

Absurdism in *The Adam Project* (2022) Film

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Abstrak

Dalam dunia yang terus bergerak tanpa memberi jawaban, manusia tetap mencari makna. Filsafat absurdisme Albert Camus lahir dari ketegangan antara kebutuhan manusia akan pemahaman dan keheningan semesta yang acuh tak acuh. Film *The Adam Project* (2022) tidak hanya menghadirkan petualangan lintas waktu, tetapi juga refleksi tentang kehilangan, keterasingan, dan keterbatasan kendali manusia. Melalui pendekatan studi film dan kerangka absurdisme Camus, penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana absurditas direpresentasikan melalui narasi, visual, dan respons karakter. Adam, baik muda maupun dewasa, mewakili manusia yang terus mencari makna di tengah ketidakpastian. Seperti Sisyphus dalam pemikiran Camus, ia belajar menerima kehilangan dan keterbatasan hidup. *The Adam Project* menunjukkan bahwa makna tidak ditemukan, melainkan diciptakan melalui keberanian untuk terus menjalani kehidupan dengan kesadaran, keteguhan, dan penerimaan penuh.

Kata Kunci: absurditas, eksistensialisme, penerimaan, Albert Camus.

Abstract

In a world that moves forward without offering answers, humans persist in their search for meaning. Albert Camus' philosophy of absurdism emerges from the tension between humanity's desire for clarity and the universe's silence. *The Adam Project* (2022) presents more than a science-fiction adventure; it explores grief, alienation, and the limits of human control. Using film study and Camus' absurdist framework, this research examines how absurdism is represented through narrative, visual elements, and character responses. Adam, both young and old, reflects the absurd hero who confronts uncertainty while continuing to move forward. As Camus suggests through Sisyphus, meaning arises not from certainty but from persistence. The film ultimately portrays absurdism as a conscious acceptance of life's unpredictability and limitations.

Keywords: absurdism, existentialism, acceptance, Albert Camus.

INTRODUCTION

At the center of absurdism lies Albert Camus's idea that human life is shaped by the constant search for meaning in a universe that offers no clear answers. As he states, "The absurd is born out of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world" (Bora, 2020). For Camus, this tension between human longing and the world's indifference is unavoidable. Rather than resolving it, individuals must learn to confront and endure it. Camus also emphasizes the duality of human existence, noting that life is inseparable from its contradictions light and darkness, joy and suffering (Camus, 1955).

Absurdism therefore acknowledges the pain and uncertainty of life while encouraging individuals to face them with awareness and dignity. Within this philosophical perspective, *The Adam Project* (2022) presents a contemporary narrative that resonates with absurdist themes. Directed by Shawn Levy and starring Ryan Reynolds, the film blends science fiction and comedy while exploring deeper questions about time, loss, and human agency. The story follows Adam Reed,

a time-traveling pilot who encounters his younger self while attempting to prevent future tragedy. Although the film introduces advanced technology that allows characters to travel through time, Adam's journey ultimately reveals that certain aspects of life such as grief, memory, and emotional healing cannot be controlled or rewritten. This narrative reflects Camus's assertion that the universe does not conform to human logic or desires. Camus's philosophy, particularly expressed in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), explains that the absurd emerges from the conflict between the human desire for clarity and the indifferent nature of reality. Rather than falling into despair, the absurd hero chooses to confront this condition consciously and continue living despite its meaninglessness. In *The Adam Project*, Adam's journey mirrors this perspective. His attempt to change the past gradually becomes a process of accepting grief, understanding his father, and recognizing the limits of control. Like Sisyphus endlessly pushing his rock, Adam ultimately learns that meaning is not found in altering fate but in accepting

life's struggles. Several previous studies have explored existential themes in modern films. For instance, Oktavianti et al. (2023) examined *The Worst Person in the World* (2021) through the lens of existential philosophy, focusing on identity and life choices. Similarly, Tanesia et al. (2021) analyzed *Soul* (2020), emphasizing the protagonist's search for purpose. However, these studies primarily address existentialism rather than Camusian absurdism. Consequently, limited research has examined how contemporary films portray the concept of absurdism, particularly in genre-blending narratives like *The Adam Project*.

This study analyzes the portrayal of absurdism through the character of Adam Reed in *The Adam Project* (2022). The film illustrates that even with the illusion of control offered by time travel, human life remains shaped by uncertainty, loss, and the ongoing search for meaning. In this sense, the character of Adam Reed reflects Camus's concept of the absurd: despite life's unpredictability and limitations, meaning is created through the conscious decision to continue living.

METHOD

This study is a film analysis using *The Adam Project* (2022), directed by Shawn Levy, as the primary data source. The data are taken from selected scenes involving the main character, Adam Reed, both in his adult and younger versions, as the central focus of this research. To answer the research question, the study applies the theory of absurdism proposed by Albert Camus, examining how absurdism is portrayed through Adam's emotional struggles, reflections, and experiences throughout the film, particularly in relation to the tension between the human search for meaning and the silence of the universe.

The analysis focuses on the character's dialogues, actions, and emotional responses, with data collected from relevant scenes and supported by screenshots and selected lines from the film. The analysis process includes identifying scenes that reflect absurdist themes, interpreting them using Camus's theory, and elaborating the findings to explain how the film represents the absurd condition through the character of Adam Reed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of *The Adam Project* (2022) reveals that the character of Adam Reed embodies several fundamental aspects of Albert Camus's philosophy of absurdism. Throughout the film, Adam is confronted with experiences that expose the limitations of human control over life, particularly regarding grief, loss, and

the irreversible passage of time. Despite possessing advanced technology and the extraordinary ability to travel through time, Adam discovers that neither science nor technology can eliminate emotional suffering or completely repair the consequences of the past.

Adam's journey is driven by a desire to change events that have caused him pain, especially the death of his father and the emotional wounds left unresolved throughout his life. His attempts to revisit the past reflect a common human tendency to seek meaning, certainty, and control in an unpredictable world. However, as the narrative progresses, Adam realizes that some events cannot be altered without creating further complications. This realization illustrates Camus's notion of the absurd, which emerges from the confrontation between humanity's desire for order and the universe's refusal to provide definitive answers or perfect solutions.

Furthermore, the interaction between adult Adam and his younger self serves as a symbolic process of self-confrontation and self-understanding. Through these encounters, Adam is forced to face his unresolved grief, anger, and disappointment. Rather than finding a way to erase these painful experiences, he gradually learns to acknowledge them as inevitable parts of life. This acceptance marks a significant transformation in his character, demonstrating a movement from resistance toward understanding and reconciliation.

The film also portrays how grief functions as a catalyst for Adam's existential struggle. The loss of his father creates a sense of emptiness that influences his decisions and relationships. In Camus's philosophy, suffering and loss are unavoidable aspects of human existence, and attempts to completely escape them are ultimately futile. Adam's journey illustrates this idea as he comes to understand that healing does not require changing the past but accepting its permanence. His growth reflects the recognition that meaning is not found through controlling circumstances but through one's response to them.

Moreover, Adam's final decision to let events unfold naturally demonstrates an absurdist response to existence. Instead of continuing to rebel against reality by trying to manipulate time, he chooses acceptance. This does not signify defeat or resignation; rather, it reflects the awareness that life's uncertainties and losses cannot be fully overcome. Similar to Camus's concept of the absurd hero, Adam acknowledges the limitations of human agency while continuing to live, love, and move forward despite them.

Therefore, the findings indicate that *The Adam Project* presents absurdism through Adam Reed's struggle with grief, his confrontation with the uncontrollable nature of

life, and his eventual acceptance of reality. The film suggests that although humans may never obtain complete answers to their suffering, they can still find the strength to continue living meaningfully. In this sense, Adam's character reflects Camus's belief that the appropriate response to the absurd is not escape but conscious acceptance and perseverance in the face of life's inherent uncertainties.

Representation of Absurdism in *The Adam Project* (2022) Film

In a world governed by uncertainty and veiled in silence, *The Adam Project* (2022) emerges not merely as a time-travel adventure, but as a subtle meditation on the absurd. Beneath its witty dialogue and cinematic spectacle lies a deeper narrative one that mirrors Albert Camus's concept of absurdism: the persistent human search for meaning in a universe that offers none in return. Time travel in this film does not grant clarity or control; instead, it exposes the futility of escaping fate, the ache of memory, and the irreversibility of loss. Camus wrote that the absurd is born from the collision between "the human need" and "the unreasonable silence of the world," and this tension pulses through the film's quietest moments and most chaotic confrontations. *The Adam Project* uses its science-fiction premise not to answer life's questions, but to illuminate their unanswerable nature. Through fractured relationships, inner conflict, and emotional dissonance, the film portrays absurdism not as a philosophical abstraction but as a lived experience, etched into every glance, silence, and unresolved goodbye.

Alienation and the Indifferent World

In the opening minutes of *The Adam Project* (2022), viewers are immersed in the brittle landscape of young Adam's emotional reality, one sculpted not by joy or safety, but by quiet grief, disconnection, and social hostility. His world is not fantastical, despite the science-fiction genre, but painfully familiar: the sterile school hallway, the echo of footsteps, and the looming threat of physical and emotional harm. Figure 1 captures a formative moment in Adam's life, where his isolation becomes physically embodied. A larger peer corners him by the wall, bullying, and utters, The dialogue, though sparse, reveals the chasm between him and his social world a world where his difference is not tolerated but punished. This confrontation, while it appears to be a moment of schoolyard bullying, extends far deeper into the realm of existential absurdity. For Camus, life is not devoid of meaning. Instead, meaning is not automatically bestowed by the universe but emerges through human confrontation with an indifferent world.



Figure 1. Ray mocks Adam as he runs away.
(00:26:32–00:26:35)

Ray: "Run away, Reed!"

The second scene presents Adam Reed's alienation as an external manifestation of the absurd. Ray's verbal taunting functions not merely as juvenile mockery, but as a confrontation between Adam's desire for dignity and a social environment that offers none. From a Camusian perspective, this moment illustrates existential alienation rather than simple social exclusion. Adam seeks recognition and belonging, yet the world represented through Ray's cruelty responds with ridicule rather than understanding.

This interaction reflects Camus' notion of the absurd as the collision between human longing and an indifferent universe. Adam's suffering is neither acknowledged nor corrected; instead, it is exposed publicly and rendered insignificant. Ray's laughter operates as a symbolic extension of the universe's indifference, reinforcing the absence of moral order or fairness. In this sense, Adam's humiliation is not meaningful within the social world he inhabits, emphasizing the futility of seeking justice or empathy.

The visual contrast within the scene further intensifies this absurd condition. The bright, open setting conflicts sharply with the emotional violence inflicted upon Adam, underscoring Camus' idea that suffering occurs without explanation or consequence. There is no intervention, resolution, or moral restoration only Adam's withdrawal from a reality that refuses coherence. His retreat signifies an early awareness of the absurd, marking the moment where expectation collapses under the weight of indifference. Ultimately, this scene demonstrates how absurdism in *The Adam Project* is conveyed through Adam Reed's lived experience of alienation. Rather than dramatizing injustice, the film normalizes it, aligning with Camus' assertion that the absurd emerges not from chaos alone, but from the world's refusal to respond meaningfully to human pain.

The Futility of Control and Time Travel

While science fiction often presents time travel as a miraculous tool to undo pain or reshape destiny, *The*

Adam Project subverts this fantasy through an absurdist lens. Despite the technological mastery to traverse timelines, Adam Reed remains unable to escape the irreversible truths of loss, grief, and human imperfection. This subchapter explores how time travel, rather than granting control, exposes the futility of trying to rewrite life's core sufferings affirming Camus's belief that the universe remains indifferent, no matter how far we reach into its machinery.

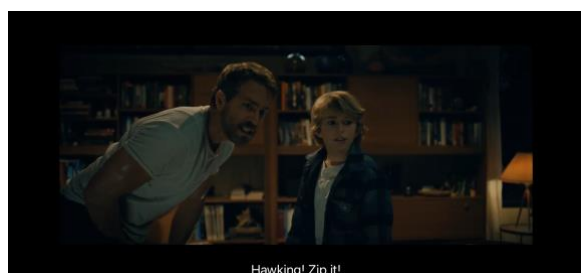


Figure 2. *The First Encounter Between Young Adam and Future Adam.*
(00:12:45 - 00:12:48)

Both Adam: "Hawking! Zip it! Hawking! Zip it!"

The first encounter between Young Adam and Future Adam marks a direct confrontation with the absurd condition. The simultaneous exclamation, illustrates an irrational moment in which two versions of the same consciousness react identically within an impossible situation. This encounter does not invite logical explanation or narrative justification; instead, it presents a rupture in reality that must be confronted rather than understood. From a Camusian perspective, the absurd emerges here through the collapse of rational causality, as time no longer functions according to human expectation.

The significance of this moment lies not in the mechanics of time travel, but in Adam's response to its impossibility. Young Adam's shock contrasts with Future Adam's relative composure, suggesting an evolution from confusion toward resignation. This difference reflects Camus' assertion that awareness of the absurd develops over time: while the initial encounter produces disorientation, continued existence within an irrational world fosters endurance rather than explanation. Future Adam does not attempt to rationalize the event, signaling an acceptance of the absurd condition.

The Search for Meaning Through Loss

In *The Adam Project*, loss operates not merely as a plot device but as an existential force, one that drives the protagonist toward self-confrontation and, paradoxically, growth. According to Camusian absurdism, meaning is never found through grand

design or cosmic justice, but through the individual's revolt against despair. In Adam's journey, the death of his father becomes a pivotal absurd moment: an irreversible event that both shatters his emotional world and fuels his longing to undo it. This tension, between the desire to rewrite the past and the impossibility of doing so captures the very heart of the absurd. Yet it is through this suffering that Adam begins to seek reconciliation, not only with the version of himself he had abandoned, but with the grief he never allowed himself to process. As time travel fails to restore what has been lost, what remains is a quiet search for meaning: found not in control, but in the act of remembering, forgiving, and continuing on.



Figure 3. *Young Adam is curious what will happen in the future.*
(00:50:44 - 00:50:47)

Older Adam: "The only woman you ever loved was taken from you."

Older Adam's statement, exposes the collapse of futurity. The line does not merely communicate grief it announces the failure of expectation. Embedded within it is the assumption that love should endure and that the future should preserve what gives life meaning. Its destruction therefore becomes an absurd rupture.

From a Camusian perspective, this moment embodies the confrontation between human desire for permanence and the inevitability of loss. Adam possesses extraordinary technological power he can travel through time yet he remains incapable of preventing Laura's death. This contradiction intensifies the absurd condition. Even with access to time itself, he cannot escape the fundamental limits of existence. The universe does not negotiate with longing.

The statement is directed toward his younger self. In doing so, Adam disrupts the illusion that the future guarantees fulfillment. Instead of offering hope, adulthood delivers irreversible absence. This dismantling of expectation aligns with Camus' rejection of false hope or metaphysical consolation. There is no cosmic compensation for suffering.

However, the scene does not portray resignation. By articulating the loss directly, Adam refuses denial.

Camus argues that revolt begins with clear recognition. Adam's acknowledgment of Laura's absence signals not surrender, but lucidity. He does not pretend the loss can be corrected he confronts it. The absurd hero, according to Camus, lives without appeal without demanding that the universe restore what it has taken. This moment marks a philosophical shift. Adam's struggle is no longer about mastering time but about enduring its consequences. The tragedy of love lost becomes evidence of the absurd: meaning is experienced deeply, yet never secured permanently. His task is not to rewrite the past, but to continue living in full awareness of its irreversibility.



Figure 4. Young Adam's conversation with his mom after school.

(00:04:15 - 00:04:18)

Ellie: "Mom doesn't understand you."

Young Adam: "Dad would have."

Figure Young Adam's statement, exposes a fundamental tension between longing and absence. The significance of this line lies not simply in grief, but in the expectation that someone specifically his father could provide total understanding. In Camusian terms, this reflects the human demand for clarity in a world that offers none.

Camus argues that the absurd emerges from the collision between the human need for meaning and the universe's indifference. In this moment, Adam articulates that need directly. He believes that his father would have understood him completely, suggesting that meaning and validation once existed in a singular figure. However, the father's death renders that certainty inaccessible. The universe does not respond to Adam's longing it remains silent. The scene does not resolve this tension. Adam's grief is neither corrected nor comforted in a transformative way. Instead, it remains. This unresolved state aligns with absurdist philosophy: loss cannot be undone, and understanding cannot be guaranteed. Even within a narrative built on time travel, death remains irreversible. The film thereby reinforces a central absurdist insight technology cannot repair existential rupture.

Rather than offering sentimental closure, the dialogue exposes the impossibility of restoring what is gone. Adam's statement reflects an early belief that meaning resided in another person. The gradual dismantling of that belief marks a movement toward absurd awareness: he must exist without the assurance of perfect understanding. Meaning, if it is to exist at all, must be constructed without relying on the return of the past.

The Absurd Humor and Sarcasm

In the face of grief, trauma, and existential confusion, *The Adam Project* uniquely employs humor and sarcasm as both a coping mechanism and a philosophical stance mirroring Camus' view of the absurd. Rather than collapsing under the weight of suffering or seeking false hope, the characters especially older Adam frequently deflect pain with wit. This use of humor does not erase the absurdity of their situation, but instead highlights it. Camus argued that absurd awareness requires rebellion: not through despair, but through lucid acceptance. In *The Adam Project*, sarcasm becomes a quiet form of rebellion an ironic commentary on the futility of control, the chaos of time, and the inevitability of loss. The contrast between emotional weight and comedic delivery reflects the absurd condition: that life is simultaneously painful and laughable, and that meaning might be found not in resolution, but in our attitude toward the unresolved.



Figure 5. Old Adam's Absurd Humor in Confronting the Future.

(00:17:42 - 00:17:50)

Old Adam: "Can I be honest? Your future is still tragic."

Old Adam: "I'm kidding."

Old Adam's statement, demonstrates how humor functions as an absurdist strategy rather than simple comic relief. The shifting declaration destabilizes reassurance. Instead of offering comfort to his younger self, he exposes the inevitability of suffering, then momentarily disguises it as a joke.

This oscillation between sincerity and irony mirrors Camus' concept of the absurd condition. Young Adam implicitly seeks certainty about the future, hoping for evidence that pain will be redeemed. Old Adam refuses to provide that illusion. His sarcasm becomes a philosophical gesture: truth is acknowledged, but it is delivered through humor to make it bearable.

The flashlight exchange reinforces this dynamic. Light traditionally symbolizes clarity, yet here clarity is unstable. Truth appears, disappears, and reappears. This instability reflects the absurd itself moments of awareness interrupting the comfort of denial. Old Adam's refusal to stabilize the message suggests that the future cannot be sanitized for emotional protection. Camus argues that revolt against the absurd does not involve escape but conscious endurance. By joking about tragedy while simultaneously confirming it, Old Adam demonstrates lucidity. He neither lies nor collapses into despair. Instead, he transforms pain into irony, maintaining agency through tone rather than circumstance. This scene illustrates absurd resilience. The future remains tragic, but Adam does not surrender to it. Laughter becomes an act of resistance. In Camusian terms, this is not denial it is defiance. Humor allows Adam to confront suffering without granting it total authority over him. The absurd is acknowledged, yet he continues speaking, joking, and existing within it.



Figure 6. Young Adam's sarcastic despair to Old Adam's idea plan.
(01:13:26 - 01:13:28)

*Young Adam: "How did I even survive this long?
Your idea sucks"*

This dialogue functions as more than comedic frustration. It exposes a self-reflexive critique in which Adam confronts the instability of his own future identity. The insult destabilizes the authority typically associated with adulthood. The future self is not wiser or secure he is improvisational, flawed, and uncertain.

From an absurdist perspective, this exchange reveals the collapse of the illusion of control. Old Adam's reckless planning is not incompetence alone it reflects his awareness that structure cannot guarantee safety or meaning. In Camusian terms, once the absurd is recognized, life cannot be engineered into coherence. Old Adam acts not because he possesses certainty, but because inaction would imply surrender. His spontaneity becomes a form of revolt.

Young Adam's sarcasm intensifies the absurdity of the moment. He is simultaneously criticizing and witnessing his own existential condition. The scene stages an internal dialogue: hope confronting disillusionment. Rather than presenting the future as aspirational, the film presents it as chaotic continuity. Survival itself becomes questionable "How did I even survive?" suggesting that endurance in an irrational world is almost accidental. Importantly, humor here is defensive but not escapist. Camus argues that revolt requires lucidity. Old Adam does not pretend his plan is flawless, nor does he claim mastery over events. He proceeds despite instability. The sarcasm exchanged between them exposes vulnerability while refusing despair. The scene reinforces a central absurdist principle: one does not overcome chaos; one persists within it. Survival is not proof of meaning, but evidence of continued resistance. Adam does not defeat the absurd he endures it consciously.

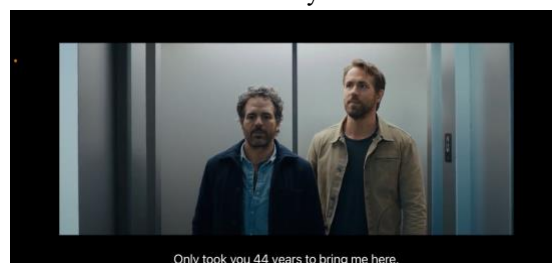


Figure 7. Young Adam's sarcastic despair to Old Adam's idea plan.
(01:18:12 - 01:18:16)

*Old Adam: "After 44 years, I finally get invited
here."*

This operates as ironic confrontation rather than simple humor. The sarcasm destabilizes the surface civility of the reunion and exposes a long-suppressed grievance. This is not merely a joke about delayed inclusion it is an indictment of emotional absence.

The line reveals how memory persists beyond death and beyond time travel. Although Adam now possesses the extraordinary ability to revisit the past, he cannot revise the emotional structure of his childhood. The invitation comes too late. In this sense, the absurd condition emerges clearly the longing for retroactive

repair collides with the irreversible nature of lived experience.

From a Camusian perspective, sarcasm here functions as revolt. Adam does not collapse into accusation or sentimentality instead, he articulates his disappointment through irony. This controlled bitterness reflects lucidity. He recognizes that no explanation from his father can undo the years of perceived neglect. The universe offers neither apology nor restitution. His father's simple reply, "Fair," reinforces the absence of dramatic reconciliation. There is acknowledgment, but no restoration. This exchange rejects illusion. The film does not grant Adam a perfectly healed paternal bond. Instead, it allows confrontation without fantasy. Old Adam's humor becomes a structured expression of grief measured, sharp, and self-aware. He neither denies the wound nor expects it to vanish. The scene embodies absurdist maturity. Adam faces the past without demanding that it compensate him. The sarcasm is not escapism it is clarity. He names the absence, accepts its permanence, and continues. In Camus' terms, this is revolt without hope of correction an insistence on truth within irreversibility.

The Characters' Responses to Absurdism in *The Adam Project*

Absurdism, with its confrontation of a chaotic, meaningless universe and the human yearning for purpose, finds an unusual playground in *The Adam Project*. No longer merely a philosophical idea hovering over the narrative, absurdism in this section is met head-on by the characters, each responding in distinctly human sometimes humorous, sometimes heartbreaking ways. From the sarcastic resilience of both versions of Adam to the quietly dignified grief of his mother, and the complex guilt buried beneath the father's intellect, these responses reveal how individuals construct meaning even when logic unravels around them. Instead of succumbing to the void, the characters wrestle with it through denial, humor, anger, longing, or even reckless action.

This chapter will explore how absurdism is not just a thematic layer in the film, but a psychological battlefield, where each character's strategy to survive, cope, and connect becomes a testament to the messy, irrational beauty of human persistence. One of the most striking responses to absurdism in *The Adam Project* is embodied by Adam himself particularly the older version. His quick wit, sarcasm, and relentless wisecracks aren't just personality traits; they are armor. Behind every joke lies a truth he's not yet ready to face: the enduring grief of losing his father and the unresolved

trauma it left behind. This is no coincidence his "big mouth" is a shield against silence, because silence invites reflection, and reflection leads to pain.

By constantly joking, interrupting, and mocking even the most serious of moments, Adam controls the narrative if everything is funny, then nothing can truly hurt him. But the absurdity of his behavior using humor in the face of death, time travel disasters, and existential crises is precisely what reveals his humanity. In a universe that no longer makes sense, Adam chooses irony over despair, sarcasm over sincerity, punchlines over tears. Yet the cracks in this façade begin to show, especially in moments where he's forced to confront his younger self, who has not yet mastered the art of deflection. The younger Adam, blunt and curious, unknowingly pulls at the very threads his older self tries so hard to keep stitched. And thus, in this internal conflict between past and present, humor becomes both a weapon and a wound a deeply absurd, yet painfully real, response to the emotional absurdity of loss.

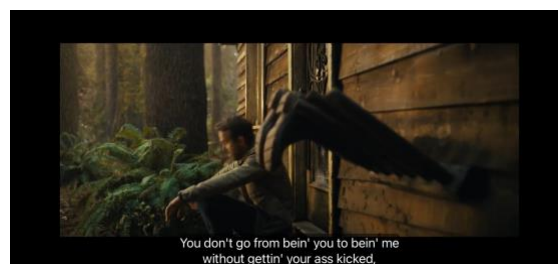


Figure 8. Deep talk between Young and Old Adam.
(00:28:14 - 00:28:22)

Old Adam: "You don't go from being you to being me without getting your ass kicked"

The line reframes pain not as a deviation from life's path but as an integral component of identity formation. From an absurdist perspective, this admission reflects lucidity. Adam does not attempt to rationalize suffering as morally justified, nor does he present it as meaningful in a redemptive sense. Instead, he recognizes it as unavoidable. In Camusian terms, this clarity marks the transition from resistance to conscious acceptance. The world does not guarantee fairness; growth does not occur under protected conditions. The self is shaped within contingency. Adam neither dramatizes nor glorifies his hardship. The phrase "getting beaten up" reduces prolonged emotional and physical pain into blunt phrasing, signaling emotional compression rather than denial. Humor and resignation coexist, but neither cancels the other. This balance reflects absurdist revolt: acknowledging suffering without collapsing into self-pity.

The statement also destabilizes idealized narratives of maturity. Becoming "Old Adam" is not portrayed as

achievement but as consequence. Identity emerges through endurance, not destiny. In this way, the scene aligns with Camus' absurd hero, who does not seek transcendence or metaphysical comfort, but continues within reality as it is. This moment demonstrates a key response to absurdism in the film: not escape, not justification, but endurance articulated with clarity. Adam does not overcome suffering he incorporates it.



Figure 9. Last acceptance of Young and Old Adam.
(01:31:44 – 01:31:48)

Old Adam: "But you were the best part all along."

Old Adam's admission, "I hate to say it, But you were the best part all along," marks a decisive shift in his existential posture. Throughout the film, he has positioned himself as superior older, tougher, more experienced. This statement reverses that hierarchy. The future self no longer claims authority over the past; instead, he validates it.

From an absurdist perspective, this moment represents internal reconciliation rather than narrative resolution. Camus argues that revolt against the absurd requires lucidity the refusal of illusion combined with continued engagement in life. Old Adam's acknowledgment is lucid: adulthood has not perfected him. Experience has not purified him. If anything, it has burdened him.

The statement destabilizes linear progress. Growth is not framed as improvement but as complication. By recognizing Young Adam as "the best version," Old Adam implicitly critiques the cynicism and emotional guardedness he developed as defense mechanisms. What he once dismissed as weakness sensitivity, openness, emotional intensity now appears as authenticity. Old Adam does not attempt to undo his suffering or reclaim innocence. Instead, he integrates it. The acceptance of his younger self signifies an acceptance of continuity across time: the wounded adult and the vulnerable child are not opposites but extensions of the same consciousness.

In Camusian terms, this moment reflects mature revolt. Adam does not conquer the absurd world; he reconciles with himself within it. The universe remains indifferent, loss remains irreversible, and time cannot be

controlled. Yet he chooses self-recognition over self-contempt. The scene concludes Adam's absurdist trajectory not with transcendence, but with clarity. Acceptance here is not metaphysical it is personal. He cannot fix the structure of existence, but he can cease warring against his own becoming. That internal lucidity constitutes his final response to the absurd.

CONCLUSION

In the final moments of *The Adam Project*, there is no triumphant mastery over time, grief, or fate. Instead, what remains is lucidity. The narrative resists resolution through correction; time travel does not restore what has been lost, nor does it provide metaphysical reassurance. This structural refusal aligns directly with Camus' concept of the absurd the confrontation between human longing and an indifferent universe.

Like Sisyphus in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Adam does not escape his condition. He becomes conscious of it. His sarcasm, emotional restraint, and eventual self-recognition illustrate a progression from defensive avoidance to lucid acceptance. He does not discover inherent meaning in suffering, nor does he reinterpret loss as purposeful. Rather, he acknowledges its permanence.

Throughout the film, absurdism is portrayed not through grand philosophical declarations, but through character dynamics: alienation, fragmented identity across time, irreversibility of death, and the collapse of linear progress. Adam's responses evolve accordingly from irony and emotional deflection to endurance and finally internal reconciliation. His acceptance of his younger self marks not redemption, but integration.

The film ultimately demonstrates that revolt, in Camusian terms, is not rebellion against fate but persistence within it. Adam continues without illusion. He cannot repair the past, but he can confront it. He cannot eliminate grief, but he can cease denying it. In this way, *The Adam Project* presents absurdism not as despair, but as conscious endurance within limitation. The film becomes a contemporary articulation of Camus' philosophy: meaning is not granted, coherence is not guaranteed, and yet the individual persists. Keeping alive.

SUGGESTIONS

This study highlights the subtle yet powerful presence of absurdist themes in modern science fiction cinema. Future researchers are encouraged to examine other films within or beyond the science fiction genre such as *Donnie Darko*, or *Inside Out* to further uncover how

absurdist philosophy manifests across diverse narratives and aesthetics. Comparative studies could explore how different cinematic approaches grapple with the absurd, particularly in relation to identity, time, and emotional resilience. Scholars may also consider cross-analyzing absurdism alongside other existential frameworks to gain a richer philosophical understanding. Creatively, this encourages filmmakers and writers to infuse popular narratives with meaningful existential undercurrents, proving that emotional storytelling and philosophical depth can coexist within mainstream cinema.

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