

"The Hitchhiker" by R. Dahl: Examine the role of first-person point of view in engaging the reader.

In literature, a point of view is a perspective from which a story is narrated, the way an author tries to engage the readers and show what takes place in a tale, story, or novel. The first-person point of view means that the story is told from the perspective of the storyteller, with the use of personal pronouns "I" or "we". This literary tool helps create a strong link between the narrator and the readers as they are on the same level of awareness. In this way, the first-person narration helps authors make the most unbelievable circumstances credible and plausible for readers.

A vivid example of such narration is "The Hitchhiker" by R. Dahl, a short story that presents a car trip of two unacquainted people. The driver who tells the story picks up "a small ratty-faced man," the character and behavior of whom turn out to be distinctly inexplicit and extraordinary. Together they find themselves in an unpleasant situation on the road caused by speeding. The narrator is scared while the hitchhiker seems to be calm and confident.

Writing from the first point of view, R. Dahl attracts the readers by making the mystery of the hitchhiker's personality **exciting for the audience**. The more genuine interest the narrator demonstrates to his passenger, the more engaged the readers are. The first-person perspective in "The Hitchhiker" creates **suspense** and **irony**, which are the essential elements of the **plot twist** at the end of the story.

The plan:

- 1) *The first-person point of view makes the story credible and, as a result, worthy to read.*

Intratextual evidence: the narrator is reliable, we know personal information about him: "I was driving up to London by myself.", "I knew just how it used to feel to be standing on the side of a country road watching the cars go by.", "I'm a writer".

- 2) *The narrator's suspense about the mysterious personality of the hitchhiker creates the intrigue that keeps readers' attention.*

Evidence: from the beginning the narrator is sincerely interested in his passenger; he asks him quite a lot of questions, makes some assumptions, e.g. "He didn't seem to like that question.", "So what do you do?" I asked him.. "Is it something you're ashamed of?". This stimulates the readers to think critically and try to guess who the hitchhiker is.

- 3) *First-person narration is the underlying factor for the situational irony and surprising twist at the end of the story.*

Evidence: In the end, the narrator knows that the hitchhiker is a 'fingersmith', who manages to cheat the policeman: "In the long delicate fingers of his right hand, the man was holding up in triumph the two books he had taken from the policeman's pockets. "Easiest job I ever done," he announced proudly."

Such an unexpected twist cannot leave the readers indifferent.