

STYLE

The use of the **heroine as narrator** gives unity to the novel. Everything is seen from **Jane's point of view**, with whose experience the author has identified herself, and invited the engagement of every reader. Jane often addresses the reader explaining how she feels and makes decisions.

The story is told in the **first person**; the language is straightforward and develops differently according to the style and mood of each character. This **emotional use of language** conveys the author's concern with the nature of human relationships. There are also repeated motifs, symbols and images: the workings of the supernatural, important dreams, patterns of light and dark, oppositions of warmth and cold.

COMPETENCE: READING AND UNDERSTANDING INFORMATION

1 READ about *Jane Eyre* on pages 252-254 and answer the following questions.

- 1 What are the settings of the novel?
- 2 What phases of the heroine's life do they correspond to?
- 3 What kind of woman is Jane Eyre?
- 4 What kind of hero is Mr Rochester?
- 5 What themes are linked to Jane's character?
- 6 How is the story narrated?
- 7 What is the language like?
- 8 What new element did *Jane Eyre* add to the tradition of the English novel?



T35 Jane and Rochester

*Jane has just discovered that Rochester is already married to a madwoman, Bertha Mason. Although she loves him, she feels that her only choice is to leave Thornfield Hall and start a new life.*

This was true: and while he spoke my very conscience and reason turned traitors<sup>1</sup> against me, and **charged** me with crime in resisting him. They spoke almost as loud as Feeling; and that clamoured wildly. 'Oh, comply<sup>2</sup>!' it said. 'Think of his misery; think of his danger – look at his state when left alone; remember his headlong<sup>3</sup> nature; consider the recklessness<sup>4</sup> following on despair – soothe him<sup>5</sup>; save him; love him; tell him you love him and will be his. Who in the world cares for *you*? or who will be **injured** by what you do?'

Still indomitable was the reply – 'I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more **unsustained** I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God; sanctioned by man. I will hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad – as I am now. Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation: they are for such moments as this, when body and soul rise in mutiny against their rigour; **stringent** are they; inviolate they shall be. If at my individual convenience I might break them, what would be their **worth**? They have a worth – so I have always believed; and if I cannot believe it now, it is because I am insane – quite insane: with my veins running fire, and my heart beating faster than I can count its throbs<sup>6</sup>. Preconceived<sup>7</sup> opinions, foregone determinations<sup>8</sup>, are all I have at this hour to stand by: there I plant my foot.'

Charlotte Brontë  
*Jane Eyre*  
(1847)

Chapter 27

4.7



- 1 **turned traitors.** Si trasformarono in traditori.
- 2 **comply.** Acconsenti.
- 3 **headlong.** Impetuosa.
- 4 **recklessness.** Avventatezza.
- 5 **soothe him.** Consolalo.
- 6 **throbs.** Battiti.
- 7 **Preconceived.** Preconcette.
- 8 **foregone determinations.** Decisioni precedenti.