

Avatar

Avatar movie review.

December 31, 2009

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Avatar movie poster.

Happy New Year! Best wishes for a wonderful 2010 to all of my "Random Neural Firings" readers! It's already getting off to a good start for me from a movie-viewing perspective, because I just saw Avatar.

The plot: The Resources Development Administration sends a contingent to the moon Pandora, accompanied by anxious-to-fight soldiers for hire, to harvest unobtainium, a precious mineral. Pandora's inhabitants, in addition to many bizarre creatures, include indigenous tribes of Na'vi, 10-foot-tall blue creatures with both feline and human attributes. The Na'vi are the primary reason the soldiers have been brought along, as the planet's largest deposit of unobtainium is located beneath the "Hometree" of a tribe of Na'vi called the Omaticaya. Should peaceful negotiations with the Omaticaya fail, that's where the soldiers come in. RDA's plan is to infiltrate the Omaticaya with avatars, which are human/Na'vi hybrids genetically engineered by RDA. A human lies down in a pod at the RDA base of operations and mind-melds into his or her personal avatar. The giant blue avatar, "inhabited" by its human operator, can then move freely among the Na'vi. The eventual goal is for the avatars to help persuade the Omaticaya to leave their Hometree peacefully, leaving RDA to plunder the unobtainium beneath it.

Jake Sully (Sam Worthington, who played the terminator in Terminator: Salvation) is a newly paraplegic ex-Marine that RDA has recruited. His twin brother, recently killed, was a part of the avatar program, with his own avatar. To avoid wasting the tremendous cost and effort involved in creating it, RDA recruits Jake because he shares his twin brother's genetic makeup. This will allow Jake to operate his brother's avatar.

Supporting characters include some clichéd ones, including the brutish Colonel, the geeky side kick, the slimy corporate jerk and the stern scientist with a soft side. Once the RDA team lands on Pandora, the avatars are activated and audiences watching Avatar are transported to an astounding alien world unlike any other they've seen.

It's a world that more than once will remind you of director James Cameron's other true love, the ocean. His love of the sea is evident in the environment he has envisioned in Avatar. I also found myself on more than one occasion remembering Aliens, the masterpiece sequel to Alien that Cameron directed -- and not just because of the presence of Sigourney Weaver in the movie.

There are three different versions of Avatar in theaters: a "regular" 2D version, a 3D version for the standard-sized theater screen, and the 3D IMAX. I saw the latter version, so my comments are based on that. I highly recommend you see this version, too, if possible. The 3D was awesome, the best 3D I have ever seen. Yes, there were occasional ghosting issues if you turned your head slightly, which is a common side effect with 3D movies. But in the grand scheme of my Avatar experience, this is a very minor quibble.

By the time Avatar ended, I and everyone who went with me felt worn out, as if we were holding our breath for much of its 2½-hour running time. The movie boggled my mind. I saw new things. I saw amazing things. I got caught up in everything. I was barely aware of the fact that I was sitting in a movie theater surrounded by people wearing goofy plastic goggles. I really do feel that I have seen something revolutionary in the grand scheme of moviemaking.

I don't want to reveal any more of the plot of Avatar than I have. You should discover its delights for yourself, with as few preconceived notions as possible. Suffice it to say that if you enjoy science fiction and fantasy movies, and look forward to becoming immersed in a world teeming with new visions, I think it's a pretty safe bet that you will absolutely love Avatar.

[Back to Blogs>>](#)