mental timing of Theory of Mind capabilities for children in a particular cultural context.

Overall, I find that this book would be of interest to anthropologists and psychologists who are working to better understand the dynamic relations between culture and mind. The book offers fairly convincing support for the universalists who claim that certain core capacities of mind develop universally among human populations. But, the book also opens many possibilities for how culture can matter in shaping the local cultural elaboration and personal experiences of these core abilities in everyday practice. Like any good collaborative study, this collection not only helps to settle certain key debates, it also points the way forward to yet more exciting psycho-cultural research to come. Edward D. Lowe

Wilson, Mary Beth: Impacts of Participatory Development in Afghanistan. A Call to Reframe Expectations. The National Solidarity Programme in the Community of Shah Raheem. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2013. 524 pp. ISBN 978-3-87997-431-3. (Studien zum Modernen Orient, 24) Price: € 39.80

This dissertation in Human Geography can be read as directed towards mainly two types of audiences. First, it gives a first-hand, empirically-based account of the perceived impacts of one of the largest participatory development programmes implemented on a country-wide level over the last decade. Secondly, it provides insights into development dynamics in Afghanistan based on a historical review and the lessons learned from one particular in-depth case study, the northern Afghan community Shah Raheem. Thus, both, scholars and practitioners of development in general and those interested in the fairing of participatory approaches in Afghanistan are being addressed.

The National Solidarity Programme (NSP), launched as nation-wide development programme in Afghanistan in 2003, started its initially planned, three-year implementation period with the vision to reach every single village in the country. Financed by a group of Western bilateral and multilateral donors, the programme aimed to bridge the gap of subnational governance between the population and the central government through the community-driven provision of services and grassroots democratization. The underlying rationale was that through the application of participatory approaches in planning local-level reconstruction and infrastructure measures, rural living conditions would be improved and the legitimacy of the central government thereby enhanced. For this purpose considerable funds were made available via block grants to especially created NSP-communities which were supposed to undertake the planning and implementation of community-based development projects themselves. To facilitate this process, representative decision-making bodies involving both male and female community members were supposed to be democratically elected. It was hoped that – in the medium to long term – these elected Community Development Councils would unfold the potential to overhaul "traditional" community governance structures which were commonly perceived to hinder development and block transition. Mary Beth Wilson's book exemplifies the interest of the development practitioners, scholars, and maybe even ordinary taxpayers of the countries financing the development interventions in Afghanistan, that the claim and scope of this megaproject have generated. Taking on the lens of a monitoring and evaluation specialist, Wilson offers an analysis of the impacts of the NSP-programme from the eyes of the target population in Shah Raheem community on factors of human security (understood as combination of political, economic, and social security) and empowerment. Though limited to a single case study, but relying on mainly qualitative fieldwork and data, the findings show a minimal positive impact in the areas of investigation. Except for social security and selective potentials for empowerment in the future, the effects turned out to be rather incremental than transformative. Thus, the author concludes that a significant disconnect exists between the claims and promises of the programme on the one side and its experienced realities or local-level achievements beyond infrastructure-implementation on the other side. Based on this finding she suggests that the rhetoric surrounding the participatory element in the NSP-framework should be tempered and needs urgent reevaluation – not only for the sake of "saving" the NSP in the Afghanistan case, but in order to save the status of participatory approaches from being abandoned as failure altogether.

The analysis represents an empirical contribution to the extensive literature on participatory development approaches. Given that existing evaluations of benefits and shortcomings of participatory approaches across the globe are highly ambiguous, due to different foci and approaches of research which nevertheless often apply a meta-perspective; Wilson's book supplements the insights with a view "from below." The well-structured thesis departs from a historical review of the emergence of the participatory development paradigm in development theory and practice and elaborates the evolution of participatory approaches in the context of Afghanistan. Interestingly, the local popularization of such approaches from the mid-1980s, but mainly in the 1990s, was not so much due to the general trend in popularity related to the perceived capacity of these approaches to yield a qualitative change after decade-long development attempts following World War II, but rather due to the absence of stability, security, and a strong government that was the only force thought capable to sustain development interventions at that time. The main innovation in this study is derived from the community-level perspective based on five months of field research in the three villages Shah Raheem consists of. The in-depth work with households and elected community representatives informs great empirical depth – thematically concerning the perceived NSP-experience, and with regard to the political and development setting of Shah Raheem as part of the "oasis, market, and battleground" which is Khulm District.

However, the dissertation's main interest, the assessment of the impact of the NSP-programme across the dif-

ferent human security and empowerment dimensions, remains a descriptive endeavor. Although the author does not claim to offer more than a "nuanced description," the single-edged concentration on the (perceived) impact as such entices the author to treat donors, implementers, and addressees of the NSP in an uncritical manner as static and homogeneous, almost like "black boxes." This manifests in the usage of undifferentiated terminology that does not scrutinize the role of these actors, but rather suggests a black and white vision of government vs. antigovernment forces, or donors vs. receivers of aid, for example. Similarly, the selection and citation of sources to back up key arguments – especially those sources which are used to add Afghan context to the analysis – seems unbalanced at times. This refers, for example, to the unquestioned usage of opinion polls and survey data, the sampling of which is rather doubtful. Taken together, these shortcomings cause the analysis to remain "inside the box." More attention to the actors, interests, and power dynamics involved in the implementation process of participatory development would likely have enriched the study. Hence, the author's concluding "call for honesty in the development field" – which is based on the detected disconnect between rhetoric and actual achievements of the NSP programme on the ground and demands a lowering of expectations of donors – is solely addressing a gap in performance of participatory approaches and, thus, reconfirms studies of a similar vein. Yet, the reader does not learn from the publication why and how this gap exists.

Katja Mielke

Worsley, Peter, S. Supomo, Thomas Hunter, and **Margaret Fletcher** (eds.): Mpu Monaguṇa's *Sumanasāntaka*. An Old Javanese Epic Poem, Its Indian Source and Balinese Illustrations. Leiden: Brill, 2013. 714 pp. ISBN 978-90-04-25203-5. (Bibliotheca Indonesica, 36) Price: € 119.00

Sumanasāntaka (Death by a Sumanasa Flower) is the title of a long Old Javanese narrative poem (*kakawin*) that was composed in around 1204 C.E. by Mpu (Sir, Master) Monaguṇa (the Silent, the Taciturn). In its broad outlines the narrative is taken from Kālidāsa's fifth-century Sanskrit work *Raghuvaṃśa* (The Story of Raghu's Line). However, as it is clearly set in the context of ancient Javanese royal culture, it is a work of literature that also constitutes a fascinating historical source in its own right. Concerning the latter aspect, Peter Worsley specifically addresses the question of how to use the *kakawin* as a unique window to daily life in thirteenth-century Java (601–652). Intriguingly, as, for example, testified by a loanword such as *jĕnggi* for a black maiden at court (canto 112.8c, from Persian *zangī* "Ethiopian, black African"), the royal world of the eastern Javanese kingdom of Kadiri in which Mpu Monaguṇa lived fully participated in what is now called, following Sheldon Pollock, the Sanskrit cosmopolis around the Indian Ocean. However, none of the extant manuscripts of the *Sumanasāntaka* comes from Java and the text seems to be completely forgotten on the island of its origin. Conversely, on the neighbouring island of Bali it has remained popular to this day. Not only was it continually recopied by Balinese scribes, it also functioned as a model for Balinese poets and served to inspire Balinese painters. Petrus Josephus Zoetmulder (1906–1995), the great expert of Old Javanese literature, praised the *Sumanasāntaka* for being one of the best specimens of *kakawin* literature, but hitherto academic attention remained disproportionally low and a scholarly edition of this extensive text had not been available.

Fortunately, this omission has now been remedied, and the authors of this magnificent book deserve our thanks and congratulations for having produced a most comprehensive volume, which for its *pièce de résistance* contains a text edition and annotated translation of Mpu Monaguṇa's poem (S. Supomo, Peter Worsley, and Margaret Fletcher, 53–527), while also providing commentaries on the relationship between this work and its Indian source of inspiration (Thomas M. Hunter, 529–597), the imagery of ancient Java in the early thirteenth century (Peter Worsley, 599–652), and Balinese painted representations of this story (Peter Worsley, 653–680). The text and its edition is ably introduced by S. Supomo (1–52), while the book also contains helpful appendices such as a lexicographical list (681–685), a list of proper names in the *Sumanasāntaka* and *Raghuvaṃśa* (687–689), a survey of the metres used (691–693), abbreviations and bibliography (695–710) as well as a general index (711–714).

The editors rather modestly refer to their translation as a rendition into "acceptable modern English" (xiv) and although readers can also follow the Old Javanese text line by line, the number of people who are able to judge the accuracy of the interpretation will, of course, be rather limited. Therefore, a cautionary note for nonexperts may be in order: as is common for translations of *kakawin* literature, in the commentary the translators honestly acknowledge that the text is not always clear and that, therefore, the translation is quite often necessarily tentative. As the translation was prepared by leading scholars in the field, it is difficult to find fault with their well-balanced translation, but, perhaps needless to say, not all specialists may always share their interpretations. For example, lines 113.7ab are translated as "Those who recited historical tales got a laugh but were eager to be shouted at / Because old women have an aversion to being married to young men" (298 f.). However, in my opinion the subject of line 113.7a, viz. *ikang amacangah* (base-word *bacangah* "[legendary] tale, genealogy, history") should not be interpreted here as "[t]hose who recited historical tales," but rather as "the storyteller," referring to the performing comedian who in the preceding line was trying to get a laugh by telling dirty jokes and literally acting like a randy goat. Hence, my translation of the two lines would be: "The storyteller (joker) got a laugh, and he was most eager to get shouted at / Because old women hate having randy husbands." The expression *wĕrĕ-wĕrĕh* in line 7b, which the editors derive from *wĕrĕh* II "adolescent, of marriageable age" could indeed be interpreted as "youthful" (see also their comment of *amĕrĕh* in canto 153.5a), but in this specific context the text seems to point to the *Sturm und Drang* phase of young manhood, when young