

**Gattaca (**[**1997**](http://www.imdb.com/Sections/Years/1997)**)**

**Director:**

[Andrew Niccol](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0629272/)

**Writer:**

Andrew Niccol (written by)

**Plot:**

A genetically inferior man assumes the identity of a superior one in order to pursue his lifelong dream of space travel.

**Cast**:

**Ethan Hawke** – Vincent Freeman

**Uma Thurman** – Irene Cassini

**Jude Law** – Jerome Eugene Morroe

**Alan Arkin** – Det. Hugo

**Gattaca**

**BY ROGER EBERT /** October 24, 1997

What is genetic engineering, after all, but preemptive plastic surgery? Make the child perfect in the test tube, and save money later. Throw in perfect health, a high IQ and a long life-span, and you have the brave new world of ``Gattaca,'' in which the bioformed have inherited the earth, and babies who are born naturally get to be menial laborers.  
  
This is one of the smartest and most provocative of science fiction films, a thriller with ideas. Its hero is a man who challenges the system. Vincent ([Ethan Hawke](http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/classifieds?category=search1&SearchType=1&q=Ethan%20Hawke&Class=%25&FromDate=19150101&ToDate=20081231)) was born in the old-fashioned way, and his genetic tests show he has bad eyesight, heart problems and a life expectancy of about 30 years. He is an ``In-Valid,'' and works as a cleaner in a space center.

Vincent does not accept his fate. He never has. As a child, he had swimming contests with his brother Anton ([Loren Dean](http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/classifieds?category=search1&SearchType=1&q=Loren%20Dean&Class=%25&FromDate=19150101&ToDate=20081231)), who has all the right scores but needs to be saved from drowning. Now Vincent dreams of becoming a crew member on an expedition to one of the moons of Saturn. Using an illegal DNA broker, he makes a deal with a man named Jerome ([Jude Law](http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/classifieds?category=search1&SearchType=1&q=Jude%20Law&Class=%25&FromDate=19150101&ToDate=20081231)), who has the right genes but was paralyzed in an accident. Jerome will provide him with blood, urine samples and an identity. In a sense, they'll both go into space. ``Gattaca'' is the remarkable debut of a writer-director from New Zealand, [Andrew Niccol](http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/classifieds?category=search1&SearchType=1&q=Andrew%20Niccol&Class=%25&FromDate=19150101&ToDate=20081231), whose film is intelligent and thrilling--a tricky combination--and also visually exciting. His most important set is a vast office where genetically superior computer programmers come to work every day, filing into their long rows of desks like the office slaves in [King Vidor](http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/classifieds?category=search1&SearchType=1&q=King%20Vidor&Class=%25&FromDate=19150101&ToDate=20081231)'s ``The Crowd'' and [Orson Welles](http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/classifieds?category=search1&SearchType=1&q=Orson%20Welles&Class=%25&FromDate=19150101&ToDate=20081231)' ``The Trial.'' (Why are ``perfect'' human societies so often depicted by ranks of automatons? Is it because human nature resides in our flaws?) Vincent, as ``Jerome,'' gets a job as a programmer, supplies false genetic samples and becomes a finalist for the space shot.

**DIRECTIONS FOR VIEWING:** As you view Gattaca in its entirety, take note of any similarities you see between the film and Brave New World. We will be composing an essay about this upon completion of the film, so take as many notes as you can.

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| *Example from Film* | *Explanation* |
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**Directions**: Read the essay below comparing “Gattaca” with Brave New World. Highlight where the author uses direct references to the novel. Finally, submit your opinion. Do you agree with what the author is saying?

A Comparison of “Gattaca” and Brave New World

**Summary:**

Imagine a world in which sex is just fun and children are made in test tubes and petri dishes. This is the world of Gattaca. This is also the prophetic view of Aldous Huxley's Brave New World. These "utopia" societies strive to make every man and woman the perfect size, IQ, social status.

Imagine a world in which all disease, human [disabilities](http://www.bookrags.com/essay-2006/3/19/255/09038), and shortcomings could be taken out of existence through genetic predestination. Imagine a world in which sex is just fun and children are made in test tubes and petri dishes. This is the world of “Gattaca”. This is also the prophetic view of Aldous [Huxley's](http://www.bookrags.com/essay-2006/3/19/255/09038) Brave New World. These "utopia" societies strive to make every man and woman the perfect size, IQ, social status. As infants, the people of these worlds are given their fates. Some are created to be part of the "Elite" while others are made to be "Epsilons." While everything appears to be well, it is evident that no utopia society can ever survive and ultimately proves itself a dystopia or the "anti-utopia." Hence, it is obvious that no utopian society is possible. Greed, envy, sadness, and other feelings always bring down the utopia to show its real side of suffering and sadness.

“Gattaca” is about a man named Vincent that was born as an invalid. He goes through life dreaming of traveling into space. His dream becomes a reality when he contacts a black market DNA dealer that arranges for Vincent to have the blood and urine of Jerome, a genetically perfect athlete however, paralyzed. Vincent is able to pass as a valid and nearly achieves his goal of traveling to space when the murder of the Director nearly exposes him. However, he eventually achieves his dream by carefully evading the police.

Brave New World is about a society in which humans are made, drugs are widely used, and sex is encouraged. Bernard is the main character of the story. He rebels from society by thinking and reading. He appears to hate the society that he is in but once people pay attention to him, he conforms to it. When Bernard brings John the Savage back to the World State, John is troubled by it and eventually kills himself, representing the death of the society.

In Brave New World, babies are created in labs and genetically altered to be made into what the Director wants them to be. The social classes consist of [Alphas](http://www.bookrags.com/essay-2006/3/19/255/09038), Betas, Deltas, Gammas, and Epsilons. The higher classes consist of beautiful, smart, healthy people while the lower classes are ugly, slow, and in poor health. Everyone has a job they must do and the community cannot survive if someone doesn't do their job. In “Gattaca’, society is made of Valids and Invalids. The valids have jobs at Gattaca and are allowed to fly on space missions. The invalids are the lower class of society. The "de-gene-erates", as they are know, mainly clean Gattaca and are looked down on from the valid class.

Jerome/Vincent is most like Bernard because he rebels from the society and changes himself. However, he is very different from Bernard because he has more inner strength. Jerome/Vincent is also like John in that he dislikes the society and rebels from it. However, he also differs from John since John committed suicide, and Jerome/Vincent was more determined. Irene is most like Lenina however, vaguely. Irene is the beautiful, conformist and the perfect citizen. However, she becomes involved with Jerome/Vincent and changes.