698 out of 882 people found the following review useful:  
[http://ia.media-imdb.com/images/M/MV5BMjI2NDEyMjYyMF5BMl5BanBnXkFtZTcwMzM3MDk0OQ@@._SX40_SY40_SS40_.jpg](http://www.imdb.com/user/ur1659050/)

**One of my favorite imperfect films.**

7/10  
**Author:** [Jason](http://www.imdb.com/user/ur1659050/) from Los Angeles, CA, USA  
26 August 2004

I know it's stupid to believe that a futuristic society is dumb enough to believe that the mere existence paintings, poems and sculptures can somehow lead to WW4.  
  
I know there's a statue as well as stylish architecture in the headquarters of the people who ban artwork.  
  
I know it's stupid to assume that a culture based on taking a drug every morning is not a very secure or feasible idea.  
  
I know it makes no sense for a culture with no emotions to still be able to fall in love, choose a spouse and desire sex to create children.  
  
I know half the people that Preston attacks are just standing there doing nothing while they wait to get their ass kicked.  
  
I know the sets look cheap.  
  
I know it's stupid that the "police" seem to die because their helmet glass breaks, when they'd probably be smart enough to have shatter-proof, if not bullet-proof plexiglass in the first place.  
  
I know there's no reason random citizens would sit in a square to watch a guy on a big screen giving a speech, re-enforcing what the characters already know.  
  
I know it paints a stupid picture of characters with emotion as looking like long-haired Gothic slobs who do nothing but sit in rooms with paintings and LP records and poetry books all day.  
  
I know the emotionless characters express emotions and crack facial expressions when they're probably not supposed to.  
  
I know Gun-Fu doesn't make much sense as to its practicality.  
  
I know this film is an inspired rip-off of "Fahrenheit 451", "1984", "THX-1138", "Brazil", and "Blade Runner".  
  
................But I love it.  
  
Although it's a mish mash of every "man vs. futuristic oppressive society" film ever made, it manages to pull it off as good as some of its inspirations.   
  
The film's story and message is clear.   
  
The action is fresh, original, readable and gets the adrenaline flowing.  
  
The atmosphere is clearly defined.  
  
The production design is inspired.  
  
Christian Bale and Emily Watson are superb.  
  
The ending is satisfying.  
  
8/10  
  
\*More power to Wimmer and Bale! I look forward to "Ultraviolet" and "Batman Begins".

Top of Form

Was the above review useful to you?

Bottom of Form

441 out of 567 people found the following review useful:  
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**Worth seeing twice in two consecutive days (which I did.)**

10/10  
**Author:** [straightarrow](http://www.imdb.com/user/ur2083680/) from Gainesville, Florida  
8 December 2002

I went in to see "Equilibrium" with no knowledge of the movie other than a two line synopsis from a local newspaper and the movie poster in the theater lobby. As usual, I was practicing my theory of "lowered expectations." I expect a movie to be horribly awful ahead of time, so I can not be disappointed. I was not disappointed. At the end of the film I could not sit still in my seat. I felt the urge to go out into the world and proclaim the utter awesomeness of "Equilibrium." Such words as "Sweet," "Crazy," and "Righteous" sprang forth from my lips in rapid succession when I talked about the movie with my friends. Not since the "Fellowship of the Ring" have I desired to sing a movie's praises. And I mean literally SING. "Equilibrium" could, and should, be the sleeper hit of the year. The film's action sequences stir up the blood and pump the adrenaline as if you were riding a roller-coaster. The art style, while minimalistic, and thus maybe confused for low-budget by some, is actually quite successful in portraying a totalitarian and emotionless society. The acting is excellent as well, and quite possibly the best I have seen in an action film in long time. While the nay-sayers will say that the film is too unoriginal, borrowing elements of its story and premise from "Fahrenheit 451" and "Brave New World," these complaints can be disregarded as the movie adds enough of its own style and story to make the comparisons plausible in basic premise only. In the end, like any movie, "Equilibrium" is meant as entertainment. And entertain it does. It does it so very well. It mixes action and with substantial plot and original style to make an excellent whole. Go see it. Go see it twice. Go see "Equilibrium," Cleric.

Top of Form

Was the above review useful to you?

Bottom of Form

409 out of 518 people found the following review useful:  
[http://ia.media-imdb.com/images/M/MV5BMjI2NDEyMjYyMF5BMl5BanBnXkFtZTcwMzM3MDk0OQ@@._SX40_SY40_SS40_.jpg](http://www.imdb.com/user/ur0139258/)

**Put down the Valium and watch this film**

10/10  
**Author:** [Brandt Sponseller](http://www.imdb.com/user/ur0139258/) from New York City  
9 March 2005

Set in a future, post-World War III society where emotions have been outlawed, Equilibrium tells the story of John Preston (Christian Bale), a government agent who begins to have doubts about the policy he is enforcing.  
  
Equilibrium is the perfect example why I do not rate lower for derivativeness or unoriginality. The film is basically high-concept combination of Fahrenheit 451 (1966), George Orwell's novel Nineteen Eighty-Four (original published in 1949, film versions appeared in 1954, 1956 and 1984), The Matrix (1999) and a bit of The Wizard of Oz (1939) thrown in for good measure. What matters is not how original the ideas are (assuming it's not a case of plagiarism), as whether something is original or not is an epistemological problem that tells us more about our own familiarity with other material rather than the precedent status of the artwork we're questioning, but how well the material is handled. The high-concept material in Equilibrium is handled brilliantly.  
  
On its surface, after a brief action-oriented beginning, Equilibrium is basically a progression from a fairly complex sci-fi film (meaning simply that it takes a lot of exposition to get up to speed) to a thriller to a "gun fu"-styled actioner. The progression is carried out deftly by writer/director Kurt Wimmer (who unfortunately hasn't shown the same level of elegant panache in other films I've seen from him, including Sphere (1998) and The Recruit (2003)), with all of the genres somewhat present throughout the film. Wimmer is so austerely slick here that Equilibrium sometimes resembles a postmodernist automobile commercial. The transition from genre to genre is incredibly smooth.  
  
The most impressive material on this surface level is the gun fu action stuff, which almost "out-Matrixes" The Matrix in style, if not volume. Preston is so skilled to be an almost invincible opponent. His solitary misstep as a fighter occurs once he gives himself over to emotion. This is nicely related to the common advice from kung fu senseis that emotion lessens one's effectiveness in combat.  
  
Of course a big part of Equilibrium is the set of philosophical points it has to make about emotion. There are sections of the film that are appropriately dialogue-heavy, and Wimmer is more than conspicuous with this (one of two) primary theme(s). Just as important as dialogue for Wimmer's commentary on man's emotions are body language and behavior. Some viewers might see it as a flaw that characters frequently show what they consider to be signs of emotions in their comments or behavior, but that's part of Wimmer's agenda. Because it's difficult to even say just what counts as an emotion, and emotions are so wrapped-up with being sentient beings, it would be difficult if not impossible to fully eliminate them, and it's certainly not recommendable. The cast does an excellent job of portraying characters who are supposed to be mostly emotionless but with cracks in the stoic armor continually poking through.  
  
Wimmer has a harsh view of our society's self-medication epidemic--even the title of the film seems to be a stab at the common claim that drugs like Prozac and Xanax are taken to help one "smooth out", or "equalize", extremes of mood, or extreme dispositions. The Equilibrium government extends this agenda into the tangible material realm as they also attempt to "smooth out" mood swings by eliminating any cultural artifacts that might promote varied moods/emotions. Wimmer seems to see it as a not-too-exaggerated extension of the modus operandi behind Prozac-like drugs.  
  
The other primary theme is one of institutional control. Wimmer has a lot to say about unquestioningly following authorities, and he's careful to show that it's not just governmental authorities that can be a problem. He does this by tightly wrapping religious allegory with his depiction of Equilibrium's government. The leader is known as "Father", and the government secret service members are "clerics". Those outside of this control are shown as authentic, free, individualistic and happy despite the hardships involved with their embrace of forbidden thought/items.  
  
More subtly, Wimmer employs the now overused washed out blue-gray cinematography of late 1990s/early 2000s genre films towards an unusual end. It's not just a stylistic device here, but represents a particular kind of reality. Under the purview of the fascistic government, blue-gray predominates. When glimpses of freedom/authenticity enter the film, the blue-gray look is gone, replaced with strongly saturated warm colors, and occasionally a more nostalgic subdued tone. This is one of the film's similarities to The Wizard of Oz, although maybe not the most significant one.  
  
If you're someone who cherishes originality for its own sake, you might not like Equilibrium as much, but you have much more serious epistemological problems to sort out. Otherwise, this is a film worth watching and thinking about.

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Was the above review useful to you?

Bottom of Form

336 out of 487 people found the following review useful:  
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**Forget the Matrix, indeed.**

10/10  
**Author:** [sydney smith](http://www.imdb.com/user/ur4141955/) from Colorado  
11 December 2004

If you are a fan of such books as Brave New World, 1984, The Giver, or This Perfect Day or movies like the Matrix and Logan's Run--Equilibrium is just the movie for you. In addition to a terrifying plot set in our very own future, the movie has mind-blowing action sequences that are choreographed beautifully (but not obviously) and shot brilliantly and spectacular acting on the part of Christian Bale. I hate predictable movies and this one is anything but...there are so many twists and turns, you'll be on the edge of your seat with suspense the majority of the time. I was hooked within the first minute! Whether you love action or a great plot line, this movie gives the Matrix trilogy (especially Reloaded and Revolutions) a run for its money--to say the least.

Top of Form

Was the above review useful to you?

Bottom of Form

204 out of 270 people found the following review useful:  
[http://ia.media-imdb.com/images/M/MV5BMjI2NDEyMjYyMF5BMl5BanBnXkFtZTcwMzM3MDk0OQ@@._SX40_SY40_SS40_.jpg](http://www.imdb.com/user/ur0175080/)

**Surprisingly Good!**

10/10  
**Author:** [Mylene-2](http://www.imdb.com/user/ur0175080/) from Clemson, SC  
20 July 2005

I watched this movie late one night on one of the Encore channels. Stayed up past my bedtime I did. Then I recorded it the next time it was on. Watched it two more times and then, AND THEN, bought the DVD and watched it a couple if not three more times. First, I rarely will watch a movie twice unless enough time has passed that I have forgotten how it ends. There are just too many movies out there and not enough time. But this movie deserved the time. I loved the fight scenes, loved the premise of the movie, loved the acting (and seeing Christian Bale shirtless). Emily Watson is an amazing actress. It's rare these days to see an action/SciFi with actual plot and dialog. How can I care about a movie if I don't care about the characters? Anyway, watch it. I've lent the movie to about 5 guys and they all liked it. One guy is into the Martial Arts and he thought the fight scenes were awesome (my word -- his word/s was/were "the fight scenes were well choreographed").  
  
Moral of the story is: watch it, you won't be disappointed. Oh, and I said "Surprisingly Good" because I had never heard of the movie and was expecting some B movie crap -- what can I say, I couldn't sleep.

Top of Form

Was the above review useful to you?

Bottom of Form

177 out of 243 people found the following review useful:  
[http://ia.media-imdb.com/images/M/MV5BMjI2NDEyMjYyMF5BMl5BanBnXkFtZTcwMzM3MDk0OQ@@._SX40_SY40_SS40_.jpg](http://www.imdb.com/user/ur4377893/)

**Cult movie extraordinaire?**

**Author:** [juniper-14](http://www.imdb.com/user/ur4377893/) from berlin, germany  
10 December 2004

I've seen this movie 5 times (it's the nature of satellite TV) within the past week and it's true...you catch something you've missed or see something new with every successive viewing. This movie is way ahead of its time, and much better than the over-rated Matrix. Bale is always exceptional, and so is his "Metroland" co-star, Emily Watson. Maybe it's the Anglophile or Brit-flick fan in me, but I must say that the added presence of Sean Bean and Angus MacFadyen all but confirms the pre-eminence of UK acting in quality films. Accompanied by very appropriate techno-musik, the action sequences are fast and Euro-flashy, heavily influenced by Jan De Bont--different from the weird, drawn-out, "suspended/string puppet" thing that apparently passes for martial arts these days. (I miss Bruce Lee)  
  
Anyway, if you haven't seen it, give this a shot. If you already have & weren't impressed, take a look at it again. It will grow on you. See if you're inclined to show up to work the next day looking and acting very much a "Cleric" who missed a Prozium dose.

Top of Form

Was the above review useful to you?

Bottom of Form

184 out of 278 people found the following review useful:  
[http://ia.media-imdb.com/images/M/MV5BMjI2NDEyMjYyMF5BMl5BanBnXkFtZTcwMzM3MDk0OQ@@._SX40_SY40_SS40_.jpg](http://www.imdb.com/user/ur3923493/)

**Unexpected pearl**

10/10  
**Author:** [Tsvyatko Rumtchovski](http://www.imdb.com/user/ur3923493/) from Sofia, Bulgaria  
22 March 2005

The "Equilibrium" is one of the very little action movies that actually make sense! The script was influenced by many books and it worked! The film is really great, quick action, combined with a brilliantly stated philosophical question, breathtaking scenes with lots of effects, superb actors! It perfectly balances on the verge between just a high-budget nonsense action film (despite it's low budget) and extremely boring science-fiction film. It was quite a nice surprise when I watched it, because the director is not famous! And there was not any Hollywood superstar but all and the acting is amazingly great! Like the actors completely fit in their roles and ruthlessly overwhelm the weak script parts! I still remember the change of the emphasis when the main character changed sides! With this performance it is a serious competitor of "the matrix" or maybe more!   
  
Although one little remark must be made in the beginning, when cleric Preston enters the barricaded room with the rebels, some shooting scenes are the same!   
  
But I guess there is not a good film without a little weakness in it, is it?

Top of Form

Was the above review useful to you?

Bottom of Form

164 out of 244 people found the following review useful:  
[http://ia.media-imdb.com/images/M/MV5BMjI2NDEyMjYyMF5BMl5BanBnXkFtZTcwMzM3MDk0OQ@@._SX40_SY40_SS40_.jpg](http://www.imdb.com/user/ur0821456/)

**A rare dose of originality**

8/10  
**Author:** [mentalcritic](http://www.imdb.com/user/ur0821456/) from Southern Hemisphere  
6 November 2004

If there is one complaint about the Hollywood system that rings true, it is that Hollywood seems quite bereft of ideas. Then films like Equilibrium come out and remind us that it's not that we're out of ideas so much as we're just not trying hard enough. Not that Equilibrium is inherently new - it borrows a fair few plot concepts from Farenheit 451 and Nineteen Eighty-Four, to name the most prominent examples. It is the way in which the old ideas are combined with the new that makes Equilibrium a fun and underrated experience.  
  
The premise is simple enough. In a kneejerk reaction to the horrors of World War Three, the survivors outlaw what they blame the chaos upon. Their own emotions, in other words. As the lead character has a series of revelations, we begin to understand that in so doing, they have also outlawed much of what gives our existence a point. In the bland, lifeless world that the law-abiding citizens inhabit, everything that the audience takes for granted to make their lives worthwhile is being systematically destroyed. Shades of the America of today, the whole principle of throwing the baby out with the bathwater, are shown in a stark horror show.  
  
I've read people comparing this film to The Matrix or its sequels. Where The Matrix series' fights were overlong, and often with no payoff, Equilibrium's fights are short and to the point. The difference this makes is, needless to say, as uplifting as Preston's fight to regain the humanity he stripped so many others of. Instead of having fights with no emotional connection to the characters, the story is given sufficient development to make the audience care what happens.  
  
The film is not entirely without flaws. The Prozium element seems to have been written with no regard for the facts about psychiatric medicines. Their purpose is not to suppress emotion at all, but to balance the chemical system of the brain in order to give the patient better control of them. Sure, they're not without problems of their own, but exaggerating them like this does not do the portion of the community that needs them any favours. That aside, however, the on-camera struggle is one of the most intriguing I've viewed for some time. Ergo, this minor plot problem is made up for. The only other real complaint I have is that the film could have done with a little more footage to give some characters more of a chance to develop.  
  
I gave Equilibrium an eight out of ten. It's not the best negative science fiction you'll ever see, but it is enough of a breath of fresh air that this won't entirely matter. If the MPAA made more films like this, it wouldn't be suffering the constant financial dire straits that it so loves to blame everyone else for.

Top of Form

Was the above review useful to you?

Bottom of Form

133 out of 202 people found the following review useful:  
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**it was good**

**Author:** [kill-5 (kill@northeastmagic.com)](http://www.imdb.com/user/ur3552660/) from United States  
9 December 2004

I think this movie was a good movie, and I also think that most critics were unjustified in their reasoning for panning it. Almost seems like a conspiracy. Anyway, the story was interesting, it set up some kind of a reality where we have this "gun kata", and stuck with it. The "gun kata" never became a deus ex machina, it just drove the action sequences, while staying clear of the actual plot, which had some interesting twists, certainly more than the matrix. I think Christian Bale's character was a kind of clone of keanu reeves in the Matrix, but he is clearly a better actor, and his range was really challenged. The other characters were much less "wooden" and comic book like than the evil characters in the matrix, which ironically made them more human, almost too human for an action movie, and that is probably why the critics were so hard on it. The matrix (at least the first one) didn't take itself too seriously, but this one did...and I think it lived up to the challenge as much as any action movie set in the distant future with some reality bending. I really enjoyed it, and would have liked to see it in the theatre, none the less a great rent if you liked the first matrix, kill bill, or any other film that blends action with choreography and weaves an interesting tale of reality. My suggestion might have been more extreme antagonists, but then, perhaps this movie will help me accept more human-like villains in action movies. Anyway give it a try!

Top of Form

Was the above review useful to you?

Bottom of Form

196 out of 362 people found the following review useful: