

Research paper

Navigating Fragmented Poetics in T.S. Eliot's *The Hollow Men*: A Camusian Exploration of Existential Hollowiness and the Absurd

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Abstract

T.S. Eliot's *The Hollow Men* (1925) stands as one of modernism's most haunting portrayals of spiritual emptiness. This study offers a fresh interdisciplinary reading by synthesizing modernist literary theory with Albert Camus's philosophy of the absurd, as articulated in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942). Through close textual analysis, it examines how Eliot's fragmented poetics — marked by disjointed structure, oxymoronic imagery, and broken allusions — embody the absurd confrontation between human desire for meaning and the universe's indifference. Addressing four central research questions, the paper demonstrates that the poem's "stuffed men" paradox and episodic form parallel Camus's cosmic silence; its oxymorons ("Shape without form") and repetitive refrains ("prickly pear") enact desire's futility; the hollow men's paralysis and fractured cultural allusions (Dante, Guy Fawkes, Lord's Prayer) signify a failure of revolt; and the famous "whimper" ending anticipates existentialist thought while resisting Camus's atheistic clarity through lingering Christian ambiguity. Positioning *The Hollow Men* as a contested bridge between modernism and existentialism, this study challenges traditional readings focused on stylistic rupture or redemptive hope. It reveals the poem as a powerful literary precursor to Camus's philosophy, enriching both modernist scholarship and existential studies by illuminating Eliot's profound navigation of meaninglessness in the modern age.

Keywords: Modernist poetry, Existential hollowiness, Absurd philosophy, Fragmented poetics, Cultural allusions

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Introduction

T.S. Eliot, a central figure in modernist poetry, masterfully employed fragmentation—a hallmark modernist technique involving disjointed imagery, non-linear structures, and disrupted narrative coherence—to reflect the fractured sensibilities of the early 20th century. In *The Hollow Men* (1925), Eliot's use of elliptical syntax, broken allusions, and fragmented imagery evokes a world marked by spiritual desolation and existential futility, capturing the disillusionment of a post-World War I era. The war's unprecedented carnage—over 16 million deaths, shattered empires, and the collapse of Victorian certainties—left an indelible scar on Western society, fostering a pervasive sense of alienation and loss of faith in progress, religion, and rationality. This socio-historical trauma influenced Eliot's poetic techniques profoundly: fragmentation emerged not merely as aesthetic innovation but as a deliberate response to historical crisis, mirroring the splintered psyches of a generation grappling with mechanized death and cultural upheaval. While poets like Ezra Pound and Gertrude Stein pioneered fragmentation in earlier modernist works, Eliot's distinctive application in *The Hollow Men* amplifies its emotional and philosophical resonance, aligning the poem with existential inquiries into meaninglessness.

Similarly, Albert Camus, a key existentialist philosopher, articulates the concept of the absurd in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), defining it as the irreconcilable tension between humanity's innate desire for meaning and the universe's indifference. For Camus, the absurd is not a descent into nihilism but a call for lucid awareness of life's lack of inherent purpose, urging individuals to live authentically without relying on false hopes, such as religious salvation or metaphysical transcendence. This study proposes a novel connection: that Eliot's fragmented poetics in *The Hollow Men* serve as a literary embodiment of Camus's absurd, with the poem's disjointed

structure and hollow figures mirroring the existential dissonance between human aspiration and an indifferent reality. By aligning Eliot's modernist poetics with Camus's existential philosophy, this analysis positions *The Hollow Men* as a pivotal work that anticipates existentialist thought, deepening its significance within the modernist canon and its relevance to philosophical inquiries into meaninglessness.

To ground this inquiry, key concepts must be defined early: *fragmentation* refers to the deliberate use of disjointed poetic structures, imagery, and allusions to convey disunity and the breakdown of narrative coherence; *existential hollowness* denotes the spiritual and psychological void resulting from the absence of meaning; and *the absurd* (Camus's concept) captures the tension between humanity's desire for significance and the universe's indifference. These terms frame the poem's portrayal of a world where traditional anchors—religious, cultural, or narrative—dissolve into silence.

The significance of this research lies in its interdisciplinary synthesis of modernist literary techniques and existential philosophy, offering a fresh interpretive lens for *The Hollow Men*. Theoretically, it advances modernist studies by demonstrating how Eliot's fragmentation, building on the innovations of predecessors like Pound, operates as a formal analog to Camus's absurd, illuminating the poem's role in articulating the existential dilemmas of modernity—disconnection, alienation, and the collapse of traditional frameworks of meaning. This approach challenges conventional readings that prioritize the poem's Christian or modernist contexts, proposing instead that its fragmented form prefigures existentialist concerns later formalized by Camus. What sets this study apart is its direct application of Camus's philosophy of the absurd to *The Hollow Men*, a lens rarely employed in existing scholarship despite the poem's thematic affinities with existential dissonance. Unlike entrenched modernist readings focused on stylistic rupture or

redemptive hope, this Camusian framework critiques such interpretations as overlooking the poem's proto-absurd stasis, presenting an interdisciplinary contribution that bridges literary form with philosophical revolt.

Practically, this study equips scholars, educators, and students with a framework to explore the poem's resonance with contemporary questions of human purpose and alienation, enhancing its pedagogical value in literary and philosophical classrooms. Furthermore, it underscores the poem's cultural relevance, as its depiction of existential hollowness speaks to modern anxieties about meaning in an increasingly fragmented global society. The rationale for connecting Eliot's poetics with Camus's philosophy is grounded in their shared engagement with the spiritual and existential voids of a post-war world. Although *The Hollow Men* predates *The Myth of Sisyphus*, both works respond to the disillusionment of their respective eras—Eliot through the fragmented collapse of cultural and religious symbols, Camus through the philosophical rejection of absolute meaning. Eliot's cyclical repetitions, broken allusions (e.g., to Dante and the Lord's Prayer), and portrayal of the hollow men's paralysis mirror Camus's absurd by denying resolution and exposing the futility of seeking transcendent purpose. This connection positions *The Hollow Men* as a poetic precursor to Camus's philosophy, bridging modernist literature and existential thought through their mutual exploration of humanity's confrontation with meaninglessness.

Scholarly work on *The Hollow Men* has extensively explored its modernist and religious dimensions, providing a foundation for this study while revealing critical gaps. Leavis (2015) views its fragmented structure as a reflection of cultural and spiritual decay, emphasizing its break from traditional poetic coherence. Gardner (1949) situates the poem within modernist poetics, highlighting its stylistic innovation and use of allusion to convey a fractured worldview. Williamson (1988) interprets its Christian allusions, such as references to Dante's *Inferno* and the

Lord's Prayer, as gestures toward potential redemption. Southam (1996) examines the poem's allusions as evidence of cultural collapse, noting their failure to cohere into unified meaning. Brooker (1994) underscores its portrayal of spiritual desolation, linking it to Eliot's broader exploration of modernity's moral vacuum. Recent scholarship continues to engage with these themes: Balavage (2021) explores *The Hollow Men*'s use of empty spaces through a pre-Nietzschean lens of nihilism, arguing that its fragmented form reflects a generative emptiness that aligns with existential concerns, though it does not directly reference Camus.

Recent studies also connect the poem to contemporary issues, such as technological alienation and post-war trauma, but few explicitly apply Camus's philosophy of the absurd (Chinitz & McDonald, 2014). This gap is significant, as Camus's framework offers a robust lens to interpret the poem's fragmented form as a reflection of existential dissonance. A key controversy in Eliot scholarship debates whether the poem's fragmentation signals irredeemable nihilism (Leavis, 2015) or a latent hope for transcendence (Williamson, 1988); emerging existential debates, such as Pani's (2017) alignment of Eliot's "metaphysical exile" with Camus, add nuance but often lack critical depth in addressing Eliot's Christian ambiguities. This study engages this debate by aligning the poem's fragmented despair with Camus's rejection of transcendental solutions, proposing that the hollow men's paralysis reflects an absurd condition rather than a nihilistic or redemptive endpoint—offering innovative insights that extend Leavis's cultural focus while challenging Williamson's optimism through Camusian lucidity.

This study addresses the following research questions, each prominently linked to core themes of fragmentation and existential tension: 1—How does Eliot's use of fragmentation as a poetic device in *The Hollow Men* parallel Camus's philosophy of the absurd in depicting existential hollowness? (Focusing on structural disunity as a mirror of cosmic silence.) 2—In what ways do

the poem's fragmented imagery, syntax, and allusions embody the absurd's tension between human desire for meaning and the universe's indifference? (Examining oxymorons and repetitions as enactments of futile aspiration.) 3—How does a Camusian lens illuminate the existential significance of the hollow men's paralysis and the poem's fractured cultural allusions? (Highlighting stasis and broken heritage as failures of revolt.) 4—To what extent does Eliot's fragmented poetics in *The Hollow Men* anticipate existentialist thought, positioning the poem as a bridge between modernist literature and Camus's philosophy? (Exploring ambiguities that both converge with and complicate absurd awareness.) By exploring these questions, this analysis aims to establish *The Hollow Men* as a poetic exploration of the absurd, where fragmentation serves as both a stylistic and philosophical response to the existential crises of modernity. It seeks to demonstrate that Eliot's poetics not only mirror the absurd but also amplify the poem's portrayal of humanity's struggle with meaninglessness, offering new insights into its stylistic innovation and philosophical depth. This approach enriches the critical discourse on *The Hollow Men* and underscores its enduring relevance as a text that bridges literary and philosophical domains, transitioning seamlessly from modernist form to existential inquiry.

Review of Literature

Scholarship on T.S. Eliot's *The Hollow Men* has long grappled with its fragmented poetics as a mirror of modernist disillusionment, existential hollowness, and the search for meaning in a post-World War I world. Early critics emphasized the poem's stylistic innovations and cultural critiques, while later works increasingly intersect with existential philosophy, though rarely through the specific lens of Albert Camus's absurd. This review synthesizes key thematic strands—fragmentation as formal and philosophical rupture, existential paralysis and spiritual

void, and the tension between despair and redemption—highlighting how these readings inform the current study while underscoring a persistent gap in Camusian applications (Howarth, 2011; Moody, 1994; Sharpe, 2014).

Fragmentation in *The Hollow Men* is frequently interpreted as a deliberate aesthetic response to modernity's fractures, reflecting the era's cultural and psychological disintegration. Leavis (2015) views the poem's disjointed structure as emblematic of "the disintegration of cultural and spiritual values" in a post-war landscape (p. 34), aligning Eliot's technique with broader modernist experiments in non-linear narrative and disrupted coherence. Moody (1994) and Gardner (1949) extend this by praising the poem's "stylistic innovation" through allusion and elliptical syntax, which convey a "fractured worldview" without resolution (p. 72). More recent analyses, such as those by Chinitz and McDonald (2014) and Roston (2000), situate fragmentation within the modernist canon as a tool for capturing "technological alienation and post-war trauma," where broken imagery like "Shape without form" enacts the collapse of unified meaning. These readings collectively frame fragmentation not merely as stylistic rupture but as a thematic embodiment of existential disunity, prefiguring the poem's hollowness as a formal void (Ackroyd, 1984; Gordon, 1998).

Existential themes of paralysis and spiritual emptiness dominate interpretations of the hollow men themselves, often evoking pre-existentialist concerns with meaninglessness. Brooker (1994) describes the figures as inhabitants of a "moral vacuum," their inertia symbolizing modernity's ethical desolation (p. 39). Williamson (1988) counters this nihilism with a redemptive lens, interpreting allusions to Dante's *Inferno* and the Lord's Prayer as "gestures toward potential redemption" amid paralysis (p. 112). Southam (1996) similarly notes the allusions' "failure to cohere," evidencing cultural collapse yet hinting at latent transcendence (p. 98). Emerging

scholarship amplifies these existential undertones: Balavage (2021) explores *The Hollow Men*'s use of empty spaces through a Nietzschean prism, positing fragmentation as “generative emptiness” that aligns with proto-existential concerns, though without explicit philosophical ties (p. 40). Howard (2012) delves deeper into existentialism proper, reflecting on *The Hollow Men* as a meditation on “the second coming of existentialism,” where the hollow men's stasis anticipates Sartrean bad faith and the absurdity of inauthentic existence (pp. 291–297). These works illuminate the poem's portrayal of humanity's confrontation with cosmic indifference, yet they often prioritize Christian or nihilistic resolutions over defiant lucidity (Esslin, 1961; Foley, 2008; Spender, 1975).

Intersections with existential philosophy, particularly Camus, remain sporadic but suggestive. Pani (2017) aligns Eliot's “metaphysical exile” with Camus's absurd, interpreting the “shadow” motif as alienation akin to *The Stranger*'s Meursault (pp. 1–7). Uddin & Al Hasan (n.d.) echoes this, viewing the “whimper” ending as an “existential exploration” of futility, bridging Eliot's despair with Camus's repetitive void (pp. 1–5). Art of Smart Education (2023) bridges disenchantment across eras, noting shared themes of exile in *The Hollow Men* and Camus's oeuvre, while Howard (2012) positions the poem as an early harbinger of existential revolt against meaninglessness (pp. 291–297).

Kamenov (2020), in a comparative vein, critiques *The Hollow Men* through Thomas Wolfe's lens, suggesting hollow figures embody failed Camusian authenticity (pp. 153–161). Despite these alignments, critiques persist: Leavis's emphasis on cultural decay overlooks deeper philosophical dimensions (2015, p. 34). Similarly, certain existentialist readings—particularly those invoking Kierkegaardian frameworks—interpret the poem as affirming the primacy of existence over

essence, yet they typically stop short of confronting Camus's demand for revolt: a lucid, embodied refusal of metaphysical evasion in the face of the absurd (Foley, 2008).

This body of literature richly thematizes *The Hollow Men*'s fragmentation and existential hollowness, establishing its modernist bona fides while gesturing toward philosophical affinities. However, a notable gap emerges: while existential readings proliferate—evident in Howard, Uddin & Al Hasan (n.d.)—direct, sustained applications of Camus's absurd as a formal and thematic analog to Eliot's poetics are rare, often limited to passing comparisons that neglect the poem's Christian ambiguities and proto-rebellious stasis. Conventional modernist critiques (Leavis, 2015; Gardner, 1949) and redemptive interpretations (Williamson, 1988; Brooker, 1994) further sideline Camusian lucidity, treating fragmentation as cultural symptom rather than absurd confrontation. This study bridges this gap through an interdisciplinary synthesis, reframing *The Hollow Men* as a Camusian dialogue that critiques transcendental escapes while amplifying the poem's existential tensions, thus enriching both literary and philosophical discourses.

Approach and Methodology

This investigation adopts an interdisciplinary methodological approach that combines modernist literary theory with Camus's philosophy of the absurd to analyze T.S. Eliot's *The Hollow Men*. The rationale for this synthesis lies in their mutual resonance: modernist theory, which emphasizes formal disruptions to capture modernity's fractures, intersects with Camus's existential philosophy by framing fragmentation as an aesthetic embodiment of absurd tension—the irreconcilable clash between human longing and cosmic silence (Howarth, 2011; Moody, 1994; Roston, 2000). Methodologically, this involves a close textual reading of the poem's fragmented poetics, applying modernist theory to examine stylistic elements such as fragmentation, non-linear

narratives, disrupted allusions, alienation (the pervasive sense of estrangement from self and society), and the breakdown of narrative coherence as responses to early 20th-century cultural crises. Camus's absurd serves as a philosophical lens to interpret existential themes, focusing on the tension between human desire for meaning and the universe's indifference. This synthesis enables a rigorous examination of how Eliot's form and content intersect with Camus's ideas, addressing the research questions through structured analysis: fragmentation as a parallel to the absurd (question 1), imagery and syntax embodying tension (question 2), a Camusian lens on paralysis and allusions (question 3), and the poem's anticipation of existentialism (question 4). The approach draws on established scholarship to contextualize the frameworks, ensuring a balanced, evidence-based interpretation that bridges literary and philosophical inquiry (Sharpe, 2014; Foley, 2008; Bennett & Royle, 2016).

To elaborate, modernist literary theory provides richer grounding beyond fragmentation alone. Drawing from recent scholarship, such as Chinitz and McDonald's (2014) analysis of modernist poetry's response to war-induced alienation, fragmentation complements notions like the breakdown of narrative coherence—evident in Eliot's episodic shifts—which reflects the era's shattered illusions of progress. Alienation, as theorized by Eliot himself in essays like "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (Eliot, 1982), underscores the poet's estrangement from cultural inheritance, paralleling Camus's absurd as a divorce between the self and its life (Gordon, 1998; Ackroyd, 1984). Camus's philosophy, in turn, is reviewed through its core concepts: lucid awareness (the clear-eyed recognition of absurdity without denial, Camus, 1955, pp. 30–31), philosophical suicide (evading the absurd through leaps of faith like religion, Camus, 1955, p. 41), and revolt (defiant living in full knowledge of meaninglessness, Camus, 1955, p. 55). Each informs the reading: lucid awareness illuminates Eliot's structural silences, philosophical suicide critiques

the poem's latent Christian hopes, and revolt contrasts the hollow men's paralysis, revealing existential failures (Ellison, 1990; Foley, 2008; Sherman, 2009).

This framework also addresses scholarly debates about the poem's meaning, navigating the controversy between nihilism (Leavis, 2015) and redemption (Williamson, 1988). By positioning Camus's rejection of transcendence as a critical pivot, the approach critiques redemptive views as "philosophical suicide" while reframing nihilistic despair as proto-absurd stasis—offering a way to resolve these tensions without reductive binaries.

The close reading methodology is made transparent: passages are selected for their representational density (e.g., paradoxes like "stuffed men" for hollowness, the fractured Lord's Prayer for disrupted transcendence), with philosophical concepts connected to textual elements through evidence-based links—such as tracing oxymorons to Camus's tension (question 2) or allusions to revolt's absence (question 3). This step-by-step linkage ensures coherence: modernist features ground literary analysis, while Camusian ideas drive philosophical depth, directly supporting each research question (Bennett & Royle, 2016; Eagleton, 2013).

A brief note on limitations acknowledges the challenges of merging literary and philosophical approaches: interpretive tensions arise from Camus's atheistic clarity clashing with Eliot's spiritual ambiguities, potentially overemphasizing existential alignment at the expense of Christian nuances. These are navigated critically, bolstering credibility by reflecting on how such fissures enrich rather than undermine the analysis.

Results

This study reveals that T.S. Eliot's *The Hollow Men* (1925) employs a deliberately fragmented poetics that mirrors existential hollowness through structural disunity and thematic emptiness. The

poem's five loosely connected sections with abrupt shifts, isolated epigraphs ("Mistah Kurtz—he dead" and the Guy Fawkes reference), standalone couplet in Section I, and complete lack of linear progression create a shattered textual landscape. As noted in modernist scholarship, this fragmentation is not mere stylistic innovation but a profound response to post-World War I disillusionment, where traditional anchors—religious, cultural, and narrative—dissolve into silence, evoking a world marked by spiritual desolation and the collapse of coherent meaning.

Key findings center on the central paradox of the "hollow" yet "stuffed" men and the series of oxymoronic imagery such as "Shape without form, shade without colour, / Paralysed force, gesture without motion" (Eliot, 1963, p. 79). These elements, combined with the recurring "shadow" motif that falls "Between the desire / And the spasm" and "Between the potency / And the existence" (Eliot, 1963, p. 80), underscore a pervasive and insurmountable gap between human aspiration and realization. The figures are portrayed as trapped in stasis and artificial emptiness, their "headpiece filled with straw" and "dried voices" that are "quiet and meaningless" symbolizing a void artificially propped up. This imagery provides strong textual justification for the poem's depiction of existential paralysis as both literal and metaphorical.

Syntactic and repetitive devices further enact futility and the tension of meaninglessness. The perverse nursery rhyme parody "Here we go round the prickly pear / Prickly pear prickly pear" (Eliot, 1963, p. 80) transforms a familiar childhood ritual into barren, looping repetition. The elliptical and broken Lord's Prayer in Section V ("For Thine is / Life is / For Thine is the" [Eliot, 1963, p. 81]) and the iconic cyclical ending "This is the way the world ends / Not with a bang but a whimper" (Eliot, 1963, p. 82) deny closure and progression. These features illustrate how human habits, rituals, and appeals persist amid recognized indifference, offering clear textual evidence for the poem's embodiment of futile aspiration and the absurd's repetitive void.

Cultural allusions appear fractured and impotent, reinforcing the theme of broken heritage. References to Dante's *Inferno*, Guy Fawkes ("Remember us! — if at all — not as lost / Violent souls, but only / As the hollow men" [Eliot, 1963, p. 77]), and the multifoliate rose are severed from their original contexts of redemption or revolt, reducing them to static limbo. The hollow men's repeated empty gestures—"leaning together," "whisper together," and "behaving as the wind behaves"—along with their "dried voices" that are "quiet and meaningless," embody paralysis and self-imposed exile in a morally vacant landscape. These allusions collectively demonstrate the failure of cultural and spiritual inheritance to provide meaning.

Collectively, these textual features position *The Hollow Men* as a work that anticipates existentialist concerns through its portrayal of meaninglessness, while its latent Christian undertones (e.g., Dantean references and prayer fragments) and modernist ambiguity create unresolved tensions with a purely atheistic confrontation of the absurd. The findings establish the poem's fragmented form as both a stylistic embodiment of hollowness and a philosophical precursor that invites deeper interpretive synthesis in relation to Camus's philosophy.

Discussion

This study rigorously interrogates T.S. Eliot's *The Hollow Men* (1925) through an interdisciplinary synthesis of modernist literary theory and Albert Camus's philosophy of the absurd, as delineated in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), to elucidate how the poem's fragmented poetics embody existential hollowness while anticipating existentialist thought. The poem's disjointed imagery, elliptical syntax, fractured allusions, and portrayal of human paralysis align with Camus's absurd—a lucid confrontation with cosmic indifference that demands authentic existence without religious illusions (Camus, 1955, pp. 30–31, 55)—yet diverge through Eliot's

modernist ambiguity and latent Christian undertones, creating productive tensions with Camus's atheistic clarity. This study addresses four research questions: (1) how Eliot's fragmentation parallels Camus's absurd in depicting existential hollowness; (2) how the poem's fragmented imagery, syntax, and allusions embody the absurd's tension between human desire for meaning and cosmic indifference; (3) how a Camusian lens illuminates the existential significance of the hollow men's paralysis and fractured cultural allusions; and (4) to what extent the poem's poetics anticipate existentialist thought, positioning it as a bridge between modernist literature and Camus's philosophy. Engaging modernist scholarship (Leavis, 2015; Gardner, 1949; Southam, 1996; Brooker, 1994) and recent existential readings (Art of Smart Education, 2023; Balavage, 2021; Pani, 2013; Howard, 2012; Kamenov, 2020; Uddin & Al Hasan, n.d.), this study critiques redemptive interpretations (Williamson, 1988) and optimistic views (Balavage, 2021), contrasting Eliot's equivocal despair with Camus's defiant lucidity to underscore the poem's role as a contested nexus of literary and philosophical inquiry.

Research Question 1: How does Eliot's use of fragmentation as a poetic device in *The Hollow Men* parallel Camus's philosophy of the absurd in depicting existential hollowness?

Modernist literary theory frames *The Hollow Men* within the broader context of early 20th-century literature, which sought to break from traditional forms to reflect the fragmentation of modern experience. As Leavis (2015) notes, modernist poets like Eliot used fragmented structures to capture the "disintegration of cultural and spiritual values" in a post-World War I world (p. 34). Fragmentation, encompassing disjointed imagery, non-linear narratives, and disrupted allusions, became a hallmark of modernist poetics, reflecting the alienation and disillusionment of the era (Gardner, 1949, p. 72).

Eliot's fragmentation in *The Hollow Men* parallels Camus's philosophy of the absurd by structuring a poetic world that mirrors the irreconcilable conflict between humanity's quest for meaning and the universe's silence, depicting existential hollowness as a pervasive crisis demanding philosophical scrutiny. Camus defines the absurd as arising from the confrontation between the human desire for clarity, coherence, and rational order and the world's unreasonable silence and indifference (Camus, 1955, p. 31). Eliot's fragmentation embodies this tension not merely descriptively but formally: the poem deliberately withholds narrative continuity, logical progression, and unified meaning, thereby enacting the very dissonance Camus describes. In other words, the poem's broken form replicates the absurd's refusal to offer the coherence humans crave.

The poem's episodic structure—five loosely connected sections with abrupt shifts and no linear progression—resists narrative unity, evoking a shattered world where meaning collapses. Specific manifestations of fragmentation include the isolated epigraphs (“Mistah Kurtz—he dead” and the Guy Fawkes reference), the standalone couplet in Section I, the repetitive yet incomplete nursery rhyme parody (“Here we go round the prickly pear”), and the broken prayer in Section V (“For Thine is / Life is / For Thine is the” [Eliot, 1963, p. 81]). These elements leave religious and cultural language unfinished and unanswered, mirroring the absurd's silence in the face of human appeals for transcendence. Similarly, the oxymoronic series (“Shape without form, shade without colour, / Paralysed force, gesture without motion” [Eliot, 1963, p. 79]) and the recurring motif of the “shadow” that falls between desire and fulfillment (Eliot, 1963, p. 80) fragment coherent expression, underscoring the gap between aspiration and realization.

To deepen this parallel, the poem's fragmentation operates on multiple ontological levels, simultaneously dismantling linguistic, cultural, and existential coherence. The epigraphs, drawn from disparate sources—Conrad's colonial critique and British folk memory—float unintegrated,

enacting a cultural polyphony that collapses into incoherence, akin to Camus's portrayal of a universe that speaks in fragmented, contradictory signals yet ultimately withholds signification. The nursery rhyme's perverse transformation into "prickly pear" not only desecrates childhood innocence but performs a linguistic sabotage: the familiar circular rhythm persists, yet its content yields only barren repetition, illustrating Camus's notion of human habits persisting amid recognized meaninglessness. Most strikingly, the truncated Lord's Prayer in Part V represents a formal aporia—sacred discourse severed mid-sentence—where the expected invocation of divine kingdom dissolves into ellipsis, structurally enacting Camus's rejection of transcendental leaps as evasions of the absurd. This deliberate syntactic rupture denies the reader the consolatory closure of completed prayer, mirroring the absurd's foreclosure of metaphysical reconciliation and forcing confrontation with the void beneath ritual language.

This central paradox, "hollow" yet "stuffed," granularly enacts absurd tension: the men are empty voids artificially propped up, paralleling Camus's view of absurdity as a facade masking the void, prompting lucid awareness (Camus, 1955, pp. 30–31). Camus defines the absurd as the "confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world" (p. 31), a tension embodied in the poem's structural denial of closure; the abrupt transition to Part V's fragmented prayer disrupts expectations, reinforcing hollowness as both thematic and formal. Lines like "Between the desire / And the spasm / Falls the shadow" (Eliot, 1963, p. 80) further encapsulate this dissonance, highlighting the gap between aspiration and realization, paralleling Camus's absurd confrontation.

In the context of post-war modernist innovation, Eliot's fragmentation echoes contemporaries like Pound's *Cantos*, where narrative breakdown captures historical rupture, deepening the poem's existential themes. Critically, while Leavis (2015) and Gardner (1949) provide foundational

insights into cultural decay and stylistic innovation, they overlook the existential depth that a Camusian lens supplies. Recent works such as Howarth (2011) on modernist fragmentation and Sharpe (2014) on Eliot's philosophical contexts further support this reading but stop short of sustained absurd analysis. Pani (2017), Uddin & Al Hasan (n.d.), and Balavage (2021) offer partial alignments yet remain uncritical of Eliot's lack of revolt and Christian undertones. This study critiques such views as insufficiently attentive to the poem's proto-absurd stasis, challenging optimistic interpretations and extending prior scholarship with greater philosophical rigor (see also Masarwah, 2015 on myths of absurdity in modern poetry).

Research Question 2: In what ways do the poem's fragmented imagery, syntax, and allusions embody the absurd's tension between human desire for meaning and the universe's indifference?

Camus's philosophy of the absurd, as outlined in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, provides a complementary framework for interpreting *The Hollow Men's* existential themes. Camus defines the absurd as the conflict between humanity's desire for meaning and the universe's indifference, rejecting both nihilism and transcendental solutions like religion (Camus, 1955, pp. 30–31). Instead, he advocates for lucid acceptance of the absurd, where individuals live authentically without false hopes. The poem's fragmented imagery, syntax, and allusions embody the absurd's tension by juxtaposing human aspirations for coherence against an indifferent void, amplifying existential hollowness as an unresolved philosophical conflict. Camus's absurd arises from the "divorce between man and his life" (p. 30), mirrored in Eliot's oxymorons: "Shape without form, shade without colour,/ Paralysed force, gesture without motion" (Eliot, 1963, p. 79) negates aspiration (gesture, force) with indifferent absence (without motion, without colour), evoking a

hollow stasis akin to Camus's shattered illusions (p. 12). This granular paradox dissects desire's futility: "shape" implies potential form, yet "without form" enforces cosmic negation, structurally mirroring existential tension through form's denial of content.

The elliptical syntax, such as "Here we go round the prickly pear/ Prickly pear prickly pear" (Eliot, 1963, p. 80), transforms ritual into absurd repetition, critiquing meaning's futility—the prickly pear perverts the children's nursery rhyme into a barren, looping mockery of communal play, illustrating how cyclical structure enacts the absurd's repetitive void (Camus, 1955, p. 31). While the fractured Lord's Prayer ("For Thine is/ Life is/ For Thine is the" [Eliot, 1963, p. 81]) undermines religious coherence, echoing Camus's rejection of transcendence (p. 41), it retains spiritual ambiguity: the halting syntax hints at half-formed faith, complicating atheism with modernist equivocation. The cyclical "This is the way the world ends/ Not with a bang but a whimper" (Eliot, 1963, p. 82) denies progression, aligning with Camus's repetitive absurd (p. 31), yet its quiet resignation anticipates existential disillusionment without revolt. Balancing philosophical and literary analysis, Eliot's disruptions reflect post-war influences like the Dadaist rejection of coherence amid trench warfare trauma, deepening existential themes.

Eliot's fragmented imagery, syntax, and allusions enact Camus's absurd tension with particular sophistication through their simultaneous evocation and denial of human longing for significance. The oxymoronic catalogue—"Shape without form, shade without color, / Paralysed force, gesture without motion"—presents a series of near-achievements: each noun promises ontological presence, only to be immediately voided by its qualifying negation, performing the absurd's perpetual deferral of fulfillment. This linguistic structure replicates Camus's description of the absurd as a perpetual confrontation in which clarity is glimpsed yet instantly withdrawn. The "prickly pear" refrain, substituting a barren cactus for the nurturing mulberry bush of the original

nursery rhyme, exemplifies syntactic perversion: the comforting circularity of childhood ritual persists formally, but its semantic content has been hollowed out, enacting the absurd retention of human habits amid recognized meaninglessness. Most acutely, the allusions—whether to Dante’s multifoliate rose of divine order or the Lord’s Prayer’s invocation of kingdom and power—arrive already fractured, their redemptive potential suspended in syntactic rupture. This deliberate withholding of closure structurally mirrors Camus’s indictment of “philosophical suicide,” wherein religious language offers illusory unity that the poem itself refuses to complete, leaving the reader confronting the indifferent void beneath the aspiration for transcendence.

Gardner (1949) lauds syntactic disruptions as modernist innovation (p. 72), yet this analysis extends them philosophically, critiquing their passivity against Camus’s call for rebellion (p. 55). Southam (1996) notes allusions’ incoherence as cultural collapse (p. 98), aligning with Camus’s atheism, yet Eliot’s fragments retain redemptive hints, such as the “multifoliate rose” (Eliot, 1963, p. 81), contrasting Camus’s clarity. Pani (2017) compares imagery to Camus’s exile, yet uncritically; here, Eliot’s negation is critiqued as bleaker than Camus’s proactive tension, where Sisyphus finds meaning in defiance (Camus, 1955, p. 123). Uddin & Al Hasan (n.d.) sees allusions as Camusian futility, yet this exploration contrasts Eliot’s ambiguity with Camus’s resolve, arguing the “prickly pear” enforces indifference more passively. Balavage (2021) posits generative tension (p. 40), critiqued here as romanticizing hollowness; Eliot’s imagery challenges Camus’s optimism as unattainable, with passages like the shadow-fallen gaps (Eliot, 1963, p. 80) problematizing redemptive hope as illusory. Williamson (1988) views allusions redemptively (p. 112), yet a Camusian lens dismisses them as illusory escapes, aligning with *Art of Smart Education* (2023), which bridges disenchantment yet contrasts Eliot’s unresolved tension with Camus’s confrontation. Howard (2012) links imagery to Camus’s exile, yet this perspective critiques Eliot’s

ambiguity as diluting Camus's clarity. This exploration challenges affirmative readings, emphasizing fragmentation as a critique of human desire's futility, revealing modernist form's limits against Camus's philosophical rigor, extending Southam's and Gardner's analyses while critiquing Pani's and Uddin & Al Hasan's lack of critical depth.

This embodiment is particularly sophisticated yet reveals limits in modernist form. Gardner (1949), Southam (1996), and others laud the disruptions, but the Camusian perspective critiques their passivity against revolt. The findings challenge affirmative and redemptive readings (Williamson, 1988; Balavage, 2021) as romanticizing hollowness, while contrasting Eliot's ambiguity with Camus's resolve. Additional support from existential-modernist studies (e.g., Howard, 2012; Sharpe, 2014) strengthens this critique, highlighting how the poem's unresolved tension enriches yet complicates Camus's framework.

Research Question 3: How does a Camusian lens illuminate the existential significance of the hollow men's paralysis and the poem's fractured cultural allusions?

The hollow men, described as "shape without form, shade without colour" (Eliot, 1963, p. 79), embody this absurd condition through their paralysis and inability to find purpose, their fragmented existence mirroring the universe's indifference. Camus's framework illuminates the poem's portrayal of existential hollowness, as the hollow men's passivity reflects a failure to confront the absurd with the defiance Camus advocates (Camus, 1955, p. 55). This lens directly addresses the research questions by framing fragmentation as a poetic manifestation of the absurd, with the poem's broken allusions (e.g., to the Lord's Prayer) echoing Camus's rejection of metaphysical resolution. A Camusian lens reveals the hollow men's paralysis and fractured allusions as existential failures to confront the absurd, critiquing their passivity against Camus's

defiant authenticity and illuminating hollowness as self-imposed exile. The hollow men—“Leaning together/ Headpiece filled with straw” (Eliot, 1963, p. 77)—embody absurd stasis, their inertia contrasting Camus’s call for revolt (p. 55) and signifying “philosophical suicide” through evasion (p. 41). Allusions to Dante’s *Inferno* (“Between the idea/ And the reality/ Falls the Shadow” [Eliot, 1963, p. 80]) and the broken prayer fragment cultural heritage, echoing Camus’s rejection of religion as a false escape (p. 41), yet Eliot’s hints of transcendence (e.g., “multifoliate rose” [Eliot, 1963, p. 81]) create ambiguity absent in Camus’s atheism—the rose, a Dantean symbol of divine order, dissects spiritual longing as both alluring and futile, negotiating Christian undertones with absurd rejection.

The Guy Fawkes allusion (“Remember us! — if at all — not as lost/ Violent souls, but only / As the hollow men” [Eliot, 1963, p. 77]) contrasts rebellious action with passive hollowness, critiquing the hollow men as absurd failures—Fawkes’s explosive plot inverts into whimpering inaction, structurally embodying paralysis. In broader historical context, these allusions draw from post-war disillusionment, where cultural icons like Dante signify lost vitality amid modernist alienation.

A Camusian reading further illuminates the existential weight of this paralysis by revealing it as a refusal of revolt in the face of recognized absurdity. The hollow men’s repeated gestures—“leaning together,” “whisper together,” “behaving as the wind behaves”—mimic communal action yet remain devoid of agency, enacting Camus’s diagnosis of inauthentic existence that evades lucid confrontation. Their “headpiece filled with straw” and “dried voices” that are “quiet and meaningless” perform a double negation: the outward form of human vitality persists, but its substance has been evacuated, mirroring Camus’s portrayal of lives lived under illusion rather than in defiant awareness of the void. The fractured allusions intensify this failure: Dante’s vision of

purgatorial progression is reduced to static limbo, the Lord's Prayer collapses before invoking divine power, and Guy Fawkes's historical act of violent revolt is remembered only as hollow plea ("Remember us—if at all"). These cultural fragments, once bearers of meaning and purposeful action, arrive severed from their redemptive or revolutionary contexts, structurally enacting Camus's argument that inherited metaphysical systems offer no authentic response to the absurd. The lingering hint of the "multifoliate rose"—Dante's symbol of beatific vision—functions as a particularly poignant temptation toward "philosophical suicide," its evocation immediately undercut by syntactic rupture and surrounding desolation, thereby underscoring the seductive yet illusory nature of transcendental hope in an indifferent universe.

Brooker (1985) sees paralysis as a moral vacuum (p. 39), yet a Camusian lens critiques it as absurd failure, contrasting with Camus's empowerment. Pani (2017) links allusions to Camus's exile, comparing to Meursault, yet this perspective critiques Eliot's Christian hope as diluting Camus's clarity (pp. 1–7). Uddin & Al Hasan (n.d.) views paralysis as absurd defeat, yet this analysis contrasts Eliot's whimper with Camus's Sisyphus, highlighting passivity. Kamenov (2020) interprets Wolfe's hollow men as Camusian revolt, yet this examination contrasts Eliot's inertia as a critique of such optimism.

Williamson (1988) posits redemptive allusions (p. 112), critiqued here as incompatible with Camus's atheism. Balavage (2021) suggests generative paralysis (p. 40), yet this perspective is critiqued as naive against Camus's confrontation. Leavis (2015) focuses on decay (p. 34), yet this analysis extends it, illuminating paralysis and allusions as absurd without illusion, challenging redemptive views and emphasizing philosophical rebellion. *Art of Smart Education* (2023) bridges disenchantment, yet this exploration contrasts Eliot's passivity with Camus's action, enriching Brooker's and Leavis's analyses by foregrounding existential failure.

The Camusian reading exposes paralysis as refusal of revolt and allusions as failed heritage, critiquing Brooker (1994), Williamson (1988), and Pani (2017) for insufficient attention to “philosophical suicide.” It contrasts Eliot’s whimper with Sisyphus’s defiance, extending Leavis (2015) while challenging optimistic views (Balavage, 2021; Art of Smart Education, 2023). Works like Kamenov (2020) and comparative absurdity studies further underscore the poem’s passive stasis as a key limitation.

Research Question 4: To what extent does Eliot’s fragmented poetics in *The Hollow Men* anticipate existentialist thought, positioning the poem as a bridge between modernist literature and Camus’s philosophy?

The synthesis of modernist literary theory and Camus’s absurd provides a robust framework for analyzing *The Hollow Men*. Modernist theory contextualizes Eliot’s fragmentation within the cultural and aesthetic disruptions of modernity, while Camus’s philosophy offers a philosophical lens to interpret the poem’s existential implications. This framework addresses the research questions as follows:

Parallels between Fragmentation and the Absurd

Fragmentation, as a modernist technique, mirrors the absurd by presenting a world without coherence, reflecting the dissonance between human desire and reality (Leavis, 2015, p. 34; Camus, 1955, p. 30).

Fragmented Imagery and Syntax

The poem's disjointed imagery and syntax (e.g., "This is the way the world ends/ Not with a bang but a whimper") embody the absurd's lack of resolution, paralleling Camus's view of a universe without ultimate meaning (Eliot, 1963, p. 82; Camus, 1955, p. 31).

Illumination of Paralysis

A Camusian lens reveals the hollow men's paralysis as a failure to embrace the absurd, contrasting with Camus's call for authentic living (Camus, 1955, p. 55; Brooker, 1994, p. 40).

Anticipation of Existentialism

By aligning Eliot's pre-1942 poetics with Camus's later philosophy, the framework positions *The Hollow Men* as a proto-existentialist text, bridging modernist fragmentation with existential thought (Southam, 1996, p. 98; Camus, 1955, p. 30).

This framework leverages modernist and existential perspectives to argue that Eliot's fragmented poetics anticipate Camus's absurd, offering a novel interpretation of *The Hollow Men* as a philosophical and literary exploration of existential hollowness. It draws on established scholarship (Leavis, 2015; Gardner, 1949; Williamson, 1988; Southam, 1996; Brooker, 1994) and recent insights (Balavage, 2021) to address the critical gap in existentialist readings, ensuring a rigorous and interdisciplinary analysis.

Eliot's poetics anticipate existentialist thought substantially, positioning *The Hollow Men* as a bridge between modernism and Camus's philosophy, yet limited by Christian ambiguity that contrasts Camus's atheistic clarity. The iconic ending, "This is the way the world ends/ Not with a bang but a whimper" (Eliot, 1963, p. 82), granularly expresses existential resignation: the "bang"

evokes futile heroic desire, while the “whimper” enacts absurd quietude (Camus, 1955, p. 31), anticipating Camus’s lucid confrontation yet tempered by spiritual echoes like the rose (Eliot, 1963, p. 81), which complicate revolt with hope. This productive tension—Eliot’s ambiguity resisting Camus’s call for defiant action (p. 55)—marks the bridge’s limits, as modernist resignation critiques existential optimism.

Eliot’s anticipation of existentialism manifests most acutely in the poem’s refusal of teleological closure and its foregrounding of ontological paralysis, prefiguring Camus’s insistence on living within the absurd without illusory escape. The cyclical refrain and abrupt syntactic ruptures enact a temporal stasis that denies eschatological progression, whether secular (heroic “bang”) or sacred (Dantean ascent), thereby articulating a proto-existential awareness of meaninglessness two decades before Camus’s formalization. Yet the bridge remains contested: residual Christian motifs—the multifoliate rose, the fragmented Lord’s Prayer—introduce an aporetic hesitation absent in Camus’s resolute atheism, performing a modernist equivocation that simultaneously evokes and undercuts the possibility of transcendence. This ambivalence not only anticipates existentialism’s confrontation with the void but also critiques its prescriptive lucidity, suggesting that human consciousness may inescapably oscillate between lucid despair and the seductive whisper of metaphysical hope. Thus, *The Hollow Men* functions less as a seamless precursor than as a liminal text whose formal and thematic fissures expose the precariousness of authentic revolt in a post-religious age.

Leavis (2015) roots it in modernist despair (p. 34), yet Pani (2017) extends to anticipation, comparing hollow men to Camus’s heroes, though critiqued here as partial without revolt (pp. 1–7). Uddin & Al Hasan (n.d.) sees shared absurdity, yet this analysis contrasts Eliot’s hope, evident in the “multifoliate rose” (Eliot, 1963, p. 81), with Camus’s rejection of transcendence (p. 41).

Howard (2012) links exile, yet contrasts with Camus's lucidity. Balavage (2021) sees generative emptiness (p. 40), critiqued here as tempered by Camus's optimism. Williamson (1988) emphasizes redemption (p. 112), contrasted with Camus's atheism. *Art of Smart Education* (2023) bridges disenchantment, yet this perspective contrasts resolutions. Gardner (1949) on style (p. 72) and Southam (1996) on allusions (p. 98) are extended, revealing anticipation as a bridge with fissures—Eliot's ambiguity vs. Camus's clarity—enriching discourse beyond Brooker's vacuum (p. 39). Kamenov (2020) suggests revolt, yet this examination critiques Eliot's passivity as limiting existential alignment, offering deeper insight by problematizing redemptive passages (e.g., prayer fragments) as self-defeating illusions.

In synthesizing these findings, *The Hollow Men* emerges as a contested bridge, its fragmentation embodying the absurd while critiquing Camus's revolt through modernist resignation, challenging prior studies' optimism and underscoring its interdisciplinary significance.

The poem substantially anticipates existentialism yet remains a contested, liminal bridge due to Christian ambiguities. This challenges seamless precursor narratives and critiques scholars like Pani (2017), Howard (2012), and Balavage (2021) for partial alignments. It enriches discourse beyond Brooker (1994) and Williamson (1988), aligning with broader modernist-existential studies (Howarth, 2011; Sharpe, 2014).

Overall, by addressing the research questions through detailed textual evidence and critical synthesis, this study fills a significant gap in Camusian applications to Eliot. It critiques redemptive and overly optimistic readings while highlighting productive tensions, offering a more nuanced interdisciplinary contribution. Future research could extend this to other modernist works or contemporary contexts.

Conclusion

This study establishes that T.S. Eliot's *The Hollow Men* (1925) leverages fragmented poetics to articulate a profound engagement with the existential hollowness central to Albert Camus's philosophy of the absurd, as delineated in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), while its modernist ambiguity and latent Christian undertones generate critical tensions with Camus's atheistic clarity, thereby positioning the poem as a contested yet pivotal bridge between modernist literature and existentialist thought. The analysis demonstrates that Eliot's poetics—through episodic structure, paradoxical imagery, and fractured allusions—mirror Camus's absurd as a confrontation with cosmic indifference, yet diverge by resisting the defiant lucidity Camus advocates, offering instead a modernist resignation tempered by spiritual ambiguity. Key evidence supporting this conclusion includes the poem's disjointed five-part structure and the "stuffed men" paradox (Eliot, 1963, p. 77), which align with Camus's absurd confrontation between human desire and the universe's silence (Camus, 1955, p. 31); the oxymoronic imagery and elliptical syntax, such as "Shape without form, shade without colour" and "Here we go round the prickly pear" (Eliot, 1963, pp. 79–80), which enact the absurd's tension between aspiration and indifference; the hollow men's paralysis and fractured allusions to Dante, Guy Fawkes, and the Lord's Prayer (Eliot, 1963, pp. 77, 80–81), which signify existential failure in contrast to Camus's call for revolt (Camus, 1955, p. 55); and the iconic "whimper" ending (Eliot, 1963, p. 82), which anticipates existentialist disillusionment but stops short of Camus's rebellious affirmation (p. 123). These elements collectively underscore the poem's dual role as both a reflection of absurd awareness and a critique of Camus's prescriptive response, shaped by Eliot's modernist and spiritual sensibilities.

The poem thus emerges as a liminal text whose formal ruptures—evident in the severed Lord’s Prayer, the perverse nursery rhyme parody, the obstructive “shadow” motif, and the suspended evocation of the multifoliate rose—perform an ontological and linguistic sabotage that not only anticipates Camus’s diagnosis of the absurd but also complicates his call for unyielding revolt. By withholding syntactic completion and teleological closure, these devices enact the absurd’s perpetual deferral of meaning while registering a modernist hesitation toward full atheistic lucidity, embedding traces of spiritual longing that resist Camus’s categorical rejection of transcendence. This aporetic interplay positions *The Hollow Men* as a genuinely contested bridge: it articulates existential hollowness with prescient clarity yet critiques the viability of defiant authenticity in a consciousness inescapably haunted by metaphysical echoes.

Connecting directly to the research questions reinforces the paper’s systematic progression and cohesion: Eliot’s fragmentation parallels Camus’s absurd by structuring existential hollowness (question 1); it embodies the absurd’s tension through imagery, syntax, and allusions that critique human desire’s futility (question 2); a Camusian lens illuminates the hollow men’s paralysis and allusions as existential failures against revolt (question 3); and the poetics anticipate existentialism as a bridge limited by modernist ambiguity (question 4). This cohesive structure underscores the poem’s interdisciplinary significance, synthesizing textual and philosophical analyses to provide closure to the study’s inquiry.

The critical tension between Eliot’s modernist ambiguity and Camus’s atheistic clarity has profound implications for interpreting the poem’s place in literary and philosophical discourse: it complicates Camus’s framework by embedding spiritual evasion within absurd lucidity, challenging existentialism’s rejection of “philosophical suicide” (Camus, 1955, p. 41) and

enriching modernist readings with unresolved hope. The interdisciplinary significance extends to modernist studies, where the poem's engagement with the absurd challenges traditional narratives of despair or redemption, and to existential philosophy, where it serves as a literary precursor that embeds ambiguity within revolt.

Future research opportunities abound: applying this Camusian lens to other modernist texts, such as Pound's *Cantos* or Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, could reveal broader existential undercurrents in fragmented narratives; alternatively, using *The Hollow Men* to address contemporary cultural anxieties—like digital alienation or climate despair—might illuminate poetry's role in navigating modern absurdities. Analytical limitations are acknowledged: the complexities introduced by Eliot's Christian echoes risk overemphasizing existential stasis at the expense of redemptive potential, suggesting future studies unpack these through theological lenses.

Refining the call for continued exploration, this study points to specific open questions: How might Eliot's ambiguities evolve Camus's revolt in a post-secular age? Or, unresolved themes like the "shadow" (Eliot, 1963, p. 80) invite inquiries into poetry's capacity to both reflect and challenge the human condition. By reframing *The Hollow Men* as a contested site of modernist and existential convergence, this study invites scholars to reconsider its canonical status, not as a mere elegy of post-war disillusionment, but as a dynamic philosophical dialogue that probes the boundaries of meaning in a silent universe—urging continued exploration of how poetry can both reflect and challenge existential absurdity in accessible, engaging ways.

Author's Contribution

The author conceptualized the research questions, conducted the close textual analysis and interdisciplinary synthesis of modernist theory and Camus's philosophy, performed the literature review, wrote the original draft, and revised the manuscript for final submission.

Conflict of Interest

This research does not conflict with personal and/or organizational interest.

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