

**BINARY OPPOSITION OF CHARACTERS IN MIZUKI
TSUJIMURA'S *LONELY CASTLE IN THE MIRROR***

THESIS

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM
MALANG
2025**

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THESIS

Presented to
Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.)

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MALANG
2025**

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled “**Binary Opposition of Characters in Mizuki Tsujimura’s *Lonely Castle in the Mirror***” is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection of claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, 18th September 2025



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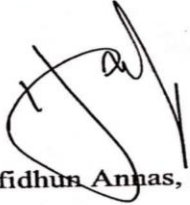
APPROVAL SHEET

This is to certify that Anggraeni Juwita Wati's thesis entitled **Binary Oposition of Characters in Mizuki Tsujimura's *Lonely Castle in the Mirror*** has been approved for thesis examinataion at Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, as one of the requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S).

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MOTTO

*“Pushed from the precipice
Climbed right back up the cliff
Long story short, I survived”
(Taylor Swift)*

DEDECATION

I proudly dedicate this thesis to my parents, Wulyono and Juwatin, who have always been my inspiration and continue to support me through their prayers, love, and motivation. Thank you, *ibu* and *bapak*, for all your sacrifices, I never forget it. I am also deeply grateful to my brother, Adi Wulyo Setyo Budi, who has always supported me. Thank you for always being there for me. I am truly blessed to be part of your lives *ibu, bapak, mas*. You are will always be my home.

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The researcher is aware that completing this thesis would not have been possible without the assistance and support of various parties. Therefore, the researcher would like to take this opportunity to express gratitude to:

1. Mr. Hafidhun Annas, M.Hum., as the supervisor who provided a lot of motivation and guidance to help me complete the thesis. Thank you for always encouraging me not to give up.
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4. Dr. Agwin Degaf, M.A., as Head of the English Literature Department of Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

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The researcher knows that this thesis still has many flaws and mistakes. Therefore, the researcher expects constructive criticism and suggestions to enhance this work. Hopefully, this thesis can be useful for all parties.

Malang, 18th September 2025

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ABSTRACT

Wati, Anggraeni Juwita (2025) *Binary Opposition of Characters in Mizuki Tsujimura Lonely Castle in the Mirror*. Undergraduate. Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Hafidhun Annas, M.Hum.

Key Words: Binary opposition, character and characterisation, structuralism.

Binary opposition is a human mental process in which concepts or ideas are understood and interpreted by contrasting them, such as weak and strong, honest and lie, life and death, and so on. The concept of binary opposition is also essential to literary works. In the novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror* by Mizuki Tsujimura, there are two worlds: the real world and the fantasy world (castle), which show characters having different characterizations in both. This research is a literary criticism study that examines the binary opposition of the seven characters in the novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror*, namely Kokoro, Aki, Fuka, Masamune, Subaru, Ureshino, and Rion, between the real and fantasy worlds. This research applied a structuralism approach and Levi-Strauss' binary opposition theory. This research aims to analyze the characters' characterization in both the real and fantasy worlds and how these contrasts are related. This research inquiry is a qualitative study, including primary data derived from Mizuki Tsujimura's novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror* in the form of sentences, phrases, and conversations. The findings of this research reveal that the characters' characterization differs in the real and fantasy worlds. In the real world, the characters go through unpleasant situations like rejection, isolation, and loneliness. Meanwhile, in the fantasy world, they discover a healing space where they are accepted, connected and together. This research illustrates the characters' contrasting experiences in both real and fantasy, creating an engaging narrative experience.

مستخلص البحث

واتي، أنغرايني جوييتا (٢٠٢٥). التضاد الثنائي للشخصيات في رواية "القلعة الوحيدة في المرأة" لميزوكي تسوجيمورا. أطروحة. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية في مالانج. المشرف: حافظو أنس، م. مو.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التضاد الثنائي، الشخصية وتوصيف الشخصيات، النبوية

التضاد الثنائي هو عملية التفكير الإنساني في فهم وتفسير مفهوم أو فكرة من خلال مقارنتها، مثل الضعف والقوة، والصدق والكذب، والحياة والموت، وما إلى ذلك. تلعب فكرة التضاد الثنائي دورًا محوريًا في الأعمال الأدبية. في رواية "القلعة الوحيدة في المرأة"، يوجد عالمان: العالم الحقيقي وعالم الخيال (القلعة)، واللذان يصوران الشخصيات بشخصيات مختلفة. هذا البحث دراسة نقدية أدبية تناقش التناقض الثنائي للشخصيات السبع في رواية "القلعة الوحيدة في المرأة"، وهم كوكورو، وأكي، وفوكا، وماساموني، وسوبارو، ويوريشينو، وريون، بين العالم الحقيقي والعالم الخيالي. يُدرس هذا البحث من خلال منهج بنوي يطبق نظرية التناقض الثنائي لليفي شتراوس. يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة تناقض الشخصيات بين العالم الحقيقي والعالم الخيالي، وكشف كيفية ترابط هذه الاختلافات. هذا البحث دراسة نوعية، تعتمد بياناتها الرئيسية على رواية "القلعة الوحيدة في المرأة" لميزوكي تسوجيمورا في شكل جمل وتعبيرات وحوارات. تُظهر نتائج هذه الدراسة أن الشخصيات تمتلك شخصيات متعارضة بين العالم الحقيقي والعالم الخيالي. ففي العالم الحقيقي، تختبر الشخصيات تجارب مؤلمة كالشعور بالرفض والعزلة والشعور بالوحدة. أما في عالم الخيال، فيجدون مساحة تُشفي ذواتهم، حيث يتم قبولهم، ويمكنهم التفاعل، والشعور معًا. يكشف هذا البحث عن التجارب المتضاربة للشخصيات في كلا العالمين من خلال تقديم تجربة سردية مثيرة للاهتمام.

ABSTRAK

Wati, Anggraeni Juwita (2025) Oposisi Biner Para Karakter dalam *Lonely Castle in the Mirror* Karya Mizuki Tsujimura. Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing: Hafidhun Annas, M.Hum.

Kata Kunci: Oposisi biner, karakter dan karakterisasi, strukturalisme.

Oposisi biner merupakan proses berpikir manusia dalam memahami dan menafsirkan suatu konsep atau ide dengan cara memperlawankan konsep tersebut, seperti lemah dan kuat, jujur dan bohong, hidup dan mati, dan sebagainya. Gagasan tentang oposisi biner ini juga memiliki peran sentral dalam karya sastra. Dalam novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror* karya Mizuki Tsujimura terdapat dua dunia, yakni dunia nyata dan dunia fantasi (kastil) yang mana menggambarkan para karakter memiliki karakterisasi yang berbeda. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kritik sastra yang membahas tentang oposisi biner ketujuh karakter yang ada dalam novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror*, yakni Kokoro, Aki, Fuka, Masamune, Subaru, Ureshino dan Rion di antara dunia nyata dan dunia fantasi. Penelitian ini ditelaah melalui pendekatan strukturalisme yang menerapkan teori oposisi biner oleh Levi-Strauss. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji oposisi para karakter di antara dunia nyata dan dunia fantasi, serta mengungkapkan bagaimana perbedaan tersebut dapat saling berhubungan. Penelitian ini merupakan studi kualitatif yang data utamanya diambil dari novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror* karya Mizuki Tsujimura berupa kalimat, ungkapan, dan percakapan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa para karakter memiliki kepribadian yang bertolak belakang di antara dunia nyata dan dunia fantasi. Di mana dunia nyata para karakter mengalami pengalaman yang menyakitkan seperti merasa ditolak, mengisolasi diri, dan juga merasa kesepian. Sedangkan di dunia fantasi mereka menemukan ruang yang dapat memulihkan diri mereka di mana mereka diterima, dapat berinteraksi, juga meraskan kebersamaan. Penelitian ini mengungkapkan pengalaman yang saling bertentangan para karakter di kedua dunia dengan menawarkan pengalaman naratif yang menarik.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this section, the researcher describes several points. The first point explains the background of the study that consist of the topic of the study. Moreover, the researcher also mentions research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitation, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

The concept of binary opposition is inseparably linked to everyday life, because humans essentially understand meaning through contrast with other meanings. In the field of health, there are individuals who are healthy and those who are sick. A person truly appreciates the meaning of health only after experiencing illness. In social life, the difference between rich and poor shows the existence of economic inequality. The same concept applies to “good” and “evil,” or “day” and “night.” It supports the perspective of structuralists, who maintain that an entity cannot be comprehended in isolation and must be viewed as a component of a more extensive structure, of which it is a part (Barry, 2008). This is due to the fact that binary opposition enables humans to comprehend complex or abstract concepts by contrasting them in pairs, such as "weak and strong," "honest and lying," "alive and dead," and so forth. Therefore, it can be inferred that binary opposition is one of the systems that facilitate human thought's comprehension and interpretation of a concept or idea.

This idea of binary opposition also plays a central role in literary works. As products of the imagination, literary texts often reflect the structure of human thought, including the binary contrasts we use to interpret the world. Literary works are the outcome of a person's imagination in the form of stories, and they can also develop from a person's life story, which is mixed with aesthetic ideals that characterize life in society and serve as moral standards for enhancing social (Memon, Rao, & Siyal, 2021). The characters created by the author have the potential to motivate or inspire the reader in different ways. Not only do these characters complement the story, but they also serve as a bridge for readers to comprehend real-life issues through the literary work.

In *The Raw and the Cooked* (1964), Levi-Strauss studied how mythological stories from different cultures share a structure: the world is understood by contrasting opposing elements (binary opposition). In literature there are binary opposition such as the reality and fantasy. In literature, the real world refers to concrete and real everyday life, full of social rules, logic, and direct human experience (Roslan et al., 2016). The story typically portrays this as a realistic setting, where events make sense and can occur in real life. On the other hand, the fantasy world denotes an imaginative realm that frequently transcends the limits of logic and reality. This world is used in myths and fiction to describe human conflicts, values, or desires that can not always be realized.

The real world depicted is consistent with reality and adheres to natural rules (Jackson, 1981). This narrative stresses common life aspects and does not contradict reality. The story properly represents reality, with the exception of magical and supernatural elements. Based on Jackson (1981), fantasy is a story that contradicts reality, about a world that never happened, never existed, and cannot exist in real life. Thus, fantasy is an author's fantasy or idea that is opposed to the real world and is used in a literary work to create an engaging story. Mizuki Tujimura's novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror* is one of the literary works that raises two opposing components between the real and fantasy worlds by analyzing the differences in characters in both worlds.

In general, the novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror* tells the story of seven junior high school students who are absent from school for various reasons like bullying and social pressures. Kokoro Anzai, the main character, a junior high school student in Yukishina No.5 who experienced bullying at school until she decides to lock herself in her room. One day she pulled into a magic mirror that takes her into a mysterious castle and meets six other teenagers. Among them are two girls, namely Aki and Fuka. While the rest are boys named Rion, Masamune, Subaru, and Ureshino. They are gathered in a castle in the mirror by a young woman wearing a wolf mask named Wolf Queen. They are tasked with finding a key hidden in the castle. Whoever finds it can make one wish come true. They are given almost a year to solve the mission until March 30th of the following year. However, once the key is found and one person's wish is granted, their memories of the castle, and each other, will also be completely lost.

The castle in the mirror allows the characters to temporarily escape their personal problems in the real world. They can make friends in the mirror castle without feeling afraid or pressured like they do in the real world. Furthermore, the castle serves as a neutral space for the characters to discuss their experiences with one another, allowing them to process dealing with real-life challenges. Its interactions help the characters acquire the fortitude and confidence they need to handle real-world challenges. As a result, the binary opposition strategy used in this research is necessary to highlight the distinctions between the characters in the real world and the castle in the mirror in the fantasy world. This is a result of the characters experiencing opposite things: the painful experience they perceive in the real world and the healing space they discover in the castle in the mirror.

Hence, in this research the researcher provided two previous studies that used the same object *Lonely Castle in the Mirror* by Mizuki Tsujimura to explain the novelty of this research. The first research is *Trauma and Fairy Tales in Lonely Castle in the Mirror by Mizuki Tsujimura* (Prasol, 2023). This research discussed how Tsujimura presents the trauma experienced by the characters who through bullying in the novel explained metamorphically using elements from European fairy tales. This research discovered that references to European fairy tales in the novel serve as both a symbolic representation of traumatic experiences and a form of escape from trauma.

The second research is *Potrayal of Japanese Culture in the Novel Lonely Castle in the Mirror by Mizuki Tsujimura* (Azri, 2023). The research focused on the Japanese

culture in the terms of lifestyle and everyday items that represented in the novel using Raymond William's culture study theory. The research identified cultural values in their way of life, including reliance on elders (*amae*), endurance and perseverance (*gaman*), doing one's best (*gambaru*), having a purpose in life (*ikigai*), compromising (*nemawashi*), kindness, politeness, and gentleness (*omoiyari*), and giving gifts (*zoto*). Additionally, common cultural products are divided into two categories: traditional Japanese beauty (*bigaku*) and modern adaptations of foreign culture (*iitoko dori*).

Furthermore, in this research the researcher also provided several previous studies that have examined Levi Strauss's binary opposition in literary work. The first one is *Mental Binary Opposition of Wednesday and Enid in Wednesday Series S1 Episode 1 and 4* (Ambarwati and Tawami, 2024). This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach to discern the binary opposition between the characters Wednesday and Enid. The research revealed four opposing mental states between the characters Wednesday and Enid: darkness and lightness, introvert and extrovert, rigid and flexible, and dismissive and caring. The second is *Binary Opposition of Ali and Vikram Characters in Alif the Unseen Novel* (Annisa, 2024). This research examined Alif, a modern hacker, and Vikram the mythical vampire creature. This research employed a qualitative method focusing on human vs. supernatural, fear vs. courage, and modern vs. traditional. The results of this research indicated that even though the two characters are opposites, they complement each other.

The third is *Philosophical Contradictions in Sana'i Ghaznavi's Poetry* (Akbari et al., 2023). This research employed a descriptive analytical approach based on Levi-Strauss' binary opposition theory. In this research, Sana'i Ghazavi's poetry expressed competing but coexisting philosophies such as divinity, the heavenly world (*lahut*), and the earthy world (*nasut*). The forth previous study is *Binary Oposition of Characters in Casey Watson's A Boy Without Hope* (Auliana, 2021). The research focused on Casey and Miller's characterizations that have opposing personalities but are interconnected in forming the meaning of the story. The research's findings showed that Casey's character is portrayed as a positive character, meanwhile Miller is portrayed as a more negative character throughout the story, including the beginning, rising action, climax, falling action, and conclusion.

The last previous study is *Social Binary Oppositions in Osborne's "Look Back in Anger"* (Nalgire, 2021). This research used descriptive analysis to better comprehend the relationship between opposing concepts in the drama. In this research, there are various binary oppositions in the drama, such as the ruling class and the laboring class, love and hate, the real world and the imagination, and pre- and post-marital life. This research aimed to uncover the deep significance of the drama *Look Back in Anger*.

In this research, the researcher also provided three previous studies using Ferdinand de Sasussure's binary opposition. The first is *A Critique of Structural Binary Oppositions in Elif Shafak's The Forty Rules of Love* (Roona and Khan, 2022). The

methodology utilized in this study is qualitative. The analysis found binary oppositions in the work, including east and west, past and present, and spiritualism and materialism. The second is *Saussure's Concept of Binary Oppositions: Looking through the Lens of the Holy Qur'an* (Gul et al., 2022) This study employed a qualitative descriptive analysis of 15 verses from Surah As-Shams. The analysis found binary oppositions in 15 verses of Surah As-Shams, including the sun and moon, day and night, sky and earth, soul and body, evil and piety, and purity and pollution.

The last is *A Structuralist Analysis of Saussurean Binary Oppositions in Ahmed Ali's Novel 'Twilight in Delhi'* (Memon et al., 2021). This research used qualitative methods to investigate the binary opposition of characters in the novel *Twilight in Delhi*. The novel has various opposite results, including traditional and modern, preserver and destructive, idealist and realistic, and romantic and unromantic.

Therefore, in this research, the researcher focuses on revealing the difference between character characterization in the real world and the fantasy world in Mizuki Tsujimura's novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror*. This research aims to offer novelty compared to previous research that utilized the same novel as its primary data source.

B. Problem of the Study

Based on the background the study, this research raised one question as follow:

How is binary opposition between the real and fantasy worlds viewed from the characterization of the characters in *Lonely Castle in the Mirror* by Mizuki Tsujimura?

C. Significance of the Study

Hopefully, this research can contribute both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research can provide knowledge and understanding of binary opposition of real and fantasy world in the characters in Mizuki Tsujimura's novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror*. In addition, this research can also useful to understand more the use of structuralism approach in binary opposition. Practically, the researcher hopes to contribute to the advancement of literary studies. The researcher hopes that this research will be valuable to readers, particularly those interested in the same theory or topic as the researcher.

D. Scope and Limitation

In this research, researcher focuses on revealing the difference between character characterization in the real and the fantasy worlds in Mizuki Tsujimura's novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror*. The distinction here is that the researcher not only focuses on one main character but the researcher also focuses to six characters by analyzing the binary opposition. This research utilized Levi-Strauss binary opposition using structuralism approach.

E. Key Terms

1. **Binary opposition:** Refers to the distinction between two opposites in interpreting the universe, such as light and dark (Strauss, 1969).
2. **Real world:** Portrayal of normal life that does not contain supernatural aspects (Jackson, 1981).

3. **Fantasy world:** An imaginary universe established by the author that differs from reality in that it allows the author to depict magical elements that are impossible in real life (Jackson, 1981).
4. **Characterization:** How the author presents characters to the reader through actions, dialogue, or descriptions in a story (Abrams & Harpham, 2015).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this section, the researcher examines relevant literature reviews covering several general and specific issues underlying theories such as structuralism, Levi Strauss' binary opposition, character, and characterization.

A. Structuralism

Ferdinand de Saussure, the father of modern linguistics, established structuralism. According Saussure (2015) language divides into three parts: parole, langage, and langue. Parole is a speech made by a language speaker. While langage refers to the speaker's overall ability to speak. Ferdinand de Saussure focused on the issue of langue (language system), specifically the meaning that the language speaker can understand. When two speakers of a language communicate with one another and comprehend each other's objectives and aims for the language in question, langue is not constrained by history, background, or culture. Langue, which is regarded as a language's essential meaning, is not context-bound. Thus, langue emerges from the collective unconsciousness of many speakers who are interacting.

Therefore, Radford and Radford (2005) defined language as a system in which all the elements fit together, and which the value of any one element depends on the simultaneous coexistence of all the others. This shows that all language components

are meaningful because they are connected and distinct from one another; no language has meaning if it stands alone. To put it another way, language functions as a cohesive system that produces meaning. Sanders (2004) further supports this view by stating that structuralism, as defined by Ferdinand de Saussure, is a fundamental framework for elucidating the formation of social and cultural structures as well as how these structures serve as sign systems. Furthermore, Sander asserts that structuralism is a school of thought or methodology that dominated several scientific fields during the 20th century, including linguistics, literary criticism, anthropology, film and media criticism, psychology, philosophy, and economics.

When addressing structuralism, it must be considered in connection with the signifier. Structuralism is a concept of meaning described by interconnected and interdependent signifiers. Saussure asserts that a single signifier can possess multiple meanings, contingent on its usage and cultural context. Sanders (2004) stated, Lévi-Strauss, who succeeded Ferdinand de Saussure, expands on the idea that language serves as a bridge between one meaning and another. In his mythology, Strauss elucidated the understanding of language in myths through the plot and the interrelationships among patterned themes. Thus, language in myths is not only a medium for storytelling but also a tool for connecting layers of meaning.

In the context of literary works, structuralism cannot be understood separately but rather as part of a larger framework (Taghizadeh, 2013). In other words, studying

a literary work from a structuralist perspective primarily focuses on the construction and production of meaning. Structuralism posits that a literary work's meaning remains static due to the fixed pieces that collaborate to elucidate its meaning. These literary aspects reinforce one another, forming an organized and harmonic framework that helps stabilize the meaning of the literary work. It also defines structuralism as a theoretical approach to literary works that emphasizes the link between distinct parts in the text. Structuralism holds that the elements or parts of a text have no meaning when considered separately or individually. These elements have meaning only when they are connected to other elements in the text.

B. Binary Opposition

Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist, first established the concept of binary opposition, explaining that humans acquire meaning through the juxtaposition of two opposed ideas. For example, we understand the meaning of "night" since there is "day." So, binary opposition is a mode of thinking that compares something's significance to its opposite. The structuralist idea includes Ferdinand de Saussure's postulated binary opposition. However, Levi-Strauss is acknowledged as the one who developed the theory of binary opposition. Strauss argued in his book *The Raw and the Cooked* (1969) that ancient societies' myths or methods of thinking were organized into opposing pairs. Examples are good and evil, day and night, and sad and cheerful. According to this viewpoint, something has meaning when compared or contrasted with something else. This can indicate that one item is positive and another is negative.

Based on Selden et al. (2005, p.68) Levi Strauss' myth approach focused on the structural patterns that shape the myth's meaning rather than the sequences of the story. Levi Strauss applied structuralism to the concept of binary opposition (pairs of opposing concepts) to grasp the story's meaning. Strauss contends that these opposing patterns represent the fundamental structure of human thought. According to them, the meaning of a literary work originates from the structure established by clashing ideas (binary opposition) in the text itself, rather than from the writer's or reader's experiences.

Binary opposition is an important concept for both writers and readers. Writers might utilize binary opposition to structure and emphasize the significance in their writing. On the other hand, binary opposition can assist readers in comprehending the structure and meaning contained in a literary work.

C. Character

In a literary work, the author always created characters who experience events or actions in various situations throughout the story. As Abrams and Harpams stated in the book *Glossary of Literary Terms*:

“Character is the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it the dialogue and from what they do the action.” (2015:48)

This shows how characters in literary works provide readers a chance to comprehend the thoughts and feelings of the characters since the author conveys these emotions and

thoughts through the characters' actions and dialogue. It also aligns with Chatman's (1993) statement that characters are story agents who not only drive the plot but also possess traits that shape their characteristics in the narrative.

Based on Nurgiyantoro (2010, p.176), characters in literary works can be classified based on perspective or point of view. In other words, characters can be grouped based on their roles, functions, personalities, and development through the story's plot.

1. Main characters and supporting characters

Characters can be divided into two types based on their roles or relevance in the story, such as main character and supporting character. The main characters are those who receive the greatest attention and dominate the plot. The main characters, constantly present in major events in the story, determine the entire development of the storyline. Meanwhile, the supporting characters emerge only occasionally and have limited roles. Supporting characters exist because they are connected to the main characters. A story can have multiple main characters, but their importance is based on their dominance, narrative intensity, and plot influence.

2. Protagonist and antagonist characters

Characters are classified as protagonists or antagonists based on their function in the plot. The protagonist is the main character who inspires empathy

from readers by representing ideal norms, values, and hopes. Readers frequently relate with the protagonist because they share common experiences and emotions. Meanwhile, the antagonist is a character who produces direct or indirect conflict, which in turn causes conflict for the protagonist. Thus, the existence of protagonists and antagonists is equally crucial since they generate the conflict in the story.

3. Simple characters and round characters

In terms of characterization in a story, characters can be divided into simple characters (flat characters) and round characters (complex characters). Simple characters consistently display only one specific trait or quality, making them easier to understand but often resulting in a flat character. However, not all flat characters are monotonous; some possess unique traits and exhibit novelty. Meanwhile, round characters are more complex than flat characters. These characters display various life aspects and distinct personalities, which makes them resemble real people more closely. Round characters are usually difficult to predict because their behavior is unpredictable throughout the plot.

4. Static characters and dynamic characters

In the development of the plot, characters can be divided into static characters and dynamic characters. Static characters do not change in traits, personality, or behavior throughout the story. These characters remain consistent throughout the story, whether they are villains or heroes, and do not reveal any additional aspects of their personalities. These characters tend to be

flat and simplistic. On the other hand, dynamic characters are those who undergo changes or developments in their personalities as the story progresses, influenced by either external or internal factors. These characters are more complex because they reflect the dynamic reality of human life, making them feel more alive and realistic.

D. Characterization

According to Chatman (1993), characterization refers to the process of giving certain traits to characters in a story. When the authors create characters, they also introduce a personality, a new perspective, and a distinct way of viewing the world. This allows viewers to better grasp the characters' feelings and ideas. Furthermore, it allows readers to witness a different side of human life that is rarely seen in the real world.

Abrams and Harpham (2015) state that the author generally employs two techniques to introduce and identify the characters, namely direct characterization (telling) and indirect characterization (showing).

a. Direct Characterization

In the direct characterization, the author simply tells readers what the character is like. The author shows the reader the traits or personality of the character explicitly, so that the reader does not create an interpretation in the form of a description through narration or dialogue between characters.

Minderop in the book *Metode Karakteristik Telaah Fiksi* (2005, p.8) stated there are several methods in direct characterization, namely:

1. Characterization using the character names

Literary works frequently use character names to introduce or develop concepts, as well as to elucidate and accentuate the character's personality. The names given to the characters describe the qualities that set them apart from other characters. The name references the character's dominant traits.

2. Characterization through the appearance of the character

In literary works, the appearance of characters is a significant component in relation to the study of characterization. The character's physical appearance, such as clothing, hairstyle, face, expression, and body language is often used by authors as an initial clue to understanding a character's character.

3. Characterization through the narration

The author gives the reader a detailed description and explanation of the characters. Not only does the author depict the characters' outward appearance and speech patterns, but she also delves into their innermost feelings, ideas, and struggles. The author's complete control over the characters' development, nature, and narrative is responsible for this.

b. Indirect Characterization

In indirect characterization, the author shows to the reader what characters are like through dialogue, external details (appearance), characters' thoughts, speech, and motivations. This makes the reader have to understand the character more deeply and conclude what the character's trait and personality is. According to Minderop (2005, p.22), there are several methods involved in indirect characterization.

1. Characterization through dialogue

Through dialogues the character's personality and attitude are revealed by what they say, how they say it, who they talk to, and how others react. It also describes how the author portrays characters through their interactions or dialogues with one another. It can also be done from other characters' perspectives on the character. In other words, characters are shown through the way others talk and treat toward them.

2. Location and conversation situation

Readers can derive additional meaning from the background of a conversation. Writers choose locations to support the tone and context of a conversation, making this feature important. The background can reinforce a character's conflict or mood to enhance the impact of the story.

3. The character's identity address by the speaker

The character's conversation partner can influence the way they talk in a conversation. This phenomenon reflects the social relationships between characters and how they view each other.

4. The mental quality of characters

Characteristics of characters can be identified through their body language, facial expressions, conversations, and actions. Readers can indirectly understand the emotional and psychological state of characters.

5. Tone of voice, stress, dialect, and vocabulary

This helps readers understand the characters more effectively. The way people speak also reflects their personality or background, which can create a more realistic and vivid portrayal of the characters.

6. Characterization through the actions of characters

Characters are not only established by their words but also by their actions. Readers can tell a character's moral and essence from their actions, even if they do not say it.

Author uses characterization to show and tell the reader how the character is described through their speech and action. It also the way the author shows the character's thoughts, feelings, and responses to events. So, characterization is the way author develops the traits of the character.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

In this section, the researcher explains the research methods, which are divided into several groups, such as research design, data sources, data collection, and data analysis.

A. Research Design

This research is categorized into literary criticism because the researcher conducts discussion of literature including description analysis, and interpretation of novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror* as a literary work. The term of literary criticism is intended to analyze, interpret, evaluate, and describe of a literary work (Abrams and Harpham, 2015). Moreover, this research also includes to library research because this research produces descriptive data in the form of words written by analyzing and interpreting the data.

The researcher uses literary criticism which taken from the binary opposition perspectives, critics operate. This research uses the structuralism theory of binary opposition by Levi Strauss. Therefore, the appropriate analysis of this research is structuralism approach.

B. Data Source

In this research, the researcher uses the fantasy fiction novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror* by Mizuki Tsujimura as the main data. This novel is a Japanese novel translated into English by Philip Gabriel and published by Doubleday in 2021. The English edition is 368 pages long. Moreover, the data present in the form of sentences, phrases, and dialogue of the novel.

C. Data Collection

The researcher uses textual sources from novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror* as the primary source to collect the data. The research process was conducted in several stages, including the following: (1) reading the novel carefully to fully understand it, (2) highlighting the important parts of the novel that were relevant, and (3) categorizing the relevant data related to the focus of the analysis. The novel's quotations served as material for the analysis. The final stage of this research involved analyzing the data to address the research question and derive the necessary conclusions.

D. Data Analysis

The researcher classifies and identifies the data using the binary opposition theory after gathering all the research data. Furthermore, the researcher analyzed the data using personal perspectives and provided related references. Finally, the researcher reached a conclusion based on Levi Strauss' (1969) binary opposition theory.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section poses one question that address by data analysis. The researcher uses the binary opposition method to analyze the characters in the novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror*. This research examines the opposition characterization among the characters Kokoro, Aki, Fuka, Masamune, Subaru, Ureshino, and Rion in both the real and fantasy worlds.

In this research, the researcher finds significant evidence that the characters have opposing personalities between the real world and the fantasy world (castle in the mirror). The researcher selects seven characters from Yukishina No. 5 Junior High School, including Kokoro, Aki, Fuka, Subaru, Masamune, Ureshino, and Rion who were absent from school. A comparison of the characterization in the two worlds reveals that it shapes the narrative meaning in the text. This research reveals how the differences between characters in the real world and the fantasy world can create meaning in the story, using the binary opposition theory through structuralist approach.

A. Characterization of Characters in the Real World vs. Fantasy World

In this section, the researcher discusses the characterization depicted in the novel's real world and fantasy world to help readers comprehend the characters Kokoro, Aki, Fuka, Masamune, Subaru, Ureshino, and Rion in Mizuki Tsujimura's novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror*. This explanation is intended to help readers

comprehend how these characters behave in the real world and fantasy world including the problems they faced and the characteristics they possess.

1. Anzai Kokoro

Kokoro is a first-year student at Yukishina No. 5 Junior High School. Kokoro is described as a child who refuses to attend school because she has due to verbal bullying. The following quote serves as an example of the verbal bullying Kokoro endures:

Tojo-san and Kokoro had been discussing which after-school club to join. But when the time came to meet, as they'd promised each other, Tojo-san strode right out of the classroom with Sanada and her crew. When they were out in the hallway Sanada said, loudly enough for Kokoro to hear, 'I feel so sorry for those loners!' As she slowly packed away her school books, ready to go home, she noticed the stares from the other kids, and Kokoro finally understood: the comment had been meant for her. (p.17).

The quote above intentionally uses mockery to embarrass Kokoro. Kokoro, who previously had a friend named Tojo and had planned to join an after-school club, disregarded the commitment. Tojo instead chose to leave Kokoro and join Sanada's gang, who is known dislike her. Sanada deliberately uttered mocking words to insinuate something negative about Kokoro. These words hurt Kokoro's feelings and makes her feel humiliated by the negative label "loners" given by Sanada. This emphasizes that Kokoro appears lonely after losing her friend, as Tojo chose to join Sanada and leave her behind.

Kokoro's relationship with Tojo, which was initially close due to their adjacent seats and proximity as neighbors, began to grow distant after the influence of Sanada and her gang.

So why did things turn out the way they did? Tojo-san ended up turning her back on Kokoro. Kokoro quickly worked out that Sanada and her little cohort had said something to Tojo-san about her. One day in class, Kokoro went over to her. 'Moé-chan?' she said, and Tojo-san looked up, obviously annoyed. What do you want? her expression said. It was clear Tojo-san found Kokoro a nuisance. She no longer wanted to be in Kokoro's company, especially not in front of Sanada and her gang. (p.17)

The quote above demonstrates how Tojo began to distance herself from Kokoro. She even showed signs of being annoyed when Kokoro tried to talk to her. This change caused Kokoro to lose a close friend. Tojo's rejection created a sense of loneliness because it made Kokoro feel excluded and considered a nuisance. Consequently, the loss of the previously established friendship led to Kokoro's feelings of loneliness.

Moreover, in the real world Kokoro also faced confrontation by Sanada gang in her house.

Someone began pounding on the door. 'Come out! We know you're in there.' 'Go around the back. We can see her through the window.' Kokoro's flesh began to crawl. 'Let's teach her a lesson,' someone said. Lesson – like in school? Or more like punishment? The two ideas spun around in her head, painfully, absurdly – and she started trembling. (p.84).

The quote above illustrates verbal bullying directed at Kokoro with a threatening tone. When a gang of children arrived at her home and began shouting and knocking on the door, Kokoro became terrified. When Kokoro heard, "Let's teach her a lesson," it reinforced the threat and elicited fear in Kokoro. In response to the situation, Kokoro,

who is alone at home at the time, immediately closes all the curtains and lies on the floor, an action that reflects her fear for her safety.

She had to close the curtains in all the rooms as fast as she could. She had no clue if she'd do it in time. It was still light enough outside for her to see several silhouettes. And the shadows of their bikes. 'Come out! You wuss!' Miori Sanada's voice. Kokoro held her breath and lay flat against the floor next to the sofa. Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang – they pounded at the back door. So many voices; she figured there must be about ten of them, repeating each other's calls. If the door weren't locked, she felt like Miori and her pals would march right into her house. And she actually felt that if that happened, they'd find her, drag her outside and – kill her. She was so terrified she couldn't utter a sound. (p.85).

It shows Miori Sanada shouting in front of Kokoro's house. The sound of repeated pounding on the back door increase Kokoro's worry. She even imagines the worst possibility if the door remained unlocked, they might forcefully enter, drag her out, and potentially cause her harm. This incident shows that Kokoro is not only bullied by one or two persons but by a group of about ten students who try to disturb her private space, specifically her own house. As a result of the bullying that Kokoro experienced, she decided to isolate herself from the outside world.

Kokoro decides to isolate herself from outside as a result of the bullying incident. She stops going to school because she always gets stomach ache when she wakes up in the morning.

'Mum, my stomach hurts.' Her mother had been preparing some hot milk and toast, and when she heard this her face went blank. 'How does it hurt?' she asked. 'The same as always,' Kokoro said in a small voice. 'The same as always? But you were fine until yesterday. The School we visited isn't like your public junior high, you know. You don't need to go every day, there are fewer children in each class, and the teachers seem so kind. You said you'd go. But now you're telling me you won't?' Her mother obviously wanted her to attend. But Kokoro wasn't feigning illness. Her stomach really was killing her. When Kokoro didn't reply, her mother shot an irritated glance at the clock.

'So – what do you want to do?' Kokoro's legs felt paralysed. 'I can't go,' she said. 'Is it only today you can't go? Or are you never going to go?' Kokoro couldn't say. She wasn't going today, but she had no idea if, the next day, she might not have a stomach ache again. (p.7).

Kokoro's self-isolation is seen in her refusal to enroll at her new school, as indicated in the quote above. She consistently informs her mother that she experiences a genuine stomachache whenever it is time to attend school, asserting that her pain is real and not a pretense for avoiding school. Despite her mother's explanation that her new school differs from her previous school, Kokoro remains unwilling to attend. Kokoro's refusal to engage with or adjust to her new environment is a form of isolation. Kokoro's actions are a clear example of self-isolation, as she isolates herself from the opportunity to re-engage in school and begin to adapt to her new environment.

Kokoro not only isolated herself from the school environment but also from activities outside the house.

On Saturday her parents invited her to go out shopping, but she said, 'I'm OK. You two go,' to which her parents didn't know what to say. They looked at each other, and later her father asked her, 'So, what're you planning to do? How are you going to manage if you never leave the house?' Kokoro had no idea. She wished she had an answer. But the thought of bumping into someone she knew paralysed her. (p.78).

The quote above illustrates Kokoro's isolation by declining her parents' request to leave the house for shopping. Kokoro was hesitant to participate in outside activities, instead staying at home. The idea of going outside and potentially encountering her friends had her feeling helpless. It indicates that the bullying incident she experienced led to her feeling uncomfortable and uneasy outside of her house, even with her family.

Consequently, Kokoro decided to entirely isolate herself from both the school environment and outdoor spaces as a result of her previous negative experience.

In contrast in the real world, in the fantasy world Kokoro is able to interact comfortably with the boys such as Subaru and Masamune. Although she previously isolated herself from society due to bullying, in the castle she shows her ability to connect with others in the castle.

'Do you want to play with us?' Subaru, controller in hand, turned to Kokoro. Masamune, sitting cross legged, was looking over at her. 'Sure,' she said, and she took the controller from Subaru. Masamune laughed. 'So you play games, even though you're a girl?' 'Yeah,' Kokoro said, 'loads of girls do.' 'Really?' Masamune said. Yeah, Kokoro thought. Time had passed in a flash. Kokoro and the boys had played right up until the castle closed at five o'clock. Kokoro had never experienced this before – having fun with two guys, with no other girls around. 'You should come tomorrow, too,' Subaru said. Even Masamune seemed to accept her as one of the gang. 'We'll probably be here, so if you're free, you should come,' he echoed. 'Thank you,' said Kokoro. Honestly, she was so happy she wasn't sure how to respond. She didn't feel afraid to come here any more. (p.56)

The quote above illustrates Kokoro's ability to interact with Subaru and Masamune through their offer to participate in games. Kokoro's acceptance of Subaru's request to participate in games demonstrates her willingness to do so without being forced to. After isolating herself from social interactions in the real world, Kokoro is finally able to have fun with boys in the castle. Subaru and Masamune also offer Kokoro to return to the castle and play games with them, displaying Kokoro's acceptance as a member of their group. When a person feels accepted, they are less afraid to interact in new situations. The quote below illustrates this, as Kokoro returns to the castle the following day.

Kokoro visited the castle the very next day. She found she had no problem being with the others again, and wondered why she'd been so bothered about it before. (p.59)

Following Subaru and Masamune's previous request, Kokoro returned to the castle without hesitation, even questioning why she had always been worried when she visited the baseball team. This revealed that she was no longer afraid of interacting with people in a new place since she felt accepted.

In addition, Kokoro also felt an intense sense of togetherness with her female friends, Aki and Fuka, while at the castle. Kokoro, who previously experienced bullying in the real world, felt supported in the castle, particularly by her girlfriends, Aki and Fuka.

'Is this a problem that's still going on?' Aki asked after a while. 'Yes, it's still going on,' Kokoro said, and as soon as she did, Aki stood up from her dining chair and patted Kokoro on the head with her right hand, messing up her hair. 'What are you doing?' said Kokoro, her hair askew. 'I'm proud of you,' Aki said, her eyes gentle and consoling. 'I'm proud of you. That must have been so hard to take.' Fuka, who'd been silent, held out a handkerchief to Kokoro. Her eyes had the same soft glow as Aki's. Kokoro accepted Fuka's handkerchief, held her breath, then quietly inhaled, long and deep. (p.88).

In the quote above, when Kokoro finished explaining about the bullying experience she had, Aki and Fuka responded in a way that made her feel heard. Aki's attitude and words toward Kokoro were a type of emotional validation, indicating that she respected Kokoro's courage in sharing her awful experience. Meanwhile, Fuka demonstrated compassion through small gestures, indicating that she understood what Kokoro was experiencing, even though she did not express the feeling explicitly. Aki and Fuka's response demonstrated that they were there for Kokoro and did not make

her feel alone in dealing with her problems. Both responses made Kokoro feel heard and understood. She was not shunned because of the problem she discussed with them. As seen in the quote bellow:

"What Kokoro looked forward to the most was seeing Aki and Fuka..." (p. 92).

It is demonstrated when Kokoro became even more passionate about visiting the castle to meet Aki and Fuka.

From the data presented above, the researcher concludes that Kokoro's character has binary opposition in both the actual and fantasy worlds. To make things easier to understand, the researcher provides data in the form of a table below.

Table 1. Binary opposition of Kokoro's character in the real and fantasy worlds

Real World	Fantasy World
Rejected	Accepted
Isolation	Interaction
Loneliness	Togetherness

It can be concluded Kokoro's personality differs between the real life and the fantasy world (the castle). In the real world, she faces rejection (bullying), which causes her to isolate herself, and feel alone. In contrast, Kokoro feels accepted in the fantasy world. She becomes comfortable interacting and feels togetherness with others. Therefore, the contrast between Kokoro's characterization in the real and fantasy

worlds reflects Levi Strauss's (1969) concept of binary opposition, which suggests that meaning is created through the contrast between two opposing ideas. This distinction demonstrates that the fantasy world serves as a healing space, allowing her to recover from the trauma in the real world.

2. Inoue Akiko

Akiko is a third-year student at Yukishina No. 5 Junior High School. She is an active member volleyball club in her school. Aki is the club's finest volleyball player.

I was always the best player on the volleyball team, she thought, and it irritated me to see the other girls just standing there. 'Stop being so spaced out!' I used to shout. (p.313)

The quote above explains that Aki holds high expectations for other people's performances because she believes she is a capable player in her school's volleyball club. She becomes annoyed when she sees her friends not putting up the effort or hard work she expects. Consequently, she often shouts at her other friends to warn them to focus. Aki also intimidates the junior members of her club.

Perhaps I overdid it a bit. We'd gather the younger, less experienced girls, and we older ones would surround them and demand they tell us exactly what the hell they thought they were doing. Every club used to do it, and it wasn't as if I was the only one. (p.314)

The quote above, Aki admits that she excessively treats juniors who are considered less experienced. Together with other senior members, they surround the juniors with questions that put pressure on them. However, Aki herself views this behavior as

normal in the club, despite its potential to have a negative impact. Aki's attitude backfires, as others interpret her activities as bullying.

Aki believed that her acts is not intended to harm anyone, but her attitude causes chaos within her school's volleyball team.

My presence was destroying the volleyball team. They told me I was a bully. That wasn't what I intended, and yet it turned out I was the one they wanted out. There was nothing for it but to leave the team. (p.314)

In the quotes above, her volleyball team rejects her and labels Aki as a bully because of her bad attitude. As a result, Aki leaves the volleyball team and decides not to attend school any longer.

Furthermore, Aki felt lonely as she faced her challenges alone. As a result, when Masamune invited all of her castle friends to attend school on the same day, Aki immediately agreed, expecting that they could also help and accompany her in facing her problems.

But these guys – they'll really help me. They'll stand up to it all with me. But on that January day, when she'd gone over to the nurse's office, wanting to support Masamune, truly wanting to do what she could, no one else had turned up. It had been so cold. Looking out of the window of the nurse's office at the pale sky, Aki felt betrayed. Aki crawled into the small bed in the office, pulled the covers up over her, and lay there trembling. (p.315)

The quote above, Aki displayed her dedication to attending school on the agreed-upon day with Masamune and her friends. This move revealed not just her care for Masamune but also her desire to face the problems together, since they could rely on one another. However, the reality she encountered was different. When she arrived

at the nurse's office to wait, none of her friends were there. She didn't see any of her friends there. Her hopes that she could face everything with the others were dashed. Ultimately, she would have to deal with her problems on her own.

In this situation, Aki also attempted to avoid interacting with her volleyball club mates. When Aki returned to school, Misuzu, one of her volleyball club friends, was looking for her in the nurse's office, but Aki refused to meet her.

'Ma'am, is it true that Aki has come into school today?' Outside the door of the nurse's office, she overheard the voice of Misuzu from the volleyball team. It made her want to run. 'Please, tell her I'm not here. Even if they all come, please don't tell them I'm here.' (p.315)

According to the quote above, Aki was unprepared to meet Misuzu. She even instructed the nurse to lie to Misuzu to avoid the interaction with her. This indicates Aki's isolation from the friends she once surrounded herself with.

Unlike in real world, Aki's character in the castle in the mirror is portrayed as friendly as she greets Kokoro during their initial encounter in the castle.

'Hello,' a voice said, and she looked up. A tall girl with a ponytail was smiling at her. 'We've also just arrived. We heard you ran off yesterday, so this child told us to wait here for you, so you wouldn't run away again.' 'But ... what is this place?' 'We're in the same boat as you,' the ponytailed girl said. Kokoro had thought they were about the same age, but this girl sounded older. Calmer and more grown-up. (p.28)

In the dialogue above, Aki shows a positive attitude by greeting Kokoro when she first arrives at the castle. Aki shows bravery by talking to Kokoro first, even if they do not know each other yet. She also tells Kokoro that she does not understand why they are

there, so Kokoro is not confused. Aki looks calm and mature in the first impression.

That is why Ureshino quickly starts to fancy Aki.

'Ureshino-kun, you mean you like Aki-chan?' Kokoro asked. Ureshino didn't reply. Kokoro was thinking she shouldn't push it, but after a while he said quietly, 'Yeah, that's right. Is there a problem?' 'No, no problem.' 'Love at first sight,' Ureshino said. 'But she is pretty amazing, Aki-chan,' she said. Kokoro felt she had to say something. 'She's smart, and fearless. I completely get how you'd fall for her.' Ureshino looked surprised. But then he broke into a smile. 'I know, right?' he said. (p.64)

In the conversation above, Ureshino's admission of his feelings for Aki indicates that her castle friends hold positive perceptions of her. The conversation between Ureshino and Kokoro reveals Aki's wonderful personality. Kokoro agrees that Aki is smart and brave, and she perfectly understands why someone like Ureshino might fall in love with her. It serves as indirect evidence of Aki's acceptance by her castle friends. It is hardly unexpected that people liked and accepted her right away when they first met because she looked mature and charming.

Furthermore, Aki finds togetherness in the castle particularly through interactions with her friends there. Although Aki is grieving after attending her grandmother's funeral, she chooses to visit the castle instead back to her home.

Kokoro looked over at Subaru, just as he turned to face Aki. 'Aki-chan, can I ask you something?' 'What' 'Why are you in your uniform today?' he continued. 'Did something happen?' Aki seemed to freeze. 'I went to a funeral.' There was an audible intake of breath. Aki's cheeks were pale and drawn. 'It was my grandmother, who I lived with. My cousins and I were told to wear our school uniforms.' 'Didn't you need to go home afterwards?' Fuka asked. 'Is it OK that you were here with us?' 'Well, that's ...' Aki said, her voice cracking. But Fuka had no ulterior motive in asking; she was simply concerned about her. 'It's fine,' Aki answered. 'It's better being here with all of you. (p.167)

In the dialogue above, Aki reveals her comfort with her friends in the castle. Subaru's question regarding why Aki is wearing a uniform in the castle reveals that she had just come from her grandmother's funeral. Despite her grief at the death of her grandmother, who lived with her, Aki prefers to visit the castle and spend time with her friends rather than return home. This decision demonstrates Aki's emotional attachment to her friends in the castle. Her statement, demonstrates how their togetherness provides her with strength and emotional support when she is feeling down. So, the castle in the mirror is more than simply a place to escape. It is also a comforting place that provides togetherness she does not have in the real world.

From the evidences presented above, the researcher finds that Aki's character has binary opposition in both the actual and fantasy worlds. To make things easier to understand, the researcher provides data in the form of a table below.

Table 2. Binary opposition of Aki's character in the real and fantasy worlds

Real World	Fantasy World
Rejected	Accepted
Isolation	Interaction
Loneliness	Togetherness

It can be concluded Aki's character shows binary opposition between the real and fantasy worlds. In the real world, Aki is portrayed as a fierce figure who intimidates her juniors makes her rejected from her team mates and it makes her

isolates herself from them. She also feels alone faces her problems. In contrast, in the fantasy world, Aki is accepted and feels togetherness with others in the castle. She also easy to start interaction with them. Hence, the contrast between Aki in real and fantasy worlds reflects Levi Strauss's (1969) theory that meaning comes from opposing ideas. The fantasy world is not merely an escape from reality but also a space for Aki to heal. In other words, the fantasy world serves as a place of emotional healing for her.

3. Hasegawa Fuka

Fuka is a second-year student at Yukishina No. 5 Junior High School. Fuka has rarely attended school because she has piano lessons during the school day. Her mother also agrees, valuing piano lessons over formal education.

Her mother said to the teachers at school, 'You're concerned about her school attendance, but would you have a look at her record in piano competitions? Couldn't you consider this as equivalent to her school record?' When she started at junior high, Fuka's mother encouraged her piano playing even more. She was told to take time off from school to have lessons in Kyoto with a famous piano teacher. She would attend lessons from her grandparents' house, who lived in the area. (p.292)

This quote shows Fuka's mother's view that non-academic achievements are more important than academic ones. This belief shows that excelling at piano playing is considered equivalent to formal education. This view also indirectly suggests that her self-worth depends on her musical abilities rather than her academic abilities. This viewpoint adds to Fuka's emotional burden and distances her further from school life because she often skips classes.

As a result, Fuka is frequently absent from school and makes her difficult to interact with her friends. Fuka does not have any friends because she can not engage with her friends.

She went to school even less often. Even then, she didn't have much to talk about with the other girls. She didn't do PE (Physical Education) and wasn't in any clubs. She felt left out. But that was OK. She didn't need friends. (p.295)

Fuka frequently skipped school, making it difficult for her to socialize with other students. She also did not have any friends because she could not make friends with them. In the quote above, Fuka did not do sports or join any clubs at school, and it made her feel like she was missing out on her friends. This situation made her feel left out. She felt alone and friendless because she struggled to socialize and rarely attended school. As a result, she lost her will to attend school.

Even though Fuka's friend asked her to play with them, she declined it.

At PE at school, Fuka sat on the sidelines and watched. The others had formed a circle, and were tossing the ball to each other. She was sitting on the gymnasium floor, hugging her knees, her back up against a corner, when Mima-chan came over with a group of girls. 'Don't you want to play?' 'Um ... no.' Fuka always sat out during PE. It would be a disaster if she hurt a finger playing volleyball. (p.291)

In the text above shows when her friends are exercising, Fuka merely watches them. Even one of her friends asks her to do so, Fuka gently declines to play with them. Fuka never engages in sport, particularly volleyball, so she is worried about potential injuries from volleyball participation, which could disrupt her piano-playing activities.

It also indicates that Fuka tends to isolate herself and avoid interacting with her friends, despite one of them wanting her to get along with the group.

Therefore, Fuka is able to form close interactions in the castle, which contrasts with her real life, where she struggles to fit in due to her frequent absences from school.

Aki took out her thermos and got the tea ready. Kokoro and Fuka took out the cookies they'd each brought, and today Aki had brought patterned paper napkins which she began to spread out. When she saw the napkins, with their border design of rose vines and birds, Fuka declared them 'So sweet.' Not the kind of comment she typically made. She fingered one delicately and asked, 'Where do they sell these?' 'They are lovely, aren't they,' Aki said, and smiled. 'I went to a stationer's nearby at the weekend and they were selling them there. They had all kinds of other cool designs as well, and it was so hard to choose. Do you like these, Fuka? I'll give them to you.' 'Do I like them? Yeah, I suppose so.' 'They're so gorgeous,' Kokoro piped up, and Fuka looked at her. 'Aki-chan?' 'Hm?' 'Can I give Kokoro-chan one too?' 'Sure. Of course.' 'Really?' Kokoro asked, and with a 'Here you go,' Fuka handed her the one she was holding. (p.59)

The quote above demonstrates Fuka's willingness to participate in the activities frequently held by the girls Aki and Fuka, like tea drinking at the castle. In the fantasy world, Fuka is willing to socialize with her friends, unlike in the real world, where she refuses to engage even when they invite her. Fuka is willing to participate and interact in basic activities organized by her friends. Fuka is more open and willing to initiate conversations, which Kokoro stated she rarely does. This act suggests that she feels open to express herself. It demonstrates her close relationship with the girls in the castle. This interaction displays Fuka's ability to engage and develop close interactions with her friends in the fantasy world.

Additionally, Fuka demonstrates her closeness interaction to Kokoro, particularly after Kokoro initially shared the problems she encountered in the real

world. This interaction becomes a turning point for Fuka, as she begins to open up about her struggles.

'I know what it's like to feel panicked when you can't keep up with schoolwork.' She was in the dining room at the castle the next day, and Fuka was speaking quietly. Fuka began opening up about not going to school. 'You mean there're moments when you can't keep up with schoolwork, Fuka-chan? That's hard to believe.' Fuka looked like the perfect A student, what with her glasses and bowl haircut. But Fuka smiled and said, 'You didn't see that coming, did you? I know I look a bit nerdy, but my grades are actually pretty bad. There's tons of schoolwork I just don't get. I often feel left behind.

In the conversation above, Fuka slowly reveals that she often feels behind in her studies and struggles at school. Through the conversation it indicates that Fuka and Kokoro's interaction is improving, to the point that Fuka feels comfortable sharing her personal concerns. The conversation portrays Fuka's sense of secure, as she dares to reveal secrets. This attitude is in contrast to Fuka's life in the real world, where she isolates herself because she is unable to interact with her friends.

In contrast to the real world, Fuka's piano competition failure led her to believe that her recognition was solely based on her personal achievements. However, at the castle, she received true acceptance from her friends without having to prove her abilities.

Subaru added the intimate chan, calling her Fuka-chan. She liked how gentlemanly he was. Even Rion, the sort of boy who stood out in a crowd, treated her as one of his friends, and called her simply Fuka. Whenever he did so, she was happy to be her, to be just 'Fuka'. Whether I have any talent or not – none of that makes any difference here. They're all happy to know me. (p.296).

In the quote above, Fuka felt accepted by her castle friends. Her friends treated her as an equal, without requiring her to demonstrate any ability. Fuka was delighted with

her friends' enthusiastic acceptance, regardless of her talents. Fuka was true to herself in the castle.

From the evidences presented above, the researcher finds that Fuka's character has binary opposition in both the actual and fantasy worlds. To make things easier to understand, the researcher provides data in the form of a table below.

Table 3. Binary opposition of Fuka's character in the real and fantasy world

Real World	Fantasy World
Rejected	Accepted
Isolation	Interaction
Loneliness	Togetherness

Fuka's character exhibits a binary opposition between her experiences in the real world and the fantasy world. In the real world, Fuka feels left (rejected) behind at school because she rarely going to school. It makes Fuka isolates herself from interacting with her friends and feel alone because she often skips school to play piano. On the other side, in the fantasy world, Fuka feels accepted by her friends. Her friends treat her nicely. Furthermore, she also shows that she is able to creat interaction with another friends such as Aki and Kokoro and feels togetherness in there. This contrast highlight Levi Strauss's (1969) concept of binary opposition, showing that the fantasy world serves as an emotional healing space for Fuka, a place where she can interact and create healthy relationships, something she finds difficult to do in the real world.

4. Masamune Aasu

Masamune is a second-grade student at Yukishina No. 5 Junior High School. Masamune is portrayed as a character who gets rejection from his friend because of the lies he tells his friends. Masamune's friends have given him the nickname "Lying Masa" as a result of his behavior toward them.

Masa is a liar. Always bragging about my friend this and my friend that. 'I – hate that.' The boy looked as if he was about to cry, 'Maybe you thought that lie was no big deal, but to me it felt like you'd totally betrayed me. Especially because I always admired you, and envied you. (p.277)

The line above expresses his friends' intense anger for Masamune. His friends also underline that Masamune's lies are a serious issue, as he constantly admires Masamune. It demonstrates how Masamune's actions have a significant emotional influence on his friends.

Masamune feels hatred directed at him by his friends, but he keeps his emotions to himself and does not express them openly. His reaction to the accusations appears in the form of his internal thoughts:

That's not true! But it was true. He knew better than anyone that he had lied. So he had no way of defending himself. What he wanted to say was, 'No, I never meant to hurt anyone,' but he wasn't even sure of that. (p.277)

The text above demonstrates that he is hurt and regrets his acts but is unable to change other people's perceptions of him. Masamune has the desire to defend himself, yet the defense only occurs in his mind. He never says the sentence verbally. This demonstrates Masamune's tendency to keep his emotions hidden rather than

communicate them to others. He is unable to express his emotions honestly and isolate himself.

Masamune felt lonely on the day his friends were supposed to attend school with him, but they were not there.

'They're not gonna bail on me. I know it.' Masamune was sitting on a hard chair in the nurse's office. Someone was rubbing his back. His shoulders were heaving, as if he'd just been crying his eyes out; he had bawled so much that he was having trouble breathing. *'They're gonna come. I know it.'* He was talking to himself. The hand kept rubbing his back. *'Something must have prevented your friends from coming.'* (p.278)

The quote above demonstrates that Masamune felt lonely on the day he wanted his friends to come to school with him. He was sure his pals would come, but they did not. Masamune tried to convince himself, even though he was quite disappointed that his friends did not show up when they said they would. He still had to deal with the actual world on his own, and it hurt him.

In contrast to the real world, Masamune begins to experience acceptance from his friends at the castle. In the real world, Masamune was rejected when his friends discovered his lies, but in the fantasy world, he feels accepted. Upon revealing that he is known as "Lying Masa" in the real world and admitting to his friends in the castle that he has always been proud of the story he has faked, he receives a different response.

Masamune raised his head. But his eyes below his short fringe were still looking down. 'Lying Masa ... is what they called me.' *'What?'* *'Lying Masa. Masamune the Liar.'* *'I told you all that the guy who made this game was a friend of mine. Well, that's not true. I'm sorry.'* Masamune looked at the video games lying scattered on the floor. Kokoro

had no idea which one he was looking at. Yet somehow she understood why he had felt the need to reveal this to them. 'I get it,' Aki said. She usually had a sarcastic comeback for him, but now she seemed to be speaking for the others. 'Sorry,' Masamune said again. (p.242)

The quote above shows the responses of his friends in the fantasy world are different from those he received in the actual world when he discovered what he had done. They are neither furious nor judgmental. In contrast, Aki, who responds to represent the children at the castle, exhibits a relaxed reaction. Her response shows that people are not judging Masamune for what he did, but rather they are accepting and understanding him.

Masamune interacts more openly with his friends at the castle, such as when he expresses a desire for them to accompany him back to Yukishina No. 5 Junior High.

'Could you come to school? Just for one day. One day would be enough.' A chorus of gasps. Masamune gripped his elbow harder. 'My parents told me to think about going to a different school starting in the third semester.' 'So I told my father I didn't want to switch to a private school yet. I said instead I'd try going back to Yukishina No. 5 Junior High.' Masamune had started speaking more quickly, as if trying to justify himself. 'I'd go on the first day only. That would be enough. I'll tell them I gave it a try, but couldn't take it, and that'll delay them sending me to a new school until April, when the new school year starts.' 'So it wasn't advice you wanted, but our help,' Subaru said. 'OK. I'll go,' Subaru said. 'I'll be waiting in the classroom on the appointed day.' Masamune's eyes widened hopefully. 'Me too.' Kokoro burst out. (p.191)

In the quote above, Masamune describes his parents' plans to transfer him to a different school, but he is not yet ready. As a result, he requests the help of his friends to attend school together. It demonstrates Masamune's ability to connect openly with his friends in the fantasy world. Furthermore, Masamune's friends' replies, such as Subaru and Kokoro's offer to accompany him to school, demonstrate that he has support and that he is not facing his problem alone.

From the evidences presented above, the researcher finds that Masamune character has binary opposition in both the actual and fantasy worlds. To make things easier to understand, the researcher provides data in the form of a table below.

Table 4. Binary opposition of Masamune's character in the real and fantasy worlds

Real World	Fantasy World
Rejected	Accepted
Isolation	Interaction
Loneliness	Togetherness

It can be concluded Masamune's character differs between the real world and the fantasy world. In the real world, his friends reject Masamune because of his tendency to lie. The rejection makes him isolate himself and feels alone. In contrast, in the fantasy world, Masamune is accepted by others. He can create openly interaction and feels togetherness with them. Following Levi Strauss's (1969) theory of binary opposition, this contrast highlight how meaning is created through opposing ideas. This contrast demonstrates that the fantasy world is a healing place for him to develop emotionally and build interactions with others.

5. Nagahisa Subaru

Subaru is a third-grade student at Yukishina No. 5 Junior High School. Subaru's reason for taking a break from school differs from his other friends. Subaru

is not face bullying or bad incidents like his friends. He does not have a compelling cause difficulty adapting after moving to his grandmother's house.

My parents aren't around. That's why my brother and I went to our grandparents. It's not that I was pushed out, or that anything serious happened, so unlike all of you I just dropped out because I'm lazy, and it makes me feel guilty. At first I didn't really want to go to school. I didn't know anyone there. If you wanted to fit in, April was the month to go, when the school year started. (p. 160)

From the quote above, Subaru does not attend school because he does not have any acquaintances in his new school. Instead of attempting to adapt, he decides not to attend school at all. The reason is that if he wanted to start adapting, he should have done in April, when the new school year began. However, Subaru missed that opportunity, so it would be even more difficult to return. He feels rejected before he even starts it that is why he isolate himself.

In the real world, Subaru's immediate family is unconcerned about his decision to stop attending school. Subaru believes that no one, not even his grandfather and parents, truly cares for him.

'These days you've got to graduate from high school or you won't amount to anything. You gotta go to school. It's important,' his grandfather insisted. He might say that, but his grandfather never actually communicated with his teachers about his situation. He confined himself to directing snide comments at Subaru. Their parents had labelled both brothers as kids with issues, and had washed their hands of them. All they did was get angry, tell them they had their own lives to lead and that the brothers, too, should get a grip and take responsibility for their own lives. All of which led Subaru to one conclusion: no one really cared all that much what happened to him. (p.287)

In the quote above, Subaru's grandfather forced him to go to school without understanding his true feelings, which led Subaru to decide against attending school.

Meanwhile, his parents behave similarly. They simply label Subaru and his brother as

'kids with issues' and abdicate their parental responsibilities. They never hear the reasons for Subaru's decision, instead criticizing him and demanding that he return to school. Subaru feels neglected (rejected) and feels entirely alone in dealing with his struggles because his family does not provide him with any support or understanding.

In contrast, in the castle Subaru feels accepted by his friends despite his unexpected look change, which includes dyeing his hair and piercing his ears.

Dyeing your hair and getting a piercing clearly wasn't something people did in Masamune's world. But he seemed determined to pretend to be calm about it. Kokoro felt the same, and she was sure the others did too. 'Really now,' a voice said. There was an awkwardness in the air; Aki was the only one who confronted Subaru over what he'd done. 'But won't the teachers tell you off? They always get so stressed at the end of the semester, yelling at us not to come back from summer holiday with our hair dyed. Aren't you afraid they'll come down on you like a ton of bricks?' 'Sure, but I won't let it bother me.' 'Lucky you. You know, maybe I should try that. With my hair.' 'Wicked. You'd look so great, Aki-chan.' (p.115)

In the quote above, Subaru's drastic change in appearance, such as dyeing his hair and getting his ears pierced, surprised Kokoro and the others. Initially, this caused some awkwardness among his castle friends. However, Aki tried to lighten the mood by asking about the potential impact of such changes if they were made for school purposes. Aki casually mentioned that she wanted to do something similar to what Subaru did, such as dyeing her hair. It suggests that Aki embraces the change and remains unaffected by Subaru's appearance. Aki's attitude also serves as an indirect example for her friends, encouraging them to embrace Subaru's new appearance. Although it caused some awkwardness in the castle, no one avoided him or judged his

appearance as 'kids with issues'. Aki's response showed that even though Subaru changed his appearance, he would still be accepted by his other friends in the castle. In contrast to his experiences in the real world, Subaru felt accepted and cared for by his friends in the castle.

While Subaru struggles to adapt and isolate himself in the real world, fantasy world allows him to open up and build meaningful connections with others. Subaru is able to build social relationships quickly, as seen from his interactions with Masamune and Kokoro.

Gazing into the room, the two boys seemed to sense her presence. She couldn't decide what to say to them, and no words came out. It was Subaru who came to her rescue. Subaru put down his own game console, and turn to Kokoro 'So you came, eh? Welcome!' Then he said, 'It doesn't feel right to say that. This isn't actually my house, and all of us have the same right to it.' 'He-hello,' she said, a little unsteadily. 'Hey, Subaru!' Masamune called. The way he called Subaru using just his first name – no san or kun attached – made her tense up. It was just as she suspected – in her absence they'd become friendly enough to address each other so casually. (p.48)

From the quote above, Subaru shows friendliness by being the first to greet Kokoro when he notices her arrival at the castle. He even invites Kokoro to join them. The way Subaru and Masamune play console games together demonstrates their close interaction. They both seem to be close and do not hesitate to address one another by first names. Masamune calls Subaru only by his first name, without any honorifics such as "-san" or "-kun," which are sometimes used as a form of politeness, particularly with older people (Oshima, 2023). Subaru is a third-year junior high student, while Masamune is a second-year junior high student, indicating that Subaru is older than Masamune. Despite this, Subaru does not complain when Masamune addresses him

only by his first name, indicating that their interaction is close. It exemplifies the contrast of Subaru, who in the real world believes he will struggle to adapt to a new environment, but in the fantasy world he is able to quickly form interactions with his other friends who are new to him.

In the real world, Subaru lives with a family that does not care about him, so he has to face his problems alone. Subaru, on the other hand, feels a sense of belonging in the castle as they work together to solve difficulties, including finding the key wish, which is their major purpose.

There was no other option – they had to find the key. ‘OK,’ Subaru said. ‘We’re now going to start searching for it properly. So let’s do things systematically.’ ‘I think I did a complete search of the dining room,’ Aki said. ‘I looked five or six times in here,’ Masamune said, casting his eye around the Game Room. Subaru nodded, too. ‘I checked in the kitchen and bathrooms. I wondered about them, since there’s no running water. So I checked over the taps and drains, but found nothing. I couldn’t find the entrance to the Wishing Room either. (p.146)

In the quote above, Subaru's interactions with Aki and Masamune demonstrate close cooperation. They share reports about their search efforts to discover the key wish. Unlike in the actual world, Subaru feels a sense of togetherness in the castle as they work together to solve the problem.

From the evidences presented above, the researcher finds that Subaru character has binary opposition in both the actual and fantasy worlds. To make things easier to understand, the researcher provides data in the form of a table below.

Table 5. Binary opposition of Subaru's character in the real and fantasy worlds

Real World	Fantasy World
Rejected	Accepted
Isolation	Interaction
Loneliness	Togetherness

Subaru's character exhibits a binary opposition in both the real and fantasy worlds. In the real world, Subaru is portrayed as someone who isolates himself because he is pessimistic about adapting to a new environment. He also did not receive emotional support from his family, which made him feel like they did not care about his problems and left him feeling alone in dealing with them. In the fantasy world, Subaru appeared to be a person who easily interacts with his other friends there. He gradually discovered a sense of togetherness with others, particularly while pursuing the key wish. According to Levi Strauss (1969) theory of binary opposition, meaning is formed through the contrast between two opposing ideas. This contrast demonstrates that the castle in the fantasy world serves as a place of self-healing and self-discovery.

6. Ureshino Haruka

Ureshino is a first grade student at Yukishina No. 5 Junior High School. He stops to attend school since his friendships turned unhealthy because he was exploited by his friends.

It was guys I made friends with in junior high. We got on fine – they'd come to my house to play video games, we'd go to juku together. I thought we were friends, but then things got a little weird. When they'd come to my house, I'd give them drinks and ice cream and stuff, and I felt sorry for them since they didn't get any spending money from their parents, so when we went out, I paid for their food. And after a while they just starting expecting it, for me to always pay, but the more I did it the more they respected me, the more they tried to please me. (p.130)

The quote above reveals that Ureshino's voluntary actions, such as treating them to food, to be taken advantage of by his friends. Ureshino's way of showing concern transformed into expectations that his friends placed on him. The more he did these actions, the more his friends appreciated him. It implicitly tells that Ureshino felt that he could be accepted by his friends by pleasing them and if he and if he did the opposite he would be ignored by them. This demonstrates that Ureshino was exploited as a tool for his friends' personal benefit. His friends exploited him to pay for their meals. Despite giving the impression of acceptance, his friends only valued Ureshino for his material gifts. It indicates that Ureshino was not really accepted as a friend but rather used.

Ureshino's friends only accepted him if he met their material needs, which made their relationship more like a transaction. As a result, if Ureshino was no longer satisfied their material standards, he was thrown away.

One of the guys said 'Hey, if you're not going to treat us any more when we go out, then I don't want to hang around with you.' The other guys smirked and laughed. (p.132)

In the quotation above, one of Ureshino's friend states that they will only remain friends with him if he continues to treat them. Ureshino's friends threaten to end their friendship with him if Ureshino stops giving them things. This mocking reveals that

his friends do not actually appreciate him as a friend but rather use him. Consequently, Ureshino decided to stop going to school because of what he had experienced, as shown in the following quote:

“...and it was too stressful to go to school.” (p.130)

It confirms that Ureshino was no longer able to attend school. In other words, Ureshino chose to isolate himself from the source of his stress.

Unlike in the real world, Ureshino feels more accepted in the castle. One example is when Kokoro offers him some food.

Kokoro took out the apple she'd brought and placed it on the table. 'I brought an apple. Anyone want some?' Ureshino's face lit up. 'Can I?' Masamune and Subaru looked uncertainly at the apple. 'Aren't you gonna take it off?' It took her a beat to understand they meant the apple peel. 'Oh – sure.' 'Hm,' Masamune said, but didn't elaborate. 'You're amazing, Kokoro-chan,' Ureshino said, his eyes lingering on her hands. 'You're really great at peeling apples. You're like my mum.' Masamune made no comment, but did munch happily on a couple of slices of apple while he continued his video game. (p.65)

The quote above portrays a scene at the castle, where Ureshino and his friends gather in the game room. When Kokoro offers him an apple, Ureshino enthusiastically accepts it. This behavior contrasts with his real-life experience, where he frequently treats his friend food in order to be accepted. At the castle, he readily accepts the offer. He and his friends, Masamune and Subaru, enjoy the apples Kokoro peels while playing the game. This simple moment not only demonstrates togetherness but also highlights that in the fantasy world, Ureshino does not have to accomplish anything to be accepted by his castle friends.

Furthermore, even though Ureshino has been experienced something unpleasant in real world before, he still has the courage to go to school to keep his commitment to Masamune and other friends. Nevertheless, the reality Ureshino encountered did not align with his hopes that he did not find his friends coming.

He was hanging around waiting for Masamune and the others. Feeling hunger pangs, he took the rice balls his mother had made out of their aluminium foil wrapping, and started shoving them into his mouth. 'Guys, it's him.' 'You're right – why has he come? So weird.' 'He's stuffing something into his mouth. Ugh. Look!' Malicious voices. Kids at a school club, even though it was a Sunday, were staring like he was some bizarre creature. Ureshino knew very well they were saying nasty things about him. 'Masamune and the others sure are taking their sweet time,' he murmured, glancing through the school gate. Even if he had been stood up, he wanted to tell the others all about it in the castle tomorrow. (p.281)

In the quote above, Ureshino finds the strength to attend school on a holiday. He waits for Masamune and the other friends who had agreed to go to school to arrive. Unfortunately, the school club members pay more attention to him and make fun of him, although he has done nothing wrong. He hoped his friends would arrive to accompany him, but they never did. In the end, he had to handle the situation on his own, without the help he had hoped for. However, it also shows that Ureshino eventhough he was left alone, this experience did not close him off from interaction with his friends in the castle. On the contrary, Ureshino remained open to interaction, as shown by his willingness to go to the castle to meet others despite what had happened.

However, in the fantasy world, Ureshino is treated differently than he is in real world. A moment that illustrates togetherness in the castle is when Ureshino arrives injured.

The battle-scarred Ureshino turned up one day without a word in the Game Room. He didn't seem to have broken anything, and he wasn't dragging a leg, or carrying his arm in a sling. He had slunk silently into the room. That day everyone was present. All eyes were fixed on Ureshino; no one uttered a word. He avoided their gaze, and was about to drop down into an empty sofa. Just then, someone spoke up. 'Ureshino.' It was Masamune. He walked over to Ureshino and gave him a light push on the shoulder. 'Do you want to play?' he asked. Ureshino bit his lip, as if holding back something. There was a momentary hush in the room as they all watched. 'Yeah,' Ureshino said. 'I'd like to.' And with this, their short exchange was over. He settled down with them in front of the screen. No one asked him about his wounds that day. (p.129)

In the quote above, Ureshino arrives at the castle looking unwell. However, none of his friends immediately demand an explanation or ask questions about what happened to him. Masamune even attempts to brighten the mood by encouraging him to play a game. This action shows that Ureshino's friends are supporting him after the incident that occurred in Ureshino's real world. Ureshino's controlled emotional response demonstrates how touched he is by Masamune's actions. He not only feels that he is not alone throughout his difficult day but he also feels accepted at the castle by his friends. This moment shows that Ureshino finds acceptance and support in the fantasy world during his challenging times.

From the evidences presented above, the researcher finds that Ureshino character has binary opposition in both the actual and fantasy worlds. To make things easier to understand, the researcher provides data in the form of a table below.

Table 6. Binary opposition of Ureshino's character in real and fantasy world

Fantasy World	Fantasy World
Rejected	Accepted
Isolation	Interaction
Loneliness	Togetherness

It can be concluded that Ureshino's character demonstrates a binary opposition between the real world and the fantasy world. In the real world, he experiences rejected with his friends because he is exploited by them, which causes him to stop attending school. In the real world, he feels alone in difficult situations. However, in the fantasy world, Ureshino is accepted as he is by his friends in the castle. Furthermore, he is not abandoned after having a terrible experience in the real world. This contrast reflects Levi Strauss's (1969) theory binary opposition, which argued that meaning is constructed through relationship between two opposing ideas. This difference emphasizes that the fantasy world acts as a healing space for Ureshino to find a sense of acceptance, interaction, and togetherness.

7. Mizumori Rion

Rion is the only one in the castle in the mirror who does not attend school in Japan. He attends soccer school in Hawaii. If he did not go to Hawaii, Rion would prefer to attend Yukishina No. 5 Junior High School. Rion does not attend school in Japan like his other friends due to his parents' encouragement after his sister's death.

Rion's decision was not entirely his own, but his mother provides some subtle encouragement after his sister death.

He was more sporty than his peers. But even that made his mother wonder why. 'Why is the younger brother so much stronger than his older sister?' 'If only a little bit of that good health could have rubbed off on Mio.' He couldn't think what to say. 'Uh,' he managed. 'Uh, you say,' his mother mocked, and lowered her eyes. (p.303)

From the quotation above, Rion's mother compares Rion to his sister since her death. Despite Rion's athletic abilities, his mother believes it is not something to be proud of. She even doubts and regrets the different conditions between Rion and his sister. As a result, Rion feels his presence is not enough to fill the void left by his sister.

Even if I'm healthy, and living with them ... That wouldn't comfort his parents. Rion wasn't sure when he'd realized this, but he had become certain of it. (p.304)

In the quote above, Rion comes to understand the meaning of his existence for his parents. This understanding does not emerge suddenly but gradually forms into a painful conviction that his presence is neither truly valued nor desired. Rion feels as if he lives in the shadow of his older sister. Even though after her passing, she is still remembered and missed by his parents more than he is. Rion knows that life with his parents will never be the same without his sister, even though he is still healthy and lives with them. This feeling makes him feel his presence is nothing by his parents.

Moreover, when his mother shows him a pamphlet about a soccer school in Hawaii, he feels his mother was trying to keep Rion away from her.

'Have a look at this,' she said. The brochure was for a school in Hawaii. When he saw it was a boarding school, Rion's heart froze. He despised the very thought of it. 'I thought

it would be a huge opportunity for you,' his mother said. She stared at him solemnly, and he suddenly realized. His mother wanted him far away. (p.305)

The text above reveals that Rion is deeply disappointed when his mother gives him a brochure for a soccer boarding school in Hawaii. According to Rion, his mother's "great opportunity" was a subtle attempt to remove him from his home. Rion's mother seemed not to want to see him again at home since it reminded her of his sister Mio, who had died. His mother intended to send him to Hawaii, far from home, to ease the pain of losing his sister.

Rion eventually accepted his mother's suggestion to attend soccer school in Hawaii. He chose to accept it in order to get away from his parents. He told his mother he wanted to go there, even if it wasn't his actual ambition.

'I'm sure it's a good school, but what did Rion say about it?' 'He said he'd like to go.' He overheard his parents talking one evening. His father had just got home from work. 'Are you sure?' he asked. 'Are you sure that's what he said?' 'He did. He said he'd like to go.' Listening to his father, Rion thought, No, Dad, you're wrong. Even I can see that if I stay here a moment longer, it'll only cause you both more pain. And I feel the same way – I want to get away from you. (p.305)

The quote above illustrates that Rion's departure to Hawaii was not driven by his true ambitions, but rather motivated by his mother's suggestion and a desire to escape from his parents. He felt that if he stayed, he would only cause more harm to both them and himself. Rion's departure to Hawaii represented a form of isolation, as he believed there was no longer any place for him in his parents' lives following his sister's death.

Furthermore, at Christmas celebration portrayed Rion loneliness in real world. Although his mother came all the way to Hawaii and made him a cake, the visit was very short.

His mother had come to visit him at Christmas, and baked him a cake then she'd gone home. She hadn't said a word about taking him back with her for the New Year holiday. Rion's mother had baked the cake, but hadn't stayed to actually eat it with her son. Maybe she thought he'd share it with his friends. But it was Christmas, and the other kids in the dorm would have gone back home to their families. (p.187)

In the quote above, Rion's mother did not stay with Rion to celebrate Christmas. Although his mother shows effort by making the cake, she does not accompany Rion to enjoy the moment together. She seemingly believes that Rion could share it with his friends in the dorm. But in reality, on Christmas Day, most of the other children go home and celebrates with their families. This situation shows that Rion feels lonely on Christmast.

In contrast to his life in the real world, Rion feels acceptance from his friends in the fantasy world. When they know he is not come from Japan and attended soccer school in Hawaii, Fuka shows interest in Rion's background.

The room was suddenly quiet, until Fuka finally broke the silence. 'Hey,' she said to Rion, looking at his watch. 'You're already living abroad alone, at your age? Does that mean you were scouted by your school, or by a coach or something?' 'Nah. The coach for my team in Japan wrote a recommendation letter, but that's about it. My parents picked the school.' 'What's the time difference with Hawaii?' 'Nineteen hours.' A tired smile finally appeared on Rion's face. The clock on the wall showed four. 'So it's nine now. Dinner's over and soon it'll be lights out.' 'Is that yesterday? Or today?' 'Yesterday. Hawaii's nearly one whole day behind.' With that, the room fell silent again. (p.121)

In the quote above, Fuka asks questions that go beyond casual conversation, expressing curiosity about Rion's journey to that point. This implies that Rion's experiences and information are important to know. The quote above shows the interaction in the castle made Rion feel welcomed. He was not judged, despite coming from a different background than his friends. He received no negative response; instead, his friends were interested in how Rion was able to attend school in Hawaii. His conversation with Fuka revealed a profound interest and concern for Rion's life.

In contrast to his distancing behavior from those closest to him, specifically his parent in the real world, Rion expressed a desire to return to his fantasy world.

He stared at the dead mirror, hoping it would start to shine. He gave it a stroke 'Come on, shine, mirror, shine.' When it finally did begin to glisten with its rainbow colours, he broke into a wide smile. He put on his watch and ever so slowly thrust his hand inside. (p.306)

In the quotation above, Rion's impatience in waiting for the mirror in his room to light up indicates his eagerness to interact with his friends in the castle. Instead of feeling excluded, he felt a sense of belonging while waiting for the mirror in his room to light up, eager to reconnect with his friends soon.

The presence of his friends at the castle gives Rion a sense of togetherness that Rion had not experienced in real world after moving in Hawaii.

At the castle Christmas party, Rion arrived with a cake. The group gave a 'Wow!' when they saw it. 'It looks so delicious!' Kokoro chimed in. It was a chiffon cake, with a hole in the middle. The icing was uneven. It didn't look as though it had been bought in a shop. The fruit decorations on the top were a little irregular too, but that gave the cake its charm. 'Is it homemade?' Masamune asked. All eyes were on Rion. 'It's my mum's,'

he said. 'She bakes one every year. She came over for Christmas, stayed in my dorm and gave it to me, so I brought it.' He'd brought a cake knife to cut it into slices. (p.186)

In the quote above, Rion arrives at the castle's Christmas party with a cake his mother made on Christmas Eve. His mother comes and bakes him a Christmas cake, but she does not stay to share the joy of Christmas with Rion. As a result, Rion decides to go to the castle and take the cake to share with his friends. Rion feels a warmth of togetherness in the castle that he does not experience in the real world. He celebrates Christmas not only by eating cake, but also by the comfort it provides.

From the evidences presented above, the researcher finds that Rion character has binary opposition in both the actual and fantasy worlds. To make things easier to understand, the researcher provides data in the form of a table below.

Table 7. Binary opposition of Rion's character in real and fantasy world

Real World	Fantasy World
Rejected	Accepted
Isolation	Interaction
Loneliness	Togetherness

It can be concluded that Rion's character demonstrates a binary opposition between the real world and the fantasy realm. In the real world, Rion experiences rejection from his parents, especially after his sister's death. Therefore, when his mother told Rion to continue his soccer education in Hawaii, Rion agreed because he wanted to move away from his parents. Therefore, he feels lonely because his family cannot be there to

accompany him on special days such as Christmas. However, in the fantasy world, Rion gets attention from his friends. He also feels a togetherness that he has not felt since moving to Hawaii. This contrast aligns with Levi Strauss's (1969) binary opposition, where meaning is shaped by the contrast between two opposing conditions. The fantasy world serves as a healing space, offering comfort from the bitter experiences he has faced in the real world.

From the data analyse above, the seven characters in Mizuki Tsujimura's novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror* namely Kokoro, Aki, Fuka, Masamune, Subaru, Ureshino, and Rion, demonstrate a binary opposition between the real and fantasy worlds. In the real world, they encounter painful experiences such as rejection, isolation, and lonely. In contrast, in the fantasy world within the castle in the mirror, they discover a safe place full of acceptance, interaction, and togetherness. The novel's binary opposition between the real world and the fantasy world emphasizes that the real world is portrayed as a painful space for the characters, while the fantasy world offers a healing space.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After analyzing novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror* using literary criticism through structuralism and the theory of binary opposition, the researcher comes to the last chapter that contains of a conclusion and suggestion. This chapter contains of a conclusion that reckons with the analysis, which has been done in the previous chapter. Moreover, the researcher also gives suggestion related to this study for the readers, especially for the next researchers who use similar subject or theory as used in this research.

A. Conclusion

This research concludes that the seven characters Kokoro, Aki, Fuka, Masamune, Subaru, Ureshino, and Rion depict a strong binary opposition between the real world and the fantasy world. In the real world, Kokoro is a victim of bullying, which causes her to stop attending school. Unlike Aki, she is considered a bully by her volleyball teammates because of her negative behavior, which makes her stop going to school. Fuka has difficulty interacting in with her friends at school due to her tendency to skip school to play the piano. Subaru also decides not to go to school after moving to his grandmother's house because he feels pessimistic about his ability to adapt to the new environment. Masamune decides not to attend school in the face of being shunned for lying to his friends. Ureshino experiences bullying in the form of exploitation, as

his friends make him buy food for them. Meanwhile, Rion feels neglected by her mother for sending her abroad after her older sister died.

The entire painful experience that the characters have in the real world sharply contrasts with the fantasy world. The fantasy world, through the castle in the mirror, serves as a healing space for the characters, offering them the acceptance, interaction, and togetherness that they lack in their real world. The fantasy world serves as an emotional healing space, showing a contrast with the reality they face in the real world. This binary opposition emphasizes that the real world is depicted as a painful space, while the fantasy world is presented as a space of healing for the characters.

B. Suggestion

This research focuses on the binary opposition between the real and fantasy worlds through the characterization of characters in the novel *Lonely Castle in the Mirror* by Mizuki Tsujimura. However, there are many other aspects of the novel that remain open to research using other theories or approaches, including psychoanalysis, gender studies, semiotics, and so on. Therefore, the researcher recommends that future research focus on other elements, such as plot, setting, and point of view. Further researchers are required to read carefully and repeatedly when analyzing literary works to comprehend the theory, approach, and object of study, thus producing more accurate and comprehensive research.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



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