**THE FILMS OF JAMES CAMERON: COMMON THEMES AND ELEMENTS**

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James Cameron is a Director who has been thrilling audiences with his films for more than 30 years now. He has pushed the technological envelope of what is possible in making films forward with every single film he has directed, and also managed to often work in his love for deep sea exploration. He has actually not made that many films for someone active in the industry for this long, but you have heard of almost all of them: *Terminator and Terminator 2, Aliens, The Abyss, True Lies, Titanic, and Avatar.* The last two films are the highest grossing films ever made; each made more than 2 billion dollars. This has given him the freedom to pursue his passions, which have included making documentaries and becoming an expert at operating deep dive submersibles; he piloted such a vehicle when filming the actual wreck of the Titanic to use in the feature film he made, and even said that making that film provided him with the justification for diving on that wreck, which was something he very much wanted to do.

This love of both technology and the exploration of the deep ocean are one of the common elements in many of his films. Other common aspects of his style are the use of strong female characters, both in leading and supporting roles. Men are often seen as more arrogant and less human; they are the ones who do whatever the company tells them to do, without any regard for environment or any appreciation of the natural world. Many of his films have featured the amazing work of the late composer James Horner. There are often very dramatic action scenes that literally have you on the edge of your seat.

Technology in his films is a double edged sword, which means that it is both a gift and a curse.

Let’s examine how these stylistic elements play out in some of these films.

Technology (the special effects used to make films)

Deep Sea Exploration (or Space)

Strong Female Characters

Arrogant Male Characters

Great Action Scenes

**TERMINATOR**

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Made in 1984, this film envisioned a future 50 years later where the earth was being controlled by an Artificial Intelligence network known as Skynet. There is human resistance to the machines, and it is being led by John Connor; the humans are on the verge of victory.

So Skynet sends an AI assassin back to 1984 to kill John Connor’s mother, Sarah Connor; if he is never born, he will never be able to lead the humans in the Resistance to victory. The assassin is known as The Terminator; this creature has a human skin over a machine body, so that it can blend in with all of the other humans. Cameron cast Arnold Schwarzenegger in this role when the latter was still at the apex of his physical development as a world champion bodybuilder, and he did look appropriately menacing.

The Terminator looks up all of the Sarah Connors’ in the phone book and starts killing them one by one. But a Resistance Fighter named Kyle Reese has followed the Terminator back in time to 1984. He rescues “the” Sarah Connor before the Terminator can kill her.



The Police apprehend the two of them, but of course do not believe their story. Most of them die when the Terminator then attacks the police station, but Kyle and Sarah escape again.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1SCQzBJyMY> Terminator: Police Station Shootout

Sarah and Kyle hide out in a motel room and make love; this one encounter will result in the pregnancy and the birth of John.

The Terminator keeps tracking them down; this incredible chase scene results in the explosion of a gasoline tanker, which melts all of the human skin from the Terminator, leaving only the exoskeleton.





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3ebTXeD1Rg> Terminator: Truck Chase Scene

The final scenes take place in a factory; Kyle places a pipe bomb on the Terminator, but is killed in the ensuing explosion. Sarah lures what is left of the machine into a hydraulic press, and crushes it.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LNov_KsfL_U> Last Scene from Terminator

In terms of the common themes:

Technology: This film was make in 1984, and the technology does seem dated compared to the current developments in CGI that Cameron helped pioneer. The AI Terminator looked very realistic then, and still looks pretty good today; the exoskeleton looks very frightening and malevolent. The hovercraft machines over the junk yards don’t look quite as good as they did over 30 years ago.

Deep Sea Exploration (or Space): We have to stretch a bit to make this theme fit here, but the 2029 scenes are set in a very dystopian future, after a nuclear holocaust, and this future does imagine when these very advanced forms of Artificial Intelligence have seized control from the humans who developed them

Strong Female Characters: Sarah Connor is certainly a very strong and independent female character. She ramped this up several notches further in Terminator 2, the sequel to this film. Actress Linda Hamilton lifted weights and added dramatic muscle to her body frame in preparing for the second film

Arrogant Men: The arrogance of men is seen particularly in the Police Officers who do not believe Sarah and Kyle’s story; they really pay a big price for not believing them. The arrogance of humans in general is reflected by the film depicting a future that got out of control because humans decided to rely too much on technology, giving these AI machines the ability to think for themselves.

Great Action Scenes: The action scene with the gasoline tanker is as intense as any action scene in a Cameron film.

**ALIENS (1986)**

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Cameron’s next film was the sequel to Director Ridley Scott’s film *Alien,* which came out in 1979. When Scott was asked about why he didn’t direct the sequel, he said “They never asked me!” But apparently Scott was busy with another film, and he had no reason for bad feelings with Cameron.

Cameron wrote the script, and insisted to the studio that Sigourney Weaver reprise her role as Ellen Ripley, when negotiations reached an impasse. She finally agreed to do the film for $1 million dollars, a record at that time for a female star in a motion picture.

At the end of the first film, Ripley put herself into suspended hibernation for reasons necessary to her survival; she is finally rescued after drifting through space for 57 years. She is forced to go through debriefing by the corporation that owned the ship she destroyed; her questioners are highly skeptical of her claims of killing the alien life forms that killed the rest of the film’s crew.

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gale_Ann_Hurd_and_James_Cameron.jpg)

The producing team behind *Aliens*, James Cameron and Gale Ann Hurd

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m92yvNscIAo> The Interrogation

Though reluctant, Ripley eventually agrees to go back the moon LV-426 where she first encountered the alien eggs. Accompanying her will be company representative Carter Burke, and Lieutenant Gorman, the leader of a group of Colonial Marines. Burke promises Ripley that they will exterminate the xenomorph aliens, as opposed to trying to capture them for research purposes.

Ripley meets the rest of the team on the spaceship USS Salaco; there is also an android named Bishop, which concerns Ripley, because of her terrible experience with Ash, the android on the mission in the original film.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZYknBB_UVY> The Crew Awakens

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgNsTOc_MIo> Bishop’s Knife Trick

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPMk-EEyOpE> I have a Class 2 Rating

The team descends to the colony on a small shuttle; the place seems deserted, except for two “facehugger” aliens inside of two containment tanks in the lab, and a young girl named Newt, who has been hiding inside the heating and air conditioning vents. A computer helps the team find the rest of the colonists, but they are all being used as incubators for xenomorph babies. A marine kills one of these babies, and the rest of the xenomorphs attack. Chaos reigns; some of the marines are killed, but Ripley manages to rescue most of them. The shuttle tries to rescue the survivors, but a xenomorph had already infiltrated the ship. It kills the pilot, and the shuttle crashes into the colony, damaging the nuclear reactor.



Ripley figures out that Burke has lied to her; he was the one who sent these colonists to investigate what had happened with Ripley’s original mission 57 years ago. He had hope to recover some of the eggs, and then sell them as a potential bioweapon back on earth to the highest bidder.

Bishop, the android, informs the remaining crew that the shuttle crash damage to the power plant is severe, and that it will soon explode with a force that would kill them all. He agrees to crawl through the piping to reach the transmitter, and get the spaceship to send down the remaining shuttle to evacuate the survivors.

Ripley and Newt sleep briefly in the lab, but when they wake up, the two face huggers have been released from their tanks. Ripley sounds the alarm; the marines responds and kill the aliens, and then a furious Ripley confronts Burke, because she thinks he is responsible for this travesty. She thinks he hoped the creatures would impregnate both her and Newt, allowing him to take these embryos back to Earth and be undetected.

All of a sudden the electricity goes out, and the aliens attack through the ceiling. Burke is killed, as are three other Marines and Newt is captured.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40U82Ty3WBw> (this is a compilation of all of the grisly death scenes in this film)

Ripley receives more firepower when the second shuttle arrives; she goes back into the colony processing station to rescue Newt. As they are leaving, they encounter the Queen Xenomorph. She tells her drones to stand down after Ripley shows her a flamethrower that can destroy her eggs. But as Ripley leaves, she flames most of the eggs, and tries to shoot as many of the aliens as possible.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RS-x1AzjqLQ> Ripley vs the Queen

She and Newt escape on the shuttle just before the station is blown up by the nuclear explosion. But they discover that the queen has attached herself to the landing gear. Ripley straps herself into an exosuit, and ends up expelling the Queen through an airlock into space. The survivors enter the hibernation pods, and head back to Earth.



<https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=aliens+1986+ripley>

In terms of the common themes:

Technology: this was still pre-CGI days, so Cameron had to rely on miniature models for the exterior shots of the Space Colony, and large rubber suits for the Aliens, with dancers and other humans inside to help create the different movements.

Deep Sea Exploration (or Space): This film does take place in space; it also involves active involvement with alien life forms, presented here as extremely dangerous and malevolent

Strong Female Characters: This film has two great, strong female characters. Ripley is a very physically beautiful woman, but equally capable of holding her own in the most intense combat situations. She has nerves of steel, and a very clear focus. That scene where she straps on the exosuit is a classic. Vasquez is a no-nonsense, muscular combat soldier, certainly the equal of any of her male counterparts in battle.

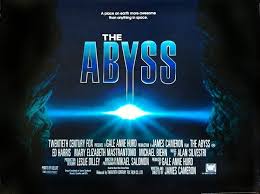
Arrogant Men: Burke plays the evil male capitalist, willing to lie and to sacrifice any of his team members in order to financially profit from bringing the xenomorphs back to Earth so that he can sell them to the highest bidder for use as a bioweapon.

Great Action Scenes: This entire film is full of these scenes; links to three of the best are in the above notes.

Sources:

<https://alienseries.wordpress.com/2014/01/07/ridley-scotts-alien-ii-or-what-he-wanted-to-happen/>

**THE ABYSS**



This 1989 film was not a box office hit like most of Cameron’s other films, and was also one of the most difficult productions that he has ever been involved in.

The film is based on an 1897 H.G. Wells story, but another major inspiration was the success of deep sea submersibles in locating the wreck of the Titanic in 1985, some 12,400 feet below the surface of the Atlantic Ocean. CGI Technology was still in its infancy, so Cameron opted to film in the containment tanks of two abandoned nuclear power reactors. The main tank was filled with 7.5 million gallons of water, and most of the filming took place 40 feet down.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zbpL3LeW7k> Abyss Trailer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EeFypUFn7oU> Entire film of The Abyss

A U.S. submarine has contact with an unidentified underwater object and sinks. A SEAL team heads to the rescue, trying to also deal with an impending hurricane as well as Soviet ships who would like to get to the sub first and get a first-hand look at current US submarine technology. The SEAL team decides to use an underwater oil drilling platform as a base of operations. Further drama is ensured when the designer of the platform, Dr; Lindsey Brigman (Maryanne Mastrantonio) insists on going with the SEALS, despite the fact that her ex-husband, Bud (Ed Harris) is the foreman.



A power outage occurs in the submersibles go to investigate the sunken sub, and Lindsey sees some strangely colored lights around the sub. The Admiral in charge of the mission sends the SEAL team leader, Lt. Coffey in another mini-sub to try and recover one of the nuclear missiles on the sub, and the hurricane also rolls in. The oil drilling platform is connected by a tether to a surface ship and a crane on that ship that can lift the platform if needed, but the storm causes the crane to tear loose from the ship and to also drag the platform down the bottom of the trench where the damaged sub is. The rig sustains heavy damage and some crew members die, but Lt. Coffey shows no remorse for his actions.



Lindsey puts on some diving gear, and goes to a flooded part of the platform to retrieve some oxygen bottles that will be needed to survive. She encounters a NTI, a “non-terrestrial intelligence”, that is exploring the base. Coffey is overcome with paranoia and closes a bulkhead, causing the NTI to retreat. Coffey and another SEAL then attempt to arm the warhead to attack the NTI. Bud and the rest of the crew try to stop him, but Coffey escapes in one on the mini-subs. Bud and Lindsey chase after him in the other.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zqGSHWmWjcc>

Coffey fires the warhead into the trench; it does not explode, but his sub has been damaged in the process; it goes over the edge and the trench and implodes, killing him.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkhBPF4yfkI>

The other sub chasing is also heavily damaged from these depths, and contains only one diving suit. Lindsay chooses basically to temporarily die from hypothermia, hoping that Bud can get her body back the platform and revive her.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Q60x_5WOqk> Abyss Drowning Scene

Bud dons an experimental diving suit and goes after the nuclear warhead, trying to disarm it. He encounters the NTI’s; they take him on board their very large ship. It rises to the surface of the water, with the oil platform and other submersibles aground on the surface of the ship. Bud exits, and he and Lindsey embrace.

In terms of the common themes:

Technology: The scene with the NTI was one of the earliest CGI sequences. It was created by ILM, Industrial Light and Magic, the company created by George Lucas for the original *Star Wars.*  Scans of both Lindsey and Bud’s faces were done to help the creature morph into the water-based likenesses fo them. It took 6 months to create this short sequence, which delayed the opening of the film.

Deep Sea Exploration (or Space): This entire film takes place in the deep sea.

Strong Female Characters: Lindsey is another of Cameron’s terrific and strong female characters. She’s a PhD, a leader in her field, and even brave enough to temporarily die, which takes an enormous amount of courage.

Arrogant Men: Lt. Coffey defines this role in this film; he epitomizes the kind of man who thinks that domination and brute force are the answer to every situation.

Great Action Scenes: There are plenty of these in the film. The near-drowning scene is one of the most dramatic

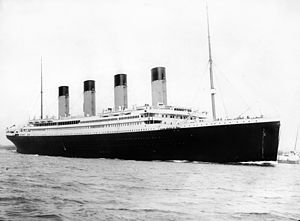
**TITANIC (1997),** directed by James Cameron, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet



Made for a record budget of 200 million, this film has grossed over 2 billion dollars, one of only two films to ever do this. The other film was Cameron’s *Avatar.* It is always fun to go see a Cameron film, just to see how this money looks up on the big screen, for you know you are going to get your money’s worth. The film also won 11 Oscars, including Best Picture and Best Director

The plot involves an ill-fated romance between a young man and a young woman from very different social classes, intertwined with the story of the most famous shipwreck in history. Cameron really wanted to make a film about the shipwreck, so he says he wrote a screenplay to let him do that, shortly after the wreck of the Titanic was discovered in 1985. Countless books and movies have been made about this tragedy, and public appetite for stories connected to it seems almost insatiable.

People have remained fascinated with the story of the Titanic for the more than one hundred years since it sank on its maiden in 1912, because the story seems to represent the ultimate hubris and arrogance of human beings. The shipbuilders deemed their new ship “unsinkable”, and the Captain was determined to set a speed record for the trip between Southampton, England and New York City, so he maintained full speed ahead even through the night when the ship was sailing through waters they had been warned were full of icebergs. It was a moonless night and thus hard to see. The ship struck one of the icebergs a glancing blow, but it ripped open a gash down more than half the ship. The unsinkable ship in fact sank within two hours of the accident.



The shipbuilders were so sure of the vessel that they only outfitted it with lifeboats for about half the passengers that it could carry. The story has other tensions because of the way that the ship was literally sectioned off into first class, second class, and third class compartments, with first preference for the lifeboats being given to the first class passengers of course. Most of the lifeboats were not even filled, which also spoke volumes about the disregard for the many immigrants on the lower levels who were coming to America for a new life.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtVyu-A3vkY&list=PL31AIbVp8UnhVCTb_NSfATw9KFwrjS61c&index=18> Opening Scene



The film is bookended by a present day story aboard a treasure hunting vessel, whose operators hope to salvage some of the many treasures thought to still be on the recently discovered wreck, including a necklace called The Heart of the Ocean. The crew had found a sketchbook in a safe on a previous search that contained a nude drawing of a young woman wearing only the necklace 101 year-old Rose Dawson Calvert saw the news reports of the find and has claimed to be the woman in the drawing, so she was flown to the ship and is enthralling the captain and his crew with her stories about her experiences on the ill-fated voyage as the film begins. Cameron himself piloted the deep sea submersible that filmed the famous wreck; he is one of the few people in the world trained to pilot these vessels.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCy5WQ9S4c0&feature=youtu.be> Trailer

Rose was 17 in 1912, and was travelling as first class passenger Rose DeWitt Butaker with her Mother and her much older fiancé, Cal Hockley (Billy Zane). This was an arranged marriage meant to solve financial issues for Rose’s family, but Rose is unhappy about the idea of being married to Cal, who is a totally arrogant and controlling man.



Rose runs to the stern of the ship, intent on throwing herself overboard, when she is talked out of it by Jack Dawson, a third class sketch artist coming to America to seek a new life.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otgWwcUuWO4> Jack and Rose first meet

Rose tells Cal that Jack saved her from falling, and that he should be rewarded for his efforts, so Cal invites Jack to have dinner with them in the first class restaurant.

Later, Jack and Rose sneak away down to a more fun and more “real” celebration going on in the third class part of the ship.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KffX-8tx_Jw> A Real Party

Rose initially is indifferent to Jack’s interest in her, but then quickly realizes that she also likes him far more than she does Cal. She meets him on the bow of the ship at sunset for one of the most iconic scenes in the film.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAYPvpCS-bI> Jack and Rose talk on deck

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MDPeL8lpzo> I’m flying

Later, a bold Rose asks Jack to sketch her, wearing only the famous necklace called The Heart of the Ocean.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2yE6rHthdk&index=12&list=PL31AIbVp8UnhVCTb_NSfATw9KFwrjS61c> Titanic Drawing Scene

They then give the slip to Cal’s bodyguard and end up making love in the cargo hold inside one of the luxury automobiles being shipped to New York.

Back on the top of the deck, they see the ship strike the iceberg and overhear a conversation between the ship’s designer and the officers that indicates how bad this is going to be.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mg9VDvAQ-1k> Iceberg Collision Scene

Meanwhile, Cal discovers the nude sketch in his safe, where the necklace is also kept, and he is livid. He puts the necklace in Jack’s pocket and has him arrested for theft. Jack is then cuffed to a pipe, and the necklace is given back to Cal, who puts it in his coat pocket.

Rose discovers what has happened; despite the chaos of the sinking ship, she rescues Jack. They encounter Cal once again, who gives Rose his coat (with the diamond in the pocket) and wants to get her aboard one of the lifeboats. She reluctantly boards one, after Cal promises to get both himself and Jack off safely. But this is another lie, and when Rose realizes it, she jumps back on the ship and runs off with Jack, as Cal chases after them with a gun.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RLRSa1wzRE&list=PL31AIbVp8UnhVCTb_NSfATw9KFwrjS61c&index=26> Gun Chase Scene (after iceberg)

Cal eventually grabs a child and gets himself on a boat, in order to save himself.

Rose and Jack return to the upper deck as the ship is breaking in half and sinking.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQno09_49jo> Titanic Sinking

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JLfqqfNU4o> Sinking Scene

In the cold ocean, Jack helps Rose onto a floating wooden panel that will only hold one person; he hangs on, but dies of hypothermia, after encouraging Rose to live a long and fulfilling life.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGhK4014JNE> Jack Dies

The film then cuts back to treasure vessel, where Rose has been telling this story. She has The Heart of the Ocean in her pocket, the necklace the crew was looking for, but in a private moment, drops it into the sea over the gravesite of the Titanic.

In the last scene of the film, Rose is dying at home in her bed. The camera pans a montage of photographs from what seems like the wonderful life that she led, even though it was without the love of her life. The shot switches to one of the underwater views of the wrecked ship and morphs into a shot on the same part of the ship when it was on its first voyage. The young Rose reunites with Jack at the top of the Grand Staircase and they embrace and kiss passionately, to the applause of many of the long dead passengers.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CwnWAk9qU0&list=PL31AIbVp8UnhVCTb_NSfATw9KFwrjS61c&index=4>

In terms of the common themes:

Technology: Here’s a time lapse of the construction of a model of the ship, which was then floated in an enormous wave tank, where shots could be filmed against a green screen, and then composited with shots out on the actual ocean; add in some terrific sound effects, and the impact is that you really feel like you are on the Titanic, as it sails across the Atlantic Ocean.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWPVuVvUCG8&list=PL31AIbVp8UnhVCTb_NSfATw9KFwrjS61c&index=52> fascinating time lapse video of the set construction of the ship for this 1997 film

This link explains the technology used to create the “million dollar” shot in the film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32g61zq254Y&list=PL31AIbVp8UnhVCTb_NSfATw9KFwrjS61c&index=59>

Another use of technology that astounded savvy audiences was the use of computers to create digital people, who nonetheless seemed very real when viewed at a distance.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XU-lBk1x7bk&list=PL31AIbVp8UnhVCTb_NSfATw9KFwrjS61c&index=64> digital people

Deep Sea Exploration (or Space): The film is bookended by the story of the deep sea submersible looking for treasures in the wreck, which is 12,400 feet below the ocean surface

Strong Female Characters: Rose is a remarkably strong character for this time period. She makes a courageous decision to opt out of her arranged marriage to a man she despises, displays even more courage to help rescue Jack while the ship is sinking, and then leads a long and amazing life after the tragedy, as recorded in the camera shot that sweeps over the photos of her life as she is dying

Arrogant Men: Rose’s fiancé, Cal, is a really arrogant and horrible man, epitomized by his grabbing a young child so that he can jump into one of the lifeboats and escape drowning. Less obvious are the historical arrogance of the ship’s architect and the Captain, who thought their ship was unsinkable. This led them to not have enough lifeboats on the ship, and to sail full speed ahead on a moonless night to try and set a speed record, despite knowing that many icebergs had been spotted

Great Action Scenes: The sinking of the Titanic is very dramatic and very realistic. An interesting contrast is to note that the horizontal ship goes highly vertical as it sinks. In *Avatar,* the vertical Tree of Life goes horizontal as it crashes and burns.

**AVATAR**

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It would be 12 years before Cameron would release his next film. *Titanic* was enormously successful at the box office, and gave Cameron the financial freedom to do whatever he wanted to, including the freedom to wait and do his next film whenever he was ready to.

It was worth the wait. *Avatar,* released in 2009, was a stunning visual achievement and also was enormously entertaining.

The film takes place in 2154; humans have used up all of the natural resources on the Earth, forcing them to look to other planets and moons for new sources of energy.

Such a mineral has been found on the moon Pandora. It has the clichéd name of “unobtanium”, something that surprisingly survived the rewrite process with the script. Humans cannot breathe the atmosphere on Pandora, but the native Na’Vi tribe can. These 10 foot tall blue creatures revere their natural surroundings and live in harmony with them, much like our own Native Americans do.

The mining operation on Pandora is under the aegis of the Resources Development Association, led by the Administrator, Parker Selfridge (Giovanni Ribisi). Colonel Miles Quaritch is the head of the Security Force. Dr. Grace Augustine (Sigourney Weaver) is the head of the Avatar program. Humans are able to mind meld into these Na’Vi lookalikes, so that they can more easily explore Pandora.

Jake Sully is a former Marine and a paraplegic; he is sent to Pandora to replace his deceased twin brother as the operator of one of these Na’Vi avatars. One of his first missions is to protect Dr. Augustine while she collects research data. In this scene, he is attacked by a Thanator:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPTb8Udio6Q> Thanator Chase

Jake is rescued by Neytiri, a beautiful, young female Na’Vi; she takes Jake back to her clan. Her mother Mo’at is the Spiritual Leader of the group, and she orders her reluctant daughter to train Jake in the ways of the tribe. They soon both fall in love with each other.

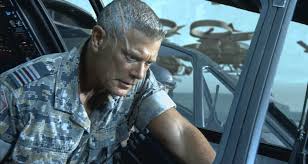


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Ru9fw7szQw> Love Scene

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6Sj3NU9eUw> Becoming One with Neytiri; a compilation of images from the film edited to a different piece of music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYk0zVOAOgQ> Jake’s first flight. Also utilizes a different piece of music, along with some sound from the film

Quaritch wants Jake to spy on the Na’Vi; in particular he wants intelligence on their Hometree, a sacred place that also is on top of the largest deposit of unobtanium on all of Pandora. After Quaritch and Ribisi learn that Jake has gone native, they destroy the Hometree, and kill Neytiri’s father and many others in the process



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGNvDVKOxCk> Destroying the Home Tree

Jake temporarily had lost the trust of the Na’vi when he was forced to reveal that his initial mission was to spy on them. After Grace is badly injured in the fight, he attempts to regain the Na'vi's trust, by connecting his mind to that of Toruk, a dragon-like predator feared and honored by the Na'vi. At the Tree of Souls, they try to transfer Grace’s mind permanently into her Na’Vi avatar, but she dies before this can be completed.

Jake then appeals to the entire clan to come together to fight the RDA,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttR-FQBnFgM> Jake speaks to the Na’Vi clan before the battle.

Quaritch stages a pre-emptive strike the next day, but the Na’Vi prevail when they are joined by all of the Pandoran wildlife.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgCNVdYzIcw> Humans vs the Na’vi War Scene

Quaritch dons an exoskeleton suit similar to what Ripley used in the 1986 *Aliens,* and he and Jake fight it out.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4lmrmx3cpWU> Jake vs Quaritch

Netyri kills Quaritch, and saves the human version of Jake before he suffocates from the Pandoran atmosphere, which is poisonous to humans.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-X0HPtQjlM> Neytiri meets the human Jake Sully

The humans are almost all then expelled permanently from Pandora. In the final scene, Jake transfers permanently into his avatar at a ceremony at the Tree of Souls.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjHcWC2IZPY> Ending scene: Jake becomes a Na’Vi

In terms of the common themes:

Technology: This film was groundbreaking in so many different areas. The entire planet of Pandora is a virtual reality world of astounding beauty. The avatar technology utilized motion capture technology to give the facial features and body movements of the Na’Vi an amazing lifelike quality. The combination of creative imagination with advanced technology was a huge factor in why this is the most successful film ever at the box office

Deep Sea Exploration (or Space): This entire film takes place on the imaginary moon Pandora, in the Alpha Centauri system

Strong Female Characters: Neytiri is an amazing character on many, many levels; she is a strong leader with razor-sharp intelligence. Lt. Chacon, pilot of one of the hovercraft, has the guts to stand up to Quaritch and his hatred of the Na’Vi.

Arrogant Men: Quaritch is as awful as any male character in any Cameron film; the quintessential “Ugly American”, he is all macho man and brute force, who doesn’t give the first damn about the native Na’Vi or their environment. Parker Selfridge is the amoral company man, just doing his job, going after what will make his company the most money.

Great Action Scenes: There are so many in this film; the entire film keeps you on the edge of your seat for the entire 2 hours and 42 minutes.

As to what’s next, no less than 5 Avatar sequels are in the works, and will be released one every year, starting in 2019. All will be filmed at the same time, in the same way the *Lord of the Rings* films were done.