

The Medium That Ate The World

Raph Koster

I'm here to talk about games.

People say games are frivolous.

friv·o·lous

adj. 'fri-v&-l&s

1. Unworthy of serious attention; trivial: *a frivolous novel.*
2. Inappropriately silly: *a frivolous purchase.*

[Middle English, probably from Latin *frivulus*, of little value, probably from *friare*, to crumble.]

friv o·lous·ly *adv.*

friv o·lous·ness *n.*

People are nuts.

**I'm here to tell you that games
aren't**

pointless,

childish, or

inappropriately silly.

**GAMES ARE HERE TO EAT
HUMAN BRAINS.**

**Consider this a clarion call of
warning.**

**(It's too late for me – save
yourselves).**

Where did games come from?

The world of boards

The regular world

Higginbotham's oscilloscope

What is a game?

What are media?

Art

Music

Literature

Games are models

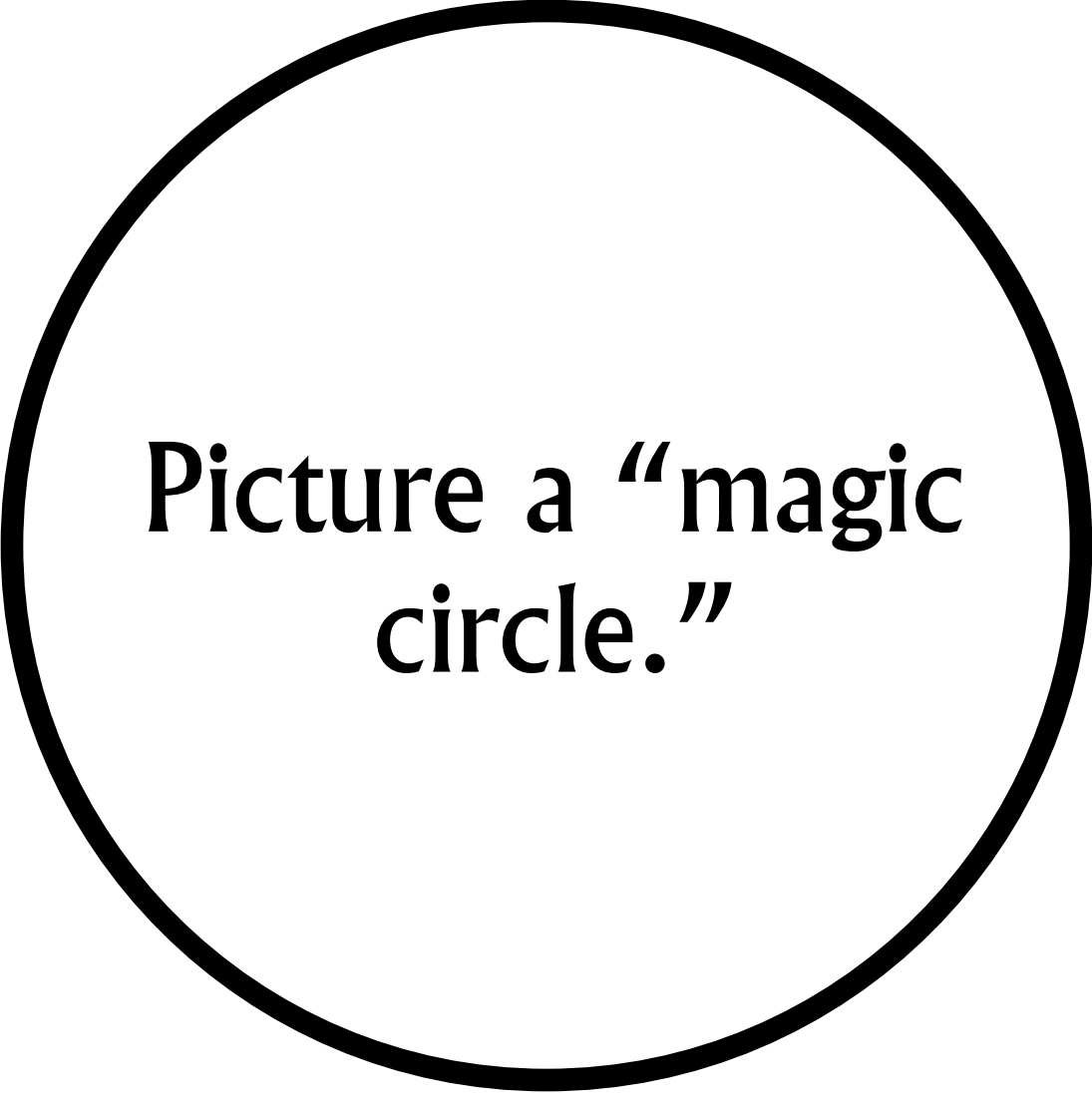
The boardgame model

The sports model

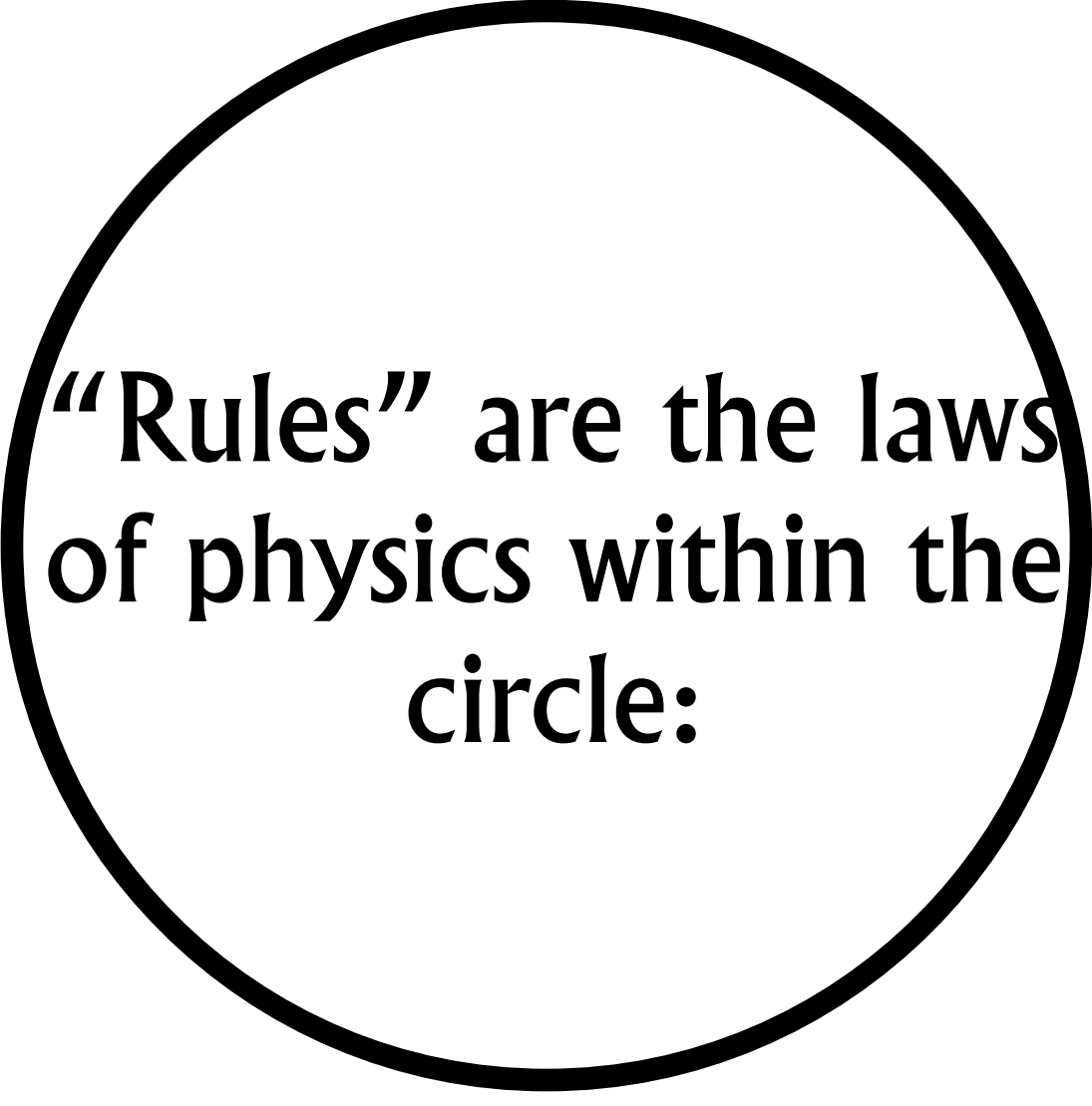
The play model



The videogame model

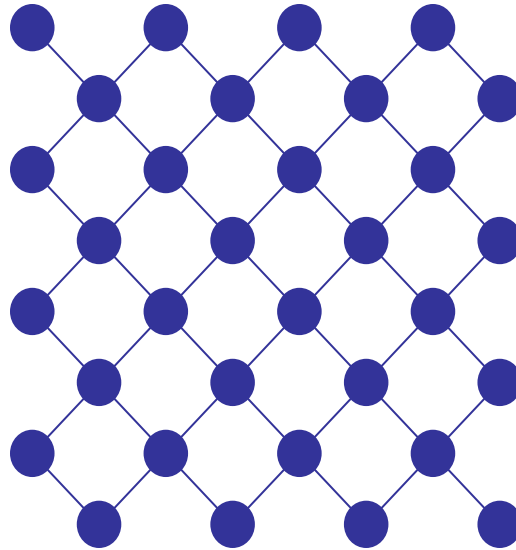


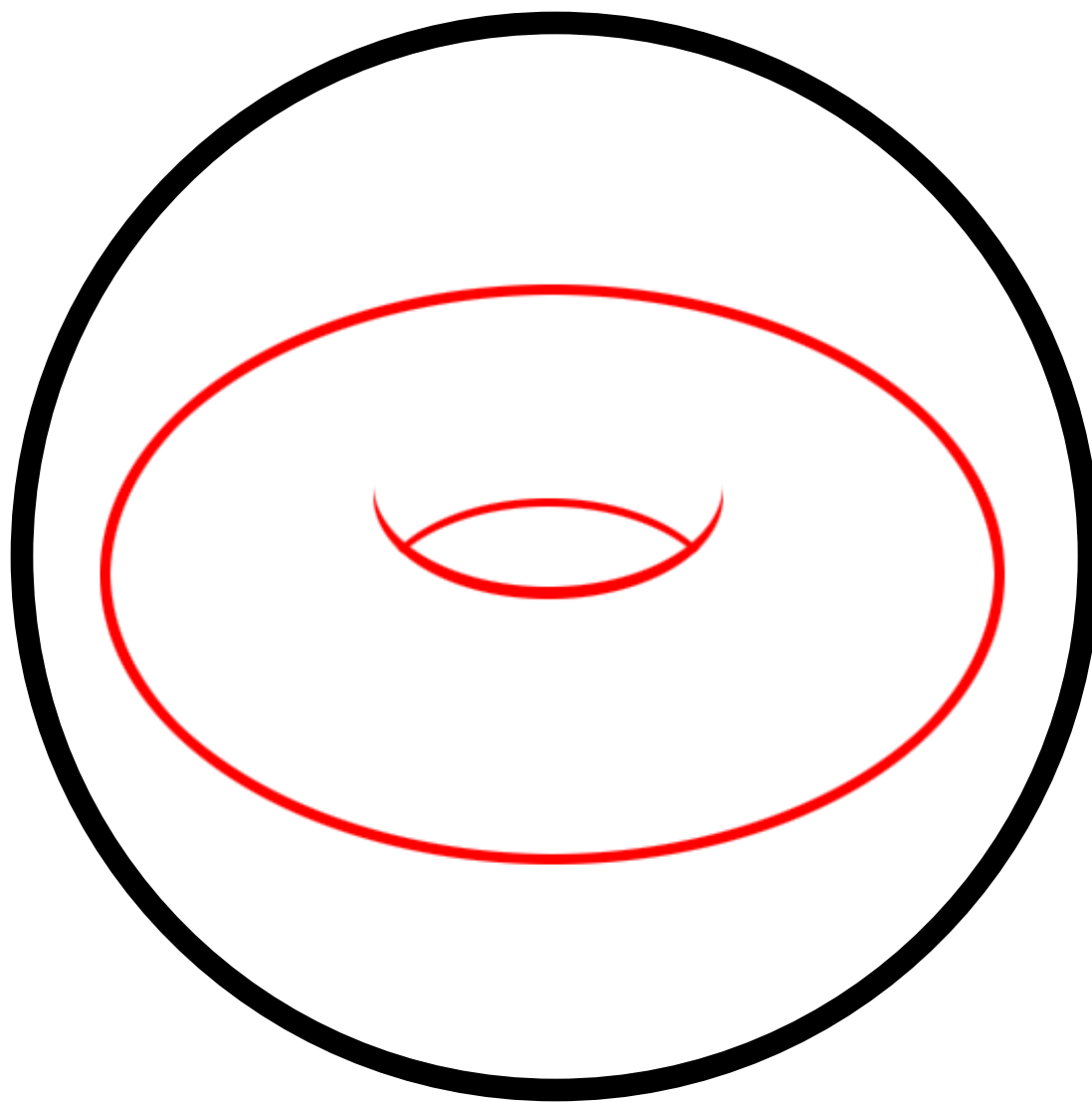
Picture a “magic
circle.”

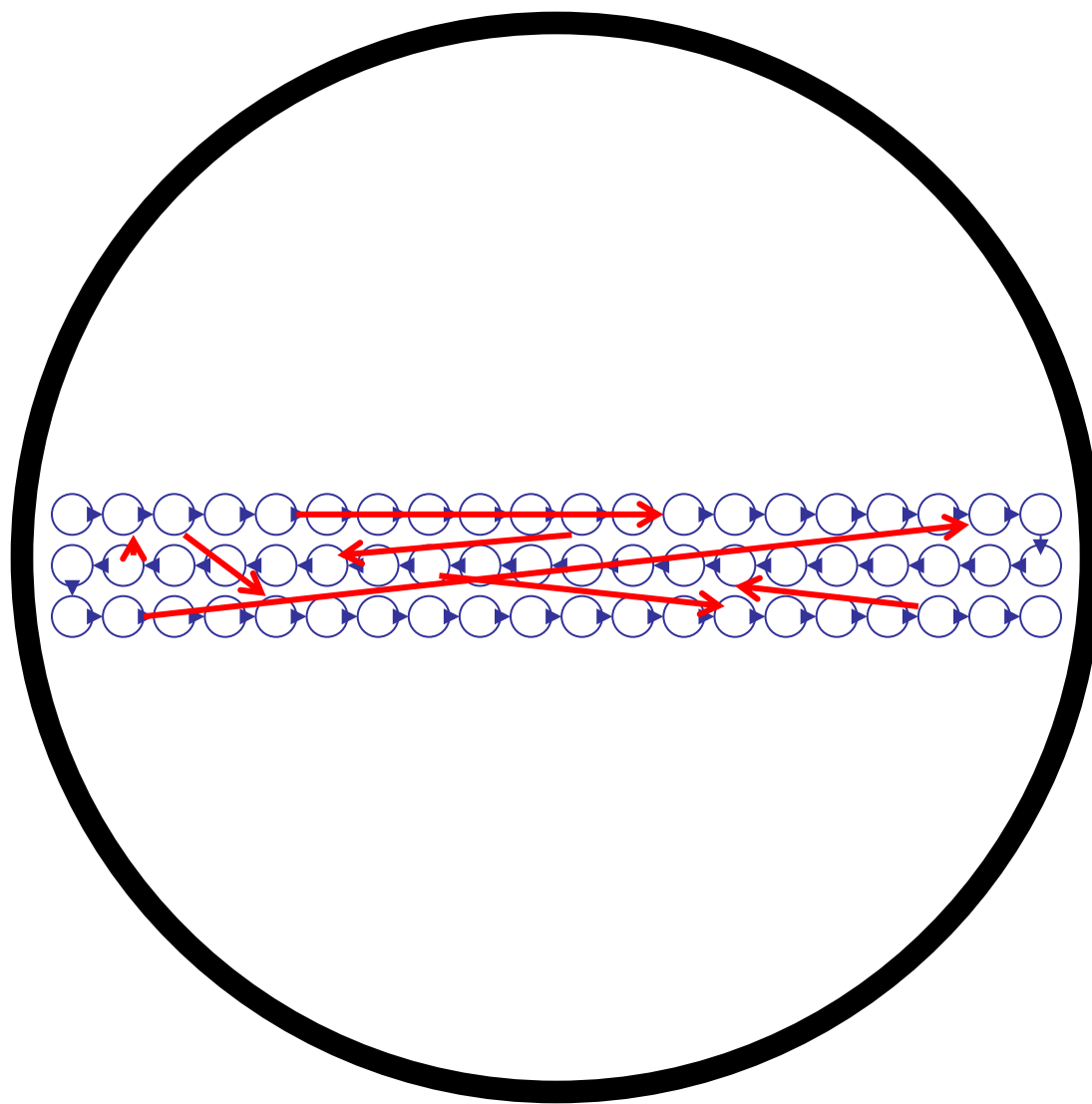


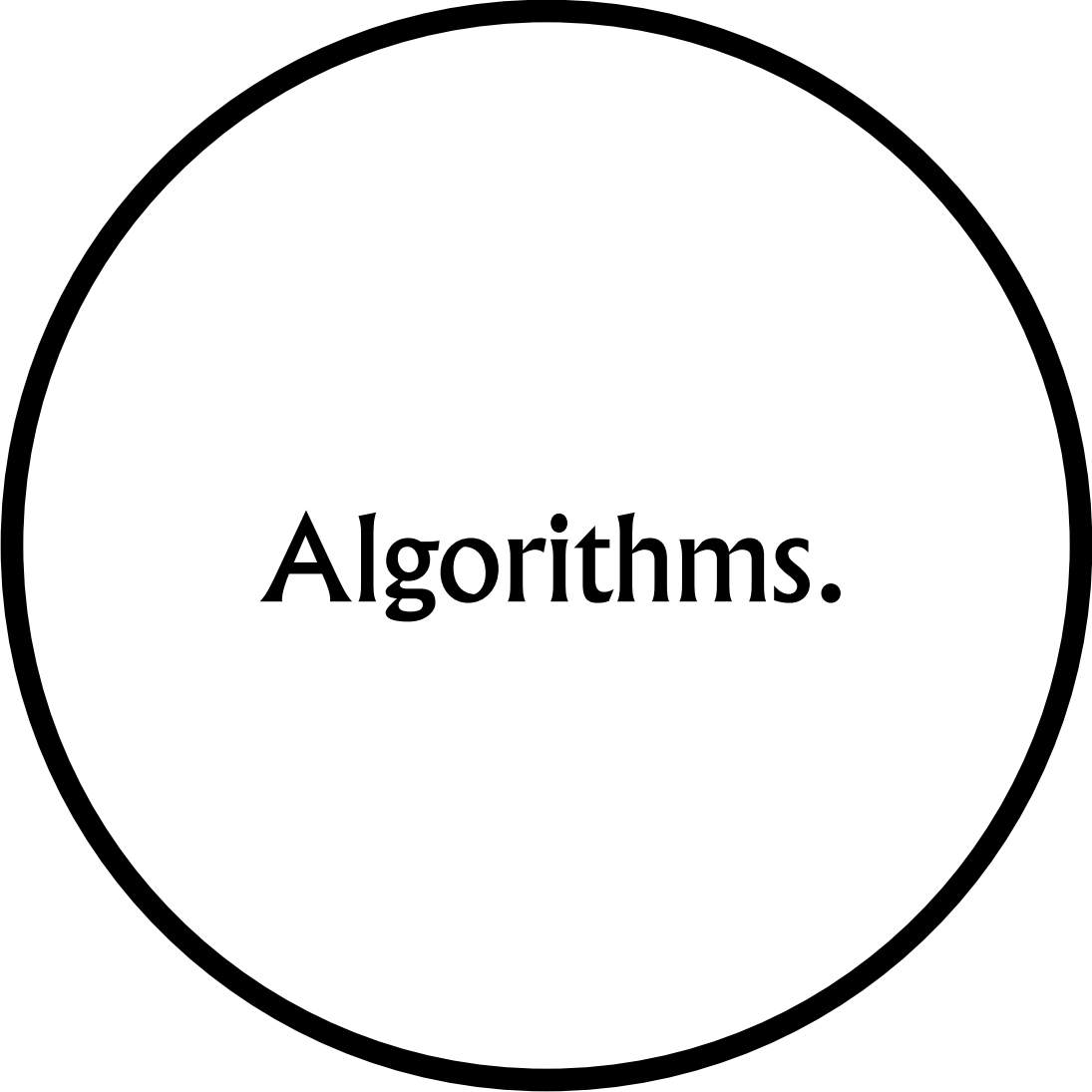
**“Rules” are the laws
of physics within the
circle:**

Topologies.

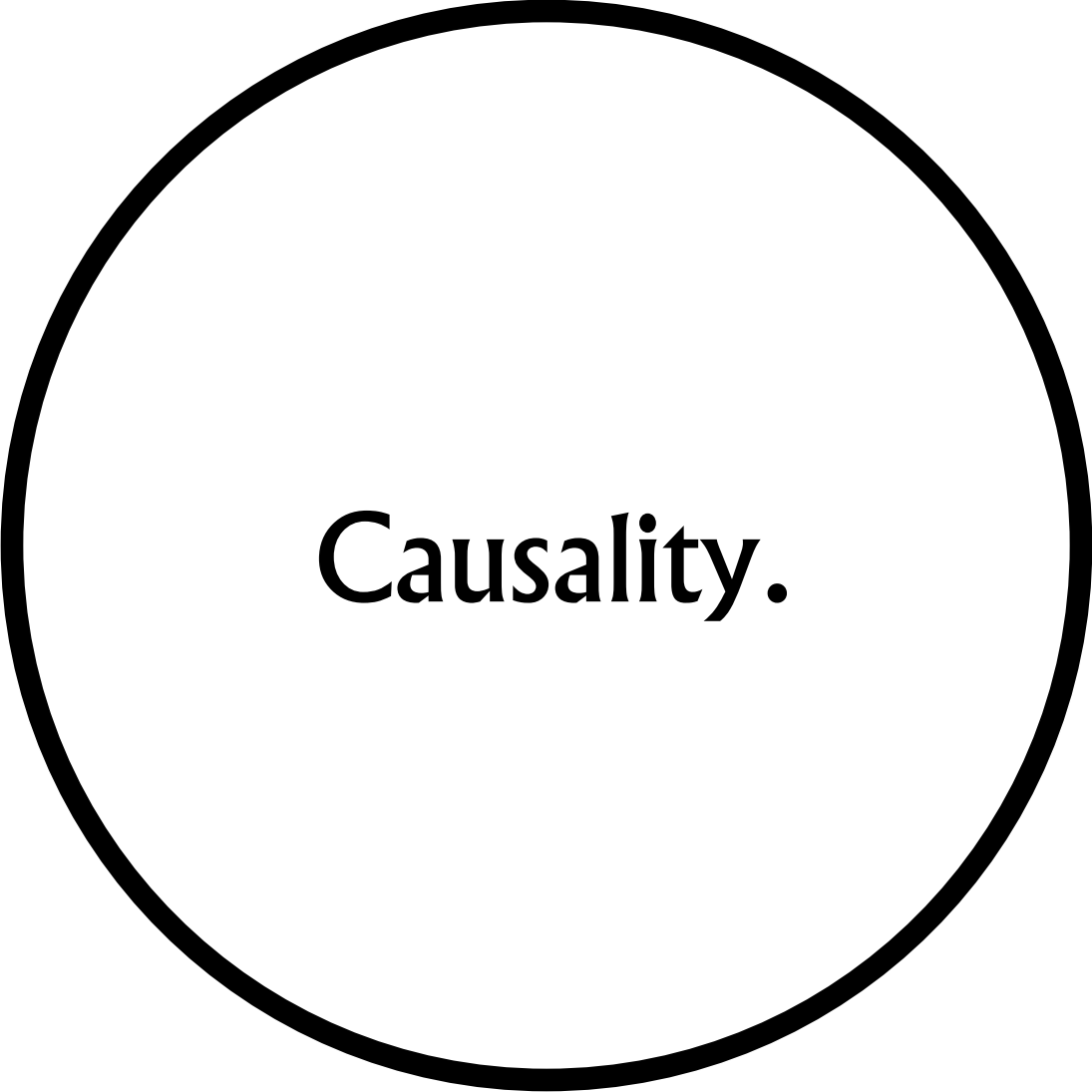








Algorithms.



Causality.

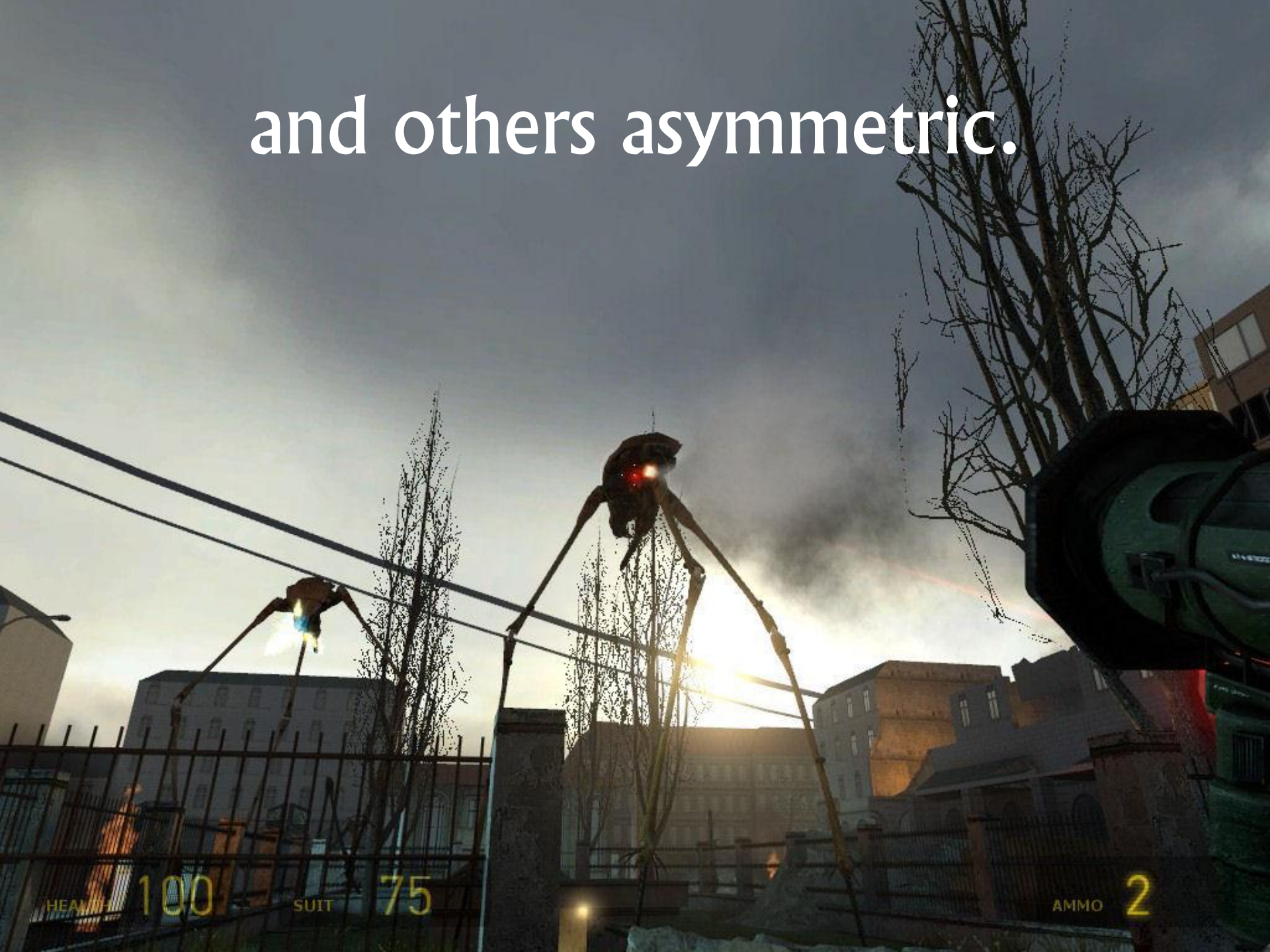
All games are turn-based.

**(Some turns are really really fast,
and run on a timer).**



Some games are symmetric

and others asymmetric.



Why do games exist?

What is fun?

Kinds of fun

Ludus

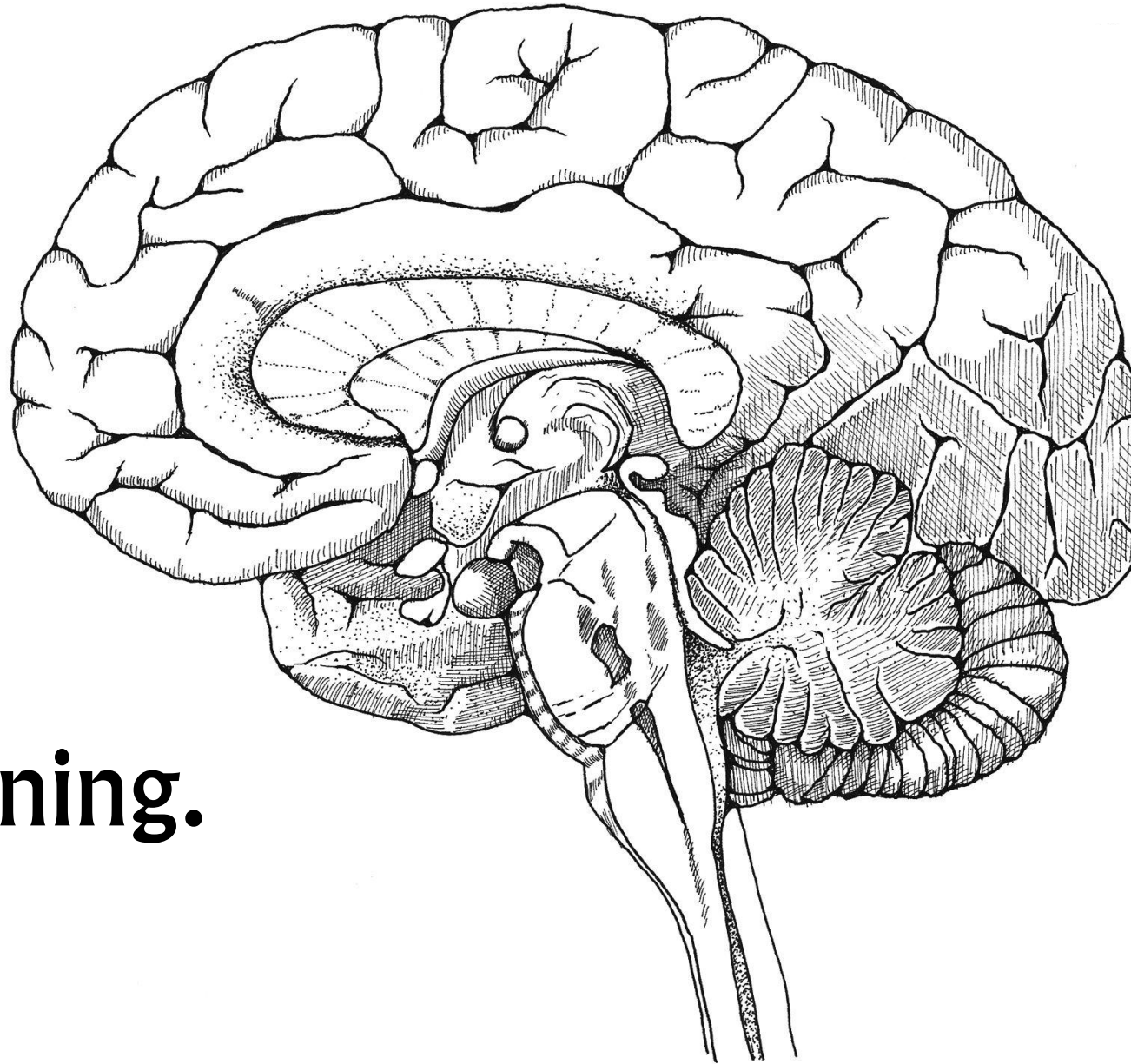
Paidia

Ilinx

Vertigo

Alea

Mimicry



Fun is learning.

What does that tell us about ourselves?

Killing.
Aiming.
Projecting force.
Assessing arcs.
Timing actions.
Collecting.
Exploring.
Building.
Forming tribes.
Seeking understanding.

**Seeing the world as a gamer
means...**

Goal-oriented behavior.

Quantification.

Collaboration.

The rise of play?

Games are eating popular culture.

How many of you play games?

100% of kids aged 6-10 do.

\$7,548,000,000

dollars spent on games in 2004.

**Not to mention pop culture
impact...**

Where are games going?

**There are two kinds of video games
today.**

**Incredibly expensive CGI movies
with occasional interactive
sequences.**

And “pure” games.

One path leads to the holodeck.

The other is the models model.

One swallows the other.

(models > holodeck)

Can there be a metaverse?

**Modern games are composite
media.**

**It's easier to imagine a TV show
within a game than the other way
around.**

**The pace of cyberspace is being set
by games.**

The future of play is ubiquity.

