

Avatar: Between Utopia and Heterotopia

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Abstract

With this article we intend to examine the concepts of utopia and heterotopia, as proposed by Michel Foucault, from considerations about the notions of places and non-places. In these places others, we attempt to show the inflexion points of contestation and compensations, in relation to the processes that do not correspond to our ideals, or, more than that, do not answer to the preservation and dignity of our specie.

Keywords: utopia, heterotopia, avatar

On Places

In this paper, we raise the debate on the concepts of utopia and heterotopia, as Foucault outlined them in 1967. The text related to this conference, *Des espaces autres*, obtained the authorization for publication only in 1984.

On one hand, *Des espaces autres* leads us to the controversies of its time, sometimes with examples of occasion, sometimes conducted by historical data. On the other hand, the text works with both concepts above mentioned which, modulated according to different cultural landscapes, are timeless in nature.

We aim to do, among other things, the implementation of these concepts to current circumstances. Our intention had originated from the experience of watching the movie *Avatar* and the experience of teaching, which takes us to follow the students in their lives, so we begin this journey of reflection with the recollection of the legacy from several studies on the notion of place, as Foucault has done.

At the beginning of each academic year we open classes with new students who will join the former students, constituting the student body of the university. They reached to this by being successful in the competitive selection they have undergone. Certainly, this result has requested their engagement and efforts that could turn out in filling the vacancy.

It happens that one vacancy, or vacant place, may imply the existence of an empty space to be filled and defined by individuals through the process of occupation.

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Well, great thinkers have taught us that there are no empty places, that the assimilation of references and meanings is concomitant to the constitutive design of places. The space itself, as a whole, is full of our intentions, whether we take it as geographic location or as institutional position.

The division of space in categories or in places appeared a long time ago in the history of humanity, each one carrying meanings. One typical example of this is the large number of surnames which have their origins in the place that a family came from, in which case the mention of the name socially described, defined and introduced one person. The divisions outline hierarchies, as those that indicate sacred and profane, closed and open, urban and rural, private and public, cultural and utilitarian, labor and leisure places... They are accompanied by the indication of proper and improper occupations, generating modes of correction.

After all, haven't we already said that the dirtiness is an object out of place? Remember that the place of the dirtiness is an extrinsic determination and it follows demands arising from cultural circumstances. In these days there is the emergence of places previously unthinkable, such as recycling centers or the places for information storage in computers, all *selected* according to a given social articulation. And each selection generates, naturally, the out-of-place.

It is possible to notice the sacralization of these spaces, supported by the institutional label, in its meaning effects that manage to conduct us through life, we the people who fight to occupy them or are served by them. These effects are not enough to show that the places are not empty, but are full of significance – we must notice that they pay our perceptions, our terrors, our desires and, consequently, our dreams.

Evidently, the space from the perspective of places is real, while it admits materiality. Its substance is physical, lending naturality to its design and to its occupant. However, the place and the occupant have a statutory commitment: there are procedures to be followed, there are tasks to be accomplished. Following the considerations concerning the nature of places and considering an accelerated pace of life, caused or provided by our technological acquisitions, authors as Marc Augé (1994) and Paul Virilio (1984) have dedicated to think them from the perspective of rapidity and constant crossings. Given these factors, the authors undertook an exercise of exploring

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the notion of non-place, a term created regarding the generation of spaces of passages, or spaces of momentary halt. The occupation of a non-place is characterized by the transitoriness, by a positioning that is ephemeral enough to liquefy any identificatory bond, which is situated between one point to another: the car and the streets, the train and the stations, the airplanes and the airports... Its habitation is presented as impossibility, because the non-places have a distinct status: only for circulation. The film *The Terminal* (2004), starring Tom Hanks and directed by Steven Spielberg, shows us the limbo in which the character Viktor Navroski is, for having his passport invalidated, due to the coup d'état in his country, while he was flying to New York. His entrance to the United States is denied; at the same time, he cannot return to his country in the current circumstances. In the way of American movies, Viktor manages to build a provisory life in the airport terminal. However, the non-place characteristic of this space is clearly expressed in the movie by all Viktor's efforts and by the adaptation that the local functions must undergo to meet the exigencies of the character.

Also in relation to the space and its determinations, we must emphasize that even the reference to define locations and their crossings gives to the space some significant mark, in line with the intentions and with the resources of science and technique. Note that a location can be indicated by the stars, by its reliefs designs, by geometrical coordinates or, as nowadays, by gadgets linked to satellites, like the GPSs. As each reference, the map itself changes its configuration. It is a fact that nowadays there is a predominance of extraterrestrial space, inhabited by our satellites, as a reference for both communication and for orientation of terrestrial locomotion.

The thinkers that are dedicated to these contemporary issues, while they notice the spread of control devices, widely implemented by satellites, also emphasize the taking of space as places, a fact which refers, undoubtedly, to their occupations, from the perspective of the relationships between them that are still determinant in their meanings.

Anyway, as we strive to occupy places according to our inclinations and desires, we also strive to escape from them. The framing movement corresponds to another one that tries to get itself away from rules and constrictions, in order to dissimulate a mechanical restraint that is inherent to the selection of the places, so they continue to correspond to our inclinations and desires. Thus, it is from other places, which are not

the ones we have already outlined – especially the institutionalized ones – we are going to discuss.

On utopia

Our civilizing process, organized around the design and the administration of real places, has also produced and created unreal places, as spaces without a location physically ascertainable. The utopias are configured as non-existing places in which we invest our individual and collective expectations. As imaginary production, they need a point to spread out. That's why they are often a reflection of a given society, positively or negatively.

They may be homologous to the social formation, in the projection of their improvement. In this sense, the Illuminism, movement that brings in its name what it claims, have developed utopian conceptions, when it imagined a better world, from the one which have already given its first steps. They may be reversed, when they reflect an opposite character that, however, can only be conceived from a previously delimited situation which put them in the background. In this sense, revolutionary proposals are positioned from reversal utopias.

In reality, a utopia is a virtual place constructed by dreams investment, as Manuel Bandeira (1986) consecrated in *Pasárgada*, the place where he was friend of the king and could choose the bed and the woman he wanted.

As we know, the New World was, one day, a real place to invest the utopias of the Old World, recognized by the cities of gold as much as in the proposals to construct perfect societies. It is important to emphasize that, although they are imagined as ideal places, the utopias imply a return movement, sustaining the real places. In the West, for example, reflecting the principle of progression, there is the utopian investment in a democracy in which the human rights should be truly applied as everyone's rights.

These imaginary formations, which reverberate in our work, could be seen in institutional programs, in the laws governing us and in all social articulation. However, we don't need to go too far. Sometimes our cultural productions clearly define the utopias we assimilate. This is the case of the movie *Avatar*, which presents, at least, three central vectors in common with our utopian conceptions, mixing present and past, real and imaginary.

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We must start from the beginning. Dictionaries tell us that the word avatar has its origin in the Sanskrit, when it denominated the descending of the beings from Heaven to Earth, in reference to the idea of reincarnation of the gods. By extension, avatar refers to a metamorphosis and nowadays is a form chosen by internet users to represent themselves – figuratively - in virtual communities.

We must start from the beginning. Avatar, movie with screenplay and direction by James Cameron, which premiered in December 2009, was released in traditional format and in 3D. The experts tell us that this movie represents a technological innovation, because of the recording with special cameras to film and because of the improved visualization system. The worldwide revenue has surpassed the official budget of 327 million dollars, and the movie has become, in February 2010, the biggest success in the history of cinema.

Avatar tells a story that takes place in 2.154, when Pandora, one of the moons from Polifemo, a gas giant in orbit around Alpha Centauri, is explored by a large corporation, RDA, directed by Parker Selfridge. He extracts from it the ore of Unobtainium, and to maintain the pervasive presence of his company, he uses a group of mercenaries trained by ex-military men.

The natives of Pandora are from a related species to the human beings. Although they are three meters high and have tails, bright and colored skin, the people from Na'Vi are adherent of a worldview that, worshiping the goddess Eywa, puts them in harmony with the vital essence that gives life to nature and provides a peaceful approach.

There is a group of scientists, led by Dr. Grace Augustine, that tries to maintain good relationships and contact with the Na'Vis. And since the atmosphere from Pandora is poison to humans, this group has designed the Avatar Program, with which they have created hybrid human beings, with human's and Na'Vi's DNA. A human being with genetic material compatible with the avatar can have their brain functions transplanted so he can inhabit it and give life to it.

Jake Sully, a former Marine, is paraplegic and needs money to the treatment that would heal him. This treatment is offered in exchange for his trip to Pandora, in order to assume the avatar of his dead twin brother, who was a scientist from the Program.

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Jake, in the body of his avatar, during his first incursion in Pandora gets lost from Dr. Grace and from the biologist Norm Spellman, the people who accompanied him. In the forest, that he does not know, Neytiri helps him, taking him to the Hometree, where her clan lives. They become friends and she teaches him her way of life and how to deal with the plants and animals of the place. Coronel Miles Quaritch, one of the RDA's partners, tries to take advantage of the friendship between Jake and the Na'Vis. He proposes to Jake to convince the Omaticaya clan to abandon the Hometree, because there is under it a rich unobtainium reserve. However, Jake allies with the Na'vis, attacking RDA's machines which try to destroy the Hometree.

Despite the opposition of Dr. Grace and her revelation that the attack against the Hometree would disturb the equilibrium of the bio-botanical neural network from Pandora, and despite Jake's alliance to Na'vis, coronel Quatrigh gives the order to destroy the Hometree, trapping Jake, Grace and Norm. Trudy Chacon, a security force pilot disgusted with Quaritch's interventions in Pandora, releases them. Grace is shot and Jake decides to ask for help to the Omaticaya, which considered him a betrayer.

With Toruk, a flying dragon that only few great leaders had tamed, Jake goes to the Tree of Souls, the energy center where the Omaticaya had taken refuge and, with them, tries to carry, uncessfully, Grace's soul to her avatar. However, the injury is serious and she dies.

After Jake's fidelity to Na'Vis is confirmed, Tsu'Tey, Jake and the leader Omaticaya fly with Toruk to reunite several groups to fight against the destruction of the Tree of Souls. Amid the battle, in which many die, the fauna of Pandora comes to help and, with Jake, who becomes the new Omaticaya leader – since Tsu'Tey dies – win over the military. The ore company and the military are forced out to to Pandora. Jake has his real body exposed to the atmosphere of Pandora and almost dies. Again, he is saved by Neytiri who takes him to the Tree of Souls where, under her power, Jake's soul is transposed, definitely, to his avatar.

Early in the beginning it is implied a first utopian situation. In the movie there are clones, constituted by human and Na'vis DNA mix. These clones are animated by the temporary transposition of the human soul to the clone.

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Since *Blade Runner*, in 1982, directed by Ridley Scott, this question surrounds us. Born from the cybernetics, from artificial intelligence, from robotics, from genomics, from the possibility of immortality, from the combination/transposition with other bodies, it sustains the dreams of science and the western imaginary.

In this ideology, *Avatar* represents a resolution, showing a kind of answer to the question, making the irreversible transposition dependent of a force of nature, in the case of a field of force represented by the Tree of Souls. At the same time, in the transposition itself, it announces its possibility and responds affirmatively to the proposed question in terms of scientific progress.

On the other hand, *Avatar* uses elements which are outlined in our utopias since, perhaps, always. It is about the harmony between nature and human beings, experienced by the Na'Vi community. There, the last word, the conflict resolution, the food, the protection, the mercy and the life fall to a nature in which everything permeates and to everything connects to.

The conception of a wise, good, virtuous and cheerful nature was in the pre-Christian religions, as in the rousseauian thinking and it is, nowadays, in new version related to learning about ecological system. We did not stop hearing about equilibrium that guarantees, in the end, the preservation of human species, by the preservation of its place: the Earth. This vector is on preoccupations and on ideal conceptions at the same time, and if today it is guided by the controversies about global warming, seeming so contemporary, it is the same thing that had lead our species to conceive gods responsible for, as an example, the seasons of the year. It was our work to honor them, in the name of fertility, of the good harvest, and finally, of their favorable conduction to us, amid the plenitude of our own nature.

The third point, that characterizes *Avatar* as a utopian production, is related to the fusion of new and old components. On the one hand, the 3D proposal of *Avatar* is entirely performed with the resources of new technologies, and we marvel at the colors, at the *reality*, at the *proximity* of the images. We can touch them, even they are intangible, and we can be inside the movie, although in an IMAX room.

On the other hand, the creation of the 3D perception, beyond that provided by the eyes, is old hat: then and now, it is reduced to the polarization of the colors. It is also

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the ambition of 3D simulation: from the Albertian perspective to Lumière's invention, it has done the path of a dream. Avatar is the most up-to-date cinema experience, waiting for its necessary overcoming.

On other places

However, in Avatar, in the game between 3D, movie, heroic saga and utopian space, it is outlined another design, the design of other places. In fact, a utopia establishes itself as such. Nevertheless, in this article, the places others are understood as Foucault has described.

There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places - places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society - which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias. I believe that between utopias and these quite other sites, these heterotopias, there might be a sort of mixed, joint experience, which would be the mirror (Foucault, 1994: 1574-1575)²

Foucault proposes and explores the conception of heterotopia through two examples. We're taking, firstly, the last one. A boat is a heterotopia, a piece of a localizable place; when it is launched to the endless sea, is a mixture of all different ports to which, in fact, it does not belong. The corsair is the character who accompanies it and the act of sacking is the way to impose the different in this space that contradicts the other ones, by showing them his stipulated disposition and by showing them their vulnerability.

The other example was a matter when Foucault's lecture was delivered, in 1967. It is about the mirror as utopia and as heterotopia.

The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the

² The excerpts of the work were freely translated by the author of this paper.

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moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there. (Ibid.: 1574-1575).

The mirror is a utopia in the virtual image reflected that does not inhabit any place and, however, stands as a model since it is unifying. To further explore this example, we use the observations of Jacques Lacan about the mirror stage, developed by this time when Foucault was composing his text. With these observations, we can deepen the understanding on the utopian nature of the mirrors.

It is enough to understand the mirror stage as identification in the sense that the analysis gives to this term, in other words, the change produced in the subject when he assumes an image – which predestination to this phase effect is sufficiently indicated by the use, in theory, of the old term *imago* (Lacan, 1998: 97).

Considering the mirror and its role in the formation of identities, the feedback effect which Foucault deals with is the experience of unity of someone's body which only can be experimented with his reflection. Such experience is linked to the recognition of his surrounding, also reflected in the mirror, which acts as a witness that, in fact, it is his image.

If it is from his surroundings that an individual obtains the guarantee which allows him to recognize his image as his own, all articulation there involved are extra-mirror: the image, in its virtual nature, the recognition, which is dedicated to the virtuality of the image according to the surroundings. Finally, the image of the body, the edge which represents the first step in the construction of identity. Through identification, a utopia of identity lives in the mirror, although the inflexion of disparate elements.

It happens that the movie *Avatar* is qualified as analogue as such as another example. It leads us – perception is thinking – for unusual lands; it works as a mirror, giving us a vision of ourselves, or of our culture. Besides the examples that outline the dimension of these other places, known as heterotopias, Foucault has defined six principles to orient the recognition of heterotopical spaces. By examining them, we may specify the condition in which *Avatar* can be defined as a heterotopia. Because of this intent, they are going to be examined here in a different sequence, as conducted by the similarity of the movie with the nature of other places.

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At first, the heterotopias are constant properties of all and any culture, although in different ways. They can be classified in two general groups: heterotopias of crisis and heterotopias of deviation. The heterotopia of crisis received its name by Foucault because it implies places that contain individuals who are, inside a given society, in a state of crisis. In primitive societies, this type of heterotopia has manifested, for example, in spaces reserved for menstruating women, as well as those reserved for the elderly. Nowadays, according to Foucault, this kind of place tends to disappear, being replaced by the heterotopias of deviation.

The mark of our times, since modernity, has been the creation of places to individuals who, somehow, represent a deviation in relation to the average or to the rules in a given society. For Foucault, this is the case of the nursing homes and psychiatric clinics, also forms of prison, in which we can include the home for elderly, that is, at the same time, heterotopias of crisis and heterotopias of deviation “(...) since in our society where leisure is the rule, idleness is a sort of deviation” (Foucault, 1994: 1576).

In the second principle that orients his description, Foucault considers that the heterotopias can work differently in the same society over the time, depending on the culture. He takes as an example the cemetery as the symbolic weight which determines the displacement of the proximity with the church to the suburbs: the first location is oriented by the spirituality and the second one by sanitary principles.

The fifth principle tells us that they contain systems that, at the same time, guarantee isolation and permeability. By definition, we enter in a heterotopical space through repression or rituals concerning it. Foucault takes as an example the heterotopical spaces turned into purification rites, as the Scandinavian sauna. But his principle also contains the spaces that is apparently opened and, however, make exclusions, as in the case of motel rooms “where a man goes with his car and his mistress and where illicit sex is both absolutely sheltered and absolutely hidden, kept isolated without however being allowed out in the open” (Ibid.:1580).

The first, second and fifth principles described are little related to the movie or especially, to our object of exploration. That's why we discussed it before, so we could show the perfect integration of the remaining principles with *Avatar*.

Only in the fifth principle we can establish an analogy between the film and heterotopia, because it is reasonable to say that the space of the cinema is open to all when, in fact, and especially in the case of a 3D movie, it is a limited and negotiated space, where the entrance payment works as a rite of access. Moreover, we can notice the fact that since its launching in December 2009 in Brazil, until the end of February 2010, has been difficult to buy tickets, even in advance, to watch it.

The third principle is marked by juxtaposition: the same material space can contain different locations, sometimes contradictory. There are several examples that come together there, when in other places they might be incompatible.

Foucault gives us as an example the case of the gardens, thought as a microcosm in the ancient oriental tradition, which includes representative diversities of the cosmos. Nature and structure are equally diverse, immersed in the same place through the symbol. He continues remembering the carpets that, in their origins, represent the garden, a mobile garden in various spaces.

Also in the third principle, Foucault makes reference to the theatre and to the cinema as examples of heterotopia:

Thus it is that the theater brings onto the rectangle of the stage, one after the other, a whole series of places that are foreign to one another; thus it is that the cinema is a very odd rectangular room, at the end of which, on a two-dimensional screen, one sees the projection of a three-dimensional space (Ibid.: 1577).

Well, *Avatar* follows, as a movie, this third principle in locating the rectangular room and in projecting a dimension into another. But it does it doubly, working the dimension in a radical way with the innovative presentation in 3D. In addition, it juxtaposes spaces in the film itself: the space of the company that explores the unobtainium ore, the space of the laboratory in which the clones are produced and, finally, the space of Pandora – this, in turn, pure heterotopias in the juxtaposed harmonic diversity.

Pandora is related to the two first groups, to the company and to the scientists, besides retaining traces of immaculate nature, which includes majestic trees, satellites floating in the air, linked by lianas and roots which contradict the gravity, abrupt ravines, amazing waterfalls, hybrid animals conceived with known animals, the materiality of the world and family, according to our imaginary.

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Besides, this imaginary allows the presence of dragons, in line with certain aesthetic that has origin, by a matter of popularity, in *The Lord of the Rings*, by J.R.R.Tolkien, published in 3 volumes between 1954/1955, or in the *RPG Dungeon & Dragons*, originally developed by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, and published for the first time in 1974 in the USA.

Pandora is the home of the Na'Vi people, who are also a mixture of creatures culturally known as aliens, as we can see in their colors and elongated bodies. Moreover, as a character indication, the fact that they have been represented, most of the times, as advanced creatures. In general this advance is technical; in Pandora it has a spiritual character. Anyway, in both cases, our imaginary has defined them as *good* creatures.

Strictly speaking, the spaces delimited by all this quadrants of the movie are contradictory, by their nature and purpose, once we do not find them equally disposed anywhere else. Definitely, this is a property of the fiction. However, it is important to notice that in *Avatar* they converge on the materiality of the image, creating another type of relational space that supports the movie plot and the spectator engagement.

The fourth principle tells us that the heterotopias are connected to the breach of conventional time and so, also constitutes itself as heterochrony. Foucault tells us that there are heterotopias from a time that accumulates infinitely, putting together elements from different periods, such as museums and libraries. Thus, we can consider places that shelter all periods and become, thus, timeless. However, there are also heterotopias that operate with an evanescent temporality, as in parties, fairs, *shows*, *raves* etc.

In *Avatar*, the first heterochrony is clearly present. There is the time of life in Pandora, the time of primitive societies around the cycles of great Mother Nature. There is the accelerated and aggressive time of corporative business. There is the time of the laboratory and there is the time of the clone's possession. All these times in accumulation also provoke, from the spectator's perspective, a disconnection of the present time, since the movie operates with a temporality which perhaps assembles opposite rhythms.

Can we approximate it to a fugacious heterocronia? Certainly yes, considering the ephemerality of the moment of the exposition, the 3D party that fascinates us.

Between utopia and heterotopia

Finally, the sixth principle relates to the functional character of a heterotopia, in relation to the spaces of its contours.

Either their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned (...) Or else, on the contrary, their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled. (Foucault, 1994: 1580).

In the last case, instead of determination, it builds a heterotopia of compensation.

In *Avatar* we certainly have both aspects. There is illusion, not only because of 3D, but also because of the creation of an impossible saga, at least in terms of our current technological provisions which, however, we experiment as coherent.

As fictional story, *Avatar* follows the classic patterns of narrative. Thus we can clearly see the 31 narrative functions described by Vladimir Propp (1984), from the tales of wonder.

After all, we have the *absentation* of Jake Sully, the *hero*, to a distant planet, an adventure that was proposed in exchange of the treatment for his paralysis. We must notice that in the contemporary sagas, when the unknown and mysterious places are all worn out, the places for investiture have been changed to another time on Earth, past or future, or to another interstellar point, as in *Avatar*.

In the story, to the intents of the ore corporation and its paramilitary display, Jake's presence is required to obtain information about the Na'Vis. So, Jake plays the *reconnaissance of the villain*. In his turn, the villain represents RDA ore corporation, directed by Parker Selfridge and by the mercenaries that support him.

The victim is, at the same time, Pandora and its inhabitants, who are tricked by the villain. Jake, saved by Neyriti, when he gets lost in the forest, receives at the same time his *adjuvant* and his *difficult task*, being trained by her in the lifestyle of Na'Vis, defeated to overcome obstacles.

Jake's reaction is passing the test, becoming proficient warrior, about to succeed in riding the Toruk dragon. In fact, this achievement qualifies him to the *receipt of a magical agent*. The function of the spatial guidance is present in the movie in many ways, being frequent the displacement of the clone's soul to an avatar.

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The former marine gets to the moment of *mediation*, when he notices the damage caused by the villain, in the bioenergetic equilibrium of the place.

The *struggle* occurs in the battle of the various tribes against the company and the mercenaries. The *victory* is achieved with the death of Quaritch and the expulsion of Selfridge and the militaries, which constitute a form of *punishment* of the villain.

The initial *lack* is *compensated*, with the re-establishment of the supremacy of the Na'Vis. The hero *marries* the princess Neyriti and ascends the throne, becoming the leader of the Omaticaya.

Surprisingly, to the modern times, we can also find the *transfiguration* figure, in which the beast and the frog become charming prince. Jake, paralytic in his human body, having his soul definitely transposed to his avatar, inhabits a perfect body.

Even if we discuss strictly the seven main characters and their spheres, which composes the plot of a fable, they are in the saga: the aggressor, the villain, the donor who provides the magical agent, the assistant (several), the princess, the boss (he can be an ideal to be pursued), the hero, the false hero, considered the one who shows as benefactor, while damaging others.

Well, certainly the center of the movie is the denouncement against the multinational corporations, which explore and lead with predatory activities.

In this sense, the heterotopia of *Avatar* executes the function of challenging space, at the same time it works as a compensation to our space.

In it, the disorderly activities mentioned by Foucault turns into the uncontrolled activities of the companies, which effort to profit. It happens that this is just the quadrant of Pandora that works as a mirror, in which we identify our humanity. However, this is also the characteristic we reject because at least in the movie, its perversity stays exposed. With this, and plus the presentation of the Na'Vis as an ideal group, the movie is almost a manifest.

The keynote of the compensation comes in two ways. On the one side, there is the harmony with nature that has been dreamed of as far as our memory can go, and has have specific features since the arrival of Europeans in the New World, encounter which has heavily supported the idea of an opulent nature with in which we live well. On the other side, in the end of the narrative, with some help from the hero and their allies, the

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natives in harmony with nature and with the strength of that nature win. In the movie, we won the war we are losing in terms of ecology.

Marcelo Gleiser wrote in an article in *Folha de S. Paulo*, about unobtainium ore:

The film's message is simple: if we don't control the pace we are exploring the resources of our planet, soon we will have nothing to explore. As zinc, for example, which should run out around 2040. Other metals have the same destination (Gleiser, 2010: 9).

And he sums up the situation continuing: "As I wrote before, we are our worst enemies and our only hope. Nature is not going to help us" (Ibid.)

These words concentrate the property of the heterotopias to outline a critique on the game of reflections in which we show up, clearly, in our missteps. So, it shows that *Avatar* is the perfect example of what Foucault described as heterotopia; we could observe the shuffling of time and space, the plunder of History, the game of mirrors in its reversal, which stands out our relations of production as well as our relationship with the planet's resources. We could also see that even the other places, above all, are not empty. On the contrary, they are built on the intersection of meanings that allows the conception of the counter-location.

Finally, to be constituted as a stretched space, *Avatar* allows the emergence, through defense, of our ancestor's dreams, our ideals, now updated. With a little of hybridism, a deny tone and a dash of dream, the movie shows what are the heterotopias and also that they are drawn in half-wall (*mitoyenne*, the term used by Foucault) with the utopias.

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