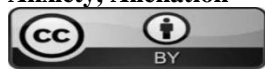**Israa Ali Abd-Alredha**

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Nihilism and Existential Anxiety in Thomas Pynchon's Bleeding Edge

A B S T R A C T

The research will study the nihilistic absurd in Thomas Pynchon's novel. Bleeding Edge (2013).Nihilism Existential Anxiety in Pynchon's novels take the form of man's reaction to a world seemingly without meaning or man as a glove puppet controlled or menace by invisible outside forces. By implication in the attempt to attain the purported "American Dream" characters in the selected novel replaced values such as truth, morality, kindness, honesty, and compassion with illusion, gross consumerism ,as well as personal isolation.however, seems to suggest that perhaps the entire American Dream itself is really just an unattainable illusion. Therefore, the research seeks to ascertain if Pynchon's work paints a world occupied by individuals attempting to comprehend and assert their identity within a social circle of progress and crisis. From the perspective of nihilism, moral beliefs are baseless as such; nihilism is the creation of modern society because it is difficult for the public to accept certain acts.

العدمية و القلق الوجودي في رواية ضد اليوم لتوماس بينتشوف

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الملخص

سوف يدرس البحث العبثية العدمية في رواية توماس بينشون نزيف الحافة (٢٠١٣). تتخذ العدمية و القلق الوجودي في روايات بينشون كرد فعل الرجل على عالم يبدو بلا معنى أو كدميه يتحكم فيها أو يهددها قوى خارجية غير مرئية. من خلال محاولة تحقيق شخصيات "الحلم الأمريكي" المزعومة في الرواية المختارة، استبدلت القيم مثل الحقيقة والأخلاق واللطف والصدق والرحمة بالوهم والاستهلاك الجسيم، فضلاً عن العزلة الشخصية. ومع ذلك، يبدو أنه يشير إلى ذلك ربما يكون الحلم الأمريكي برمته مجرد وهم بعيد المنال. لذلك، يسعى البحث إلى التأكد مما إذا كان عمل بينتشون يرسم عالماً مشغولاً بأفراد يحاولون فهم وتأكيد هويتهم داخل دائرة اجتماعية من التقدم والأزمات. من منظور العدمية، فإن المعتقدات الأخلاقية لا أساس لها من الصحة على هذا النحو؛ العدمية هي خلق المجتمع الحديث لأنه يصعب على الجمهور قبول أفعال معينة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: توماس بينتشون، العدمية، الوجودية، القلق، العزلة.

Bleeding Edge: Overview

The events of September 11 and the advent of the internet are at the center of the fictional detective book Bleeding Edge. The protagonist, Maxine Tarnow, is a Jewish New York City single mother of two boys and a former certified fraud investigator. As a result of taking on a case involving a shady computer security business, she becomes embroiled in a web of illegal behavior involving money going to and from unknown sources at the online firm Hashslingrz. She is faced with a diverse array of characters, including Russian mobsters, bloggers, hackers, unhappy company owners, and developers. Following the murder investigation at the former Hashslingrz location, Maxine's life and career became entangled with CIA Hitman Windust. She attempts to persuade Eric and Driscoll to take shelter with her and Horst in the DeepArcher, an enclosed electronic system. Even though March is being chased and has nowhere to stay, she is able to keep up with her blog thanks to public Wi-Fi. 4

Maxine Tarnow, a Jewish fraud investigator, is a female riddle-solver who embarks on a journey for knowledge in a story that begins with the words "It was the first day in spring 2001" and ends with the words "pear trees have exploded into bloom" , (T. Pynchon, 2013, P475) roughly a year later. While Oedipa Maas's readers in 1966 were able to see the world through Maxine's eyes in The Crying of Lot 49, the yearly cycle of 2001 was interrupted by the terrorist acts on September 11. Pynchon's latter work significantly modifies the ideological assumptions that underlie our present view of American society and links them to political and medical hazards. A return to conventional human affections, which may help in recovering a society recognized as seriously traumatized, is called for towards the novel's conclusion after the new virtual reality pseudo-haven creates tremendous feelings that lead to cybernetic web addiction. In a study (Collado-Rodrguez, 2016)

After the two World Wars and the Industrial Revolution, society saw significant shifts in lifestyle and outlook, profoundly altering the human mind. After the Industrial Revolution, progress persisted, mostly in science, and eventually led to cutting-edge technology. To create a new digital environment that is on par with our physical one. From the perspective of any given character, the entire universe is invisible and impenetrable (Each character has his virtual world, no one can see this character from his phone the cannot just what they want you to watch and reach it). When corporate dishonesty leads to the fabrication of reports, it might pave the way for future moral collapse and nihilism by setting a bad example.

Let's pretend Pynchon's Bleeding Edge was a call to action to pay greater attention to America's underrepresented minorities. In that situation, the author's worst nightmares from half a century ago are realized in Bleeding Edge. In Pynchon's vision of the early twenty-first century, people are trapped by new and sophisticated bleeding-edge technologies that, by playing on the informational patterns that shape our beings, provide a false and enslaving refuge from the terrors of the physical world. This is despite the fact that the bouncing 1960s shook up social stagnation. According to a recent study (Collado-Rodrguez, 2016),

Reflecting Maxwell's demon's promise to halt entropy, DeepArcher is effectively granted a condition of sanctuary. The novel's characters, including the site's creators, have faith in the site's ability to defy entropy. However, the site is ultimately nothing more than a hope for everlasting life that can never be realized. According to Justin, it was not designed to evolve but to be timeless: "A refuge. History-free is what Lucas and I were hoping for". (T. Pynchon, 2013,p 373) That's a self-contained setup where data transmission is unaffected by the passage of time.

Maxine, who quickly falls for its allure, is certain that the virtual doorway might help her deal with the tragedies that come with dying. There are those who have found refuge from the effects of what some scholars call a "structurally traumatized state of being" in DeepArcher, a place where legend says the dead can also be met. She even supposedly runs into the assassinated government official Lester Traipse. Yet, after 9/11's horrific events, the deep web's anonymity was compromised. Maxine now visits this transformed grief simulation. "bereaved survivors, perhaps foreign and domestic, bagmen, middlemen, paramilitary [. . .] For those who may be genuine casualties, likenesses have been brought here by loved ones so they'll have an afterlife, their faces scanned in from family photos, . . ." . (T. Pynchon, 2013,P357–58)

DeepArcher is essential because it offers a secure online haven where users may go to "avoid the numerous sorts of real-world suffering." It's only a bunch of pixels, of course, but three Russian hackers turned bodyguards swear it's the "real place."

As Eric tells Maxine, "Look at it, every day more lusers than users, keyboards and screens turning into nothin but portals to Web sites for what the Management wants everybody addicted to, shopping, gaming, jerking off, streaming endless garbage —"

(T. Pynchon, 2013,432).

Information overload, staged grieving, and the misuse of traumatic events all contribute to the system and fulfill the promise of the DeepArcher creators of an information trip with hints of eternal motion. In a study

Bleeding Edge makes indirect reference to a search engine (2013). Rather than following in the footsteps of Joshua Cohen's novel Book of Numbers (2015), which follows a tech mogul as he builds a search engine comparable to Google, Pynchon instead creates a convoluted tech caper revolving around the fate of a startup called DeepArcher, which provides access to the Deep Web. Though the scenario may remind you of a page from a Pynchon book, the technical description of the Deep Web is actually very pedestrian. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) defines the Deep Web as "the parts of the web not indexed by standard commercial search engines," which includes commonplace locations such as private commercial forums, password-protected sites, and sites with no inbound traffic that can only be accessed anonymously by proxy ("Memex"). Amazingly, over 99.7 percent of what we commonly refer to as "the Web" consists of "deep" places that can only be accessed by people who already know what they're looking for (Bergman).

As a result, Bleeding Edge (2013) delves into the depths of the Deep Web—all of the areas that Google chooses to ignore—to contextualize the growth of what Ken Hillis and Kent Puckett have both labeled "the culture of search." (Haeselin, 2017,p1) To emphasize the value of life and highlight the contrast between the virtual world's nihilistic lie with deceptive ideas and informational patterns and the actual world's truth, the novel's narrator takes readers on a journey that alternates between the real and the virtual worlds. That's what makes us who we are as posthumans, and we could be happier without the flesh, while the bad guys might be taking it all to keep the psychological and ideological sway they undoubtedly have over the material world. Again at the center of the Pynchonian universe is terrorism, this time as a means of exploring the ways in which social energy interacts with the binary of life and death, played out in the novel through a variety of conflicting narratives surrounding the 9/11 attacks and their aftermath. It doesn't matter how it looks, it messes with people's emotions and the way society functions. Further, the internet adds to mental stagnation in its users by supporting their attempts to process their sorrow.

Bleeding Edge (2013) portrays virtual space as a new Limbo, existing between the worlds of the living and the dead. Its future is uncertain, but it has the potential to evolve into either a seductive artificial paradise shielded from the effects of entropy or a sad place where reunions with the dead are still possible. In a study (Collado-Rodrguez, 2016) Concern in the novel stems not merely from each character's moral decline, but from the far-reaching ripples it sends across American society as large. The events in Bleeding Edge (2013) are quite current. The story depicts a gang of "entreprenerds" who are determined to make the world into their ideal of a neoliberal techno utopia at any cost. The story centers on Maxine Tarnow, a fraud investigator, and her efforts to learn the true intentions of Gabriel Ice, CEO of hashslingrz, a strong and affluent company conceptualized as the unholy marriage of Facebook and the aforementioned Silk Road bazaar. While investigating hashslingrz, Maxine finds several lofty and possibly illegal endeavors, such as the wholesale purchase and laying of fiber-optic cable to facilitate the growth of the Web (surface and Deep), and the possible acquisition of the fictitious startup DeepArcher, which is a firm working on a software interface for searching the Deep Web (Haeselin, 2017)

Hashslingrz can benefit from using DeepArcher because of the interface's efforts to make the web-below-the-web more approachable and comprehensible. For Pynchon, DeepArcher's

interface, which serves as a digital marketplace and social gathering place, is a mindless gimmick. After Maxine logs in for the first time, she starts wondering about the source and purpose of the images that appear on her screen. (Haeselin) 2017

> Who can afford bandwidth like this? She mouses her way to back of the [train] car, expecting grand vistas of trackscape receding, only to find, instead emptiness, absence of color, the entropic dwindling into Netscape Gray of the other brighter world. As if any idea here of escaping to refuge would have to include no way back. (T. Pynchon, 2013,P 77)

If in the early 21st century social energy takes the shape of information, then the struggle over who controls cyberspace might eventually become a danger to individual liberty. In a study (Collado-Rodrguez, 2016) Those people are free to hold to whatever set of beliefs that benefits them. This future looks a lot like Nietzsche's dystopian picture of a society where subjectivism and interpretation have supplanted absolute truth. According to Nietzsche, "everything" is false". Any and all are allowed "is a perfect example of how Heart of Darkness' moral dynamics might be understood (Nietzsche, 2017a, p 326).

Justin and Lucas's Deep Web reference exemplifies this type of technology. Maxine brings Horst back and tries to get Eric and Driscoll, two programmers, to come in with them while they are homeless. Despite being pursued and without a permanent residence, March maintains her blog through Wi-Fi. As Pynchon shows, the Internet and human life are already deeply intertwined. Therefore, Maxine can't run away from her need to find a place to stay for her and her family for the time being.

The (almost) eternally wealthy, with the help of AIs, literary updates of the artificial intelligence Wiener helped create, rule society with the help of the media, which becomes flooded with conspiracies and paranoia as groups from the lowest reaches of society attempt to control or fight the system. Gibson's protagonists leave their bodies behind almost permanently when they log on to the computer; as a result, they are reduced to informational patterns and given the key to immortality. In a study (Collado-Rodrguez, 2016)

The homeless and Maxine run away from reality for a fake one they found online. The rider boy is privately bathed; there is no private "we will stay in town and hide where everyone can see us". (T. Pynchon, 2013,p 321) The protagonist seems to reveal the author's strategy for indicating the technology with a comment at one point. Man's position and sense of self decline when he realizes there is no unifying wholeness at the core of which he plays a central role. This leads man to deny the world we live in and instead put his confidence in a supernatural afterlife as a means of escape. Finding out this perfect world was an illusion ultimately leads to a nihilistic acceptance of an intolerable reality. "(Nietzsche, 2017a)

Not alone did the people lose touch with one another, but also with God. Consequently, they become a shell of their former selves since doing so goes against their own nature. To follow this line of thinking, they must become nihilists.This demonstrates how people flee the violence and hardships of the actual world for the relative safety of the virtual one, where politicians, the drug trade, party planning, and gangs all exercise virtual power over the physical world (Annika Riekkola, n.d).

When Maxine values equality over the truth, she arrives at nihilism. Nietzsche says, "The deeper one looks, the more our valuations disappear – meaninglessness approaches!".

Reference: (Nietzsche, 2017a, p.326)When a character delves deeper than the surface, he or she discovers something very different. They realize what prevents them from accepting this.

Maxine makes it clear that in reality, nobody has anywhere to go for protection. They would rather exist ridiculously in a virtual world than figure out how to have a roof over their head or fix their issues in the real world. They substitute reality with a virtual world in which they think they are busy and have a fulfilling life, but this fantasy life is empty since it is not based on reality. Characters who haven't found their place in the world often resort to devaluing what they hold dearest in an effort to fill the void in their lives.

Nietzsche, describing the world around the turn of the century, characterizes the tendency to avoid facing reality as a sign of cowardice. When asked about her thoughts on technology, Maxine says that no one can control the internet. Then, her father, who was a political activist, comments that "Your internet, back then the Defense Department called it DARPAnet, the real original purpose was to assure the survival of U.S. command and control after a nuclear exchange with the Soviets." (T. Pynchon, 2013, p416)

Pynchon mentions the internet multiple times because of its significance and importance:

> Yep, and your internet was their invention, this magical convenience that creeps now like a smell through the smallest details of our lives, the shopping, the housework, the homework, the taxes, absorbing our energy, eating up our precious time. And there's no innocence" (T. Pynchon, 2013,p 321)

With examples from throughout the world, this book shows how the internet has developed into a powerful new tool for global innovation and progress. It's a set up that takes data and turns it into something tangible, all inside a framework of open possibilities. It's also tightly centered on command, with everyone connected to one another to prevent anyone from becoming lost. When everyone's phones are interconnected, it becomes impossible to avoid being monitored. According to Pynchon, this means that the internet is in the hands of governments and corporations, and that it has become yet another potential for freedom that has been squandered and converted into a weapon of increasing control and monitoring. In the book, the struggle between the growth of the War on Terror and the regulation of the Deep Web is portrayed (Chappell, 2016, 37). Instead of being a tool for good transformation and liberation, as Maxine asserts, the internet has become a coercive instrument of control in people's lives.

The central preoccupation of the novel is thus "the nexus of technology and terror." (Rich, 2013) Maxine is at a loss to explain Felix Bongueaux's motivations as a hacker when he creates virus detecting software. "You are frowning," says Boïngueaux. "We're beyond good and evil here, the technology, it's neutral, eh?" (T. Pynchon, 2013,p 89) Many societal issues may be traced back to recent technological advances, the most significant of which is security. Numerous people are able to perform better in their jobs because to technological advancements. Even though Maxine won't answer, it's fair to wonder if technology has any biases. Eventually, Maxine stopped trusting people. When she learns there are no longer any morals, she sinks into a pit of ludicrous nothingness. Despite the varying degrees of silliness,

all of the individuals ultimately meet the same fate. But according to Nietzsche, since there is no truth at the center of reality, the effort is bound to failure. Seeking such significance is doomed to failure and will only bring you frustration and disappointment. "

(Nietzsche, 2017a)

To put it bluntly, moral relativism is a threat to our very survival as a species. Maxine's demise is a reflection of Nietzsche's warnings that mankind is in danger of falling into nihilism; that staring into the abyss for too long may lead the abyss to look back into a man. — Friedrich Nietzsche (1885)

The work is replete with phrases that explicitly discuss the post-human nature of modern culture. It's possible that audiovisual equipment is just as unreliable as the human sight. Nothing Maxine sees ever helps any of the heroes, with the exception of March, to understand the root causes or ultimate motivations for the terrorist activities, much less stop them. In Pynchon's novel, March Kelleher openly blames Bush and the Mossad for the attacks and its political objective, and the DVD he gives to Maxine serves as a means of learning about his political interpretation of the terrorist acts. Similar interpretations of the assaults predated the September 2013 release of Bleeding Edge(2013). On the other hand, Pynchon's association of terrorism with cutting-edge technology is indicative of his view that advances in information transmission would always pose a danger to established democratic values. The dangers of posthuman virtuality must be revealed if America is to regain its vitality and independence. In the story, we witness this through Maxine's eyes with the realization that the present is a painful place. In a study (Collado-Rodrguez, 2016)

Pynchon reveals the reality that the internet has transformed individuals into post-humans by altering their subject conditions inside a technological global capitalist society. An increase in the number of people employed in the knowledge sector, as proposed by Romer, is correlated with the development of novel concepts. He thinks of the economy as a huge discovery machine with the potential to radically transform technological traditions. According to him, "self-growth" is where true innovation begins. Therefore, they end up living a very ridiculous existence. According to (Rasheed & Hassoon, 2021)

Pynchon portrays modern civilization as fundamentally scarred in his 2013 novel Bleeding Edge. As viewed via Maxine's search and mediated through his reiterative binary, a societal situation resulting from the theft and control of communal pain, its monetization through online addiction and information overload, and the blurring of distinctions between victim and perpetrator. In a study (Collado-Rodrguez, 2016)

Because only via narrative representation can one (re)construct the source of conflict and so dispel its pathological implications, it is a central tenet of trauma studies that the victim must struggle with language to digest the traumatic experience. (Laub, 1992) But Pynchon seems to disagree with this assessment. Ultimately, his protagonist agrees with more modern critical perspectives on the topic, including those who worry about the inappropriate and excessive use of trauma representations and who may even doubt the efficacy of story in reducing or eliminating traumatic suffering. In the modern era of knowledge, even stories meant to help people get past trauma remain inside their own sphere of influence.

In the near future of Bleeding Edge, virtual reality has become the go-to method for managing the data streams that make up our post-human identities. Due to an updated binary image of reality, we are now emotionally susceptible to the trauma paradigm, which may cause us to worry about our capacity to establish our own identities. The new paradigm, in connection with the political manipulation of trauma narratives, creates a society where many people are victims while a small number of offenders utilize violence and informational fear to ensnare them. It is possible, Pynchon warns, that victims' states would become tied to entropic suffering and death, making them slaves via terror. The reader-witness of trauma representations may be psychologically weakened by the story's pervasive description of the subject as a victim. In a study. (Collado-Rodrguez, 2016)

Maxine's quest for truth and exploration of the Deep Web, both professionally and personally, are reminiscent of Nietzsche's views. "(Nietzsche & Kaufmann, 1974)" This is what happens to Maxine when she goes back to her old life: she becomes jaded, a new woman. Maxine is opposed to the technical falsehoods that emerge as a result of moral nihilism. This appears to be "A fixed standard of conduct is not a sovereign power enthroned above man. It is his own creation. A man obeying an ethical code is trying to lift himself by his own bootstraps, and by bootstraps which have only an imaginary existence"

(Miller, 1992, p. 18)

The most notable distinction between her old and new life is Maxine. Along with raising her two children and working full-time, today's modern lady is also forging her own identity and pursuing her aspirations to become a powerful woman. And right now, she's immersing herself in the new universe of DeepArcher. She's looking for a way out in this virtual world, which is foreign to the average modern guy. In her instance, the answer is the key to unlocking the mysteries of the online world. She hopes that one day this online environment will be on par with reality, allowing her to find peace and tranquility away from the noise of the real world.

The conclusion of Bleeding Edge calls attention to the need of reinstating the effects that can aid in the healing of commodified trauma; it announces the beginning of a new life cycle in a new spring, with motherhood resonating as the most potent everlasting pattern. As she did at the start of the story, Maxine still worries about being late to drop her kids off at school. Due to the effects of physical entropy, her kids have now matured. But now that she's freed herself from posthuman virtuality's grip, our protagonist feels stronger than ever and ready to face against the forces of darkness. When posthuman commodified trauma is ignored, human potential is freed up again. (Collado-Rodrguez, 2016)

It's the life of Superman, as defined by Nietzsche, whether she's blogging or trying to uncover the truth about her firm. He affirms life in a Dionysian fashion, as befits an overman. Despite how superior we may think we are to other humans, Nietzsche argues that we are "still more ape than any ape" and share more in common with other primates than we do with ourselves. Meanwhile, man must tightrope across this abyss of existential meaninglessness in order to overcome nihilism. "(Nietzsche, 2017b)

Conclusion

Thomas Pynchon is the most web-savvy author alive today. Given the current climate in American society, it is hardly surprising that Pynchon's Bleeding Edge (2013) revolves upon technological advancement; all of the novel's published explanations rely on this theme. However, both readings miss the point, which is that the tale is actually about the impact of the search engine, and not only media technology or the Internet. By situating the development of the internet search engine within his story, Pynchon provides a precise explanation for the novel ways in which his characters encounter nihilism and existentialism. This is according to research done in 2017 by Haeselin.

To the characters in this book, and to Punchon himself, the world outside of his own is as real as the world they live in. As a result of her peculiar habits in the online world, Maxine set off on a completely ludicrous adventure. This allows Maxine to go beyond her real-world directives, which is quite unlike her. Her path through nihilism resulted in a new reality that did not fit inside the parameters of the existing world, whose parameters were shaped by society, commerce, and politics. Nietzsche's description of the "superman" in his book may be seen in Maxine.

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