

Discussion Questions for *The Anthropologists*

By Aysegul Savas

1. No prize is awarded for best book club question, but if one were, this month's award would go to **Judy Catterton** for her "What the BLEEP is this book about?" What a great way to begin our discussion!
2. "Daily life was a difficult story to tell," the narrator comments (**pg. 11**). How true! It seems that capturing daily life is what Savas sought to do in this book, which has very little plot. Was she successful in capturing daily life, or as the narrator's grandmother says (**pg. 11**) should she (our author) have been better off "forget[ting] about daily life. No one cares about that?" (*Maribeth Fischer*)
3. Sections of the book are titled after elements of anthropological field work (e.g., "Principles of Kinship"). How did this structure and naming convention add to the novel? (*Deborah B*)
4. I was fascinated with the small "episodes" and how clean (for lack of a better word) each one was. She seemed to say just enough and then moved on to the next chapter. I wasn't worried or excited about what would happen next, but I still kept turning pages. How the hell did she make this work? (*Gail Comorat*)
5. Savas does not fill us in on what city or what country her characters are living in, nor where she and her husband are from. I found this choice distracting, although one I can understand given the nature of the narrative. Did this bother anyone else? Could we discuss? (*Gail, Judy Wood, Kim Burnett*)
6. Savas has her characters speak in thoughts as opposed to actual dialogue. Does the author use this technique to examine the lives of her characters as an anthropologist would study them? (*Judy W*)
7. Savas says it was important for her to write a happy book but questioned whether or not a happy book could be literary. Did she succeed? (*Gail*)
8. How did she add weight to Manu and Asya's story without focusing heavily on plot or conflict? (*Gail*) How were Ravi and Lena crucial to the development of the narrator and Manu? (*Maribeth*)
9. The novel explores what it means to be "foreign"—not just to a place, but to traditional life trajectories and expectations. In what ways do Asya and Manu subvert traditional expectations? In what ways do they adhere to them?
10. Anya worries that "we weren't living by the correct set of rules, that we should be making our lives sturdy." How does this concern propel her and Manu? Do you think this is a universal feeling for younger adults figuring out how to live and be in the world?

11. The apartment viewings are titled “Future Selves” throughout the novel. How do these scenes reflect the couple’s anxieties about adulthood and belonging? What do their reactions to different spaces reveal?
12. Asya’s park documentary project becomes a meditation on everyday life. How does her choice to film this local space reflect larger themes in the novel about finding meaning in the mundane?
13. Why do you think Savaş titled her novel *The Anthropologists*? How does the title relate to both Asya’s work, and the work of the author herself?