

GATTACA

Written and directed by Andrew Niccol

Article by Mark Freeman

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Andrew Niccol, a screenwriter and director, was born in New Zealand and moved to England at the age of 21 to direct commercials. He has written and directed *Gattaca*, *Simone* and *Lord of War* as well as earning an Academy Award nomination for his screenplay for *The Truman Show*.

OVERVIEW

In recent years, scientific research has unearthed a greater understanding of our genetic make-up – the lottery that determines our appearance and physical capabilities. The means by which we inherit specific traits from our parents, our genes are like a blueprint of our future, determining our predisposition for specific talents or particular illnesses. Concurrent with this understanding of genetics have come successful attempts in cloning, and, more recently, the ethical debate over stem cell research to combat a range of physical maladies. Identification and eradication of rogue genes (those that could ultimately cause malfunction at birth or later in a person's life) is a very real possibility with the developing exploration in genetic research. In your own DNA, you already carry the genetic code which will cause your physical development in your teens, your predisposition to weight gain in your twenties, your hair loss in your thirties, early menopause in your forties, the arthritis you develop in your fifties, your death from cancer in your seventies. It's an imposing thought to consider the map of our histories, our futures, in terms of our genetic code.

But what if, as seems increasingly likely, we are able to select our genetic make-up? Imagine a world where we can eradicate the code which will give us bad skin or big ears or motor neuron disease. Imagine a world where, through genetic selection, you will be granted the 'best' of the genetic codes from your parents. Imagine this world where, through genetic engineering, we are able to eliminate illness, disease and dysfunction and encourage longevity, beauty and

physical perfection. It sounds great in theory. Andrew Niccol's futuristic film *Gattaca* puts this ideal into practice, and explores a society based on the manipulation of natural genetic codes, and in doing so exposes the potential for abuse and discrimination in a world predicated on perfection.

PLOT AT A GLANCE

Gattaca is a story set, as an intertitle tells us, in the 'not-too-distant future', in a world where genetic engineering has become the normal approach to procreation. We are introduced to Vincent Freeman, a child conceived not by genetic means, but through an act of love. He is what is known as a 'faith birth', a 'God-child', an INVALID. His brother, the genetically modified Anton, is superior in strength and favoured within the society. As a 'natural' child, Vincent's imperfections (he possesses a 99% probability of fatal heart disease) see him ostracised and rejected. He is an employment risk due to his genetic inferiority, yet he dreams of a job in space – a task only performed by the most elite, genetically perfect members of society.

Leaving his parents and his brother, Vincent performs the menial tasks assigned to the genetically inferior, the new underclass in a world that favours perfection. Ultimately, Vincent develops a plan to disguise his genetic inferiority and secure a place in the space program at Gattaca. He gains the assistance of Jerome Eugene Morrow, a VALID with superior genetic make-up who has been rendered a paraplegic after an accident. Using Jerome's blood and urine samples to pass the rigorous screening process at Gattaca, Vincent 'becomes' Jerome Morrow and earns a place on an expedition to Titan, one of the moons of Saturn. Vincent/Jerome, with the assistance of Jerome/Eugene, becomes what is known as a 'borrowed ladder', someone who fraudulently moves upwards in society through the use of someone else's genetic material.

However, a murder sees Vincent/Jerome under suspicion, whilst his relationship with fellow worker, Irene, is complicated by his attempts to cover the truth of his INVALID status. The murder investigation hinges on one vital clue – Vincent's eyelash, with its inferior genetic code – has been found at the murder scene. Vincent's efforts to cover his tracks become increasingly difficult and the revelation of his brother Anton's involvement in the murder case complicates matters even further. *Gattaca*'s final moments centre on resolving the

relationship between Vincent and Irene, the struggle for VALIDITY between Vincent and Anton, and the achievement of Vincent's ultimate goal – to journey into space on the expedition to Titan.

FILM STRUCTURE & STYLE

Structure and sequence

Gattaca begins with a focus on flakes of skin, nails and hair which thud to the ground with a weight which magnifies their significance. These elements, things we shed naturally every day, are the very clues which could jeopardise Vincent's success at Gattaca, as we see with the eyelash which is detected during the murder investigation. This opening title sequence identifies the key to a reading of the film, an identification of the things which will propel the narrative, as well as a spotlight on the ethical issues that *Gattaca* confronts.

Niccol then begins the story, but notice the way he doesn't begin at the beginning as we might expect. The intertitle announces we are in the 'not-too-distant future' which locates us in time, and prepares us for the cool, robotic images which set the story in motion. These first sequences provide us with an overview of the society, the routine Vincent must endure to exist within it, and the central location of Gattaca itself. This beginning raises several questions, its structure inviting us to make sense of the images, characters and locale before the voiceover narration begins. This too is set up as something of a puzzle. The voice we come to recognise as belonging to Vincent explains, in a quite dispassionate tone, the basic beliefs of this society. He makes particular reference to Jerome Morrow, whom we watch entering Gattaca and joining the onlookers at the scene of a murder – a crime which is at this point unexplained.

This opening poses the fundamental questions that engage our interest. What is this society like? Who has been murdered? Who is responsible for the death? If the man we have followed from his home into Gattaca is not Jerome Morrow, then who on earth is he? The structural decision to begin the film at this point serves to pique our interest, and acts as an entry point into an exploration of this futuristic society.

Flashback

The flashback which then begins is designed to answer some of these questions, as well as setting up some of the conflicts which must be worked through during the film. You might like to consider the way the story has been structured as you watch the film, the switching between the plots which run concurrently. How do the flashback sequences featuring Vincent and Anton's childhood rivalry reflect on the later structures? Niccol's cutting between Vincent's attempts to evade detection, and Anton's pursuit of the mystery INVALID cast some light on the relationship between the two brothers.

Cross-cutting

Another element to consider is the frequent cross-cutting between the lives of Vincent/Jerome and Jerome/Eugene. Niccol aims to draw the similarities between these two lives; one featuring an INVALID at Gattaca, the other featuring a VALID confined to the home, virtually hidden from the outside world. The structural decision to consistently cut between these two parallel existences assists in exploring the themes and issues Gattaca raises.

What effect does the structure Niccol adopts have on our understanding of the film itself?

Interior style

Gattaca possesses a striking visual style that helps focus our attention on some of the basic themes and ideas explored in the film. Interior sequences have a cool, dispassionate tone, and we can identify this through the sounds we hear, and the images we see. Inside Gattaca, and even inside the house Vincent and Jerome share there is an emphasis on space, cleanliness and order. No mess or clutter exists in this society, and this underscores the emphasis placed on precision and efficiency. This is a society which rejects disorder, chaos and imperfection, and, as such, Niccol shows us a world devoid of litter and general untidiness.

Sound

The use of sound also focuses our attention on these factors. Listen for the echoes of voices and footsteps throughout the film, as if the characters live in a world that is hollow, distant and lacking in warmth and humanity. The reverberation of sound adds to our understanding of the world Niccol creates, the echoes placing emphasis on the cold distance that characterises *Gattaca* and its workers.

Colour

These interiors are filmed in cold blues, muted dark colours, and stark whites acting as contrast. The use of colour in these sequences serves to emphasise the clinical lack of warmth at *Gattaca*. It has no sense of humanity, but rather the cold efficiency of a machine. Indeed, the obvious segregation of the workers at their stations, the lack of interaction between them, and their robotic entry into the facility itself, all work to reinforce this vision of the future.

Exterior style

The exterior sequences, however, show a marked difference from those within *Gattaca* itself. It is in these sequences that occur outside the confines of *Gattaca* that we find greater warmth and humanity. Notice how exterior settings are filmed in a warm golden glow, like that emanating from a sunset. Filters on the camera are used to create this effect, which serves to place emphasis on the 'natural' in direct contrast to the 'manufactured' look of the *Gattaca* sequences. It achieves the effect of appearing both futuristic, almost post-apocalyptic, whilst simultaneously reinforcing the existence of the natural elements.

Consider the significance of the journey Irene and Vincent take to watch the sunrise, the depth of colour as the sun reflects off a multitude of surfaces. It is here that true beauty lies, in the simple natural effects created by our own sun, and not through the efforts to construct beauty through technology. The beaches which feature in *Gattaca* appear natural and untouched, and both the lighting and the use of sound seem 'true'. Niccol sets up this difference between the way he portrays his cold interiors and his natural exteriors for a specific purpose. How can an exploration of these differences lead us to a deeper understanding of the film?

MAIN CHARACTERS

Vincent Freeman

Vincent is a man dedicated to proving science and society wrong. He represents the natural, the emotional and the spiritual in the film. Whilst his incarnation as Jerome at Gattaca appears to be the perfect genetically engineered human, away from this location we see him in a much more earthy state. Whilst his brother seems simply programmed to succeed, Vincent's goal to be accepted into the space program at Gattaca is motivated by his own passion and drive.

Anton's success seems predestined, and, as such, he appears aloof and cold. Vincent, on the other hand, has had to fight for every step towards his goal, and we see in him, the more human qualities of ambition, determination, discipline and desire. He is a dreamer in a world where dreams have been replaced by scientific inevitability. In this way, Vincent is the one character who falls through the cracks in this carefully planned and strictly ordered society. He demonstrates a range of human emotions that seem beyond the other characters.

Those whom Vincent touches most intimately, like Irene and Jerome, begin to develop a depth of understanding and a humanity that has previously been missing from their lives. Vincent's natural courage and determination humanise these two characters, and they are enriched by their connection with this 'faith birth'. His name, too, is significant. Historically in European societies, 'Freeman' was the name given to emancipated serfs, or slaves, who earned the freedom to strike out on their own. Consider how this name reflects Vincent's position, his obstacles, and his goals.

Vincent also demonstrates an affinity with the natural elements. He conquers the seas, becoming a strong swimmer who can power through the water, over seaweed and beyond, whilst his brother ultimately flounders in such an environment. After spending the night with Irene, we see Vincent naked on the beach, using the natural elements to assist him in the process of exfoliation. His connection with the natural elements is what distinguishes him from the other characters, and a comparison between the two conception sequences –

Vincent's, and then Anton's – places emphasis on his affinity with nature as against the genetically engineered mode of existence. His success at the conclusion of the film is not just of one man achieving his ultimate goal, but of nature's triumph over an 'unnatural' society. He is aided by those sympathetic to his cause, such as Jerome and Lamar, but it is his very human qualities, his natural skills and determination that see him through to his departure to Titan. Indeed, as Vincent himself suggests, he is 'as good as any ... and better than most.'

Irene

Irene appears to possess everything this world has to offer, yet her heart defect prevents her from ever considering challenging her destiny. When we first meet her, she is cool and distant with her crisp manner and carefully restrained appearance. She has long accepted her genetic fate, and never seeks to question what the future holds for her. Subsequently, her life is almost over before it begins, and with her genetic make-up determining her future, there seems little point to challenging or disputing what has already been mapped out for her. Notice her apparent disappointment with the genetic reading she gains after submitting a sample of Vincent's hair, which he has planted in his comb. As someone accepted, but 'sub-standard', Irene is painfully aware of her place in the social hierarchy, and the apparent perfection of 'Jerome' is yet another reminder of things unattainable.

Once his true identity is exposed, Vincent's accomplishments have a profound impact on Irene – they demonstrate to her what is possible. As two people with heart defects, and a pre-determined 'expiry' date, Irene comes to see what is possible when one does not simply give in to fate, but actively strives to challenge and control it. Whilst in some ways we might feel pity for Irene, a victim of social conditioning, by the conclusion of the film we have a much greater respect for her. Irene becomes assertive and compassionate, covering for Vincent and playing out the charade with Jerome when Anton comes to investigate. She changes from a cool, detached beauty to a woman in tune with her humanity, a natural state she discovers through her association with Vincent.

Jerome Morrow

The changes Jerome/Eugene undergoes are perhaps the most radical of all the characters in *Gattaca*. When we first meet Jerome, he is a bitter, angry man who seems destined for self-destruction. He drinks and smokes; he can be caustic and thoughtless. But he changes quite radically throughout the film, and becomes almost a martyr for Vincent's cause. He is a further anomaly in this ordered society – the perfect genetic specimen but burdened by the weight of his destiny. Jerome is as trapped as Vincent and Irene; by his birth, his future has been mapped out for him. His early commitment to Vincent's endeavour is slapdash – samples are contaminated by alcohol, and his attitude borders on self-pity. Yet, gradually this gives way to a sense of purpose and self-worth, and there's a sense that Vincent/Jerome and Jerome/Eugene really are beginning to blend into the one person.

From Vincent, Jerome begins to understand something of the nature of a struggle, the desire to overcome obstacles – after all, Jerome has lived a life so genetically charmed that success has been 'guaranteed at birth'. It is through Vincent that Jerome comes to understand himself, find something natural and pure in himself, which genetic expectations had prevented him from seeing. As he says to Vincent before his departure into space: 'I got the better end of the deal. I only lent you my body. You lent me your dream'. By supplying Vincent with his genetic materials, Jerome/Eugene helps make Vincent's dream a reality and his sacrifice at the film's conclusion is the culmination of his purpose: Jerome has fulfilled his potential, and Vincent has taken over where Jerome left off after his 'accident'.

Anton

If Jerome and Vincent are two opposites who meet in the middle and ultimately merge, Anton is significant if only for his inflexibility and total commitment to the rules of this society. As a genetically superior being, he carries all the arrogance and conceit of one who has never had to question his place or his purpose. He is a man dedicated to his mission, and even though he recognises the prime suspect in the murder as his own brother, Anton still pursues the truth. There is a distinct sense of jealousy in Anton; that Vincent has managed to carry out this fraud with such success is a direct threat to Anton's sense of self. If a flawed

INVALID is capable of such success, then it calls into question Anton's own sense of privilege and superiority. The fact that Vincent has to rescue him twice from drowning, underscores Anton's own flaws, flaws that were never supposed to exist. Yet, his perfection, when tested, is imperfect: he is not as strong a swimmer as Vincent, and doesn't possess Vincent's warmth or gritty determination. It is difficult to feel sympathetic towards Anton because of his failure in the most human of traits – his essential humanity.

THEMES & VALUES

Future worlds

Implications of genetic engineering

Gattaca is an important film for our times, particularly with the advent of stem cell research currently in the news. As such, the film poses some interesting and provocative questions. Is tampering with our genetic code a justifiable practice? Despite what we may think of the world presented to us in *Gattaca*, it is a world where disease and genetic dysfunction have been all but eradicated. Genetic engineering does offer us a world where illness and early death can be avoided, ensuring longevity for all.

Where do you stand on issues of genetic engineering? If science advances to the point where we can remove susceptibility to cystic fibrosis, cancer, Parkinson's disease, or even less dramatic conditions like hair loss, weight gain or bad teeth, should we embrace these innovations? Think of the importance of the sequence where Irene and Vincent attend the concert given by the pianist with twelve fingers. What is Niccol's purpose in the inclusion of this information? *Gattaca* asks us to question the intrusion of science onto a natural order, and presents a glimpse of a future where genetic engineering is given free reign.

Discrimination

The film identifies some specific possibilities arising from the widespread use of genetic engineering which could impact negatively on a society. The most obvious is the discrimination which Vincent and other INVALIDS suffer, resulting from 'a new underclass no longer determined by social status or the colour of your skin'. This futuristic society has discrimination down to a science.

Consider the similarities between discrimination today and the genetic discrimination that exists in *Gattaca*. What similarities can you detect between the present and the future that the film proposes?

Projecting present-day features into the future

Although *Gattaca* does focus on genetic engineering and its future ramifications, it also projects other features of our society into the future in order to explore their implications. One of these is an increasingly narrow view of work as the most important activity in life and the most crucial determinant of a person's 'success' or 'failure'. Of course, work *is* important – both as a source of income and as a source of meaning and fulfilment – but in our own society the debate about the 'work–family balance' has been gaining more prominence as the birthrate in Western societies decreases. *Gattaca* portrays a society in which this balance has moved almost entirely towards work: family life and conventional leisure pursuits seem almost to have vanished. Such a society clearly lacks many of the everyday sources of human interaction and pleasure that we take to be necessary for our overall happiness and well-being.

Moreover, *Gattaca* represents the work environment as subsuming every aspect of human individuality to the greater good – that is, the good not of society, but the good of the corporation. The increasing power of (private) corporations in controlling social matters (which in the past were mainly the responsibility of governments) is another feature of present-day society that *Gattaca* projects into the future.

Dystopia

In all these features – genetic engineering, the importance attached to work, the role of the corporation in the modern world – *Gattaca* emphasises the negative aspects over positive ones. In this sense, the film presents a *dystopian* view of the future rather than a *utopian* one. Representations of 'future worlds' usually take one of these two forms, although elements of both can be present.

A dystopian view of the future is really a means of critiquing qualities of society in the present. Although *Gattaca* presents some interesting ideas about the future, it does so in order to make us think about features of our own lives that

we might take for granted but that might, if certain trends continue, not last for a great deal longer into the future. Think about:

- our right to be judged on how well we perform, not on someone's prejudiced view of what we might be capable of
- our ability to set goals for ourselves in life and to work towards achieving them
- our right to privacy (especially from corporate surveillance)
- our ability to form a sense of our own identity and live consistently with that self-concept.

Are these rights and freedoms protected by existing laws and conventions?

Gattaca suggests that they may not be – and that we risk a large part of what 'being human' has traditionally meant if they disappear from society.

KEY SCENES

'You are the authority on what's not possible'

One of the most significant moments in *Gattaca* occurs in the wake of Anton's visit and his meeting with Jerome/Eugene. It is at this point that Irene becomes aware of the fraud Vincent has perpetrated, but it's also a moment that redefines the relationship between these three main characters. Upon Anton's exit, Irene steps back from Jerome, as if unsure of his identity, despite the fact that the blood test has just revealed this stranger to be Jerome Morrow. We then see Vincent climb the stairs, with Jerome in the foreground. In this shot, we see the two Jeromes united, and their identities seem to merge into one. They greet each other as 'Jerome', reinforcing their unity as the one person; Jerome/Eugene even makes a joke that his paralysis has all been an act, and that he is indeed able to climb the stairs.

This off-hand comment provides something of an insight into the give and take in this relationship, and whilst Vincent has gained by gifts of genetic material, Jerome has clearly begun to see himself differently as well, living through the actions of his 'twin'. His later comment about Irene reinforces this bond with Vincent, when he observes 'I think she likes us.'

Identity and genetic make-up

The subsequent discussion between Irene and Vincent foregrounds several of the film's major themes. Vincent chides Irene as 'the authority on what's not possible', which serves to highlight the fact that she has lived a life closed to possibility, focusing on fault and restriction rather than truly exploiting the potentialities of life. In contrast, as one who has refused to concede to the future his genetic code has demanded, Vincent is proof that not all is predestined.

This is a significant moment for Irene. She has lived her life according to the values of this society, has limited herself because she has been raised to believe her abilities are finite and that her identity is tied to her genetic make-up. It is at this juncture that she comes to recognise the inherent flaws in this belief, the ways society has duped her and the way she has effectively denied herself any chance of achieving her full potential. This sequence draws together the issues of truth and identity as well as commenting on the ways this society oppresses dreams and possibilities through its adherence to 'genoistic' practices.

'I never saved anything for the swim back'

Three key scenes are those in which Vincent and Anton compete to see who can swim the furthest. Anton wins the first contest, which serves to highlight Vincent's inferior position. This occurs at the stage of his life when as a young boy, Vincent's environment and upbringing has consistently told him he can never achieve what is destined for his genetically superior brother.

The second contest brings change. Vincent refuses to accept his fate (as, for example, Irene has), and through determination and willpower he defeats Anton and saves him from drowning. His success brings into focus two important issues – that the human spirit can overcome obstacles so that goals can be reached, and that genetic superiority does not necessarily imply 'the best'. Vincent's success teaches him a valuable lesson: that if he is to achieve his goals, as he has with the swimming contest, he must leave home and pursue his dream.

The final contest again sees Vincent victorious, and again he is required to save his drowning brother. Anton asks him: 'How are you doing this, Vincent? How have you done any of this?' His question highlights Anton's inability to see beyond what this society has told him: that as a genetically engineered superior being, those with less perfect physical qualities must fail. But Anton completely overlooks the impact of the human spirit, the desire for success, the willpower and determination to succeed that is born out of repression. Vincent's reply that: 'This is how I did it, Anton. I never saved anything for the swim back' serves to spotlight the difference between the brothers, and it is the mental commitment, the factor which makes Vincent most human, that gives him the edge.

Whilst Anton may indeed be his genetic superior, Vincent defeats his brother through greater intangibles that cannot be determined through blood or urine tests. Vincent's triumph and subsequent rescue of his brother concludes with a shot of the clouds clearing, and a clear vision of the heavens – Vincent's goal is, then, directly within his grasp.

Identity

Gattaca explores various facets of identity, and asks us to question what it is that makes us who we are. Vincent is an INVALID, who in a sense 'becomes' Jerome Morrow, a model of genetic perfection. Conversely, Jerome/Eugene, a genetically perfect VALID, yearns for the kind of joy that Vincent experiences in the realisation of his dreams. Both Vincent and Jerome are conditioned to believe and accept that their fates are determined by their genetic make-up. They must challenge the system that dictates its own agenda in order to take control of their lives and explore their true potential. Vincent and Jerome's journey of self-discovery highlights the importance of the intangible aspects of humanity – passion, ambition, drive, admiration, love, respect – in the pursuit of happiness and fulfilment. The transformation of these two characters blends and mixes their identities, until their purposes and personal qualities seem remarkably similar.

The notion of the 'imposter'

It could be said that Vincent and Jerome are both imposters, pretending to be something they aren't. Consider the interview scene with Anton, Jerome and Irene. There is a sense that Jerome/Eugene is lying, that he will be uncovered as an imposter, yet essentially what he is doing is simply reverting to his original identity. At this point, we are reminded that Jerome/Eugene is a VALID. Up to this point we have almost taken for granted that he is 'inferior' to Vincent – at least in Vincent's incarnation as Jerome/Vincent. Similarly, we come to see Vincent as the cool, efficient worker destined for a trip to Titan, rather than the INVALID with unruly hair and glasses. He too transforms from one identity to another, so that Vincent and Jerome both seem to gradually merge into one.

It is interesting to question this notion of the 'imposter' here – are Vincent and Jerome ultimately trying to be something they are not, or are they struggling against an oppressive society to become who they really are? Try to identify different points in the film where the characters really are pretending to be someone else.

Lack of individuality

Also consider the lack of individuality in the world of *Gattaca*. Niccol places great emphasis on the drone-like existence of the workers at Gattaca. They may be genetically superior, but they are virtually indistinguishable from one another, so that specifics seem to vanish and individuality is sacrificed for the sake of the group. There is little connection or interaction with others at Gattaca, and one gets the sense that no-one truly notices anyone else. This is highlighted by Jerome's comment to Vincent: 'when they look at you they don't see you anymore. They see me'. An eradication of individuality blurs identity completely, so that Vincent can become someone else and pass through undetected, as long as the scientific tests are passed.

Anton blends into this world with absolute accuracy, and he appears to be just another suit in a world of similarly attired VALIDs. Only towards the end of the film, when his identity is revealed, does he become anything other than simply another drone. But it's also important to consider the way that Anton shapes his identity. He allows his genetic make-up to create his persona; it is through his cells that he is defined and achieves an identity. Vincent, however, defines

himself through his aspirations and accomplishments, and it is this that makes him an individual, one whom even Lamar and his son look up to.

Think about this issue in relation to Irene. How has her concept of self defined her identity? Indeed, what are the qualities that make all of us what we are?

WRITING TASKS

The following writing activities will provide ideas or a draft for something that you can develop for your final writing pieces later. Write your notes in your journal or blog and make sure you head them clearly to show how they relate to the theme or idea you are studying.

- What have you learnt about the theme of 'Future worlds' from studying *Gattaca*? How does its vision of the future compare with others you have seen or read about? Summarise the main features in your writing journal or blog.
- Watch the scene in which Vincent reveals his true identity to Irene several times. Write notes on the way this scene is presented using the language of film: describe the use of editing (shot/reverse shot); camera distance; acting style (especially by Uma Thurman); music soundtrack. How do these techniques contribute to the scene's presentation of the main ideas about identity and human aspirations? How do they convey Irene's conflicting and changing thoughts on what she learns in this scene?
- Write the dialogue for a short scene involving Vincent and Anton following their final swimming contest. Do you think Anton stops judging his brother on the basis of his genetic make-up? Would Vincent thank his brother for not revealing his identity during the investigation? Or would they remain opposed, one faithfully representing 'the system' and the other rebelling against it?

ESSAY TOPICS

- 1 'Vincent and Anton may be brothers, but their lives could not be more different. *Gattaca* deliberately contrasts their lives for a specific purpose.' Discuss.
- 2 'Irene is a victim of the society in which she lives. Only through Vincent can she learn what is truly possible.' Do you agree?
- 3 "I got the better end of the deal. I only lent you my body. You lent me your dream." What does Jerome gain by his association with Vincent?
- 4 How is Vincent constantly reminded that he "was never meant for this world"? How does this affect him?
- 5 "When you finally get your chance to leave, you find a reason to stay." Why does Vincent consider remaining on Earth?
- 6 '*Gattaca* presents a world destroyed by the pursuit of perfection.' Do you agree?
- 7 How does *Gattaca* explore issues of personal identity?
- 8 "This child is still you – simply the best of you." Does the society depicted in *Gattaca* support this statement?
- 9 '*Gattaca* supports the belief that nature, despite its flaws, is preferable to an error-free genetically engineered existence.' Do you agree?
- 10 'We may be able to conquer genetic defects and cure disease, but we cannot conquer discrimination and prejudice.' Does *Gattaca* support this view?

TEXT

Gattaca, Columbia Pictures, 1997. dir. Andrew Niccol, starring Ethan Hawke, Jude Law and Uma Thurman.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Mark Freeman teaches and assesses VCE English and writes widely on VCE texts and on film.

See Sue Tweg's Insight Text Guide on *Gattaca*, Insight Publications, for in-depth notes on this novel.

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