

Research Article

Scrolling through the Absurd: Camus, Depression and Suicide in the Age of Social Media

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Abstract: This paper explores the enduring relevance of Albert Camus' philosophy of the absurd in addressing the growing mental health crises of the digital age, particularly depression and suicide in the context of social media. Camus asserts that life is inherently without ultimate meaning, and that the human quest for coherence is met with the universe's indifference. This confrontation – what he calls “*absurd*” – resonates strongly today, as many experience despair in a world saturated by digital performance, comparison, and curated identities. The paper argues that depression often mirrors the psychological impact of the absurd condition, with social media amplifying feelings of alienation, emptiness, and existential anxiety, especially among the youth. Drawing on Camus' ethical rejection of suicide, the study interprets suicide not as a resolution but as a surrender to meaninglessness. Instead, it champions Camus' concept of revolt: the conscious decision to live fully and authentically despite life's lack of inherent meaning. Through this lens, the absurd becomes not a source of despair, but a call to courage, freedom, and honest existence. Ultimately, Camus offers a powerful ethical framework for navigating modern existential challenges – one that affirms life, dignity, and hope in the face of an indifferent world.

Keywords: absurdity; depression; suicide; social media; existentialism; mental health; revolt; authenticity; philosophical ethics

1. Introduction

In a hyperconnected world defined by curated digital identities, performative affect, and the pursuit of algorithmic visibility, the existential disquiet at the heart of human condition has not only persisted but arguably intensified. Despite technological advances that promise global community and personal fulfillment, studies increasingly indicate a correlation between pervasive social media use and growing psychological distress, particularly among adolescents and young adults (Keles et al., 2019; Twenge, 2017; Woods & Scott, 2016). The World Health Organization (2025) reports that suicide is now among the leading causes of death among people aged 15-29, with depression recognized as a primary contributing factor. These trends expose an urgent need for deeper reflection on the affective, existential dimensions of life in the digital age.

Amidst the crisis, the philosophy of Albert Camus, particularly his conception of the absurd, acquires renewed significance. Camus' fundamental question – whether life is worth living in the absence of inherent meaning – resonates with chilling clarity in an era where many individuals feel unseen, fragmented, and emotionally exhausted (Camus, 1955, 1991; Joiner, 2005). The absurd, for Camus, arises from the confrontation between the human desire for clarity and coherence and the universe's indifferent silence. In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, he famously declared suicide to be “*the one truly serious philosophical question*,” a provocation not toward despair but toward ethical engagement with life despite its lack of objective meaning (Camus, 1955, p. 3).

This confrontation is not a relic of a bygone existential era. Instead, it finds fertile ground in digital culture, where individuals, particularly the youth, are caught between internal suffering and external performance. Research suggests that excessive social media use intensifies feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and depression by fostering constant comparison, fragmented attention, and a relentless pressure to appear happy and successful (Fuchs, 2017;

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Verduyn et al., 2017). As Han (2015) observes in *The Burnout Society*, contemporary subjectivity is increasingly shaped by neoliberal imperatives of self-optimization and productivity, producing individuals who are simultaneously over-stimulated and internally desolate.

In this context, Camus' insistence that meaninglessness is not a verdict but a beginning opens space for an ethics of revolt – an ethic of conscious, defiant living that rejects both despair and illusion. His concept of revolt does not entail grand rebellion but a personal, continuous affirmation of life as it is – without metaphysical consolation or utopian expectation (Camus, 1991; Kaufmann, 1957). Applied to contemporary mental health discourse, Camus' revolt offers a philosophical counter-narrative to despair: a refusal to yield to nihilism, an invitation to live with awareness and integrity amid incoherence.

This paper, therefore, explores the enduring relevance of Camus' absurdist thought as a framework for understanding depression and suicide in the social media age. It argues that the depressive experience can be interpreted as a modern manifestation of absurd consciousness – a painful yet lucid awareness of disconnection, futility, and the failure of meaning-making structures. Suicide, within this framework, appears not as a philosophical resolution but a capitulation to absurdity. In contrast, revolt becomes an existential stance of resistance – living authentically not in spite of absurdity, but because of it.

By situating Camus' absurdity within the affective landscape of digital life, this study contributes to a growing body of interdisciplinary research that bridges existential philosophy, phenomenology, and psychosocial inquiry (Sherman, 2009; Ratcliffe, 2015; Yalom, 1980). It draws on recent works in digital media studies, critical psychology, and philosophical anthropology to examine how curated digital realities contribute to a metaphysics of futility, and how Camus' ideas might offer a lifeline – not of salvation, but of affirmation (Dobson, 2015; Nussbaum, 2010; Turkle, 2011).

Ultimately, this paper argues that Camus' absurdity is not an endpoint but a lens – one through which the crises of modern existence, especially those amplified by digital media, can be reimagined as opportunities for courageous, lucid living. The absurd, when faced with honesty and revolt becomes not a sentence to despair, but a call of freedom.

2. Materials and Methods

This Study adopts a qualitative, interpretive research design grounded in the traditions of philosophical hermeneutics, phenomenology, and existential inquiry. The primary aim is not to generalize findings across populations, but to engage in a rigorous, reflective analysis of the lived experiences of depression and suicide as they intersect with Albert Camus' philosophy of the absurd, particularly in the context of contemporary digital life. This design is well-suited to the study's objectives, which prioritize depth of understanding over quantification, and ethical reflection over prediction.

2.1. Research Design

The research is structured as a philosophical-analytic investigation. It combines conceptual analysis with applied philosophical anthropology and draws from existential psychology, media theory, and digital culture studies. At its core, the study is transdisciplinary, seeking to synthesize insights from diverse fields – including philosophy, psychology, sociology, and communication studies – into a coherent interpretive framework. While firmly rooted in philosophical method, it also incorporates thematic interpretations drawn from cultural texts, digital behaviors, and empirical studies on mental health.

This design allows for the systematic interrogation of concepts such as absurdity, revolt, meaninglessness, depression, and suicide, and facilitates their application to contemporary issues such as social media usage, identity fragmentation, and emotion alienation. The research adheres to philosophical inquiry norms, particularly those articulated by hermeneutic philosophers such as Paul Ricoeur and Hans-Georg Gadamer, where interpretation is both a method and mode of engagement with human experience.

2.2. Data Collection

The study does not rely on traditional empirical datasets (e.g., surveys, interviews, or experiments) in keeping with its non-empirical philosophical orientation. Instead, it employs textual analysis as its primary data collection method, drawing from three categories of sources:

1. Primary philosophical texts (Albert Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Rebel* were treated as foundational texts. These works are analyzed both for their conceptual contributions and their ethical implications regarding suicide, revolt, and absurdity).

2. Scholarly literature on digital culture and mental health (The category involved academic articles and books dealing with the psychological, social, and cultural consequences of social media use (e.g., Fuchs, 2017; Twenge, 2017; Han, 2015; Keles et al., 2019) that were reviewed to contextualize Camus' ideas within modern phenomena such as depression, anxiety, and suicide).

3. Contemporary philosophical and psychological studies (It refers to the works in existential psychology (Corrigan & Rao, 2012), and digital identity (Turkle, 2011; Dobson, 2015); they provide thematic grounding for bridging classical existentialism with contemporary lived experience).

The texts are selected based on scholarly credibility, relevance to the research question, and their contribution to the intersection of mental health, meaning-making, and digital life. All sources are peer-reviewed or academically recognized, ensuring the reliability of the intellectual material.

2.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis is conducted using philosophical hermeneutics and thematic content analysis. The process involves close reading, annotation, and the extraction of core themes relevant to Camus' philosophy and its application to modern mental health issues. Analysis proceeded in three interrelated stages:

1. Conceptual clarification means that key philosophical concepts such as absurdity, consciousness, revolt, meaninglessness, and freedom were defined and contextualized through engagement with Camus' original texts and relevant commentaries (e.g., Sherman, 2009; Kaufman, 1957).

2. Thematic mapping deals with the examination of secondary texts on digital culture, social media depression, and suicide for recurring patterns, metaphors, and themes. These were then mapped onto Camus' concepts to identify points of convergence and tension.

3. Synthesis and ethical interpretation are the final stage that involved constructing a Philosophical narrative that synthesizes Camus' insights with empirical and cultural data. This synthesis is interpretive, aiming to generate new understandings of depression and suicide not merely as clinical disorders, but existential conditions intensified by digital modernity.

By using Camus' framework as a lens, the study interrogates how meaninglessness manifests in present-day realities and proposes a life-affirming ethic rooted in revolt and presence – drawing from both philosophical rigor and contemporary relevance.

Throughout the analysis, emphasis is placed on existential meaning-making, ethical reflection, and phenomenological depth, rather than causal explanation. The analysis also attends to language, metaphor, and the symbolic structure of both philosophical texts and contemporary discourse around mental health. Philosophical insights, rather than empirical generalization, is the ultimate goal.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. *The Absurd: An Overview of Camus' Philosophy*

Albert Camus' concept of the absurd emerges from a central conflict: the human need to find meaning and coherence in life versus the silent, indifferent nature of the universe. Camus describes the absurd as "*the divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of absurdity*" (Camus, 1955, p. 13). In simpler terms it is the deep existential tension that arises when the rational mind seeks order in a universe that offers none. For Camus, this confrontation does not arise from a flaw in logic or theology, but from a fundamental mismatch between human expectation and the reality of existence (Camus, 1955, 1991).

The quintessential symbol of the absurd is the Greek mythological figure of Sisyphus, condemned to roll a boulder up in a mountain only to watch it roll back down for eternity. For Camus, Sisyphus is not merely a tragic figure but an embodiment of human condition – struggling endlessly against a meaningful task, fully conscious of its futility (Camus, 1955). However, Camus draws a startling conclusion from the scenario: "*one must imagine Sisyphus happy*" (p. 123). This happiness stems not from delusion or denial but from a radical acceptance of the absurd. Sisyphus finds meaning not in the task itself but in his defiance – his rebellion against despair.

In Camus' existential schema, the absurd is not a problem to be solved, but a reality to be faced. Attempts to escape – through religious faith, metaphysical idealism, or suicide – are

forms of philosophical surrender. Religion offers a comforting narrative of justice and divine purpose; metaphysics seeks reason and unity in the chaos. But both, for Camus, are evasions. They mask the raw truth of existence: That life has no inherent meaning and that the universe remains indifferent to human values (Camus, 1955, 1991; Sherman, 2009).

Reason itself, once celebrated as humanity's highest faculty, becomes problematic under the absurd. It fuels the endless chain of questions – “Why?” – that cannot be answered in a world without ultimate explanations. In this sense, rationality contributes to existential despair, as it drives the individual to seek clarity in a cosmos that offers only silence. Camus writes: “*the absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world*” (Camus, 1955, p. 28).

Thus, the absurd is not death. It is consciousness. So long as a person remains aware of the absurdity of their condition, they are living authentically within it. Death, while inevitable, does not resolve the absurd – it nullifies it. Suicide, then, is not a legitimate solution but a refusal to engage in life. It ends the tension rather than confronting it (Camus, 1955; Joiner, 2005).

Camus advocates a life lived in full awareness of absurdity – a life that rejects escape instead embraces experience for its own sake. It is in this recognition that one finds liberation. The absurd man, like Sisyphus, knows his labor is futile but continues nonetheless, and in doing so, asserts his freedom. He no longer seeks meaning in the external world but creates his own in the act of living (Camus, 1955; Kaufmann, 1957).

In sum, Camus' philosophy of the absurd urges individuals to live without appeal – to reject illusions of purpose and instead accept the chaotic, cyclical, and often cruel nature of existence. In that acceptance, there is a strange and rebellious joy – a joy that forms the foundation for confronting not only philosophical questions but also the emotional realities of depression, anxiety, and suicidal despair in our contemporary world (Camus, 1955; Fuchs, 2017; Keles et al., 2019).

3.2. *Modernity and the Metaphysics of Futility*

The modern world, with all its technological advances and interconnectedness, has ironically deepened the existential crisis Camus described. In place of divine meaning or metaphysical comfort, modernity offers hyper productivity, algorithmic validation, and an illusion of purpose through metrics – likes, followers, retweets (Fuchs, 2017; Twenge, 2017). Yet beneath the surface of progress lies a gnawing sense of futility, a metaphysical fatigue that mirrors the very absurdity Camus warned against (Camus, 1991).

One of the defining features of modern life is its obsession with meaning – specifically, externally verifiable meaning. People strive to be seen, to be liked, to be acknowledged, often mistaking visibility for purpose (Keles et al., 2019). This cultural structure, shaped by neoliberal values of achievement and efficiency, has reshaped our understanding of fulfillment. Under such a regime, failure is internalized as personal inadequacy, while success becomes an ever-receding horizon. The more one chases it, the more empty it feels. This mirrors Camus' observation: that even in success, we are left with repetition – another rock, another climb (Camus, 1955, p. 119).

This metaphysical futility is compounded by the inherent cultural expectation that justice and order are natural outcomes of a well-lived life. The idea that good is rewarded and evil punished, though philosophically untenable, continues to haunt the moral imagination. When this belief collapses in the face of corruption, social injustice, or random tragedy, individuals often experience a crisis of coherence. Camus notes that this is absurd at work – the failure to reconcile human hopes with an indifferent world (Camus, 1955; Sherman, 2009). A society that teaches people to expect fairness but delivers chaos becomes a breeding ground for existential disillusionment.

In response to this condition, modern individuals often seek refuge in reason. Rationality promises understanding, order, and control. But Camus critiques this dependence on reason as itself a part of the absurd condition. The human tendency to endlessly ask “*why*” leads to chains of reasoning that inevitably terminate in ambiguity or contradiction. Every answer invites another question. This cognitive loop can lead not to clarity, but despair – a paralysis of meaning, where nothing is ever enough and everything is deferred (Camus, 1955, pp. 24-28).

Moreover, the absurdity of repetition becomes particularly vivid in daily routines and life patterns under capitalism. Work cycles, academic schedules, and even social rituals mimic the Sisyphean loop – tasks repeated without definitive closure. Yet unlike Sisyphus, many individuals are unaware of the absurd nature of their lives. They continue with quiet

resentment, hoping for a reward that never arrives. Reflection, when it occurs, often poisons the experience, as Camus suggests. “*The reflection*,” he writes, “*poisons the experience*” (Camus, 1955, p. 56). The moment one begins to think deeply about the purpose of one’s actions, the weight of futility sets in.

This is where the absurd becomes not just a philosophical idea but a lived reality. The rituals of productivity, the race towards self-improvement, the compulsive self-documentation – all mask the yawning abyss beneath. We scroll endlessly, trapped in loops of consumption and performance, numbed by stimulation and haunted by emptiness. The universe offers no feedback, yet the algorithm never stops. Meaning has been outsourced to systems that do not care (Han, 2015; Woods & Scott, 2016).

In contrast, animals, Camus suggests, live without absurdity. Their lives are repetitive, instinctual, and purposeless – but not meaningless to them, because they do not demand meaning (Camus, 1955, p. 39). It is the human consciousness, with its demand for intelligibility, that renders life absurd. In this light, the crisis of modernity is not the absence of meaning but the refusal to live without one.

Thus, modernity does not eliminate the absurd – it intensifies it. It cloaks it in productivity, digital culture, and consumerism, but it cannot erase the underlying tension. Camus’ insight remains piercing: the universe does not answer back, and to demand meaning from it is to invite disappointment. Only by recognizing this futility – not escaping it – can one begin to live with clarity, freedom, and even joy (Camus, 1955, pp. 115-123).

3.3. *Depression as the Modern Absurd*

If Camus’ absurd is the confrontation between the human longing for meaning and the indifference of the universe, then depression is its most visceral and widespread modern manifestation. In an era dominated by digital saturation, psychological exhaustion, and relentless social pressures, depression reveals itself not merely as a mental illness, but as a symptom of an existential condition – a lived absurdity (Fuchs, 2017; Han, 2015).

Depression, at its core, is characterized by a deep sense of emptiness, hopelessness, and a disconnection from purpose. These are not far removed from the emotions that arise in Camus’ absurd consciousness. The absurd man realizes that no ultimate meaning exists outside his consciousness, and in that realization, the feeling of despair often takes hold (Camus, 1955). Likewise, the person suffering from depression is not just in pain but suspended in a state where life feels devoid of weight, worth, or consequence. It is not that life becomes worse – it becomes *nothing*. Camus’ insight into the absurd provides a philosophical framework through which this emptiness can be understood, not just as a clinical pathology, but as a metaphysical crisis (Sherman, 2009).

Modern depression is often intensified by the mechanisms of the digital age, especially social media, where curated identities and performative happiness distort the perception of others’ lives. The result is a toxic comparison culture – one that fuels self-doubt, inadequacy, and the illusion that everyone else is thriving (Twenge, 2017; Keles et al., 2019). This perpetuates the absurd feeling of failure in the face of invisible, unrealistic standards. In constantly scrolling through filtered joy and curated success, one is not only alienated from others but also from oneself. Every moment of comparison reinforces the existential gap between the world as it appears and the world as it is – a direct echo of Camus’ absurd (Camus 1955).

The emotional flatness of depression also mirrors the breakdown of rational meaning-making that Camus describes. In depression, the question “*Why?*” becomes haunting, unanswerable. There may be no specific trauma or cause; rather, the world simply loses its luster, its coherence. The once-familiar routine becomes weighty burdens, and the future becomes a projection of futility. Camus notes that the absurd arises from this very recognition: that reason fails to supply us with satisfying answers (Camus, 1955, pp. 24-28). In this sense, depression is a psychological state of absurd awareness – a space where meaning evaporates and effort appears pointless (Joiner, 2005).

What follows, for many, is the pull towards suicide – not out of philosophical reflection, as Camus frames it, but as an emotional response to prolonged suffering. While Camus sees suicide as the central philosophical problem, he emphatically rejects it as a solution. “*There is but one truly serious Philosophical problem*,” he writes, “*and that is suicide*” (Camus, 1955). Yet to take one’s life is to surrender to the absurd rather than confront it. Suicide, for Camus, is an escape – a refusal to live without appeal. In the context of depression, this impulse arises from the belief that pain is permanent and unchangeable, that tomorrow will bring nothing new (Camus, 1955; Joiner, 2005).

However, Camus insists that even in the face of despair, one must choose to live. To rebel against the absurd is to embrace life, not because it is meaningful, but because it is ours. Camus does not downplay the intensity of human suffering. Instead, he confronts it with a radical honesty. He asserts that meaning is not found – it is created. And this creation occurs in the very act of living, of continuing, of persisting despite the weight of absurdity (Camus, 1955, pp. 119-123).

Viewed through this lens, depression is not weakness, but an existential condition intensified by consciousness and modern pressures. The response to it cannot be reduced to platitudes or shallow optimism. Rather, it requires a deeper philosophical reckoning – a recognition that life has no predetermined purpose, and yet we can still choose to live meaningfully. Just as Sisyphus finds his moment of liberation not in victory but in awareness, so too can the depressed individual find strength in acknowledging the absurd – and in choosing to live anyway.

In this way, Camus' thought offers a quiet but powerful form of hope. It does not lie in salvation or perfect understanding, but in defiant existence. Depression, then, is not the end – but a site of confrontation, and possibly, transformation. It is the moment when the absurd becomes conscious – and thus, the moment when rebellion can begin.

3.4. *Camus and the Challenges of Suicide*

Albert Camus begins *The Myth of Sisyphus* with the announcement of declaration: “*There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide*” (Camus, 1955, p. 3). For Camus, the question of whether life is worth living arises directly from the confrontation with the absurd – the tension between the human desire for meaning and the universe's indifference. Suicide, then, becomes the ultimate response to this tension. But while Camus takes this question seriously, he offers a decisive and powerful answer: suicide is not a legitimate solution to the absurd – it is a philosophical surrender (Camus 1955, pp. 6-8).

To Camus, suicide represents a form of escape – a way to solve the persistent discomfort of absurdity. It presupposes that if life lacks objective meaning, then it is not worth enduring. But Camus challenges this logic. The absence of meaning is not a reason to abandon life, but a reason to engage with it more honestly and courageously. He argues that suicide “*confesses that life is too much,*” whereas the absurd individual “*refuses to give in*” (Camus, 1955, p. 54). Suicide is not always the result of rational contemplation but is often triggered by emotional despair, impulsivity, and social isolation – factors frequently exacerbated by untreated depression (Joiner, 2005; World Health Organization, 2025). While Camus frames suicide as a philosophical issue, the contemporary world frames it increasingly as a psychological crisis – yet both perspectives meet at a shared point: the experience of unbearable suffering in a world perceived as indifferent.

The digital age amplifies this despair. Social media platforms, while offering connection, also foster environments of alienation, comparison, and performance. The curated joy of others can deepen the individual's sense of failure or invisibility (Keles et al., 2019; Twenge, 2017). In such a context, suicide can appear as the only way to resolve the emotional and existential void. Yet, Camus offers a different path – one not of despair, but of rebellion. He calls on individuals to reject suicide not because life has inherent meaning, but because choosing to live, fully conscious of life's absurdity, is the greatest act of defiance (Camus 1955, p. 55).

This rebellion is not loud or heroic – it is quiet, continuous, and internal. It is the decision to keep pushing the rock, knowing it will fall again. Camus writes: “*The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy*” (Camus, 1955, p. 123). To live, in the face of absurdity, it is to assert one's freedom. It is to refuse the finality of suicide and instead affirm the value of experience, however fleeting or futile it may seem.

This perspective reframes how we understand suicidal tendencies. While Camus never romanticizes suffering, he insists that there is nobility in endurance, and even joy is lucidity. The absurd man does not look to the universe for meaning – he creates it through his revolt. Similarly, those who face depression and suicidal ideation are not weak or broken, but caught in the same existential confrontation (Sherman, 2009). Camus offers them a path – not of salvation, but of resistance. By choosing to live, one does not solve the absurd – but one transcends its power.

In the context of modern mental health crises, this philosophical stance has real ethical weight. It suggests that interventions for suicide prevention must go beyond medical or clinical models and incorporate many individuals face-offering not hollow reassurances, but the encouragement to live in spite of meaninglessness (Ratcliffe, 2015).

For Camus, to live is to revolt, and to revolt is to find meaning in the very act of living. Suicide ends the absurd – but so does meaning. And the one thing that keeps the absurd alive – the one thing that allows it to be endured – is consciousness, courage, and defiance. In this defiance, Camus finds the seed of freedom and the promise of personal liberation (Camus, 1955, pp. 119-123).

3.5. *Social Media, Mental Health, and Objectification*

In the digital age, the absurd has found new terrain – not in the silence of the stars, but in the algorithmic noise of scrolling feeds, curated profiles, and endless notifications. Social media has not only reshaped how individuals communicate but also how they perceive themselves and others. In doing so, it has deepened the existential crises that Albert Camus described, contributing to a modern landscape where mental health struggles are amplified by mechanisms of performance, comparison, and objectification (Twenge, 2017; Keles et al., 2019).

At its core, social media objectifies experience. It reduces life to content, moments to metrics, and identity to images. In the quest for visibility, individuals are pressured to construct idealized versions of themselves – filtered, polished, and algorithmically optimized (Marwick, 2013). Yet behind the carefully managed façade, users often experience a profound disconnection from their own realities. As Camus would recognize, this is a new face of the absurd: a gap between how life is lived and how it must be presented, a confrontation between the inner self and the digital mirror that reflects only the desirable (Camus, 1955).

This performative culture distorts the individual's relationship with suffering. Mental health struggles, which demand vulnerability, are often hidden beneath posts of curated joy. When acknowledged, they are commodified – turned into hashtags, aestheticized into narratives of “*healing*,” or transformed into “*inspirational*” content (Dobson, 2015). The problem here is not awareness itself but the flattening of existential despair into consumable trends. The lived complexity of depression or anxiety becomes a story to be liked and shared, rather than understood and confronted. In this process, suffering is not only stigmatized by stripped of its authenticity.

Furthermore, social comparison—accelerated by endless scrolling – fuels feelings of inadequacy, envy, and despair, which are central to the onset of depression (Verduyn et al., 2015). When individuals constantly measure their worth against the seemingly perfect lives of others, they reinforce the absurd sense that “*everyone else is fine, and I am not.*” This illusion sharpens the emotional distance between the individual and the world, creating a crisis of belonging. For Camus (1955, 1991), this is precisely where absurdity emerges: in the recognition that the world does not meet our expectations, no matter how rational or moral they may seem.

In such an environment, people are not only alienated from others but also from themselves. The pressure to perform, succeed, and remain relevant can fracture the self into two: the digital persona and the existential subject. The former is consumed with visibility; the latter with survival. The more these two selves diverge, the more one feels unreal (Turkle, 2011). This internal fragmentation intensifies the absurd, leading not to liberation but to paralysis. It becomes difficult to present in one's own life when that life is constantly being broadcast and judged.

Moreover, mental health stigma continues to thrive in cultures that equate emotional vulnerability with weakness or failure. Individuals suffering from depression, anxiety, or suicidal ideation often fear judgement – not just from others but from their own internalized expectations (Corrigan & Rao, 2012). Cultural narratives that promote toughness, productivity, and unceasing positivity invalidate the reality of human suffering. In this context, mental illness is not merely a private experience, but a public performance to be managed or concealed, further reinforcing the absurd disconnect between inner truth and outer image.

Camus' call to reject abstraction and return to lived experience is especially relevant here. The absurd man lives authentically not by constructing meaning in artificial systems, but by embracing life as it is – raw, unresolved, and fleeting. In the age of social media, this means resisting the reduction of self to spectacle and reclaiming one's own presence (Camus, 1991). It means choosing sincerity over stimulation, silence over noise, and real human connection over digital affirmation.

To confront the absurd today is to confront a culture that thrives on denial – denial of pain, failure, and death. But as Camus shows, it is precisely in facing these realities without illusion that life becomes meaningful – not in spite of the absurd, but because of it. The task, then, is not to escape the absurd through curated perfection or digital detachment, but to

recognize it, embrace it, and live freely within it.

3.6. *Towards an Affirmative Ethics of Absurdity*

In the face of absurdity, Camus does not offer religion, metaphysics, or utopian optimism. He offers instead something more demanding and, paradoxically, more liberating: revolt. Not rebellion in the political sense, but a constant, conscious defiance – a refusal to surrender to despair (Camus, 1955, 1991). This revolt becomes the foundation of what we might call an affirmative ethic in the absurd age: a commitment to live with clarity, passion, and integrity in a world that offers no ultimate guarantees.

At the heart of this ethic is the idea that life, precisely because it is meaningless, must be lived more intensely. If there is no preordained purpose, then individuals are free- and indeed responsible – to create their own values. This freedom is not abstract; it is existential. It demands presence, attention, and engagement with reality as it is (Camus, 1955; Sartre, 1956). The absurd person in Camus' vision finds fulfillment not by escaping life but by embracing it with open eyes, aware of its contradictions and limitations.

In Contemporary terms, this ethic translates to a radical kind of mental and emotional honesty. It rejects the delusions offered by social media, consumerism, and ideological certainty (Turkle, 2011; Han, 2017). It calls individuals to stop performing and start experiencing – to take back ownership of their time, their emotions, and their relationships. To stop asking life for meaning, and instead, to give it meaning through presence, compassion, and creativity (Frankl, 1992).

Living authentically in the absurd age means valuing experience over explanation, action over abstraction, and sincerity over spectacle. It means recognizing that joy is possible, not in spite of suffering, but alongside it. As Camus (1955) suggests through *The Myth of Sisyphus*, the absurd man finds moments of happiness not in reaching the summit, but in pushing the rock, fully conscious of the struggle. Likewise, meaning is not a goal to be achieved but an attitude to be lived – here and now, in each small act of courage and beauty.

This affirmative ethic also offers a powerful alternative to the despair that fuels depression and suicide. It invites individuals to see their suffering not as a failure or a flaw but as part of the human condition- shared, unavoidable, and worthy of compassion (Yalom, 1980; Krznaric, 2014). In recognizing the absurd, one is not defeated by it but awakened to the preciousness of life's fleeting moments. Camus writes: "*The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart*" (Camus 1955, p. 123). It is this struggle - not success, not salvation – that gives life its depth.

On a broader scale, this ethic challenges how society addresses mental health. It demands that we move beyond stigma and superficial awareness campaigns and begin to treat emotional suffering with philosophical seriousness (Foucault, 2001; Krznaric, 2014). Depression, anxiety, and existential dread are not just clinical issues; they are human responses to a complex, often incoherent world. Addressing them requires more than medication or productivity hacks – it requires a cultural shift toward empathy, humility and existential responsibility.

In education, this ethic might encourage curricula that engage students not just in technical skills but in philosophical reflection and emotional resilience (Nussbaum, 2010). In the media, it might call for narratives that honor complexity over caricature. In community life, it might inspire spaces for honest conversation, vulnerability, and mutual support.

Ultimately, Camus' philosophy is not one of resignation, but of affirmation without illusion. It calls individuals to live without appeal – to stop asking for meaning from a silent universe and instead, to be the source of meaning in their own lives (Camus, 1955). This is not easy. It requires courage. But it is also the path to freedom.

In the absurd age of scrolling, algorithms, and emotional fragmentation, this ethic offers a different kind of resistance – not by escaping the absurd but by saying yes to life, again and again, in spite of it.

4. Conclusions

In the context of social media, an ever-growing mental health crisis, and a culture consumed with meaning and performance, Albert Camus' philosophy of the absurd resonates more now than ever. The human condition is constant – we are meaning-seeking beings existing in a world devoid of any ultimate answer. The collective phenomena of depression, anxiety, and youth suicide rise not as individual afflictions, but as a deeper existential struggle or yearning for order and the world's apathy.

In his works, Camus does not embrace consolation in the usual manner. He does not offer the comfort of claiming that the universe has a blueprint, proposes better days ahead, or suggests meaning will unfold if we look deeply enough. Rather, he speaks to us and states bluntly that the world is without meaning, life is absurd, and existence devoid of any ultimate signification, is something we create. While stark, his philosophy is not nihilistic. In fact, it is an invitation to live – a rallying cry against despair, a passionate embrace of existence, not for its meaning but because it is ours.

In this regard, suicide is less a solution and more denial of life's possibilities; a potential ever availed but utterly squandered. Depression is without a doubt torturous, but it need not be the end. It may be reframed as a manifestation of the absurd: a crisis moment that calls for rebellion rather than retreat. Through awareness, honesty, and a steadfast refusal to look away, we can strive to dwell authentically, even amid suffering – within a world rife with suffering. The absurd instructs us to stop expecting the world to conform to logic, instead urging us to act purposefully, joyously, without deception, crafting meaning from living itself.

The figure of Sisyphus, condemned to interminably push a rock, transforms into a mirror reflecting our fragmented selves – he is no longer only a metaphor of struggle. We all embody Sisyphus, and like him, we must discover that true freedom lies not in fleeing life's burden, but embracing it fully. Camus offers the radical understanding that we are free once we accept the absurd: free to live, to love, to create, to endure. Not because life merits justification, but simply, because it is.

Navigating meticulously composed worlds, grappling with the inner turmoil, or pondering existence's meaning, we can hear Camus' words: "*The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy*". Through this battle – this decision to continue living – there lies a calm, rebellious acknowledgement that life – particularly in its contradictory absurdity – is undeniably valued and cherished.

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