



Sample essay 3

'Characters faced with difficult choices are the most interesting to read about.'

Explore the methods which writers use to present characters faced with difficult choices. In your response, you should focus on *Jane Eyre* to establish your argument and you should refer to the second text you have read to support and develop your line of argument.

Grade C answer

Jane Eyre uses morals and reason to make decisions that are often wise. One of the main themes in the novel is deciding between reason and passion. For example, one of the struggles she faces is whether to marry St John or to marry Mr Rochester. Jane starts to learn Hindostanee, the language of India, at the request of St John. She greatly admires him and his intelligence, but nevertheless is wary of his cold power over her.

Jane claims to have heard Mr Rochester's voice calling her, and she says that this was not superstition and not a miracle but 'the work of nature'. Throughout the novel, Jane turns to nature as a mother figure, and looks to it for guidance. She describes her relationship with Mr Rochester as 'a counteracting breeze blew off land, and continually drove me back'. She blames nature for her decisions, not always fully. For example, after Jane and Rochester's wedding is cancelled, due to Jane's decision, she finds comfort in the moon. She tells us 'it spoke to my spirit: immeasurably distant was the tone, yet so near, it whispered in my heart — "My daughter, flee temptation."' Jane answers 'Mother I will', and she flees Thornfield. We can see here that Jane sees the moon as a mother figure, and listens to her 'advice', although we know that she is orphaned and has never had a mother to guide her when making decisions. The moon reassures her in her imagination and justifies her choices.



This is similar to Melanie in *The Magic Toyshop*, when she makes the decision to try on her mother's wedding dress and venture into the garden. The idea seems like a good one to her, until her companion of the moon disappears and she is once again alone and frightened. Melanie notices that 'the moon was beginning to slide down the sky.' As soon as this happens, the atmosphere becomes more sinister, and Melanie realises that she is in trouble. Both Jane and Melanie look to the moon as a mother figure and as a symbol of guidance and they feel lost without it when making certain decisions.

Jane faces a tough decision when deciding whether to marry St John and go to India, or whether to go back to Mr Rochester. Initially, Jane didn't marry Rochester as he was already married to the mad Bertha Mason. However, Jane is always thinking of Rochester, and in the end she realises that she should follow her heart. St John says to Jane, 'God and nature intended you as a missionary's wife.' Once again, reference to nature is used, St John is saying that nature is Jane's guidance and is also being very patronising by telling Jane what is intended for her life. Also there is a religious element here with the reference to God. Furthermore, Jane says 'It was as if I had heard a summons from Heaven.' A summons is a call from authority to do something. She is comparing St John to God and saying he is the authority to follow. Heaven is the abode of God, and, effectively, by saying this, Jane defies God's request by not marrying St John.

In *The Magic Toyshop*, Finn faces a difficult decision about Melanie. They are close to having sex, but Finn says, 'You are too young.' This shows that Finn goes with his head rather than his heart, unlike Jane who gives in to heart. This is because it would have proven to be little more than rape, desired by Uncle Phillip. Finn refuses to do what he believes Phillip wants, which shows that he does have strength of character. Finn chooses to go with his head rather than his heart, which is opposite to Jane.

A superstitious element arises when Jane says that she hears Mr Rochester's voice calling her. She says 'the wondrous shock of feeling came like the earthquake which shook the foundations of Paul and Silas' prison.' Once again there is a religious element as Paul and Silas in prison is a Bible story. An earthquake occurred which shook the foundations of the prison and opened the cell doors. This is over-exaggerated, as Jane is comparing her struggles and decisions with those in the Bible. Jane seems to make wise decisions based on reality, however, in this case she is overtaken by her imagination. When Finn tries to kiss Melanie in the pleasure garden, Carter writes 'she waited in agony of apprehension'. Finn is in control; Melanie leaves it up to him whether they kiss or not, whereas, although Jane appears to be the more dominant, Rochester still overpowers her in her mind.



Examiner's comments

(NB: This question is only marked for AO1 and AO2)

AO1

- An appropriate balance between the core text and the supporting text, together with an awareness that the novels have been put together because both deal with the emotional development of their heroines
- Accurate writing but little critical terminology used
- Informed and relevant responses to the texts
- Focuses on the statement rather than the question

AO2

- Limited analysis of structure and form
- Some analysis of language