

## Gattaca Film Questions

### Instructions and Rubric (50 POINTS):

- **MLA Format, 400 words minimum (up to 10 point deduction if under word count; up to 5 point deduction for formatting errors)**
- **Grammar and Mechanics (10 points) NOTE: DO NOT USE CONTRACTIONS**
- **Title your paper: Gattaca Film Questions**
- **Clearly label all questions you are answering (*ex gratia*, 1.1, 2.3, 3, 4)**
- **Section 1 (10 points): Answer in 1 paragraph**
- **Section 2 (10 points): Answer in 1 paragraph**
- **Section 3 (10 points): Answer in 1 paragraph**
- **Section 4 (10 points): Answer in 1 paragraph**

### Section 1 (Choose and answer 1 question)

- 1.1 If you were the president of a corporation that could hire genetically enhanced individuals, would you do so? If you didn't, how could you compete with corporations that did hire only the genetically improved? What are the implications of this for our future?
- 1.2 Soon, life insurance companies, health insurance companies, employers, and the government will have the tools to predict our future health. Is this too much information for them to have? How should this information be used?

### Section 2 (Choose and answer 1 question)

- 2.1 What limits should be placed on genetic engineering? Should it be allowed at all? Should it be limited to the elimination of disease and physical imperfections? Why or why not?
- 2.2 Describe the caste system in Gattaca. Give some examples of caste systems in other societies that have actually existed.
- 2.3 The character of the Director (the murderer) told the investigators that there was no indication of violence in his genetic make-up. What were the screenwriters trying to tell us by this scene?

### Section 3 (Answer all parts of the question below based on the illustration)

3. Explain the moral and ethical principles illustrated in the image below; then state which of the two groups of people depicts a more just society. Why? Make an argument using the image below for how genetic engineering could be used in society.



## Section 4 (Answer all parts of the question below)

4. Which of the following short essays most accurately describes Vincent Freeman's ethos? How was this demonstrated in the film? Explain.

### On Limitation



*Your limitations are like a rope tied around your leg, attached to nothing... walk away from what holds you back... because it is you!*

A well-known and oft told story is how baby elephants are trained not to run away from their human masters. It goes something like this:

When elephants are very young, they are taken away from their mothers, but kept in sight, and a heavy leg iron and chain or rope is placed around the baby's leg. With the chain staked to the ground, the baby continues to strain to reach its mother. Eventually, the baby elephant stops resisting and gives up. The trainers are then able to replace the

chain with a very light rope or harness, and the elephant never tries to get away. After some time, the trainers can leave the other end of the rope lying on the ground. The memory of its boundaries is enough for the elephant to continually recreate its perceived limitations. At any point, the elephant could simply walk away, but it does not!

The nature of limitation as it manifests in human beings is quite similar. Limitation is by definition a perceived boundary based on past experience. One might retort by pointing out that there are certain limits, like the laws of physics, which cannot be overcome, and are therefore not affected by perception or other psychological phenomenon. The most compelling response to this argument is observance of the nature of scientific knowledge in general. Scientific knowledge is based on empirical investigations using the current map of what we "know" the world to be. This paradigm is amorphous at best and is continually being challenged and amended as new discoveries based on new ways of thinking are implemented. That is the nature of scientific progress.

Similarly, what we perceive as sacrosanct is in itself merely a current picture of what we know the world to be. So goes the nature of limitation. One must always ask oneself when the question of "why?" is posed, "why not?" We must ask ourselves, "On what foundation do our limitations rest?" It is too often the case that the foundation of our limitations rests upon the effects of years of recreating the pain of past experiences, until the present becomes a lie, a mistake of projecting the past into the future. At any moment, we can simply walk away, seeking a new paradigm, a new reality of self with which to move through the world.

### On Perseverance



*Sometimes, the juice is worth the squeeze.*

The honey badger, hunting a king cobra, is bitten in the melee. He kills the snake and begins to feast on its head, when suddenly, the poison begins to take effect. He passes out for a number of minutes, knocked out from the deadly toxin, laying just a few steps away from the partially eaten corpse. After a few minutes, the honey badger awakens, disoriented. Rather than being dissuaded or discouraged by the power of the snake's poison, he slowly walks over to the king cobra's half eaten body and finishes his meal.

Such is the nature of perseverance. Perseverance has no ego and no memory. It has no memory of past setbacks or perceived failures, or successes for that matter. Perseverance lives each day as if the achievements of the past have been washed away, striving anew each day to create new successes and opportunities for growth. Its lack of attachment to the past, coupled with its ever present drive to move forward into the unknown is what gives perseverance its transformative power and ability to sublimate all struggle and hardship into something pure and liberating.

Perseverance is the energetic footprint that the unknown leaves from the future for us to discover in the present, and is what makes the unknown known. It is both the opportunity and precondition for self-discovery and mastery. Perseverance is the soul's purest impulse to realize its highest vibration, courage in the face of the unknown, and faith in its outcome. Or grace. Grace is the victory that perseverance promises when fully embraced. And victory is the euphoria of life's most precious successes, those that inspire the act and expression of love.