SOURCE 1

Equilibrium is set in the joyless state of Libria, a post-nuclear apocalypse, early 21st-century society where all human emotions are outlawed in order to prevent war. Any materials, such as books or artworks, that might cause people to feel sensations are destroyed, as are those who engage in their production, dissemination or appreciation. Human instincts are kept in check through the mind-numbing drug Prozium. The protectors of this violent peace are the "clerics." They are highly trained to detect anyone failing to take Prozium doses and destroy members of the underground. John Preston (Christian Bale) is a leading cleric, ruthless in his tracking down and eradicating of sense criminals, even those closest to him. However, after a potent meeting with underground member, Mary (Emily Watson), and a missed dose of Prozium, Preston begins to have feelings, and decides to bring down the system from the inside, a dangerous mission indeed.

QUALITY

Equilibrium draws heavily from George Orwell's classic, *1984*. Writer/director Kurt Wimmer substitutes "Big Brother" for "Father," whose voice and features are projected across Libria on enormous television screens, constantly reminding people of the dangers of the natural human state and the devastation it had led to in earlier, less sophisticated societies. Where Orwell has "thought police," Wimmer has "sense police." States in Orwell's world subdue their populations by the need to maintain their war efforts, while Libria's justifies the abuse of its people through the notion of sustaining peace.

There are a number of interesting issues that Equilibrium sets up to address. In discussions with children these could easily be drawn out, but the film itself descends into a predictable and formulaic shoot-em-up sci-fi action movie. The ninja-based gun fighting style used by the clerics verges on the balletic, but for any admirer of this film genre, they will have witnessed almost identical scenes in The Matrix.

Families can talk about how Preston, emotion and beauty win over the dour, controlling Librian state, yet rather than straightforward tales of good over evil, the film leads one to question these opposing concepts. Peace is surely good, but in this case evil derives from an all-consuming quest for peace, which itself breeds violence. Familes can also talk about how the importance of love, loyalty and joy abound in this film, but glory is associated with violence and destruction

SOURCE 2

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Movie Analysis Equilibrium

Posted By Stephen Carter On October 8, 2013 @ 9:33 am In Movie Analysis | [Comments Disabled](http://www.entertainmentscene360.com/index.php/movie-analysis-equilibrium-2-49426/print/#comments_controls)

This analysis of ‘Equilibrium’ (2002) will consider how the movie’s five plot points create the story’s deep structure. These discrete story points include the ‘Inciting Incident’ in Act 1, ‘Turning Points 1 and 2′ in Act 2, and the ‘Crisis Decision’ and ‘Climax’ in Act 3. Spoiler alert: this structural analysis will reveal crucial plot moments; you may prefer to read this after viewing the film.

This movie’s back story is as follows: a future society has overcome the problem of conflict, civil strife and war by formalizing the chemical suppression of the problem’s source, human feeling, through a new wonder-drug, ‘Prozium’, which all residents are required by law to take each day, by law. They have created a society free of all conflict, and all feeling. Generations have passed since this change was initiated, and people are forgetting whether anything was lost. Cleric (Christian Bale) is one of the elite officers in the Praetorian Guards, assigned to protect ‘Father’, the society’s leader. His duties also include making visits to homes to investigate whether residents have hidden away proscribed items (proscribed because they evoke feelings, thus undermining the affect of the Prozium). Anyone with such items found on their premises is ‘processed’ as a sense offender, and executed by ‘summary combustion’.

A Hollywood movie’s ‘Inciting Incident’, which occurs usually in the first 1/2 hour, challenges the hero to respond to a new development or opportunity. To achieve that response, the hero must internally expand, irrevocably changing his life. The hero is then thrown into a series of escalating accommodations on his journey to understand and solve the Inciting Incident’s original problem. This film’s Inciting Incident occurs when Cleric, who suspects his partner and best friend, Errol Flannery (Sean Bean), of sense offenses, apprehends Flannery in a factory reading a proscribed book of poetry by Yeats. Cleric executes Flannery, as per a new directive from Father.

Turning Point 1. Something has been gnawing at the back of Cleric’s mind since his execution of Flannery. It’s not guilt, which would be suppressed by the Prozium, but rather a vague feeling of thought-discomfort. (In fact, as we later learn, Father had arranged that Cleric’s Prozium be changed to a placebo, so he will begin to ‘feel’, will be seduced to stop taking his Prozium, and may then seek to join the Resistance. It’s Father’s plan for finally getting a mole into the Resistance, after many failed attempts). Cleric did stop taking his Prozium, and was assigned a new partner, Brandt (Taye Diggs), who is now monitoring Cleric, just as Cleric had monitored Flannery. The Turning Point comes when they investigate a woman’s apartment and find a hidden room of proscribed objects; he returns there later, explores the room, and switches on a recording of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Cleric is so affected by the beauty of the music he breaks down, weeps.

A movie’s Midpoint usually provides the story with a coherence and symmetry that the audience feels unconsciously, and for this reason is important structurally. This movie’s Midpoint sees Cleric rescue a dog from extermination, and later kill eleven other Praetorian officers in order not to have the dog taken from him. With each plot point Cleric’s surrender to feeling advances another step.

Turning Point 2. Cleric’s original suspicion of Flannery has now been transformed into admiration, and a desire to know more of his secret life, so he steps up his investigation of Flannery. He has another interview with Mary O’Brien, admits offhand to her that he had killed Flannery, she reacts violently, and he concludes she was Flannery’s lover. His own attraction to her only increases his feeling of betrayed loyalty and renewed admiration for his dead friend. He next goes to the reading hall where Flannery attended lectures, and breaks through a wall into an antechamber to the ‘underground’, literally and figuratively. After meeting Jurgen (William Fichtner), he is welcomed into the underground Resistance. His feeling has taken him to full rebellion to the established order.

Act 3′s Crisis Decision sees Cleric accept the offer by the Resistance to join their planned attack on the state’s oppressive government, with the objective of assassinating Father’.

The Climax sees many of the top Resistance people arrested in a government sweep. Cleric succeeds in gaining entry to the elite compound, and learns that his defection to the Resistance had been a stratagem planned and instituted by a cabal within the government, as a means of getting a mole into the Resistance, a measure which had failed repeatedly in the past. This then made possible the sting’, apprehending all the Resistance members. He also learns that Father died years earlier, and his public persona had been perpetuated to keep the public acquiescent, docile.

Cleric manages to win against all the elite Praetorian soldiers that now surround him by the mere expedient of being faster and deadlier, first with his semi-automatic, then with a samurai sword. He dispatches virtually all of the Praetorian Guard. The captured members of the Resistance, awaiting execution by summary combustion’, are released and run riot gathering supporters to fight against the remaining soldiers protecting the government elite.

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**Film Review: Inject Your Dose of Equilibrium**

by Ari Armstrong, December 11, 2002

Forget about Star Trek and Lord of the Rings. Bond? Shaken or stirred, hopelessly trivial. The must-see film is Kurt Wimmer's Equilibrium, a dystopian mix of Bradbury, Orwell, and Huxley couched in Matrix-like action. Wimmer, who wrote and directed the movie, gleans the best features of earlier works, and he ably synthesizes them with his original perspectives for a film that speaks to today's world.

Walking into the theater, I was both hopeful and skeptical. Hopeful because it seemed like it might be a good anti-authoritarian yarn. Skeptical, because the film is sold as something that extols "feeling" and "passion." It could have ended up as mushy-headed melodrama.

True, the story is set in the near future, after WWIII, when the state forcibly drugs the entire (legal) population in order to deaden emotions. But the point is not the simplistic one that we ought to be controlled by our feelings or such nonsense. Romantic philosophy is not the ideal. Instead, the state controls the population by constantly pumping out propaganda that war and violence can be curbed only by wiping out feelings, along with art and literature. Clearly, the film relates, such totalitarian measures only perpetuate violence.

The primary clash is between individualism and collectivism, the notion that each person is an end in him or herself and appropriately pursues his or her own happiness, and the theory that the individual exists only to further the interests of the state. In Equilibrium, the side of "feelings" -- the side that promotes painting, music, and literature -- is the side of the sovereign individual.

"The god has many names," Rose Wilder Lane wrote in her 1943 critique of authority. The state-as-god has been a recurring theme of libertarian criticism. In Equilibrium, the dictator is known simply as "Father." Those who burn and murder in the name of the state are known as "clerics." The film explicitly invokes the "opiate of the masses." Statism can be a religion, too.

The radical, militant Muslims, such as those who murdered several thousand people a year ago September 11, also want to stamp out pop music, secular art, and the life devoted to personal happiness. Millions of people live something like the horrors depicted in Equilibrium every day. Several hundred years ago, the Christian world too suffered gruesome oppression. In their authoritarian versions, these religions have given rise to men rather similar to Wimmer's "Father."

Its religious theme is not Equilibrium's only sharp edge. WWIII leads to totalitarian rule. "War is the health of the state." We do well to remember that as Junior Bush beats the drums of war. The black-masked Nazi-esque storm troopers in Equilibrium already exist in the United States, even if they are not as prevalent -- they work for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and other state agencies. Mostly they came about through another war -- the "war on drugs" (and the resulting war on gun owners). Homeland Security, nationalized identification databases, and the ridiculously named PATRIOT Act may eventually lead to the unleashing of more such agents against American citizens.

I'll let my blood cool a bit and return to the plot. A head "cleric," John Preston, portrayed by an excellent Christian Bale, stops taking his drugs. He begins to experience emotions again. He begins to remember his wife, murdered for "sense" crimes (really types of thought crimes). He begins to regret the fact that he shot his partner through the throat for reading Yeats. He even begins to dream about taking down the repressive regime. It is the parallels to 1984 that wrench the guts.

The action sequences are put together well, even if they often seem fantastic. But the action shouldn't be taken too literally. The single rebel against the evil dictator in violent confrontation doesn't happen in real life, but it makes for good metaphor. (Similarly, the master Tolkien uses the ring as metaphor, and, like Wimmer, weaves together the threads from many earlier legends.)

The other actors also do a fine job. Angus MacFadyen has a little trouble maintaining character near the end with his incredulous "o-shit" faces. Sean Bean as Preston's friend does well, and Matthew Harbour deserves special recognition as Preston's chillingly assimilated son.

Okay, after you go see Equilibrium at least once, I suppose you can follow up with the clones and the Hobbits. Perhaps even a martini. Equilibrium is not the grand, sweeping saga Tolkien's books have become. But it artfully takes up the important task of assuring art per se, and the freedom to pursue happiness as self-governing individuals, will still be revered in 2084.

**Hooked**

I saw Equilibrium for the second time December 14, four days after I saw it the first time, and my evaluation of it went up considerably. Obviously any film loses part of its suspense the second time through, but I was able to pay more attention to the symbolism and ideas presented in it. I am more convinced than ever those who gave the film a negative review fundamentally don't have a clue what they're talking about. (Thankfully, the film got "two thumbs up.")

Here I talk more about the ideas presented in the film. I suggest you read no further until you see it first.

The film clearly suggests emotions -- the ability to "feel" -- are what make life worth living, yet they are also the source of violence and war. At some level, this is clearly true. The joy of art, the intensity of romantic love, the pleasures of a touch or the sight of a sunrise, the fascination of a great idea -- these are the things we live for. "Crimes of passion" such as murder, domestic violence, and assault generally involve uncontrolled emotions.

I do not want to grant, however, that an emotionally aware person is thereby at risk of falling into aggressive (i.e., non-defensive) violence. The propaganda coming from "Father" clearly indicates that's the problem. Yet that's not the basic message of Equilibrium. The simple fact the message is state propaganda renders it suspect.

True, in Equilibrium murder and war among the civilian population have been wiped out. Of course, they have been replaced by state-sponsored murder and terror. Thus, the film points out the real purpose of deadening people's emotions is to perpetuate state oppression.

And Equilibrium presents feeling people as calm, rational, and purposeful. For example, when Preston first meets the underground resistance, we are greeted by content people going about their business. We never get the impression the resisters are in danger of becoming emotionally out of control -- instead we see people who have appropriately integrated their emotions and their intellects.

War, though, is not caused primarily by out-of-control emotions. It is instead caused by economics, failures of diplomacy, and ideology. For instance, it is true the Nazis directed irrational hatred and bigotry toward Jews and others. This was caused, though, by faulty philosophical premises that led to nationalistic zeal. The core problem, in other words, was intellectual, not emotional. The intellect generally sets the parameters for emotional response. This is an issue Equilibrium doesn't address.

Thus, I left my second screening with the impression that Wimmer understands at a gut level what are the important philosophical issues, but he was not quite able to articulate these issues within his film. He reaches a pretty good explicit approximation of the truth, and any shortcoming is remedied by the details.

A couple other notes about details. There is a reference, from the state's perspective, to the "revolutionary" development of hate crimes. I think this is a critique of hate crimes as a prototype of thought crimes (and thus of "sense crimes"), though I'm not entirely sure.

One reviewer thought it offputting the Mona Lisa was found and burned by the cleric. This reviewer thought that painting was selected merely because it is widely recognized. But I think it was also selected because of the famous debates about the meaning of the lady's smile. This emotional ambiguity is displayed against that of Preston's partner. This is just a little example that shows, I think, that Wimmer is quite a bit smarter than many of his reviewers.

On a personal level, Equilibrium impacted me more deeply than any other film in recent memory. I have to think back to films like Blade Runner and Ashes and Diamonds to come up with a movie I connected with on so many levels. True, there are a few minor plot problems (what is Father's motivation to bring him up for a meeting at the end?), but any movie that treats ideas and symbols seriously these days is a find, and one that pulls off a a serious treatment of life's most fundamental questions in the context of a gripping story is a rare jewell.

**Withdrawal Pains**

Okay, so my original opening about Trek and Lord was mostly intended to get attention. I did go see the second Lord of the Rings (LOTR) film at its first midnight showing (it is December 19 as I write). I also eagerly went to view the latest Trek. Still, I really believe Equilibrium is the superior film, perhaps the best film I've seen this year.

That is not at all to downplay the significance of the Rings trilogy. Tolkien's story is obviously one of the all-time classics. Technically, the films rival any ever made. The mostly digital Gollum is as real and believable as any of the other characters. The talking trees are equally well-done. The war scenes are epic in scope. The acting is consistently superb.

Yet The Two Towers did not rip open my consciousness and leave me trembling the way Equilibrium did. Perhaps that's because I've already "got" its themes. Struggle to do what's right. Don't get caught up with power. Honor your friends. Those are all key concepts to a moral life, and they are vividly manifest through Tolkien's story.

The Rings films provoke deep emotions, don't mistake my point. But it's rather like the currents of a deep river, compared to the raging and gnashing of Equilibrium. Perhaps one reason LOTR is easier to take is that Sauron is a traditional, understandable enemy, like Saddam Hussein on steroids. We don't like Saddam, and we basically know how to deal with him. Sauron can be defeated, as long as Frodo destroys the Ring and the humans whip his armies.

Equilibrium, on the other hand, involves an enemy from within. It's a more insidious, less comprehensible, creepier form of evil. Sure, Sauron sees a lot with his great eye, but at least he doesn't try to make you believe the eye is there to watch out for your best interests.

The Westword ridiculously asserts Equilibrium is an "adolescent" film, without bothering to offer a shred of justification for the point. But Equilibrium takes on a more sophisticated kind of evil. LOTR: bad guy wants to take over the planet. Well, fine -- let's kick his ass.

The Nazis do not chill our souls merely because they tried to take over Europe. They haunt our dreams because they were sick psychotic bastards. That kind of mass hysteria, mass scape-goating, mass murder is difficult to deal with intellectually. The desire for power is comprehensible, the concentration camps are not. Sauron is evil because he is motivated by power. At least he hates everybody, and he has no illusions about his nature. He doesn't make propaganda films to convince people he's really their friend.

Sauron is an obvious sort of evil. Yes, Father in Equilibrium is also obviously evil to us -- but the point is that he's revered by many of his own victims. That is the really scary problem. On a personal level, how does an individual get to the point where hurting others seems like an okay thing to do? On a societal level, how does a culture come to institutionalize evil yet believe it is for the best? I think the main reason Equilibrium was so much more impactful for me emotionally is that it deals with problems I find more important.

There is also the fact that, as a kid, I HATED the ending of 1984. It really irritated me. It pissed me off. So Equilibrium pulled up all these old fears and frustrations, and then it vindicated my childhood hopes. Two plus two is FOUR, damn it all! Victory!

Gregory Weinkauf of Westword also writes, "Unfortunately, from the slick stunts to the puzzling motivations (Preston takes his biggest risk to save a dog), it's also hard to take this as seriously as Wimmer clearly intended." As I began to explain above, the "slick stunts" in Equilibrium are roughly analogous to, say, the talking trees in LOTR. Are we supposed to take "seriously" the Ring of Power, Gandalf's magic, or warrior-trees? I suspect not. Is this a shortcoming of the story? Obviously not. So why does Wimmer get slammed for injecting a little fantasy, used as metaphor?

The comment about the puppy is also totally off base. Yes, Preston creates risks for himself by saving a dog. As outside observers, it seems silly for him to risk his life over a dog, when his human friends (and he himself) are in so much danger. But Weinkauf misses the point entirely. Preston has repressed his emotions his whole life. He watched his own wife burn to death without wincing. It's a difficult path to return to a human existence. The puppy scenes work very well to illustrate the renewal of empathy. Saving the puppy becomes Preston's line in the sand. I mean, for God's sake, Weinkauf, haven't you ever held a puppy?

I truly enjoyed the Trek film, but it's not the sort of thing that will haunt me five years from now. I suspect I'll slip in my Equilibrium disc every couple years till I'm dead. Trek plays on the very interesting notion of genetic determinism versus free will, but in kind of a ho-hum sort of way. What really bugs me is that the Romulans initially support the bad guy, then they turn on him and become good guys, in a way that doesn't seem at all convincing.

I know the popular view is that the latest Trek is much better than Insurrection, but actually I enjoyed the previous installment more. Okay, the anti-technology sentiments got my eyes rolling. But it was humorous and the friendships between the spacers and the locals were compelling. I especially enjoyed the theme: the notion that it's wrong to violate people's property rights on the pretext that doing so benefits others. The I thing I most love about Trek is that the captains always stand up to authority when that authority is in the wrong.

So go see LOTR and Start Trek, if you haven't already. But for a film with adult themes and the ability to slice open your emotions, go see Equilibrium.

[The Colorado Freedom Report--www.FreeColorado.com](http://www.freecolorado.com/)

<http://www.freecolorado.com/2002/12/equilibrium.html>

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| |  | | --- | | **Film Review**  ***Equilibrium***  Reviewed by [Michael Karounos](https://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/AuthorBiosPhotos/MKarounosBio.htm) Vanderbilt University  ([Credits](https://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/CREDITS/equilibrium.htm)) | |
| https://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/images/670.red.rule.gif  Vol. 7, No. 2 October 2003  ***Equilibrium***  Religion is the opiate of the people.  **-** Karl Marx.  God is dead.             **-**Friedrich Nietzsche  [1] At its release last December, critics heaped scorn on Kurt Wimmer's *Equilibrium* for being a dull, humorless, and even "stupid" imitation of about a dozen other movies, most notably *The Matrix*. They all noted the wire stunts, the martial arts fighting, the trench coats and, of course, the bloody mayhem captured in stop action and fast frame filming. The film self-consciously notes that it is set in the 21st century so that no one misses the message that republics ruled by "Clerics" and a mind-numbing drug, Prozium, (a Marxian metaphor for dulling faith), pose an imminent danger to civilization as we know it. With the exception of Roger Ebert, the reviewers were distracted by the *Matrix*-like special effectsand consequently missed or chose to ignore the film's agenda. In form, it is most like *Minority Report* in that it uses a Christian theological vocabulary to portray an oppressive society. Where *Minority Report* used religious terms such as "priests" and "clergy" for police officers, "temple" for police station, "hell" for jail, and "halo" to describe a brainwashing headset, *Equilibrium* uses a lexicon of "Cleric," "Father," "savior," "faith," and "true believer" to characterize the fascist guardians of religious sensibility who have banned emotion-inducing art, literature, and music for being disruptive to the moral well-being of the state.  [2] The film was shot in Germany which may explain the gratuitous clips of Adolph Hitler and the association of fascism with a religious state. Need anyone be reminded that when it comes to systematized slaughter, there is no religion like secular religion for doing the trick? It took the Spanish Inquisition 350 years to kill several thousand innocents; the "true believers" of the secular left and right murdered 100 million in a decade or two. However, instead of Fuhrer (or Fearless Leader) the omnipotent ruler is called "Father." We subsequently learn he is a dead Father and that the leadership is guilty - surprise - of hypocrisy. There is a Nietzschean lesson here for the polemically-challenged.  [3] While the vocabulary is derivative of *Minority Report*, the iconography is straight out of *Planet of the Apes*, another film with an anti-Christian message. The two films share oppressive religious regimes and fascist costumes. Slavery is racial and physical in *Apes*; in *Equilibrium*, slavery is psychological and emotional. In both there is a rebel underground that is brutally suppressed by the self-righteous ruling class. Both have a savior. In the former, the savior is Simos, the chimpanzee whose ironic advent is meant to delegitimize the film's religion. In the latter film, it is Bale's Revelation-derived character who is called a "savior" and in the end appears (albeit horseless) wearing white clothing and wielding a sword against the enemies of emotion.  [4] In *Apes*, humans are branded with a cross whose bar is bent upward at both ends to mask the obvious symbolism. The ruling symbol branding the ubiquitous television screens of Librian society in *Equilibrium* is a cross which has bars attached to each of the spokes resulting (if you're anti-Christian) in a happy synthesis of a swastika and a cross. Additionally, the symbol on the doors is a giant "T:" the actual shape of the Roman scaffold on which Jesus was crucified and which director Wimmers in the DVD commentary admits is a "thinly disguised cross" (45:16). In *Apes*, we see simian believers worshipping an icon of Simos. In *Equilibrium*, the citizens sit in pew-style seating in a church-like space and are instructed by a speaker standing at a pulpit. The imagery in both is meant to depict believing publics as evolutionarily primitive or mentally impaired.  [5] According to the Rotten Tomatoes web site, about 70 percent of the reviewers have panned the film. In fact, it *is* a dull, humorless, and pretentious movie, but flops like *Equilibrium* need to be seen and talked about because they address vital issues of constitutionality. Under the guise of portraying religious persecution, *Equilibrium* promotes religious bigotry and persecution of religious people and beliefs. Whether one is Christian, Jewish, or Muslim, such films should raise a note of concern because all faiths have in common a belief in right and wrong, in good and evil. It is those distinctives that secularists find so threatening to their desire for behaviors without bounds or accountability and why in recent history believing nations have had to fight the totalitarian Stalins, Maos, and Pol Pots around the world.  [6] What Dostoevsky could not have foreseen is that the worst thing about a world without faith in God is not only that everything would be permissible, but that everyone would be expendable. Paradoxically, it is a precept that is always put in practice when idealistic totalitarian states oppress religions (or minorities) in order to remake in their own secular image a better and more equal life for everyone. The irony of *Equilibrium* is that in trying to portray a non-existent statist authoritarianism rooted in the symbols of Christianity, Wimmer reveals the residual totalitarianism of communism that it seems will always be with us as a romantic but deadly ideal. |

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# Class in Historical Literature and Modern Film: From Jonathan Swift to Kurt Wimmer

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Class structure has been portrayed in many modern and historical media. From the period of Restoration whereby Jonathan Swift made social commentaries in his book "Gulliver's Travels" about the role of class in his society to modern portrayals of class in cinema like "Equilibrium," there have been many opportunities to learn how class affects or hinders each society. The purpose of this paper is to identify occurrences of class in both of the media mentioned above and to elaborate on what the author or director is commenting upon in either their modern or historical society. As well, any differences between how class was structured in historical times, will be compared with modern class structures. Finally any allusions to a perfect society mentioned by either director or writer will be covered.

First let's begin by identifying the classes that are portrayed in Book 4 of Jonathon Swift's "Gulliver's Travels" and some of their characteristics. There are several different characters or races described in this novel including the early introduction of the pirates who leave Gulliver on a supposed deserted island. These pirates allow Gulliver to live. However, they are brutal in their treatment of him in that they steal his ship and exile Gulliver. The pirates are described by Swift as brutes, animalistic, or primitive in that they desire only wealth and care nothing about humankind, plus they are very coarse. These pirates are a representation of the lower class during the 18th century in Swift's England. As Gulliver explores the island he has been stranded upon he encounters horse-like characters know as the Houyhnhnms (pronounced Whinims). The Houyhnhnms have formed a society whereby all vices have been eradicated. An ideal society perhaps but the Houyhnhnms have lost all of their passion in life. Several human-like characteristics are given to the Houyhnhnms. For instance these creatures have their own language, homes, and simple government. The last species that Gulliver encounters are the Yahoos, a type of feces-throwing ape that delights in the eating of intoxicating berries who are looked down upon by the Houyhnhnms, as being overly primitive. From a general overview it would seem that Swift is portraying the Yahoos as another example of England's lower class, while the Houyhnhnms are the upper-class.

In the movie "Equilibrium" written and directed by Kurt Wimmer, there are three types of classes; one class which has renounced all forms of emotion and formed a complex government, another that fights against or rebels against this society and whose goal is to restore a society with emotions. Another type of class, the sense offenders, are involved in the government, but they have been awakened from a drug-induced coma, and are aware of the controlling powers of the government. Those who are in the government must take medication in order to prevent any re-occurrence of feelings such as aggression, anger, passion, or creativity. In doing so a bland yet productive ideal society has been created where there are no complaints or wars but there is also no form or expressions of love. Anyone who does not take their medication is known as a sense offender and is subjected to a quick execution. It is a sterile society that is enforced by a militaristic, fascist government where the main character John Preston (Christian Bale), begins to have an inner awakening. Preston is a cleric and enforcer for the fascist government whose duty is to eradicate any who have stepped across the line and become sense offenders.

Gulliver describes the Houyhnhnms in such a way that they represent his ideal society and are a representation of the upper class. For instance, "He said, my discourse was all very strange, but especially the last part; for he could not understand why Nature should teach us to conceal what Nature had given. That neither himself nor his family were ashamed of any parts of their bodies..." (Swift 1078). It's as if Swift is saying that an upper class must incorporate their primitive self while still pursuing perfection through nature. Swift also states, "The word Houyhnhnm, in their tongue, signifies a Horse; and in its etymology, the Perfection of Nature" (Swift 1078). This example of artifice, or the perfecting of nature, shows that Swift is describing a race that has reached perfection by incorporating its higher self along with its primitiveness, a superior class of society. This creates a type of paradox, which is the existence of two contradictory elements, where this perfect race still prides itself on being superior to the Yahoos who are similar to the Houyhnhnms in some ways. Can one class be perfect when it relies on ego or pride to admonish another? The Yahoos who are also without clothes like the Houyhnhms are treated as a type of lower animal or class, "About noon I saw coming towards the house a kind of vehicle, drawn like a sledge by four Yahoos" (Swift 1075). Throughout Book 4 Swift is attempting to open the eyes of the reader to the inhumanness of man and his mistreatment of animals, man and nature while making a social commentary on class.

Throughout "Equilibrium" it seems that those without feelings and dosed on Prozium, a combination of the names Valium and Prozac, are living in an ideal society and superior to those who feel human emotions, but it becomes clear as the movie progresses that the reverse is true. The progress of John Preston from non-feeling cleric to sense offender and finally rebel, show that an ideal class of humanity needs its emotions, its ability to love, nurture, create and even to hate. The movie "Equilibrium" makes a sly social commentary on our current society where millions upon millions of people take medications or [prescriptions](http://voices.yahoo.com/theme/601/prescriptions.html) daily in order to allow them to work more productively in their daily lives. Kurt Wimmer portrays the non-feeling upper-class or superior class as a non-caring entity whose main purpose besides productivity is the removal of all those who feel. Although this dystopic society experiences much restraint and some dignity it cannot last man's humanity triumphs and the upper-class is overthrown in the final few minutes of the movie. An ideal class or society is one that feels all emotions and is free from mind-controlling drugs. In the end, it is the lower class that overthrows the upper-class in a type of revolution, similar to ones that took place throughout Europe in the 18th century. A reawakening occurs as the main character overthrows the patriarchal ruler known as, "The Father" ("Internet Movie Database) and those under the influence of Prozium are freed. Will the removal of this controlling upper-class lead to a more utopian society? The answer is left up to the viewer.

Several comparisons can be made between Swifts, "Gulliver's Travels", and the film "Equilibrium" specifically that man will constantly seek to find the best society possible and to search for symmetry and balance whether within a class structure or not. After Gulliver's stay with the Houyhnhnms he leaves the island and returns to England where he sees his friends and countrymen then describes them, "...as they really were, Yahoos in shape and disposition, perhaps a little more civilized..." (Swift 1103). The Yahoos in Swift's Book 4 are a reflection of the English common-man, who he hopes will seek the more virtuous qualities of the Houyhnhnms and give up the way of vice and wars.

While Kurt Wimmer believes that man must seek betterment through emotions, "At last, we are whole. Librians, there is a disease in the heart of man. Its symptom is hate. Its symptom is anger. Its symptom is rage. Its symptom is war. The disease is human emotion" ("Equilibrium Quotes"). This quote taken from "Father" late in the picture is an example of irony, in that the real message being delivered is the opposite and that man must overcome the mundane through human emotion and feeling. It is amazing to note that often Swift mentions his hatred for the Yahoos, "...being perfectly convinced that the hatred I bore those brutes (Yahoos) would never suffer me to be corrupted by them;" (Swift 1095). Often Swift distances himself from these liquor drinking monkeys while at the same time he is similar to the Yahoos in many ways. In the presence of Houyhnhnms Swift often lowers himself as if inferior or a subject of these horse-like creatures. Again it is as though Swift is making a comment to the fact that the Houyhnhnms are the ideal to which man must strive. However, Swift is similar to the Yahoos in appearance and some behaviours only his manners are similar to the Houyhnhnms.

In "Equilibrium" there is also a sense of superiority carried by those ruling the government, "Always practicing, Cleric. Maybe that's why you're the best," says Brandt.   
"Maybe I'm just better," replies Preston ("Internet Movie Database").

Although the times, class structure and issues have changed over three hundred years man's questioning and search for a perfect society are what make both Jonathon Swift's Gulliver's Travels, and Kurt Wimmer, Equilibrium classics in their respective times. It is up to each reader or viewer to decide whether class plays a role in this society.

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