

engaging in ethnographic fieldwork for the first time or who have designed their project and are about to leave for the field. *Improvising Theory* succeeds tremendously, then, in comparison to standard “field guides” or methods books insofar as it provides a highly detailed, step-by-step account of what actually happens in the “thick of things”—when things go wrong and when things go incredibly well.

Shirley Fedorak, *Anthropology Matters!*, Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2007, 234 pages.

Reviewer: *Karl Schmid*
York University

Shirley Fedorak offers teachers a relatively new and unique tool for introducing and interesting students in anthropology with *Anthropology Matters!* The book is designed to supplement introductory textbooks and it has similar attributes such as a glossary, bolded key terms, questions for consideration and suggested readings. That Fedorak has been the lead author of the Haviland *Cultural Anthropology* text is demonstrated in its organization and overall accessibility. *Anthropology Matters!* is clearly useful for students of anthropology and allows the instructor to go beyond the limited examples in textbooks without having students read (or not read) longer academic articles and it provides more depth when ethnographies are not practical.

The first part of the book, “How Does Anthropology Work?,” has three chapters addressing ethnographic fieldwork, culture shock, and the use of anthropology. The first chapter on fieldwork competently introduces the subject. Chapter 2, which examines culture shock, should interest students because of the frank perspective on the everyday trials of fieldwork. It is the third chapter, “Of What Use is Anthropology to the Business World? The Anthropology of Shopping,” that demonstrates both the attractiveness and limitation of the book. I liked the attempt to draw students into economic anthropology through a study of shopping mall culture—a subject that should be familiar to them. The problem, however, is that this is the book’s central example of the practical (real world) application of anthropology. Although Fedorak clearly points out that we should consider the ethics of applied work while acknowledging the contributions made, the chapter leaves open the question of how corporations utilize the expertise of anthropologists. A few examples of these relationships would have been useful here. Although there is some critical discussion of power, consumption and space, instructors might want to ensure that students are not left with the impression that anthropology matters only when its applications “uncover new and meaningful ways to entice consumers to purchase more merchandise” (p. 35). Although this is not Fedorak’s intention, there is a risk that the reliance on this example communicates to students that the discipline’s relevance should be judged on market contributions.

Why does anthropology matter according to the book? Despite other occasional references to public and applied contributions, Fedorak emphasizes that the real public value of anthropology is to answer questions about cultural practices and relationships by providing context, complexity and cross-cultural examples. Part Two, in nine chapters, tackles a number of questions that I found relevant and interesting. Each chapter poses and answers a question such as “What are the Underlying Reasons Behind Ethnic Conflict, and the Consequences of these Conflicts?” (ch. 4). Other topics include immigration (ch. 5), women’s bodily self-image (ch. 6), female circumcision (ch. 7), aging (ch. 8), missionism and indigenous cultures (ch. 9), the practice of Purdah (ch. 10), same-sex marriage (ch. 11) and the impact of television (ch. 12). There is also a thematic guide to the book that indexes these chapters under twenty-one headings; these are the usual headings of many introductory texts (gender, kinship, ethnicity, sexuality, globalization and cultural imperialism).

Most thematic chapters stress the cross-cultural aspects of the topics, while integrating the language of anthropology into the discussion. Only rarely is the effect overly simplified or too overloaded with concepts. Mostly, the questions are well examined, the examples useful and illuminating, and the overall thrust is to introduce context and complexity to the subject without drowning the reader. Chapter 7 is probably the strongest chapter in the book, highly recommended for its ability to broaden debate on the question “Is Female Circumcision a Violation of Human Rights or a Cherished Cultural Tradition?” Fedorak integrates debates on ethics and cultural relativism, critically examines Western viewpoints and deftly works through connections with Islam, medicalization, criminalization and much more. Another current topic is the discussion of purdah and the question of oppression or liberation (ch. 10). Here is a highly accessible account of a cultural practice examined in numerous contexts that incorporates power and resistance.

A few chapters would benefit from additions or might require more unpacking by the instructor. The chapter on the impact of television (ch. 12) does cover social and personal meanings of the activity and analyses the *Star Trek* television series phenomenon, however students are likely to find this somewhat dated. It may be a reflection of a lack of available anthropological research, but it would add to the allure to have any of the following included: scrutiny of reality shows, discussion of the rise of news-taking through comedy and talk shows or explanation of the ubiquity of the dumb and even dumber male figure. The chapter on women’s self-image and health is likely to be popular, and many of the main issues are addressed, but it could be more ethnographic and comprehensive. On the other hand, the chapter on same-sex marriages seems to be a little over-stuffed with issues and ideas. It could also benefit from more of the Canadian perspective that Fedorak deftly weaves in without overdependence or underutilization of non-Canadian material. For example, “What Challenges do Immigrants in Canada Face?” is an effective

chapter with obvious Canadian relevance, complimenting discussions of multiculturalism and cultural pluralism found throughout the book.

On the whole, many instructors will find *Anthropology Matters!* a useful addition and supplement to introductory materials. We are fortunate to have a book that addresses current topics of interest in such a lively way and by means of a Canadian-global point of view. The book addresses what may be pedagogical gap that instructors are not always able to fill, although questions of how anthropology can become public or how applied anthropology works in practice need to be explored further. Fedorak's book is a link between the superficial skimming of anthropological topics students are exposed to in introductory textbooks, and the more demanding case studies, articles and ethnographies they encounter beyond.

Film Review / Revue de film

Stefan Haupt, *A Song for Argyris*, Distributed by First Run/Icarus Films, 2006. (Greek, French and German with English subtitles).

Reviewer: *Kendra Coulter*
University of Windsor

Now in his 60s, Argyris Sfountouris looks at a photograph of himself at age 4 taken following the massacre of his parents and over 200 other people living in the Greek farming village of Distomo by Nazi soldiers in 1944. He remembers wanting to ask the world, "Is this the way you want it?" His question frames both the life of the boy in the photo and the powerful film that explores the personal, emotional, cultural and political issues arising out of war, trauma and struggles for peace.

Stefan Haupt's documentary, *A Song for Argyris*, weaves together archival and contemporary footage to trace the life of Argyris and illuminate the way complex social processes are experienced, remembered and resisted by real people. The film presents Argyris' own remarkable journey with great honesty, but also uses his story as a way to encourage viewers to confront the impacts of war and violence on people, communities and nations. At its core, the film is driven by a clear picture of the horrors of war and prompts consideration of what can be done to promote peace cross-culturally.

The foundation for Argyris' life and the key emphases of the film are laid through an extensive embodied portrayal of the Distomo massacre and Nazi violence in Greece. We hear of SS soldiers admiring the Parthenon, walking down its steps, and then breaking the arm of a starving Greek child for stealing a bread crust, a telling lesson about the dangers of disengaged intellectualism. Survivors describe how they discovered the mangled bodies of their family members, or hid under the floor and heard their parents being tortured and killed above them. One woman's story stood out for me as a particularly

powerful depiction of how children are thrust into cultural worlds far beyond their control and comprehension, especially in times of war and collective grief. The woman recounts in graphic detail how her parents and siblings died but also how she found a bracelet given to her by her late parents and in it, a glimmer of comfort. However, her grandmother took the bracelet away and told her she was now an orphan and must wear black and live a life of mourning, thereby reinforcing the pain of loss and suffering.

What to do after collective violence? How to mourn? What to do with the life one is left with? These questions inform Argyris' postwar life. We follow his journey through Greek orphanages to the Pestalozzi Children's Village in Switzerland, then on to doctoral work, and a life of political activism against war, inequity, war profits and Greece's own fascist military junta of 1967-74, the Regime of the Colonels. Through tracing Argyris' life, we learn how he grapples with the sorrow and anger of loss, and decides to dedicate himself to working for peace and social justice. Throughout the film, we also hear the diverse voices of Argyris' relatives, neighbours, teachers, colleagues, and fellow activists from across Europe, including Germany, as well as those of politicians and the Greek composer, Mikis Theodorakis. Thus Haupt reveals the multifaceted and sometimes nuanced pieces that make up collective experience, memory and historical guilt.

Individual experiences are effectively interwoven with the broader historical context shaping the local, national and international social terrain. The roles of music, education, literature, law, policy, custom and social relationships are considered. Haupt also situates Argyris' life within the burgeoning Cold War and the establishment of contemporary global capitalism, providing valuable empirical data on both the political-economic climate and the work of resistance movements. As part of his ongoing political work, Argyris struggles with the development of anti-war strategies and complex questions that plague survivors of violence, affect daily life, and, certainly, inform activism. Remember? Forgive? Forget and let go? These questions take on added meaning given contemporary campaigns for truth, reconciliation and justice among First Nations peoples, black South Africans and others, and anthropological engagements with these campaigns. The film does not posit tidy answers, but rather brings to us the dynamic and complex struggles of Argyris and others to construct possible answers, and question the questions themselves. The reflections and actions of Argyris and others are grounded in memories of the past, in efforts to confront the present, to borrow Gavin Smith's term (1999), and in visions of a better future.

The documentary explores enduring questions about violence and how it can occur and why, as well as what individual and collective work can and should be done to stop it. Links to contemporary violence, restrictions on human rights, food and famine, imperialism and the political-economic engines of warfare are apparent throughout the film, but elucidation of these connections would be an important pedagogical exercise and a valuable intellectual and political activity if this film were