

**MASCULINITY IN ABSENCE AND MEMORY IN *NIGHT SKY WITH  
EXIT WOUNDS* BY OCEAN VUONG**

***SKRIPSI***

**BY**

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**ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAM  
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES  
UNIVERSITAS KRISTEN INDONESIA  
JAKARTA**

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EXIT WOUNDS* BY OCEAN VUONG**

*SKRIPSI*

Presented to Fakultas Sastra dan Bahasa Universitas Kristen  
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BY:

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**2025**



**FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES**  
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Yosep Liderman Panggabean



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Jakarta, January 31<sup>st</sup> 2025

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## ABSTRACT

The study examines the intricate relationship between masculinity, absence, and memory as portrayed in Ocean Vuong's poetry collection, "Night Sky with Exit Wounds." The primary focus is to explore how familial absence, particularly the lack of paternal figures, shapes Vuong's conception of masculinity and how memory serves as a tool for reconstructing identity. The research aims to investigate the dual role of memory in both reinforcing and reshaping masculine identity, particularly through the lens of trauma and cultural dislocation. Employing a qualitative methodology, the study utilizes close textual analysis of selected poems, including "Aubade with Burning City," "Telemachus," "Someday I'll Love Ocean Vuong", and "My Father Writes from Prison," while integrating theoretical frameworks from masculinity studies and memory theory. The findings reveal that Vuong's portrayal of masculinity is characterized by vulnerability and emotional complexity, challenging traditional notions of manhood that emphasize stoicism and strength. The analysis demonstrates that absence is not merely a void but an active force that shapes identity, allowing for a redefinition of masculinity that embraces emotional depth and resilience. Ultimately, the study concludes that Vuong's work offers a nuanced understanding of masculinity as a dynamic process influenced by personal and cultural memories, suggesting that masculinity can be reimagined as a site of both fragility and strength. This research contributes to contemporary discussions on masculinity, particularly within marginalized and diasporic contexts, highlighting the importance of emotional awareness and historical consciousness in the construction of male identity.

**Keywords:** Masculinity, Absence, Memory

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini meneliti hubungan rumit antara maskulinitas, ketidakhadiran, dan ingatan seperti yang digambarkan dalam kumpulan puisi Ocean Vuong, *“Night Sky with Exit Wounds.”* Fokus utamanya adalah untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana ketidakhadiran keluarga, terutama kurangnya figur ayah, membentuk konsepsi Vuong tentang maskulinitas dan bagaimana ingatan berfungsi sebagai alat untuk merekonstruksi identitas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki peran ganda memori dalam memperkuat dan membentuk kembali identitas maskulin, terutama melalui lensa trauma dan dislokasi budaya. Dengan menggunakan metodologi kualitatif, penelitian ini menggunakan analisis tekstual yang cermat terhadap puisi-puisi terpilih, termasuk *“Aubade with Burning City”*, *“Telemachus”*, *“Someday I’ll Love Ocean Vuong”*, dan *“My Father Writes from Prison”*, sembari mengintegrasikan kerangka teori dari studi maskulinitas dan teori memori. Temuan-temuan tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa penggambaran maskulinitas Vuong dicirikan oleh kerentanan dan kompleksitas emosional, yang menantang gagasan tradisional tentang kejantanan yang menekankan ketabahan dan kekuatan. Analisis ini menunjukkan bahwa ketidakhadiran bukan sekadar kekosongan, melainkan sebuah kekuatan aktif yang membentuk identitas, yang memungkinkan pendefinisian ulang maskulinitas yang merangkul kedalaman emosional dan ketangguhan. Pada akhirnya, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa karya Vuong menawarkan pemahaman yang bernuansa tentang maskulinitas sebagai sebuah proses dinamis yang dipengaruhi oleh ingatan pribadi dan budaya, menunjukkan bahwa maskulinitas dapat ditata ulang sebagai sebuah situs yang rapuh dan kuat. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada diskusi kontemporer tentang maskulinitas, terutama dalam konteks marjinal dan diaspora, yang menyoroti pentingnya kesadaran emosional dan kesadaran historis dalam konstruksi identitas laki-laki.

**Kata kunci:** Maskulinitas, Ketidakhadiran, Ingatan