

The No-Neutrality Principle

According to the No-Neutrality Principle, no one can approach any intellectual endeavor from a position of strict religious neutrality. Whenever we apply our minds to a particular subject matter, we inevitably bring with us a host of presuppositions—that is, tacit philosophical assumptions—about human nature, human origins, human reason, the constitution of reality, the laws of nature, the source of values, purpose, meaning, and ultimately God. These presuppositions may not be articulated or admitted—indeed, a person may not even be aware of them—but they are held nonetheless. Without such presuppositions, our thinking could not get off the ground in the first place, for they supply the necessary framework for meaningful thought, the scaffolding for every intellectual construction project from the majestic to the mundane. At the very least, a person's presuppositions will be implicit in the way he evaluates evidence and interprets his experiences, in how he makes judgments about what is possible or plausible or valuable, and in how he actually lives daily life. Significantly, many of these presuppositions concern religious matters, either directly or by implication. For example, how a person views human nature (that is, what kind of being he thinks he is) will inevitably impinge on such matters as the origins of the universe, the existence and nature of God, and the purpose of life. Thus, every single person exhibits some religious bias—the atheist no less than the Christian, the Muslim, and the Hindu. Since religious neutrality is impossible in principle, it's misguided to speak and act as though it were possible or even preferable—as though we could simply “bracket out” our most significant and influential presuppositions when considering any subject matter.

(James N. Anderson, *Presuppositionalism and Frame's Epistemology*, John J. Hughes, ed., *Speaking the Truth in Love: The Theology of John M. Frame*, Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009, 447-448)