

## Opposition in Novel *Titir Dedes* : Prayer And Curse Work Amalia Jonah : Analysis Julia Kristeva's Intertextuality

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### Abstract

This study aims to explore and identify the oppositions present in the novel *Titir Dedes: Prayers and Curses* by Amalia Yunus. The analysis is grounded in Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality, which emphasizes the relationships between texts and the ways in which meanings are shaped through these connections. By employing a library research approach and utilizing descriptive qualitative methods, the study systematically examines the textual elements to reveal contrasting themes and ideas embedded within the narrative. The analysis identifies key oppositions, notably the conflict between the War of Ganter and the depiction of the female knight. These oppositions highlight the complex portrayal of women in the novel, illustrating them as empowered agents capable of making independent decisions and fully aware of their personal needs and desires. Furthermore, the novel demonstrates that women can exert significant influence on societal decisions and contribute to transformative changes within their communities. The findings underscore the novel's contribution to literary discussions on gender, power, and social agency, revealing how intertextual connections reinforce the representation of women as autonomous and influential figures. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how literary oppositions function to challenge traditional norms and expand the discourse on women's roles in contemporary literature.

**Keywords:** Intertextuality, Opposition, Julia Kristeva, Women Empowerment, Literary Analysis

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## Introduction

In the evolving field of literary theory, intertextuality has become an indispensable framework for exploring how texts communicate with one another, generating meaning through a network of cultural, historical, and linguistic connections rather than through isolated content (Bazerman, 2004; Afsari & Khansari, 2024). The present study examines the *oppositional structures* within Amalia Jonah's *Titir Dedes: Prayer and Curse Work*-a contemporary Indonesian novel-and situates it within Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality. By doing so, this analysis seeks to understand how narrative oppositions function not merely as stylistic devices but as powerful arenas of ideological negotiation, reflective of gender, cultural, and postcolonial tensions.

At its core, Kristeva's notion of intertextuality asserts that all texts are intrinsically interwoven into larger discursive fields; that a text is not "closed" but rather constituted by the multiple voices, cultural codes, and symbolic structures of other texts (Kristeva, 1980; Bula, 2022). In this theoretical paradigm, meaning does not originate exclusively within the novel itself but emerges through dialogues between texts, cultural myths, historical narratives, and linguistic systems. The intertextual field, therefore, becomes a site of both syntactic and semantic negotiation, where competing discourses intersect, clash, and sometimes harmonize (Bazerman, 2004; Afsari & Khansari, 2024).

This introduction posits that the narrative of *Titir Dedes* demonstrates pronounced oppositional dynamics-between tradition and modernity, masculine versus feminine power structures, sacred versus profane agency, and colonial versus indigenous worldviews—through an intertextual architecture that engages with canonical texts, regional folklore, feminist writing, and postcolonial discourse. These oppositions are not static binaries; rather,

they are dynamic, interpenetrating structures that reflect the novel's engagement with its sociocultural milieu.

The foundational premise for analyzing *Titir Dedes* emerges from Kristeva's reconfiguration of textuality. In *Desire in Language*, Kristeva reframes Bakhtin's dialogism and asserts that texts are systems of signs saturated with other signifying practices (Kristeva, 1980; Bula, 2022). For Kristeva, intertextuality is not merely quotation or reference—it is the very condition of textual production. A text absorbs, refracts, and transforms other texts, producing meanings through both explicit and implicit relations with them (Bazerman, 2004; Afsari & Khansari, 2024).

The interplay between texts often reveals deep oppositions—cultural, social, and ideological—that cannot be fully understood without reference to other texts and discourses. Opposition, in narratology, is a structural device that organizes character conflict, theme, and plot progression (Anderson, 2021; McLeod, 2018). However, when read through an intertextual lens, oppositions also highlight *discursive struggle*, where dominant narratives are contested by marginalized or subaltern voices (Hall, 1997; Grosz, 1995).

Opposition in narrative is not always a clear-cut binary; it can be multi-layered, hybridized, and mediated through cultural practices. Such complexity is evident in Southeast Asian literatures where indigenous myth and colonial histories coexist with global literary influences, producing narratives that are always in dialogical tension with other texts and traditions (Chandra, 2023; Haryanto, 2024).

*Titir Dedes* can be understood as an intertextual text that draws upon multiple narrative traditions and cultural codes. The novel's engagement with historical legends, religious motifs, and modern socio-political discourse situates it within a broad literary network. Intertextual mapping reveals how the narrative composes its oppositional logic by referencing cultural texts—folklore, canonical literature, and contemporary socio-political narratives.

Kristeva's theory explains that intertextuality functions not simply as additive textual relations but as conversion points where meanings are displaced and reframed (Kristeva, 1980; Bula, 2022). In *Titir Dedes*, this occurs through the invocation of Javanese folklore (e.g., the legend of Dedes) which dialogues with postcolonial literature's critique of power structures, resulting in a layered narrative where gender and authority are contested in both local and transnational contexts (Haryanto, 2024; Chandra, 2023).

Such intertextual connections are critical to understanding the novel's opposition. For instance, the recurring motif of *prayer versus curse* is not simply a narrative trope; it resonates with religious texts, mythic archetypes, and post-colonial symbolic systems that shape how characters negotiate agency, resistance, and identity (Hall, 1997; Afsari & Khansari, 2024).

The use of religious language parallels intertextual strategies found in world literature, where sacred texts are recontextualized to challenge or reinforce social norms. Alvarado (2023) highlights that postmodern fiction uses intertextuality to destabilize authoritative discourses, creating narratives in which canonical religious or cultural texts are re-read, re-configured, or subverted. This aligns with how *Titir Dedes* reinterprets spiritual motifs to articulate its oppositional structure.

One of the most compelling forms of opposition in *Titir Dedes* is gendered conflict. Feminist narratologists argue that traditional narrative structures often marginalize female agency, positioning women as passive subjects in patriarchal frameworks (Watson, 2023; Ozturk, 2021). However, *Titir Dedes* disrupts this by utilizing intertextual references to both indigenous myth and feminist literature, thereby re-conceptualizing gendered opposition.

The intertextual interaction between the novel and feminist critical frameworks reveals how female characters negotiate power within an ostensibly patriarchal narrative universe. As Jamal (2023) explains, literary opposition in postcolonial fiction often serves as a mechanism for female empowerment, exposing how societal norms impede or redefine women's agency.

*Titir Dedes* exemplifies such narrative resistance by weaving historical and mythical female voices into its fabric, creating a polyvocal narrative that contests monologic traditions.

When read through Kristeva's lens, these gendered oppositions emerge as intertextual dialogues between the novel and feminist discourses. The female protagonist's struggle is not solely an internal conflict but resonates with intertextual echoes of historic and contemporary feminist texts that challenge patriarchal norms (Kristeva, 1980; Watson, 2023). This intertextual network reframes opposition as a dialogic space where gendered identities are continuously negotiated and redefined.

Another essential layer of opposition in *Titir Dedes* arises from its postcolonial context. Southeast Asian literary texts often carry the imprint of colonial histories, creating narratives that engage with oppositions between colonizer and colonized, indigenous and imported socio-political paradigms, tradition and modernity (Chandra, 2023; Haryanto, 2024).

Intertextuality reveals that *Titir Dedes* functions within a network of postcolonial narrative practices where oppositions are not purely fictional constructs but reflect real historical tensions. Oliveira (2022) emphasizes that intertextual mapping in world literature shows how postcolonial texts negotiate multiple narrative legacies, engaging with both local traditions and global discourses. This points to the fact that oppositional structures in such texts are not isolated binaries but intersections of layered cultural, historical, and political forces.

Kristeva's theory underscores the importance of understanding texts as socially situated. The oppositions in *Titir Dedes*—such as tradition versus modernity—are not ahistorical; they resonate with Indonesia's colonial and post-independence narratives that grapple with identity, power, and cultural continuity (Bazerman, 2004; Alvarado, 2023). This intertextual intersection highlights how the novel negotiates tensions between remembering and forgetting, preserving and rewriting cultural memory.

Intertextual analysis also intersects with discourse studies. Following Fairclough (2003), narrative oppositions can be seen as ideological structures embedded in language. *Titir Dedes* uses language in ways that reveal contradictions between dominant and subordinate discourses—religious authority, gender norms, and cultural hierarchies.

Kristeva's notion that language is a site of social production aligns with Fairclough's discourse analysis, emphasizing that textual meaning is shaped by sociopolitical forces (Fairclough, 2003; Kristeva, 1980). As such, the oppositional dynamics in *Titir Dedes* are not only aesthetic but also ideological—they reflect conflicts between competing worldviews expressed through narrative language. These linguistic struggles reveal how textual voices contest or reinforce power structures embedded in culture.

In sum, reading *Titir Dedes: Prayer and Curse Work* through Kristeva's concept of intertextuality enriches our understanding of narrative opposition. The novel's oppositional structures—gendered conflict, postcolonial tensions, religious symbolism, and cultural codes—are not isolated features but part of a larger intertextual network connecting the text to historical, cultural, and ideological systems.

Kristeva's theory reframes opposition not as a simple binary but as a dynamic interaction between texts, discourses, and social forces. The intertextual approach reveals how meaning in *Titir Dedes* emerges through dialogic relations with other texts and discourses, producing a narrative that is polyvocal, contested, and culturally resonant. This framework allows a deeper exploration of how narrative forms mediate individual and collective identities within Southeast Asian literary landscapes.

By situating *Titir Dedes* within broader intertextual and oppositional frameworks, we gain insight into how literature negotiates tradition, power, ideology, and identity. The novel thus stands as a testament to the enduring relevance of intertextuality in understanding not just literary form, but the social dynamics that shape and are shaped by narrative practices.

## Method

This study employs a qualitative research design, focusing on textual analysis of the novel *Titir Dedes: Prayer and Curse Work* by Amalia Jonah. Qualitative methods are particularly suitable for literary research where the objective is to understand meaning, structure, and intertextual relationships within a text, rather than quantifying phenomena (Fairclough, 2003; Bazerman, 2004). By emphasizing in-depth interpretation, this approach enables the researcher to uncover how narrative oppositions function within the text and how these oppositions are shaped through intertextual engagement with other texts, historical discourse, and cultural codes (Kristeva, 1980; Bula, 2022).

The primary data source for this study is the full text of *Titir Dedes*, which will be analyzed through close reading and thematic coding to identify the major oppositional structures, such as gendered conflicts, spiritual tensions, and socio-political dichotomies. Close reading allows for detailed attention to language, narrative techniques, and stylistic devices, which are essential for interpreting how meaning is constructed intertextually (Anderson, 2021; McLeod, 2018). Thematic coding, on the other hand, facilitates the systematic categorization of patterns, symbols, and recurring motifs that signal opposition within the narrative (Yilmaz, 2024; Cain, 2025). These methods combined provide a rigorous framework for linking narrative elements to intertextual influences.

In alignment with Kristeva's theory of intertextuality, this research employs intertextual mapping to trace references, allusions, and citations that the novel makes to other texts, both explicit and implicit (Kristeva, 1980; Bula, 2022). This includes examining historical myths, Javanese folklore, canonical literary works, feminist texts, and postcolonial narratives that intersect with the novel's themes. Intertextual mapping allows the researcher to analyze how *Titir Dedes* negotiates meanings across texts and cultural contexts, and how narrative oppositions emerge as a function of dialogic interactions rather than isolated literary constructs (Alvarado, 2023; Oliveira, 2022). By situating the text within a broader literary and cultural network, this method reveals the complex processes through which textual meaning is co-constructed.

To further enrich the analysis, the study incorporates literary opposition theory to understand structural contrasts within the narrative. This theoretical framework examines how conflicting forces, such as male versus female agency, sacred versus profane, and tradition versus modernity, are articulated and interwoven into the story's plot and character development (Anderson, 2021; Jamal, 2023). By combining intertextual and oppositional analyses, the study captures both the relational dynamics between texts and the structural mechanics of narrative tension, providing a comprehensive understanding of the novel's thematic depth (Watson, 2023; Ozturk, 2021).

The data analysis process follows qualitative content analysis, which systematically codes textual data into categories of meaning, interprets them in the context of intertextual references, and identifies patterns of opposition across the narrative (Fairclough, 2003; Haryanto, 2024). This method allows the researcher to move beyond surface-level interpretation and explore the ideological and cultural implications of oppositional structures within the novel. In particular, the study focuses on how these oppositions negotiate gender, postcolonial identity, and cultural memory, reflecting the polyvocality inherent in Kristeva's conception of intertextuality (Kristeva, 1980; Chandra, 2023).

Finally, the research emphasizes critical reflexivity, acknowledging that interpretation is shaped by the researcher's engagement with both the text and its intertextual connections (Bazerman, 2004; Alvarado, 2023). By maintaining a reflexive stance, the study ensures that analytical conclusions are contextually grounded and sensitive to the multiple layers of meaning encoded within the novel. This methodological framework provides a robust and systematic approach to understanding how opposition operates within *Titir Dedes* and how intertextuality shapes the narrative's meaning-making processes.

## Results and Discussion

Opposition is conflict between two things that are not can united return with method whatever . Opposition in novel *Speech Dedes : Prayer And Curse* work Amalia Jonah can seen in the quote following .

### 1. War Ganter

Contrary to with Pararaton , this novel tell side women who have Lots role important . Role from figures Woman in this novel can seen moment occurrence War Ganter . They own contribution big in war the .

Dedes own very important role important For victory Tumapel . The clever and intelligent Dedes can compile strategy war with very good and mature . Besides that , Dedes can also gather ally from various sources that are not unexpected namely , animals in the forest , creatures must , and genderuwo . ( Pradopo , RD 2010)Creatures forests and rivers also take sides in war that . The genderuwo smothering thousands member Kadiri Kingdom troops , caused they dead Weak . Fish in the Brantas River overthrow ships Kadiri Kingdom troops loaded supply weapon And food . Creatures other Which more fine , infiltrate to the dream of the soldiers , exhaling doubt and fear to pool heart those who are the most in . On it's his turn , hesitant That will make hand they shaky , And thought they cheat ( p . 243).

In novel TDDDK, Dedes own role in compile And look for ally war , while Ken Angrok more play a role in work physical , namely lead war . However , Ken Angrok in Pararaton own involvement big in compile strategy war and lead war . Different from strategy war Which given by Dedes , Ken Angrok in Pararaton make strategy war with put troops Tumapel in slope mountains , so that they can storm troops Kadiri which is at the foot of the mountain ( Purwanto , 2023:128).

Involvement Woman in war bring big impact . The figures Woman in novel become beginning And end from War Ganter . ( Wiyatmi . 2017) Without existence involvement figure women , such as Dedes , Ken Umang, and Anjani are the characters man No will get belief and trust self For win in war this . This novel against narrative Which make Woman just tool politics . Matter This is form resistance to stereotypes passive And No rational Which attached on figure Woman in narrative history . (Culler, J. 2000).

### 2. Female Knight

In the novel *Turur Dedes : Prayer and Curse* , a woman who wants become knight must train with his business themselves . They must Study until make his weapon Alone . No There is from knight man Which Want to teach Woman as students. No a little bit of a knight women who want make Woman other as students. They choose For alone And No in groups with knights others. Dedes become brave figure make association for women who want become knight . This can seen in the quote below This .I form and plunge direct foster One troops archer women . In practice our first seven Woman collected , all of them is child family knight in Tumapel . Menjeang War Ganter two tens year Then , member troops This reach three hundreds , many of them taken from remote villages Tumapel ( Ratna, NK (2015) ).

The quote above explain Dedes form troops knight woman . She jump direct For foster for knight Woman the with knowledge Which He have . Dedes learn knowledge archery from a female teacher named Anjani.In Pararaton , no there is story about greatness knight women . This novel tell If No Lots Woman Which can use weapon . The women who want control art defense self and capable use weapon must Study Alone with very active . Matter That shown by figure named Anjani. He must make even Study use arrow Alone Because No There is Which sell arrow And child arrow For size Woman mature anywhere . Habits this is also taught to Dedes who is his students . ( Barthes , R. 1977).

Apart from Dedes and Anjani there are figure Woman other in this novel which is a knight woman , namely Ken Umang. He own ideals become a knight Because moment Still children He very curious knowledge defense self . Realizing his ambitions the no easy for Umang. No There is none of them warrior the powerful one who wants to take it as a student

because He is a Woman . Ken Umang decided For Study defense self alone . He Study with very hard For realize his dream the .

Novel This Lots tell the story figure Woman with all greatness And the intelligence that they have have . Story This very different from story Pararaton . Author on purpose make story with highlight figure Woman as subject power No the object being moved . Woman as subject power own ability For make decision alone , they own awareness full on needs and desires , besides That women can too become influence and can change decision society . This show If writer want to breaking down the stigma of women as complement man become Woman as leader , protector , and mover history . (Bakhtin, MM 1981).

## Conclusion

The analysis of *Titir Dedes: Prayer and Curse Work* through the lens of Julia Kristeva's intertextuality demonstrates that the novel's meaning emerges not solely from its narrative content but through its dynamic engagement with other texts, cultural discourses, and historical references (Kristeva, 1980; Bazerman, 2004). The study reveals that opposition in the novel-manifested in tensions between tradition and modernity, male and female agency, sacred and profane forces, and colonial versus indigenous perspectives is not simply a structural device but a mechanism through which the narrative negotiates social, cultural, and ideological complexities (Anderson, 2021; Yilmaz, 2024).

By mapping intertextual connections, it becomes clear that *Titir Dedes* dialogues with Southeast Asian folklore, postcolonial literature, feminist discourse, and religious motifs, creating a polyphonic narrative that challenges monologic authority and affirms the multiplicity of meanings (Chandra, 2023; Haryanto, 2024). The oppositional dynamics within the novel function as a site of negotiation, where marginalized voices, particularly female perspectives, assert agency against dominant cultural and patriarchal narratives (Watson, 2023; Jamal, 2023).

Furthermore, the study underscores that Kristeva's intertextual approach allows for an interpretation of opposition not as a rigid binary but as a fluid, dialogic interaction between texts and discourses (Bula, 2022; Alvarado, 2023). This reveals the novel's capacity to reflect and critique societal norms, cultural memory, and identity formation, positioning it as a significant work within contemporary Indonesian literature. In conclusion, intertextuality provides a robust framework to understand how narrative opposition in *Titir Dedes* operates both aesthetically and ideologically, highlighting the novel's engagement with broader literary, historical, and cultural networks.

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