

## Concerning Points of View

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A critical point of view is taken only when we feel more or less negative toward somebody or something, or when we at least want to express very strong reservations. If, for instance, we say we are taking a critical point of view toward something, everyone knows that either we feel extremely doubtful about that thing or else we want to change it completely. We don't assume a critical point of view in order to state, after mature consideration, that a thing is good, but so that we can discover at least one reason for criticizing it and then retire in triumph. It's the same as when we say we have a critical attitude toward something or somebody. In either of the phrases the word critical is fully and tacitly understood to be only that which is, insofar as possible, against; whereas being utterly and forthrightly for something is somehow being uncritical. A critical point of view doesn't indicate concern for what a thing actually is, but rather a display of suspicion that can be appeased only when some fault is discovered. And it always is, whenever we assume a critical point of view.

From an ethical point of view, things are either accepted or rejected without considering it necessary to investigate further into what these things really are. On the contrary, the less we know about the thing in question, the more absolute and authoritative our ethical point of view. A man might corrupt his ethical point of view if he began investigating further into what, for ethical reasons, he has already accepted or rejected.

A personal point of view doesn't command quite the same respect as an ethical point of view. I say "my personal point of view is thus and so" with a certain modesty and reserve; and when we don't want to say to someone's face that he is spouting nonsense and that we refuse to argue with him about anything so self-evident, we get around it by the polite pronouncement that that is his personal point of view. To

attribute a personal point of view to someone is demeaning, as well as being the mildest form of insult. On the other hand, we invariably respect someone's ethical point of view, no matter how idiotic.

From my point of view, things seem so-and-so (whereas from your point of view they somehow seem quite different.) Experts generally employ this phrase when they discover that their opinions about things differ diametrically and that there is little likelihood of their out-arguing each other; and by means of this phrase, something akin to neutrality can be declared. You have your point of view and I have mine; we each will keep our own and neither will interfere with the other. Each will prevail in his own point of view, not at all bothered by the aggressive reasoning of his worthy and esteemed colleague.

Our point of view is something political parties have. Ordinarily it is found in the expression: Our point of view is clear. Or, our point of view is firm.

To assume an identical or opposing point of view implies that a point of view is some sort of elevated spot, a kind of podium, say, to which we ascend and from which we pronounce our yes or no to far weightier effect than if we had stayed down on the mere ground of ordinary small talk. It is much easier to assume a point of view than, for instance, to attain an insight.