

**Framing Kaleidoscopic Tapestries:
Cognitive Science of Religion in a Network Critical Environment**

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ABSTRACT

The 21st century is an exciting time to be engaged in religious studies. Developments in the cross disciplinary endeavor known as cognitive science have opened up new avenues of inquiry in the study of religion (Slingerland 2008, 10; Gibbs 2005, 276; Luomanen, Pyysiäinen, and Uro 2007). The development of the cognitive science of religion promises to reorient the way some scholars of religion study and analyze this particular human phenomenon (Whitehouse 2004, 230). Cognitive science brings to the table an interdisciplinary array of tools that can, at its best, allow scholars of formative Christianity and Judaism to rethink our work and our conversation partners (Lawson 2004, 5). In this essay I seek to explore the promises that conceptual integration theory (the linguistic end of the cognitive science spectrum) holds for producing robust NETWORK CRITICAL studies (Fauconnier and Turner 2002; Robbins 2007). In order to do this, I will focus on the concept of "framing" and how this cognitive process can help us, in the words of Seana Coulson, "account for all the 'extra' information readers infer in the course of meaning construction" (Coulson 2001, 83). A robust understanding of frames, esp. CULTURAL FRAMES, will aid exegetes in fleshing out both the PERSONAL and EXTENDED NEXUS of the PRODUCTION(S) under investigation. It can do this, I argue, by enabling scholars to describe possible PERSONAL COGNITIVE NETWORKS of the ARCHITECT and USERS (both PRIME and CONSEQUENT) in such a way that we can make plausible assertions about what WEBS, DOMAINS, and MATRIXES the PRODUCTION(S) might activate. NETWORK CRITICISM provides a principled meta-critical environment that allows scholars both to contextualize PRODUCTIONS and to set these PRODUCTIONS within various NETWORKS of meaning that cut across space and time. Framing, I argue, is essential in allowing us to negotiate the plurality of meaning potential prompted by ancient texts, thereby enabling us to craft critical, relational, and dynamic KALEIDOSCOPIIC DESCRIPTIONS.

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