

further supported by the preservation of certain sanctioned forms of those media for use only by the appropriate authorities.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I've imposed frameworks derived from cognitive linguistics and the cognitive science of religion on the texts of the Hebrew Bible in an effort to try to tease out a better understanding of the extent and contours of the category of generic deity. The conceptualization of deity was constructed in the Hebrew Bible, as it is today, on a foundation of embodied engagement with specific socio-material ecologies, most of which are common to the human experience. There is no need to posit the influence of widespread sociocultural idiosyncrasies to which we no longer have access in order to reconstruct the guiding frameworks in this period and for these groups. Nor is there a need to appeal to enigmatic concepts of being and non-being, to ineffability, to the putatively proprietary concerns of theology, or to the inadequacies of human language. The main conceptual filters through which the relevant cognitive processes were refracted to produce the kaleidoscope of divine features we find in the texts were the rhetorical interests and needs of historically situated persons with their own repertoires of experiences with preexisting concepts of deity within specific sociomaterial contexts. We do not have access to these experiences or to all the details of their historical and sociomaterial contexts, but there are data available to improve on where we stand today. For scholars to continue to build on our understanding of the conceptual structures of generic deity and divine agency in ancient Israel and Judah, we will need to engage each of those considerations independently as well as in concert with each other. This is precisely the goal of the next chapter vis-à-vis the conceptualization of YHWH as a member of the generic category of deity.