



The Fire in the Stone: Prehistoric Fiction from Charles Darwin to Jean M. Auel (The Wesleyan Early Classics of Science Fiction Series)

By Nicholas Ruddick

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The genre of prehistoric fiction contains a surprisingly large and diverse group of fictional works by American, British, and French writers from the late nineteenth century to the present that describe prehistoric humans. Nicholas Ruddick explains why prehistoric fiction could not come into being until after the acceptance of Charles Darwin's theories, and argues that many early prehistoric fiction works are still worth reading even though the science upon which they are based is now outdated. Exploring the history and evolution of the genre, Ruddick shows how prehistoric fiction can offer fascinating insights into the possible origins of human nature, sexuality, racial distinctions, language, religion, and art. The book includes discussions of well-known prehistoric fiction by H.G. Wells, Jules Verne, J.-H. Rosny Aîné, Jack London, William Golding, Arthur C. Clarke, and Jean M. Auel and reminds us of some unjustly forgotten landmarks of prehistoric fiction. It also briefly covers such topics as the recent boom in prehistoric romance, notable prehistoric fiction for children and young adults, and the most entertaining movies featuring prehistoric humans. The book includes illustrations that trace the changing popular images of cave men and women over the past 150 years.

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Review

"I think this is a very good book, with rich meanings; and it takes its place well in this growing series of books from Wesleyan University Press on early science fiction."—Donald M. Hassler, *Science Fiction Studies*

"...extensively researched and elegantly communicated....The Fire in The Stone to provide a major step forward in the way we think about genre."—Jonathan McCalmont, *Salon Futura*

Review

"Ruddick has described an extensive, widely popular, and surprisingly persistent tradition of stories which, as he shows, is far more than an eccentric subtheme of science fiction. He gives the individual works the attention they deserve as literature, which leads to some original and surprising conclusions." (Gary K. Wolfe)

"There is no other book that connects studies of evolution to mainstream fiction so thoroughly and thoughtfully." (David Seed, professor)

About the Author

NICHOLAS RUDDICK is a professor of English at the University of Regina and author of *Ultimate Island: On the Nature of British Science Fiction* (1993).

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