

Leadership through chaos

Ranganathan Balashanmugam



I am Ranganathan



- From Bengaluru, India.
- CTO/Co-Founder of EverestEngineering.
- I used to be a developer ♥ for ~12 years.
- Passionate about building and scaling teams.

CHAPTER 1

WORKFLOWS and EVENTS

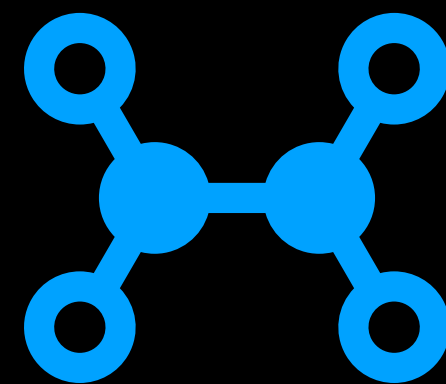
**We are all part of some
sub-system.**

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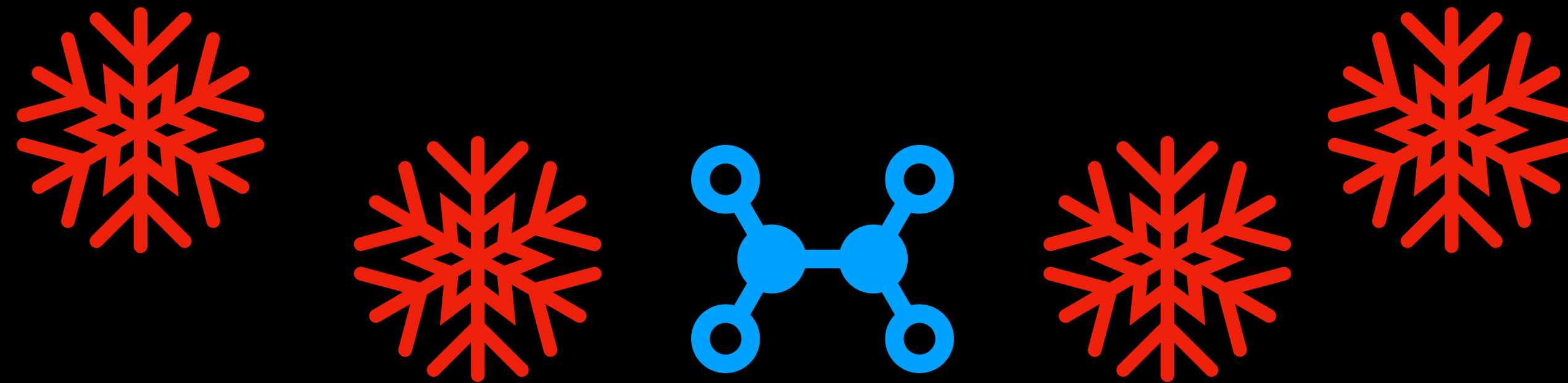
Any sub-system consists of workflows and events.

We are all part of some sub-system.



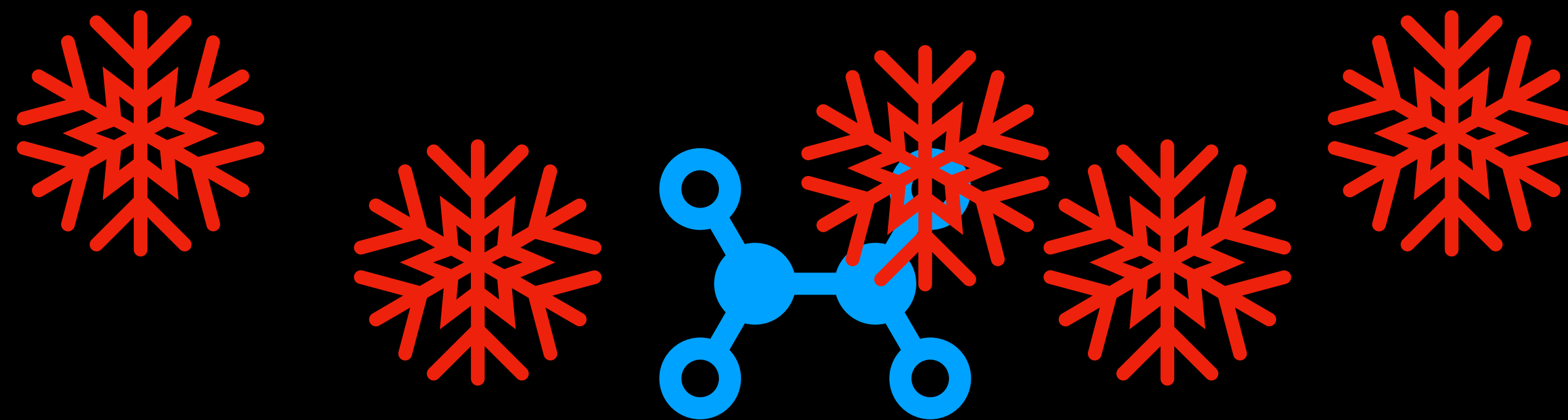
Any sub-system runs through a set of repeatable and non-repeatable workflows.

We are all part of some sub-system.



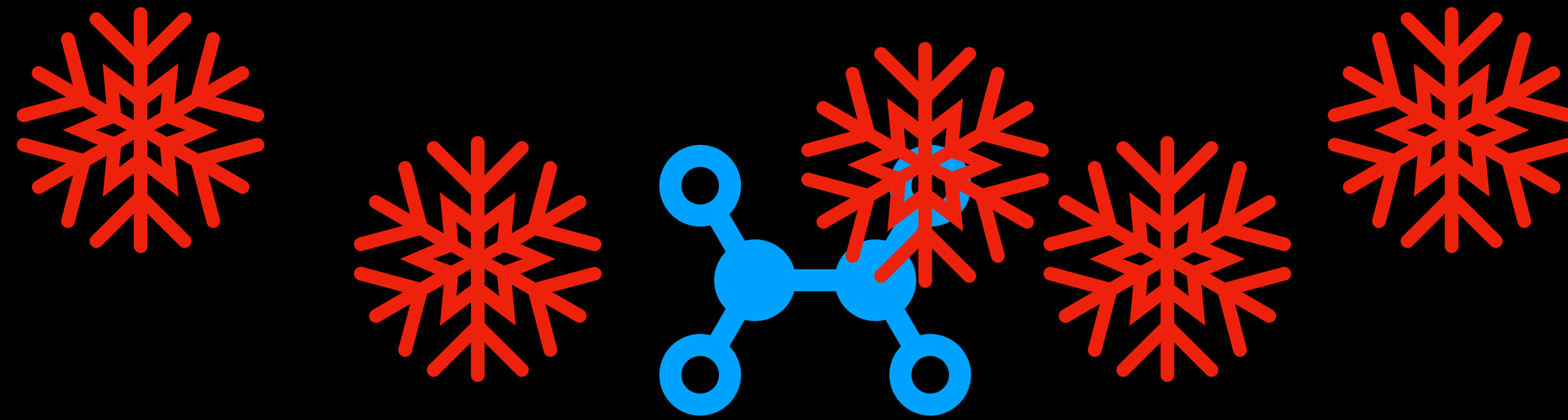
Events occur within and outside of sub-systems, which
contribute to the workflow.

We are all part of some sub-system.



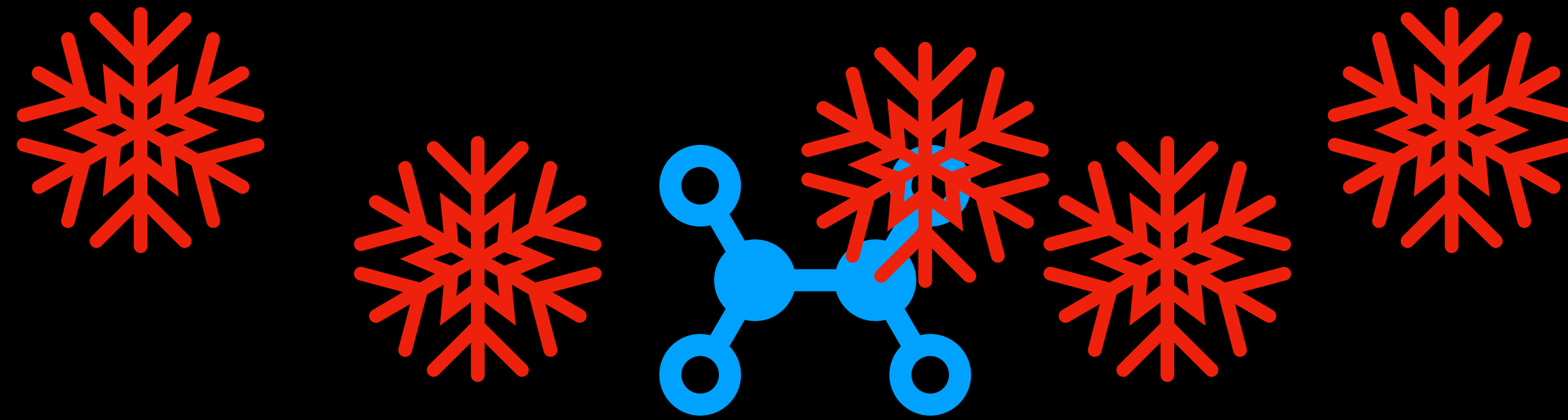
Events affect workflows.

We are all part of some sub-system.



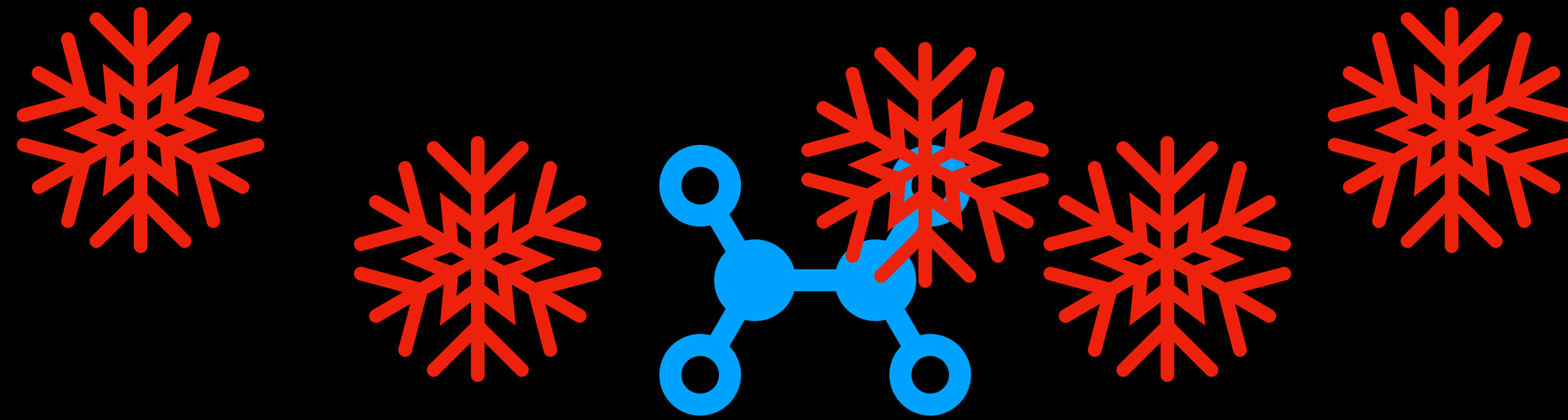
Some events are simple.
Cause and effect are predictable.

We are all part of some sub-system.



Some events increase complexity.
Cause and effect are not predictable.

We are all part of some sub-system.



**Some events cause turbulence. They only result in confusion
and disorder.**

Welcome chaos.

Chapter 1 - Summary

- Everything is part of a sub-system.
- Each sub-systems have workflows and events.
- Events affect workflows.
- When events cause turbulence, we call it chaos.

CHAPTER 2

ASSUMPTIONS

We like order.

We like order.

Because it is predictable. We understand cause and effect.

Expecting order is illusional.

We expect it to be linear. This is illusion of predictability.

Rational Choice.

We expect people to make rational choices. Even during chaos.

We assume chaos is bounded.

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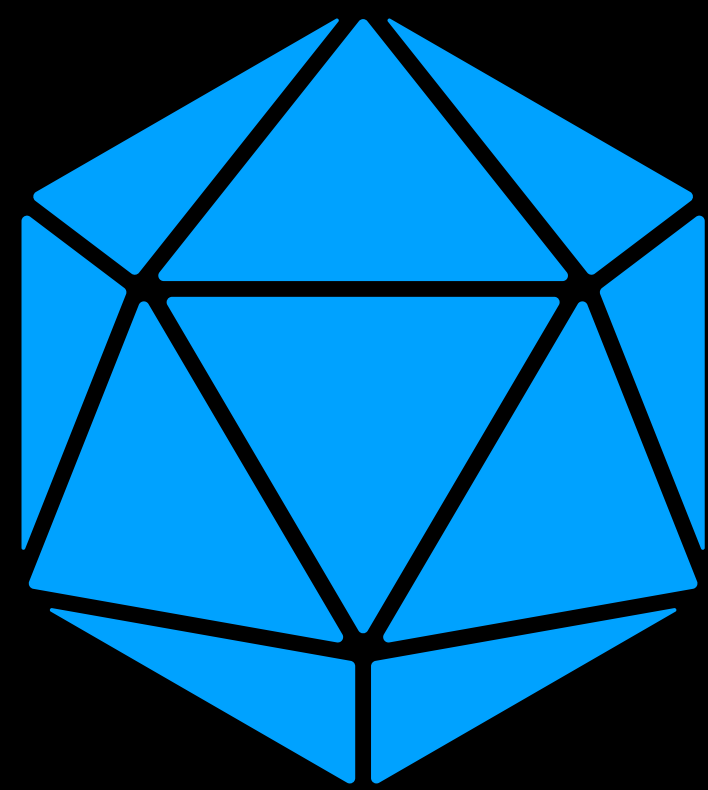
Black Swans exist.

Chapter 2 - Summary

- We like and expect order.
- We expect people to take rational choices. Even during chaos.
- We expect chaos to be bounded.

CHAPTER 3

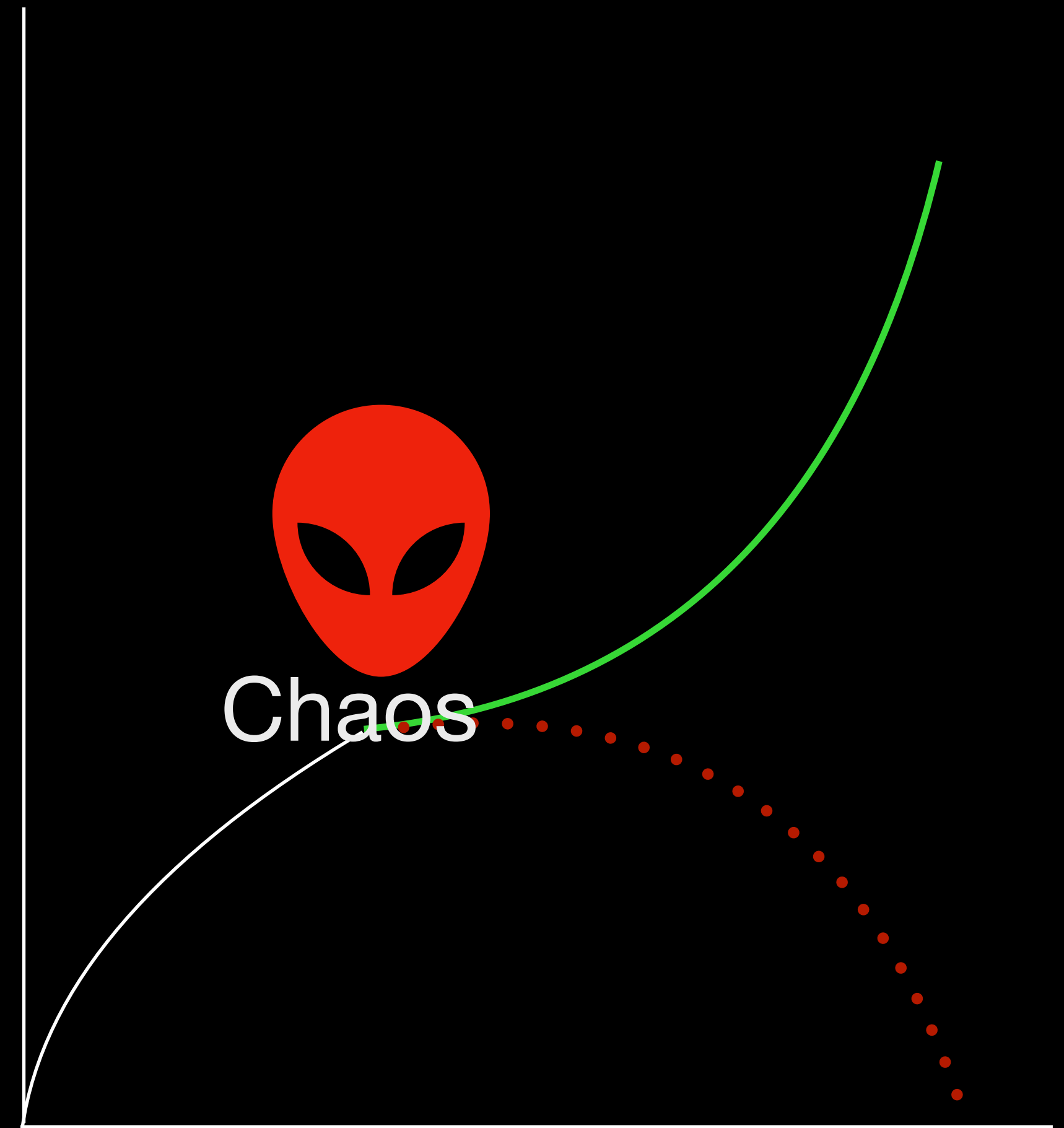
CHANGE



Change



Sub-system



Inflection point



Orchestra

Change: off-tune

War

Change: difference in opinion



Business
Change: compliance

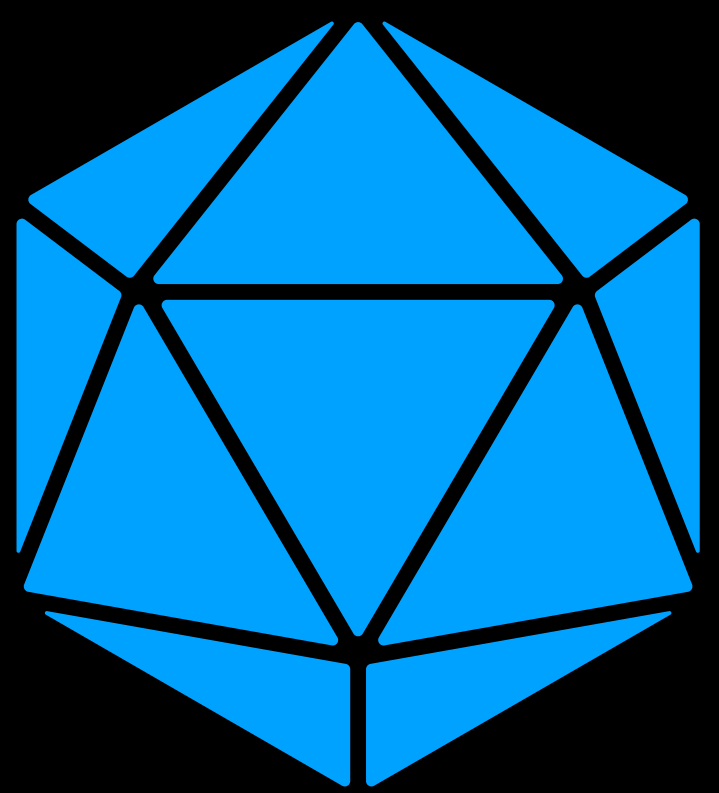


Boat rowing

Change: a strong person



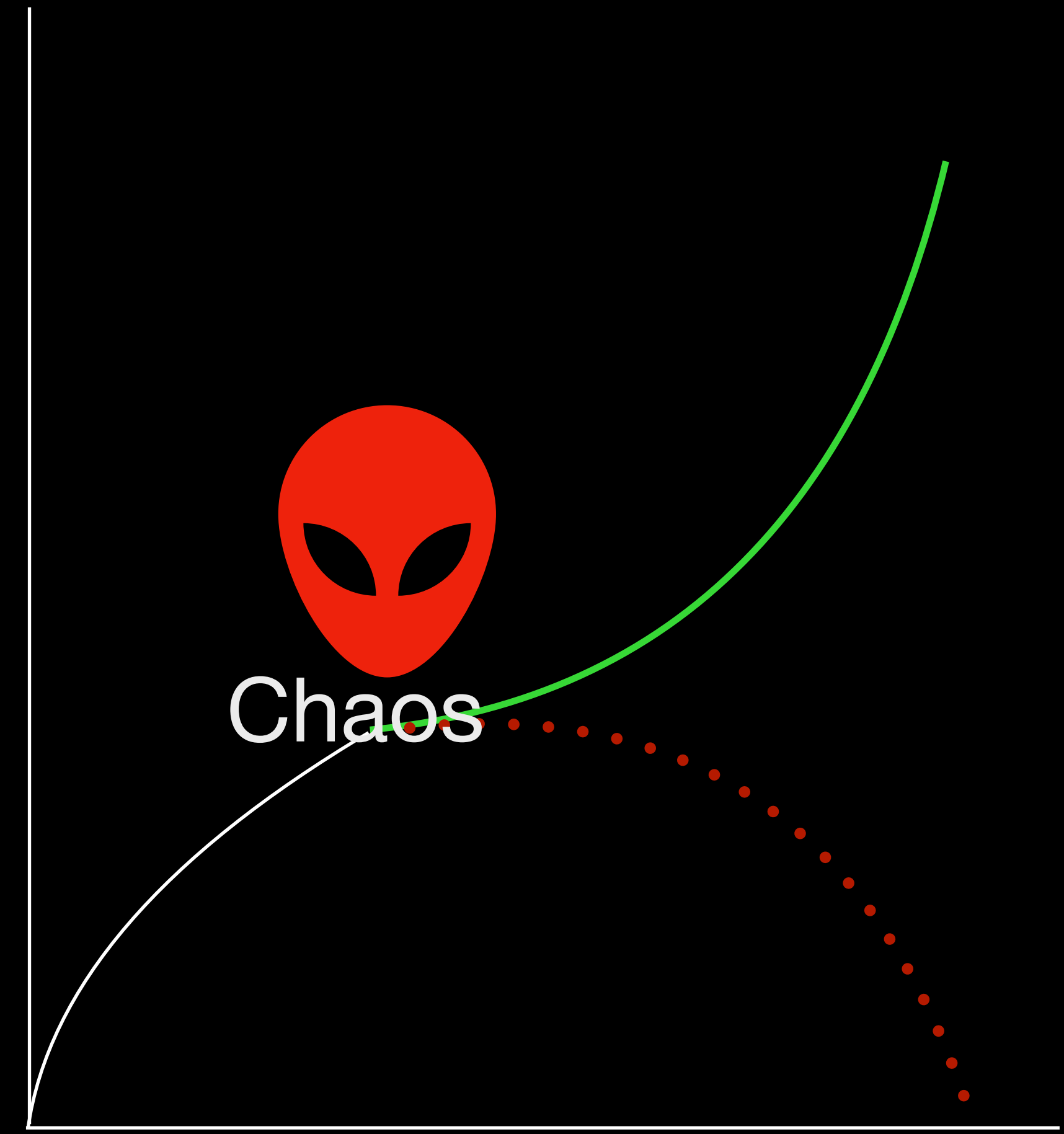
Chapter 3 - Summary



Change



Sub-system



Inflection point

CHAPTER 4

CHAOS

1. If you are not seeing chaos, it does not mean that it does not exist.

2. Stay calm.

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"If you cannot handle chaos, you will contribute to it."

3. There are many aspects we can't control. But, there are always few things we can control.

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"Break down."

4. Check for the agents of chaos. People end up contributing to the agents.

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*"When a fire alarm goes off in our house, we must look for the source of the fire instead of frantically trying to turn off the loud alarm.
- Mark McLaughlin, M.D."*

**5. Normal means of communication
wont work during chaos. Over
communicate and be very
assertive.**

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"Ambiguity fuels chaos. War rooms are helpful."

**6. People change behaviour
during chaos. They break rules.**

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during chaos. They break rules.

"They fight for toilet paper."

**7. Chaos creates urgency. It
blinds us from long term
efforts.**

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"When you are up to neck in alligators, it's hard to remember that your initial objective was to drain the swamp."

8. Simulated disorder postulates perfect discipline; simulated fear postulates courage; simulated weakness postulates strength.

- Sun Tzu

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- Sun Tzu

"Simulated disorder are like vaccinations."

9. You cannot control chaos.

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"You have to navigate through it. It too has expiry period."



What could 550 men do to an empire of millions?



img src: <https://quintessentialruminations.wordpress.com/2012/05/07/tenochtitlan-city-of-the-azte>



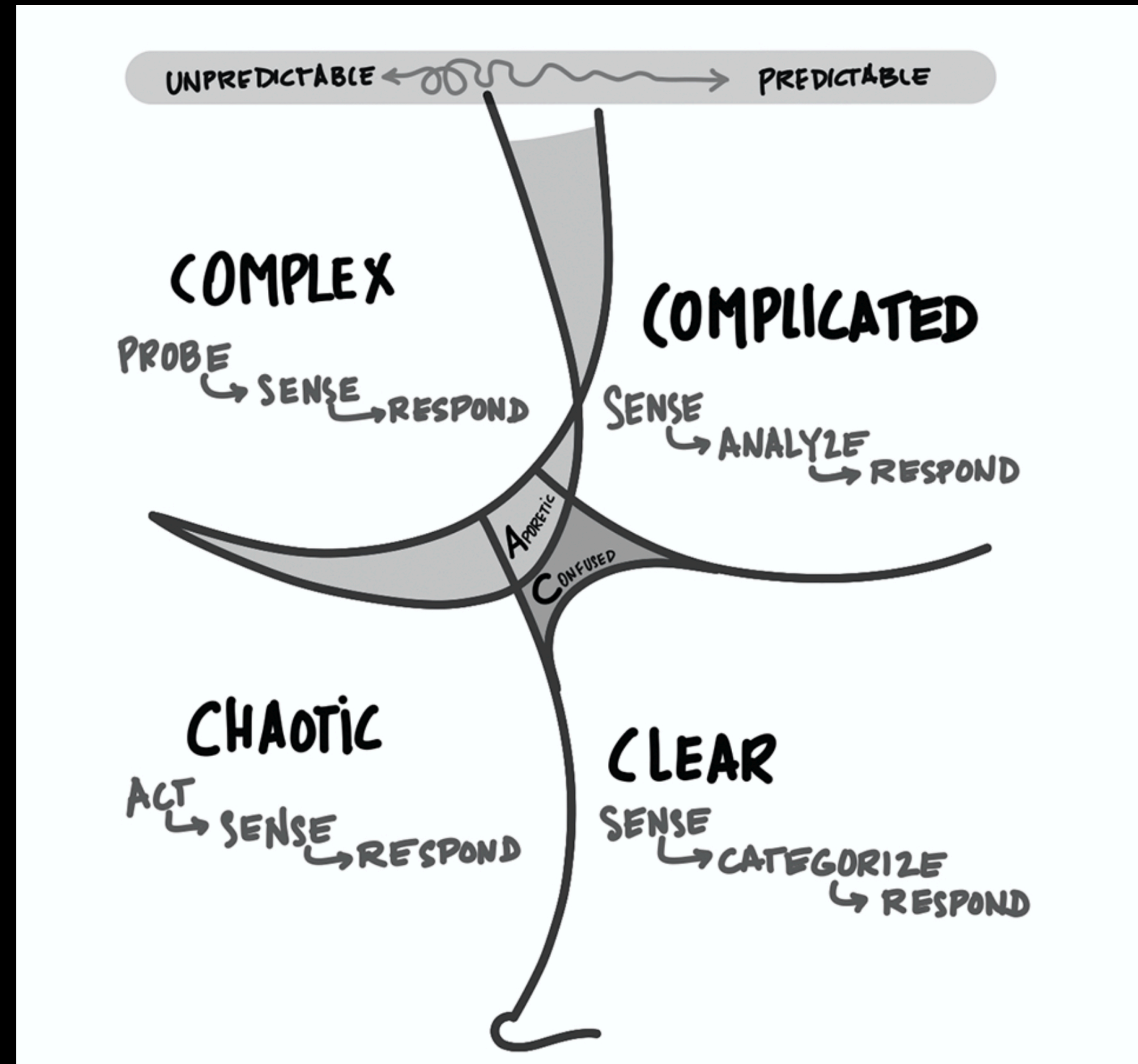


10. Expect chaos.

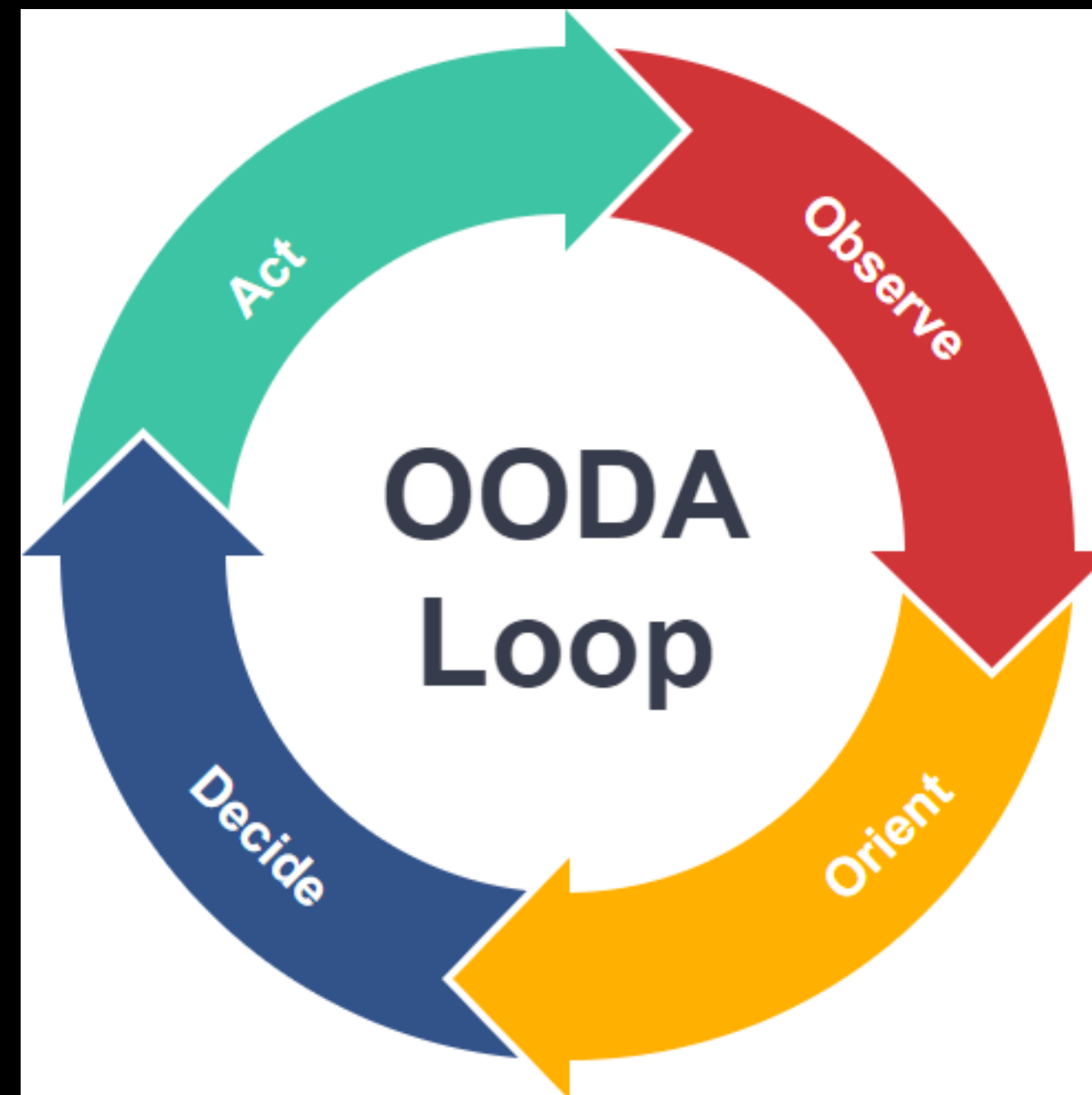
CHAPTER 5

FRAMEWORKS

Cynefin



OODA Loop



“Predictability is so unpredictable that you cannot even predict why it is unpredictable.”

–Someone predictably unpredictable

Thank you,
Ranganathan Balashanmugam