

Habitually obedient to John, I came up to his chair: he spent some three minutes in thrusting out his tongue at me as far as he could without damaging the roots: I knew he would soon strike, and while dreading the blow, I mused on the disgusting and ugly appearance of him who would presently deal it. I wonder if he read that notion in my face; for, all at once, without speaking, he struck suddenly and strongly. I tottered, and on regaining my equilibrium retired back a step or two from his chair.

'That is for your impudence in answering mama awhile since,' said he, 'and for your sneaking way of getting behind curtains, and for the look you had in your eyes two minutes since, you rat!'

Accustomed to John Reed's abuse, I never had an idea of replying to it; my care was how to endure the blow which would certainly follow the insult.

'What were you doing behind the curtain?' he asked.

'I was reading.'

'Show the book.'

I returned to the window and fetched it thence.

'You have no business to take our books; you are a dependent, mama says; you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not to live here with gentlemen's children like us, and eat the same meals we do, and wear clothes at our mama's expense. Now, I'll teach you to rummage my bookshelves: for they are mine; all the house belongs to me, or will do in a few years. Go and stand by the door, out of the way of the mirror and the windows.'

I did so, not at first aware what was his intention; but when I saw him lift and poise the book and stand in act to hurl it, I instinctively started aside with a cry of alarm: not soon enough, however; the volume was flung, it hit me, and I fell, striking my head against the door and cutting it. The cut bled, the pain was sharp: my terror had passed its climax; other feelings succeeded.

'Wicked and cruel boy!' I said. 'You are like a murderer—you are like a slave-driver—you are like the Roman emperors!'

I had read Goldsmith's History of Rome, and had formed my opinion of Nero, Caligula, &c. Also I had drawn parallels in silence, which I never thought thus to have declared aloud.

'What! what!' he cried. 'Did she say that to me? Did you hear her, Elisa and Georgiana? Won't I tell mama? but first—'

He ran headlong at me: I felt him grasp my hair and my shoulder: he had closed with a desperate thing. I really saw in him a tyrant, a murderer. I felt a drop or two of blood from my head trickle down my neck, and was sensible of somewhat pungent suffering: these sensations for the time predominated over fear, and I received him in frantic sort. I don't very well know what I did with my hands, but he called me 'Rat! Rat!' and bellowed out aloud. Aid was near him: Elisa and Georgiana had run for Mrs. Reed, who was gone upstairs: she now came upon the scene, followed by Bessie and her maid Abbot. We were parted: I heard the words—

'Dear! dear! What a fury to fly at Master John!'

'Did ever anybody see such a picture of passion!'

Then Mrs. Reed subjoined—

'Take her away to the red-room, and lock her in there.' Four hands were immediately laid upon me, and I was borne upstairs.

How does Charlotte Bronte present family and home in this extract from chapter 1 and extract and in the rest of the novel?

In Charlotte Bronte's seminal novel, 'Jane Eyre,' the theme of family and home is explored through the protagonist's journey from a harsh and unloving childhood to her eventual self-realisation and the discovery of true love. Bronte's masterful use of language, structure, and form techniques not only convey the protagonist's emotional and psychological state but also reveal the author's intent to challenge societal norms and expectations of the time. This essay will examine how the theme of family and home is developed in 'Jane Eyre,' focusing on Chapter 1, Jane's relationship with her cousin John Reed, and her ultimate reconciliation with her own identity and past.

In Chapter 1 of 'Jane Eyre,' Charlotte Bronte sets the stage for Jane's tumultuous journey by highlighting the oppressive nature of her childhood home, Gateshead. Bronte uses detailed imagery and vivid language to depict the cruelty Jane faces from her cousin John Reed. For example, when Jane describes John's menacing appearance, she notes, 'I knew he would soon strike, and while dreading the blow, I mused on the disgusting and ugly appearance of him who would presently deal it' (Bronte). The use of the words 'disgusting' and 'ugly' emphasise Jane's feelings of repulsion and fear towards John, foreshadowing the violence that follows. Moreover, Bronte employs dialogue to illustrate the power dynamics at play within the Reed household. John's derogatory language towards Jane, such as calling her a 'rat' and a 'dependent,' underscores her marginalisation within the family. The fact that Jane feels unable to respond to John's abuse, instead focusing on 'how to endure the blow which would certainly follow the insult,' highlights the powerlessness she experiences in her home environment. This power imbalance is further reinforced through the reactions of the other characters, who blame Jane for the altercation rather than addressing John's violent behavior. The injustice of Jane's treatment elicits a sense of indignation and empathy from the reader, as they recognise her struggles to find a sense of belonging in a hostile environment. Bronte's use of the first-person narrative and retrospective narration in 'Jane Eyre' serves to establish an intimate connection between the reader and the protagonist. Jane's honest and introspective voice allows the reader to experience her emotions and thoughts firsthand, creating a sense of shared understanding and engagement with her struggles. For instance, when Jane compares John to 'a murderer' and 'the Roman emperors,' the reader is privy to her internalised feelings of anger and defiance, as well as her burgeoning sense of self-worth. This emotional connection allows the reader to fully appreciate Jane's development as a character, as she navigates the complexities of family and home throughout the novel.

In addition to language techniques, Bronte's careful use of structure in Chapter 1 contributes to the emotional impact of the scene. The events unfold chronologically, allowing readers to experience Jane's escalating distress firsthand. The mounting tension is palpable as Jane anticipates the physical abuse that she has become accustomed to. Bronte's deliberate pacing builds suspense and heightens the emotional turmoil that Jane endures. Moreover, the form of the narrative is significant in conveying Jane's emotional journey. The first-person perspective immerses the reader in Jane's thoughts and feelings, enabling a deep understanding of her psychological state. When Jane declares, 'You are like a murderer—you are like a slave-driver—you are like the Roman emperors!' (Bronte, 1847, p. 14), the reader is privy to her

innermost thoughts, witnessing the intensity of her emotions. This technique creates a profound connection between the reader and the protagonist, evoking empathy and fostering a shared emotional experience. Bronte's purpose in employing such structural and form techniques is to illuminate the psychological effects of abuse and isolation within the context of family. By closely following Jane's perspective, readers are compelled to confront the complexities of power dynamics and the enduring resilience of the human spirit. Bronte, drawing from her own experiences and the prevailing social climate, seeks to challenge societal norms and prompt readers to reevaluate their understanding of family and home.

Bronte's utilisation of detailed descriptions and exploration of Jane's emotions further amplifies the effects on the reader. As Jane narrates her ordeal, she describes the physical pain, the flow of blood, and the pungent suffering she experiences (Bronte, 1847, p. 14). These visceral details evoke a deep sense of sympathy and outrage within the reader. Through the emotional and physical vulnerability of Jane, Bronte exposes the profound impact of abuse on an individual's psyche. The emotional and psychological effects on the audience are manifold. Readers are immersed in Jane's anguish and are compelled to question the societal structures that permit such mistreatment. Bronte's purpose in crafting these effects is to foster introspection and encourage readers to advocate for justice and compassion. By depicting Jane's resilience and her defiance against oppression, Bronte aims to inspire a sense of empowerment within the audience, urging them to challenge their own circumstances and strive for personal growth. Bronte's own experiences as a governess and her intimate knowledge of the challenges faced by women in the Victorian era inform her purpose in creating these emotional and psychological effects. By drawing attention to the issues of power, abuse, and gender inequality, Bronte seeks to ignite social change and engender empathy in her readers. The historical context of the Victorian era, characterised by its rigid social conventions and limited opportunities for women, supports Bronte's intention to shed light on the plight of marginalised individuals and advocate for their agency and liberation.

In Chapter 1 of 'Jane Eyre,' Charlotte Bronte skillfully employs language, structure, and form techniques to depict the theme of family and home. By utilising the 'bildungsroman' plot structure, Bronte not only showcases Jane's personal growth and transformation but also provides a platform for critiquing societal norms and expectations, particularly those regarding women's roles and opportunities. Jane's determination to overcome societal constraints and forge her own path underscores the novel's message of resilience, self-discovery, and the importance of personal agency. Therefore, perhaps, Bronte's novel serves as a critique of what she saw as oppressive societal norms and advocates for a more equitable and just society, where women have the freedom to define their own lives and destinies. Moreover, Jane's journey throughout the novel demonstrates the importance of maintaining self-respect and relying on oneself in the face of adversity, such as when she says, 'I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself.' Despite the many challenges she encounters, Jane stays true to her convictions and never compromises her

principles. This message underscores the value of personal integrity and the strength derived from self-reliance.