
Avatar The Movie: Science Fiction Or Fantasy

Over the years, there have been many arguments about whether Avatar is science fiction or fantasy.

My first reaction would be that Avatar is both science fiction and fantasy. The movie opens with pure science fiction, with humans space travelling many years to another planet to mine the very unusual and valuable ore called Unobtainium (Evans, 2009). This seems to me plausible which agrees with the idea that science fiction is mostly about possibilities, partly based on science and relying on imagination to take us from the present into the future (Unknown, 2009).

The beings on the ironically named Pandora, live in harmony with their planet, and represent what many of us would like to be. They are simply fantastic in every way. We don't have any real idea as to the types of life forms we might find in space (University, 2016) and the Navi doesn't seem to make any sense except as fantasy.

Between science, fiction and fantasy are the scientists who create Avatars to link the Sky people and the Navi. The Avatars are science fiction however, the manner in which Jake is accepted by the Navi and joins them in defeating the Sky people is fantasy. Fantasy is also the way that Direhorses and the Akron must bond physically rather than emotionally so that the Navi can ride them. Another fantasy is the ritual to Eywa to change people from one body to another, which is a form of fantasy that we can only imagine. The chance of it happening in life seems impossible.

There is a very interesting statement by the producer of Avatar who said, 'Director James Cameron, does not write science fiction, he writes science fact' (Sappenfield, 2009). The article goes on to explain that the 380-page Pandorapedia defines the moon based on scientific principles and that the floating mountains are for instance are held up by the Unobtainium magnetic field generated by the ore which is an incredibly powerful superconductor (Twentieth Century Fox Corporation, 2009). Jodi Holt of the University of California was consulted to ensure that the plants and scientific equipment of the lab-made science sense (Kozlowski, 2010).

Having seen some of the explanations as to how Pandora works, I have to conclude that the movie is science fiction, that when unexplained looks a lot like fantasy. Avatar describes a world that might exist, as it is predicted by combining various scientific principles. For now, it can't be visited.

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