

**MEN AS THE VICTIMS OF PATRIARCHAL SYSTEM IN OCEAN  
VUONG'S "ON EARTH WE'RE BRIEFLY GORGEOUS" (2018)**

**A THESIS**

*Submitted as Partial Fulfilment for the Requirements to Obtain Strata One (S1)  
Degree*



**OLIVIA**

**17019053/2017**

Advisor:

**Delvi Wahyuni, S.S, M.A.**

**NIP. 19820618 200812 2 003**

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS  
UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG**

**2021**

HALAMAN PERSETUJUAN SKRIPSI

**Judul** : Men As the Victim of Patriarchal System in Ocean Vuong's  
"On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous" (2018)  
**Nama** : Olivia  
**NIM** : 17019053/2017  
**Program Studi** : Sastra Inggris  
**Jurusan** : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris  
**Fakultas** : Bahasa dan Seni

Padang, 18 February 2022

Disetujui oleh,

Pembimbing



Delvi Wahyuni, S.S., M.A.  
NIP. 19820618 200812 2 003

Mengetahui  
Ketua Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris



Desvalini Anwar, S.S., M.Hum., Ph.D.  
NIP. 197105251,998022.002

HALAMAN PENGESAHAN LULUS UJIAN SKRIPSI

Dinyatakan lulus setelah dipertahankan di depan Tim Penguji Skripsi  
Program Studi Sastra Inggris Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris Fakultas Bahasa dan  
Seni Universitas Negeri Padang  
dengan judul

Men As the Victim of Patriarchal System in Ocean Vuong's "*On Earth We're Briefly  
Gorgeous*" (2018)

Nama : Olivia  
NIM : 17019053/2017  
Program Studi : Sastra Inggris  
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris  
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

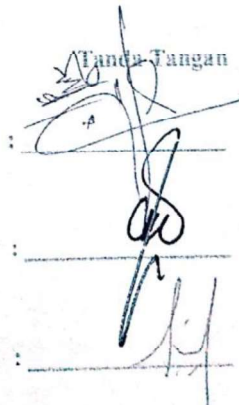
Padang, 18 February 2022

Tim Penguji

Ketua : Delvi Wahyuni, S.S., M.A.

Sekretaris : Dr. Muhd. Al Hafizh, S.S., M.A.

Anggota : Leni Marlina, S.S., M.A.

Tanda Tangan  




UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG  
FAKULTAS BAHASA DAN SENI  
**JURUSAN BAHASA DAN SAstra INGGRIS**  
Jl. Belibis, Air Tawar Barat, Kampus Selatan FBS UNP, Padang Telp/Fax: (0751) 447347

**SURAT PERNYATAAN TIDAK PLAGIAT**

Saya yang bertandatangan di bawah ini:

Nama : Olivia  
NIM/TM : 17019053/2017  
Program Studi : Sastra Inggris  
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris  
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

Dengan ini menyatakan, bahwa Tugas Akhir saya dengan judul *Men As the Victim of Patriarchal System in Ocean Vuong's "On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous"* (2018) benar merupakan hasil karya saya dan bukan merupakan plagiat dari karya orang lain. Apabila suatu saat terbukti saya melakukan plagiat maka saya bersedia diproses dan menerima sanksi akademis maupun hukum sesuai dengan hukum dan ketentuan yang berlaku, baik di institusi Universitas Negeri Padang maupun masyarakat dan negara.

Demikianlah pernyataan ini saya buat dengan penuh kesadaran dan rasa tanggung jawab sebagai anggota masyarakat ilmiah.

Diketahui oleh,  
Ketua Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris

Desvalini Anwar, S.S., M.Hum., Ph.D.  
NIP. 197105251.998022.002

Saya yang menyatakan,



Olivia  
NIM. 17019053

### **Abstract**

This study discusses the expectations of the patriarchal system for men which lead to men as victims of the patriarchal system, which is usually known as a system that is very detrimental to women in Ocean Vuong's "*On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*" that was released in 2018. This research was written using descriptive research method, which is the method used to describe in detail a phenomenon or issue in a literary work. This study provides 2 findings. The first finding is men can become victims of the patriarchal system because some men cannot meet the patriarchal system standards that require men to be masculine, physically and mentally strong, and also be heterosexual. The second finding is, through this research, it is known that Ocean Vuong's "*On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*" (2018) portrays men as victims of the patriarchal system through the main character, Little Dog, and through several events in the novel which are explained through several excerpts.

***Keywords: Heterosexuality, masculinity, patriarchal system.***

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini membahas tentang ekspektasi sistem patriarki kepada laki laki yang berujung kepada laki laki sebagai korban dari sistem patriarki, yang biasanya dikenal sebagai sistem yang sangat merugikan perempuan didalam novel "*On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*" karya Ocean Vuong yang dirilis pada tahun 2018. Penelitian ini ditulis dengan menggunakan metode penelitian deskriptif, yaitu metode yang digunakan untuk mendeskripsikan secara rinci tentang suatu fenomena atau isu dalam sebuah karya sastra. Penelitian ini memberikan 2 temuan. Yang pertama ialah, laki laki bisa menjadi korban dari sistem patriarki karena beberapa laki laki tidak bisa memenuhi standar patriarki yang mengharuskan laki laki untuk menjadi maskulin, kuat secara fisik dan mental dan juga harus menjadi heteroseksual. Yang kedua, melalui penelitian ini diketahui bahwa didalam novel yang berjudul "*On Earth We're*

*Briefly Gorgeous*” (2018), sang penulis menggambarkan laki laki sebagai korban system patriarki melalui karakter utama, Little Dog, dan melalui beberapa kejadian didalam novel yang dijelaskan melalui beberapa kutipan.

***Kata kunci: Heteroseksual, maskulinitas, system patriarki.***

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise to Allah SWT who has given me health and grace. Shalawat and Salam I send to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, for his blessings so I was able to write my final project entitled *"Men as the Victim of Patriarchal System in Ocean Vuong's On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous (2018) properly.*

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to various parties who helped me in completing this final project. I realize that this thesis still has many shortcomings. Therefore, I accept and appreciate constructive critics and suggestions and will use it as a guide to be better in the future.

I hereby express my deepest gratitude to:

1. Mrs. Delvi Wahyuni, S.S., M.A. as my supervisor who played a major role in my final project.
2. Mr. Drs. Muhd. Al Hafiz. S.S., M.A. as my examiner who has contributed to help my final project to be better.
3. Mrs. Leni Marlina, S.S., M.A. as my examiner who also contributed to help me write my final project to be better.
4. All teaching staff of the English Literature Study Program at Universitas Negeri Padang who have provided knowledge to me so that I can reach this point.
5. All my family members consisting of my mother and 2 sisters who have supported me so that I can complete this final project properly.
6. To all friends whose names I cannot mention one by one who has helped me since my first year at Universitas Negeri Padang.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who read this final project. Hope it is useful.

Padang, 10 Desember 2021

The author

Olivia



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Research.....	1
1.2 Focus of the Problem.....	5
1.3 Research Question .....	5
1.4 Purpose of the Research .....	5
1.5 Conceptual Framework .....	6
<b>CHAPTER II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Feminist Literary Theory.....	8
2.1.1 Patriarchal System.....	9
2.1.2 Masculinity .....	11
2.2 The Concept of Victim .....	14
2.3 Previous Study.....	16
<b>CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>18</b>
3.1 Type of Research.....	18
3.2. Object of the Research.....	18
3.3 Technique of Data Collection.....	18
3.4 Method and Technique of Data Analysis .....	19
<b>CHAPTER IV DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>20</b>
4.1 The Expectation of Men in Patriarchal System.....	20
4.2 The Portrait of Men as the Victim of Patriarchal System .....	35
<b>CHAPTER V CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>38</b>
5.1 Conclusion.....	38

5.2 Suggestion .....	39
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>41</b>

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Research**

Patriarchal system, according to Igbelina-Igbokwe (2013:340), is a system in which there are very striking differences between men and women, both in the social and domestic spheres and these differences will only benefit men. To support this opinion, Sultana (2010:1) stated that patriarchal system is a big obstacle to women's progress because men have full control over women. Furthermore, Rothman (1996:1243) describes the patriarchal system as a system that requires men to lead both in the household and public sphere. Thus, the patriarchal system will be very beneficial for men. However, the patriarchal system does not always about men being the leaders for women. This is in line with what Johnson (2004:25) said, that society often associates men as suspects in the patriarchal system, without seeing that men can become victims. Still with the opinion put forward by Johnson (2004:25), the oppression that occurs in the patriarchal system is caused by the system itself, not caused by men. As a result, gender is not the reason why the patriarchal system is very detrimental, but the patriarchal system itself. It is very possible if men can become victims of the patriarchal system.

In the patriarchal system, there is something called masculinity. Referring to Reeser (2015:13), masculinity is everything natural and essential that men do, following the social norms. Supporting the opinion from Reeser, Connel and

Messerschmidt (2015:47) argue that masculinity is a trait that must exist in men. That means masculinity is closely related to men. However, masculinity actually can harm men. According to Hantover (1978:185) masculinity requires men to behave like real men. That is, they must be strong, leading, and have muscular body proportions. Moreover, Gutmann (1997:386) says that masculinity is everything that can be done by men and cannot be done by women. Thus, masculinity is everything about men. It's not just about having muscular body proportions, but men under masculinity system are not allowed to show their emotions. As stated by Horrocks (1994:25), men must break down their weakest side, and also have to lose sensitivity and have to pretend to be strong just to be called a man. Because of this, Hearn (1987:25) in his book entitled "*The Gender Of Oppression*" said that men can be destroyed because of the power they form themselves as a form of masculinity. With this, it can be said that not all men can look and act like masculine men and meet the standards of the patriarchal system. In the end, these men also experience oppression and can be said to be a victim of the patriarchal system.

In the patriarchal system, a man must be someone who has a heterosexual orientation. That is, a person who has an interest in the opposite sex. As stated by Hennessey (2000:943), heterosexuality in patriarchal system is like a norm, which means a rule that guides behavior and something that must be normalized. That means, men seem to be obliged to be heterosexual because it is seen as something that men must follow in society, and if a man prefers to follow another sexual

orientation, they will be seen as people who violate the norms that have been firmly held by society. Another example of sexual orientation is homosexual. Quoting from the opinion expressed by Whitehead (2016:2), homosexuality is a condition where a man has an attraction to the same sex. In line with this, Warren (1972:288) said that homosexuality means that a man feels romantically and sexually attracted to other men. It is undeniable that homosexual men, or commonly called gay men, will get discrimination from patriarchal perpetrator. As stated by Gilman (1985:414) and Gilmore (1990:414), homosexual men or gay men often have difficulty in daily life because they have to stick to the concept of masculinity. Furthermore, research conducted by Humphrey (1999:758) and Schneider (1986:758) refers to a result that gay men experience termination of employment when their sexual orientation as homosexual is revealed. With this, men also can experience oppression and men can become the victim of patriarchal system because some of them do not meet the standard as a man in the patriarchal system.

The novel written by Ocean Vuong entitled *"On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous"* (2018) raises an issue where a man can be victimized by patriarchal system. The main character of this novel is a man named Little Dog. He was raised by his mother who strongly believes the ideology of patriarchal system and Little Dog must adapt to one of the standards set by the patriarchal system; that he must be masculine. On the other hand, Little Dog couldn't live up to his mother's expectations to look like masculine man. Not only he cannot be a masculine man, but Little Dog

also destroys his mother's expectations to be a man based on patriarchal system standards with a sexual orientation that is different from society in general. Little Dog grew up with a sexual orientation that deviates from society in general which tends to be heterosexual. He has an attraction to the same sex, or what is commonly referred to as homosexual. Certainly, his mother strongly resisted to this because it was not in accordance with the patriarchal system. Being homosexual in the patriarchal system is against the nature of men. As stated by McIntosh (1968:186), in a homosexual relationship, there is a male party who is slightly feminine or can be said a male that becomes the submissive party and the other male take a role as a dominant party. Feminine, according to Scarfone (2019:572) is all behavior that is strongly related to women. Certainly, the feminine side really violates the male nature according to the patriarchal system, and because of this Little Dog is very disadvantaged because he himself plays the role of the feminine side. Little Dog's behavior that does not reflect the real man causes him to often get unpleasant treatment from his mother. From this, it can be seen that Little Dog, as a man, can be victimized by patriarchal system.

The author found two studies related to the novel *"On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous"* (2018) by Ocean Vuong. The first one is a study conducted by Birgit Neumann in 2020 entitled *"The Mother Tongue and Translation in Ocean Vuong's On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous"* (2020) discusses how Little Dog's mother, named Rose cannot read and lives as an immigrant in the United States, where language is

one of the most important aspects. The second one is a study conducted by Mannhi Nguyen Tran entitled *Literary and Literal Bodies: Vietnamese American form, affect, and politics in Ocean Vuong's On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2020) focuses on the state of Vietnam and the relationship between America and Vietnam after the outbreak of the war between America and Vietnam which started from 1955 to 1975.

Unlike the two studies above, the study that will be conducted will focus on men as victim of the patriarchal system.

## 1.2 Focus of the Problem

This study will focus on men as the victim of patriarchal system contained in the novel "*On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*" (2018) by Ocean Vuong.

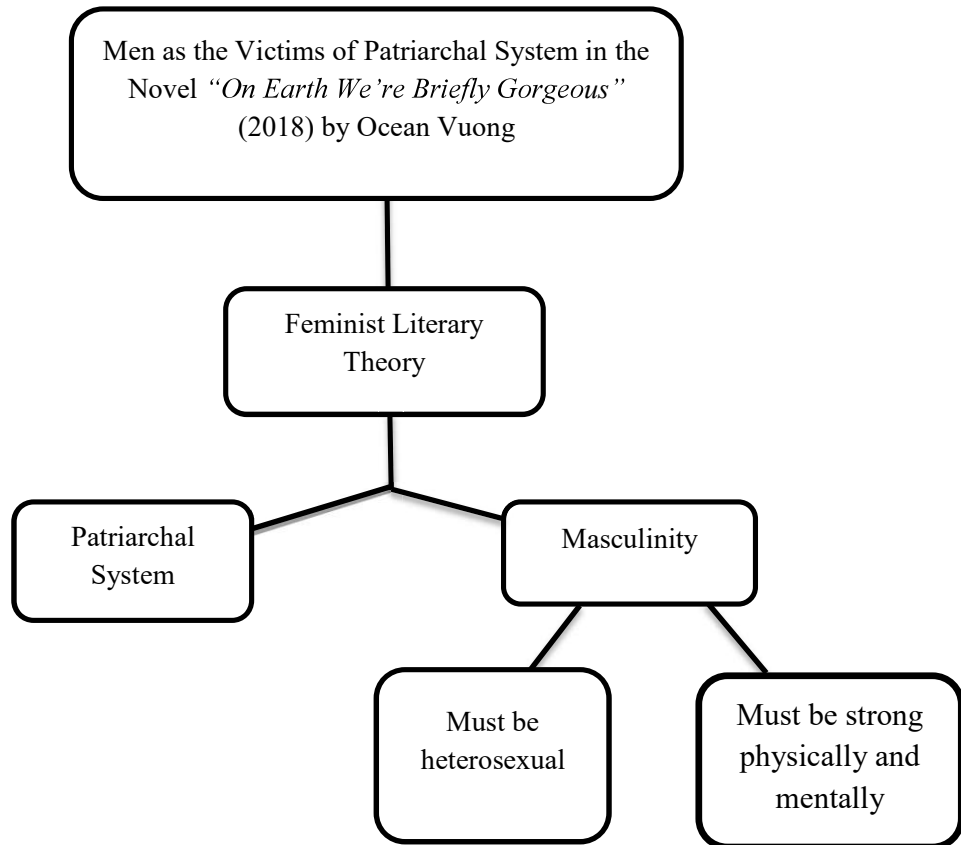
## 1.3 Research Question

1. What are the patriarchal system expectations of men in the novel "*On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*" (2018) by Ocean Vuong?
2. How does the novel portray men as the victim of patriarchal system in the novel "*On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*" (2018) by Ocean Vuong?

## 1.4 Purpose of the Research

1. To discuss the expectation of patriarchal system toward men.
2. To find out how the novel portray men as the victim of patriarchal system.

### 1.5 Conceptual Framework



This study will be analyzed using feminist literary theory. Feminist literary theory is often used by women writers as a means to express their opinions about the patriarchal system through literary works such as prose or poetry. Feminist literary theory also discusses the patriarchal system, where men have power over women both in the domestic and social spheres. Meanwhile, masculinity mainly discusses everything that men should do so that they can be considered real men by adherents of patriarchal ideology. Some things that a man must have to be considered a genuine



man are that they must be physically and mentally strong. Physically strong requires them to have a proportional and muscular body, while to be mentally strong, men are not allowed to express their emotions such as fear or crying. Another thing is, men must be heterosexual. Heterosexuality is a sexual orientation in which a man is attracted to a woman and vice versa. With being heterosexual, men will be able to control women in the domestic sphere.