



AVATAR

The movie AVATAR was the **highest-grossing** film of 2009. The movie, directed by the **world-renowned** James Cameron, just won 'Best Picture' at the Golden Globe Awards, and it joins only 4 other films which have made 1 billion USD. The other movies in this category are: Titanic (also directed by Cameron), Lord of the Rings; Return of the King, Pirates of the Caribbean; Dead Man's Chest, and The Dark Knight. James Cameron is the only director to have made 2 movies in the "1 Billion Dollar Club". AVATAR is 2 and a half hours in length and is rated PG-13 due to violence, some smoking, sensuality, and language. Is there a movie rating system in Russia? What rating would you have given AVATAR?

AVATAR takes place on the fictional planet of Pandora. The **protagonist** is Jake Sully, a disabled former member of the Marine Corps. A veteran, he was called to Pandora to take his recently deceased brother's place on the research team. Despite having no experience as a scientist, he **has a lot to offer** his colleagues Grace and Norm. Because of the planet's hostile atmosphere, humans have genetically grown half-alien/half-human bodies which they can transfer their consciousnesses into and explore the world in. Since Jake's brother already had an incredibly expensive 'Avatar' (half-alien/half-human body) grown for him, he's able to connect with it using the same DNA code and experience first-hand the joys of Pandora. Also on Pandora is a mining company led by Parker Selfidge.

This company wants to collect Unobtainium, which is located directly below the enormous tree that the Na'vi live under and rely on for their well-being. One day, on a chance meeting after getting separated from his team, Jake's Avatar is rescued by Neytiri, a Na'vi princess, who brings him into her tribe in order to give the humans a second chance at relating to this new environment. When word gets out of his increasing time with the alien species, Colonel Quaritch, the leader of the human military forces on Pandora, **enlists** Jake to do some **reconnaissance** for the company, as they'd like to persuade the tribe to move their home before taking more drastic measures to take the treasure hidden below. Yet as Jake becomes one with the tribe and begins to understand the secrets of Pandora, his conscience is torn between his new adopted world and the wheelchair-bound one awaiting him when the psychic connection to his Avatar is broken. Soon battle lines are drawn and Jake needs to decide which side he will fight on when the time comes.

AVATAR raises several issues about the environment, corporate ethics, and globalization. What was your impression of the movie, and **what did you get out of it?** If you were in Jake's position, what would you have done? What do you think about the situation depicted in the movie? Are there any **compromises** that you think could have been made?

Highest-grossing = [ADJECTIVE] Making more money than anything in the same category. (usually used with movies or albums) [*Kelly Clarkson's latest CD performed alright, but her album 'Breakthrough' was the highest-grossing of her career so far.*]

World-renowned = [ADJECTIVE] World famous; Very popular for a positive reason or special skill. [*Michael Phelps is certainly world-renowned, having smashed previous records and won 8 gold medals at the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics.*]

Protagonist = The main character in a play, film, or book; the hero. [*In Tolstoy's WAR AND PEACE, Pierre Bezhukov is the protagonist.*]

To have a lot to offer = To be skilled in such a way that one is helpful to a cause or in achieving a goal. [*Even though Muggsy Bogues was very short for a basketball player, he was also very quick and had a lot to offer to the Charlotte Hornets.*] SYNONYMOUS PHRASE: To bring a lot to the table

To enlist = ¹To ask someone to help or support you. ²To join the armed forces in a role other than officer. [*Even though I know very little about house construction, the director of Habitat for Humanity enlisted me to help build a house for the homeless.*]

Reconnaissance = [ADJECTIVE & NOUN] The use of soldiers and/or aircraft to go into an area and get information about an enemy or resource. [*Reconnaissance missions were critical in WWII for the planning of beach landings in France. Without information about the beach, the allies could not have successfully made their attack.*] NOTE: Often shortened to just "recon"

What did you get out of it? = "What did you think about it, and what did you learn from it?" PHRASE: To get (something) out of (something) = To learn (something) from (something) [*I sat through 40 hours of lecture this semester from Professor Gutorov, but honestly, I didn't get anything out of it! I didn't learn a thing from him.*]

Compromise = [NOUN] A way of solving a disagreement in which both people accept that they cannot have everything that they want. [*John and Sarah decided to go dutch on their \$40 tab. John paid \$20, and Sarah paid \$20.*] VERB VARIANT: To compromise [OR] To reach a compromise [OR] To come to a compromise [*John and I disagreed on who should buy the cleaning materials, so we compromised and he bought the ammonia, and I bought the Windex.*]

AVATAR CONTROVERSIES

Despite its success at the box office, AVATAR is a movie that is surrounded by controversy. What is your take on the following AVATAR controversies?

(1)Racist Plot? Some in America felt that the casting (placement of a certain person to play a role in a play or movie) of a white man to play Jake Sully was racist, because it shows that only a white person can save native people. These critics complain that Hollywood never casts minority characters in positive roles, and in doing so, **pigeonhole** minorities as second-rate, unimportant players in today's society.

(2)Widespread Depression? A new psychological disorder called "Post-Avatarum Depression" has been noted by psychologists. This disorder comes from the fact that the scenes of nature depicted in AVATAR were so beautiful, that people became sad and even suicidal after the movie when they realized that they would never be able to witness such beauty, as it does not exist. One viewer, a 17-year old from Sweden, revealed on his blog that, "When I woke up this morning after watching AVATAR for the first time yesterday, the world seemed ... gray. It was like my whole life, everything I've done and worked for, lost its meaning." Further, his thoughts took a grim turn. "I still don't really see any reason to keep ... doing things at all. I live in a dying world." Others see similarities between the actions of the mining company in the movie and corporations in real life, and they began to fear a similarly disastrous confrontation (conflict) on Earth.

(3)China Pulls AVATAR off the big screen. Concerned about possible civil unrest in the country, China has banned AVATAR from being shown in theaters across China. The government is concerned that some will draw a comparison between the **plight** of the Na'vi in the movie and those Chinese who are being asked to move due to aggressive re-population measures by property developers.

(4)The Vatican says AVATAR is no masterpiece. Representatives of the Pope encouraged parents NOT to let their children view AVATAR, because it encourages "nature worship".

(5)AVATAR promotes smoking! Dr. Sue Hubbard has led a campaign against AVATAR due to the fact that, in her view, it glamorizes smoking. This is because one of the heroines, Grace, often smokes and does not take care of her human body – only her Avatar body. Dr. Hubbard writes, "There are still thousands of kids every day who begin smoking as young as 11 or 12 years of age. Statistics show that 50 percent of high school teens will have smoked sometimes in their life...and continue to smoke. It's glamorized in movies and in ads...but the consequences are never shown. We in the media need to educate, not glamorize or fail to report the consequences."

To pigeonhole (someone/something) as (something) = To decide that someone or something belongs to a particular type or group. NOTE: This is normally, but not always, used in a negative context. *[Due to being on MAD TV for many years, and then taking several roles as a slapstick comedian in several movies, Jim Carrey was pigeonholed by society as a goofy actor and one-trick comedian.]*

Plight = A sad, serious, or difficult situation. *[The plight of the Polar Bear is well known, so the Senate is voting on a protection measure to help stop the intrusion of commerce on their habitat.]*

NA'VI LANGUAGE

Kaltxi. nga-ru lu pfom srak? = Hello, how are you?
Tsaheylu n = bond Lertu n = colleague
Eltu n = brain Sempu n = daddy
Faheu v = smell Pamtseo n = music
Oel ngáti kámeie" = I See you (yeah!)" (a greeting)

Learn-Navi-Pocket-Guide

CONVERSATION

Jake Sully: You are not gonna believe where I am.

Norm: The last thing we see is this marine's ass disappearing in the bush with this angry Thanator coming after him. It's not something you could teach.

Grace: For reasons I cannot fathom the Omaticaya have chosen you. God help us all. You told them you were from the **Jarhead** clan? And it worked?

Jake Sully: I'm practically family. They're gonna study me, and I have to learn to be one of them.

Colonel Quaritch: That's called taking initiative, son. Wish I had ten more like you....

Parker Selfidge: Sully, just find out what the blue monkeys want. We tried to give them medicine, education...roads, but no, they like mud. And that wouldn't bother me, it's just that they're...well, their damn village happens to be resting on the richest Unobtainium deposit within 200 clicks in any direction. I mean, look at all that chatter.

Jake Sully: Who gets them to move?

Parker Selfidge: Guess.....

Jake Sully: What if they won't go?

Colonel Quaritch: I'm betting that they will. Killing the **indigenous** looks bad.

Parker Selfidge: But there's one thing that shareholders hate more than bad press. And that's a lack of profit. I didn't make up the rules. So just find me a carrot that will get them to move.

Colonel Quaritch: Otherwise it's going to be the stick.

Parker Selfidge: You got three months. That's when the **dozers** get there.

Jarhead = Nickname for 'Marine'. (military member of the Marine Corps)

Indigenous = [ADJECTIVE & NOUN] Indigenous people lived in an area or place for a very long time, before other people came to live there. [*Native Americans (or American Indians) are indigenous to the United States. - The tse tse fly is indigenous to Africa.*]

Dozers = Slang for 'Bulldozers'. (a heavy vehicle with a large curved open container at the front, used for moving earth and stones and destroying buildings)

the Main Theme from Avatar

I see you

Walking through a dream
I see you
My light in darkness breathing hope of new life
Now I live through you and you through me
Enchanting
I pray in my heart that this dream never ends
I see me through your eyes

Living through life flying high
Your life shines the way into paradise
So I offer my life as a sacrifice
I live through your love
You teach me how to see

All that's beautiful
My senses touch your word I never pictured
Now I give my hope to you
I surrender
I pray in my heart that this world never ends
I see me through your eyes

Living through life flying high

Your love shines the way into paradise
So I offer my life
I offer my love, for you
When my heart was never open
(and my spirit never free)
To the world that you have shown me
But my eyes could not division
All the colours of love and of life ever more

Evermore
(I see me through your eyes)
I see me through your eyes
(Living through life flying high)
Flying high

Your love shines the way into paradise
So I offer my life as a sacrifice
And live through your love
And live through your life
I see you
I see you

Just Speak!

