Women's Empowerment in Local and Global Fiction: From Toba Beyond

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ABSTRACT

This study explores women's empowerment in literature, focusing on the interplay between tradition and modernity across different cultural contexts. Employing comparative literary analysis, this research examines Lucy by Jamaica Kincaid and Mangalua by Idris Pasaribu. The methodology involves thematic and narrative analysis, where thematic analysis identifies key motifs related to empowerment, resistance, and gender roles, while narrative analysis examines how each character's story arc reflects broader societal norms. Through these analyses, the study highlights how each protagonist navigates societal expectations and challenges gender norms within traditional and modern frameworks. Findings indicate that both novels use women's empowerment as a lens to critique and reshape cultural expectations, offering insights into gender roles across varied societies. The study concludes with recommendations for further research on cross-cultural gender narratives, acknowledges the limitations of focusing on only two novels, and suggests broader literary comparisons for future studies.

Keywords: *Women's Empowerment, Literature, Gender Roles*

Introduction

Literature has long played an important role in reflecting and shaping the norms of society, especially regarding gender roles or women's empowerment. Some scholars have argued that literature does not present the dominant attitudes and values of a particular time but acts as an important setting where such socio-cultural norms can be questioned and re-imagined. As such, (Felski, 2020) further underlines the affective relationships literature establishes with its readers, through which it may well contribute and participate in building and negotiating social values in society, including those concerning gender. Meanwhile, (Yadav & Yadav, 2018; Freeman, 2019; and Mitchell, 2022) indicate that feminist critical thought in literature and narration has been powerful in tearing down patriarchal structures and offering other gender narratives for women's benefit. Literature, according to (Kennedy, 2019 & Youvan, 2024), confirms women's experiences and speaks against patriarchal partiality. (Hamilton, 2019) and (Vadde, 2016) extend this discussion into a global framework of how postcolonial and modernist literatures reflect and disrupt traditional engendering and create new models of empowerment sensitive to cultural contexts. Ahmed further discusses how literature makes the voice of the marginalized louder and reflects the contradictions in society on gender. The placing of literature as a medium for creating systemic change and women's empowerment is done by discussing how literature also reshapes them, making it a strong site to further the discourse on women's empowerment.

In addition, (Maulana & Rahmah, 2020) discuss the importance of comparative analysis between traditional and modern novels, especially in understanding cultural and societal dynamics. It highlights that both traditional and modern novels provide valuable insights into how cultural values evolve over time, reflecting changes in societal norms and individual roles within those societies. This comparative approach allows for a broader and deeper understanding of literature's role in mirroring and challenging these norms, offering a comprehensive perspective on human experiences across different historical contexts. (Kadwa & Alshenqeeti, 2020) underscores the value of comparing traditional and modern novels in literary studies. It highlights that this comparison provides a rich understanding of cultural and societal influences on literature. By examining how traditional values and modern ideas intersect and contrast within novels, scholars can uncover the dynamic ways literature reflects, shapes, and challenges societal norms. This comparative approach in modern comparative literature is essential for exploring both the continuity and transformation of cultural themes across different eras and literary styles. The significance of comparative literature, particularly through the examination of dictator novels from different

cultural backgrounds. This comparative approach highlights how cultural and historical contexts shape the depiction of authoritarianism, offering a broader understanding of the themes and structures that define this genre across various literary traditions (Ali et al., 2023).

Understanding the various approaches toward the concept of women's empowerment within local and global contexts of literature is important because it is an example of diversified societal norms and values that shape gender roles in their respective cultural landscapes. The way women are portrayed in literature, whether it be through traditional stories rooted in the Batak Toba culture or in a larger global setting, brings about complexities with regard to the context of their respective societies. For instance, (Zinkina et al., 2024) explores the ways in which local cultural narratives on gender roles are played out and advances the understanding of such narratives as central to grasping the global gender dynamics. In a similar (Tomas, 2024); (Pereira, 2020) highlights how postcolonial literature engages with the crossing paths of tradition and modernity, bringing sharply into focus insights regarding how women's roles are negotiated in non-Western contexts. By placing Batak Toba literature in an international perspective, one can trace both universal themes and specific cultural factors that influence the shaping of women's empowerment narratives. As again pointed out recently by (Conradie & Bockarie, 2021); Robin, 2021; and (Fraser, 2019), this comparative method observes that literature is a potent medium for cross-cultural conversation and reveals common struggles and different strategies toward empowerment used by women all over the world. This approach further enriches our understanding not only of how gender roles are constructed and challenged in various societies but also of the potential literature has to foster global conversations about gender equality and empowerment. Thus, understanding such a variety of literary landscapes provides the ability to appreciate nuanced global and local forces at play in women's empowerment through literature.

Recent scientist underlines the importance of literature in reflecting and building the grounds for societal norms, especially in the context of gender roles and women's empowerment. Connell brings forward that "local cultural narratives constitute major elements in global gender dynamics. Thus, comparative perspectives provided by literary representation in different contexts enhance our chances of making informed contributions to a general discussion on gender equality". Tomas and Pereira develops this

further by considering how postcolonial literature offers new frames for looking at the intersecting points between tradition and modernity in negotiating women's roles in societies shaped by colonial legacies. Meanwhile, in the work of Nussbaum, it is the capabilities approach that most strongly puts forward the role of literature in narrating opportunity and challenge in the face of women's pursuits of empowerment and presses for a comparative consideration of diverse cultural narratives. Along similar veins, (Fraser, 2019) discusses how shifts in world political and cultural perspectives influence the ways in which gender and empowerment are represented in literature, how this corpus enables necessary cross-cultural dialogues on women's struggles and successes throughout the world.

In addition to international perspectives, new works also have a focus on specific cultural contexts, such as the Batak Toba region in Indonesia. ((Sinurat et al., 2024), and (Veronica & Azeharie, 2022) manages to explore how the literature of Batak Toba depicts women navigating through traditional and modern poles in order to expose just their singular struggles within a society with strict social expectations. It is in this regard that (Dewi, 2019), extends this idea by identifying that traditional structures in Batak Toba novels allow the representation of gender roles for women to conform with, and even resist, patriarchal norms. The Batak Toba culture is a culture with deep-rooted tradition and strong patriarchal societal structures; hence, it is a very peculiar context within which one can assess the roles of women and their struggle for empowerment (Sibarani & Gulo, 2020). In this setting, family dynamics, marriage, and community expectations all lie at the root of female roles and their perceived opportunities. Very often, the borders within which such structures set women's agency define the lifelong, multidimensional struggle that is the quest for empowerment for them. Most of these dynamics are made manifest in local Batak Toba novels, whereby women seem to navigate between tradition and modernity, often in rigidly defined societal expectations.

This is what (Sinurat et al., 2024); (Veronica & Azeharie, 2022); Dewi, 2019; and Sibarani & Gulo, 2020) have shown: the novels of the Batak Toba act as a site of narrative struggle for women negotiating between traditional and modern demands. This tension happens in that modernity opens fresh vistas to the empowerment of women, yet traditional structures in the social fiber of Batak Toba culture are still very much extant and inhibiting women from assuming the

fullness of this new role. These novels depict the negotiation entailed in such navigation, where women are not mere passive victims of tradition but active agents negotiating, resisting, and redefining their roles within the limiting ambit of their respective cultural contexts.

In this sense, women in the Batak Toba literature were portrayed to move through these tensions, reflecting wider societal challenges within real life faced for any woman having to balance between retaining their cultural heritage and seeking modern aspirations and freedoms. This struggle or negotiation between tradition and modernity is the heart of not just understanding women's empowerment within Batak Toba literature but also an important point of comparison with global narratives. The research thereby underlines a general humanness of the struggle to hold on to traditional values while embracing modern opportunities for empowerment by investigating how such tensions are played out in Batak Toba culture. This comparative approach will allow elaboration on how women in different cultural settings deal with the same issues, thus embedding the general discussion on gender roles and their respective expectations.

International novels from other cultures, societies, and politics have promoted several diversified views on women's empowerment. This is usually in terms of varied emphases on societal structures that impede or promote female empowerment in cultures worldwide. For instance, modern Western literature still addresses feminist themes on personal agency versus resistance to patriarchal norms (Boettcher, 1995); (Irshad Ahmad Reshi & Dr T. Sudha, 2022); Dadawala, 2018; Kushwah, 2020; and Lucas & Ordeniza, 2023). Along with this, literature from other regions of the world, like Africa and Asia, has their various challenges and opportunities standing in the road to women's empowerment. And many times, these emerge from the tension between traditional practices and modern influences.

It is an international novel that makes sense of how literature in divergent cultural contexts presents women as living out the intense tensions between tradition and modernity. They suggest that the latter, in opening up newer avenues for women's empowerment, also brings along its own set of compulsion and obligations which may turn out to be as suffocating as the conventional ones. In many of these stories, women come across as caught in an eternal game of balancing between societal expectations and personal growth, a reflection of the tensions

within wider society and the negotiation of changing gendered meanings. All the international novel theories combined underline one thing: that the portrayal of women in literature is seriously interlinked with cultural, historical, and social forces; each context provides its particular challenges and opportunities regarding women's empowerment. Even though tension between tradition and modernity is universal, it expresses itself differently given different cultural and societal structures, which makes it a rich area of comparative literary analysis.

Moreover, a comparative approach in literary studies is increasingly important. For example, (Hamilton, 2019) seeks to locate postcolonial literature within global narratives as one means of tracing how debates over women's empowerment are addressed by different cultures, while (Vadde, 2016) would center the study on modernist and contemporary literature as a gateway into the universality and culturally particular features of gender norms. These studies, put together, therefore point to the consideration of both local and global literary contexts if one is to have a more comprehensive understanding of how literature reflects and at the same time challenges the societal norms on women's empowerment.

Many previous works have examined the role of women in literature, but this study stands out with its in-depth comparative approach to local Batak Toba literature and global narratives, offering a unique perspective on the dynamics of women's empowerment in the context of the intersection of tradition and modernity. Global literature such as postcolonial works often explores women's empowerment by emphasizing identity conflicts, resistance, and negotiations against colonial and patriarchal norms. In contrast, Batak Toba's literature shows that women's roles are determined by very strong traditions, which present different challenges and opportunities for empowerment. While there are many studies exploring women's empowerment from the perspective of global literature or specific cultural traditions, there is still little research connecting narratives of women's empowerment in local Indonesian literature with global literature. This study attempts to fill this gap by investigating how women in two works from different cultural backgrounds, Lucy by Jamaica Kincaid and Mangalua by Idris Pasaribu, navigate the clash between tradition and modernity.

The reason why this research is necessary is to understand how women's empowerment is represented in literary works and how the clash between tradition and modernity affects gender

roles in various cultures. This topic is important because it illustrates how literature can be a medium to challenge and reshape social norms about women's roles. By analyzing local and global perspectives, this study shows the complexity in women's navigation between traditional expectations and modern aspirations. This research makes an important contribution to enriching the global discussion on gender equality, as well as showing the specificity of local cultures that can enrich the understanding of gender dynamics in various contexts. The present research will, therefore, not only explain the specific challenges faced by women in Batak Toba society but also act as a tool of comparison through which such challenges may be set within a global framework. In the process, both universal and culturally specific elements that determine the literary portrayal of women's empowerment across societies will be brought into bold relief. Analyzing these specifics in culture will provide much-needed insight into how tradition and modernity feature in women's empowerment across different literary landscapes, some of which will appeal to the universal and others, on the contrary, to the distinctive elements of such narratives. The given comparison thus will add to the overall debate on women's empowerment by demonstrating the role of social structures in construing literary discourses on gender.

Method

This study uses a comparative literary analysis to explore themes of women's empowerment in *Lucy* by Jamaica Kincaid and *Mangalua* by Idris Pasaribu. By analyzing these novels, which represent different cultural contexts one through a global postcolonial perspective and the other through Batak Toba cultural traditions the research aims to understand how female characters navigate traditional gender roles and modern aspirations. This qualitative research focuses on narrative analysis and thematic comparison to reveal insights into how literature serves as a platform for examining gender norms and empowerment. The thematic analysis examines motifs like empowerment, resistance, and gender negotiation, while narrative analysis investigates how each character's journey reflects societal norms. The coding process highlights moments when protagonists conform to or resist patriarchal

structures. This approach enables a comparative analysis of how cultural contexts shape women's empowerment within traditional and modern frameworks. The research procedure begins with the selection of the primary texts, *Lucy* and *Mangalua*, chosen for their exploration of the tension between tradition and modernity in women's roles. Both novels are subjected to close reading to identify key themes related to women's empowerment, with particular attention to how the protagonists interact with patriarchal structures and respond to societal challenges. The data collected from these readings are then coded thematically, focusing on motifs of empowerment, resistance, and gender negotiation. This process involves highlighting key moments where the protagonists either conform to or resist patriarchal norms, providing a basis for comparison.

The analysis adopts a comparative approach (Damrosch, 2020). In *Lucy*, postcolonial feminist theory is applied to explore how the protagonist challenges and subverts traditional gender roles, emphasizing themes of identity, migration, and resistance to colonial and patriarchal norms. In contrast, *Mangalua* is analyzed through the lens of cultural criticism, focusing on how traditional Batak Toba society frames women's roles and opportunities for empowerment. By comparing these findings, the study provides insights into the intersection of tradition and modernity in shaping women's empowerment within both local and global fiction. This approach employs feminist literary criticism, postcolonial theory, and cultural criticism to offer a nuanced understanding of how societal structures and cultural contexts impact the portrayal of women's struggles for agency in literature

Findings and Discussion

Analysis of "Lucy"

The comparative analysis of "Lucy" by Jamaica Kincaid and "*Mangalua*" by Idris Pasaribu provides a nuanced understanding of how the intersection of tradition and modernity shapes women's empowerment across different cultural contexts. By examining these novels through the lenses of feminist literary criticism, postcolonial theory, and cultural criticism, this study uncovers the varied ways in which female characters' challenge and navigate societal norms.

Table 1. Analysis of "Lucy" by Jamaica Kincaid

No.	Indicators	Example	Analysis from 'Lucy'
1.	Challenging Gender Norms	• Lucy moves away from her family and rejects the expected career of a nurse, which symbolizes her defiance of traditional gender roles. Her autonomy and independence challenge the societal norms imposed on women.	Lucy rejects traditional gender roles and expectations by pursuing her own path, moving away from her family, and refusing to conform to the societal norms of obedience and submissive femininity.

		• Lucy's sexual relationships and detachment in intimacy serve as acts of reclaiming personal autonomy, demonstrating her resistance to being defined or constrained by romantic relationships.	
2.	Comparative Analysis of Local and Global Narratives	• Lucy's internal conflict with her colonial past and her interactions with Mariah and Lewis highlight the differences between her cultural background and Western ideals, offering a counter-narrative to Western feminism. • Lucy's critique of Mariah's notion of empowerment questions Western ideals, suggesting that true liberation involves confronting and transcending colonialism and patriarchy.	'Lucy' contrasts with Western feminist narratives by embedding the protagonist's struggle within the context of postcolonial identity, highlighting the complexities of navigating empowerment within a colonial legacy.
3.	Tension Between Tradition and Modernity	• Lucy's refusal to read her mother's letters symbolizes her break from traditional expectations. Her struggle between honoring her heritage and embracing modern independence is a central theme. • The power dynamics between Lucy and Mariah reflect broader societal structures of race and class, with Lucy aware of her position as a woman of color navigating a predominantly white society.	The novel explores Lucy's struggle to define her identity amidst the tension between her traditional upbringing and the modern world, particularly in her relationship with her mother and her cultural heritage.
4.	Postcolonial and Modernist Literature's Role	• Lucy's discomfort with her name and her awareness of colonial history reflect her struggle to reclaim her identity from the colonial narrative imposed on her, illustrating the impact of colonialism on personal identity. • The novel explores Lucy's understanding of her name and the colonial history behind it, using it as a metaphor for the broader struggle against the legacies of colonialism and patriarchy.	'Lucy' addresses postcolonial themes, depicting Lucy's struggle against cultural imposition and the residual effects of colonial rule, which have shaped her perception of identity and autonomy.
5.	Cross-Cultural Conversations on Women's Empowerment	• Lucy's critique of Mariah's version of empowerment and her own journey highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of empowerment that recognizes the diversity of women's experiences across cultures. • Lucy's narrative parallels global movements where women challenge traditional roles, adding a culturally specific voice to the broader discussion on women's rights and autonomy.	The novel contributes to the global conversation on women's empowerment by showcasing the intersection of postcolonial and cross-cultural experiences, emphasizing the complexity of defining empowerment.
6.	Impact of Societal Structures on Women's Roles	• Lucy's decision to reject a traditional career and pursue a different life abroad represents her resistance against societal expectations. Her interactions with Mariah further illustrate the intersectional challenges women face. • Lucy's experience with societal expectations, including subtle racism and exoticization, illustrates how race and gender intersect to complicate her struggle for empowerment and self-definition.	'Lucy' explores how societal structures, including colonial history, cultural expectations, and Western norms, shape and constrain women's roles, with Lucy navigating and resisting these influences to assert her independence.

In "Lucy," Jamaica Kincaid explores the complexities of challenging traditional gender norms within the framework of a postcolonial identity. The protagonist, Lucy, navigates a world where societal expectations are imposed on her, both from her family and the Western society she finds herself in. This navigation is a central theme in the novel, as Lucy resists the conventional roles expected of women, such as pursuing a career deemed appropriate for her gender. Her refusal to conform to these expectations, such as rejecting a nursing career, serves as an act of defiance and self-empowerment.

Lucy's relationships are another key aspect of her challenge against gender norms. Her interactions, particularly with Mariah, highlight the tension between traditional expectations of women's roles and Lucy's desire for autonomy. Lucy's critique of Mariah's notion of empowerment reflects a deeper questioning of Western ideals, suggesting that true liberation requires confronting and overcoming colonial and patriarchal structures. This complexity is further illustrated in how Lucy handles her intimate relationships, using them to assert her independence and resist societal definitions of womanhood.

Analysis of "Mangalua"

Table 2. Analysis of "*Mangalua*" by Idris Pasaribu

No.	Indicators	Example	Analysis from '*Mangalua*'
1.	Challenging Gender Norms	• Siboru Anting decides to elope with Jogal, a decision that defies her family's and society's expectations, showcasing a form of agency in a culture where women are expected to conform to arranged marriages. • Siboru Anting's family condemns her decision, viewing it as an affront to cultural norms, while she sees it as a necessary step towards self-empowerment. This conflict illustrates the personal and social consequences of challenging gender norms. • The narrative details how Siboru Anting's decision to elope is a direct challenge to her family's honor, a core value in Batak Toba culture. Her actions spark a broader conversation about the role of women and the potential for change within traditional societies.	Siboru Anting's involvement in elopement challenges the passive role traditionally assigned to women in Batak Toba society. This act of defiance not only brings familial and societal conflict but questions the rigid societal structures that dictate women's roles and behavior
2.	Comparative Analysis of Local and Global Narratives	• While Western narratives might focus on a woman's individual quest for freedom, Siboru Anting's story is about navigating familial and cultural obligations. Her elopement is not just about personal freedom but a nuanced negotiation within her community's values. • A comparison to global literature can be drawn with characters like Jane Eyre, who also seek autonomy. However, unlike Jane's journey which is more individualistic, Siboru Anting's narrative is deeply rooted in the collective consciousness and cultural norms of her society. • Siboru Anting's decision can be compared to characters in global literature, such as Nora in 'A Doll's House', where the act of leaving behind societal norms is a significant step toward self-realization and empowerment.	'Mangalua' provides a culturally specific narrative of women's empowerment that differs from the more individualistic narratives found in Western literature. It illustrates the nuanced struggle of women within cultural confines, emphasizing collective identity and familial obligations over personal autonomy.
3.	Tension Between Tradition and Modernity	• Siboru Anting's struggle is illustrated in scenes where she grapples with the choice between fulfilling traditional expectations and embracing modern aspirations. Her decision to elope signifies a break from the past while negotiating her role within her culture. • The novel depicts the tension during family discussions about marriage, showcasing how Siboru Anting is expected to adhere to societal expectations. Her internal conflict and ultimate choice to elope highlight the broader theme of balancing tradition and modernity. • Throughout the novel, the discussions between Siboru Anting and Jogal about their future highlight the tension between following cultural traditions and seeking a new way of life. These discussions illustrate the broader societal conflict between maintaining tradition and embracing change.	The female character embodies the struggle between adhering to cultural traditions and seeking modern autonomy. Elopement disrupts established cultural practices, highlighting how women in Batak Toba society navigate the complexities of upholding cultural values while pursuing self-determination.
4.	Postcolonial and Modernist Literature's Role	• The novel highlights colonial influences in Batak Toba society, where traditional gender roles have been reinforced. Siboru Anting's act of elopement represents a subtle form of rebellion against these imposed norms, illustrating a complex interplay between indigenous culture and colonial legacy. • Postcolonial elements are evident in the way Siboru Anting's actions disrupt not only gender norms but also the expectations set by colonial influences. Her resistance can be seen as a metaphor for the broader cultural push against colonial and patriarchal control. • Siboru Anting's elopement serves as a critique of how colonial history has enforced strict gender norms in Batak Toba society. Her resistance against these norms symbolizes a reclaiming of indigenous identity and gender autonomy.	The novel reflects postcolonial themes by using the female character's act of elopement as a metaphor for resistance against colonial and patriarchal systems. It shows how women assert their agency within intersecting oppressions, challenging the legacy of colonial influence on gender roles.
5.	Cross-Cultural Conversations on Women's Empowerment	• In a scene where Siboru Anting discusses her future with Jogal, the narrative reveals the tension between cultural expectations and personal desires. This moment opens a dialogue on how women in different cultural settings face similar challenges but negotiate them in diverse ways. • Siboru Anting's story aligns with global themes of women seeking agency, yet it is deeply embedded in the specific context of Batak Toba culture. Her journey adds a layer to the global narrative, showing how cultural specifics shape the paths to empowerment. • By engaging in elopement, Siboru Anting's narrative parallels global movements where women challenge traditional roles. Her journey adds a culturally specific voice to the broader discussion on women's rights and autonomy.	'Mangalua' contributes to the global discourse on women's empowerment by presenting the Batak Toba's specific cultural dynamics. It engages with themes of autonomy and resistance within a framework that values tradition, adding depth to the conversation about how women across cultures negotiate their roles.
6.	Impact of Societal Structures on Women's Roles	• In the novel, the sinamot (dowry) negotiation process demonstrates how women's roles are influenced by societal structures. Siboru Anting's choice to elope with Jogal bypasses this process, challenging the traditional exchange of dowry and the control it exerts over women's choices • The novel describes the intricate ceremonies and societal expectations around marriage, highlighting the weight of tradition. Siboru Anting's elopement bypasses these norms, suggesting a critique of how societal structures can limit women's choices and agency. • The novel's depiction of societal reaction to the elopement, including the imposition of fines and the need for rituals to restore order, illustrates the stronghold of societal structures on women's lives. Siboru Anting's story	The novel delves into societal structures like dowry (sinamot) and the necessity of familial approval, showing how these impact women's roles. Through elopement, Siboru Anting challenges these norms while still operating within her cultural context, reflecting the interplay between resistance and conformity..

highlights both the limitations imposed by these structures and the potential for resistance and change.

From the table analysis above, "Mangalua" presents a culturally specific perspective on women's empowerment, deeply embedded in the traditional values of Batak Toba society. The narrative follows Siboru Anting, whose decision to elope serves as a form of resistance against the rigid societal structures that dictate women's roles and behavior. Unlike the individualistic narratives often found in Western feminist literature, Siboru Anting's story is one of navigating familial and cultural obligations. Her elopement is not merely an act of personal freedom but a nuanced negotiation within the collective values of her community.

The novel also delves into the tension between tradition and modernity. Siboru Anting's internal conflict and eventual decision to break away from traditional expectations highlight the complexities women face in upholding cultural values while seeking self-determination. Through her actions, the novel critiques the societal structures like dowry (sinamot) and the necessity of familial approval, which shape and often restrict women's agency. This critique extends to the broader societal reaction to Siboru Anting's elopement, which underscores the cultural hold over women's choices and the potential for resistance within these structures.

Comparative Analysis of "Lucy" and "Mangalua"

Table 3. Comparative Analysis of "Lucy" and "Mangalua"

No	Analytical Framework	Analysis in 'Lucy'	Analysis in 'Mangalua'	Comparative Insights
1.	Feminist Literary Criticism	In 'Lucy,' feminist literary criticism is used to explore how the protagonist challenges traditional gender roles. Lucy's rejection of the expected career paths and her autonomy in relationships highlight a deconstruction of passive femininity. The novel critiques societal expectations imposed on women, portraying Lucy's journey as one of self-definition and resistance.	In 'Mangalua,' feminist literary criticism is employed to examine how gender roles are constructed within the Batak Toba culture. Siboru Anting's elopement is a form of resistance against the societal expectations for women. However, the narrative also shows the limitations imposed by cultural norms, illustrating a complex portrayal of women's agency within a traditional society.	Both novels utilize feminist literary criticism to challenge traditional gender roles, but 'Lucy' does so through the lens of individual autonomy and defiance against a colonial past, while 'Mangalua' navigates within the cultural constraints of Batak Toba society. 'Lucy' offers a more personal, internalized rebellion, whereas 'Mangalua' presents a communal and culturally negotiated form of resistance.
2.	Postcolonial Theory	'Lucy' employs postcolonial theory to delve into themes of identity, migration, and resistance to colonial and patriarchal norms. Lucy's struggle with her colonial past, her discomfort with her name, and her navigation of Western society reflect the complexities of postcolonial identity. The novel critiques the lingering effects of colonialism on gender and personal autonomy.	Postcolonial theory is less directly applied to 'Mangalua' compared to 'Lucy.' However, the novel does address themes of identity within a postcolonial context, highlighting the influence of external factors on Batak Toba society. The cultural negotiation present in Siboru Anting's actions can be seen as a response to both internal traditions and external pressures.	'Lucy' deeply engages with postcolonial theory, illustrating the protagonist's struggle with her colonial identity and her resistance to imposed norms. In contrast, 'Mangalua' touches on postcolonial themes more subtly, focusing on the internal cultural dynamics rather than direct colonial critique. The emphasis in 'Lucy' is on migration and self-redefinition, while 'Mangalua' centers on cultural identity and the negotiation of tradition.
3.	Cultural Criticism	While 'Lucy' focuses on postcolonial themes, it also indirectly touches on cultural criticism by highlighting the protagonist's struggle against the cultural norms of her upbringing. Lucy's critical view of both her Caribbean heritage and the Western world she inhabits shows a tension between cultural values and her quest for empowerment.	'Mangalua' is primarily analyzed through cultural criticism, focusing on how Batak Toba society frames women's roles and opportunities for empowerment. The novel portrays the cultural rituals, norms, and values that shape the expectations for women. Siboru Anting's elopement serves as a critique of these traditional structures, demonstrating the complexities of asserting agency within a culturally bound context.	Cultural criticism in 'Lucy' is indirect, offering a critique of both Caribbean and Western cultural norms, whereas 'Mangalua' directly addresses the cultural framework of Batak Toba society. 'Lucy' presents a tension between different cultural expectations, while 'Mangalua' provides an insider's view of how cultural values shape and sometimes restrict women's agency.

The comprehensive analysis in the table above, focuses on each analytical framework for "Lucy" by Jamaica Kincaid and "Mangalua":

In "Lucy," feminist literary criticism is employed to explore how the protagonist actively challenges traditional gender roles and expectations. Lucy's journey is marked by her defiance of societal norms, as she refuses to follow the conventional path of becoming a nurse, which her family deems appropriate for a woman. Instead, Lucy pursues her own path, asserting her autonomy in relationships and resisting efforts to fit into predefined gender roles. Her relationships with figures like Mariah show a tension between expectations and her desire for self-definition. This novel deconstructs the notion of passive femininity, offering a narrative where the protagonist's internal rebellion is central to her empowerment.

On the other hand, "Mangalua" applies feminist literary criticism within the context of Batak Toba culture. The character Siboru Anting uses elopement as an act of resistance against societal expectations, particularly those related to arranged marriage. This act of elopement challenges the cultural norms surrounding women's roles, presenting a complex portrayal of agency within a traditional society. Unlike Lucy's individualistic defiance, Siboru Anting's resistance is situated within a communal and culturally negotiated context. The narrative illustrates the limitations imposed by cultural norms, highlighting how women's struggles for agency are framed and constrained by their cultural environment.

"Lucy" deeply engages with postcolonial theory by addressing themes of identity, migration, and resistance to colonial and patriarchal norms. The protagonist's struggle is inherently tied to her colonial past, exemplified in her discomfort with her own name, which carries the weight of colonial history. Lucy navigates a Western society that attempts to impose its own norms upon her, creating a tension between her identity and the expectations of the new world she inhabits. The novel critiques the lingering effects of colonialism on personal autonomy and gender, illustrating how the protagonist's quest for self-definition is a form of resistance against colonial legacies.

While "Mangalua" does not directly focus on postcolonial themes to the same extent, it subtly reflects on the influence of external factors on Batak Toba society and identity. Siboru Anting's actions can be seen within a framework of cultural negotiation, where traditions and external pressures intersect. The narrative focuses more on internal cultural dynamics than on a direct critique of colonial influence, but the character's struggle can still be interpreted as a response to both local traditions and the broader postcolonial context. This approach emphasizes the complex interplay between indigenous cultural values and external influences in shaping women's identities.

Cultural criticism in "Lucy" offers an indirect critique of both Caribbean and Western cultural norms. Lucy's critical view of her upbringing and her interactions with Western society reveal her discomfort with conforming to either set of expectations. The novel portrays her struggle as one of navigating and resisting cultural norms, as she seeks to establish her own identity outside the boundaries of any single cultural framework. This tension between different cultural identities and values is central to Lucy's journey, highlighting the protagonist's internal conflict and resistance to societal constraints.

In contrast, "Mangalua" employs cultural criticism directly to analyze how Batak Toba society frames women's roles and the opportunities available for empowerment. The novel portrays the cultural rituals, norms, and values that define expectations for women. Siboru Anting's act of elopement serves as a critique of these traditional structures, demonstrating how cultural values both constrain and shape women's agency. The narrative provides an insider's view of how deeply ingrained cultural practices influence women's struggles, offering a nuanced perspective on the complexities of asserting agency within a culturally bound context.

Comparing the two novels through these frameworks reveals a distinct approach to examining women's empowerment. "Lucy" challenges traditional gender roles through a lens of individual autonomy and postcolonial resistance, portraying a personal, internalized rebellion against both patriarchal and colonial expectations. The narrative focuses on Lucy's journey of self-definition, migration, and her struggle against imposed identities. In contrast, "Mangalua" centers on a communal, culturally negotiated form of resistance within the constraints of Batak Toba society. It emphasizes the role of cultural traditions and values in shaping women's identities and agency, presenting resistance as embedded within cultural practices rather than as an overt individual defiance.

While "Lucy" provides a direct engagement with postcolonial theory, addressing themes of migration and the negotiation of colonial identities, "Mangalua" subtly reflects on postcolonial influences through its focus on internal cultural dynamics. Both novels employ feminist literary criticism, but "Lucy" emphasizes a personal rebellion against traditional gender norms, whereas

"Mangalua" presents a more complex interplay of cultural values and gender roles. Cultural criticism in "Lucy" indirectly critiques the protagonist's cultural heritage and the Western norms she encounters, whereas in "Mangalua," cultural criticism is a central analytical tool, directly examining how cultural values in Batak Toba society shape and sometimes restrict women's agency. This comparative analysis highlights the nuanced differences in how each novel addresses the themes of women's empowerment within their respective cultural and historical contexts. The intersection of tradition and modernity plays a crucial role in shaping women's empowerment in both "*Lucy*" by Jamaica Kincaid and "*Mangalua*." By comparing the findings from these novels, several insights emerge.

Navigating Cultural Expectations and Personal Autonomy **"*Lucy*":** In "Lucy," the protagonist navigates between her Caribbean upbringing and the modern Western world, embodying the struggle between tradition and modernity. Lucy's refusal to conform to traditional expectations, such as becoming a nurse, and her resistance to the cultural norms of both her heritage and her new environment highlight the complex negotiation between personal autonomy and cultural expectations. Lucy seeks to carve out her own identity and form of empowerment that transcends the limitations imposed by both colonial and patriarchal traditions. **"*Mangalua*":** In contrast, "Mangalua" depicts a more communal and culturally integrated negotiation of women's roles within the framework of Batak Toba society. Siboru Anting's decision to elope is a form of resistance to traditional practices, such as arranged marriage and dowry negotiations. However, her actions are still deeply rooted in the cultural context of her society. The novel illustrates how women navigate within these cultural confines to assert their agency, showing that empowerment can be achieved by challenging traditional norms from within the community rather than breaking away entirely.

The Role of Tradition as a Source of Identity and Constraint, **"*Lucy*":** For Lucy, tradition is both a source of identity and a constraint that she actively seeks to reject. Her struggle is not just against the cultural expectations of her Caribbean heritage but also against the Western norms she encounters. This dual rejection highlights the tension between maintaining one's cultural roots and embracing modern values. Lucy's journey shows that empowerment involves navigating this intersection, where modernity offers opportunities for personal freedom but also presents new forms of cultural and social constraints. **"*Mangalua*":** In

"Mangalua," tradition is depicted as a defining feature of the characters' identities and the community's values. While these traditions can be restrictive, they also provide a framework within which women like Siboru Anting can negotiate their roles. Her elopement challenges the rigid structures of traditional society, such as the dowry system and familial control over marriage. However, her actions are not a complete rejection of tradition but rather a reconfiguration of it to create space for personal agency. This suggests that modernity does not necessarily require abandoning tradition but can involve transforming it to better accommodate women's aspirations.

Empowerment Through Rebellion and Negotiation, **"*Lucy*":** Lucy's form of empowerment is characterized by rebellion against both her cultural past and the expectations of the modern society she enters. Her relationships, career choices, and approach to sexuality all serve as acts of defiance. She embodies a form of modern empowerment that seeks to break free from the constraints of tradition entirely. Her journey highlights the potential for empowerment through a radical redefinition of identity, though it also suggests the isolation and disconnection that can result from rejecting both one's heritage and the norms of the surrounding society. **"*Mangalua*":** Siboru Anting's empowerment, on the other hand, is achieved through negotiation within her cultural context. Her decision to elope is an act of rebellion, but it is also an attempt to navigate and reshape the traditions of Batak Toba society. The novel portrays a form of empowerment that does not seek to reject tradition entirely but rather to find ways to assert agency within it. This suggests a model of modernity that is integrative rather than oppositional, where women can challenge and reinterpret cultural norms to create new spaces for autonomy.

The Global and Local Perspectives on Empowerment: **"*Lucy*":** The novel provides a global perspective on empowerment by situating Lucy's story within the broader context of postcolonial migration and the clash of cultural norms. Her struggle reflects a universal desire for autonomy and self-definition in the face of intersecting cultural and societal expectations. Lucy's journey speaks to the complexities of achieving empowerment in a globalized world, where the pressures of both tradition and modernity can be sources of constraint. **"*Mangalua*":** "Mangalua" offers a localized view of empowerment, grounded in the specific cultural dynamics of Batak Toba society. The novel shows how traditional practices and values can be both a source of limitation and a field of negotiation for

women seeking agency. Siboru Anting's story adds depth to the global discourse on empowerment by demonstrating that the intersection of tradition and modernity can vary significantly depending on cultural context. It highlights the importance of understanding empowerment not just as a universal concept but as one that is deeply shaped by local customs and values.

Together, "*Lucy*" and "*Mangalua*" provide a nuanced understanding of how tradition and modernity intersect to shape women's empowerment. While "*Lucy*" emphasizes a break from tradition and the pursuit of personal autonomy in a global context, "*Mangalua*" illustrates the potential for negotiating empowerment within the bounds of cultural traditions. These novels suggest that the path to empowerment is not uniform; it involves a complex interplay between rejecting, reshaping, and sometimes reconciling tradition with the demands and opportunities of modernity. This intersection is influenced by factors such as cultural heritage, societal structures, and individual aspirations, highlighting the diversity of women's experiences and the varied ways they seek to achieve empowerment.

Conclusion

This study reveals that both Lucy and Mangalua illustrate the complexities of women's empowerment through the tension between tradition and modernity. By using thematic and narrative analyses, the research highlights how the protagonists, Lucy and Siboru Anting, navigate cultural expectations to assert their autonomy in distinct ways. These findings underscore the role of literature as a medium for challenging and reshaping gender norms within specific cultural contexts. The study contributes to understanding how local and global narratives on women's empowerment diverge and intersect. Future studies could extend this analysis to include a broader range of literary works, enabling a more comprehensive view of how different cultural backgrounds shape gender roles. Although limited to two novels, this research provides a foundation for exploring how comparative literary approaches can deepen our understanding of cross-cultural gender narratives. Recommendations include expanding this framework to other cultural and literary contexts, which could offer further insights into the diverse ways women's empowerment is portrayed globally.

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