

Transmission, Crisis, and Identification in Ocean Vuong's *on Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*: A Post-Memory Study

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Abstract. Post-memory is a study of traumatic memory transmission from first-generation to post-generation. A transmission of traumatic memories often leads to complicated effects on the post-generation. This novel tells the story of a young boy called Little Dog, who lives with his grandmother Lan and his mother Rose, who are the Vietnam War survivors. As a post-generation of the Vietnam War survivor, Little Dog has to live in a complex reality because of the traumatic past of his family. This study aims to describe the transmission, form of crisis, and identification of traumatic memories constructed in Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*. It applies the theory proposed by Marianne Hirsch, known as post-memory. It is a qualitative study that uses a descriptive analysis method and exercises several stages, namely, the determination of data sources and data, data collection, and data analysis. The results show that the form of traumatic memory transmission occurring in this novel is familial transmission. Little Dog experiences this transmission because of his grandmother, Lan, and his mother, Rose, daily behavior. The transmission of traumatic memory has caused a crisis within Little Dog that then prompts him to identify the transmitted traumatic memory. The form of memory identification occurring within Little Dog was a combination of idiopathic and Heteropathic. Writing has helped Little Dog to understand, articulate, narrate, and finally accept his familial traumatic memory as a part of his life.

Keywords: *transmission; crisis; identification; post-generation; post-memory*

INTRODUCTION

War is one of the spears of human history. Wars that occurred in various parts of the world have destroyed many sectors of life and ultimately were able to change human awareness about equality between humans and nations. World War I and II caused changes in the world (Ahmadjayadi, Subkhan, & Wiradinata, 2016).

The Vietnam War was one of the wars between 1955 and 1975. This war is known as the Vietnam War since the war took place in Vietnam (Dania N. P., 2014). The Vietnam War was known as a controversial, divisive, and the longest war involving the United States. The Vietnam War had a significant impact on the survival of every level of society involved. This war led to the deaths of millions of people and the massive migration of Vietnamese citizens to several Western countries, especially the United States and Australia. This war not only caused material and immaterial losses, but it also shook the souls of the survivors. The survivors are deeply traumatized by the war and loss. As a historic war, even after 60 years, the information about the Vietnam War exists in books, historical documents, and literary works.

Both Vietnamese and American post-generation who have a strong connection with the Vietnam War have written many literary works about the event. The work by post-generation of a particular traumatic event is known as post-memory work. Post-memory work includes two groups of authors who directly experienced the event and those who did not (Mulyadi & Putra, 2020).

Ocean Vuong is an American-Vietnamese writer born in 1988. He is a post-generation of the Vietnam War survivors. His grandfather was white, and his grandmother was native Vietnamese. They met during the Vietnam War, married, and had three children. His mother is one of them. During the Vietnam War, his family was migrating to the United States. The traumatic memories of the Vietnam War were transmitted to him and re-narrated into a novel of post-memory.

Post-memory is a term associated with memory transmission that occurs between generations. According to Hirsch, post-memory is a memory passed on from the first generation to the post-generation (Hirsch, 2012). The memory transmitted from first-generation to post-generation is traumatic memory, such as war or genocide. Traumatic memories passed to the post-generation can be personal or collective memories. Post-memory is categorized as indirect memory since the post-generation does not experience the event (Nugroho, 2022). Post-memory is memory transmitted to the post-generation that enables them to reconstruct the memory through mediation and the help of their storage (Assa, 2019).

The post-generation gets post-memory through some mediations, such as story narratives, photos, paintings, literary works, and public documents (Furqan, 2022). The post-generation of either individuals or groups who receive the transmitted traumatic memory does not have a direct relationship with the events because the narrative passes the memory. The deep and continuous transmission makes the traumatic memories adopted by the post-generation their memories. Hence, post-memory impacts the post-generation present's life (Ernawati, 2020).

The post-generation that receives the traumatic memory transmission tends to experience a life crisis. The distance that separates post-generation and

post-memory is impossible to be bridged. It leads to confusion and crisis within the post-generation. The crisis within the post-generation prompts them to look for traces of what has happened in the past so that they can have a better understanding of it. The traumatic memory transmission and the crisis will prompt the post-generation to identify the transmitted traumatic memory. The identification will help them accept, avoid, or negotiate the traumatic memory.

On Earth, We're Briefly Gorgeous is a post-memory novel by Ocean Vuong, published in 2019. The novel is a long letter written by an American-Vietnamese young man to his illiterate mother. It tells the story of Little Dog, who lives with his grandmother and his mother, Lan and Rose, who are the Vietnam War survivors. As a child who is growing up in a family with traumatic experiences, Little Dog sees how the traumatic memories of the Vietnam War still haunt his grandmother and mother in their present lives. Little Dog is the post-generation of the family that has to live within the shadow of his family's traumatic memory. The domination of the past traumatic memories shown by his family are seen and adapted by him and have influenced his whole life.

This research uses the post-memory theory proposed by Marianne Hirsch to analyze the process of memory transmission, a form of crisis, and the identification of traumatic memory transmission in a post-memory novel. Three concepts of post-memory theory answer the problem in this study: (1) familial and affiliative transmission, (2) form of crisis, and (3) idiopathic and heteropathic identification.

First, post-memory is the idea of traumatic memory passed from generation to generation. The post-generation plays a role as the receiver of the traumatic memory, so this generation does not have a direct memory of the event as the core of the memory. The transmission of traumatic memory that is so strong and deep makes post-generation memory's storage dominated by traumatic memory narratives of the previous generation. The narratives of traumatic memory transmitted to the post-generation have a huge effect both in the past and in the present (Jati, 2020). The traumatic memory transmission involves media such as story narratives, photos, objects from the past, and family or community behavior as the impact of traumatic events. Hirsch divides memory transmission into two forms, namely familial transmission and affiliative transmission. Familial transmission is memory transmission that occurs within the family. Family is one of the most powerful spheres of traumatic memory transmission due to the presence of nonverbal transmission or body language that occurs very clearly through daily behavior (Hirsch, 2012). Story narratives, photographs, objects from the past, and behavior mediate memory transmission within the family. Meanwhile, affiliative transmission is memory transmission with a broad scope, such as social groups or communities. Affiliative transmission occurs through objects tied to collective memory, such as national archives and museums (Fernanda, 2017).

Second, post-generation is the receiver of memory transmission who can reconstruct memory. In this reconstruction stage, story narratives related to memory transmission tend to have improvements or changes. Improvement and changes occur because post-generation make a returning journey or a trip back to

the places from the past. This return journey creates a spark of memory that has a significant influence between generations (Hirsch, 2012). The transmitted narrative will be received differently by each post-generation, which depends on their memory (Noer, Udasmoro, &Subiyantoro, 2020). At this stage, post-generation tends to have a crisis since the transmitted memory is incomplete. The post-generation is always looking to the traces of the past so that they will be able to understand the memory better. This stage will help post-generation to accept, negotiate, or deny the memory.

Third, after performing memory construction, the process that post-generation goes through is the identification process. The identification process is significant since it is the process of forming a post-memory. The process of memory identification includes two forms, namely Heteropathic and Idiopathic. Heteropathic is the process of memory identification by pulling the self out of transmitted memory. In Heteropathic identification, post-generation creates distance between self and others. This identification allows post-generation to empathize with the victim of the traumatic event (other) but still at a distance between self and other. Idiopathic identification is a process of memory identification by positioning the self as part of the victim of the transmitted traumatic event (other). By placing oneself as part of the victim, the self has no boundaries with the victim (other); it tends to be dangerous for post-generation because the self can no longer distinguish itself from others (Hirsch, 2012). In this case, post-memory is a form of Heteropathic identification in which there is a distance between self and other, connected through family or community (Hanif, Udasmoro, & Astuti, 2021).

The research on the novel *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* has been done by two researchers. The first research was by Olivia and Wahyuni in a journal entitled "Men as the Victim of the Patriarchal System in Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2018)". This research focuses on gender-related discussion using feminist literary theories that include the discussion of heterosexuality, masculinity, and the patriarchal system. The results show that the patriarchal system, which is considered beneficial for men, makes men who cannot meet its standard become victims. In the patriarchal system, men are required to be masculine (both physically and mentally) and must have a heterosexual orientation (Olivia & Wahyuni, 2022). The second research is by Duyen in the form of a thesis entitled "Concepts of Motherhood and the Mother-son Relationship in Ocean Vuong's Epistolary Novel *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019)". This thesis applied the Kishotenketsu Structure theory to analyze the mother-son relationship shown in the novel. There are three results in this research. First, it happens a polarity of the relationship between mother and son in Vuong's novel. The polarity of relationships includes tension and tenderness, violence and love, love and hate, intimacy and distance through the use of Kishotenketsu structure, epistolary, the play of motifs, and the resulting content. Second, being a mother means appearing as a god but being seen as a ghost. Being a mother is also being a monster, and being a mother means suffering for life. Third, being a son means being a witness to the mother, being a reflection of the mother, and being an extension of the mother. The relationship between mother and son is a result of the bond with each other, the existence of

helplessness, the acceptance of ambivalence between violence and tenderness, love and hate, distance and intimacy, and the establishment of a relationship through different phases despite the limitations of their existence and life (Duyen, 2023).

Based on the literature review, it concludes that this current research is different from the previous research on Vuong's novel *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*. This research aims to describe post-memory construction in *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*. The analysis of post-memory examines the form of memory transmission, the form of crisis, and the identification of traumatic memory transmission depicted through Little Dog, the protagonist. This study examines the development of relevant studies, especially memory and trauma studies. This study may also contribute to helping people have a better understanding of the long-term effects of traumatic memories, whether for the survivor of the traumatic event or the next generation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This qualitative research emphasizes understanding problems in social life based on reality and complex and detailed conditions (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). The method used in this research is descriptive analysis. This research exercises three stages: selecting data sources, collecting data collection, and analyzing data.

The data sources in this research include two types, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources. The primary data source in this research is *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*. The secondary data sources in this research are written data that include journals, theses, books, and other sources that support this research. The data in this research are words, phrases, clauses, or sentences related to transmission, crisis, and identification in line with the post-memory concept.

The data collection exercises two stages. First, the researcher conducts repeated reading of the novel *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*. Second, the researcher classifies the data of each variable. Three data variables include the data on traumatic memory transmission, the data on the crisis experienced by Little Dog after the traumatic memory transmission, and the data related to the identification process done by Little Dog toward the traumatic memory transmission.

In the analysis stage, each variable found and classified in the data collection stage is connected to form an in-line analysis. The relationship between each variable indicates the cause and effect of a traumatic memory transmission. The data analysis exercises three stages. The first stage is the analysis of traumatic memory transmission. Traumatic memory transmission examines two different forms of transmission: familial and affiliative transmission. Transmission of familial memory occurs within the family, mediated by story narration, photos, and behavior shared by the family members' survivors in daily life. Affiliative transmission occurs outside the family, which takes a larger context in society. Archives, documents, and testimony videos mediate the affiliative transmission. The analysis of traumatic memory transmissions is in the context of media. The data of the traumatic memory transmission includes the words, phrases, clauses, or sentences related to the familial and affiliative transmission represented in the

novel. The second stage is the analysis of the crisis experienced by Little Dog. The crisis experienced by Little Dog refers to the words, phrases, clauses, or sentences that show conflict and confusion shared by Little Dog after receiving the traumatic memory transmission. The analysis of the conflict and confusion shared by Little Dog refers to three aspects: Little Dog himself, his family, and his society. The third stage is the data analysis of the identification process done by Little Dog. The identification process happens when the traumatic memory transmission and the crisis prompt several responses within Little Dog. The response refers to the words, phrases, clauses, or sentences that indicate the acceptance, the rejection, or the negotiation made by Little Dog toward the traumatic memory transmission. The identification process shown by Little Dog includes two forms: idiopathic identification and heteropathic identification.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Familial Transmission from Lan and Rose

Familial transmission is a traumatic memory transmission process that occurs within the family. This transmission in the novel exercises two mediations, namely, story narratives and daily behavior. The familial transmission refers to Lan, the grandmother, and Rose, the mother of Little Dog. Lan and Rose are survivors of the Vietnam War who witnessed how the war has destroyed their homeland and has taken many lives. They survived the Vietnam War and joined the exodus of Vietnamese citizens to the United States. The Vietnam War has caused deep trauma and made them experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The strong connection with his grandmother and mother influences the process and the impact of traumatic memories transmission received by Little Dog as a post-generation of the family. Surviving the war did not make Lan and Rose have a good life. Based on Hirsch (2012), families who survive the war tend to be damaged and broken. The war that happened in the past has a traumatic effect on the future and is transmitted and adopted by post-generation. In this novel, the process of war memory transmission exercises Lan's narratives. Made into an afternoon tale between grandmother and grandson, Lan's narratives of her youth, homeland, and the Vietnam War sound very interesting and genuine to Little Dog.

“Now this one, Little Dog, this one will really take you out. You ready? Are you even interested in what I’m saying? Good. because I never lie.” A familiar story would follow, punctuated with the same dramatic pauses and inflections during moments of suspense or crucial turns. I’d mouth along with the sentences, as if watching a film for the umpteenth time—a movie made by Lan’s words and animated by my imagination. In this way, we collaborated” (Vuong, 2019, p. 15).

The quote shows that Little Dog is actively involved in memory transmission, as told by his grandmother. By reconstructing her past using his imagination, Little Dog can understand the story very well. By imagining, Little Dog becomes very close to the narrative. The transmitted memory given by his

grandmother left a deep impression on him. By collaborating in projecting the narrative story told by his grandmother, he directly enters and is drawn into the grandmother's narrative.

"I had forgotten myself into her story, and had lost my way, willingly, until she reached back and swatted my thigh. "Hey, don't you sleep on me now!" But I wasn't asleep. I was standing next to her as her purple dress swayed in the smoky bar, the glasses clinking under the scent of motors oil and cigars, of vodka and Gunsmoke from the soldiers' uniforms"(Vuong, 2019, p. 16).

The quote shows that Little Dog is transported deeper into his grandmother's past, mediated by his grandmother's story narratives. In the last sentence Little Dog says that he was there, standing next to his grandmother when she was in the smoke-filled bar. This statement identifies that he is participating in the traumatic event experienced by his grandmother and bringing himself into the traumatic event. The strong connection between a family member, as a grandmother and grandson, makes him want to know more about his grandmother's past. Hence, he projects himself into the story narratives told by his grandmother and tries to understand more of what happened to his grandmother in the past before he was born.

The transmission of traumatic memory is also mediated through the form of everyday behavior since there is a tendency for survivors to perform actions that indicate the presence of trauma within their bodies. The body holds trauma that the memory cannot recall and the mouth cannot speak about. Lan demonstrates this trauma. The war not only affected her mental health but also affected her body. Her body has memorized the trauma, and her daily behavior shows it. The body is a place where trauma is stored and realized. Lan has a problem with her body, muscles, joints, and posture. It causes Little Dog to barely see his grandmother's head when standing at the sink since her back has to bend often (Vuong, 2019, p. 13). The war also makes her schizophrenia worse. Schizophrenia is a severe mental disorder that causes sufferers to experience hallucinations, delusions, thinking disorders, and behavioral changes. After surviving the Vietnam War, Lan often experienced hallucinations and delusions where she felt as if she was still in the past when the war happened. She experienced confusion about living in the past and the present, which caused her to always live in fear. This symptom of trauma refers to war trauma, where survivors live in the shadow of the past and can never truly escape from the past. One night, Lan was on her knees, scratching widely at the blankets, and when she saw Little Dog was awake, she grabbed his mouth, placed her finger over her lips, and said, "Shhh. If you scream, the mortars will know where we are(Vuong, 2019, p. 13).

The Vietnam War still haunted Lan. The movement of scratching the blanket is a compulsive action performed by her as a sign that the war trauma still dominates her present life. It is a sign of the presence of trauma in her body. The quote above shows that Lan kept the traumatic memory of her past, which significantly affects her present life. Lan's daily behavior creates confusion and anxiety within Little Dog. On the one hand, as a grandson who loves his grandmother, he wants to help her and tries to understand her pain. On the other

hand, the more he finds out and tries to understand the traumatic event owned by his grandmother, the greater the risk of him being affected.

Little Dog received a more significant traumatic memory transmission than Rose, his mother. Rose also experienced the trauma of the Vietnam War within herself. Her daily behavior expresses her trauma. She is a mother who cannot control her emotions. She often yells and hits Little Dog. However, as a post-generation, he tries to understand the situation of surviving from the war. His understanding and awareness of the traumatic memory owned by his family made the trauma closer to him. There is a significant tendency within Little Dog to adopt the transmitted traumatic memory into his own.

"I read parents suffering from PTSD are more likely to hit their children Perhaps there is a monstrous origin to it, after all. Perhaps to lay hands on your child is to prepare him for war. To say possessing a heartbeat is never as simple as the heart's task of saying yes yesyes to the body"(Vuong, 2019, p. 9).

The quote shows how trauma not only affects the past but also affects the present. Rose has survived the war and lives in the present, but she speaks, behaves, and thinks oriented to the past. As a war survivor, she tends to be and feel like someone different. It makes her unable to love and be gentle to her son and sometimes makes her feel like a monster rather than a mother. It happened in the morning while she was pruning a basket of green beans over the sink; she said, out of nowhere, "I'm not a monster. I'm a mother" (Vuong, 2019, p. 8).

It shows that there are moments when she feels like a monster and how the trauma of the war has affected her life. She keeps the past, and the past events affect her behavior. She has no power to get out and overcome it. The behavior keeps repeating itself without her control. Like Lan, Rose also lives in the present by never being able to escape from the domination of the past.

"Your mom. She is not normal, okay? She is in pain. She is hurt. But she wanted you, she needed us." she stirred in place. The leaves crackled. "She loves you Little Dog. but she sick. Sick like me. In the brains"(Vuong, 2019, p. 90).

The data shows that traumatic memories that continue to resonate have enormous potential to be adopted by post-generations that live and grow within the family. The statement that families who survive war are often fractured and disrupted (Hirsch, 2012). It strengthens the power of family in traumatic memory transmission. The story narratives and daily behavior demonstrated by Lan and Rose are transmitted to Little Dog significantly and effectively, causing the memory embedded in his life as if it were his own. Based on the discussion above, it can be seen the transmission of traumatic memories and trauma happens within the family. It strengthens Hirsch's (2012) opinion that family is a fertile ground for transmitting traumatic memory and trauma.

The Crisis Experienced by Little Dog

The transmission of traumatic memory, both familial and affiliative, carried a varied impact on each post-generation. The transmission of traumatic memory tends to bring a post-generation experiencing a life crisis. The crisis occurs because of the confusion within the post-generation to articulate and understand the transmitted traumatic memory. Lan and Rose's transmission of memories of the Vietnam War has created a crisis within Little Dog. He has to undergo the burden of a very complex dual reality. The reality shown in this novel is in line with Hirsch's statement, which says that children of survivors who transform themselves into the past will undergo a very complex double reality burden. This double burden occurs because the post-generation tends to repeat the traumas of the previous generation, known as the horrific and involuntary mimetic obsession (Hirsch, 2012).

The strong bonds that exist between grandmother, mother, grandson, and son emphasize the ownership of trauma transmitted within the family. The post-generation tend to take responsibility for the suffering experienced by the family as compensation for their lives. It caused Little Dog to live in the dominance of his family's past.

There is a moment when the mother of Little Dog suddenly says that she is not a monster but a mother. Little Dog convinced her mother that she was not a monster, but he lied (Vuong, 2019, p. 8). It shows a crisis experienced by Little Dog. He realizes that something is wrong with his mother and his family, but as a post-generation war survivor, he cannot say so. It is due to the reason for his and his family's existence, as well as the many lives lost due to the war. He had a crisis between feeling like his mother was a monster and feeling a great deal of guilt for not being able to understand the pain his mother was going through as a result of the war.

The crisis of Little Dog shows his ignorance of the meaning of his and his family's existence. The traumatic memory of the war had a significant impact, both on his family and also on himself. Little Dog's ignorance of his and his family's existence is as in the quote below.

“I don't know what I'm saying. I guess what I mean is that sometimes I don't know what or who we are. Days I feel like a human being, while other days I feel more like a sound. I touch the world not as myself but as echoes of what of who I was. Can you hear me yet? Can you read me?”(Vuong, 2019, p. 46).

The data emphasizes the crisis experienced by Little Dog. The dominance of his family's traumatic past, which is transmitted and shown by the daily behavior, makes him feel that he has lost himself and his family. The resonance of traumatic memories that continue to be emitted by his grandmother and mother erode the existence of the present and refer to the events from the past. His ignorance of the essence of his existence, which sometimes feels like a human being and at other times only a voice, indicates a post-generation life taken away by the past. The dominance of the past makes him trapped between the past and the present, thus making him lose his identity. The resonance of voice from his family's memory shapes and dominates his current life and draws an understanding that his life is

only a resonance that pulled him into a very dark hole by his grandmother and mother (Vuong, 2019, p. 49).

The crisis the Little Dog experienced manifested in his personality, which always doubts everything and makes him hate himself. It shows another impact caused by the transmission of traumatic memories that dominate his life. The doubts that appear everywhere in himself indicate a fear within himself that continues to haunt him, and the fear of his family adopted into his fears that make him afraid of everything, even something he is very sure about. He hated himself for being uncertain about images, clauses, ideas, and journals he used in his writing. Even when he knows something for sure, he fears the knowledge will dissolve (Vuong, 2019, p. 46).

Little Dog, as the post-generation of a traumatized family, knows the war that his family had been through, but he cannot fully understand the trauma and the pain. There are so many things that are unable to be bridged between the past and the present. It makes Little Dog confused and experiences a crisis. As a post-generation, he felt responsible for the war experienced by his loved ones, but his inability to completely understand left him in a crisis and frustration.

“Sometimes, when I’m careless, I think survival is easy: you just keep moving forward with what you have, or what’s left of what you were given, until something changes—or you realize, at last, that you can change without disappearing, that all you had to do was wait until the storm passes you over and you find that—yes—your name is still attached to a living thing”(Vuong, 2019, p. 102).

The quote emphasizes the pain and trauma experienced by his mother and grandmother cannot be fully understood by Little Dog. Sometimes, he thinks that survival is easy, but his broken belief emphasizes the fact shown by his family. It reinforces Hirsch’s arguments that war trauma is impossible to understand by the post-generation who did not experience the event. No matter how much effort is needed to articulate and understand the pain and the trauma left by the war, there are always things that are impossible to bridge. Little Dog’s crisis is a result of his inability to understand the pain and suffering owned by his mother and grandmother, as well as the unfulfilled sense of responsibility to heal the wounds.

The Identification of Transmitted Traumatic Memory by Little Dog

The transmission of traumatic memories and the crisis experienced by Little Dog determine his identification process. The memory identification shown by Little Dog is a combination of idiopathic identification and Heteropathic identification. In the beginning, Little Dog’s identification of the transmitted traumatic memory tends to be idiopathic since he adopts the memory as his own. It shows by the time he projects himself into his grandmother’s memory. Referring to the memory of his grandmother shows that he has adopted and has been dragged deeper into his grandmother’s past traumatic memory. There are no boundaries between the *self* and the *other*, which makes Little Dog lose himself and stay in his family’s traumatic past.

As he grows up, the identification of the transmitted traumatic memory changes to Heteropathic identification. He gains an understanding that the traumatic memory belongs to his mother and grandmother, not himself. The awareness helps him to create distance between the *self* and the *other*.

“I didn’t know that the war was still inside you, that there was a war to begin with, that once it enters you it never leaves—but merely echoes, a sound forming the face of your own son”(Vuong, 2019, p. 2).

The data shows an identification process carried out by Little Dog. As a post-generation of a traumatic family, he has no memory of the Vietnam War, but he realizes that her mother has it. He knows that the war had happened in the past, even though the impact of the war still presents today. By realizing the different times of the past and the present, he creates a distance between them. He can pull himself out of the domination of his family's traumatic past and live in the present.

“Even after all these years, the contrast between our skin surprises me—the way a blank page does when my hand, gripping a pen, begins to move through its spatial field, trying to act upon its life without marring it. But by writing, I mar it. I change, embellish, and preserve you all at once”(Vuong, 2019, p. 62).

The quote shows how writing helps Little Dog to understand, articulate, and re-narrate the traumatic events experienced by his family into something better, beautiful, easily understood, and acceptable for him as the post-generation. His acceptance of the traumatic events experienced by his family makes him realize that he and his family were not born of war, but they were born of beauty. The acceptance allowed him to continue his life and find the value of his existence of himself and his family. He can see the good inside the traumatic event by considering it as a gift from the past so that they will be able to celebrate life.

“All this time I told myself we were born from war—but I was wrong, Ma. We were born from beauty. Let no mistake us for the fruit of violence—but that violence, having passed through the fruit, failed to spoil it”(Vuong, 2019, p. 172).

The data shows that Little Dog represents a change in the identification form of transmitted traumatic memory, from idiopathic to heteropathic identification. It shows that the identification process of traumatic memory by post-generation alters. It changes over time as the storage of the post-generation changes. The changes in the identification process in Little Dog happen because he gains an awareness of his existence, which enables him to create a distance between the transmitted traumatic memory and his memory, between the past and the present. Writing mediates his identification process. Writing helps him understand, articulate, negotiate, and accept his family’s traumatic past without letting himself in it. Writing has helped him bridge the distance between the past and the present, between the experienced and non-experienced, even though, in

the end, the distance between the past and the present can never be fully bridged (Hirsch, 2012).

CONCLUSION

As a post-memory novel, *On Earth, We're Briefly Gorgeous* is a narrative related to traumatic memory transmission, crisis, and identification. The transmission of familial memory done by Lan and Ros dominates the narrative. In transmitting the traumatic memory and trauma, story narratives and daily behavior are used as mediators. The transmission of traumatic memories received by Little Dog caused him to experience a life crisis. The crisis appears as a result of his confusion and his inability to understand the transmitted traumatic memory, which then makes him unable to recognize the value of himself and his family. The crisis also causes him to experience self-doubt and makes him hate himself. The sense of responsibility to understand and heal his family's suffering due to the war has caused a crisis within him worse. The traumatic memory transmission and the crisis experienced by Little Dog encourage him to identify the transmitted traumatic memory. He represents a combination of idiopathic and heteropathic identification. Idiopathic identification is dangerous since it will affect a Little Dog's present life. However, as he grew up, his identification changed to heteropathic identification. By adopting heteropathic identification, he can create distance between the *self* and the *other*.

The discussion shows that traumatic memory transmission is a complex process and always followed by a risky effect, which has a great potential to disrupt post-generation's present life. Since every post-generation has a different background and storage, the impact of traumatic memory transmission is also different and not fixed. It creates many ways of reconciliation, and writing is one of them. In this novel, writing enables Little Dog to reconcile with his family's traumatic memories. Writing enables him to change his self-perception and live without being dominated by voices from the past.

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