

# The issue of exoticism in avatar

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Avatar was an evolutionary science fiction film released in 2009. This film was taken based in Pandora where the humans, also known as the sky people who are on a mission to take away a very important resource, called Unobtainium which had the richest deposit in Pandora, from the Na'vi, for their survival. To be able to do that, they took forms as the 10 foot tall creatures to achieve it. Jake Sully manages to get in close contact with the Na'vi population. In this journey, ethnocentrism would be encountered by both the humans and the Na'vi, interchangeably. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to view other cultures from the perspective of one's own culture. In various parts of the film exoticism is also displayed. Exoticism is a sub-concept of ethnocentrism as it involves analyzing another culture, in comparison to their respective cultures. Exoticism is the viewing of other cultures as being interesting or different in comparison to our own cultures. Exoticism was seen in various parts of the film. The first would be the one encountered by Jake Sully. When Jake Sully was rescued by Neytiri from the pack of viper wolves, he thanked her and continued following her. He was anxious to know about her existence and where she was going. During their confrontation the roots from the tree of souls lands on his entire body. Jake Sully was belittled and tried to ward them off, but was stopped by Neytiri. He was amazed and was in awe of how the Na'vi regarded them. This showed his amazement at their difference in respecting even the littlest thing, unlike the humans, who have irresponsibly not regarded trees as spiritual as per say.

The next instance was when Neytiri brings Jake Sully to her parents. On their way there, Jake comes across various plants that glow in the dark and how

they change colors, by touch. Jake can be seen being amused. He plays with the glowing plants while following Neytiri, by touching the various plants, many times, continuously, in a jovial manner, or somewhat a carefree manner. This clearly exhibits exoticism as well, because it was something that the humans have never encountered, and when it was the first encountered by Jake Sully, in Pandora it was an amusing experience. Jake has never experienced such encounters. Such first-hand encounters give Jake Sully a new and vibrant experience.

Just as how anthropologists feel different and excited in a new environment surrounded with a different culture, Jake Sully felt the same way. In the book *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, Malinowski explains how the new environment he faced was different and new to him, without criticizing it. This makes up for the term exoticism, in which a different culture is viewed as different or interesting in the perspective of their culture.

In conclusion, exoticism is a form of ethnocentrism. This was shown in the movie *Avatar*, as discussed.