewards who need to take account of everything that they have been given with faith. The first phase in this stewardship's faithful administration is self-giving to God. Believe need to accept

that they are not their own (1 Cor. 6:19). We was redeemed by the precious blood of christ (1 Peter 1:18 and 19), not by silver or gold. Through Macedonia's, "they set a respectable pattern of spiritual devotion. Life is a stewardship with all that it entails, to be exercised for God's glory.

Once people recognize their management obligations, gambling in no way constitutes the proper management of God's provided wealth, time and capacity. Even the world's ethics won't tolerate those who are playing with assets put in their trust. Christian duty transcends all other obligations, and gambling is inappropriate for the Christian. It is a total disregard for the stewardship rule. It is God-given property prostitution that should be used to glorify him.

Second, Gambling is wrong because it entails the risk of winning at others' expense and misery. The essence of gambling is so powerful that a person can only benefit by experiencing loss from other people. The suffering caused by gambling is completely inconsistent with Scripture's love-related teaching. The Christian is not only to love lovable men, but even enemies. The principle of love would lead Christians refuse any state to legalize gambling.

Third, gambling is wrong because it is inconsistent with the work ethic of Scripture. The value research is emphasized throughout the scriptures. The link between working and eating is stated in several ways. The Old Testament reminds us, "Whoever works his land will have plenty of meat"(proverbs, 12:11). The same principle is stated with great force in new Testament. Paul wrote to the

Thessalonians: “ when we were with you, this rule we gave you: If a man will not work, he shall not eat” (2 Thessalonians, 3:10).

In the wisdom of God work was assigned in the garden of Eden even before the Fall (Genesis 2:15ff; cf.1:28). Though sin resulted in a change of the nature of work (Genesis 3:17,19), responsibility for working has never been rescinded. Any attempt to circumvent the work ethic of Scripture can only lead to failure. Gambling, whether to secure wealth in a hurry or to put bread on the table, is incompatible with what the bible teaches about work.

Fourth, Gambling is wrong because it appears to be a habit of creation. Like other sins, gambling appears to become a dependency. Compulsive gamblers are oppressed, as in the case of alcoholics and drug addicts, to the degree that they lose not only money but all important things in life. We have lost their own influence. This state is contradictory to scripture’s instruction. The word of God points out that even lawful activities (1 Corinthians, 6:12) will not be put under the authority of a Christian. Temperance, or self-control, will characterize the person indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Galatians, 5:23)

It is clear that daily gamblers are under the influence of the gambling addiction. We are slaves of a lust that they can not satisfy instead of being servants of God. Paul clearly described the condition when he wrote, “Do you not know that you are slaves to the one you obey when you offer yourself to someone to obey him as slaves?” (Matthew, 6:16). Gambling should be considered an evil due to the degrading possibility of addiction.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter discusses about the analysis. In this chapter, the researcher would like to answer the problem of the study which has been stated in chapter I by presenting the data and analyzing the data. The researcher tries to analyze Ben Mezrich's Novel entitled "*Bringing Down The House*" by presenting the connotative and denotative meaning of gambling.

To explain the meaning of gambling in this novel, the researcher using semiotic theory developed by Roland Barthes. By using this theory, researchers are able to interpret the meanings and symbols displayed by each character so that the myths about gambling in the novel can be revealed.

A. The Meaning of Gambling in *Bringing Down The House*

1. Denotative Meaning of Gambling in *Bringing Down The House*

An activity can be called gambling, if in it there are three basic aspects namely, betting, risk, and prizes. This definition is derived from the historical footprint of gambling itself, where every gambling must involve all three aspects. Ben Mezrich in *Bringing Down The House* also explains gambling, in denotation meaning, as an activity that involves betting, risk, and also prizes.

"When they reached the steps to the quieter tables, Martinez yanked the stack of bills out of his shirt pocket and casually split it in half. "You've played blackjack before, right?" Kevin looked at the bills in Martinez's hand. Sure, he'd played before—a few times on vacation with

his family, once or twice at Foxwoods, the Indian casino in Connecticut. But the most he'd ever bet on a single hand was five dollars, and the most he'd ever risked in a night was a few hundred. He wasn't stupid, he knew that the house had an edge at the tables. Every player is a loser eventually. He'd gambled a few times for fun, but never seriously."

(BDTH:18)

The scene above tells Kevin who followed Martinez for the first time to bet at the Blackjack table with a large number of bets. Kevin does understand well about the game system. However, betting in large numbers is really something new for Kevin. In such a position, Kevin feels doubt as well as adrenaline. He weighed various aspects of the game. Including the three basic aspects that exist in a gambling namely, the value of bets, risks, and prizes that he will likely get. With these three aspects, it can be concluded that the denotative meaning of gambling in *Bringing Down The House* is gambling in general.

Another denotative meaning of gambling is playing. The use of the term playing is quite commonly used to refer to gambling activities. When viewed from the definition, the use of the term playing generally refers to activities looking for amusement. But there is another understanding that is also widely understood, namely playing as a productive activity. In *Bringing Down The House*, the term playing is seen as a fun and productive activity.

"A few minutes later the dealer finished, letting Martinez cut. Then she restacked the cards in the shoe and began to deal. Hand after hand, the play went by quietly, and both Kevin and Martinez remained about even with the house. As the shoe reached the halfway point, Kevin began to relax, assuming that his friend had indeed been screwing with him. He put another hundred on the betting circle—and watched as Martinez

suddenly raised his bet to a thousand dollars. He coughed, and Martinez looked at him, then smiled at the dealer.”

(BDTH:21)

The above scenario tells the story when Martinez, who is a friend of Kevin as the main character, shows how to utilize the gaps in Blackjack by using his card counting skills. The term playing in the above scenario can be understood as a fun and productive activity. In general, people will consider gambling as a fun activity because it is used to relieve fatigue. On the other hand, gambling can also be used as a productive activity if it makes money like Martinez did. At this point it can be concluded that the other denotative meaning of gambling in *Bringing Down The House*, is not just ordinary gambling, but there is an element of pleasure and productive in it.

In addition to using the term playing, Ben Mezrich in *Bringing Down The House* also uses the term game which also refers to Blackjack's gambling activities. Looking back in history, the term game is actually more widely used, especially in the United States and Britain. It is just that, the term game is now more widely used to refer to digital games that are usually played through various electronic devices.

“By now, Kevin was beginning to realize that Fisher and Martinez were, at the very least, serious gamblers. Was it possible that they had made all their cash playing casino games?”

(BDTH: 16)

In the quote above, Kevin starts to believe that his two friends, Martinez and Fisher, are professional gamblers. It's just that, Kevin is still in doubt, is it true

that all the money they have is earned from playing Blackjack. In this section it can be concluded if Kevin, at first, only considered Blackjack as a game for mere pleasure. Even though Martinez and Fisher can be more productive and make Blackjack their money field.

“As for Martinez, he played smoothly, barely looking at his cards, tossing chips into the betting circle with seeming abandon. He kept his bets around two hundred dollars, but every now and then he jumped up to five hundred, and once he even laid down a thousand dollars at once, getting lucky with a pair of kings. He never celebrated when he won, never complained when he lost. In fact, he didn’t seem that interested in the game at all.”

(BDTH: 20)

Although basically a game is a means to look for amusement and productivity, in fact Martinez doesn't really enjoy it. This is because Martinez only plays Blackjack to get money. There is no more fun in it like Kevin feels.

The next denotation meaning from gambling is card counting. Card counting is one of the methods later used by Blackjack players to exploit the gaps in it. The players, in this case Kevin and his teammates, don't just do ordinary gambling with bets and such. They also calculate the trace of the cards to get the best number so that the chances of winning are huge.

“It was a rare opportunity, a moment alone with his father. Kevin decided to test the waters: “Dad, have you ever heard of card counting?” His father didn’t look up from the newspaper. “You mean like professional poker players, who keep track of the cards?” Kevin listened for the sound of the bathroom door. He certainly didn’t want to tackle both Felicia and his father at the same time. He proceeded cautiously. “No, I mean blackjack. Some people count cards to give them an advantage.” His father turned the paper over, scanning the back page. “Foolishness. They

use six decks at casinos nowadays. You can't keep track of six decks. It's not possible.””

(BDTH:66)

In the above scenario it can be seen, if Kevin's father catches that a professional card counter is also an expert gambler. This clarifies the relationship between gambling and card counting activities as presented in this novel. Although in the end the father did not believe there are people who can count cards in any game as great as that person.

One thing that should be underlined is that, although card counting is very closely related to gambling, Kevin and his entire team actually consider card counting not part of gambling. Card counting is not the same as other materials in the branch of mathematics, an art, and other terms that are far related to gambling.

“Kevin felt a rush of adrenaline. It was the same feeling he got when his father approved of something he had done. His father would not have approved of Micky, an adult who hung around brilliant kids, turning them into gamblers. Kevin's father never would have understood. Card counting wasn't gambling. It was arbitrage.”

(BDTH:37)

The quote above explains how Kevin experiences doubts when going to tell the truth to his father. The father wanted Kevin to have a good job like his two older sisters and certainly would not allow if Kevin chose to play Blackjack as his life path. It's just that Kevin insisted that card counting was completely different from gambling.

2. Connotative Meaning of Gambling in *Bringing Down The House*

If the denotative meaning of gambling in *Bringing Down The House* is playing, and card counting, then the connotative meaning of gambling in the novel also varies. The first connotative meaning is that gambling is a business, which means there is capital, profit and loss in it.

“Kevin seemed too much the typical MIT grad: a true engineer at heart. As my writing career began to take off in the years that followed our first meeting, we rarely crossed paths. It was almost six years later that we ran into each other at a Super Bowl party in an apartment located a few blocks from Fenway Park. Kevin had just flown in from a “business” trip to Las Vegas. During the game’s half-time show, I found myself alone with him in the kitchen. After a quick exchange of pleasantries, he surprised me by lowering his voice and beckoning me in close: “I’ve got a great story for your next book,” he began.”

(BDTH: 6)

The writer who uses a first-person perspective uses the term business to describe Kevin's activities that spend his weekends gambling in Las Vegas. However, the term business in question is not legal and legal business before the law. This can be seen from the way Kevin told the story to the writer, in a low voice and whisper. If it's a business that is run by Kevin is legal, then actions such as lowering his voice and whispering are certainly not necessary.

But that does not mean the business run by Kevin and his colleagues is a low-income business. Kevin and his teammates have a mature business plan with professional workers. Of course the business has a strong financier, the right development strategy, and accurate execution in the field. Micky Rosa, as the

forming of the Blackjack team that followed Kevin and well-known card counting legend in Las Vegas, planned everything thoroughly and measured.

“His blackjack team was more than a lark—it was a shrewdly planned business, run almost like a cult. Everyone revered Micky; even Kevin found himself in awe of the man’s abilities and charisma. When the team came together, any dispute was immediately deferred to Micky. Every decision about the team’s structure seemed to come directly from him. Even Kevin’s recruitment, though obviously spurred by Martinez and Fisher, was played off as Micky’s idea.”

(BDTH: 37)

In the above scene, Kevin is depicting Micky Rosa. Micky himself is a financier as well as the leader of the MIT student Blackjack team which later Kevin will also follow. The Blackjack team formed by Micky Rosa is not just a bunch of runny boys. Micky really does business in it. Micky has connections with investors who are ready to fund the entire operational costs of the team. With the calculated share, profits will flow to the players, team leaders, and investors. Gambling in Las Vegas by a group of MIT students is a well-planned business.

Even so, business is still business. No matter how good the calculation, a business will definitely suffer losses. This also applies to businesses run by Kevin and his colleagues. At some point, the gambling business suffered losses. Although in the end they can get their money back after playing. The only threat that risks jeopardizing their business comes from the casinos themselves. Obviously, what Kevin and his friends did as card counters at the Blackjack table was hated by casino owners. This risk will always be present in every action

carried out. Here are the times when Kevin and his friends suffered losses because they were almost captured by casino security.

“Kevin kept moving. People all around were staring at him. Alfred hadn’t touched him, hadn’t made a move to physically detain him, but he wasn’t going away. He followed all the way to the exit, stopping only when Kevin stepped through the glass doors to the sidewalk. Kevin kept going for ten more yards before glancing back. The man was staring at him through the glass with those bloodhound eyes. Next to him was another man, tall, gangly, with weathered cheeks, narrow, ice-blue eyes, and silver hair. Kevin stared at the two of them for a full beat, his breath coming in short bursts. Then he turned and jogged down the strip.”

(BDTH: 113)

The above scene is when Kevin was almost caught by the manager and security of the New York New York Hotel, Las Vegas. Kevin belatedly realized when his friend, Jill, gave an alarm. Even though his chest was rumbling out of fear that bad things would happen, Kevin tried to face the manager calmly. In the end, the manager asked Kevin to come with him, to be asked a few questions. Kevin, who had anticipated the situation, managed to escape from the pursuit of the manager and the security through the casino's front door. Kevin and his team did not experience a big loss in that situation. It's just that Kevin and his team can not play in New York New York because it has been detected to do card counting. This clearly will reduce the team's future revenue.

“The three security guards left Martinez in the room by himself, locking the door behind them. Martinez immediately checked the knob—no luck. After the immediate shock of the room invasion had worn off, he had regained much of his composure. He’d never been back-roomed before, but he knew the drill. It was a game, and as long as he played carefully, he’d be all right.”

(BDTH: 114)

In contrast to Kevin who had saved himself from the siege of the casino manager and the security forces, Martinez, who was still sleeping because he was drunk, was captured. He was ambushed by security forces and dragged into a room for questioning. The casino interrogation room is a nightmare for card counters. Some say that all bad things will happen in it. And sure enough. Martinez was intimidated by the manager and casino security. Although there were no injuries he received, this interrogation confirmed that his business was no longer accepted at the casino.

After the incident in New York, New York, Kevin and his team still had a chance to experience some losses due to being banned at various casinos they visited. Rio Casino, Grand Victoria, Luxor and the Isle of Capri. Everyone recognized Kevin and his team so they could no longer play there. This is clearly the most difficult times that must be faced by a card counting team from MIT in running its business. The worst incident happened to Fisher when playing at the Golden Sun Casino. He received several blows to the face. Fortunately, Martinez soon realized that his colleague disappeared and managed to save him.

“Fisher was at the far end of the bathroom, his arms pinned behind his back by a man nearly a foot taller. Another man had him by the throat, while a third was standing off to the side, arms crossed. Martinez’s heart froze as he took in the scene. Fisher’s face was a mess; there was blood streaming from his nose, and one of his eyes was starting to swell shut. He had a dark bruise on his left cheek, and his lips looked swollen. The man holding him by the throat had blood on the knuckles of both hands”

(BDTH: 153)

With all the risks and adverse events experienced by Kevin and his colleagues above, it can be concluded that they run a business full of risks. This risk will remain lurking about every card counter and they are aware of it. After all, that's how the business works. There are advantages, there are losses, there are risks.

The next connotative meaning of gambling in the *Bringing Down The House* novel is career. This connotative meaning is still closely related to the previous meaning, namely business. Because gambling is a business with employees who run it, then the possibility to consider gambling as a career in the future is also inevitable. Kevin himself considers playing cards as another side of his life, and not a whole career that he wants to live for life. This can be seen from several scenes where Kevin doubts his decision to stay alive with a career in the Blackjack team or just let it go.

“Either way, he had finally decided it was best to put thoughts of blackjack aside, and had gone back to the steady monotony of his life.”

(BDTH: 26)

The above quote shows if Kevin has to put aside gambling (in this case Blackjack) and organize his life with a stable career as his father said. Pairing Blackjack with a stable career shows that living life playing Blackjack is also categorized as a career, even though it's far from stable.

“Kevin was supposed to be just like them. Kids from Weston didn't grow up to be professional card counters. They went to Harvard or Yale or MIT. The rebellious ones went to Brown, or maybe even Stanford. They

became doctors and lawyers and bankers. They had families and lake houses and milliondollar mortgages. They drove Volvos and SUVs.”

(BDTH: 64)

Kevin grew up in a family that was very career-honoring. His two older sisters have established jobs and can be proud of. This prompted Kevin to follow in the steps of his two sisters. Kevin has always been surrounded by a paradigm implanted by his environment since childhood. That's why when Kevin finally decided to join the card counting team and consider it a career, there was a turbulent conflict in him.

“The next morning, as Kevin nursed a hangover while standing in the taxi line at O’Hare Airport, he impulsively decided it was time to quit his job. He didn’t know what he was going to do next, but Vegas allowed him the freedom to seek out the life he wanted to live. He didn’t have to make blackjack his profession; but it could cushion him between jobs.”

(BDTH: 91)

Kevin is often at the point where he wants to stop playing Blackjack and lead a normal life with a stable career. This consideration usually arises when he faces problems while playing. As in the above quote when Kevin was almost caught by the casino guard. It's just that Kevin always thinks that a normal life with a stable career will make him confined and bored. That's not the life he wants. Las Vegas with all its casinos gives Kevin freedom.

“He’d had two interviews with the Bartlett Group, a boutique investmentbanking firm located on the west side of the city. He’d applied to appease his parents, who were still getting over his disinterest in medicine and graduate school. He didn’t really want to go into banking, either, but he knew he couldn’t hang around Boston like Martinez and Fisher. He wasn’t ready to make blackjack his full-time profession—a subject that had caused a few heated arguments with Fisher, who was

beginning to take things more seriously after their stellar profits over the last six months.”

(BDTH: 75)

In the above scene, Kevin is preparing to do an interview for a job. In this position, Kevin is still aware that he cannot live without career clarity such as Martinez and Fisher. He must have a stable career, outside of his career as a professional card counter. True for him, gambling is a career, but he cannot live only from gambling.

“He had stayed with the team because he couldn’t be satisfied by a nine-to-five life. What he didn’t tell Fisher was that he couldn’t be satisfied with the gambler’s lifestyle either—he needed a combination of the two.”

(BDTH: 101)

In some of the quotes above, it appears that Kevin is often disturbed by his decision to join the Blackjack team and gamble every weekend. Kevin never made Blackjack a career he would choose for his entire life. He still cares about his career. He also still thinks about what his family wants, especially his father. Although at some point, Kevin can really enjoy his double life as a man with a clear career and a professional gambler with card counting skills.

Kevin often shows the doubts when the team made a decision. Especially the decision when Martinez and Fisher decided to investigate what was wrong with their game so many casinos refused. The first thing that came to Kevin's mind was to avoid all the risks that might be posed by the team so that it impacted his career and future. The end of Kevin's doubts was when he was kicked out of the team by Martinez and Fisher who wanted a more aggressive game. Kevin who

had been expelled from the team finally formed his own team with Dylan and Jill by applying a slower and measurable style of play.

In contrast to Kevin, Fisher and Martines already consider gambling and card counting as their main career. They both made gambling as their main livelihood. That is, they get money and live from gambling in the casinos they explore. This is the fundamental difference between Kevin and his two friends. This makes Fisher and Martinez very ambitious in carrying out their work. They both often take risks that can endanger the whole team.

“Fisher decided it would be a banner weekend for the team. They would gather the biggest stake they’d ever attempted, letting everyone on the team invest at once. It was a risky venture—more than two million dollars in play at the same time—but they were emboldened by the past two years of success. Micky’s warning aside, it didn’t seem like there was anything to fear.”

(BDTH: 101)

Fisher's thoughts that make gambling as his main career often endanger the team. Likewise, when there seems to be little chance, Fisher will take it.

“Kevin didn’t like his cavalier attitude. Fisher had kicked out Micky, the one person who had experience with this sort of situation. Instead of taking the reins and trying to figure out what had happened, Fisher just wanted to plow forward—despite the risks.”

(BDTH: 122)

The ambitious nature of Fisher and Martinez has led the team to break away from Micky as the person who formed the team from scratch and taught them everything about counting cards at the Blackjack table. Both of them argued

that Micky Rosa's role was irrelevant and instead prevented the team from developing into a bigger and get more profit.

““Listen,” Fisher continued. “I respect Micky more than you know. But he’s not a player anymore. He’s a dinosaur, man. His time came and went. Now he’s making money off of all of us, and we simply don’t need him anymore.”

(BDTH: 96)

Fisherman and Martinez's stubborn nature also often puts the team in danger. It was only when Fisher was caught and hit by a few blows to his face that made him less ambitious.

Dylan and Jill assume that gambling is a hobby and also a leisure time filler between their main jobs. Dylan works for an advertising agency, while Jill works for a well-known consulting firm in the area.

“Unlike Fisher and Martinez, Dylan had a life outside of blackjack. He went back to his advertising firm every Monday and saw blackjack as a lucrative hobby, not a lifestyle. Although Kevin wasn’t satisfied with his banking job in Chicago—he found it stifling and not nearly intellectual enough to inspire him—he still resisted the idea of making blackjack his fulltime occupation”

(BDTH: 90)

Dylan never had a strong enough motivation to get out of his stable career. For him, his current job is the best choice. Regarding playing Blackjack as a hobby is one way he looks for fun and relieve fatigue after a busy week at work.

“Dylan had thought the barring was no big deal, but Jill was concerned that the team wasn’t taking the casino’s response seriously enough. She saw card counting as an exciting hobby, but not something that was worth any amount of risk, no matter how vague. She had a career

to think about; even a trumped-up charge was enough to put her in a bad light when applying for jobs at conservative corporate firms.”

(BDTH: 120)

This reason makes Dylan and Jill not want to take too much risk in playing Blackjack because it will impact on the careers they have built from the start. Dylan and Jill tend to be more careful in every decision taken by the team. Even when the team split into two camps, Dylan and Jill preferred to join Kevin because of his safer playing style than Martines and Fisher.

“Nowadays, when you withdraw more than ten thousand dollars, the casinos fill out a form and report it to the IRS. Back then we walked out with as much cash as we could carry, and nobody got so much as a postcard. I made it very clear to Dylan that I wouldn’t be a part of it if there was any tax evasion going on. Profits from gambling are income and have to be reported. I wasn’t going to sacrifice my career for Micky Rosa.”

(BDTH: 86)

Although in the end Jill and Dylan separated because of problems in the team, but they were still able to control their respective careers. Until the end, Jill and Dylan continued playing Blackjack on weekends, and worked in their offices on weekdays.

The next connotation meaning of gambling is life and religion. This meaning is only owned by Micky Rosa. Micky is known as a matriculation expert as well as a card counter legend whose name is already very well known. In fact there are two books that are dedicated specifically to tell his journey to conquer Las Vegas with these abilities.

” Kevin watched him with a new respect; he’d seen the name before. Two of the card-counting books had mentioned the former math prodigy—one of the youngest MIT graduates in history, matriculating at the age of sixteen—as a master of the sport.”

(BDTH: 28)

There is no specific explanation about how Micky Rosa can become a card counting expert. There is only a part where he tells a few stories about his game at casinos in Las Vegas. His past is full of uncertainty. He only said that he was once at the point where card counting would be his life. For Micky Rosa, card counting is also a belief that guides her through life, in other words, a religion.

“Micky never spoke about his life before blackjack; it was as if he had been reborn on the Strip with the discovery of his true calling. He spoke reverently about card counting: To him, it was both a business and a religion. Even though he couldn’t really play anymore, he spent most of his free time practicing the art and making innovations.”

(BDTH: 77)

The quote above shows that Micky Rosa, even though he did not go down directly to the field to count cards, continued to explore the science of card counting. He spends his days practicing and discovering new innovations in gambling. This is why, the connotation meaning that can be concluded is that gambling can be considered as a way of life.

B. Myth of Gambling in *Bringing Down The House*

The myths about gambling in *Bringing Down The House* vary greatly. This is nothing but the effect of the various frameworks of thinking possessed by each character. This fact provides confirmation of the theory of myth proposed by

Roland Barthes, that connotative meaning can change based on beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies resulting from the social environment. Each character in *Bringing Down The House* has a different background. This is the main reason why they have different connotative meaning on gambling.

Kevin, the main character in this novel, comes from a family who upholds the principle of hard work. His family came from China where a brilliant career was the main goal the Kevin family hoped for him. This stereotype remains attached to families of Chinese descent who settled in America. Kevin also has two brothers with brilliant careers. This social background makes Kevin think hard how he will pursue a future career as a good descendant of the Chinese family.

So when Kevin was met with Blackjack, and the world of card counting, he felt a turbulent conflict in his mind. He could not risk his future career because of something stupid, caught by the casino because he was found out as a card counter. But on the other hand, Kevin also felt that his life was too empty. He did not want to spend the rest of his life to work from 9 am to 5 pm. He needs something that frees himself. So, even though there were many conflicts within him, Kevin still went his way as a card counter on weekends, and men with brilliant careers on other days. Kevin himself sees gambling as a hobby and a way to fulfill his desires.

Martinez and Fisher view gambling as their main career and job. Both depend on life and life from playing Blackjack. There is no clear explanation why

both of them can see gambling as such. But clearly, Martinez and Fisher are also students at MIT. Both are quite brilliant students, especially in the field of arithmetic. In some scenes it is said that Martinez and Fisher are no longer interested in the academic world which will lead to a tiring world of work. They wanted something new and when Micky Rosa invited the two to join the card counting team, Martinez and Fisher seemed to get a golden opportunity.

Dylan and Jill have different views and myths about gambling. Both are a normal married couple, with a good career. Dylan and Jill see gambling as a side job in spare time. With this view, both become more careful in taking steps. Dylan and Jill often criticize team decisions that are considered too risky. Of course, with the consideration that they both do not want a messy career just because they were caught red-handed counting cards in Las Vegas.

Micky Rosa, besides seeing gambling as a business, also sees it as a way of life that he must take. Micky Rosa is a retired teacher at MIT. He also coined the card counter group as an extracurricular. Time goes by, and Micky Rosa's interest in card counting techniques is increasing. Something that was originally an attraction, now becomes an obsession. Until one point, Micky Rosa became one of the card counting legends that is very famous throughout Las Vegas. His life is card counting. He traced all matters relating to card counting. Learn new techniques, read books, etc.

Ben Mezrich does not explain the background of each character clearly. Nevertheless, the motivation of each character can be known briefly through each

of the scenes presented. Every action taken by a character can also be taken into consideration to determine how they view gambling and classify it as a myth they believe in. The theory of myth from Roland Barthes proves that each character will have a different connotative meaning depending on the social influence it gets.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After presenting the analysis in the previous chapter, conclusions and suggestions will be drawn in this chapter. Conclusions are elaborated on the basis of research questions, while suggestions are provided as provisions for future researchers interested in conducting further research in this field.

A. Conclusion

The meaning of gambling in the previous chapter is divided into two, denotative meaning and connotative meaning. Denotatively, gambling in *Bringing Down The House* has several meanings that are interconnected with one another. First, gambling is an activity in which there are three basic elements namely, betting, risk, and prizes. Second, gambling in this novel is not just gambling in general. There are elements of entertainment and productivity in it so gambling can be understood as a play activity. Third, denotatively, gambling also has the same meaning as card counting. Card counting is the activity of looking for gaps in a card game, especially in casinos. The type of gambling in *Bringing Down The House* is casino gambling with Blackjack type of game. Therefore, the denotative meaning that is owned becomes relevant to card counting.

The connotative meaning of gambling in *Bringing Down The House* also varies. There are several connotative meanings that are found and remain relevant to each other. The first connotative meaning is that gambling is considered as a

business. The business in question is business in general, which means there is capital, profit, and also loss. One character in this novel, Micky Rosa, forms a card counting team that will play Blackjack in Las Vegas every weekend. Micky Rosa in this case, is a businessman. He invited investors to give him capital which was then used by the team to gamble. The win that is gained is the profit, while the defeat due to several factors is the loss that must be borne.

The second connotative meaning is career. Gambling in *Bringing Down The House* Martinez and Fisher consider playing Blackjack every weekend as their career, because that's where they both get their regular income. In contrast to Kevin who thinks that gambling is not the career he wants. Kevin, who grew up in a family of Chinese descent, has a paradigm that a good career is a stable career, and gambling is not the right answer. Dylan and Jill consider gambling as their hobby. That is, they gamble just for fun. Dylan and Jill have a stable career. Dylan works for an advertising agency, Jill works for a well-known consulting firm.

The last connotative meaning is gambling as a belief and a way of life. This connotative meaning comes from Micky Rosa. It is said that Micky Rosa has been interested in card counting theories and science since teaching at MIT. He was also the first to establish a card counting club as extracurricular. At one point, Micky managed to apply all of his knowledge and beat one casino at a time in Las Vegas. He became a very famous card counter legend. Until now, Micky is no longer playing on the field. However, his interest in card counting has never been extinguished. He formed new teams, guided them, and continued to provide innovations. He was never absent from practice and continued to hone the art of

card counting. For Micky Rosa, counting cards is not just gambling, but a way of life that must be taken.

The myth of gambling is about spending money and just having fun. Because of its bad influence, gambling is often seen as a destructive hobby or a habit. Previously, no one had seen gambling as a career. The concept of gambling is very much at odds with what is called a normal career. Gambling is flexible and anti-establishment. So when there is a group of people who make gambling as a business, career, or way of life, they will be seen as strange.

B. Suggestion

There are a number of suggestions for future research using Ben Mezrich's *Bringing Down The House* as an object of study. The first suggestion is that further research can explore other aspects of this novel, such as the psychological aspects of each character, aspects of personality, and others.

The next suggestion is that future research can compare *Bringing Down The House* with other Ben Mezrich's novels according to research needs. Thus it is hoped that the research data to be analyzed can be richer.

The last suggestion, considering this research is a form of contribution to literary criticism, is that this research can be used as teaching material especially for material related to the process. Teachers can describe other focuses besides myths of gambling such as moral values, social values, and others.

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Appendix

DATA	DENOTATIVE	CONNOTATIVE
<p><i>“When they reached the steps to the quieter tables, Martinez yanked the stack of bills out of his shirt pocket and casually split it in half. “You’ve played blackjack before, right?” Kevin looked at the bills in Martinez’s hand. Sure, he’d played before—a few times on vacation with his family, once or twice at Foxwoods, the Indian casino in Connecticut. But the most he’d ever bet on a single hand was five dollars, and the most he’d ever risked in a night was a few hundred. He wasn’t stupid, he knew that the house had an edge at the tables. Every player is a loser eventually. He’d gambled a few times for fun, but never seriously.”</i></p> <p>(BDTH:18)</p>	<p>Gambling: An activity that involves betting, risk, and prizes. In this scene, Kevin rethinks Martinez's question about whether Kevin has played Blackjack before. Instantly Kevin's memory returned to his memory of how he had lost a gamble at a casino in Connecticut. This shows that Blackjack has a denotative meaning, namely gambling.</p>	
<p><i>“By now, Kevin was beginning to realize</i></p>	<p>Playing or Game: The term playing and game is</p>	

<p><i>that Fisher and Martinez were, at the very least, serious gamblers. Was it possible that they had made all their cash playing casino games?”</i></p> <p>(BDTH: 16)</p>	<p>seen as a fun and productive activity. Martinez and Fisher chose Blackjack as a profession as well as a pleasure. They work but also have fun. Therefore, Kevin considers Blackjack as a game for both of them. Apart from that, all games at casinos are often referred to as casino games.</p>	
<p><i>“It was a rare opportunity, a moment alone with his father. Kevin decided to test the waters: “Dad, have you ever heard of card counting?” His father didn’t look up from the newspaper. “You mean like professional poker players, who keep track of the cards?” Kevin listened for the sound of the bathroom door. He certainly didn’t want to tackle both Felicia and his father at the same time. He proceeded cautiously. “No, I mean blackjack. Some people count cards to give them an advantage.” His father turned the paper over, scanning the back page. “Foolishness. They</i></p>	<p>Card Counting: One of the methods later used by Blackjack players to exploit the gaps in it. Card counting is closely related to Black Jack as a method of cheating. There may be other uses of card counting but the most common use is when playing blackjack.</p>	

<p><i>use six decks at casinos nowadays. You can't keep track of six decks. It's not possible.'"</i></p> <p>(BDTH:66)</p>		
<p><i>"His blackjack team was more than a lark—it was a shrewdly planned business, run almost like a cult. Everyone revered Micky; even Kevin found himself in awe of the man's abilities and charisma. When the team came together, any dispute was immediately deferred to Micky. Every decision about the team's structure seemed to come directly from him. Even Kevin's recruitment, though obviously spurred by Martinez and Fisher, was played off as Micky's idea."</i></p> <p>(BDTH: 37)</p>		<p>Business: The Blackjack team formed by Micky Rosa is not just a bunch of runny boys. Micky really does business in it. Micky has connections with investors who are ready to fund the entire operational costs of the team. With the calculated share, profits will flow to the players, team leaders, and investors. Gambling in Las Vegas by a group of MIT students is a well-planned business.</p>
<p><i>"Kevin was supposed to be just like them. Kids from Weston didn't grow up to be professional card counters. They went to Harvard or Yale or MIT."</i></p>		<p>Career: In this scene, Kevin directly juxtaposes card counting with his sister's career. Indirectly, not a few people that make card counting their main career in life like</p>

<p><i>The rebellious ones went to Brown, or maybe even Stanford. They became doctors and lawyers and bankers. They had families and lake houses and milliondollar mortgages. They drove Volvos and SUVs.”</i></p> <p>(BDTH: 64)</p>		<p>Micky Rosa.</p>
<p><i>“Micky never spoke about his life before blackjack; it was as if he had been reborn on the Strip with the discovery of his true calling. He spoke reverently about card counting: To him, it was both a business and a religion. Even though he couldn’t really play anymore, he spent most of his free time practicing the art and making innovations.”</i></p> <p>(BDTH: 77)</p>		<p>Life and Religion: It shows that Micky Rosa, even though he did not go down directly to the field to count cards, continued to explore the science of card counting. He spends his days practicing and discovering new innovations in gambling. This is why, the connotation meaning that can be concluded is that gambling can be considered as a way of life.</p>