

Gattaca by andrew niccol essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The 1997 science fiction drama film Gattaca by Andrew Niccol illustrates a dystopian world condemning genetic engineering which plays a primary role in determining whether the human being will be genetically superior or genetically inferior. Niccol utilizes his 'degenerate' protagonist, Vincent, to highlight the flaws of a system which encourages predeterminism over ambition and discrimination over acceptance. A society is presented where love has no value and one's genetic make-up is more important than their intelligence and physicality. One does not have to be genetically superior to succeed; talent only gets one so far.

Due to genetic engineering everyone's future is predetermined which restricts the individuals to have any motivation or pursue any dreams/goals. Niccol creates the character Eugene, who having "a genetic quotient second to none" still comes second on the podium. Eugene tried to commit suicide because of the burden of perfection that he suffered but he "couldn't even get that right". This indicates how there is a lack of motivation for the superior because they are under the assumption from birth that their ambition will inevitably come true.

Also if a valid predetermined future does not occur, they begin to question themselves, and begin to believe they are worth nothing and should commit suicide. In contrast to Vincent, who has a dream and is determined to pursue his dream; he would die trying. This is shown in the third swimming race scene when Vincent "never saved anything for the swim back," remarkably triumphs over Anton and has to rescue him from drowning. Discrimination in the real world is usually directed on gender, race or colour of one's skin but in the stratified society of Gattaca, "discrimination is down to a science. This

is shown when at the start of the film there is a long shot with all the workers of Gattaca arriving and walking through double doors with their backs turned to us, implying that they could be anyone, because in Gattaca names do not matter.

Also all the people are wearing similar grey suits. When one applies for a job, their level of education is irrelevant, what only matters are their DNA. This is demonstrated in the scene where Vincent is at a job interview and the interviewer hands him a container in which he has to excrete his urine (genes) into. The scene is accompanied with a voice-over with Vincent saying that " my real resume was in my cells. " It did not matter if he was the most intelligent person in the world, if he had any imperfections in his genes, then everything was over. Andrew Niccol over-emphasizes rule breaking and the black market which is produced due to the hierarchy system.

A broker demonstrates rule breaking because he takes disabled/un healthy 'valids helixes' and sells them to invalids who are determined to become a valid and do what genetically superior people can do. This is not the first time the broker has commenced this type of activity. There is a close-up shot of a display folder which several vials of blood being held by the broker, implying that there are many valids available and wanting to sell their DNA to earn money. Rule breaking is again revealed when Irene knowing about Vincent being a fraud does not get him caught because she loves him. Subverting the rules is attempted in Gattaca for their own benefits, everyone has a motive.

Taking all this into consideration, Niccol however, does emphasize that relationships can aid and/or sway your dream. There is a joint effort in Vincent's mission to depart to Titan, including Eugene, Irene, Caesar and Dr. Lamar. Vincent changes from being single-minded and concentrating on his one goal to caring about the people around him and risks his chance of going to Titan. This is shown near the end of the film, there was a surprise substance test and Vincent was not prepared for it.

Instead of getting Vincent caught out, Dr. Lamar let him go because he has a son " who is not all that they promised," and " is a fan of [Vincent's]. " Caesar helps Vincent from being caught, he " takes care of that [cup]," which Vincent was drinking out of to make sure that the detectives don't get a hold of it and then get another piece of evidence against Vincent. Irene who was a conformist of society, starts to fall in love with Vincent and as such when she finds out he is a ' faith-birth' does not get him in trouble, instead she becomes closer to him. Eugene is the reason why Vincent was able to achieve his dream, if Eugene didn't " lend [Vincent his] body" then none of this would be possible.

On top of this at the end of the film, Vincent is left with blood, urine, nails and hair " enough to last [him] two lifetimes. "