

**ST JOSEPH’S UNIVERSITY, BENGALURU -27**

**MA ENGLISH – III SEMESTER**

**SEMESTER EXAMINATION: OCTOBER 2023**

**(Examination conducted in November /December  2023)**

**EN 9118: BRITISH LITERATURE**

**(For current batch students only)**

**Time: 2  Hours     Max Marks: 50**

**This paper contains 2 printed pages and 4 parts**

Instructions:

* You are permitted to use a dictionary.
* Do not exceed the word limit.

**I. Answer ANY ONE of the following questions in 200-250 words: (1x15=15)**

1. The Romantic era witnessed shifts of various kinds from the worldview that dominated the Age of the Enlightenment/Neoclassical Era. These shifts in ideology and sensibility are manifested in most major works of the writers and thinkers of the Romantic period. Choose any two of these shifts for a focused answer and illustrate it using two or three relevant texts listed in the syllabus.
2. The literature of the Victorian era was characterised by a high ‘moral seriousness’ at one level and, perhaps as a reaction, by a sort of mischievous playfulness at another level. Respond critically to this statement and illustrate your answer with references to relevant texts.

**II. Answer the following questions in 150-200 words. (2x10=20)**

1. Comment on the way Wordsworth presents the encounter with the ‘Sublime’ in the ‘stolen boat’ section of ‘The Prelude?
2. How does the title of Gaskell’s novel, *North and South*, point to a clash of worldviews in England between two regions and two classes. Illustrate with reference to the text?

**III. Answer ANY ONE of the following questions in 5-6 lines: (1x5=5)**

1. Which observation of Dorothy Wordsworth regarding her more famous brother did you find most interesting and why?
2. Lewis Caroll’s “Alice in Wonderland’ is full of vivid and memorable phrases and lines. Which one of them did you find particularly memorable and why?

**IV. Read the following article on Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and answer the questions that follow**

There’s nothing like going back to the classics. Many people don’t realize that one of the best-selling books of the nineteenth century was Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. It has never been out of print. As a novel it has its issues, but the tale strikes something deeply responsive in readers. And the story may not be what you think. You see, the movies have made Frankenstein’s monster into something Shelley never intended. Indeed, today’s Frankenstein monster is pieced together from various monster images, just like the mad doctor’s original creation.

After a lapse of many decades, I decided to read *Frankenstein* again. It must’ve been in my tweenage years that I’d last done so. I recall putting the book down thinking how sad it was. Something happens, however, when you return to a book after a span of many years. This time I was looking for the mad doctor and hoping to determine if the monster deserved that title at all. The story won’t let any easy answers come. Victor Frankenstein is a young, impulsive man carried away by an idea. He doesn’t contemplate the consequences of what he’s doing. It’s like buying a dog without considering that you’ve just realigned your priorities for several years. Not noticing that his growing creation is hideous to the eyes until it’s too late, he simply abandons the creature without a word. (The parallels with an absentee father should be obvious.)

The creature—monster is a bit harsh—wants acceptance. He isn’t a mute brute with bolts in his neck. He’s not a robot. He is Adam kicked out of the garden with no Eve. He doesn’t start out evil. The rejection of his creator forces him to murder in a desire for revenge. Shelley’s world was deeply influenced by the Bible as well as Milton. Religious concepts are constantly under evaluation. The child of radical parents—her mother was one of the first feminists on record—Shelley questions everything here. No doubt in Victor’s mind he’s created a demon. Or has the monster created Frankenstein? Until the very final pages nobody else actually sees his monster, or at least hasn’t seen him and lived to tell about it. What fuels the creature’s fury is rejection. Evil doesn’t just happen in the world of the mad doctor.

Sympathies are divided in *Frankenstein*. We feel for the monster. His creator never apologizes. Never reflects that he somehow shares (or completely owns) the blame for the sad fate of that which he’s created. Living under a Frankenstein presidency, these unanswered questions hang thickly in the air. Lack of foresight seldom ends well. The monster isn’t always who you assume it to be.

(sourced from a blogpost by Steve A Wiggins, May 22, 2017. https://steveawiggins.com/2017/05/22/revisiting-frankenstein)

**IV. Answer the following question in 150-200 words: (1x10=10)**

1. Which observation by the above writer do you find yourself in agreement or disagreement with and why? What further observations about the novel do you wish to add based on your own reading of *Frankenstein*?