

***Iron Man* kicks @\$\$! The author of *The Keepers* explains why this Hollywood example of biomimicry foretells the future of warfare.**

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Iron Man portrays a new kind of super-weapon; a humanoid battle suit worn by Tony Stark. As amazing as *Iron Man* may seem, Richard Friar, author of *The Keepers: Part One: WWII* (Baker and Taylor, \$14.95) and the Fall 2008 release of *Part Two: Tribulation*, believes that future battlemachines will imitate the natural forms in the animal kingdom, of which a human is merely one example. More specifically he assesses that the field of science and engineering called biomimicry, the Latin meaning of which is imitating life, will lead to a new era of warfare. *The Keepers* trilogy is speculative futurism, and provides a detailed account of WWII which Friar proposes will be fought using battlemachines derived from biomimicry.

Biomimicry has ancient roots. An example from history is found in Elizabethan Era English shipbuilders who looked to fish and dolphins to streamline the hulls of their ships, giving them an incredible speed advantage over the Spanish. A contemporary example is in the development of Velcro, inspired by Alpine burs that clung to hikers' socks and pants.

But according to Friar, the future of biomimicry will reach far beyond every day inventions. *Iron Man* can be defined as an example of biomimicry. Tony Stark could have developed a small armored vehicle to ride out of the cave, but instead he develops full-body armor to mimic the exterior of a human being. The suit relies on his natural gait, which is key to his escape, as the only way out is by counting his steps. *Iron Man* aside, Friar thinks the animal kingdom will inspire extremely powerful weapons.

Biomimicry when it comes to imitating animals fits nowhere better than in the military spectrum. The reason for this is simple. Animals have been at war with each other for billions of years, and during this time they honed their physical designs and capabilities to best move about on planet Earth. (Richard Friar, Author)

By studying the natural world, engineers develop cutting edge technology, pre-approved and tested in the laboratory of life. Friar states that agility is the key to efficient warfare.

The number one trait that makes an Animalian battlemachine more efficient than conventional vehicles is agility. A hummingbird craft can fly circles around its closest competitor, the helicopter, which has a relatively weak acceleration and turning capability. The Panzer quadrupedal battlemachine, modeled after the cheetah, can dodge incoming fire unlike a tank, jumping from left to right, stopping suddenly and taking off rapidly. (Richard Friar, Author)

Recall the scene in *Iron Man* when Tony Stark evades the U.S. Military jet planes. While planes share some similarities with birds in flight, they can not flap their wings to come to a halt mid-air, or swiftly change directions. Tony, however, can do a mid-air flip, point his foot-jets in a completely different angle, and take off, avoiding the planes that move in predictable arcs. This is a perfect example of biomimicry producing powerful new weaponry that outclasses conventional craft in agility and thus, in overall application.

CONTINUED ON REVERSE

The most ingenious (and in some ways most disturbing) element of the book is the evolution and use of new classes of super weapons... Geiseric's regime, the Apex, employs high tech biomimicry to create war chariots that hover like humming birds, ships that move like sea creatures and tanks that gallop on all fours. The Juggernaut, a giant tentacle machine ravages the coasts of resisting nations. (Bookreview.com)

Biomimicry has in fact been used in warfare on a relatively small scale. The BigDog, developed by the military engineering firm Boston Dynamics, is the most advanced quadruped robot ever created. About the size of a large dog, its purpose is to be a supply-carrier for the U.S. military in mountainous terrain. Even the most rugged vehicles, such as HUMVs, can not reach the places where the U.S. is battling Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. At one point, the U.S. military resorted to using one of the most ancient supply-carriers, the camel. But, the camel was not strong enough and thus was born BigDog, which moves like a four-legged animal, but has the strength of a machine.

When I created the concept of the Panzer quadrupedal battlemachine, this was before Boston Dynamics released their designs and concepts to the public. However, many companies had released designs of quadruped robots built for a variety of reasons, and so it wasn't hard to see how they would soon be applied to the military. (Richard Friar, Author)

You can go to www.thekeepersww3.com to view an animated trailer that features a handful of the Animalian Project battlemachines from *The Keepers* trilogy. As amazing as these battlemachines may appear, what truly makes them fascinating is the fact that they are completely within the realm of reality and based off of technology in its infancy today.

Sometimes truth genuinely is stranger than fiction. Like everyone, I love to be entertained! But I also uphold the value of realism. I think fans are becoming bored by the glut of over the top stories that exist as sensory overload but have no factual relevance or ability to exist in the real world. (Richard Friar, Author)

This same grounding in reality is perhaps why *Iron Man* is such a successful franchise. Iron Man as Tony Stark is a real man, with real problems, existing in a world viewers recognize. *The Keepers* has been commended for achieving this same level of realism while, likewise, providing an entertaining read.

Friar takes on a smorgasboard of arcane topics—from Platonic philosophy to the science of biomimicry—and makes them not only comprehensible but relevant. Such intellectual tangents might prove tedious fare in the hands of a less-skilled author, but here supply the novel with depth and texture that will only enhance the reader's experience. (Kirkus Discoveries)

Friar has revealed very little about *Part Two: Tribulation*, but he has suggested that he found inspiration in the prehistoric times, with a battlemachine based off of the Raptor.

To schedule an interview, request a galley copy of *Tribulation* or for additional information, please call PR Info For The Keepers at (925) 242-7805, email icp.entertainment@gmail.com or visit <http://www.thekeepersww3.com/>.

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