



## Ego Depletion & Thirthing-as-othering in Albert Camus's *The Stranger*

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### ABSTRACT

This paper deals with Edward Soja's thirthing-as-othering process that is part of the thirdspace experience proposed by Soja's spatial theory of subjectivity. According to the paper, both the enlightening milieu of the thirdspace and the thirthing-as-othering process can significantly function as therapeutic elements of rejuvenating man's mental resources that are fatigued and exhausted by the psychological case of ego depletion. In this respect, keeping a link between the psychological theory of ego depletion and Soja's thirdspace, the paper suggests an interdisciplinary therapeutic approach that is both philosophical and psychological. Therefore, tracing the potential specifications and implications of rejuvenating man's depleted mental resources, the study proposes a self-regulation plan according to which the individual can gain insight in different patterns of human behavior that are used as suggestive rejuvenating role models. The patterns provided by the thirthing-as-othering process together with the motivation and willpower created there can help the individual to shrug off the state of ego-depletion and recharge his worn-out mental powers in light of the insight and enlightenment he can acquire within the framework of his discovered thirdspace. Accordingly, the Third Space is recommended as a human enhancing area of self-discovery and a therapeutic and rejuvenating one as well that could be regarded as a replication of what Aldo Leopard calls the "land of ethics". To further establish its argument, the paper applies its proposed hybrid approach to Albert Camus's *The Stranger*. This is critically done with some questions in mind concerning manifestations of ego depletion, the way the novel portrays its ego depleted characters, their thirdspaces and the relevant emergent suggestive alternatives and manifestations of the rejuvenation of their depleted mental resources.

### Key Words

*Spatial theory-thirdspace- ego-depletion- mental resources-self control*

Throughout the history of humanity, great devastating events like the first and the second world wars, different forms of colonization as well as the evolving climate crisis and catastrophic environmental changes have significantly resulted in the spread of varied types of psychic malfunctioning, self-control fatigue and what the paper venture to call "the reaction of no reaction". This significantly ranges from severe cases of psychic numbing to stark states of apathy and varied symptoms and manifestations of the psychological fatigue of ego depletion.

Referring to ego-depletion, a psychic phenomenon that goes back to Freud's psychoanalysis, Politician and diplomat Patrick J. Hurley highlights it as a "type of cognitive fatigue"(2). It is a contemporary recurrent phenomenon of psychic malfunctioning that occurs due to the individual's frequently going through hard overwhelming experiences that, on the long run, consume his mental resources resulting in a type of self-control fatigue and lack of the ability to take relevant decisions at the required time. Hence, ego-depletion theory argues that the frequent going through extremely tiresome situations consumes the individual's abundant supply of mental abilities so that sustaining reasonable levels of self-control in consequent tasks will be utterly stuck. Thus, ego-depletion is rather held responsible for the lack of self-control as well as the fading of one's willpower, the fact that causes the individual to breach ethical and social codes showing different forms of misbehavior (Hurley 1). At this definite point, the individual is diagnosed as functioning under ego-depletion which means that he can no longer keep the least level of self-control or resolution and is therefore susceptible to experience psychic breakdown and malfunctioning in different critical circumstances. Consequently, being under ego-depletion, one can provide no relevant exact resolution or decision; he increasingly suffers from weariness and overtiredness, loses self-control and determination (Baumeister & Vohs 123). Hence, he would effortlessly prefer peaceful alternatives to hazardous ones (Unger & Stahlberg 28). Accordingly, defining ego depletion, social psychologists Roy Baumeister Mark Muraven, Dianne Tice and Ellen Bratslavsky refer to it as "a temporary reduction in the self's capacity or willingness to engage in volitional action (including controlling the environment, controlling the self, making choices, and initiating action) caused by prior exercise of volition". (Baumeister & Bratslavsky 1253).

What is required then is a strategy to shake man off this developed state of psychic malfunctioning (ego-depletion) by helping the individual to have all his depleted mental resources rejuvenated. This could be effected through a self-regulation process that is fundamentally defined as the individual's capability to manage his responses and adjust them by confining the undesired inclination to produce reactions and modes of unaccepted performance so as to adjust his behavior in order to observe and respect rules, ethics and morals. In other words, self-regulation is stopping "impulses from producing Behavior" (Baumeister & Vohs 116-119). Such a significant rejuvenating self-regulation process requires a four moderators plan that is built upon providing a standard of behavior, strictly observing behavior, determination and an enthusiastic drive (Muraven 894- 895). In light of this, the paper recommends the example of Edward Soja's Third Space experience that provides a highly illuminating self-regulating spatial area where man's depleted mental powers can be rejuvenated.

The thirdspace is a concept initiated by Postmodern geographer Edward Soja who has developed the Thirdspace theory to help redefine and reconceptualize existing notions of both space and identity. Soja has first acknowledged the two types of space established by his postcolonial and postmodern predecessors: the first space that is material 'perceived' space' and the second space that is immaterial 'conceived space' (Nag 93). However, his spatial contribution lies in adding a third type of space which is "a lived space" that is rather "central" and "peripheral" (Nag 93). His theory then is one that comprehensively keeps the three types of space in one bundle highlighting that they have in common the notion of "in-betweenness" (Nag 96). Meditating upon the two concepts of the first/perceived space and the second/conceived space, Soja identifies them respectively as being preoccupied with the real tangible world and a virtual imaginative zone where real life is reconsidered and explicated (Soja, *Thirdspace* 6). To further clarify his point, Soja writes:

... the mainstream spatial or geographical imagination has, for at least the past century, revolved primarily around a dual mode of thinking about space; one, which I have described as a Firstspace perspective and epistemology, fixed mainly on the concrete materiality of spatial forms, on things that can be empirically mapped; and the second as Secondspace, conceived in ideas about space, in thoughtful re-presentations of human spatiality in mental or cognitive forms". ( Soja *Thirdspace* 12)

Critically referring to the two notions of the first and the second space as inadequate, Claire Lauer claims that exclusively limiting the concept of spatiality to be physical (the Firstspace) and mental (the Seconspace) disregarding further potential aspects is highly confusing and deceptive (Lauer 56). In line with Lauer and inspired by Henri Lefebvre's perspectives on spatial thinking, Soja develops his trialectics of spaciality by proposing his thirdspace theory that breaks barriers between what is 'perceived' and what is 'conceived' turning place and space to be one incorporated entity (Nag 93). Therefore, Soja's trialectics of spaciality could be regarded as a combination of three notions of space: "perceived space", "conceived space" and "lived space" (Nag 95). This latter one is a hermeneutic space of three fundamental steps: destruction, reconstruction and the step of attaching further potentials to the "lived space" (Li & Zhou 3-4). Furthermore, being inspired by Lefebvre's Aleph, Soja's lived space has a social significance as it highlights space as a social construct that is "the space of all-inclusive simultaneities, perils as well as possibilities: the space of radical openness, the space of social struggle" (Soja, *Thirdspace* 68). Keeping up with Soja's standpoint concerning the undeniable social perception of every space, Campbell. A. O. Munro identifies body organs, confinement institutions, legal verdicts as social spaces. He argues that:

A womb is not merely a biological organ, it is also a social space inscribed with significant political, sociological, and legal meaning; a prison is not just a site of physical confinement it is also a social space constructed through competing ideologies of, for example race and class; a legal decision or rule is not only a text or an authoritative act, it also constitutes social space; it embodies the performance of broader fields of power. (11)

A further aspect of Soja's trialectics of spaciality is the "thirthing- as- Othering" process, that takes place in third space and significantly seeks to undermine the constraint of what he calls "the either/or logic" (Third Space, 3-5). By the "the either/or logic", Soja suggests that real space has an infinite series of dual opposing notions such as "subjectivity and objectivity, abstraction and concretization, reality and imagination, known and unknown, repetition and difference, construction and deconstruction, thought and body, consciousness and unconsciousness, singularity and diversity, daily life and endless history" (Li & Zhou 3-4). Hence, his "Thirthing-as-othering" ideology implies a radical reconstruction of all dual taken for granted sets existing in the thirdspace by adding a third option (Lauer 57). This thirthing-as-othering process according to Soja suggests:

a critical 'other-than' choice that speaks and critiques through its otherness ... It does not derive simply from an additive combination of its binary antecedents but rather from a disordering, deconstruction, and tentative reconstitution of their presumed totalization producing an open alternative that is both similar and strikingly different. (*Thirdspace* 61)

This hermeneutic and energetic combination of paradoxes mixing in the Thirdspace and the third emergent other is termed by Soja as trialectics that is “a mode of dialectical reasoning that is more inherently spatial than the conventional temporally-defined dialectics of Hegel or Marx” (Soja, Thirdspace 12). Accordingly, Soja defines his Thirdspace notion as a suggested area of reassessment and modifying human spatial thinking; it is also a developed method of approaching spatial thinking to best receive the alternative created in “the re-balanced trialectics of spatiality-historicity-sociality” (Thirdspace 12).

Accordingly, Soja’s line of thought try to subvert the strategy of reducing one notion or idea to be limited to two contrary substitutes denying other potentials. Soja, therefore, condemns the routine taken-for-granted polarity of dual contradictory options like life and death, male and female, love and hatred, etc. His thirdspace notion including its thirding- as- Othering process is meant to imply a virtual area where a third option, a third other and a third probable item emanates by exposing the existing contradictory options to “a creative process of restructuring that draws selectively and strategically from the two opposing categories to open new alternatives” (Thirdspace 3). This makes the thirdspace an area where issues with their two contradictory alternatives, like gender, ethnic, color and class issues could be nonjudgmentally reconsidered and discussed with neither commitment nor obligation to take the side of one choice denouncing the other. This makes Soja’s Thirdspace a fair neutral comprehensive wide-ranging space of multiplicity that tolerantly encompasses “multiculturalism, racial, gender and religious pluralism among other perspectives” (Gomaa, Thirdspace 5). It easily incorporates the clashing and the irresolvable in one area without making judgment or stirring a specific tendency where “one can be a Marxist and post-Marxist, materialist and idealist, structuralist and humanist, disciplined and transdisciplinary at the same time” (Thirdspace 3). In this respect, focusing upon Soja’s contemplation upon the way identity is built in the Thirdspace, Claire Lauer argues that Soja does not call for the destabilization of the present dual items in favor of the evolving third or other alternative. He rather believes that the current elements of identity persist correspondingly with recreated ones where the understanding of the connection between both sides creates a sense of identity (59).

Having established the twofold approach of the present paper referring to the two concerned theories of ego-depletion and the thirdspace, the paper significantly recommends the employment of the identified spatial strategy of subjectivity for therapeutic purposes. The thirdspace and the related thirding-as-othering technique are meant to play a role in rejuvenating the exhausted mental resources of ego-depleted individuals to put an end to the evolved state of ego-depletion. This malady-recovery journey from ego-depletion to rejuvenation that occurs in the thirdspace could be best traced and illustrated in Camus’s *The Stranger*, focusing upon examples of success and failure to shrug off ego-depletion. From the very beginning, Camus’s *The Stranger* highlights the most prominent characters as helpless ego-depleted figures who show neither self-control nor resolution. This is mainly caused by the anthropocentric attitude, adopted by all of them, that regards man as superior to all other creatures including animals and plants and consequently leads to the deteriorated state of nature that is spoiled and exploited by man causing him to feel guilty. Highlighting man-nature hostile relationship as responsible for manifestations of man’s psychic malfunctioning, Nermin Gomaa argues that, “Man-nature antagonistic relationship and the obsessive guilt about environmental crisis are held responsible for the creation of existential anxieties and Psychoterratic (Psyche-Earth) disorders such as eco-anxiety and grief that negatively affect man’s psychic wellbeing and subjectivity”

(Apathy, 2). Experiencing guilt feeling for so long and being obsessed with their mortal nature, an idea that haunts them more when they face different manifestations of the climate crisis, the characters have their mental resources run out and depleted.

Highlighting this devastating obsession with mortality as one fundamental cause of ego-depletion and self-control fatigue, M.J. Rust writes: “‘We're completely fucked' . . . If many people are secretly thinking this, and I suspect they are, their motivation for taking action in the face of climate change will be zero” (10-11). Camus’s protagonist, Meursault, expresses the fact that all humans are destined to die and “his turn, too, would come like the others’. And what difference could it make if, after being charged with murder, he were executed because he didn’t weep at his mother’s funeral, since it all came to the same thing in the end?” (Camus 75). However, such obsession with death, though destructive is less damaging than feeling guilty. In this respect, J. Dodds underlines the destructive influence of guilt feeling upon the individual’s psychic wellbeing as he argues that man’s anxieties caused by feeling guilty about nature’s crisis are more serious and graver than his worries of death. This makes him more determined to prove himself to be innocent rather than to make up for the mistake (3). Having exerted great efforts to keep self-controlled and to overwhelm his dreads of mortality and guilt feelings, man has all of a sudden discovered that he is no longer capable of maintaining his psychological balance nor keeping self-regulated in face of the same anxieties (Pikhala, 549). This idea figures prominently in Camus’s *The Stranger* and is recurrently reflected in the characters’ sense of self-remorse echoed in their behavior that makes Meursault, for example, obsessed with a determination to provide a sacrifice that shrugs him off guilt feelings. This obsession has finally led him to willingly become a Christlike figure who sacrifices himself to atone for human beings’ sins.

To establish the previously recommended self-regulation plan as effective and practical, the paper explores its replication in Camus’s novel, focusing upon all examples of inspiring comprehensive patterns of behavior employed by Camus to help the characters go beyond the limitation of both the anthropocentric and the self-reproach attitudes. However, going against anthropocentrism and hierarchies of species, as argued by Goma, requires a specific ecosophy that has a psychological, philosophical and religious standpoint coupled with a constructive ecocentric touch (Apathy 5). In light of Soja’s thirding-as-othering technique, Camus could provide the required ecosophy by assigning a thirdspace for each character. This also enables him to create what Aldo Leopold calls the “land of ethics” that is a land that symbolizes a wide-ranging social area with different implications and basis of man-nature bond that allows both humans and non-humans to live together in a peaceful manner (Louw 94-97). Living in the virtual “land of ethics” humans’ distorted selves could be reconstructed in an ecological way that terminates man’s manipulation of nature and consequently his guilt feelings (Louw 94-97).

For doing so, Camus has assigned a thirdspace or a “land of ethics” for each character highlighting the way a limitless number of dual contradictory ideas meet at this middle ground, mixing, reacting until a process of deconstruction and reconstruction takes place giving way to other potential alternatives to be created. Those newly born options provide a wide range of patterns of human behavior that are never considered before. This benevolently helps recharging man’s mental resources by broadening his own vision to go beyond the ordinary and taken-for-granted either-or ideas. The other required steps proposed by the self-regulation plan, monitoring human behavior and instilling willpower and motivation in him, are also evidently fulfilled in the medium of the thirdspace.

Accordingly, Camus has skillfully drawn the malady-recovery journey of his protagonist, Meursault, who has from the very beginning represented a stark case of psychic malfunctioning and ego-depletion, a case seemingly developed by being constantly alert to manifestations of climate changes, the related self-reproach and dread of death that utterly consumed his mental resources. Hence, his ego-depleting experiences are mostly psychic ones that occur on an unconscious level rather than a conscious one. This tends to make the case rather more exhausting and complicated. On a subconscious level, Meursault significantly moves from one difficult tormenting area to another. Such areas could be identified as two major ones: guilt- feeling and fear -of- inevitable- death areas. The death of the mother suggestively implies the death of nature or rather the environmental crisis. Meursault's anthropocentric attitude is highly reflected in his smoking habit and the use of means of transportation, known as the major cause of pollution, when not necessary. Besides, when asked by Raymond Sintès whether he condemns Salamano for mistreating his dog, referring to this action as "a damned shame," Meursault denies the idea saying "No." (Camus 19).

Feeling guilty about his mother's death that inherently implies the death of nature, when Meursault told Maria that his mother died the day before, he whispered to himself that "one can't help feeling a bit guilty" (Camus 14). The guilt/mortality obsession that turns him to be an ego-depleted figure is constantly and repeatedly presented in his obsessive preoccupation with manifestations of climate changes. Being too much minded with heat in the funeral rather than with grieving over the loss of his mother, he says, "The sky was already a blaze of light, and the air stoking up rapidly. I felt the first waves of heat lapping my back, and my dark suit made things worse. I couldn't imagine why we waited so long for getting under way" (Camus 11). In another situation, his preoccupation with the weather is highly stressed and he refers to it in minute details as he says, "Wherever I looked I saw the same sun-drenched countryside, and the sky was so dazzling that I dared not raise my eyes. Presently we struck a patch of freshly tarred road. A shimmer of heat played over it and one's feet squelched at each step, leaving bright black gashes" (Camus 12). Such descriptions of the weather's ups and downs are widely and remarkably found throughout the novel establishing a persistent link between man's psyche and climate changes.

Meursault's ego-depletion, obviously presented early in the novel, moves in a progressive linear manner that highlights his experiences as a gradual rather than a simultaneous malfunctioning of all mental resources. This starts with the stage of disengagement or the reaction of no reaction- stage that is highly reflected in the way he responds to the news of his mother's death. He declares the death of his mother in an apathetic, ego-depleted mode that significantly reflect his lack of involvement and resolution. He says, "MOTHER died today. Or, maybe, yesterday; I can't be sure" (Camus 4). Unable to reflect the least signs of sorrow, he does not like to see his dead mother for the last time and he uninterestedly starts to smoke with the keeper of the Home (Camus 7). Further manifestations of the gradual progress of his ego-depletion are implied in other varied situations that go beyond the reaction of no reaction to extreme carelessness manifested in his inability to tell the age of his mother or to give any details about her life in the house of aging. This is followed by a higher stage of ego-depletion that reflects his going astray as the reaction of no reaction stage turns to be the contrary irrelevant reaction- stage. This is reflected in spending a night with his beloved girl immediately after his mother's funeral, going with her to the swimming pool then to the movie to watch a comic film and having a sexual affair with her. Referring to this later on in the man's trial for killing an Arab man, the Prosecutor says, "Gentlemen of the jury, I would have you note that on the

next day after his mother's funeral that man was visiting the swimming pool, starting a liaison with a girl, and going to see a comic film. That is all I wish to say." (Camus 59). In addition, when asked by Marie whether he loves her or not, he gives the most unexpected answer saying: "that sort of question had no meaning, really; but I supposed I didn't" (Camus 24). This highlights him as a mentally disturbed person whose actions do never correspond with the way he feels; it also shows that he starts the stage of losing self-control manifested in not being able to filter his words avoiding what is regarded as indecent or offensive.

As his ego-depletion reached the top, the protagonist, who is then utterly out of self-control, surprisingly and for no logic reason killed an Arab man. However, despite being convicted of a murder crime, throughout the trial, the judge turned the crime to be one of a son's negligence and indifference to his aging mother. Consequently, Meursault is accused of forsaking his mother when he distanced her away in a home for ageing people claiming that he was unable to afford the costs of life nor to give her the due attention. In reaction, the lawyer asks "Is my client on trial for having buried his mother, or for killing a man?" (Camus 60), a question that highlights the novel as an imitation of a trial where all human beings are judged to be guilty about nature's deteriorated state.

The man's ego-depletion and loss of self-control is highly stirred by elements of nature especially heat. Meursault's account of the scorching heat sets it as a significant issue that gets him to kill an Arab man for no specific clear reason. Meursault says, "It was just the same sort of heat as at my mother's funeral, and I had the same disagreeable sensations—especially in my forehead, where all the veins seemed to be bursting through the skin. I couldn't stand it any longer, and took another step forward" (Camus 38). Hence, when the Judge asked him about the reasons behind murdering the Arab man, Meursault admitted that he did not kill him on purpose but "it was because of the sun" (Camus 64). Such admission significantly establishes a close bond between ego-depletion and climate changes, that is the paper's major argument. Heat, therefore, depleted more his already exhausted mental resources causing him to entirely lose self-control. Behaving under the influence of lack of self-control fatigue, he took the wrong decision and killed the Arab man.

In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud argues that "...a murder can be atoned only by the sacrifice of another life" (Freud, 99). In line with Freud's standpoint, in Eco- Anxiety and "The Myth of Apathy" in Albert Camus's *The Stranger*, Gomaa argues that, "Reading the novel in terms of the myth of the Primal Horde crime, the protagonist's murder of the Arab man is meant to be a totem sacrifice rather than a crime. Being complicit in the ecological crisis, human beings are haunted with guilt feelings and, to atone for the sin, a sacrifice of a totem animal is required" (Apathy 12). Similarly, providing a justification for the crime in light of its suggested twofold approach, the paper argues that the ego-depleted Meursault took the wrong decision to stop his guilt feelings by providing a totem animal sacrifice (the Arab man) to atone for the crime he committed: killing nature. However, this helps only to increase guilt feelings and consequently his ego-depletion.

Meursault's stepping into his particular thirdspace/land of ethics, the cell, represents the beginning of the self-regulation plan, the gradual destabilization of the state of ego-depletion and the rejuvenating of his depleted mental resources. The cell is a highly energetic space where stereotypic taken-for-granted ideas are shaken off by the creation of further alternatives. The suggested thirdspace provides different inspiring patterns of human behavior implied in the mix between the dual contradictory ideas and the evolving alternatives. In this respect, the cell is portrayed as a typical heterotopic illuminating thirdspace where both the eco-centric and the anthropocentric

attitudes mix resulting in a third alternative: the theocentric one that inspires the protagonist with the Christ's pattern of self-sacrifice for the sake of humanity. This is manifested in Meursault's transformation into a Christ-like figure that is willing to sacrifice himself to atone for human beings' sins.

In the cell, further dual contradictory ideas meet together resulting in other alternatives: atheism and belief in God represented in Meursault and the Chaplain. Meursault (atheism) refused many times to receive the Chaplain (belief) in his cell and he has later admitted that he does not believe in God. This resurrects belief and atheism in the thirdspace so as to mix and create a further potential option: a compromising selective in-between state of selectively complying with some Christian dogmas like atonement and salvation while rejecting the existence of a deity (Camus 72). This is why he moves between the two extremes of atheism and belief in God identifying first with atheism and then when his mental resources have been rejuvenated, though declaring his disbelief in God, he prefers to die as a Christ-like figure who sacrifices himself for humanity's sake. Furthermore, mortality and immortality are also summoned up in Meursault's thirdspace resulting in a third alternative that is the spiritual hope implied in the notion of salvation and the related promised paradise. Hope is highly recommended by the paper as having a rejuvenating power that is bound to shake man off his ego-depletion state, moving him to normally act and react with self-control and willpower with rejuvenated mental powers. This is replicated in the spiritual dialog between the Chaplain and Meursault about belief and disbelief and the fact that life is terrible without the spiritual hope provided by religion. Camus writes:

Have you no hope at all? Do you really think that when you die you die outright, and nothing remains?

I said: "Yes."

He dropped his eyes and sat down again. He was truly sorry for me, he said. It must make life unbearable for a man, to think as I did (73).

Camus refers to Christian hope that lies in repentance. This is replicated in the Magistrate's words to Meursault that "even the worst of sinners could obtain forgiveness of Him. But first he must repent, and become like a little child, with a simple, trustful heart, open to conviction" (Camus 43). The spiritual conversation between the Chaplain and Meursault about belief and disbelief suggests that life is excruciating without theological hope. Hence, both the Magistrate and the Chaplain advised Meursault to find out a source of rejuvenating hope. Camus writes:

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Meursault's thirdspace (prison) also provides the other requirements of the suggested self-regulation plan: monitoring behavior, willpower and motivation. There, Meursault's behavior is strictly observed and he, as a result, complied with prison's regulating rules including the prohibition of smoking. Though Meursault was at the beginning disappointed because smoking is prohibited, when he has his mental resources rejuvenated, he could keep a high level of self-control highlighted in his ability to give up smoking at the end of the novel. Similarly,



despite being upset at the very beginning, he started to enjoy everything so that he “had an absurd impression of being ‘one of the family’” (Camus, p. 44). The Chaplin’s words about God and hope instilled him with determination and willpower that transformed him to be a potential Christ-like figure. This transformation also testifies that in Meursault’s thirdspace, the protagonist’s anthropocentric attitude has been shaking off to be replaced with an eco-centric as well as theo-centric one deeply instilled in him by the laws of the heterotopia of prison. The thirdspace experience was so enlightening that he has had his depleted resources recharged and he could take relevant decisions like the decision to atone for human being’s guilt in a Christian manner. He therefore becomes a Christ-like figure who can bring about hope and who believes himself to be innocent (Camus 44).

Similarly, before moving to the house of elderly people, Meursault’s mother was suffering from ego-depletion. She is first depicted as a watching, silent apathetic fellow living with her son. Meursault says, “When we lived together, Mother was always watching me, but we hardly ever talked” (Camus 5). When she first moved to the aging house, her ego-depletion has become more devastating, she lost self-control and was crying all nights and days. However, she gradually has had her own mental resources rejuvenated through the experience of her third space/ land of ethics, the house of elderly people, where she has got other inspiring alternative patterns of human behavior that help her overcome the two stimuli of ego-depletion: the anthropocentric attitude and the related dread of mortality and guilt feelings. There in her thirdspace, as in her son’s case, mortality and immortality are called upon to create other alternatives like salvation, spiritual immortality and the notion of the eternal return of the same proposed by Nietzsche.

In the house of elderly people/ the thirdspace, the dual contradictory idea of life and death mix and react to summon up further alternatives specially Nietzsche’s theory of the eternal return of the same which suggests that life comes to an end just to start over everything again with every minute detail. Explaining such a change of attitude, Meursault says, “There, too, in that Home where lives were flickering out, the dusk came as a mournful solace. With death so near, Mother must have felt like someone on the brink of freedom, ready to start life all over again” (Camus 75). This theory of Nietzsche suggests a third alternative for the dual contradictory idea of mortality and immortality. According to Nietzsche, whenever man’s life reaches its end, it starts over and everything is repeated with every tiny detail (Williams 341). Nietzsche writes, “This life as you now live it and have lived it you will have to live once again and innumerable times again; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unspeakably small or great in your life must return to you, all in the same succession and sequence” (Williams 341). This notion of Nietzsche’s is a source of hope that destabilizes the threatening influence of the ecological crisis and the related ego-depletion of man.

Though the case of Meursault’s mother was that of “we are completely fucked” referred to by Rust (10-11), she has successfully managed to shrug herself off her ego depletion and has gradually developed a new identity. This occurred when she moved beyond man’s anthropocentric attitude to a socio-centric one suggested in the third space. She then, according to the warden, has got a fiancé and a lot of good considerate companions of the same age group who make her life a pleasant one and “she’d have cried if she’d been told to leave the Home” (Camus 5). Inspired by the arising alternatives of the anthropocentric attitude created in the thirdspace (the socio-centric and the theo-centric attitudes) and the consequent emerging patterns of behavior, the mother has developed a theological

background and would prefer to be buried according to Christian custom. Being astounded with his mother's transformation, Meursault says, "my mother, though not a professed atheist had never given a thought to religion in her life" (Camus 5). The heterotopia of the house of elderly people also provides the other prerequisites of the self-regulation plan suggested by the paper: monitoring behavior, motivation and willpower that turns the woman from being an ego-depleted figure to one who has own mental abilities rejuvenated.

Old Salamano's relationship to his dog testifies his anthropocentric attitude as well as the related ego-depleting guilt feelings due to feeling complicit in the exploitation of nature. The constant disintegration of the dog is both suggestive of the anthropocentric attitude and its consequent decay of nature. It also attests Salamano's lack of self-control and his acting under ego-depletion. The dog has once had amazing fur; describing it Salamano says, "I tried hard to cure him; every mortal night after he got that skin disease, I rubbed an ointment in. But his real trouble was old age, and there's no curing that." (Camus,30). Salamano's words imply his guilt feelings that he tries to mitigate by the fact that he cannot make up for his own mistake because of the inevitable mortal nature of every living thing in nature. The reference to the dog's disappearance symbolically implies the forthcoming animal annihilation and man's consequent distress due to being responsible for it. His ego-depletion is reflected in his inability to stop the unfair hostility towards the dog echoed, for example, in calling him "a bastard, a lousy mongrel" (Camus 19). Salamano tried so hard to help the dog (nature) get well; nevertheless, every living thing should certainly grow old and die. Unlike Meursault's case, nothing in the novel implies that Salamano could find his rejuvenating thirdspace wherein he would be able to step out of his ego-depletion and have his run out mental resources recharged. The fact that Salamano shockingly showed pain over the loss of his dog reflects a lack of self-control and inability to take a decision.

## Conclusion

The paper has first suggested a supposedly effective self-regulation plan that is meant to terminate ego-depletion as a psychological state of psychic malfunctioning with its symptoms manifested in lack of self-control, inability to face troubles and hardships taking the relevant decision at the relevant time, starkly going against standards of socially accepted behavior and showing an apathetic behavior that represents either the wrong reaction or the reaction of no reaction. To further highlight the idea, the paper established man's anthropocentric attitude towards nature and the related guilt feelings and dread of death as the main cause of ego-depletion. Therefore, setting ego-depletion to be its area of argument, the paper proposes a therapeutic self-regulation plan that builds heavily upon Edward Soja's spatial theory of identity building: the theory of the thirdspace. Identifying the thirdspace as a virtual area of enlightenment and self-discovery wherein new alternatives of life's taken-for-granted dual contradictory ideas, the paper critically surveys Albert Camus's *The Stranger* highlighting the ego-depleted figures and their particular thirdspace. This fundamentally labelled the novel as a typical presentation of Soja's thirdspace theory as a rejuvenating space where the characters' depleted mental resources are recharged and signs of self-control fatigue and lack of determination gradually fade away leaving behind self-enhanced individuals with rejuvenated mental resources. The characters of the novel who could live the experience of the third space as a virtual area of self-discovery and identity building have their depleted mental resources rejuvenated by experiencing potential options never considered before. Through the medium of the thirdspace, the novel argues for different recommended

alternatives like the eco-centric, the theo-centric and the sociocentric attitudes rather than the anthropocentric one that is held responsible for the disintegration of nature and the environmental crisis. A further emergent suggested option is the threefold Christian immortality scheme that encompasses spiritual hope that could be attained through a Christ-like sacrifice that atone for the sins of humanity and help man to reach salvation and live an eternal immortal life. The novel itself could be regarded as the reader's thirdspace or virtual self-discovery rejuvenating area.

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