

4 The Danger of Space Expansion

Is mankind bound to repeat the same mistakes?

1 Showing the limits of space colonisation

A. Group work. Each group will present a film dealing with the limits of space colonisation.

Group A works on *Elysium* and **group B** works on *Avatar*.

B. Then together explain what the limits of space exploration are: Who benefits from it? What will happen to the colonised worlds?

HELP!

- slums: bidonvilles
- wheel: roue

Group A

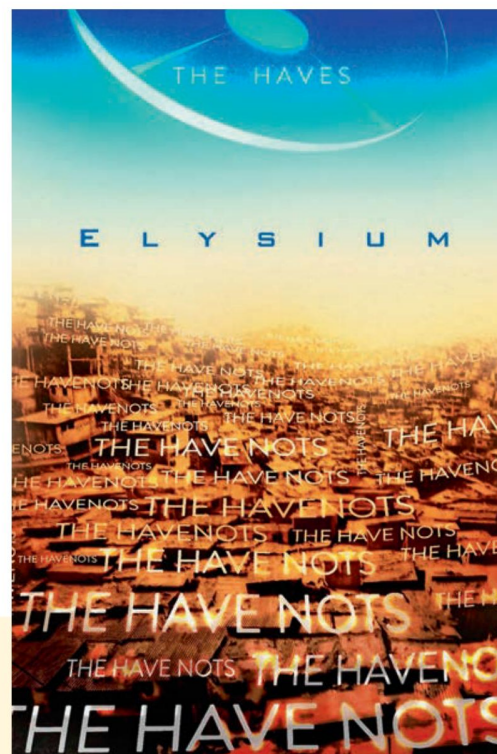
Read the summary of *Elysium* (2013) and study the poster.

- What type of world is depicted in the film? Justify.
- What is man's progress responsible for?
- Give a presentation of the poster, focusing on its contrasts and meaning.

In the year 2159 two classes of people exist: the very wealthy who live on a pristine¹ man-made space station called Elysium, and the rest, who live on an overpopulated, ruined Earth. Secretary Rhodes, a hard line government official, will stop at nothing to enforce anti-immigration laws and preserve the luxurious lifestyle

of the citizens of Elysium. That doesn't stop the people of Earth from trying to get in, by any means they can.

¹ immaculé



Group B

Read the conversation between two characters of J. Cameron's *Avatar*.

- What do you learn about Pandora?
- Explain what Selfridge's attitude reveals about the history of mankind and the limits of space conquest.



A colony of humans, led by head administrator P. Selfridge, is cutting down the trees of Pandora (a far-away planet inhabited by the Na'vi) in order to mine a valuable mineral called unobtainium. Dr. Grace Augustine, a biologist who has been living with the natives, disapproves of the administrator's methods...

GRACE: Those trees were sacred to the Omatiyaya in a way you can't imagine.

SELFTRIDGE: Tch. Oh, you know what? You throw a stick in the air around here, it's gonna land on some sacred fern, for Christ's sake!

GRACE: I'm not talking about some kind of pagan voodoo here. I'm talking about something real, something measurable in the biology of the forest.

SELFTRIDGE: Which is what exactly?

GRACE: What we think we know... is that there is some kind of electrochemical

communication between the roots of the trees. Like the synapses between neurons. And each tree has ten-to-the-fourth connections to the trees around it. And there are ten-to-the-twelfth trees on Pandora.

SELFTRIDGE: Whi-which is a lot, I'm guessing.

GRACE: It's more connections than the human brain. Get it? It's a network. It's a global network, and the Na'vi can access it. They can upload and download data. Memories. At sites like the one you just destroyed. Yes.

SELFTRIDGE: What the hell have you people been smoking out there? They're just goddamn trees!

GRACE: You need to wake up, Parker.

SELFTRIDGE: No. You need to wake up.

GRACE: The wealth of this world isn't in the ground. It's all around us.

Avatar (screenplay), 2009