

for



educators



museums



journeyers

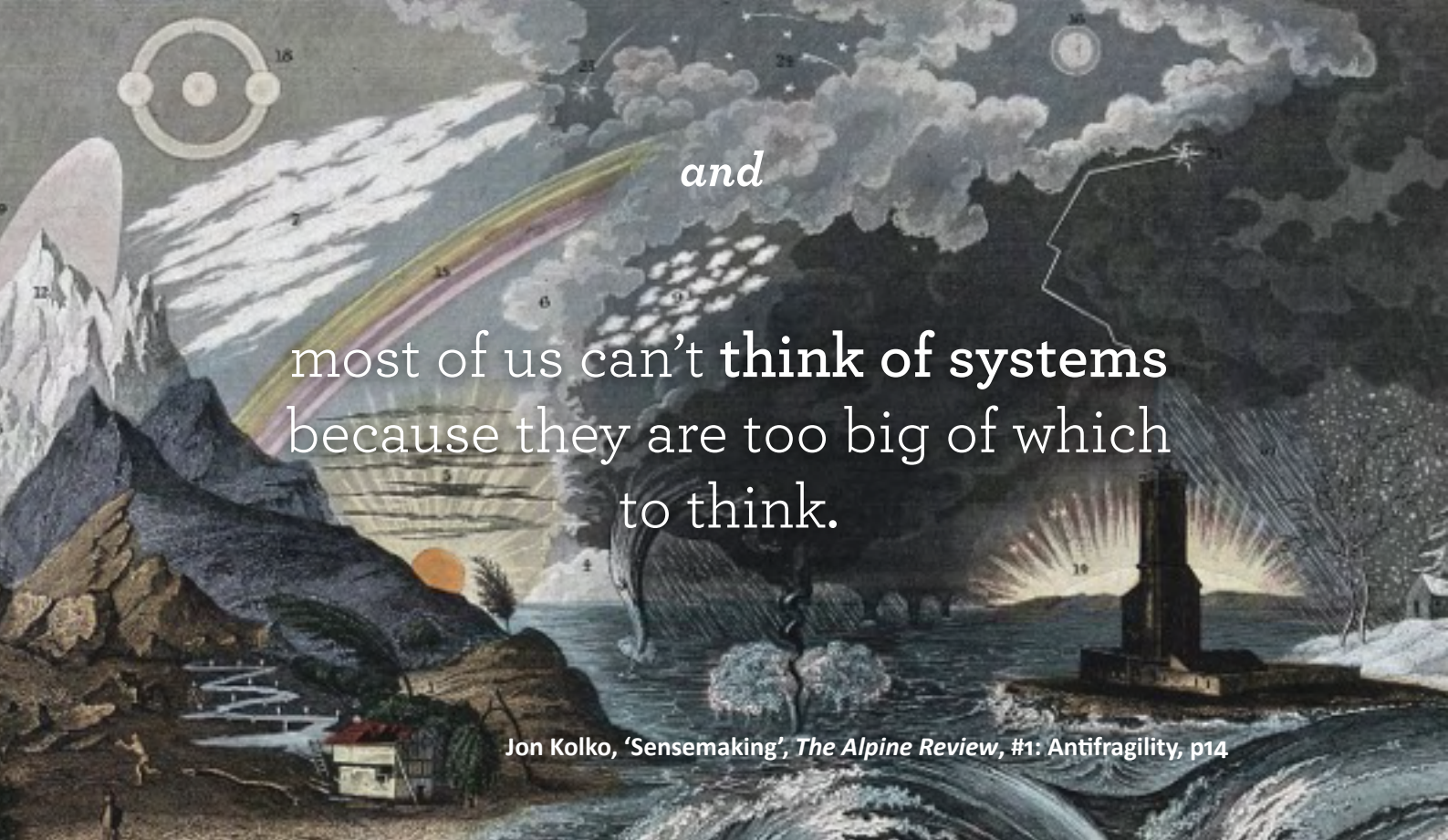


computation

because...

analogy-making is the universal fabric
of **cognition**

Douglas Hofstadter and Emmanuel Sander
Surfaces and Essences: Analogy as the Fuel and Fire of Thinking



and
most of us can't **think of systems**
because they are too big of which
to think.

Jon Kolko, 'Sensemaking', *The Alpine Review*, #1: Antifragility, p14

Exploring the **similitude** of disparate elements – making **analogies** – can clarify a system's structures and relations. It can also yield **a sense of the whole**.

Humans are naturally tuned in to **patterns**. You can play Sembl to strengthen this muscle and find patterns both useful and marvellous.



Play

In each move, place an image and **identify a resemblance**.

Your **challenge**: be interesting to other players.



Branding iron

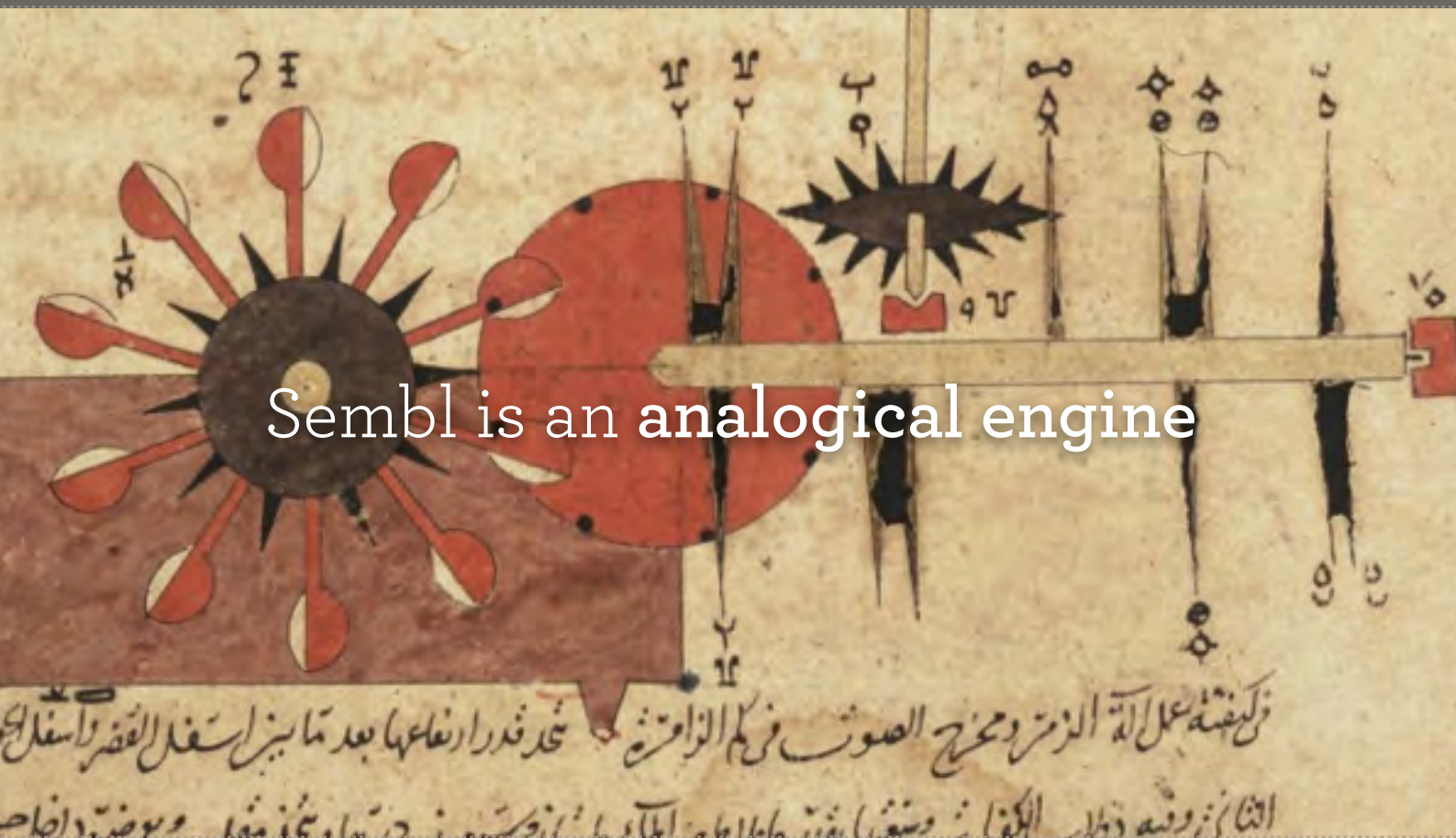
body labelling



Breastplate given to an
Aboriginal man by a colonist

Both the breastplate and the branding iron label bodies; **breastplate as brand**.
This analogy reminds us that white settlers in Australia imposed a regime of
authority on Aboriginal people.

Sembl is an analogical engine



for educators

To rise to emerging challenges, we all need to skill up on creative thinking. For players, Sembl is **conceptual parkour**.

When you practise this kind of play with the material of real-world events, ecologies, cultures and histories, startling insights can emerge.

We're adding more material all the time, and you can upload your own to work – or play – on any problem you want.



for museums

You've got heaps of significant stuff, and you want it to be known and loved.

Sembl players make connections between collection items – which is a surprisingly good way to gain **insight** into a thing itself.

Contributing material to Sembl is easy. To maximise attention to its collection a museum may also become a premier game host.



for journeyers

Deep down, don't we all want peace, justice and love?

We live with all kinds of social divisions that imbalance the world and create conflict within it. You can use Sembl to look across divides. Seek resemblance, and see differences both clarify and dissolve.

Experience dense network **wholeness** and feel more awake to what matters.

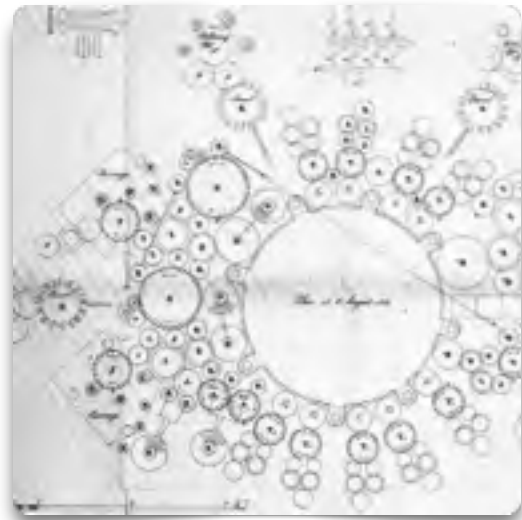


for computation

Computers process with binary logic; we think in analogue. If only they could understand how we think, how much more handy would they be?

Sembl cultivates a growing **index** of human analogies. Potentially, that is very useful.

Discuss?



Open!

Sembl's lifeblood is openly-licensed cultural material; we love open.

- It's free to play against happenstance opponents or at the invitation of a host.
- Play on tablet or desktop.
- Game data – sembls, ratings etc – is shared with museums and other parties for use in their own interfaces.
- In time, **source code** will be released so the system can be adapted, refined and extended for the benefit of all patrons.
- Follow our progress, ideas and reflections at sembl.net/blog.



Credits

Sembl is:

- founded by **Catherine Styles**, PhD – @cathstyles / cath@sembl.net
- inspired by **Charles Cameron** – @hipbonegamer
- supported by the ACT Government under the **InnovationConnect (ICon)** Grant Program
- constructed in the first instance by **Icelab** – @Icelab



Images

- **Microscopic organisms with mineral skeletons** by Ernst Haeckel, *Rhizopoda Radiaria*, 1862, Biodiversity Heritage Library
- **Animal magnetism**, 1802, Wellcome Library, London
- **Diagram of atmospheric effects**, 1846, Wellcome Library, London
- **Breastplate**, 1840, National Museum of Australia
- **Branding iron**, National Museum of Australia
- **Water-powered machine**, Arabic manuscript, c1500–1899, Max Planck Digital Library via Wikimedia Commons
- **Training at the Technical College, Canberra**, c1940, State Library of Victoria
- **Palais Royal**, c1904, J Paul Getty Museum
- **Hot air balloon above the clouds**, Wellcome Library, London
- **Analytical engine** by Charles Babbage, 1840, London Science Museum via a Haverford College resource on the history of mechanised thought
- **Lacquered wooden domestic shrine** with 66 figures of Shinto and Buddhist deities, 19th century, Wellcome Library, London
- **Pallas praising nature at the birth of the infantes, promising to protect them from evil**, 1612, Los Angeles County Museum of Art