

PREFACE

Toni Morrison, being the most prominent Afro-American author, has firmly secured her place in the American literary canon. She uses the vehicle of fiction to represent the social context, to expose inequality, racism and social injustice faced by the blacks and conveys the lived experience of the black people. She thus furthers the lived experience of the black people. She thus furthers the Afro-American agenda through the depiction of protest in her novels and attempts to pursue subjects and narrative possibilities which had not been previously realized in fiction. She, in her fiction, asserts the artistic, cultural and political value of blackness to resist the ideological and cultural hegemony of whiteness. Her notion of protest involves affirming the value of the modes of speech, behavior and community, which have been marginalized and denigrated.

Morrison's writing is influenced by race-based political events such as civil rights movement that galvanized 1960's America. She in her lifetime has been a witness to some fundamental changes ranging from legalized segregation to the election of America's first black president. Morrison grew up in pre civil era and soaked the prevailing Afro-American ideology of protest. Hence themes such as racial awareness, pride and solidarity resonate in her novels. Her novels detail the

corrosive effects of white hegemonic ideology and culture on black cultural and communal identity and articulate the need for cultural memory and consciousness in the assertion of a contemporary individual identity. The present work explores various nuances of protest in the six most representative novels of Toni Morrison namely The Bluest Eye, Sula, Tar Baby, Jazz, Beloved and Love. The first chapter provides an introduction to Toni Morrison by presenting a brief biographical sketch and an overview of her fictional work. The second chapter explores The Bluest Eye and studies the disastrous consequences of the imposition of the white aesthetic standards on the self perception of black people and recommends an inner acceptance of blackness and its aesthetic standards. The third chapter presents a study of Tar Baby and Beloved and explores the use of 'memory of the past' and fraternal bonding as viable strategy to resist the oppressive onslaught of the white cultural values. The fourth chapter studies Sula and exhibits how ethical standards in a society afflicted by bourgeois, patriarchal and racial values can distort the lives of people and so their tyranny must be protested and opposed. The fifth chapter presents a detailed account of Jazz and Love and exhibit how solidarity among women could be an effective means of protesting against the dehumanizing impact of racial, patriarchal and capitalist forces. The last chapter 'Conclusion' presents the findings of the study.

At the end of a long, painstaking and enriching period, this thesis has finally seen the light of the day. It would have remained forever quiescent if it had not been for the help and encouragement of many people to whom I can give nothing but express gratitude of this junctures.

Bharti Yadav