



ROBIN COUSIN

# le chercheur fantôme

ÉDITIONS FLBLB

In bookshops the 2nd May 2013

Colour cover • 128 colour pages • 21 x 28 cm

ISBN : 978-2-35761-050-7

Published in 2016 in Mexico by La Cifra editorial

*El investigador fantasma*



## THE INVISIBLE RESEARCHER

Robin Cousin

### SCIENTIFIC FICTION PRIZE IN 2015

The Foundation for the study of complex and dynamic systems offers a residency to twenty-four researchers and supplies them with unlimited funds to complete their work. One evening, three researchers, Louise, Stephan and Vilhem, discover the presence of a fourth occupant that no-one has ever seen. He was working on the problem of “ $P=NP$ ”.

— What exactly is  $P=NP$ ?

— It's a problem linked to the theory of algorithmic complexity. Most mathematicians believe  $P$  is different from  $NP$ , which places a theoretical limit on computers' capacities.

— What if we proved  $P$  and  $NP$  are equal?

— It would revolutionise the modern mathematics field, and wreak havoc in scientific research in general.

— Oh.

*Before he became interested in the “ $P=NP$ ” problem, designed by the Clay foundation as one of the seven millennial problems, Robin Cousin came into contact with Stephan Douady, the director of research at the CNRS. A specialist in the study of complex and dynamic systems, Douady became the inspiration for the main character.*

*One distinctive feature of complex systems is that they are unpredictable, even when all parameters and conditions are known from the start. The only way to study them is by simulation, scale models and observing their evolution.*

*That is exactly what Robin Cousin set out to do, by grounding his plot in the day-to-day lives of researchers, and placing a mathematical problem at the heart of this close-quarter thriller.*



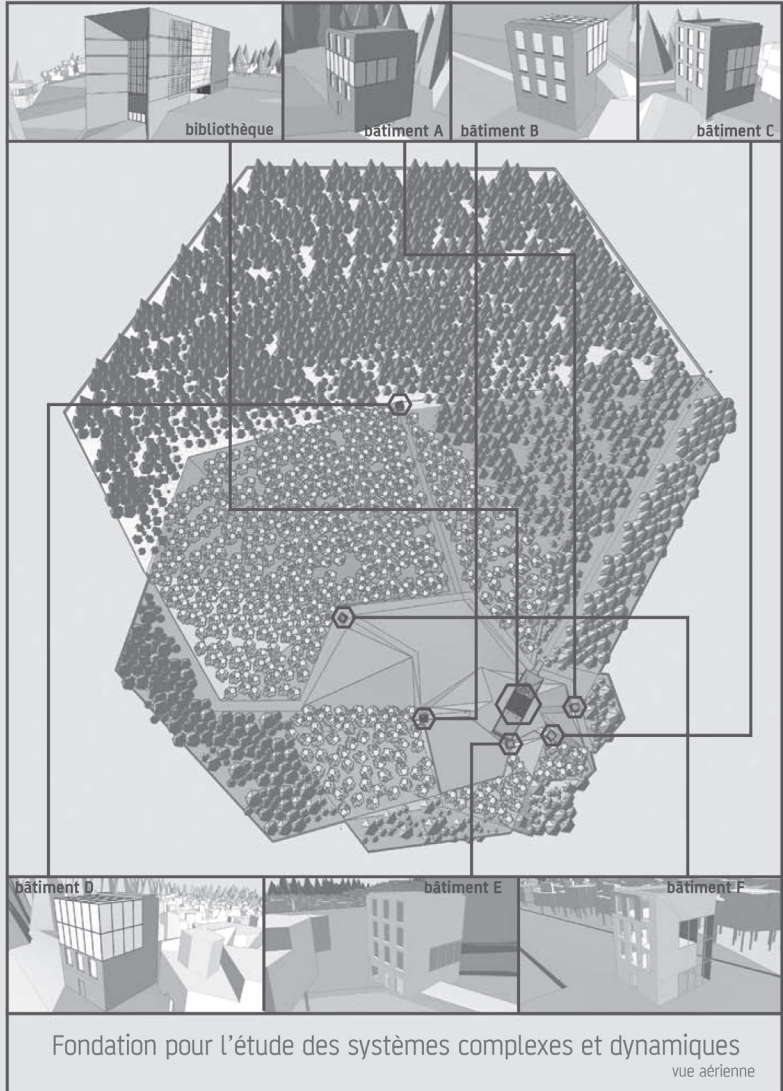
### The Author

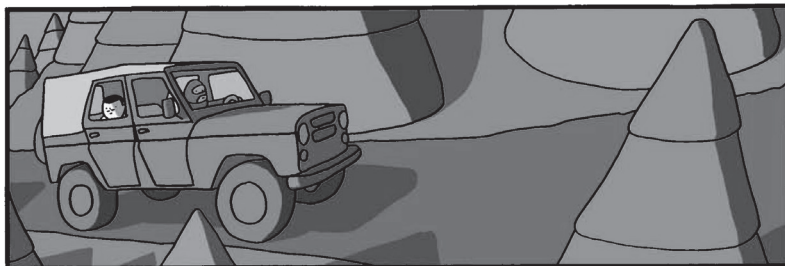
Robin Cousin was born in 1984. As a boy he used to write screenplays he would then adapt as radio plays, comic books and home movies, with the help of his cousins and his play-doh. After trying out applied art and interior design, he ended up choosing comics. Comics are a very complete medium: a bit of drawing, a bit of writing, a bit of stage direction, a bit of acting. After five years at the Fine Arts school of Angoulême, he even wrote his dissertation about them.

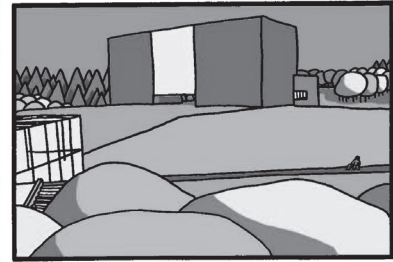
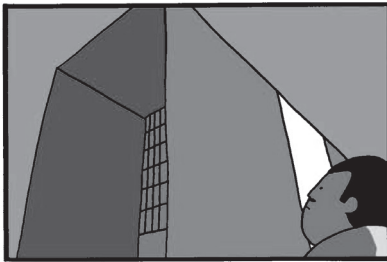
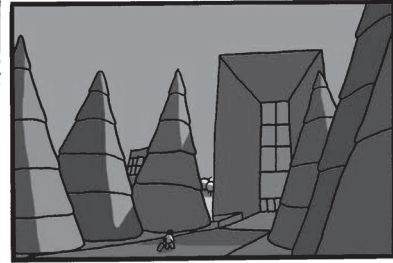
Later on he founded Les Machines editions and co-organised the F.OFF in Angoulême. Published in 2013 and winner of the Scientific Fiction Prize in 2015, *The Invisible Researcher* is a love-letter to scientific research and the poetic gaze it holds on the world.

Can computers imitate human beings? How much power are we willing to give to the machines? These are the questions that keep him awake at night.









Come one guys, let's go! // Hey, Sorokin, try to do a better job than your predecessor. It was absolute bedlam when we got here. // I'll do my best.



Hello. I am Alan Bateson, my field is systemic sociology and I'm the head of Foundation #3. If you're watching this video, it's because you were selected by the programme seven years ago, just like I was. You are the first resident, which makes you head of Foundation #4. Foundation #3 is ending as I speak... // No, I won't leave! // Alan, tell them I haven't finished my research!!



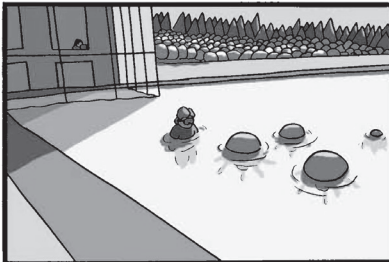
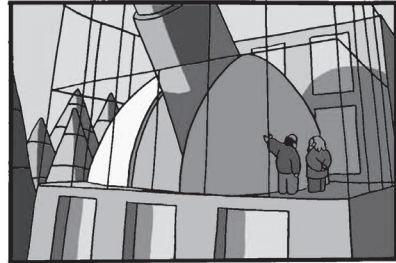
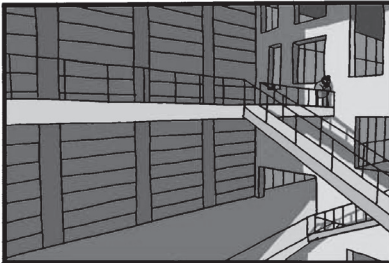


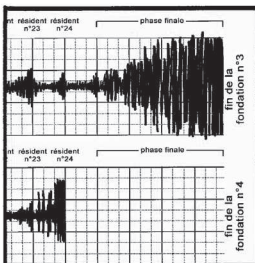
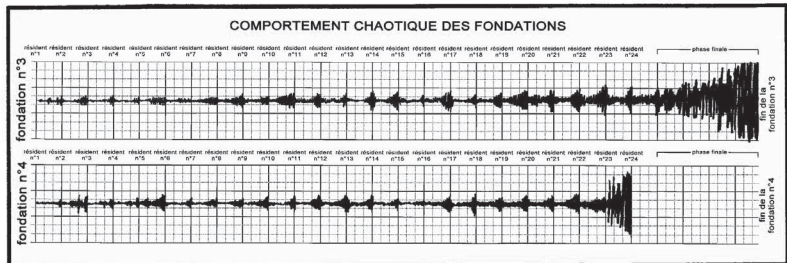
Don't be upset by what you just saw. These are the usual proceedings at the end of a cycle. // Like all dynamic systems, the Foundation tends to encourage entropy and chaotic behaviour. // That's why every three months, the programme selects a new resident to "rebalance" the system. // Just like yourself, the new occupants are researching one of the domains of systemic theory application. // Biology, computer science, finance, neuroscience... // After 6 years, the 24 laboratories will be in use and the system will be at its peak. // During the seventh and last year, the occupants' research should start showing results. Also during this phase, the system will start to break down. // Your goal will be to delay the chaos as much as possible.



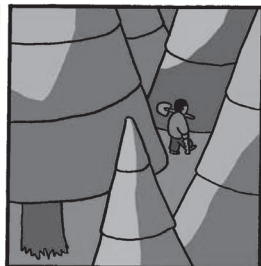
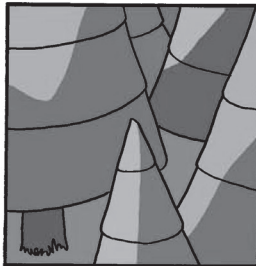
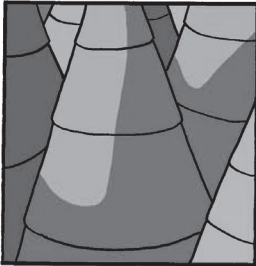
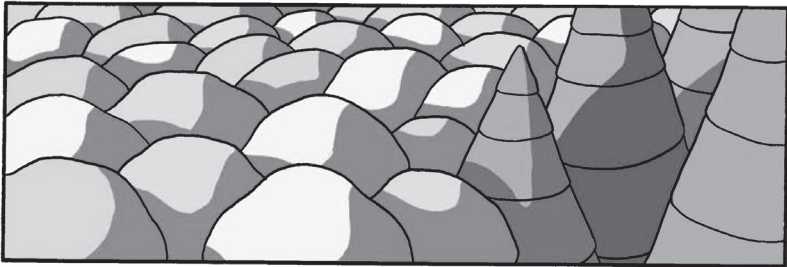
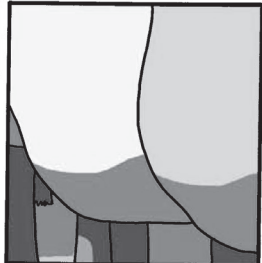
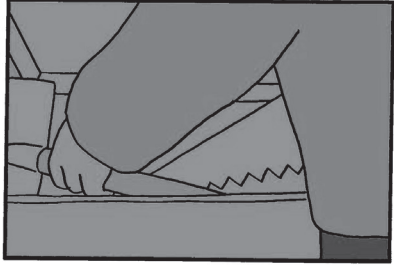
You're late, sir. Please follow us. // Just a second. // Your goal is to guide the occupants but also to improve the system. // My results are all here... / Let's take him away. // Wait... // 2556th day (last day) -completed research (total: 7 out of 24) -deaths: 1 -2 additional fires -arrival of the closing team

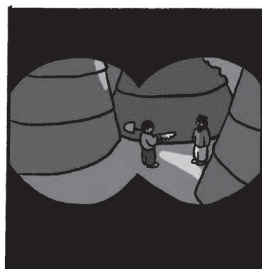
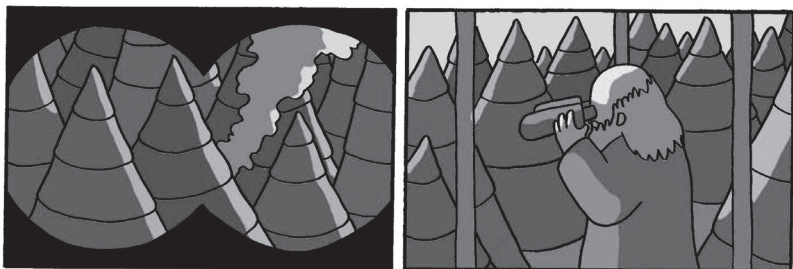
Six ans plus tard...



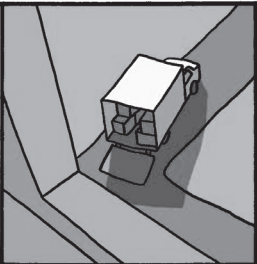
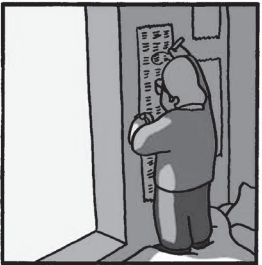
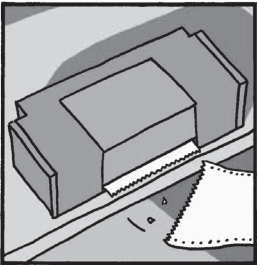
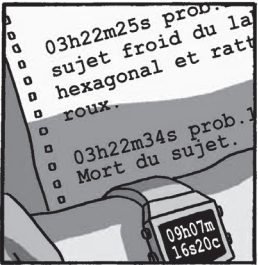
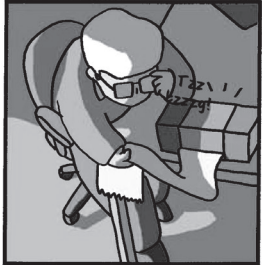


CHAOTIC BEHAVIOUR IN THE FOUNDATIONS // Hmm. The chaos is arriving too soon. // I hope the new occupant will calm things down... // Building F ; 2nd floor + morphogenesis greenhouse // ...at least for a while. // Knock! Knock! // Sir, it's about the new guys's things. / Perfect.





Philip, come and see this ! // It's starting again, in the forest. There's smoke now. // So? // So? It's strange. I wonder what they're up to... // It's none of our business. Come on, get back to work!



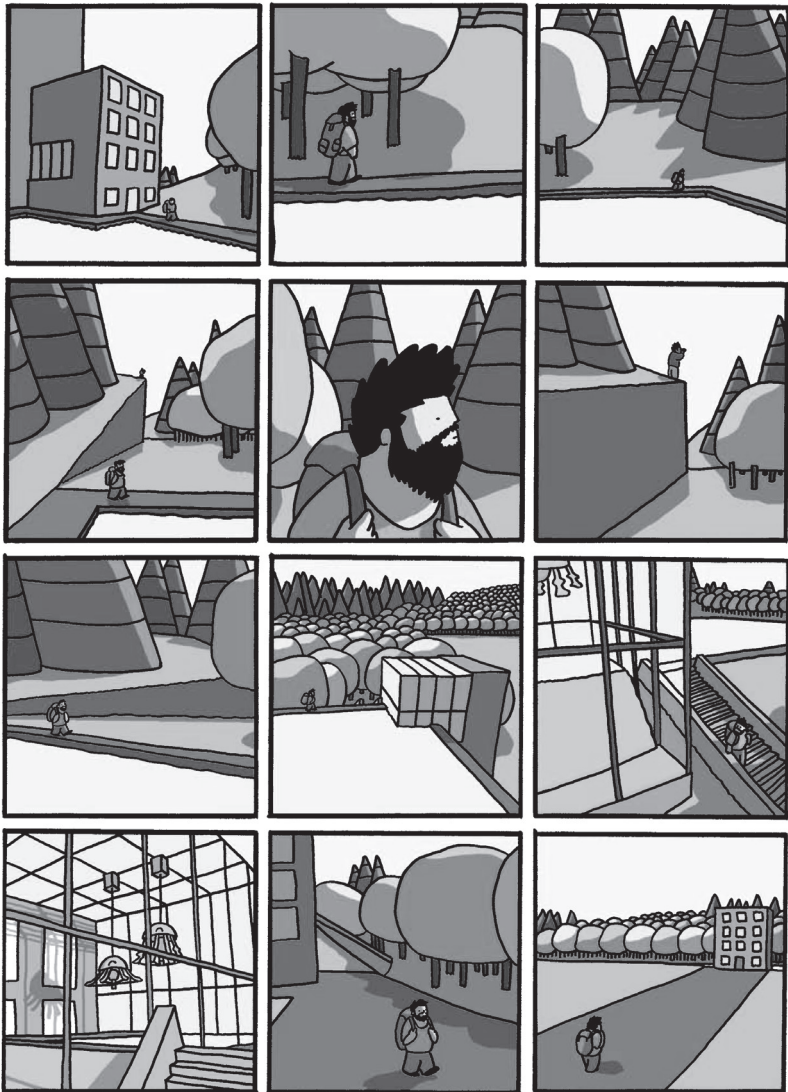


Building E... // Come in, come in! // Ah, Mr Douasy, did you have a nice trip? // yes, fine. / Good. // Let's see, your laboratory is on the second floor of Building F. // Here are your keys.





For food and everyday commodities, speak to the logistics supervisor. // If you need scientific equipment, or if you encounter any problems in your research, you can come straight to me. // Very well. // Your things are being moved in. / Your plants will arrive tomorrow. Any questions? // Er... Not for now. // You are free to handle your research however you see fit. / we only ask that you report back regularly. // You know, you're the 24th and last researcher. That makes you a most important occupant. // I'm staking a lot on your presence amongst our scientific community. // Er thank you, that's kind. // Ah, before I forget, in case of a major and irreversible emergency, here's the number for the clean-up crew. // Can I get to my lab through here? / Yes, just go around the lake.







11 RUE MARCEL PAUL  
86000 POITIERS, FRANCE  
+ 33 5 49 00 40 96  
FLBLB.COM • FLBLB@FLBLB.COM

CONTACT PRESSE  
HÉLÈNE RICHARD  
HELENE@FLBLB.COM

DIFFUSION DISTRIBUTION  
HARMONIA MUNDI LIVRES