

REVIEW OF *THE WORD FOR WORLD IS FOREST*

“You have not thought things through,” he said. By his standards it was a brutal insult.¹

Less interesting than some of Le Guin’s earlier sci-fi novels. This one is very straightforward: colonizing military force commits atrocities against aliens; aliens reach breaking point and strike back, then arrange peace.

The lovely aspect of the story is that the aliens prevent this from turning into a cycle of violence. They fight only as much as they must; they don’t pursue vengeance. But the story doesn’t explore how to achieve this outcome. The aliens are presented as simply less violent by nature than ordinary humans.

I did enjoy the furry aliens’ perspective on earthlings:

“...Ugly they are, do you think even their children are hairless?”

“That we shall never know, I hope.”

“Ugh, think of nursing a child that wasn’t furry. Like trying to suckle a fish.”²

¹Ursula K. Le Guin, *Hainish Novels & Stories*, vol. 2, Library of America 296-297 (New York, N.Y: The Library of America, 2017), 41.

²Ibid., 2:85.