

The point of view of a narrative manipulates how the audience perceives the characters, themes and meaning in a novel, as the audience is subject to the bias and emotions of the narrator. *We Were Liars* by E. Lockhart (2014), explores the guilt and self-discovery of the protagonist, Cadence, after a traumatic accident. *Third Witch* by Jackie French (2017) explores the guilt and self-discovery of a minor character, Annie, who blames herself for the collapse of a Kingdom in this re-working of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. While both viewpoints are the result of unreliable narration, they also influence how the audience perceives characters, themes and meaning in the narratives.

The guilt of both protagonists in *We Were Liars* and *Third Witch* manifests itself in the writing of the narrators' point of view, causing the audience to experience the emotions and thoughts of the character. As the audience are exposed to these themes, their opinions of characters and events are heavily influenced by the perspective of the narrator. In *We Were Liars*, Cadence faces extreme guilt and remorse, demonstrated by the repetition of her saying, **"I should have," "It's my fault" and "If only,"** convincing the audience that it was never her intention to kill her friends. She writes, **"It turns them to ice. They chip and break, tiny pieces shattering on the Windemere steps...My face is frozen and fractured in a witch's snarl of grief...Here I am frozen, when I deserve to burn."** Cadence shows her guilt through a series of metaphors, to highlight her psychological devastation. She uses juxtaposition to make the audience perceive more aspects of her character by contrasting guilt with self-hatred. Likewise, the audience is emotionally influenced in *Third Witch* by the protagonist. Annie is entangled in a web of plotting for the crown that she never intended to be a part of, as she narrates, **"No wonder her conscience screamed at night. My own conscience whimpered like a kitten drowning in a sack. How much of this was due to me?"** The personification and simile assist the audience in understanding and visualising the traumatic guilt experienced by both Lady Macbeth and Annie. The rhetorical self-questioning emphasises Annie's uncertainty of how guilty she is and makes the audience question her actions. The narrators' point of view of the theme of guilt changes the audience's perception, specifically of the concepts of good and evil, by appealing to their emotions and making them understand the protagonists in more detail.

Self-discovery is at the heart of both *We Were Liars* and *Third Witch* as each protagonist comes to a deeper understanding of herself and her role in the events that take place, impacting the audience's perceptions. In *We Were Liars* Cadence discovers and remembers events at the end of the novel, which shape her life. Cadence opens and closes the book with almost identical lines, writing, **"I am the perpetrator of a foolish, deluded crime that became a tragedy,"** revealing her self-discovery through an epiphany. Cadence becomes aware of herself, giving the audience a sudden clarity and understanding of the narrative and the truth of her accident. Similarly, the theme of self-discovery is explored in the book, *Third Witch*, as Annie makes mistakes early in the book but learns through them, thus influencing the audience's perception. Through self-reflection, Annie writes, **"Agnes was right. Words had power. Words could wield swords, and death, and kings,"** reflecting on the words she said that caused a kingdom to fall into chaos through a flashback. Annie uses repetition and personification to stress significance, reinforcing the idea and creating a powerful image for the audience. The audience is taken on a journey of self-discovery along with the narrator. Through the narrators' discovery process, the audience is given the chance to reflect and therefore change their point of view on the narrative.

The audience's perceptions of the characters are developed throughout the narrative as the narrator writes it with their own emotions, opinions and bias. In *We Were Liars*, Cadence does not correctly recall her memories, making the audience unaware of the truth. As Cadence processes her surroundings, she reflects on the death of her friends in one of her fairy-tale metaphors, writing, **"The children died in a fire—all except one. Only one was left, and she—No, that's not right."** The switch to third person in Cadence's narration hints at her disconnection from reality. She creates fairy-tales as a background for the events, using allegories from Andrew Lang stories, writing, **"There is always a witch...Go on, strike, said the witch, smiling. Fire is beautiful. Nothing bad will**

happen...And they listened...The witch watched their beauty burn, their bounce, their intelligence...their dreams for the future. She watched it all disappear in smoke.” Through use of an allegory, Cadence helps the audience to comprehend her guilt and self-discovery through her personal realisation of events. The audience is influenced into believing her story is true, however, it is unreliable as she is still discovering her subjective reality. The audience is similarly influenced throughout *Third Witch*, as the protagonist slowly unravels the complicated inner workings of the palace. Annie writes, **“I tried not to stare at her as I ate. Had this girl really helped to murder a king? ...I realised with growing shock that I had always known what my lady was capable of...”** Annie’s rhetorical question portrays the uncertainty and doubt in her thoughts, which makes the audience come to their own conclusions about the character. Both Annie and thus, the audience, begin to question the differences between good and evil. Annie doubts her initial loyalties and brings the audience with her on a journey of doubt and mistrust. Through characterisation, she forms a complete idea of the nature of Lady Macbeth, stating that she had **“always known”** of what her lady was capable. Through this, the audience discovers that Lady Macbeth is not guiltless, which changes their perception of her as a major character. The narrator can change how the audience perceives characters, through questioning their own understanding and ideas, which makes the audience question their previous understanding.

We Were Liars by E. Lockhart and *Third Witch* by Jackie French illustrate that the narrative point of view manipulates the audience’s perceptions of a narrative. The audience’s understanding of characters, themes and meaning in the novels is derived from the perspective of the protagonist, which may be unreliable or biased. The protagonists face trauma or mistrust when forming their opinions about the characters, often making the audience come to the same conclusions. As the narrator uncovers more about the characters and goes through a journey of guilt and self-discovery, the audience can perceive more about the meaning, themes and characters in the book.