

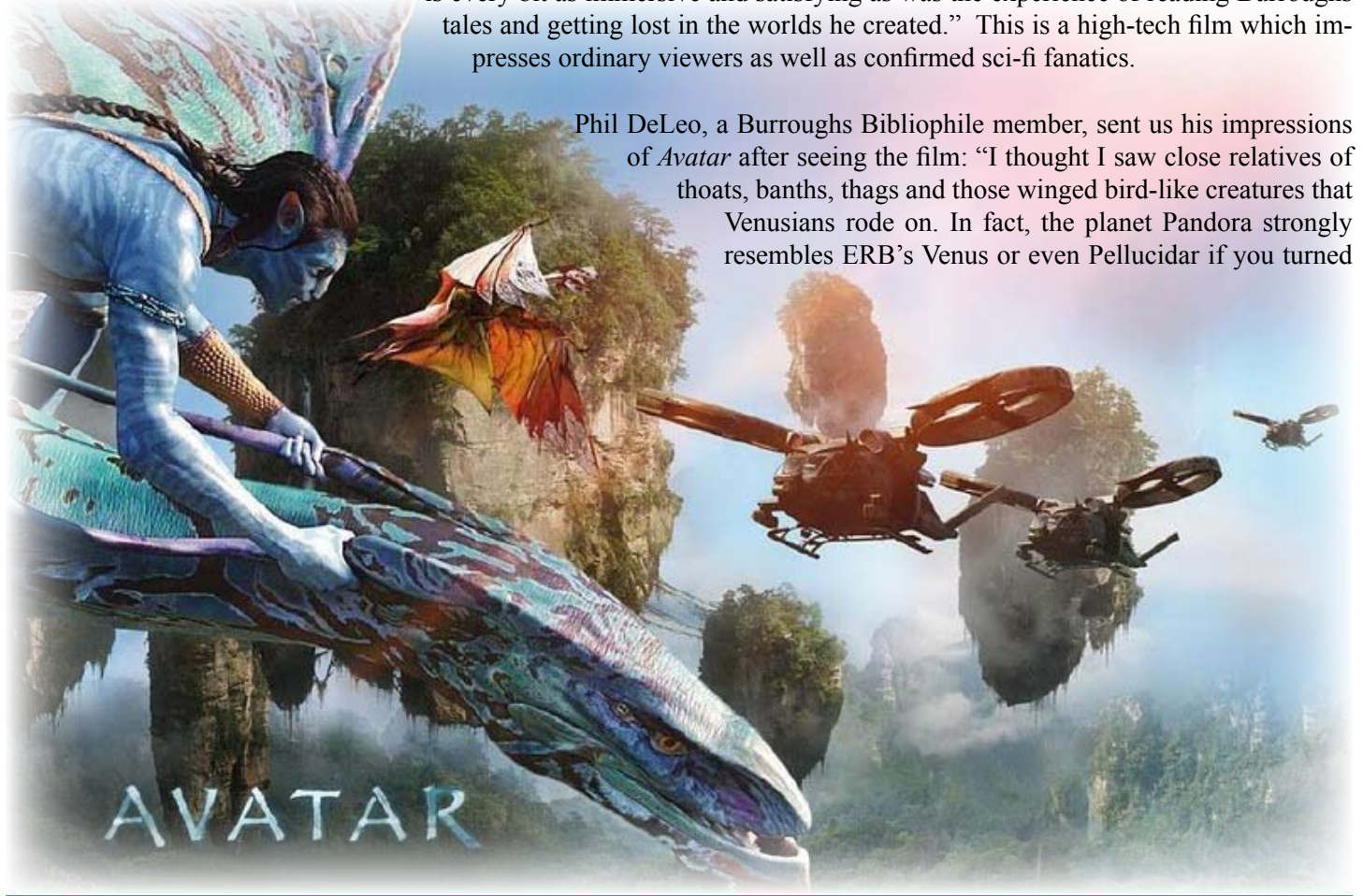


CONTACTING THE WORLDS OF EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

Avatar and Burroughs

Bill Hillman's ERBZINE #3038 covers this subject extremely well by reproducing Michael Sellers' "Avatar and ERB," illustrated with 18 excellent photographs, so we hope you will get a chance to view this at: <http://www.erbzine.com/mag30/3038.html>. To sum up, James Cameron's *Avatar* seems to follow the themes of ERB's John Carter of Mars where a heroic human male is thrust alone into an alien world. Film maker and critic Michael D. Sellers (a friend of Danton Burroughs) reports that Cameron had Burroughs in mind when he created *Avatar*, observing: "What was ERB-like was the creation of a complete world with detailed flora and fauna and an indigenous culture that was well thought out and presented in detail that made me think of Burroughs." *Avatar*'s hero is "a male warrior in an exotic, alien land, overcoming physical challenges and confronting the fears of difference...The biggest similarity for me was the one thing that Burroughs did better than anyone else, and that is to create a world that feels complete. Barsoom became real in my mind...I could have drawn a map of the planet; I could write the history; I even tried playing Jetan; even today, decades after reading the books, I remember the names of the creatures...banth, thoat, calot, orluk, sith. The vividness with which Burroughs created Barsoom, Amtor, Caspak, Pellucidar, and Tarzan's jungle has been captured for the first time cinematically. And that means the experience of viewing *Avatar* is every bit as immersive and satisfying as was the experience of reading Burroughs tales and getting lost in the worlds he created." This is a high-tech film which impresses ordinary viewers as well as confirmed sci-fi fanatics.

Phil DeLeo, a Burroughs Bibliophile member, sent us his impressions of *Avatar* after seeing the film: "I thought I saw close relatives of thoats, banths, thags and those winged bird-like creatures that Venusians rode on. In fact, the planet Pandora strongly resembles ERB's Venus or even Pellucidar if you turned



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up the horizon with computer generated imagery. Every Burroughs fan ought to see this film. It's a pity that ERB himself could not have lived to see what can be done with today's technologies. It's too bad Cameron is not making *A Princess of Mars*. That would be something to see."

Bob Barrett also writes: "John Cameron has stated in numerous interviews that when he was a youth he was influenced by Edgar Rice Bur-



roughs and H. Rider Haggard. *Avatar* is a pure delight to see! It is the kind of story that Edgar Rice Burroughs might have written today if he was still alive. A grand adventure!"
... "Ye Editor"
This page and front: scenes from *Avatar*. Below left: Michael Whelan's cover painting for *Warlord of Mars*.

