A NEW PALINGENESIS

ADAPTED FROM THE STORY BY ROBERT DUNCAN MILNE
Robert Duncan Milne (1844-99), from Cupar, Fife, was a pioneering author of science fiction stories, most of which appeared in San Francisco's Argonaut magazine in the 1880s and '90s. SF historian Sam Moskowitz credits Milne with being the first full-time SF writer, and his contribution to the genre is arguably greater than anyone else including Stevenson and Conan Doyle, yet it has all but disappeared into oblivion. Milne was fascinated by science. He drew on the work of Scottish physicists and inventors such as James Clark Maxwell and Alexander Graham Bell into the possibilities of electromagnetic forces and new communications media to overcome distances in space and time. Milne wrote about visual time-travelling long before H.G. Wells. He foresaw virtual ‘tele-presencing’, remote surveillance, mobile phones and worldwide satellite communications – not to mention climate change, scientific terrorism and drone warfare, cryogenics and molecular re-engineering. Milne also wrote on alien life forms, artificial immortality, identity theft and personality exchange, lost worlds and the rediscovery of extinct species.

‘A New Palingenesis’, originally published in The Argonaut on July 7th 1883, and adapted in this comic, is a secular version of the resurrection myth. Mary Shelley was the first scientiser of the occult to rework the supernatural idea of reanimating the dead through the mysterious powers of electricity in Frankenstein (1818). In Milne's story, in which Doctor S- dissolves his terminally ill wife’s body in order to bring her back to life in restored health, is a striking, further modernisation of Frankenstein, to reflect late-nineteenth century interest in electromagnetic science and spiritualism. In particular, it is a retelling of Shelley's narrative strand about Frankenstein's aborted attempt to shape a female mate for his creature, but also his misogynistic ambition to bypass the sexual principle in reproducing life altogether. By doing so, Milne interfused Shelley's updating of the Promethean myth with others. 'A New Palingenesis' is also a version of Pygmalion and his male-ordered, wish-fulfilling desire to animate his idealised female sculpture, Galatea from Ovid's Metamorphoses, perhaps giving a positive twist to Orpheus's attempt to bring his corpse-bride Eurydice back from the underworld as well?

With its basis in spiritualist ideas about the soul as a kind of electrical intelligence, detachable from the body but a material entity nonetheless, Doctor S-treats his wife as an 'intelligent battery'. He is thus able to preserve her personality after death and renew her body simultaneously because that captured electrical intelligence also carries a DNA-like code for rebuilding the individual organism itself from its chemical constituents. The descriptions of the experiment and the body's gradual re-materialisation are among Milne's most visually impressive, anticipating the X-ray-like anatomisation and reversal of Griffin's disappearance process in Wells's The Invisible Man (1897). In the context of the 1880s, it must have been a compelling scientisation of the paranormal, combining highly technical descriptions of the Doctor's system of electrically linked glass coffins with ghostly imagery. It is both dramatic and highly visual, even cinematic in its descriptions, and is here brought to life in the form of a comic.

Dr Keith Williams
University of Dundee
November 2022
GREETINGS
FELLOW TRAVELLERS IN SPACE AND TIME.

THE STORY I AM ABOUT TO RELATE WILL SEEM ARDUOUS TO MOST, FAINTEOUS TO MANY, BUT SUGGESTIVE, I HOPE, TO A FEW.

ABSENT TO THOSE WHOSE IDEAS ARE BOUND BY THE IRON PALE OF DOGMA AND PREJUDICE.

FANFAUL TO THOSE WHO, THOUGH INTELLECTUALLY CAPABLE OF GRASPING THE PHILOSOPHY SET FORTH, YET CANNOT SEE BEYOND OR BEHIND THE SCHOOL THEY HAVE BEEN Brought UP IN.

SUGGESTIVE TO THE FEW WHO STILL RETAIN INDEPENDENCE OF THOUGHT SUFFICIENT TO KNOW THAT THEY AS YET KNOW NOTHING OF THE INNER WORKINGS OF NATURE.

ABOUT A YEAR AGO CURIOSITY DREW ME TO A SPIRITUALISTIC MEETING IN A PUBLIC HALL.

WELCOME, TO A NEW PALINGENESIS...

MY PROVINCE IS SIMPLY TO STATE THEM AND LEAVE THE CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THEM TO THE PUBLIC.

THE ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE OF THIS CREED, PHILOSOPHY OR SUPERSTITION HAS ALWAYS SEEMED PLEASING AND ELEVATING TO ME, EVEN IF CON ARTISTS AND LUMINARIES COULD ALSO BE COUNTED AMONG ITS PRACTITIONERS.

I OFFER NO APOLOGY AND ASK NO APPEAL FOR THE FACTS NARRATED.

THE IDEA OF A HEREAFER IS A PREPOSSESSING AND SEDUCTIVE ONE,

IF THE CONCEPTION IS VANISHING AND BASELESS, THERE CAN BE NO QUESTION THAT A LARGE PROPORTION OF INTELLIGENT PEOPLE ENTERTAIN IT.

OR AT LEAST, WOULD BE GLAD IF THEY COULD REASONABLY DO SO ON THE BASIS OF MATERIAL PROOF.

TO MY POOR APPREHENSION, THE HEREAFER OF THE SPIRITUALISTS HAS MORE TO RECOMMEND IT THAN THE HEAVEN OF THE THEOLOGIANS.

MOST RELIGIONS DEFINE FAITH AS THE "SUBSTANCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN."

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE CLAIMS OF THE SPIRITUALISTIC PHILOSOPHY CAN BE PERFECTLY REPRODUCED BY A CONJUROR.

THE PHENOMENON OF MATERNALIZATION, THE MANIFESTATION OF A BEING WHO PREVIOUSLY LIVED ON THIS EARTH, HAS BEEN FREQUENTLY EXPOSED AS THE CREATURE OF PALPABLE AND GLARING FRAUD.

WHILE THE TRUE SPIRITUALIST DEPLORATES THIS FACT, AND DEPRECIATES SENTENCE BEING PONDERED UPON HIS PHILOSOPHY BECAUSE OF IT,

THE TRUE DISCIPLE OF POSITIVE SCIENCE DEMANDS INDESPURTABLE PROOF OF THE ALLEGED PHENOMENON AND NONE HAD BEEN PRODUCED.

THE ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE OF THIS CREED, PHILOSOPHY OR SUPERSTITION HAS ALWAYS SEEMED PLEASING AND ELEVATING TO ME, EVEN IF CON ARTISTS AND LUMINARIES COULD ALSO BE COUNTED AMONG ITS PRACTITIONERS.

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WHILE THE TRUE SPIRITUALIST DEPLORATES THIS FACT, AND DEPRECIATES SENTENCE BEING PONDERED UPON HIS PHILOSOPHY BECAUSE OF IT,
Strange, is it not, that dupes and charlatans should be suffered to tamper with the sublime mystery in nature!

It is this monstrous burlesque which brings the living reality into discredit.

Good to see you again, Doctor Stephens. What is your opinion of the phenomena we have just witnessed?

These are clever tricks but do a disservice to the study of natural laws. A quack doctor may occasionally achieve results but unlike a regular practitioner understands nothing of the inner meaning of what they do.

These mediums are performers, not scientists.

Until these phenomena are formulated and reduced to a scientific theorem, reasonable people - that is to say, people who hold faith and imagination subservient to reason - will have nothing to do with them.

Yet you tell me that you, who are well known as a man of scientific methods, attribute these phenomena to a genuine natural cause?

Certainly, I do, and what is more, I have no doubt that I have arrived at a proper conception of that cause.

Are you at liberty to explain its nature?

Are you saying how to do it?

To manifest someone from beyond?

To bring someone back to life?

To come to my home this evenings, you will have answers.
WELCOME.

MY NAME IS ANN HILL. MY HUSBAND SPEAKS OF YOU SO OFTEN THAT I IMAGINE THAT I KNOW YOU ALREADY.

AND SO THAT EVENING I WAS THEIR GUEST, MEETING THE DOCTOR’S WIFE, ELISA. FOR THE FIRST TIME, I WAS STRUCK BY THE DEEP LOVE BETWEEN THE COUPLE, BUT ALSO THE PAIN GRIEF THAT MOST PITIOUS AND HOPELESS OF ALL MALEFICES, CONSUMPTION, HAD ON HER.

WE ENJOYED A PLEASANT MEAL, ALL THE WHILE INTERROGATING THE SUBJECTS AT HAND – DEATH, THE HEREAFTEER, SPIRITUALISM.

I HOPE TO SEE YOU AGAIN SOON, ROBERT.

AND WITH MY HEALTH MUCH IMPROVED.

THE DOCTOR TOLD ME THAT ALL TRADITIONAL REMEDIES HAD BEEN TRIED, AND AS I ATTEMPTED TO OFFER MY SYMPATHY HE BRIEFLY RETURNED TO THE SUBJECT THAT HE HAD RAISED EARLIER.

MY WIFE, THE END IS NEAR.

I SUPPOSE YOU ARE SURPRISED BY THE Sudden INVITATION TO MY HOME UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES.

YES, WELL, I AM NOT A PHYSICIAN, SO...

THE LADY SPOKE FREELY AND UNRESERVEDLY UPON THIS TOPIC, SPECULATING CALMLY UPON HER APPROACHING DISSOLUTION, WHICH THE DOCTOR ACKNOWLEDGED HIMSELF POWERLESS TO PREVENT.

NO, BUT YOU CAN BE OF ENORMOUS SERVICE TO ME AT THIS TIME. I WANT YOU TO BE A WITNESS.

I DESIRE YOU TO WITNESS THE PROCEEDINGS WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE SOMETIME IN THE COMING DAYS. THINGS MAY TAKE PLACE WHICH MAY NECESSITATE YOUR APPEARING AND GIVING EVIDENCE IN A COURT OF LAW.

WHAT THINGS? AND WHY ME?

MY EXPERIMENT SEeks TO ESTABLISH THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF INDIVIDUAL INTELLIGENCE AFTER DEATH.

OR, TO PUT IT IN CONVENTIONAL PHRASEOLOGY, THE IMMORTALITY OF THE HUMAN SOUL.

AND YOU SEE, IN THEbrief TIME I HAVE KNOWN YOU I HAVE IMPRESSED ME WITH YOUR REASON AND OPEN MIND.

I AGreed TO WITNESS HIS SUMMONS, AND TO COME PROMPTLY UPON RECEIVING IT.

I ACCEPTED, OF COURSE. MANY, I MAY GUESS, WOULD NOT HAVE DONE SO, BUT THOSE THAT KNOW ME WELL COULD HARDLY BE SURPRISED. A CERTAIN PROVING CURiosity Has ALWAYS STIRRED MY PATH.
THE CALL CAME JUST OVER A WEEK LATER. I HONORED MY PROMISE.

I EXPECTED TO FIND THE DOCTOR GRIEVING AT THE LOSS OF HIS POOR WIFE, BUT FOUND HIM TO BE ODDLY ANIMATED.

OF COURSE, MY THOUGHTS TURNED TO HIS WILD CLAIMS ABOUT THE MATERIAL REALITY OF SPIRITUALIST CLAIMS AND HIS ASSERTIONS OF PROOF, BUT I HAD DISASSOCIATED THIS AS THE FANTASIES OF A DESPERATE MAN.

AS HE LED ME TO A VEST UNSEEN PORTION OF THE HOUSE, I WAS STRUCK BY A PECULIARLY PUNGENT ODOR OF CHEMICALS.

THIS WAS NOT EVIDENCE OF DESPERATE FANTASIES!

THIS IS IMPRESSIVE! BUT TO WHAT PURPOSE...?

ROBERT...

ELSA? BUT I THOUGHT...

YES, YES, WE MUST Hurry!

QUICK! MAN HELP ME LIFT HER!
She wanted the operation to take place under these conditions.

Operation?

In case you are wondering, she's wearing her bridal excess.

What on earth are you doing?

I didn't agree to this madness!

What are you trying to dispose of her body?

What indeed? Are you trying to conceal?

I cannot be a party to this.

I anticipated your reaction.

There is one door and enough electric current running through the door knob to kill a man.

No one can enter or leave until my work is complete.

Won't she suffocate in there?

She would, given time, but she'll be dead long before that.
DID YOU SEE THAT FLASH? DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS?

THE BODY WHICH LIES BEFORE YOU IS DEAD.

THE SPIRIT WHICH ANIMATED IT HAS PASSED FROM IT.

IT IS NOW IN THE OTHER RESERVOIR.

SOUL, SPIRIT, INTELLIGENCE, THE LIFE PRINCIPLE, CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL, IS NEITHER MORE NOR LESS THAN A FORM.

A MOTE OF THAT FORCE WHICH WE CALL ELECTRICITY.

WHAT ARE YOU? A SPIRITUALIST? WHAT IS THE MEANING OF ALL THIS?

A SPIRITUALIST? YES. A MATERIALIST? YES.

SPIRIT IS REALLY AND TRULY NOTHING BUT A FORM OF MATTER. NOTHING CAN EXIST WHICH IS NOT MATERIAL.

IT IS SIMPLY OUR RUDIMENT AND IGNORANCE WHICH DRAW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN MATTER AND SPIRIT.

THE SOUL IS SIMPLY INDIVIDUALIZED ELECTRICITY, AN INTELLIGENT SECONDARY BATTERY, IF YOU WILL.

A STOREHOUSE OF THE LIFE PRINCIPLE, CAPABLE OF USING AND CONTROLLING ALL FORMS OF CO-EXISTENT MATTER.
THE VAPOR WAS QUICKLY TRANSFERRED FROM ONE TANK TO THE OTHER.

A STRANGE PHENOMENON NOW MADE ITSELF APPARENT. THE VAPOUR RETURNED TO LIQUID, AND IT BECAME ODDLY REACTIVE.

YOU SEE! EVERY ELEMENT NOW HELD IN THIS SOLUTION, CARBON, HYDROGEN, NITROGEN, OXYGEN, PHOSPHORUS, POTASSIUM, CALCIUM, MAGNESIUM, SODIUM, SULPHUR, ALUMINUM —

EVERY ELEMENT WHICH ONCE COMPOSED THE BODY OF MY WIFE HAS BEEN EXTRACTED.

THE INTELLIGENT BATTERY, CALLED 'SPIRIT' OR 'SOUL,' WAS ATTRACTION, COMBINED.

AND HERE IS THE DARWINIAN TRIUMPH OF MIND OVER MATTER!

AND WOVEN TOGETHER THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF INORGANIC MATTER WHICH GO TO MAKE UP THE BODY AND IS RECONSTITUTING IT!

NINETY MINUTES PASSED, AND IT DID SO IN SILENCE.

WHEN THE DOCTOR REMOVED THE CLOTH BANDAGE AND THE LIQUID WAS GONE, LEAVING A MYSTERIOUS VAPOUR IN THE TANK.
THE PHENOMENON OF MATERIALIZATION, AS EVOLVED BY GENUINE SPIRIT MEDIANS, IS AN ACTUAL PHENOMENON.

THE ERROR THE SPIRITUALISTS FALL INTO CONSISTS IN SUPPOSING THAT THE PHENOMENON IS SUPERNATURAL.

THE BODY, UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES DOES NOT USUALLY, UPON DEATH, HAVE EXACTLY THE RIGHT CONDITIONS ESTABLISHED BY MY APPARATUS TO ACHIEVE RE-ATTACHMENT, BUT THIS IS A PRODUCT OF NATURE, NOT MAGIC.

PRACTITIONERS OF SPIRITUALISM HAVE DISCOVERED SOME OF THESE LIMS OF NATURE IN THEIR DEMONSTRATIONS OF MATERIALIZATION, BUT ONLY I HAVE PERFECTED A SCIENTIFIC PROCEDURE!

BUT IF THE PHENOMENON OF MATERIALIZATION IS A SCIENTIFIC FACT, WHY DO SUCH BODIES ALWAYS DISAPPEAR, VANISH, MELT INTO THIN AIR, AND LEAVE NO TRACE OF THEIR EXISTENCE BEHIND THEM? WHY CANNOT THEY RETAIN THEIR CONQUERYA?

EXACTLY, GOOD SIR! JUST AS A MAGNET EXPOSED TO PROLONGED EXCITEMENT WILL PART WITH ITS MAGNETIC PROPERTIES, SO THE INTELLIGENT BATTERY, OR SPIRIT, WILL BECOME "DE-MAGNETIZED", AND FAIL TO RETAIN ITS COHESION, BUT I...

THE DOCTOR MANUREDLY INSTRUCTED HIS WIFE TO RETRIEVE SOMETHING FROM A BOX INSIDE THE TANK.

THE ONLY WAY TO FIX THIS NEW BUT ETHEREAL BODY IN PLACE IS THROUGH THE DIGESTION OF FOOD.

THE MOLECULES OF THE FOOD FORM A LINK TO THIS WORLD THAT CANNOT BE BROKEN.

BUT I MUST SUPPLY AIR... NO! THE VALVE HAS BROKEN! WITHOUT IT SHE'LL SUFFOCATE; SHE CAN'T LEAVE THE TANK THIS SOON!

THIS IS THE MOST ESSENTIAL PART OF ALL. ALTHOUGH MY WIFE'S BODY IS PERFECTLY MATERIALIZED, AND ITS FORMER MALADIES REMOVED, THE PROCESS MAY YET BE REVISED!

DISSOLUTION IS THE DANGER NOW!
THE DOCTOR INSISTED IT WAS TOO EARLY FOR HIS WIFE TO LEAVE THE TANK, BUT I COULD NOT WATCH HER SUCCUMBE.

THE INGESTION OF FOOD WOULD TAKE TOO LONG TO WORK, BUT THE DOCTOR REALISED THAT THE QUICKEST WAY TO INFUSE ELSA’S BODY WITH ENERGIC MOLECULES AND ATOMS WAS THROUGH A DIFFERENT TYPE OF SPIRIT.

BRANDY! DRINK IT MY LOVE. THIS WILL GO STRAIGHT INTO THE BLOOD.
The effect of the alcohol was instantaneous. Elsa was returned to full health.

The danger of dissolution had passed.

A week after, when Mrs. Stephens reappeared in society, all the friends of the family were amazed at her sudden change from the condition of a dying consumptive to one of a lady in the full flush of youth and health.

The human body is ever renewing itself and wasting away. Little by little all our tissues will be replaced by fresh matter constantly being assimilated through the organs of nutrition.

So many questions unanswered. What did Elsa experience of the hereafter? Was she aware of being reduced, or elevated, to a disembodied spark, a spirit?

The doctor and Elsa took themselves off on a tour around the world to celebrate the years they now had together: a love torn back from the twilight of death.

Of course, none knew the secret of Elsa's rebirth, but the doctor, myself, and the residents herself.

And I hope by no fatal misfortune befalls me prior to the publication of this manuscript being guaranteed, the readers of this account.
ROBERT DUNCAN MILNE was an astonishingly prescient pioneer, publishing some 80 science fiction stories, mostly in San Francisco’s Argonaut Magazine in the 1880’s & 90’s.

His father was Reverend George Gordon Milne, the town’s Episcopal minister, and his mother, Elizabeth Anne Kaye, was descended from King Robert the Bruce.

Young Robert, along with his three brothers and two sisters, had a privileged upbringing and a classical education.

In August 1868 Milne left for America, never to return to his homeland. This may have been due to his alcoholism, or his interest in modern science rather than religion, both of which may have threatened the family’s reputation.

He excelled at school and in 1862 was admitted to Lincoln College, Oxford, reading classics, and with an interest in athletics and sport, especially rugby and rowing. However, excessive drinking disrupted his studies and Milne left Oxford without obtaining a degree.

In Kern County, California, it was hard, unglamorous work, far from the romance of the Old West although it did involve dangerous encounters with bandits and mountain lions.

Robert Duncan Milne

Script: Chris Murray & Keith Williams
Art and Lettering: Monty Nero

We are indebted to work on Milne by Sam Moskowitz, Barry Sullivan and Ari Brin.
Milne worked as a cook, bartender, and an itinerant labourer in California, and even spent some time as a tramp.

In the 1870s, Milne came to San Francisco, where his life and career would take yet more strange turns. He then seemed to reinvent himself as an engineer, perhaps supported by money sent by his family, and especially his uncle, a wealthy businessman who offered occasional financial assistance.

Milne embarked on a career as a journalist and scientific reporter, initially writing about his experiences as a shepherd and tramp, but in 1879, he began a prolific 20-year period producing science fiction stories. He published over 60 stories, mostly in The Argonaut and the San Francisco Examiner.

In 1874, his new form of rotary steam engine was demonstrated at the San Francisco Mechanics Institute Fair, and in 1877, he filed a patent for it. He thought this would make him a fortune, but it didn’t due to problems adapting it for use by industry.

Milne’s interest in science and technology propelled his science fiction writing, and he became the leading figure in the West Coast science fiction movement.

At this time, Milne befriended Ambrose Bierce, author of The Devil’s Dictionary (1906), and Robert Louis Stevenson, writer of Treasure Island (1883) and The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (1886). Meeting the latter when he visited San Francisco in 1879, Milne even supported Stevenson for a time when his countryman had fallen on hard times and could barely afford to eat.
MILNE'S EARLY SCIENCE FICTION STORIES WERE EXTRAPOLATED FROM EMERGING TECHNOLOGY, BUT THEY SOON TURNED TO THEMES SUCH AS INTERPLANETARY TRAVEL, ENVIRONMENTAL COLLAPSE, STRANGE FORMS OF COMMUNICATION, THE OCCULT AND SUPERNATURAL, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO SCIENCE, TELEPATHY, AND THE EXTENSION OF LIFE BY ARTIFICIAL MEANS.

HIS WRITING WAS DETAILED AND ARTICULATE IN ITS COMMUNICATION OF SCIENTIFIC PROCESSES, WHICH GAVE HIS FANTASTIC IDEAS A NEW KIND OF PLAUSIBILITY. OFTEN HIS PROTAGONISTS WERE REPORTERS OR CHARACTERS WITH GREAT SCIENTIFIC CURiosity AS WELL AS A CLASSICAL EDUCATION, MUCH LIKE HIMSELF.

ONE STORY, "TEN THOUSAND YEARS IN ICE" (1894), EVEN SPARKED A SENSATION IN IRELAND, WHERE IT WAS TRANSLATED AND REPRINTED AND WAS TAKEN TO BE A REAL EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT OF A MAN AWAKENED FROM THE ICE.

THIS IS EERILY ANTICIPATORY OF THE INFAMOUS 1938 WAR OF THE WORLDS RADIO BROADCAST BY ORSON WELLES THAT SPARKED PANIC OVER AN ALIEN INVASION BECAUSE OF ITS IMITATION RADIO NEWS FORMAT.
Milne worked prolifically and successfully despite his alcoholism, but it had earned him a reputation. In 1902, William Randolph Hearst, publisher of the San Francisco Examiner, ordered Milne to take the Keeley gold cure for alcoholism and to write a story about the experience.

The story generated great interest, and while the treatments were effective in the short term, Milne soon relapsed and lost his position at the Examiner.

On December 15th, 1899, shortly after midnight, Milne was struck by an electric cable car while trying to cross the road while inebriated. He died later the same day, aged just 55.

Milne’s science fiction stories enjoyed huge popular success and critical acclaim but were never collected, appearing in periodicals they, and he, were largely forgotten.

It could have been different. Milne’s uncle has sent funds for him to publish a collection of his stories and to return to Scotland for a visit, but on his way to the ship be embarked on a drinking binge. He never made the journey and never published the proposed book.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Sam Moskowitz, an American writer and science fiction scholar, published on the San Francisco SF scene of the late nineteenth century, identifying Milne as a major figure. He also reprinted several stories by Milne in an attempt to rescue his work from oblivion.

In recent years, Milne has started to be rediscovered again. Barry Sullivan, a student at the University of Dundee, discovered references to Milne while working in the archives of local newspaper and comic publisher D.C. Thomson. Sullivan, who, like Milne, came from Cupar, was fascinated by this lost science fiction writer.

Researchers at the University of Dundee, including Dr. Keith Williams, Ali Birni and Professor Christopher Murken, have taken up the cause of bringing Milne and his work the recognition it deserves.

Robert Duncan Milne is a bridge between Scottish and American science fiction literature, and one of the most imaginative and prescient science fiction writers of the nineteenth century, anticipating many of the technological innovations that would shape the modern world.
Robert Duncan Milne was born in Cupar, Fife, in 1844, son of an Episcopalian minister. Educated in Classics, he left Oxford without taking his degree and emigrated to the American West. For several years, he lived an itinerant life as barman, cook, sheepherder and tramp. In the 1880s and ‘90s, Milne reinvented himself as an astonishingly prescient pioneer of SF, publishing some 60 SF stories, mostly in San Francisco’s Argonaut magazine. His prolific career was terminated by a fatal accident in 1899, before he could collect them together into book form. At the University of Dundee, we are researching, adapting, and republishing Milne’s lost stories, many for the first time in more than 120 years.

Keith Williams (DPhil Oxon) is reader in English at the University of Dundee and has taught Science Fiction at both undergraduate and postgraduate MLitt levels. He has published widely on science fiction writing and related media in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, including H.G. Wells, Modernity and the Movies (2007), the first comprehensive study of Wells and cinema. His most recent book is James Joyce and Cinematicity: Before and After Film (2020). He is co-supervising PhD projects in the SF area, including one on Robert Duncan Milne himself and on the history of women’s utopian fiction.

Norrie Millar is a comics creator based in Dundee Scotland and when he is not drawing comics, he is colouring, reading, writing or thinking about them.

Monty Nero is a writer and artist who created the hit series Death Sentence with artist Mike Dowling, published by Titan in English and Delcourt in French. He’s written The Hulk and X-Men for Marvel, and stories for 2000AD and Vertigo Comics. He has a Masters in Comics Studies. His agent is James Wills at Watson Little Ltd.

Damon Herd is Programme Director of the MDes Comics and Graphic Novels at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, University of Dundee. His research areas include zines and DIY publishing culture, as well as autobiographical comics and performance.

With thanks to Dr Daniel Cook, coordinator of Dundee’s Being Human Hub.
Rough page layouts for *A New Palingenesis* by Norrie Millar.
Inked pages for A New Palingenesis by Norrie Millar.
MORE SCIENCE-FICTION COMICS FROM UNIVERSE
ROSSUM'S UNIVERSAL ROBOTS

ADAPTED FROM THE PLAY BY KAREL ČAPEK

CHRIS MURRAY NICK JOHNSON

1920 2021