

# **ALL AT SEA :**

A POSTCOLONIAL STUDY OF MELVILLE, CONRAD,  
GOLDING, UNSWORTH AND ROGERS

by

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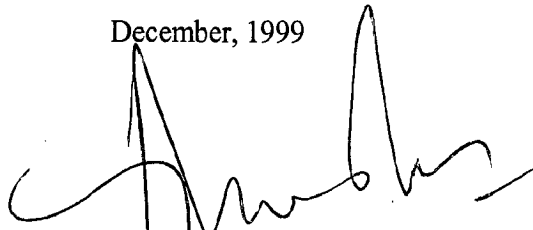
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## CERTIFICATE

It is certified that the thesis entitled “**ALL AT SEA: A Postcolonial Study of Melville, Conrad, Golding, Unsworth and Rogers**”, being submitted by **Harbir Singh Manku** to the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is a record of bonafide research, carried out by him. The candidate has worked under our guidance and supervision, which to our knowledge is worthy of consideration for the award of the degree.

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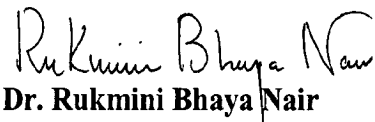
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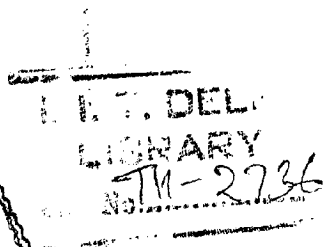
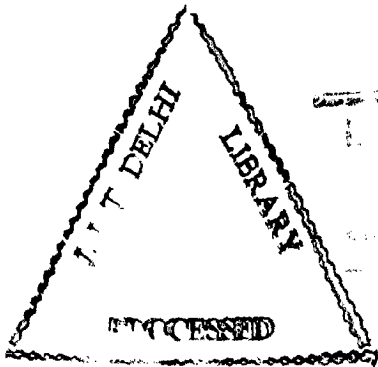
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**HARBIR SINGH**

## ABSTRACT

The sea and the colony have a direct link in the history of the colonial world. The postcolonial theories doing the rounds in contemporary times have succeeded in generating a new interest in both canonical and non-canonical history and literature. Frantz Fanon and Edward Said have been instrumental in making the world more aware of the hegemonistic cultural practices as well as writers of the West. It has become possible to examine canonical writers like Melville, Conrad and Golding and point towards how they, despite their best efforts, marginalise the presentation of non-whites. Jane Rogers and Barry Unsworth, who belong to the contemporary world become live examples that show how a dominant wave of ideas in a historical time helps base their fictional creations in that ideology.

In the juxtaposition of the two groups one notices how the latter group centers the marginalised natives in the earlier writers, who had actually lived during the times of active colonization, are centered by the latter group.

In a postcolonial scenario it is possible to see how Melville in "Benito Cereno" cannot resist showing the 'mutinous' blacks on a slave-ship to be incorrigible villains. In Conrad's *The Rescue* he swerves away from the 'race' issues to 'class' issues. This is in spite of having spent much energy on race-relations in many of his previous works. The contemporary writers, on the other hand, engage themselves in taking us back to the period of slavery in Africa and to the colonising by the "First Fleet" in Australia.

An attempt is made to approach the five authors through two kinds of triads. One triad involves the race, class, gender equations and the other one leads us through history and literature to ideology. These triads, on the one hand, get engaged in a dialogue with each other and on the other, help in the evaluation of earlier writers in the light of the later ones.

This study does not attempt to foreground theoretical subtleties in the postmodern and postcolonial ideologies. Though it bases its arguments in the “postcolonial couch” yet it reads against postcolonial theoretic readings of literary creations. The text is kept in the absolute center and close reading has been deliberately sustained so that the teleology and movement of the narrative lead on to the epistemology of the works. It must be categorically stated that this is more an anti-colonial study than a postcolonial one even when one understands that the former ideology is contained in the latter one.

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