

Review of: "The World of Perception — Comparative Philosophy of the Ancient Mayan Bird Totems"

Sandra Wawrytko¹

¹ San Diego State University

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I was very intrigued by the title and topic of the article. Mayan philosophy does not receive much attention and so I was looking forward to hearing more about it. I very much appreciated the insights into Mayan attempts to reconnect humans with the divine, bridging the gap between physicality and transcendence. The references to mystical experience that goes beyond reason are well-deserving of attention. The attempt to legitimize mythological perceptions as a way to reveal philosophical truths is very promising.

The main problem I see here is the need for more than pictorial evidence. Additional research required to substantiate the claims that specific images encode philosophical principles. Specifically, the epistemological foundation of Mayan culture needs to be explored more deeply, including the link between perception and cognition. One possibility is to go deeper into the parallels between Mayan and Chinese uses of bird totems, providing a fresh perspective that will value imagery that tends to be dismissed as mere mythology. More Chinese textual resources might be available to draw on in making a case for the thought-provoking thesis of mystical reconciliation. Therefore I applaud the authors for respecting the philosophical depths of traditions outside the confines of “western” thought, that has a strangle hold on the meaning of philosophy for far too long.

Looking forward to seeing a revised text!