Prosodi: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa dan Sastra
Vol. 20 – No. 1, Oktober 2026, pp.175 - 195
https://doi.org/10.21107/prosodi.v20i1.35284
Open Access:
https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/prosodi

ISSN 1907-6665 (Print)
ISSN 2622-0474 (Online)

COLONIALISM IN URSULA K. LE GUIN'S *THE WORD FOR WORLD IS FOREST*: HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

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Article History

Received : 04/07/2026
Revised : 18/08/2026
Accepted : 27/08/2026
Published : 30/08/2026

Keywords:
Biographical Analysis, Colonialism, Historiacal Analysis, Resistance

Kata Kunci:
Analisa Biografi, Analisa Histori Kolonialisme, Perlawanan

Abstract. This study investigated how colonial power, domination, and resistance are depicted in Le Guin's *The Word for World is Forest*. The study also explored how the historical and biographical background influenced the content of the novel. Employing a qualitative discourse analysis approach on Mandler's psycholinguistic perspective and critical approach analysis on historical and biographical approach, the study tried to discover both objectives. The findings revealed that colonialism is depicted as a system of power that not only focuses on territorial control but also encompasses economic, cultural, and social domination. Furthermore, the practice of colonialism in this novel is reinforced through the dehumanization of the indigenous people. As a feedback from colonialized people, colonial oppression would ultimately spark resistance. Finally, the study concludes that Le Guins's The Word for World was Forest serves not only as a work of literature but also as a social critique of colonialism.

Abstrak. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana kekuasaan kolonial, dominasi, dan perlawanan digambarkan dalam novel karya Le Guin The Word for World is Forest. Studi ini juga mengungkap bagaimana latar belakang sejarah dan biografi pengarangnya memengaruhi isi novel. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan analisis wacana kualitatif berdasarkan perspektif psikolinguistik Mandler serta analisis kritis melalui pendekatan sejarah dan biografi, penelitian ini berupaya menjawab kedua tujuan tersebut. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kolonialisme digambarkan sebagai sistem kekuasaan yang tidak hanya berfokus pada penguasaan wilayah, tetapi juga mencakup dominasi ekonomi, budaya, dan sosial. Lebih lanjut, praktik kolonialisme dalam novel ini diperkuat melalui dehumanisasi terhadap penduduk pribumi. Sebagai respons dari pihak yang terjajah, penindasan kolonial pada akhirnya akan memicu perlawanan. Akhirnya, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa karya Le Guin ini tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai karya sastra, tetapi juga sebagai kritik sosial terhadap kolonialisme.

How to Cite: Maghfiroh, Z., Tirmidi, T. (2026). COLONIALISM IN URSULA K. LE GUIN'S *THE WORD FOR WORLD IS FOREST*: HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS. *Prosodi:Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa dan Sastra*, 20(2), 175 - 195.
https://doi.org/10.21107/prosodi.v20i2.35284

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INTRODUCTION

Literature plays an important role in language learning because it provides authentic language use, cultural understanding, and opportunities for critical thinking. Discourse analysis enables researchers to explore how language constructs meaning, identity, and ideology within literary texts. This study focuses on Ursula K. Le Guin's The Word for World is Forest and investigates how language represents cognition and worldview within imagined communities.

Literature has long been recognized as a powerful medium for reflecting and interrogating social realities, including issues of power, domination, and resistance. In the context of language education and literary studies, literary works are not only appreciated for their aesthetic value but also analyzed for the discourses they construct and reproduce (Satriani et al., 2024). One significant discourse frequently explored in literature is colonialism, which

encompasses the systems of domination, exploitation, and cultural suppression imposed by colonizing powers upon indigenous populations.

Colonialism has long been a significant subject of academic inquiry, particularly in literary studies, where texts often reflect and critique systems of domination, power, and cultural hegemony Strugnell, A. (2005). In this context, settler colonialism emerges as a distinct form of colonial practice that differs fundamentally from classical colonialism. Unlike traditional colonial systems that rely on exploitation, settler colonialism is characterized by the replacement of indigenous populations and the establishment of a new socio-political order by settlers (Veracini, 2010). Colonialism, as a historical and ideological phenomenon, has shaped global social, political, and cultural structures. It is not merely a matter of territorial occupation but also involves the construction of power relations through language, representation, and ideology. According to postcolonial scholars, colonial discourse functions to legitimize domination by portraying colonized people as inferior, primitive, or incapable of self-governance (Walter, 2022). Thus, examining colonialism through discourse analysis allows researchers to uncover how language constructs and maintains unequal power relations.

According to Veracini (2010), settler colonialism operates through a "logic of elimination," where indigenous peoples are systematically displaced, marginalized, or assimilated to ensure the dominance of settler society. This structural phenomenon is not merely historical but continues to shape modern socio-cultural and political realities. Literature plays a crucial role in representing and contesting these dynamics, as it reflects ideological discourses embedded within colonial and postcolonial contexts. In literary studies, discourse analysis plays a crucial role in revealing how texts encode ideological meanings. As proposed by James Paul Gee, language is not simply a tool for communication but a form of social action that enacts identities, relationships, and systems of power. Similarly, Norman Fairclough emphasizes that discourse both reflects and shapes social realities, including structures of domination. Therefore, analyzing discourse in literary texts provides deeper insights into how authors represent and critique social issues such as colonialism.

One literary work that critically engages with the theme of colonialism is *The Word for World is Forest* by Ursula K. Le Guin. This novella presents a narrative set on a distant planet called Athshe, where human colonizers exploit natural resources and oppress the indigenous population. Through its storyline, the novel reflects the dynamics of imperialism, environmental destruction, and resistance. The colonizers impose their authority through violence, forced labor, and cultural domination, while the native Athsheans struggle to resist and reclaim their identity and autonomy.

Le Guin's work is particularly significant because it not only portrays colonial domination but also critiques it by highlighting the moral and ecological consequences of exploitation. The novel draws parallels with real-world historical events, such as the Vietnam War and Western imperialism, making it a relevant text for analyzing colonial discourse. Furthermore, the narrative emphasizes the relationship between language, power, and ideology, making it an appropriate subject for discourse analysis (Shi, 2024).

Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Word for World is Forest* is a significant literary work that portrays themes of environmental exploitation, domination, and resistance. The novel illustrates the interaction between colonizers and indigenous inhabitants, mirroring real-world settler colonial practices. Through narrative and characterization, Le Guin exposes the mechanisms of oppression and the ethical consequences of colonial expansion. Despite the richness of its themes, many studies on Le Guin's work tend to focus on environmentalism, feminism, or science fiction elements, while the discourse of colonialism has not been fully explored, particularly through a linguistic and discourse-analytic perspective. This gap highlights the need

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for a study that systematically examines how colonialism is constructed through language and narrative strategies in the text.

By applying discourse analysis, this research seeks to investigate how colonial power, domination, and resistance are represented in *The Word for World is Forest*. The study focuses on how language is used to construct identities, justify exploitation, and express resistance. Through this approach, the research aims to contribute to both literary studies and language education by providing a deeper understanding of how discourse operates within literary texts to reflect and challenge social realities.

Therefore, analyzing the discourse of colonialism within this novel is essential to understand how literary texts construct, reinforce, or challenge colonial ideologies. This study aims to explore how settler colonial discourse is represented and problematized in Le Guin's work.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design, specifically using a descriptive-analytical method**.** Qualitative research is appropriate because the data analyzed are in the form of words, phrases, sentences, dialogues, and narratives rather than numerical data. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research focuses on exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Therefore, this approach allows the researcher to examine literary texts in depth and interpret the meanings, values, and social issues represented within the text.

One of the main characteristics of qualitative research is that it focuses on descriptive data. Instead of relying on statistical measurements, qualitative research examines textual and verbal data to obtain a detailed understanding of a particular phenomenon. In this study, the primary data are taken from Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Word for World is Forest*, particularly words, phrases, sentences, dialogues, and narrative passages that represent the discourse of settler colonialism. These textual data are described and interpreted to identify how colonial practices, power relations, domination, exploitation, and resistance are represented in the novel.

Another characteristic of qualitative research is its emphasis on understanding phenomena within their context. Qualitative researchers consider that a phenomenon cannot be fully understood by separating it from the social, cultural, historical, and political contexts in which it occurs. In this study, the representation of settler colonialism is examined within the context of the relationship between the human settlers from Earth and the Athshean people. The researcher considers the interactions between the colonizers and the indigenous population, including the exploitation of natural resources, the exercise of power, cultural domination, and the resistance of the Athsheans. This contextual approach helps the researcher understand colonial discourse as a complex social and cultural phenomenon rather than merely identifying isolated examples in the text.

Qualitative research is also characterized by the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. In literary research, the researcher plays an important role in identifying, selecting, interpreting, and categorizing relevant textual data. The researcher carefully reads the novel several times to identify passages related to settler colonialism and then interprets those passages based on the selected theoretical framework. Therefore, the research process involves the researcher's analytical and interpretive abilities rather than the use of statistical instruments.

Furthermore, qualitative research generally applies an interpretive approach. The purpose is not only to describe what appears in the data but also to understand the meanings underlying the data. In this study, the researcher does not merely identify

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colonial events or interactions in *The Word for World is Forest*. The researcher also interprets how those events construct particular ideas about colonial power, domination, exploitation, indigenous identity, and resistance. The interpretation is conducted by connecting the textual evidence with relevant concepts of settler colonialism.

Another important characteristic is the use of inductive and flexible analysis. Qualitative research allows researchers to identify patterns, categories, and meanings that emerge from the data. In this study, the researcher begins by collecting relevant textual passages and then categorizes them according to recurring aspects of settler colonialism. These categories are subsequently analyzed and connected to the theoretical concepts used in the study. Although the analysis is guided by an established theoretical framework, the researcher remains attentive to meanings and patterns that emerge from the textual data.

The study also emphasizes a holistic understanding of the phenomenon. The discourse of settler colonialism is not examined through a single aspect but through several interconnected elements, such as political power, economic exploitation, cultural domination, environmental exploitation, and indigenous resistance. By examining these elements as interconnected aspects, the researcher can provide a more comprehensive interpretation of how settler colonialism operates and is represented in the novel.

In this study, the descriptive-analytical method is used to describe the representation of settler colonialism and analyze its underlying meanings based on the selected theoretical frameworks. The descriptive aspect involves identifying and presenting relevant textual evidence from the novel, while the analytical aspect involves interpreting the evidence to reveal the forms, practices, and consequences of settler colonialism. Thus, the qualitative descriptive-analytical approach enables the researcher to provide an in-depth interpretation of the discourse of settler colonialism in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Word for World is Forest*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

1. Finding the theme

The central theme of Ursula K. Le Guin's novel *The Word for World is Forest* is colonialism and the destruction caused by human domination over nature and indigenous people**.** The novel presents how the Terrans (humans from Earth) colonize the planet Athshe, exploit its natural resources, and oppress the native inhabitants called the Athsheans. Through this conflict, the author criticizes imperialism, violence, slavery, and environmental exploitation.

Another important theme is the relationship between humans and nature**.** The Athsheans live peacefully with the forest and consider nature as part of their spiritual and cultural identity, while the Terrans see the forest only as a resource to be controlled and destroyed for economic interests. This contrast reflects the difference between harmony and greed.

The novel also explores the theme of violence and resistance. Initially, the Athsheans are peaceful people who avoid killing, but because of the cruelty of the colonizers, they are forced to learn violence in order to defend their land and freedom. This shows how oppression can transform peaceful societies into resistant movements.

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In addition, the novel emphasizes the theme of cultural conflict and identity**.** The clash between Terran civilization and Athshean traditions demonstrates how colonial power often attempts to erase indigenous culture and values. However, the Athsheans struggle to maintain their identity, beliefs, and connection to their homeland.

Overall, The Word for World is Forest is a powerful critique of colonialism, environmental destruction, and human greed, while also promoting peace, cultural respect, and harmony with nature.

a. Synopsis

Ursula K. Le Guin's novel The Word for World is Forest is set on the planet Athshe, a world whose entire surface is covered in dense forest and is home to an indigenous people known as the Athsheans. The Athsheans live in peace, uphold the balance of nature, and have a deep spiritual connection with their environment. They know neither war nor murder, as their lives are based on harmony, cooperation, and respect for nature.

Athshe's peace begins to be disrupted when humans from Earth, known as Terrans, arrive to exploit the planet's natural resources. Since Earth has suffered severe environmental damage, the Terrans turn Athshe into a logging colony. They set up industrial camps, logged the forests on a massive scale, and enslaved the indigenous people to support their economic activities. During this colonization process, the Terrans viewed the Athsheans as inferior beings and treated them with violence, discrimination, and various forms of oppression.

Captain Davidson, a military officer who embodies the ideology of colonial domination. Davidson firmly believes in the superiority of the human race and views the Athsheans merely as tools to serve Terran interests. Davidson's cruelty and brutality make him a symbol of colonial power and imperialism. Through his actions, Davidson illustrates how colonizers often justify exploitation and violence by constructing an image of cultural and racial superiority. Davidson's aggressive behavior caused widespread suffering among the Athshean people and accelerated the conflict between the two civilizations.

As time goes on, Selver—a peaceful and spiritually sensitive individual who initially lived in accordance with his people's traditions—has suffered deep trauma after witnessing the atrocities committed by the Terrans, including slavery, humiliation, and the deaths of his loved ones. These experiences transformed Selver from an ordinary member of society into a leader of the resistance. Although this violence contradicted Athshean cultural values, Selver gradually realized that he was defending his people and preserving their world, and that active resistance against colonial oppression was necessary.

Amid these conditions, Selver organized the Athshean tribe into a coordinated movement against the Terrans. The Athshean people began to employ warfare strategies that had never before existed in their culture. A deeply concerning event for the Selver occurred with the attack on Smith Camp, where the Athshean tribe succeeded in destroying one of the Terrans' main settlements; the Athshean victory proved that the people whom the Terrans considered weak and uncivilized were, in fact, capable of resisting colonial domination.

Meanwhile, Raj Lyubov, a Terran anthropologist, represents a different perspective from that of the colonizers. Unlike Davidson, Lyubov strives to understand the Athshean tribe and respects their culture and worldview. She recognizes the destructive consequences of human colonization and works to foster mutual understanding between the two societies. However, despite her sympathy for the Athshean tribe, Lyubov is unable to prevent the conflict. Her

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character illustrates the limitations of individual morality when confronted with a larger system of power and domination.

As Athshean resistance grew stronger, Terran authorities began to realize the failure of their colonial project. The mounting losses suffered by the Terrans eventually forced the Earth government to reconsider its presence on Athshe. Davidson's violent actions were met with resistance, and he was ultimately removed from office and exiled. Gradually, following these events, the Terrans withdrew from the planet, allowing the Athshean people to regain control of their homeland and reclaim their freedom.

Ultimately, this victory had a profound impact on a war that left deep scars on Athshean society. Before the arrival of the Terrans, the Athsheans had no concept of murder or organized violence. However, through their struggle for survival, they were forced to learn practices that permanently altered their cultural identity. Selver himself realized that although the Athsheans had succeeded in defeating their colonizers, they would never be able to fully return to the peaceful way of life they had before colonization, because knowledge of violence had become part of his people's existence.

Through the conflict between the Terrans and the Athsheans, Ursula K. Le Guin reveals the devastating consequences of imperialism and the exploitation of natural resources. This story depicts a sharp critique of colonialism, environmental destruction, and cultural domination, while highlighting the importance of ecological harmony, cultural diversity, and respect for indigenous communities. It not only depicts the devastation of environmental destruction but also brings about profound psychological and cultural transformations that continue to affect both the colonizers and the colonized long after the conflict has ended.

b. Simple Story

To make it easier to follow the plot, the story can be simplified into the following main stages:

1. On the forest planet Athshe, the native Athsheans live peacefully and maintain harmony with nature. They have no tradition of war or murder and value balance in their daily lives.
2. Humans from Earth, known as Terrans, arrive on Athshe after environmental destruction on Earth. They establish logging colonies to exploit the forests for economic purposes.
3. The Terrans begin cutting down the forests and force the Athsheans to work as slaves. They treat the indigenous people as inferior beings and deny their humanity.
4. Captain Davidson emerges as the leader of the Terran military forces. He believes in human superiority and governs the colony through violence and oppression.
5. The Athsheans experience suffering as their lands, culture, and freedom are threatened by Terran domination. Their peaceful way of life gradually begins to collapse.
6. Selver, an Athshean who once lived peacefully, witnesses the cruelty committed by the Terrans. The death and suffering of his people deeply traumatize him.
7. Because of these tragic experiences, Selver decides to resist the colonizers. Although violence contradicts Athshean values, he realizes that resistance is necessary for survival.

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8. Selver becomes the leader of the Athshean people and organizes a rebellion against Terran authority. The Athsheans learn methods of warfare that were previously unknown to them.
9. The Athsheans launch attacks on several Terran camps. One of the most important victories is the destruction of Smith Camp, which weakens the Terran position.
10. The success of the rebellion proves that the Athsheans are not weak or incapable. Their resistance challenges the Terrans' belief in racial and cultural superiority.
11. Raj Lyubov, a Terran anthropologist, develops sympathy for the Athsheans. He respects their culture and recognizes the destructive consequences of colonization.
12. Despite Lyubov's efforts to create understanding between the two groups, the conflict continues to intensify. Violence and hostility spread throughout Athshe.
13. As the Athshean resistance becomes stronger, the Terrans begin to lose control of the planet. Their colonial project gradually collapses.
14. Eventually, the Terran government orders the withdrawal from Athshe, and Captain Davidson is removed from power and exiled. The Athsheans regain their land and freedom.
15. Although the Athsheans achieve victory, the experience of violence permanently changes their society. The knowledge of war and death becomes part of their culture, leaving deep psychological and cultural scars while reminding them of the consequences of colonialism.

c. Story Grammar

The Word for World is Forest is a science fiction novel written by Ursula K. Le Guin. The novel tells the story of the conflict between the Terrans, human colonizers from Earth, and the indigenous Athsheans who inhabit the forest planet Athshe. The Athsheans are peaceful people who live in harmony with nature and maintain a deep spiritual connection with their environment. They do not know war or murder because their society is based on balance, cooperation, and respect for all living beings.

Their peaceful existence is disrupted when humans from Earth arrive on Athshe to exploit its natural resources. The Terrans establish logging colonies and enslave the native Athsheans in order to maximize economic production. Under the leadership of Captain Davidson, the Terrans impose violence, discrimination, and oppression upon the indigenous population. Davidson, who strongly believes in human superiority, becomes the symbol of colonial domination and environmental destruction.

The main Athshean character is Selver, who initially lives according to the peaceful traditions of his people. However, after witnessing the suffering, humiliation, and death caused by the Terrans, Selver undergoes a profound transformation. Although violence contradicts Athshean values, he decides to resist the colonizers in order to protect his people and preserve their homeland. Trauma and injustice motivate him to become the leader of the Athshean resistance.

Under Selver's leadership, the Athsheans organize a rebellion against Terran rule. They learn methods of warfare that had previously been unknown in their culture and launch attacks against several Terran camps. One of the most important events in the story is the destruction of Smith Camp, which demonstrates that the Athsheans are capable of challenging the power of the colonizers. Their resistance gradually weakens Terran authority and exposes the failure of the colonial project.

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Another important figure is Raj Lyubov, a Terran anthropologist who sympathizes with the Athsheans and recognizes the destructive consequences of colonization. Although he attempts to establish understanding between the two groups, he is unable to prevent the conflict from escalating. Eventually, the growing resistance forces the Terran government to abandon Athshe. Captain Davidson is removed from power and exiled, while the Athsheans regain control over their land and freedom.

Despite their victory, the consequences of war permanently change Athshean society. A people who once knew only peace are forced to inherit the knowledge of violence and death. Selver realizes that although the Athsheans have successfully liberated their world, their culture will never completely return to its original state. Thus, *The Word for World is Forest* presents a powerful critique of colonialism, environmental exploitation, and cultural domination while emphasizing the lasting psychological and moral consequences of violence.

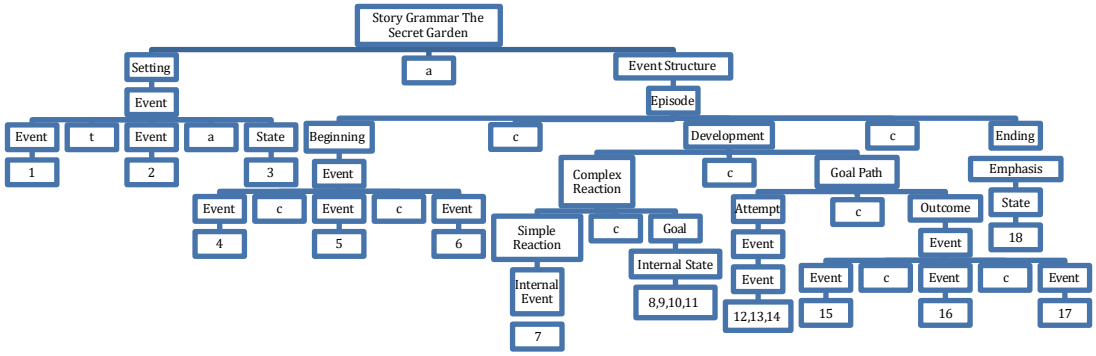


Figure 1 Story grammar of The Secret Garden

d. The Theme

The analysis reveals that the central theme of *The Secret Garden* is the positive impact of physical and psychological interaction between humans and nature on individual development, particularly that of children. This theme is consistently developed from the beginning to the end of the story through the transformation of the characters Mary, Colin, and Archibald Craven.

2. Historical and Biographical Context

a. Historical Context

The historical background of *The Word for World is Forest* is closely related to the political and social conditions of the late twentieth century, particularly the issues of colonialism, imperialism, environmental destruction, and war. Ursula K. Le Guin wrote this novel in 1972, during a period when global attention was heavily focused on the Vietnam War (1955–1975) and the growing criticism of Western imperialism. The novel reflects these historical tensions through a science fiction setting that symbolizes real-world colonial oppression.

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One of the most significant historical influences on the novel is the Vietnam War, especially the involvement of the United States in occupying and exploiting foreign lands. In the story, the human colonizers from Earth invade the forest planet Athshe, exploiting its natural resources and oppressing the native Athshean people. This mirrors how powerful nations historically colonized other territories for economic and political gain, often justifying their actions through claims of superiority. The violent domination of the Athsheans can be interpreted as an allegory for colonial practices and military aggression experienced by many indigenous peoples around the world.

The novel is also rooted in the broader history of European and Western colonialism**.** Colonialism involved the expansion of imperial powers into non-Western lands, where native populations were often displaced, enslaved, or culturally erased. Le Guin critiques this history by portraying the Terrans as destructive colonizers who view the Athsheans as primitive and inferior. This representation aligns with postcolonial theories that examine how colonial powers construct narratives of dominance and dehumanize the colonized.

In addition, *The Word for World is Forest* was written during the rise of the environmental movement in the 1960s and 1970s. During this period, increasing awareness of deforestation, pollution, and ecological damage influenced many writers and thinkers. The Athsheans' deep spiritual connection with their forest environment contrasts sharply with the Terrans' exploitative attitude toward nature. Through this contrast, Le Guin criticizes industrial capitalism and emphasizes the importance of ecological balance and respect for the natural world.

Furthermore, the novel reflects contemporary discussions about cultural identity and resistance. The Athsheans initially live peacefully, but colonial violence forces them to resist and redefine their identity through struggle. This parallels the experiences of many colonized societies that fought for independence and sought to reclaim their cultural autonomy. The narrative illustrates how colonial oppression can transform both the oppressor and the oppressed, often leading to cycles of violence and trauma.

From a literary perspective, the novel emerged during a time when science fiction was increasingly used as a medium for social and political critique. Le Guin, influenced by anthropological and philosophical ideas, used speculative fiction to explore issues of power, language, and worldview. Her work contributes to postcolonial literary discourse by challenging dominant ideologies and imagining alternative ways of living based on harmony rather than domination.

In conclusion, the historical background of *The Word for World is Forest* is deeply connected to the realities of colonialism, the Vietnam War, environmental concerns, and struggles for cultural liberation. Through the fictional world of Athshe, Ursula K. Le Guin offers a powerful critique of historical and ongoing systems of oppression, making the novel highly relevant to discussions of colonial discourse and resistance.

b. Biographical Context

The influence of an author's life experiences can be observed in the genres of science fiction and fantasy literature of *The Word for World is Forest.* Le Guin grew up in an intellectual family that strongly influenced her worldview and literary imagination. Her father, Alfred L. Kroeber, was a famous anthropologist, while her mother, Theodora Kroeber, was a writer known for documenting Native American culture. Because of this background, Le Guin developed a deep interest in anthropology, culture, language, and human society from an early age.

Le Guin studied literature and languages at Radcliffe College and later earned a master's degree from Columbia University. Her educational background helped shape her

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literary style, which often combines philosophical reflection, social criticism, and cultural analysis. Throughout her career, she became widely recognized for using science fiction not only as entertainment but also as a medium to explore complex issues such as gender, colonialism, environmentalism, identity, and power relations.

The writing of *The Word for World is Forest* was heavily influenced by Le Guin's personal beliefs and the political situation during the early 1970s. She strongly opposed war, violence, and imperial domination, especially the Vietnam War conducted by the United States. In several interviews and essays, Le Guin explained that the novel was written as a response to the brutality and destruction caused by war and colonial exploitation. The conflict between the Terrans and the Athsheans symbolizes the relationship between colonizers and indigenous peoples in real history.

Le Guin's anthropological perspective also plays an important role in the novel. Influenced by her father's studies of indigenous cultures, she often created fictional societies with unique languages, customs, and worldviews. In *The Word for World is Forest*, the Athsheans are portrayed as peaceful people who live in harmony with nature and value collective balance rather than domination. This reflects Le Guin's admiration for non-Western cultures and her criticism of industrial and militaristic societies.

Another important aspect of Le Guin's biography is her concern for environmental issues. During the twentieth century, industrial expansion and deforestation became global concerns, and Le Guin used her fiction to criticize humanity's destructive relationship with nature. The forest in the novel is not merely a physical setting but also a symbol of life, spirituality, and ecological harmony. Through the destruction of the forest by the Terrans, Le Guin condemns environmental exploitation driven by greed and capitalism.

Le Guin was also deeply influenced by philosophical and spiritual traditions such as Taoism. Taoist ideas about balance, harmony, and nonviolence can be seen clearly in the Athsheans' way of life. However, the novel also explores how oppression can force peaceful people into violence, showing the tragic consequences of colonial domination.

As a writer, Ursula K. Le Guin received many prestigious literary awards, including the Hugo Award and the Nebula Award. Her works have had a significant impact on modern literature, particularly in feminist and postcolonial literary studies. She is remembered as a writer who challenged dominant ideologies and encouraged readers to think critically about humanity, culture, and power.

In conclusion, the biographical background of Ursula K. Le Guin greatly influenced the creation of *The Word for World is Forest*. Her family environment, academic background, political beliefs, anthropological interests, and environmental concerns all contributed to the themes and messages presented in the novel. Through her experiences and perspectives, Le Guin created a powerful literary work that critiques colonialism, violence, and ecological destruction while promoting peace, cultural respect, and harmony with nature.

B. Discussions

Based on the findings of this study, colonialism in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Word for World is Forest* is represented not simply as a political relationship between colonizers and colonized people, but as a complex system of power that transforms land, natural resources,

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social relations, cultural values, and the identity of the indigenous population. The findings indicate that the environmental destruction experienced by Athshe cannot be separated from the broader structure of settler colonialism. The Terrans' exploitation of the forest is not merely an economic activity undertaken to obtain natural resources. Rather, it represents a colonial process through which the colonizers attempt to appropriate the land, reorganize its function according to their own interests, and undermine the relationship between the Athsheans and their environment. This interpretation becomes particularly significant when the novel is examined through Patrick Wolfe's theory of settler colonialism.

Wolfe (2006) distinguishes settler colonialism from other forms of colonial domination by emphasizing that settler colonialism is fundamentally concerned with land and the establishment of a new colonial society on an appropriated land base. The central principle of settler colonialism is what Wolfe calls the "logic of elimination," through which indigenous societies are dissolved, displaced, or otherwise rendered less capable of maintaining their relationship to their land. Wolfe argues that settler colonialism is inherently eliminatory, although elimination does not necessarily take the form of immediate physical genocide. It may also operate through dispossession, social transformation, cultural destruction, and the establishment of a new social order on indigenous land.

This theoretical perspective provides an important framework for understanding the Terrans' presence on Athshe. Their arrival cannot be understood merely as an attempt to obtain timber from another planet. Their activities transform Athshe from a living environment into a resource frontier. The forest is treated as something that can be measured, harvested, transported, and converted into economic value. Consequently, the colonial occupation of Athshe operates simultaneously on two levels: the physical appropriation of land and the ideological transformation of the meaning of that land. For the Athsheans, the forest constitutes the center of their social and spiritual existence, whereas for the Terrans, it becomes a commodity. This conflict over the meaning and function of the forest demonstrates that the colonial struggle is fundamentally a struggle over land, resources, and the right to determine how the environment should be used.

1. Environmental Exploitation as a Form of Settler Colonial Power

The first major finding of this study concerns the environmental consequences of colonialism. The destruction of Athshe's forests demonstrates that colonial domination is inseparable from environmental exploitation. The Terrans arrive on Athshe because Earth has depleted its own timber resources and consequently requires resources from other planets. Their presence therefore emerges from a history of environmental exhaustion on Earth. Instead of addressing the ecological consequences of their own development, however, the Terrans transfer their extractive practices to another world. This aspect of the novel supports Wolfe's argument that land is central to settler colonialism. Wolfe emphasizes that land is necessary for life and that struggles over land are therefore also struggles over life. In the case of Athshe, this relationship becomes especially visible because the forest is not simply a geographical space. It is the material foundation of Athshean society. The destruction of the forest consequently threatens both the ecological system and the social system that depends upon it.

The Terrans' deforestation can therefore be interpreted as part of the "logic of elimination." The elimination of indigenous societies does not necessarily begin with the direct

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physical elimination of indigenous individuals. It can begin with the destruction of the material conditions that enable an indigenous society to exist. When forests are removed, the Athsheans lose access to the environment through which they organize their economic, social, and spiritual lives. Environmental destruction thus contributes to the weakening of indigenous autonomy.

This finding is particularly important because it expands the meaning of environmental exploitation in the novel. At first glance, deforestation may appear to be an economic consequence of colonialism: the Terrans need timber, so they cut down trees. However, from the perspective of Wolfe's theory, the process has a deeper political meaning. The forest is the basis upon which Athshean life is organized, and destroying the forest therefore interferes with the ability of Athsheans to maintain their own social order. Environmental exploitation becomes a mechanism through which colonial power transforms the indigenous relationship with land.

The novel consequently illustrates that the environment is not an external object separate from colonial politics. The forest is directly connected to the survival of the Athshean community. This interpretation is consistent with Savi's (2021) study, which argues that *The Word for World is Forest* represents a colonial exploitation of another planet after Earth has exhausted its own resources. Savi also emphasizes the Terrans' dualistic understanding of nature, in which humanity is positioned against nature and the environment is treated as an object of exploitation.

However, the present study develops this argument further by connecting environmental exploitation to settler colonialism. Savi primarily approaches the novel through the dilemmas of the Anthropocene and the Athsheans' alternative ecological worldview. The present research, by contrast, argues that environmental destruction is not simply an ecological problem produced by excessive human activity. It is also part of a colonial structure in which the indigenous population's relationship to land is undermined in order to facilitate the appropriation of that land and its resources.

This distinction is important because it reveals the political dimension of environmental destruction. The Terrans do not destroy the forest accidentally. The destruction is organized, systematic, and motivated by the interests of the colonial society. The forest is converted into a resource because the colonizers possess the political and military power to define its value. The Athsheans, despite being the original inhabitants of Athshe, have little authority over the fate of their own environment. Therefore, the environmental crisis in the novel is simultaneously a crisis of political power.

2. Colonialism, Land Appropriation, and the Elimination of Indigenous Space

The second finding concerns the relationship between colonial occupation and the elimination of indigenous space. Wolfe's concept of settler colonialism is useful because it shifts attention from colonial violence as an isolated event to colonialism as a continuing structure. Contemporary scholarship frequently emphasizes Wolfe's formulation of settler colonialism as a "structure, not an event." This means that colonialism should not be understood only as the moment when colonizers arrive. Instead, attention must be given to the structures that continue to reorganize land, society, and indigenous existence after the initial invasion.

The situation on Athshe illustrates this structural dimension. The arrival of the Terrans is only the beginning of the colonial process. After arriving, they establish settlements, construct logging camps, organize labor, exploit natural resources, impose their authority, and create a system in which Athsheans are subordinated. The colonial presence therefore becomes institutionalized. This process is significant because the Terrans do not treat Athshe as a place belonging to another society. They behave as though the existence of Athshean society does not prevent them from claiming the planet's resources. The Athsheans are effectively transformed

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from inhabitants into obstacles. Their presence becomes problematic precisely because they occupy the land that the Terrans desire to control.

This dynamic reflects Wolfe's argument that settler colonialism seeks to establish a new society on an appropriated land base. The indigenous population becomes a problem for the colonial project because the existence of an indigenous society demonstrates that the land already belongs to someone else. The colonial system consequently requires the reduction of indigenous authority over land. The novel represents this process through the contrast between Athshean and Terran understandings of land. Athshean society is deeply connected to the forest. Their identity, culture, dreams, and social organization are integrated with their environment. For the Terrans, however, land is primarily valuable because of what can be extracted from it. These opposing understandings produce an inevitable conflict.

Therefore, the colonial struggle in the novel is not merely a struggle between two groups of people. It is also a struggle between two different ontologies of land. The Athsheans understand the forest as part of a living system, whereas the Terrans understand it as a resource frontier. The colonial system becomes powerful because the Terrans have the military and institutional capacity to impose their interpretation of the environment over the Athsheans' interpretation. The environmental consequences are therefore inseparable from territorial domination. Once the Terrans gain control of the forest, the Athsheans lose control over an essential part of their world. The destruction of trees consequently represents the destruction of indigenous spatial autonomy.

3. Dehumanization and the Logic of Elimination

Another important finding is the dehumanization of the Athsheans. The colonizers refer to the indigenous population using the derogatory term "creechies." This linguistic practice demonstrates that colonial domination operates not only through physical force but also through discourse. By reducing Athsheans to a derogatory category, the Terrans create an ideological distinction between themselves and the indigenous population.

This finding can also be interpreted through Wolfe's logic of elimination. Elimination does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of every indigenous individual. Rather, it involves the dissolution of indigenous society as an autonomous social and political entity. Dehumanization contributes to this process because it undermines recognition of indigenous people as legitimate subjects with their own rights, values, and relationship to land.

In the novel, the dehumanization of Athsheans makes violence easier to justify. If the colonizers perceive Athsheans as inferior, primitive, or less fully human, then exploitation can be presented as legitimate. Violence against them no longer appears to the colonizers as violence against people with equal moral status. This ideological mechanism is crucial because colonial exploitation requires not only physical power but also a justification for that power.

The relationship between dehumanization and environmental exploitation is particularly significant. Once the indigenous population is represented as inferior, their relationship with the land can also be dismissed as inferior. The Terrans can then claim that their own supposedly rational and technologically advanced use of the forest is superior to Athshean ecological practices. Colonial domination consequently involves the imposition of both political and epistemological authority.

This finding is compatible with Jang's (2024) analysis, which examines the relationship among ecological destruction, capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism in the novel. Jang uses Jason W. Moore's theory of capitalism and Frantz Fanon's critique of colonialism to explain how ecological destruction is connected to capitalist imperialism and colonial domination.

The present study, however, emphasizes that the problem can also be understood through settler colonialism. Whereas capitalist and postcolonial approaches can explain the economic exploitation and psychological effects of colonial domination, Wolfe's framework draws attention to the centrality of indigenous land. The Athsheans are not dehumanized simply

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because the Terrans want cheap labor. Their dehumanization also helps the Terrans justify their appropriation of Athshean territory and natural resources.

Thus, language, violence, and environmental exploitation operate as interconnected dimensions of colonial power. The derogatory naming of Athsheans supports social hierarchy; social hierarchy legitimizes violence; violence enables resource extraction; and resource extraction undermines the material foundation of Athshean society. These processes reinforce one another and form a broader colonial structure.

4. Environmental Destruction and Cultural Disruption

The findings further demonstrate that environmental destruction produces cultural consequences. The Athsheans do not merely lose trees; they lose part of the material and symbolic environment through which their culture exists. This is important because indigenous culture is frequently inseparable from land. When the environment is transformed, cultural practices and systems of knowledge may also be disrupted. In *The Word for World is Forest*, this relationship is represented through the importance of the forest and the Athshean concept of "dream-time." The Athshean worldview does not sharply separate material existence from spiritual and psychological existence. The forest, dreams, social relationships, and identity are interconnected. Consequently, colonial violence produces consequences that extend beyond physical suffering.
The destruction of the forest therefore threatens the cultural continuity of Athshean society. The colonizers introduce new forms of violence, new social relationships, and new ideas that were previously unfamiliar to the Athsheans. The most significant example is the introduction of organized killing. The Athsheans were initially represented as a society that did not practice interpersonal violence in the same manner as the Terrans. However, colonial oppression changes this condition.

This finding is important when viewed through Wolfe's concept of colonial transformation. Settler colonialism does not merely occupy an already existing society. It reorganizes that society according to colonial needs. As Wolfe explains, settler colonialism has both a destructive and constructive dimension: it attempts to dissolve native societies while simultaneously establishing a new colonial society on appropriated land.
The Terrans therefore do not simply destroy Athshean culture from the outside. Their presence forces Athshean society to respond to new forms of violence and domination. The resulting transformation demonstrates how colonialism can alter indigenous social structures even when indigenous resistance remains strong.

The concept of dream-time is particularly important because it illustrates the depth of this cultural transformation. The Athsheans' relationship with dreams represents a distinctive way of understanding reality. When colonial violence disrupts this worldview, the consequences are psychological as well as cultural. Violence enters a society that previously organized itself around different principles.

Therefore, colonialism produces what may be called cultural displacement. The Athsheans remain physically present on their planet, but the conditions that previously allowed them to live according to their own cultural system are increasingly threatened. This is another form of elimination: the elimination of a way of life.

5. Colonial Violence and the Transformation of Indigenous Resistance

The fifth major finding concerns resistance. Selver's transformation demonstrates that colonial violence produces resistance as a response to oppression. Initially, the Athsheans do not possess the same concept of organized violence as the Terrans. However, slavery, physical

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abuse, sexual violence, and the destruction of their environment force them to reconsider their relationship to violence.

This finding is consistent with Paul and Krishna's (2025) study, which examines the ethical relationship between violence and peace in the novel. Their study argues that Le Guin presents violence in a complex way: although the novel emphasizes nonviolence and Taoist ethics, violence may become a means of self-preservation for a persecuted community. The present study agrees with this interpretation but places greater emphasis on the colonial structure that produces the transformation. Selver does not become violent because violence is inherently part of Athshean culture. Rather, violence is introduced and normalized through colonial oppression. His transformation is therefore evidence of the social consequences of settler colonialism.

This distinction is crucial. If Selver's violence is considered independently from colonialism, he could simply be interpreted as a character who changes from peaceful to violent. However, when analyzed through Wolfe, his transformation becomes evidence of the disruptive effects of colonial domination. The colonial system changes not only the environment but also the behavioral and psychological structures of the colonized society.

Selver's resistance also challenges the colonial assumption that indigenous people will remain passive. The Athsheans are initially treated as a population that can be controlled, exploited, and subordinated. However, resistance demonstrates that the indigenous population retains agency.The resistance therefore disrupts the colonial logic of elimination. If settler colonialism seeks to dissolve indigenous autonomy, resistance becomes an assertion of continued indigenous existence. The Athsheans' struggle is not merely a military conflict; it is a struggle to maintain their right to determine their own relationship with their land and society.

At the same time, Le Guin does not romanticize resistance completely. The Athsheans' adoption of violence produces consequences for their own cultural identity. They must confront the moral and psychological effects of killing. Thus, the novel presents colonial resistance as necessary but tragic. The colonized are forced to adopt forms of violence that fundamentally contradict some of their previous values.

This complexity strengthens the novel's critique of colonialism. Colonialism does not simply harm its victims physically; it can force them into forms of behavior that transform their identities. The tragedy is therefore twofold: the colonized lose aspects of their original world, while the colonizers also create the conditions for violent resistance against themselves.

6. Anthropocentrism and the Colonial Construction of Nature

Another significant finding is the relationship between settler colonialism and anthropocentrism. The character of Davidson represents a worldview in which humans are positioned above other forms of life. His attitude toward the Athsheans and the environment demonstrates that anthropocentrism can provide an ideological foundation for domination. The Terrans perceive the forest primarily in terms of its usefulness. Trees become timber, animals become resources, and Athsheans become laborers or obstacles. Everything is evaluated according to its usefulness to the colonial system. This logic is fundamentally different from the Athshean understanding of the forest as an integral part of life.Savi (2021) identifies a similar contrast by arguing that the Terrans reproduce a dualistic logic that separates humans from nature and enables environmental exploitation. She connects this representation to contemporary Anthropocene concerns, including deforestation, biodiversity loss, and ecological crisis. Roy (2023) likewise interprets the novel through capitalism and ecosocialism, identifying two competing systems: Terran industrial capitalism, characterized by physical and symbolic violence, and an Athshean worldview organized around ecological interdependence and a forest-centered understanding of life.

These previous studies strengthen the present finding that environmental destruction is central to the novel. However, the present research adds another dimension by arguing that

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anthropocentrism is not merely an environmental philosophy. Within the colonial context, it becomes a political ideology. The belief that humans have the right to control nature becomes connected to the belief that technologically powerful humans have the right to control indigenous people.

This relationship can be represented as a hierarchy:

Terrans → superior humans → superior culture → superior use of nature → legitimate domination of Athsheans and Athshean land.

The hierarchy demonstrates how environmental domination and indigenous domination reinforce one another. If nature is understood as an object, then the people whose lives are closely integrated with nature can also be treated as objects. Therefore, challenging anthropocentrism becomes part of challenging colonialism.

7. The Interconnection between Environmental and Social Destruction

One of the most important findings of this study is that environmental destruction and social destruction cannot be treated as two separate consequences of colonialism. They are interconnected. The destruction of the forest affects Athshean society, while the oppression of Athsheans facilitates the destruction of the forest.

The Terrans require political control to exploit Athshe's natural resources. At the same time, the economic value of those resources strengthens the colonial system. This creates a cycle: resource extraction → colonial expansion → indigenous dispossession → environmental destruction → cultural disruption → resistance → intensified colonial violence.

This cycle illustrates the structural nature of settler colonialism. Colonialism reproduces itself through multiple institutions and practices rather than through a single act of invasion. The environmental consequences are therefore not accidental by-products. They are produced by the same colonial structure that creates social and cultural inequality. This interpretation is supported by Jang's (2024) finding that ecological destruction in the novel is closely related to capitalism and imperialism. Jang argues that the novel can be read as a critique of ecological destruction produced through capitalist structures and imperialist violence. Similarly, the 2025 Marxist study by Khudair and Abdulali interprets the novel as a representation of capitalist exploitation, colonial expansion, ecological destruction, forced labor, and the commodification of Athsheans.

The present research complements these approaches by emphasizing the land-centered nature of the colonial relationship. Capitalism explains why the forest becomes a commodity, while Wolfe's settler colonialism explains why the colonizers consider themselves entitled to appropriate an indigenous land base in the first place. This distinction is particularly useful for understanding why the environmental consequences of the novel are so profound. The Terrans do not simply exploit a forest; they establish themselves on another society's planet and reorganize the environment according to their own needs. The environmental crisis is consequently inseparable from territorial domination.

8. Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this research demonstrate both continuity and difference in relation to previous scholarship on *The Word for World is Forest*. Previous studies have established that the novel contains strong critiques of imperialism, capitalism, militarism, ecological destruction, and colonial violence. Savi (2021), for example, emphasizes the novel's relevance to Anthropocene dilemmas and the contrast between Terran environmental exploitation and Athshean ecological thinking. Roy (2023) approaches the novel through capitalism and ecosocialism, arguing that the conflict between Terran industrial capitalism and Athshean ecological values provides a central framework for understanding the novel. Jang (2024) similarly connects ecological destruction to capitalism and imperialism while examining

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Athshean resistance through Moore's and Fanon's theories. Meanwhile, Paul and Krishna (2025) focus on violence, peace, and Taoist ethics, particularly the way colonial oppression transforms violence into a means of self-preservation.

More recent scholarship has also examined dehumanization and decolonization in the novel. A 2025 study by Halmoosh and Az-Zubaidy, for example, focuses on colonial violence, dehumanization, hybridity, and decolonization, identifying these issues as important dimensions of the encounter between Terran colonizers and Athsheans. These studies demonstrate that the novel has already been widely interpreted as a critique of colonial and ecological violence. However, they do not make Patrick Wolfe's theory of settler colonialism the central analytical framework for explaining the relationship between environmental exploitation and indigenous elimination. The present research therefore occupies a distinctive position. Rather than treating environmental destruction, cultural disruption, dehumanization, and resistance as separate themes, it understands them as interconnected manifestations of a settler-colonial structure. The forest is important not simply because it is an ecological environment but because it is the land base of an indigenous society. Its destruction therefore contributes to the elimination of indigenous autonomy.

9. The Uniqueness of the Present Study

The uniqueness of this study lies primarily in its combination of settler colonialism theory and environmental analysis. Existing studies have successfully demonstrated that *The Word for World is Forest* is concerned with ecological destruction, capitalism, imperialism, violence, and resistance. However, this study argues that these issues can be integrated through Wolfe's concept of settler colonialism.

First, this study contributes by demonstrating that environmental destruction functions as part of the logic of elimination**.** The destruction of the forest does not merely represent ecological damage. It undermines the material basis of Athshean society and weakens the indigenous population's ability to maintain its own way of life.

Second, this study emphasizes that land is the central connection between environmental and colonial violence. The forest is simultaneously an ecological environment, a cultural space, a source of livelihood, and the foundation of Athshean identity. Therefore, controlling the forest means controlling the conditions of Athshean existence.

Third, this research demonstrates that environmental exploitation is also a form of cultural domination. Because the Athsheans understand their relationship with the forest differently from the Terrans, deforestation represents an attempt to replace an indigenous environmental worldview with a colonial one. The conflict is therefore not simply about how many trees are cut down but about who has the authority to determine the meaning and use of land.

Fourth, the study reveals that dehumanization and environmental exploitation are interconnected. The colonizers' representation of Athsheans as inferior makes it easier to deny their authority over the land. Once Athsheans are represented as less human, their relationship with the forest can also be dismissed as primitive or irrelevant. Thus, colonial discourse helps legitimize environmental appropriation.

Fifth, this study highlights the reciprocal relationship between environmental destruction and resistance. The destruction of the forest intensifies colonial oppression, while colonial oppression produces resistance. Selver's transformation therefore demonstrates that environmental exploitation can generate political consequences. The forest becomes a site of both domination and resistance.

Finally, this research contributes by showing that the environmental consequences of settler colonialism extend beyond physical destruction. They include psychological, cultural, social, and ethical transformations. The destruction of Athshe's environment contributes to the

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disruption of dream-time, the transformation of social relations, and the introduction of violence into a society previously characterized by different principles of coexistence.

10. Overall Interpretation

Taken together, the findings indicate that *The Word for World is Forest* presents settler colonialism as a system that seeks to transform both land and people. The Terrans' objective is not limited to extracting resources. Their presence establishes a new colonial order in which the indigenous population is subordinated and the environment is reorganized according to colonial interests. Wolfe's theory makes it possible to understand why these processes are interconnected. The "logic of elimination" does not operate only through physical violence. It can also operate through dispossession, cultural disruption, dehumanization, environmental destruction, and the establishment of a new social order on indigenous land.

In Athshe, the forest becomes the clearest symbol of this struggle. For the Terrans, the forest is a commodity; for the Athsheans, it is the foundation of their world. The conflict between these two perspectives produces the central tension of the novel. The colonial destruction of the forest consequently becomes a destruction of a way of life. At the same time, Le Guin does not present the Athsheans as completely powerless. Their resistance demonstrates the persistence of indigenous agency. Nevertheless, the novel emphasizes that resistance itself can be transformed by colonial violence. Selver and the Athsheans must adopt forms of violence that alter their cultural and psychological identity. Colonialism therefore produces a tragic transformation: in attempting to defend their world, the colonized are forced to change part of the world they are defending. The novel ultimately suggests that the environmental crisis cannot be separated from questions of power, justice, and cultural survival. The destruction of nature is not simply the result of technological development. It is the consequence of a particular system of values that defines land as property, nature as commodity, and indigenous people as obstacles to economic expansion.

Therefore, the central contribution of this study is the argument that the environmental consequences represented in *The Word for World is Forest* should be understood as an integral component of settler colonialism. Deforestation, exploitation, dehumanization, cultural disruption, and violence are not isolated phenomena. They form an interconnected colonial structure that attempts to transform Athshe into a space that serves Terran interests. In this sense, Le Guin's novel remains significant because it connects the fate of the environment with the fate of indigenous societies. The destruction of the forest threatens not only trees and animals but also memory, identity, culture, spirituality, and social continuity. The novel consequently demonstrates that environmental justice and indigenous justice cannot be completely separated. To destroy an indigenous environment is also to threaten the social and cultural system that has developed through that environment.

Ultimately, *The Word for World is Forest* can be read as a powerful literary critique of a colonial system that seeks to destroy in order to replace. The Terrans' exploitation of Athshe demonstrates the destructive dimension of settler colonialism, while the Athsheans' resistance demonstrates the persistence of indigenous agency. Through the conflict between the Terrans and Athsheans, Le Guin reveals that colonial power operates through the simultaneous domination of people, land, and meaning. The novel therefore extends beyond a simple criticism of deforestation or imperialism. It exposes the structural relationship between territorial appropriation, environmental exploitation, cultural destruction, and indigenous resistance.

The findings of this study consequently reinforce Wolfe's central insight that settler colonialism must be understood structurally rather than as a single historical event. The Terrans' initial arrival is only the starting point of a larger process involving the appropriation of land, exploitation of resources, establishment of colonial institutions, dehumanization of indigenous

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people, disruption of indigenous culture, and resistance against colonial domination. Through this framework, the environmental destruction of Athshe becomes more than an ecological tragedy: it becomes evidence of how colonial power operates through the transformation of the land itself. Thus, the distinctive significance of this research lies in demonstrating that the environment is not merely the setting in which settler colonialism occurs; the environment is one of the primary sites through which settler colonialism operates. In *The Word for World is Forest*, the struggle over the forest is simultaneously a struggle over territory, resources, identity, culture, and survival. This interpretation provides a more integrated understanding of the novel and demonstrates how Le Guin connects ecological destruction with the broader consequences of colonial domination.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusions

Based on the analysis in findings and discussions, it can be concluded that the novel The Word for World is Forest portrays colonialism as a complex and destructive system of domination. Colonialism in this novel is not only evident in the form of territorial control but also encompasses the exploitation of natural resources, the oppression of indigenous peoples, and the imposition of ideology and culture by the colonizers. The presence of humans from Earth on the planet Athshe illustrates how colonialism is carried out with an economic orientation and unilateral interests, without regard for environmental sustainability or the well-being of local communities.

Furthermore, the practice of dehumanization was a key factor in sustaining colonialism. The indigenous people of Athshe were viewed as inferior beings and treated as objects or tools of production. The use of derogatory terms demonstrates that language functions as an instrument of power capable of shaping perceptions and justifying acts of oppression. Thus, colonialism operates not only through physical force but also through discursive constructions that affirm the colonizers' superiority.

Furthermore, this novel also illustrates that colonial oppression ultimately sparks resistance from the colonized. The character Selver represents this transformation, as he leads the resistance against the colonizers after experiencing various forms of violence and injustice. However, this resistance does not only impact the colonizers but also alters the fundamental values of the previously peaceful Athshe society. This transformation demonstrates that colonialism not only destroys externally but also disrupts the internal structures and cultural identity of a society.

On the other hand, this novel also critiques the anthropocentric view that places humans at the center of everything. Human exploitation of the Athshe forest reflects an attitude that disregards ecological balance. Through the conflicts that arise, it becomes clear that human domination over nature actually causes destruction and disharmony. Therefore, this novel emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balanced relationship between humans, nature, and other living beings.

Ultimately, The Word for World is Forest serves not only as a work of literature but also as a social critique of colonialism. The story also demonstrates that colonialism has far-reaching social, cultural, and ecological impacts and gives rise to long-term consequences that are difficult to reverse.

B. Suggestions

Based on the results of this study, several recommendations can be offered—for readers, future researchers, and the field of education. Firstly, readers are encouraged to view this novel not only as a work of science fiction but also as a reflection on social realities and the history of colonialism. Readers are also encouraged to draw critical insights from this story, particularly regarding the importance of valuing cultural diversity, protecting the environment, and rejecting all forms of oppression and injustice.

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Secondly, for future researchers, this study has limitations in its scope, as it focuses solely on the discourse of colonialism. Therefore, future research could expand upon this study by employing alternative approaches, such as psycholinguistics, ecocriticism, or a more in-depth postcolonial analysis. Additionally, the analysis could be broadened by comparing this novel with other works by Ursula K. Le Guin or other authors addressing similar themes.

Thirdly, in the field of education, this novel can be used as teaching material in literature courses, particularly to enhance students' critical analytical skills regarding social, cultural, and environmental issues. Professors or instructors can utilize this novel as a medium to discuss the concepts of colonialism, power, and the relationship between humans and nature in a more contextual and reflective manner.

Finally, this study is expected to contribute to the development of literary studies, particularly in understanding how literary works can represent and critique complex social phenomena such as colonialism.

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