COMING INTO PUBLIC AREA IN *THE SECRET LIVES OF BABA SEGI'S WIVES (2010) BY LOLA SHONEYIN*

Thesis

Submitted as partial fullfilment for the requirements to obtain strata I (SI Degree)

By

Wanda Rifani Astuti Nst

1305409/2013

Advisors:

Dr. Kurnia Ningsih, M.A

Dra. An Fauzia Rozani S, M.A

English Department

Faculty of Language and Arts

Universitas Negeri Padang

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PERSETUJUAN SKRIPSI

Judul	**: Coming to Public Area in *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's wives (2010) by Lola Shoneyin***
Nama	**: Wanda Rifani Astuti Nst**
NIM	**: 1305409/2013**
Program Studi	**: Sastra Inggris**
Jurusan	**: Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris**
Fakultas	**: Bahasa dan Seni**

Padang, Februari 2018

Disetujui oleh,

Pembimbing I	**Pembimbing II**
Dr. Kurnia Ningsih, M.A.	**Dra. An Fauzia Syafei, M.A.**
NIP. 19540626 198203 2 001	**NIP. 19660424 199002 2 001**

Mengetahui
Ketua Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris

Dr. Refnaldi, S.Pd., M.Litt.
NIP. 19680301 199403 1 003

PENGESAHAN

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

Coming to Public Area in *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's wives (2010) by Lola Shoneyin*

Nama	**: Wanda Rifani Astuti Nst**
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Jurusan	**: Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris**
Fakultas	**: Bahasa dan Seni**

Padang, Februari 2018

Tim Penguji

		Nama	**Tanda Tangan**
1.	**Ketua**	**: Leni Marlina, S.S, M.A**	**:**
2.	**Sekretaris**	**: Desvalini Anwar, S.S, M.Hum, Ph.D**	**:**
3.	**Anggota**	**: Devy Kurnia Alamsyah, S.S, M.Hum**	**:**
4.	**Anggota**	**: Dr. Kurnia Ningsih, M.A**	**:**
5.	**Anggota**	**: Dra. An Fauzia Rozani Syafei, M.A**	**:**

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	: Wanda Rifani Astuti Nst
NIM/TM	: 1305409/2013
Program Studi	: Sastra Inggris
Jurusan	: Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas	: FBS UNP

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Ketua Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris

Dr. Refnaldi, S.Pd.,M.Litt.
NIP. 19680301 199403 1 003

Saya yang menyatakan,

Wanda Rifani Astuti Nst
1305409/2013

COMING TO PUBLIC AREA

IN THE SECRET LIVES OF BABA SEGI'S WIVES (2010) BY LOLA SHONEYIN

Nasution, Wanda Rifani Astuti. 2018. "Coming to Public Area in *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's wives* (2010) by Lola Shoneyin. Thesis. Universitas Negeri Padang.

Pembimbing: 1. Dr. Kurnia Ningsih, M.A
2. Dra. An Fauzia Rozani Syafei, M.A

Abstrak

Skripsi ini merupakan analisa novel *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's wives* karya Lola Shoneyin. Masalah yang diangkat adalah sejauh mana novel ini merefleksikan isu perjuangan dua karakter perempuan yang ingin memasuki ruang publik. Tujuan penganalisaan ini adalah mengungkapkan sejauh mana novel ini menggambarkan topik perjuangan perempuan dalam memasuki ruang publik dan sejauh mana karakter, konflik dan setting memberikan kontribusi untuk mengungkapkan hal tersebut. Analisa ini dikaitkan dengan konsep (theory) Marxist-feminist oleh Holmstorm, C. Delphy, dan H.Booth. Hasil analisa menunjukkan bahwa kedua karakter perempuan dapat memasuki ruang public dengan cara menjadi mandiri. Karakter yang pertama memasuki ruang publik dengan menjalankan bisnis dan mengemudi mobilnya sendiri. Karakter kedua adalah seorang sarjana yang memasuki ruang publik dengan cara mengaplikasikan ilmunya. Dia mengajarkan istri lainnya untuk membaca dan menulis. Dia memberikan pengetahuan untuk karakter wanita lainnya untuk menyadari pentingnya memasuki ruang publik.

Kata Kunci: publik, mandiri, perempuan.

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The Writer

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

From generation to generation, society possesses the concept of gender roles that relates to culture. Most society influenced by patriarchal system controls gender how to behave. The norms that society creates generally consider acceptable, appropriate, and desirable for people. The rule, men were the breadwinner of the family while women took care of the house and children, is made by this system. The way to restrain women with this rule is by marriage. This concept makes the imbalance between gender in aspects of life such as career, social, and spiritual and has restrain women's movement in environment. In order to fight this condition women have to struggle to get knowledge and increase the awareness about the equality between men and women in every aspects of life.

Society makes two different areas of works for each gender; domestic area for women and public area for men. In Merriam-Webster (2010) *domestic area* is defined as a particular extent of space that devoted to home duties and pleasures. In another word, domestic area is a place to take care of house and the entire family members. This area is a place for women who refer to the wife and daughter. They only do works such as cleaning, cooking, and taking care of the house. Women do not deal with politic, economic, or academic works. They removed from those activities.

In contrary, in Merriam-webster (2010), *public area* is defined as devoted to the general or national welfare. It is a place for men. Lerner (1989:239) says the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that men hold power in all the important institutions of society and that women are deprived of access to such power. This statement supports a very clear sign that a particular situation or feeling exists of male is one of the reasons which makes men more likely to hold and powerful in public area. Then, Walby (1990:20) states:

> "In this system women's labor power, women's reproduction, women's sexuality, women's mobility and property and other economic resources–are under patriarchal control that explains the movement of women have been limited the amount or growth by men from time to time to keep them subordinate and cannot make something new or changes in society."

From the statement above, the men have controlled every movement of women in every aspects of life. They create some kind of chains to limit women in everything so that they cannot make changes in society, especially to change their own life. They believe that they have power to make decisions about how a country, place, company, even someone is organized. As St. Thomas Aquinas (1997: 115) declared that woman is an 'imperfect man', he believed that men are the one who superior and godlike to women. It is also to make men have fully control of women. Men believe women as others.

This condition makes the disadvantages for women. The belief that women have no skill to do public works and consider as uncivilized become the barrier for women. So that women increase their awareness not to be controlled by others. They break this belief to show that they also have knowledge and skill in every aspects of public business such as economic, politic, and even academic works.

In reality, women have entered public area and alter this condition. For example, Mo abudu is the only African woman on the list with a ranking of 56 on a list of 100 people from all over the world. She is the head of one of Africa's most successful new media ventures, the Nigeria-based television network Ebony Life TV, endeavors to tell real African stories and change the conversation around the continent. Then, Chimamanda Ngozi Adhicie is a Nigerian writer who is awarded with MacArthur Genius Grant in 2008. Her works have win many awards, such as *The American Embassy* awarded in O. Hendry Price in 2003 , *Purple Hibiscus* won Commonwealth Writer's Price in 2004, *Americanah* won National Book Critics Award in 2013, and many more. This is also show in the novel, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* (2010), women characters leave domestic area and enter public area. Women have their awareness about the importance to have their own career. They become independent. They alter the condition of being limited from public business by earning money by themselves, doing business, and applying knowledge.

The issue about coming to public area is interesting to be analyzed. The novel by Lola Shoneyin shows the differences of gender roles. It makes people

realized that women still limited from the public and controlled by men. This work also incredible in visualized the distress of women's fighting to make changes in their life. The novel *The Secret Lives of Baba's Segi's wife* (2010) by Lola Shoneyin shows the acts of Nigerian women to leave domestic and come to public area by doing business and applying knowledge.

1.2 Coming to Public Area

In this study, *coming to public area* is the acts done by woman who go out and leave domestic area to have their own career in public area and become independent. They resist and alter the condition of being limited and controlled by husband. They are committed to become independent without having restriction from society and change their lives. The characters of this novel are coming to public area by doing business and applying knowledge.

There are two keywords to form the terminology in this study. They are *coming to* and *public area.* According to SPEARA (2016), Indonesia's higher education directorate ministry of Education, *coming to* is defined as when something new begins especially something that will cause a lot of changes in the inner part of place or area. While *public area*, in Merriam-webster (2010), is devoted to the general or national welfare.

1.3 A Brief Description of the Author's Biography

Titilola Atinuke Alexandrah Shoneyin was born in Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State, south-western Nigeria, in 1974. She is the youngest of six children and the only one girl. Her parents, Chief Tinuoye Shoneyin and Mrs Yetunde Shoneyin are Remo indigenes from Ogun State. She was married to Olaokun Soyinka, a medical doctor and the son of Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka. When Shoneyin was six years old, her parents sent her to boarding school in the UK, where she attended Cargilfield School, Edinburgh; The Collegiate, Winterbourne, Bristol; Fettes Junior School, Edinburgh. She returned to Nigeria after her father was imprisoned by then military government and completed her secondary education at Abadina College. She later got her BA degree from Ogun State University in 1994.

Shoneyin's early writing consisted mainly of poetry and short stories. Her first work appeared in *Post Express* in 1995, which features a short story about a Nigerian woman who leaves her husband for an Austrian woman. This story initiated dialogue about homosexuality within a Nigerian context. Her first volume of poetry, *So All the Time I was Sitting on an Egg*, was published by Ovalonion House, Nigeria, in 1998. Shoneyin attended the renowned Iowa International Writers Programme, Iowa, USA, in August 1999 and was also in that year a Distinguished Scholar at the University of St. Thomas. Her second volume of poetry, *Song of a Riverbird*, was published in Nigeria in 2002. While

living in England, she obtained a teaching degree from London Metropolitan University in 2005.

Shoneyin completed her first novel in 2000. Her second novel, *Harlot*, received some interest, yet the story of a young girl growing up in colonial Nigeria to make a fortune as a "Madame" remains unpublished. Shoneyin moved on to her third novel, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*, which was published in 2010. Cassava Republic Press, Nigeria, published Shoneyin's third poetry collection, *For the Love of Flight*, in February 2010. *Mayowa and the Masquerades*, a children's book, was also published by Cassava Republic, in July 2010. She has also written for newspapers, including *The ScotsmanThe Guardian*, and The Times on issues such as racism, Nigeria's tradition of polygamous marriage, the Nigerian terrorist group Boko Haram and the elections of now President Muhammadu Buhari.

The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives (2010) won the 2011 PEN OAKLAND Josephine Miles Literary Award, won two Association of Nigerian Awards, and longlisted for the 2011 Orange Prize. The novel has been translated into seven languages. In an interview with Intervension in features in 2012, Lola Shoneyin said:

> "Freedom for me is being able to speak and act in a way that gives me personal fulfilment, without the constraints of a vigorously hypocritical society and without causing anyone distress. Sex, as a theme, is important to me because even though across religions and societies it is an

> essential ritual that ought to be pleasurable, we have found ways to bleed the pleasure out of it, we have taught ourselves to suppress that which is instinctive. The woman is targeted here. She has become the one who cannot, must not enjoy sex, as if sexual pleasure for her translates to promiscuity and narcissism. This is of great interest to me.
>
> It is this lack of courage and ownership that sometimes prompts me to create female characters and poet personae for whom sex is complex. This is the truth. Like freedom, sex has been made complex for a lot of women. This shouldn't be the case." (page 2)

Freedom for Shoneyin is having the feeling of being happy and satisfied with your life because you are doing interesting, useful, and important things in life. The reality of being limited and feeling slumped is restrain women in every aspects of life which created by culture itself.

1.4 *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives (2010)*

The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives (2010), written by Lola Shoneyin, reflects the issue of coming to public area. In this analysis, *coming to public area* is the acts done by Nigerian women to go out and come to public area to change their life. The husband, Baba Segi, has four wives. He controls each wife and holds power in the house. He is portrayed as an arrogant man. The first wife, Iya Segi, was forced by her mother to marry him. She marries him because she wants to take her money back. The second and third wife, Iya Tope and Iya Femi, are submissive to their husband. The fourth wife, Bolanle, marry Baba Segi to redeem

herself and to be free from her mother. They have to obey husband. They forced to do only domestic works; cleaning, cooking, and taking care of entire family members. However, Iya Segi and Bolanle resist and alter this condition. While, the second and third wife still enjoy domestic area by being obedient to their husband. Iya Segi and Bolanle commit to be independent. They leave domestic and come to public are by doing business and applying knowledge.

First character is Iya Segi. She is the first wife of Baba Segi. She refuses to be economic dependence to her husband. She becomes independent. She tries to pursue her dreams; by having her own property and being free. In order to reach her dream, she works harder in earning money. She sells *fufu.* She runs sweet store. She expands her profit by having cement store in Ibadan. She manages her business well. Then, she attends driving school to expedite her movement. She has her own car and drive by herself.

Second character is the fourth wife of Baba Segi, Bolanle. The way she is coming to public area is by applying her knowledge. Bolanle starts to educate her family, Baba Segi's house. She teaches other wives. She teaches Baba Segi's children. She helps the children to do their task. She educates Segi, the first daughter of Baba Segi, to have awareness to have her own opinion, to express her thoughts, and not to intimidate by man. Then, Bolanle stands on her choices and take the risk bravely. She shows that woman has choice in life.

1.5 Problem of the Study

Coming to Public area appeared as an important issue in Lola Shoneyin's novel, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* (2010). Thus, there are some research questions used to analyze the issue of coming to public area done by Nigerian women which are formulated as follow:

1. How far do the characters in novel *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* (2010) expose issue about coming to public area?
2. To what extent do the setting, plot (conflict) support the issue about coming to public area?

1.6 Purpose of the Study

The aims of this study are to find out:

1. How far the characters, Iya Segi and Bolanle, exposed the topic of coming to public area.
2. This study is going to investigate to what extent the characters, setting, plot (conflict) in novel *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* (2010) by Lola Shoneyin supports the issue of protagonist to go out from domestic area and coming to public area.

1.7 Previous Study

The analysis of *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* (2010) that focus on analyzing about coming to public area has not been found yet. However, there are

some studies that related to this analysis and give contribution and inspiration in analyzing this novel. First, the analysis by Ezenwanebe's women's liberation struggle. Second, Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity, and the New Thought Movement, 1875–1920 by Beryl Setter in *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences,* Vol. 36(4), 508–509. Both of the studies give the contribution and inspiration.

The first analysis by Osita C. Ezenwanebe (2010) entitled *Issues in Women's Liberation Struggle in Contemporary Nigeria: A Study of Ezeigbo's Hand's that crush Stone.* This analysis studies some of the issues arising from the character's quest for freedom. This analysis focus on reconstructing the image of women characters in the hope of freeing them from the bonds of social oppression, making them visible and overfull enough in modern, democratic Nigeria. Ezenwanebe use character, setting, and plot to reveal the meaning of this novel. This analysis dealt with the concept from Marxist and Feminist perspectives by Laily Philip (2006). It is about the critical perspective and social movement in revolves around the eradication of sexism. The result of the analysis is female protagonist seek emancipation outside the confines of traditional culture, demanding both man and oppressive cultural tradition on their way to freedom.

Another study that gives contribution to this analysis is *Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity, and the New Thought Movement, 1875–1920* by Beryl Setter in *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences,* Vol. 36(4), 508–509. This study revealed the meaning by using the fictional devices such as character, plot (conflict), and setting. This study revealed the role

of gender in the promulgation of New Thought. She demonstrated the centrality of women in the early New Thought movement, as framers of doctrine, as teachers, and as students. The analysis explored the arguments of the movement's writers over the "manly" and "womanly" virtues, and how they translated into competing visions of the larger social order. This study dealt with feminist theory by Flex. Many women saw the movement as part of a religious surge that would herald a new "woman's era". The result of this study is the movement of women for reaching "women's era" and this study became the most of the major philosophical debates of the time.

Both of these studies give contribution and inspiration in analyzing the novel *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* (2010) by Lola Shoneyin. This study using fictional devices; character, plot (conflict), and setting like those related studies above. Moreover, these studies reveals about the struggle of characters to survive and free themselves from the condition of being discriminate, intimidated, and limited by others.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This analysis uses fictional devices such as; character, plot (conflict), and setting to reveal the meaning. First, Character is important element to reveal the meaning of novel. According to Abrams (1999):

> "Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by reader as being endowed with

> particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it—the dialogue—and from what they do—the action." (P. 32)

From the statement above, it can be concluded that the way to analyze the character should focus on character's action, thought, conversation, and reaction toward conflict. It also gives the readers ability to know the qualities of the characters. In this novel, there are two women characters; Iya Segi and Bolanle. They represent the women who leave domestic and come to public area. They increase their awareness to be autonomous. The first character runs business to go out from domestic area. She becomes economic independent. She runs sweet store. She has cement stores. While, the second character come to public area by applying knowledge. She educates the entire family members; she teaches manner and etiquette, she teaches the other wives to write and to read, she educates the daughter to express her thought and not to be intimidated by others. It indicates that the second character is an intellectual and educated woman.

Another fictional device is plot. Plot is sequence of events for the things that happen in the story. It has conflicts to make up the stories. Guerin (2005) states that conflict can be divide into internal conflict and external conflict. Internal conflict is the conflict within the characters itself. While, external conflict is the struggle between character and an outside force such as nature, other character, and environment. In this analysis, the characters confront with the internal and external conflicts. Internal conflict is emerged when she has to decide

which one is the right way to come to public area. The first character releases it by doing business. She refuses to be economic dependence to her husband. Then, the second character chooses to educate other people. Furthermore, the external conflicts occur when the society and the husband prevent them to leave domestic area.

Setting appears not only as place and time but also anything that make up the story such as social condition, custom, and life style. According to Kurtus (2007) setting is a particular place and times to create the way characters feel in an event in the story. In order to recognize and understand setting can be seen in where the story takes place, the time of every event in the story, whether it is in the past or present and social condition and custom. It is also supported by Krarer (1999) who says that setting denotes the location, historical period, and social surrounding in which the action of a text develops. Briefly, setting is not only about where or when the story takes place but also anything that related that help readers to understand the meaning of the story such as custom and historical period. In this analysis, the story takes place in Nigeria where women are considered as second person. Furthermore, the protagonists experience difficult situation from society that makes them limited from public area.

The analysis of this novel is supported by text and context based interpretation to bring up understanding. Glenn and Grey (2014) states

> "Text based interpretation is the approach that based on the analysis and interpretation to text itself, which nothing more than what

> is whole text about. Meanwhile, context based interpretation in the approach that considers the historical period during which work was written including the circumstances of culture, history, political, and social." (P. 178)

It can be concluded that the text-based interpretation takes the meaning of the story only in the text itself. Meanwhile, Context based interpretation involved the phenomenon that happen in the world that connect with the story. This study analyses incriminates the circumstances of culture, history, and social related to gender roles between men and women.

Those elements of fiction are analyzed by Marxist-feminist concept. Women's conscious have sought to disturb the certainties such a patriarchal culture and to assert a belief in sexual equality. Holmstrom (1984) states that to end women's oppression can only achieve by working. He saw the economic dependence might be the driving factor of women's subjugation to men.

It is also supported by Christine Delphy (1981) who states that marriage is a labor contract that gives men the right to exploit women. It implies that marriage becomes bondage for women. The wife becomes the slave for the husband without salary. This attitudes and behavior have existed for a long time in an organization and have become accepted as normal even though they are bad. Furthermore, socialist feminists concern with the roles allocated to women that are independent of class status. Thus, it makes space between sexes; domestic area for women and public area for men.

Thus feminists fight against this unfair condition. They argue the way to break free from women's oppression is by working. Considering sexism and gendered division of labor of each historical era is determined by the economic system. They go towards specifying how gender and class work together to create distinct forms of oppression and privilege for women and men of each class.

Women realize this condition give the disadvantages for them. They begin to free themselves from patriarchal rule that restrain them to enter public area. They amplify their awareness about the equality between sexes so that they can participate in every aspects of public business. They want to be free from the binds and prove women are not uncivilized or imperfect man. They want to establish and achieve political, personal, and social equality. Heather Booth (1972) says:

> "Women and all people have a right to safe and good working conditions; but these need to be fought for all workers" (P.28)

From the quotation above, it describes that the work place should be done fairly and correctly for all people in the world, including women. Women have to fight the rights to work in every aspect of public works. The beliefs of men were the breadwinner of the family while women were the one who responsible for house works has change. Women must fight to show that they can also enter the place where they can earn money to support the others. Thus, to end gender roles in every aspects of life can achieve by working and being independent. As Booth (1972) states:

> "We must present intermediate goals that are realizable as well as desirable to show the necessity and possibility of organizing and we must develop collective actions." (P.32)

To attain the goal of entering public area, women have to hold their principal on and work harder. The opportunity to do public works for women can improve their lives. It also gives women the sense of their power.

Thus, coming to public area in this analysis refer to the acts done by two characters to go out from domestic area and coming to public area. There are two protagonists as the central of this analysis. They were trapped in polygamous household. They were bound to rule and restriction made by husband and society. They only positioned in domestic works. However, they begin to leave domestic area and come to public area to change their life. They leave domestic area by doing business and applying knowledge.

1.9 Methodology

The analysis of novel *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* (2010) by Lola Shoneyin is done through text and context-based interpretation. Fictional devices such as character, plot (conflict), and setting are used to analyze this novel. To evoke the acts of coming to public area, characters reaction toward conflicts are used in this analysis. Then, the setting deals with circumstances and atmosphere. It gives contribution in process of analysis by giving help in revealing the meaning. Plot and conflicts in this novel give important role to reveal the conflicts that characters faced. Those elements are analyzed based on

how characters are going out from domestic area and coming to public area. Those elements are analyzed based on feminist concept; Marxist-feminist by Holmstorm, C. Delphy, and H.Booth.

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