

Perspective. Or is what you see really what you think it is?

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I've always been fascinated by perspective. Not in the way an artist might be, but the way two people can look at a situation, or scene, book etc and see completely different things. Sometimes it can lead to misunderstandings, and learning of another's differing perspective can also be quite challenging, particularly when you have already formed an opinion on something. Your original view of it becomes altered and you can never look at it again in quite the same way.

Take this example - a couple of weeks ago my family and I visited Birmingham library. It's a truly stunning building and as the day was bright and sunny we climbed right to the top to see the roof garden. Here, with a view of nearly the whole of Birmingham, you can sit and read to your heart's content. Wow, was my first thought. After a moment I noticed a man doing exactly that, sitting in the sun, engrossed in a book. His bright blue kurta caught my eye, but what really struck me was his air of peacefulness, he looked serene and happy. My first thought was one of envy, not because I wasn't having a lovely day myself, but because I thought it magical that he had time in his day to immerse himself in his reading, something that was so obviously bringing him great pleasure. It was such a beautiful contrast against all the hurly burly of the rushing city below.

We wandered around a little, took some photos, gazed at the view and then made our way back inside. As we did so, I passed by the same man, and this time, coming as I was from a different direction, I was able to turn back to see what he was reading (I'm so nosy like this). When I saw his book was entitled *How not to Worry*, my perspective changed in an instant.

As a writer then, I love perspective, it's such a useful tool and can generate wonderful twists for your characters and scenes. It's something I deliberately tried to use whilst writing *Letting in light*. I wanted my character's skewed way of looking at his world to influence his actions, and to learn that by adopting a new perspective, nothing material had altered, but he suddenly gained the power to accept, move on, and live a different life. *'After all, life, like art, is all about perspective, and sometimes it just depends on your point of view.'*