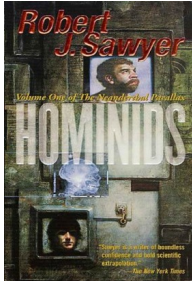




Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



Hominids
By Robert J. Sawyer
Discussed August 2003

Discussion Questions

1. Sawyer says that he has extrapolated his alternate Neanderthal civilization from the latest theories and paleoanthropological evidence. What is your impression of the results? Does Sawyer's depiction of the Neanderthal civilization (social standards; mores and beliefs; social structure; sexual practices; etc.) seem plausible to you?
2. One of the purposes of a "stranger in a strange land" story is to offer analysis and critique of our own contemporary society. What comments does Sawyer make about our human civilization in *Hominids*?
3. The scientific basis for the accident that sent Ponter Boddit to our world is the "quantum-computing effects" of Adikor's computer. How did this concept affect your enjoyment of the story? As far as you can tell, how "fictional" is this "science"? Does it seem possible; or is it "techno-babble"?
4. In your opinion, how well does the "Companion" technology fit into Neanderthal society? Would you classify Hak (Ponter's Companion) as a character in the story? Or is Hak just a plot device?
5. What's your opinion of the relationship between Ponter Boddit and geneticist Mary Vaughan? Does this relationship seem plausible to you? How does it contribute to the storyline?
6. What do you think about Sawyer's portrayal of the relationship between Ponter Boddit and Adikor Huld, his male-mate? Does it "work" for you? Can you compare/contrast Ponter's feelings for Adikor with Adikor's feelings for Ponter?

Other SF Works With Similar Themes

Asimov, Isaac

The Ugly Little Boy (novelette, appeared in *Galaxy Science Fiction*, 1958 B and several anthologies since then)

Asimov, Isaac and Robert Silverberg

The Ugly Little Boy (Silverberg's novelization of Asimov's story, 1991)

Flynn, Michael F.

"Still Coming Ashore" (*Analog*, July/August 2003)

Greenberg, Martin H., Robert Silverberg, and Charles Waugh
Neanderthals (anthology, Isaac Asimov's Wonderful Worlds of Science Fiction, No. 6 - 1987)

London, Jack

Before Adam (1907; recently reprinted - Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2000)

Other books in the *Neanderthal Parallax* "series":

- *Humans*
- *Hybrids*