



**THE EFFECTS OF RACISM TOWARD BERNADINE'S  
MARRIAGE AND HER LOVE AFFAIR IN *WAITING TO  
EXHALE***

**THESIS**

**A Thesis Presented to the English Department  
The Faculty of Letters, Jember University  
as one of the requirements to get  
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2006**

## **PAGE OF DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to:

1. My beloved father and mother : *Alm Harun Al Rasyid* and *Sartijah*
2. My beloved step father : *T.S. Yudi Irawan*
3. My beloved brothers : *Fariz Al Ayubi* and *Moch.Rafi Ali Mufti*
4. My teachers and my lecturers
5. My almamater

**MOTTO:**

**No human race is superior; no religious faith is inferior. All collective judgments are wrong. Only racists make them.**

*( Elie Wiesel 'the winner of Nobel prize for peace in 1986')*

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby stated that the thesis entitled "The effects of racism toward Bernadine's marriage and her love affair in *Waiting to Exhale*", is an original piece of writing. I certify that the analysis and the research described in this thesis have not already been submitted for any other degree or any publications.

I certify to the best of my knowledge that all sources used and any help received in the preparation of this thesis have been acknowledged.

Jember, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2006

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## APPROVAL SHEET

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## ABSTRACT

**“The Effects of Racism toward Bernadine’s Marriage and her Love Affair in *Waiting to Exhale*,” Rosyida Firmani, 010110101128, 2006, 44 pages.**

Racism, the belief that one race is superior rather than another race, has been occurred since the first men are created by God. Human firstly socializes only with another similar physical appearances. This gathering which is known later as races happens in each part of our world, including America. America, which is used to be popular as New World, has been attracting many races to taste the beauty of this virgin island. Unfortunately, the Black race, one of races who came to America, did not arrive as citizen but as the slaves of White America. Afterwards, even the slavery was abolished two hundred years ago, today, the Blacks are still threatened racist by American society. Terry McMillan, as one of the black women authors tries to raise this social problems and inspires her to write *Waiting To Exhale*. In *Waiting to Exhale*, the readers are presented the story of four American Black Women’s life in 1992 which is fulfilled by their love story, their friendship, and racial treatments that happens to them.

This thesis will analyze about the effects of racism toward Bernadine’s marriage, one of main character in this novel, and her love affair afterward. The problems that will be discussed in this thesis are how racism influences Bernadine family’s life then how racism gives effects to Bernadine’s marriage and her love affair. To avoid the complex discussion, this thesis is limited only to Bernadine’s character, especially to her marriage and her love affair. Meanwhile, there are two approaches which are used in this thesis, those are Psychological and Sociological approach.

*Waiting to Exhale* is a story about American Black Women’s life in 1992. Bernadine Harris as one of the main characters of this novel plays as a house wife who has been abandoned by her husband for a white girl. John Harris has a stereotype of himself that in American society the white race is the best race among the others. He believes that if he wants to be a part of them, he should change his life into white also. Since that time, John’s life changes into White lifestyle, even the way he manages his family’s life. Furthermore, he decides to replace his Black’s wife with a white woman. Those racial actions gives negative effects in Bernadine’s life. Her marriage runs into divorce, her children gets suffer and, even Bernadine herself traps into a forbidden love affair.

Through the novel, it can be seen that racism toward the Blacks still exists in America until this recent times.

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Finally, I do hope that this thesis may give beneficial and valuable contribution for them who concern with literature.

Jember, June 2006

Rosyida Firmani

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