

# Absurdist Film

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# WHAT IS ABSURDISM AND WHEN DID IT BEGIN?

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- Absurdism is the belief that humans live within a chaotic universe that does not have any sole purpose.
- Absurdism as a concept dates back to the early 20th century and it was movement that became prominent in the 1950s.

# WHAT ARE SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF ABSURDISM?

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- Humor is a large part of the genre.
  - Absurdist humor is different from a typical comedy
  - Focuses greatly on the chaotic aspect of life and unpredictable juxtapositions

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# ABSURDIST FILMS

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# Meaning of Absurdism in Film

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- Absurdism in film opens a door to more philosophical and thought provoking stories.
- Absurdism is widely used in post-war stories as a way to cope with the trauma war brings with their survivors.
- Comedy is one way that absurdist films cope with post-war trauma but another way is by raw thrillers and horror films as well as science fiction

# Hitchcock Films

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- Alfred Hitchcock was a film director who had a peak in his career in the 1950s with his film "Dial M For Murder". After releasing that film, his fame grew larger.
- Hitchcock is one of the most popular film directors who dabbled in absurdism.
- His first absurdist film was "The Birds" which was released in 1963. It is a horror-thriller that focuses on a series of random violent bird attacks in California.
- The birds attacking civilians is symbolic for the entrapment of animals for humans on use so the film questions what would happen if it were the other way around

# 1. Dr. Strangelove

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- 1964 film that studies the nature of human violence
- An absurd satire of the Cold War
  - The main satire is the one on the MAD theory which was in serious development during the Cold War era by scientists
    - The MAD theory (Mutually Assured Destruction) is a military strategy where nuclear weapons by two or more opposing sides of a war will cause total destruction on both sides.
  - The film showcases the extent of human violence and the lengths humans will go to in order to receive power.

## 2. Synecdoche, New York

- Released in 2008
- The story follows a theater director who starts living in a studio warehouse that happens to be a replica of New York City. The director chooses to live this new life path so he can search for the ultimate truth of life.
- The film itself is a complex soul-crushing story with that existential crisis that highlights absurdism

# 3. Two Days, One Night

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- A French film, released in 2014
- The story follows a Sandra, a woman who is on the brink of losing her job unless she convinces her co-workers to give up their bonuses so she can get that money for herself.
  - She goes through quite a bit mentally and she is struggling to figure out how to keep her job and her sanity.
- The film is considered absurdist because of its bizarre nature and the in-depth of the extents the woman takes to get said job back