

ORGANIZATION AS FLUX AND TRANSFORMATION

Gareth Morgan

Review Chapter 3: What is an “Open System”?

- ▣ Continuous cycle of input, internal transformation, output, and feedback.
- ▣ Emphasizes importance of relationships between the environment and the internal functioning of the system.

Rethinking Relations with Environment

- Morgan argues that the opinions of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela differ from the “open system”? How?
- Answer: “They argue that all living systems are organizationally closed, autonomous systems of interaction that make reference only to themselves.”

What does Maturana and Varela's term "autopoiesis" mean?

- The ability to self-create or self-renew.
- The capacity for self-production through a closed system of relations.

Autopoietic vs. Synpoietic

Characteristics	Autopoietic	Synpoietic
Boundaries:	closed G — E — R	open
Control:	autonomous G — E — R	cooperative
Information:	central G — E — R	distributed
Organization:	closed G — E — R	ajar
Predictability:	predictable G — E — R	unpredictable
Orientation:	developmental G — E — R	evolutionary
Internal Balance:	homeostatic G — E — R	changing/dynamic

Approx. positions: **groupthink (G)**; **'expert'-driven task force (E)**; **round-table (R)**

Organizational Narcissism

- How does Maturana and Varela's theory of autopoiesis relate to narcissism?

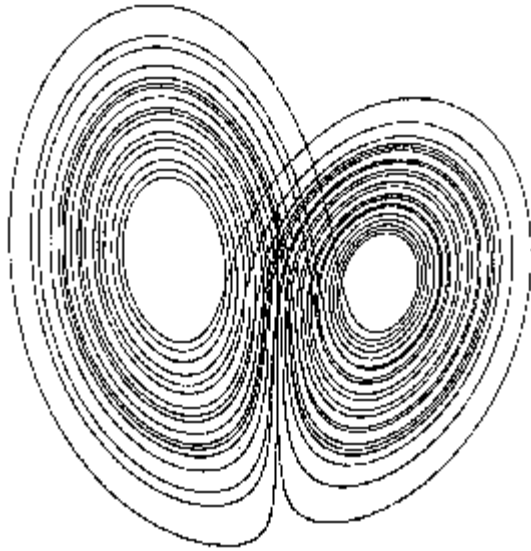


What does Morgan mean by “egocentric organizations”?

- Organizations that “have a rather fixed notion of who they are or what they can be and are determined to impose or sustain that identity at all costs.”
- What are some potential ramifications of an organization being egocentric?

The Butterfly Effect

- “a small change as insignificant as a butterfly flapping its wings in Peking can influence weather patterns in the Gulf of Mexico.”



- How does Morgan relate the image of the butterfly effect to organizations?

Managing in Complexity

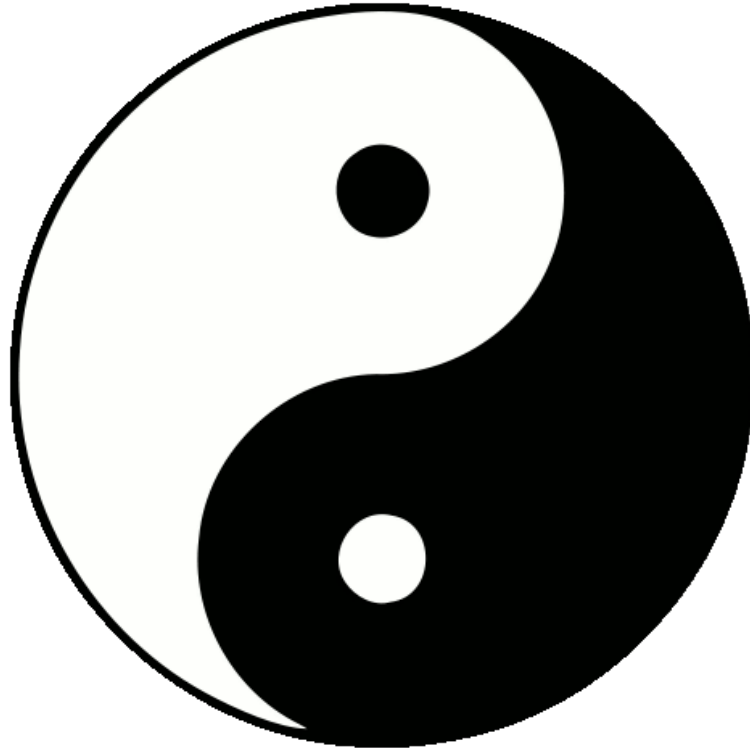
- What 5 ideas does Morgan suggest should guide management of change?
 1. Rethink what we mean by organization, especially the nature of hierarchy and control.
 2. Learn the art of managing and changing contexts.
 3. Learn how to use small changes to create large effects.
 4. Live with continuous transformation and emergent order as a natural state of affairs.
 5. Be open to new metaphors that can facilitate processes of self-organization.

The Logic of Mutual Causality

- How does Magorah Maruyama develop examples of loop analysis and positive feedback?
- How can Maruyama's work be related back to the "butterfly effect"?
 - ▣ See chart examples in text

Yin and Yang

- How can Taoist philosophy, shaped by all natural and human life being shaped by cyclical movement and opposites, be applied to organizations?



What did Morgan highlight as Marx's 3 principles of dialectical change?

1. The mutual struggle, or unity of opposites
2. The negation of negation
3. The transformation of quantity into quality
 - Explain each principle

Creative Reflection



- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the flux and transformation metaphor?