

# Aya Avatar

## Introduction by Ralph Miller

Sometimes unrelated events occur in your life in clusters that cause you to notice something you would not otherwise really pay attention to.

Several weeks ago I saw the film Avatar with my children. To tell you the truth, the thing that impressed me the most was how the idea of connecting back to nature had been presented with the Navi tail connection. I thought it surprising that this concept was thrust into mass consciousness so simply in such an exceedingly beautiful film. I have often returned to the film in my thoughts since seeing it.

Just recently I traveled to Brazil where I was invited to give a presentation about ayahuasca to a group of doctors and scientists. My lecture was well received.

Most of the delegates were from Germany and Switzerland and there were a few others from Brazil. There were some really interesting people, many of whom I am sure I will see again. But the best thing that happened on this short trip was a very heart-felt friendship that I made with two new Brazilian friends.

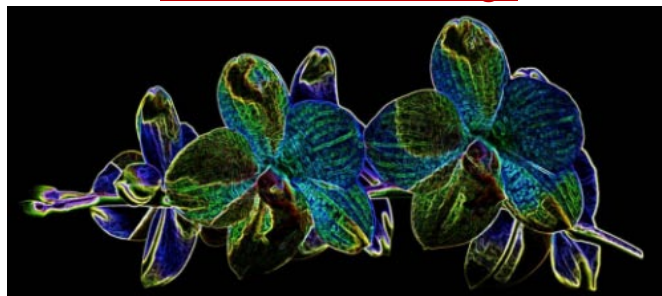
The morning after my lecture I was sitting at breakfast with one of my new friends whose name is Alvaro. He commented about what I had said in my lecture, about the way that ayahuasca connects us back to the natural world. Definitely one of my favorite subjects! The re-connection to the natural world is one of the fundamental lessons from this sacred ancient medicine. I have spoken and written about the need to re-connect to nature for years. (see [The Natural World](#))

We talked for a while and at one point in the conversation he said, "You know, what you were talking about connecting to nature reminded me of the same concept that was presented in the film Avatar."

Having seen the film a few weeks ago, I agreed with him, "Yes every living thing had a tail or some means of connecting to every other living thing. The connection was real and vital and natural, that's the way ayahuasca is. Ayahuasca is like the Navi tail – it's an interface."

Upon my return home, after a few days had past, several things happened in quick succession all in one day. My friend Alvaro told me about his passion in creating some very special photo images and he sent me an image of orchid flowers that he had made. He described it as experimental photography and said it showed the energetic patterns within the plant.

[\*\*View the full size image\*\*](#)



*Image of orchids (photo courtesy of Alvaro Guidotti)*

The same day I noticed a marked increase in visitors to the [heartoftheinitiate.com](http://heartoftheinitiate.com) website and checked for the source of the increased traffic. I discovered pretty quickly that someone had put in a link to our website from the Avatar Forum ... it was a pretty long post called, '[Avatar, Eywa, and Ayahuasca healed my soul](#)'. In the post there was a link back to our site referring to a specific page containing the [shamanic music](#) of our shaman Warinei Wanare.

Somewhere else on the forum was a link to an article called 'Aya Avatar' written by Erik Davis. I really liked Erik's article.

I fired a quick email to Erik and Alvaro to ask if I could re-post their respective creative works and share them with our audience. I received an enthusiastic 'yes' from both of them within a few hours. So I am happy to share Alvaro's beautiful image above and Erik's insightful article below. I hope you enjoy them.

This all brought my awareness of the human-nature connection to a whole new level. Nice how some things happen ... What a system!

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## Update 02/03 – Deleted Scene!

[Cut Scene From The Original Script \(read the 5 page scene at the end of this article\)](#)



My interest in the film Avatar was further piqued today as I read a portion of the film's script that recently found its way to the internet. You can read it for yourself, but there were a number of deleted scenes from the final film.

This particular scene dealt with Jake Sulley's avatar participating in a sacred visionary ceremony. According to the script, the ceremony using a 'psychoactive alkaloid' was an initiation and it was Jake Sulley's intention to 'become one of them'.

This is particularly interesting to me as the ceremony involved eating a special worm and then immediately being stung by a scorpion type insect. Apparently the visionary effects of the ceremony required two separate components.

Of course this mirrors exactly the pharmacology of ayahuasca. The psychoactive component from the *chacruna* bush of ayahuasca is *dimethyl-tryptamine* or DMT which is also identical to the human neurotransmitter produced in the pineal gland. DMT when ingested orally is destroyed by the digestive stomach enzyme *monoamine-oxidase* or MAO. However, the ayahuasca brew contains a 2nd plant called *caapi*, which contains strong but temporarily acting MAO inhibitors which allow the DMT to pass from the gut to the brain.

The mechanism of inhibiting MAO was not discovered by Western science until 1952. The discovery happened 'by accident' while researchers were attempting to develop a new drug for treating tuberculosis. Ayahuasca has been in use among indigenous tribes for over 3,000 years we know of. Incredibly, simple tribal shamans have incorporated this fairly sophisticated process millennia before its discovery in 'modern' science.

Talk about intelligence in nature!

## Aya Avatar

### Drink the Jungle Juice

by Erik Davis ([www.techgnosis.com](http://www.techgnosis.com)) January 7, 2010



In paradoxical and altogether predictable terms, James Cameron's ravishing *Avatar* sets a blue man group of mystically attuned forest dwellers against the aggressive and heartless exploitation that characterizes the military-industrial-media complex, with its virtual interfaces, biotech chimeras, and cyborg war machines. The paradox, of course, is that a version of this latter complex is responsible for delivering Camaron's visions to us in the first place. To wit: before a recent screening of the film at the Metreon IMAX theater in San Francisco, we hapless begoggled ones were barraged with military ads, not to mention a triumphant techno-fetishist breakdown on the Imax technology that would soon transport us to the planet Pandora almost as thoroughly (and resonantly) as the handicapped jarhead Jake jacks into his computer-generated avatar body.

But those are behind the scenes ironies. With its floating Roger Deanscapes and hallucinogenic flora, the manifest world of *Avatar* instead spoke another truth: that the jungle pantheism that now pervades the psychoactive counterculture has gone thoroughly mainstream. Of course, noble savage narratives of ecological balance and shamanic wisdom have been haunting the Rousseau-mapped outback of the western mind for centuries. That said, *Avatar* represents some important twists in that basic tale. The most important of these is that the Na'vi's nearly telepathic understanding of their environment is grounded not only in ritual, plant-lore, and that earnest seriousness that now afflicts PC Hollywood Indians, but in an *organic communications network*: the fibrous, animated, and vaguely repulsive pony-tail tentacles that not only allow the Na'vi to form direct control links with animals but also, through the optical filaments of the "Tree of Souls," to commune with both ancestors and the Eywa, the biological spirit of the planet whose name resonates with Erda, our own Earth.

Call it ayahuasca lite. For while *Avatar* features nothing like the South American shaman lore and stupendous aya visuals that litter the otherwise very bad 2004 Western released here as *Renegade*, the film does suggest that the bitter jungle brew, and ideas of ecological wisdom now attached to it, is having a trickle-down effect. The banisteriopsis caapi vine that gives ayahuasca its name (though not its most hallucinogenic alkaloids) is also known as the "Vine of Souls," which echoes the Na'vi's Tree of Souls. And when Sigourney Weaver attempts to establish the efficacy of the Trees through a neurological discourse of electrical connection, the corporate tool Parker asks what she's been smoking—a backhanded way of acknowledging how much *Avatar's* visionary take on ecological consciousness is grounded in psychoactive consciousness.

After all, beyond a thriving and in many ways damaging ayahuasca tourist market in Brazil and Peru, clandestine aya circles manned by South American shamans and all manner of Euro-

American facilitators are now well established throughout the west. Among the professional creative classes who make up a sizable portion of West Coast seekers—for spirit and/or thrills—ayahuasca could almost be said to be mainstream. So it no longer matters whether Cameron or his animators have themselves drunk the tea; its active compounds are already swimming in the cultural water supply. Eco-futuristic dreams are now indistinguishable from the visionary potential of media technology itself. Indeed, whether you are talking form (ground-breaking 3D animation) or content (cyber-hippie wetdream decor), Cameron's visual and technological rhetoric is impossible to disentangle from hallucinogenic experience.

OK, maybe I am the one smoking something. But if there is an aya-Avatar connection, it would explain one crucial way in which the film differs from conventional "noble savage" mysticism. Rather than ground the Na'vi's grooviness in their folklore or spiritual purity, the film instead presents the vision of a *direct and material communications link* with the plant mind. Which means that Eywa (aka Aya) does not have to be believed—she can be *experienced*. After the temporary fusion with the Tree of Souls that fails to prevent her death, Weaver's chain-smoking left-brain doctor happily confirms Ewya's existence. Like the Vine of Souls now wending its way through the developed world, the Tree of Souls becomes a kind of bio-mystical media, a visionary communications matrix that uplinks the souls of the dead and the network mind of the ecosphere itself.



*Erik Davis is a North American writer, social historian, cultural critic and lecturer. He is noted for his study of the history of technology and society and his essays about the fate of the individual in the dawning posthuman era. Although significant aspects of his work include media criticism and technology criticism, his works span across other disciplines to include a larger social history of art, religion, and science, technology, and politics.*

*He is the author, most recently, of 'The Visionary State: A Journey through California's Spiritual Landscape'. Davis has contributed articles and essays to a variety of publications including 'LA Weekly', the 'Village Voice', and 'Wired'.*



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## ***Cut Scene From The Original 'Avatar' Movie Script***

GRACE (cont'd)  
And the psychoactive alkaloid in the worm-  
- we have no idea what that'll do in an  
avatar brain.

Jake breaks free and wheels away, down the corridor.

GRACE follows JAKE as he crosses to the Link. A sheet of  
LIGHTNING flashes across the sky outside.

Norm is initializing the Link.

NORM  
Calibrating. Thirty seconds.

She puts her hands on his shoulders.

GRACE  
No matter what you prove out there-- you  
are still in here.  
(shaking him)  
Right here.

JAKE  
I have to go all the way -- become one of  
them--

GRACE  
(furiously)  
Goddammit, Jake, you can never be one of  
them!

Norm looks up, startled at the VEHEMENCE in GRACE' voice.

GRACE  
Our life out there takes millions of  
dollars of machinery to sustain. You  
visit -- and you leave.

During this, Jake pulls himself from his wheelchair, levering  
himself into the Link, hauling his useless legs inside.

GRACE  
(softening)  
You can never truly be with her.

Jake stops, pinioned by the truth. He seems suddenly very  
lost.

JAKE  
You know why I'm here? Because Quaritch  
sent me.

JAKE  
That's right -- to embed with the  
*Omaticaya*. To find out how to screw them  
out of their home. By deceit or by  
force, he didn't care. And if it turned  
out to be force, then how best to do it.

Norm is in shock. But Grace is eerily calm.

GRACE  
And what about now, Jake?

JAKE  
I'm not that guy any more.

Grace nods. She's been on his journey every step of the way.

GRACE  
I know.

JAKE  
But if I tell Quaritch the truth, he  
yanks me out -- I never see her again.  
And if I tell her the truth, the clan  
throws me out -- that's if they don't cut  
my heart out and show it to me.

Jake looks hopelessly at the two of them. In his own perfect  
Hell.

NORM  
They won't understand what you've done.

JAKE  
They don't even have a word for "lie" --  
they had to learn it from us.

Grace sees he is on the verge of tears. Lost and alone,  
between worlds.

GRACE  
I know. I taught it to them.

JAKE  
(pleading)  
Grace. I've gotta go. They're waiting.

NORM  
Link is ready.

Grace stops him as he tries to close the lid.

GRACE  
Jake. You can't carry this burden much longer.

JAKE  
(smiling wanly)  
It's okay. Mo'at says an alien mind probably can't survive the Dream Hunt anyway.

Grace closes the lid. It feels like closing a coffin. She watches his psionic patterns aligning to his avatar, somewhere out in the night.

GRACE  
(to Norm)  
Prep my link. I'm going in.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMONS/HOMETREE - NIGHT

JAKE SITS, eyes closed, as Neytiri and another young hunter paint his face and body in preparation for *uniltaron* -- the Dream Hunt.

NEYTIRI  
When your Spirit Animal comes, you will know.

Their eyes meet with emotion neither can conceal any longer.

TIME CUT. GRACE stands with the crowd at the ramp to HOMETREE'S LOWEST LEVEL. Jake barely sees her as he goes down the spiral. She tries to follow, but is barred by a hunter.

BELOW, seemingly in the womb of the earth, Jake walks slowly into the center of a tight circle of seated elders and hunters. An ELDER is slowly rapping a large WATER DRUM.

TIME CUT -- MO'AT purifies him with smoke from burning herbs, CHANTING in a low monotone. Jake, squatting, washes the smoke over himself with his palms.

MACRO - MO'AT'S FINGERS unwrap a piece of wood riddled with holes. She catches the end of a glowing purple **WORM**, and draws it out of the wood.

MO'AT  
(subtitled)  
*Oh wise worm, eater of the Sacred Tree --  
bless this worthy Hunter with a true  
vision.*

MO'AT places the worm on Jake's out-stretched TONGUE. It twists on itself, lighting his mouth before he closes it. She indicates he should chew. He does.

MACRO -- AN EARTHEN JAR is opened. EYTUKAN removes a writhing black ARACHNOID, the Pandoran equivalent of a scorpion.

He places it against the back of Jake's neck and presses. The insect drives its stinger into Jake's skin and --

Jake grimaces. Mo'at and Eytukan step back, leaving Jake alone in the circle.

Neytiri watches intently, joining in the low chant.

SLOW DOLLY IN on Jake. His eyes OPEN. He looks around at the faces -- they seem to TRANSFORM, becoming threatening.

Jake looks down at the palms of his hands.

JAKE'S POV -- his hands recede, his whole body, the ground and --

INSTANTLY the circle of Na'vi recedes, as if to a distant horizon, leaving vast ground in between. SPACE is utterly distorted, and SOUND as well -- echoing, THUNDEROUS.

ECU JAKE -- pupils DILATED black. He looks around and --

The onlookers are gone, replaced by a ring of glowing trees, which seem miles high. The whole image is bathed in spectral radiance. Jake looks down --

JAKE'S POV -- his body and hands transforming -- fingers stretching into tendrils, legs becoming roots which spread outward across the ground, a thousand glowing dendrites which connect to the roots of the trees and --

CUT TO REALITY -- Jake is on his hands and knees, PUKING in the dirt. He contorts, crying out in agony as the venom contracts his muscles but --

IN HIS VISION Jake stands serene on a FLOATING MOUNTAIN CLIFF. A GREAT BLACK SHADOW covers him, the unmistakable X silhouette of a diving LEONOPTERYX. The LAST SHADOW.

CAMERA SCREAMS down on him as the shadow grows larger -- WE RUSH into his face, into the blackness of his pupil which FILLS THE UNIVERSE and --



REAL JAKE writhes in the dirt, his back arched as his muscles seize. He foams and thrashes, his eyes rolled back in his head, while inside --

TIME ITSELF HAS ACCELERATED -- clouds scream around the mountain tops, mist boils through the forest. He feels the wind of time blowing through him as --

REAL JAKE claws the ground, moaning, staring blindly while --

INSIDE, IN POV he FLIES over the landscape of Pandora --

--but the forest is BLASTED. Fires flicker among trees that are BURNED black and lifeless in a smoky twilight.

A great WINGED SHADOW is cast below, rippling over the devastated ground. AVATAR JAKE looks down at the shadow. Realizes HE is casting it, and we RUSH IN to his PUPIL and --

PULL BACK from the eye of a GREAT LEONOPTERYX, flying lordly and terrible over the land. It lets out an almighty SHRIEK which seems to echo to eternity and --

SLAM CUT to Jake, on his back, GASPING -- back in his body. He weakly rolls up to one elbow and looks around the room.

MO'AT

It is finished.

Neytiri's face is flooded with relief. The faces of the clan elders look at Jake expectantly.

EYTUKAN

(subtitled)

*Did your Spirit Animal come?*

Jake looks from Eytukan to Mo'at, Tsu'tey and the elders. *How can he tell them what he has seen?*

Mo'at puts her splayed fingers against his face, seeming to peer into his troubled soul.

MO'AT

(to Jake)

Something has come.

(to the others, subtitled)

*It will take time for the meaning to be clear.*

She steps back, and Eytukan motions for Jake to stand. He gets up, weakly.