

Eco-critical Perspective of James Cameron's Science-Fiction Movie *Avatar*

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In this last decade, the environment crisis becomes the front page news. This is not only the absurd talk but fact. High rates of deforestation and forest degradation are common in many parts of the world. Ecocriticism is enabling us to analyze and criticize about the world in which we live and about our relationships with that world and with our fellow inhabitants (Dickerson). Environmental issues are inspiring many authors and movie makers to put the issues in their works, films and stories which are dependably best media to deliver message to other people in a mass level. "Films communicates not only through imagery, metaphor, and symbol; visually through action and gesture; verbally through dialogue, but also directly through concrete images and sounds". (Boggs).

Avatar is a film about a particular group of people, RDA Corporation, who explores a planet in Alpha Centauri star system called Pandora to mining the precious mineral, Unobtainium. But in order to do that they have to win over the natives heart first, which the 9-foot tall blue thing called Na'vi. The scientists make Avatar, the hybrid native mix from human DNA and native DNA. In this movie, the main character Jake Sully, who is rescued by female native

Neytiri. Native Na'vi people has spiritual relation with the environment. Na'vi are too dependent on nature, especially to that sacred tree; the trees of soul, they believe the tree as their mother goddess, Eywa, living together with the ancestors and the soul of dead people. Right under this tree is where Unobtanium that human looks for lying .The environment of Pandora describes as a hostile environment, threatening also describes as a friendly and hospitable environment. Human are the people who come from the earth to Pandora.



Fig. 1. Colonel Ouaritch welcoming people to Pandora

Human's main opinion about nature is that the environment is the profitable thing. Later, this opinion leads human to do some exploration to the environment that often bring bad consequences to the environment itself. They see nature as their enemy that should take over. They prepare themselves to do invasion with high technology brought from the Earth, so they could control them. From the beginning of the film when new people are coming to Pandora, Colonel is welcoming with a warning about how cruel the Pandora is (See. Fig. 1). He uses this sentence to emphasis people would prefer to go to the hell than to Pandora. Environment of human, generally is the only tool to gain money and benefits. It was the money that mention first in this film as the reason to do this job for Jake Sully. He already had nothing left to do after dropping out from military because of the injury.

The man from the company convinced him that it is a good and promising job by mentioning about the good and even the very good payment (See. Fig.2)the repetition of the word good from payment is to emphasize the word. In this movie, the human's plan is to passing through the barren land caused by mining in the middle of the green land and this movie is an evidence that human affect harmfully to the environment. It changes the environment badly. Human needs land or place to build their barracks, offices, laboratories, and airbase to advocate their civilization. But these kinds of development affects and changes the environment mostly into bad condition.



Fig. 2. The company people convincing Jack (the protagonist of the movie)

This film also demonstrates deforestation. It happens when RDA corporation send out their huge tanks to cut down the holly tree of voices, in the morning right before the Jack and Neytiri's eyes. The tree of voice is the place where the Na'vi believe their prayers will be heard and sometimes be answered. The drivers of the tanks keep their ways to cut the tree down after getting the permission from Parker, the chief of the companies at Pandora. This is the behavior of human.

On the other hand The Na'vi have a unique relationship with their environment. They live harmonically and respect nature and worship it. They believe all life is sacred and should be honored. Rituals encouraging the interconnectedness of the human and non-human worlds exist

in every aboriginal culture. In this movie scene in order to save Jack, Neytiri killed a wild black dog (See. Fig. 3). She prayed beside the dog after killing. When Jake thanks to her, she was angry instead. She was angry because she thought that those animals were not deserved to die. Na'vi, who live peacefully with nature understands that even animals have the spirits that should be respected.



Fig. 3 Neytiri killed a wild black dog

From a human perspective, environmental issues involve concern about science, nature, health, employment, profits, politics, ethics, and economics (Enger). This different perspective brings the different understanding that lead into disagreement among themselves Human always feel he is the superior towards nature and that makes them arrogant and feels like they own the environment. Human only look at nature as the profitable object if only they can work on it and turn the environment into something better. On the other hand native People of Na'vi they live harmonically with nature surroundings plants and animals and they worshiping nature as they believe that nature it has power and force that can bring benefits as well as destruction for them. From those different relationship such as Na'vi and some other human character after the three or more months before finally find the love to the environment. In contrast the villain human characters, Colonel Quaritch and Selfridge who do not have any feeling of the love with environment. But in the end, they defeated by the nature.

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