Systems Theory

Key Players, Concepts, and Assumptions

Characteristics of Systems

Feedback and Control Loops

Permeable/Amorphous Boundaries

Ecological Systems

Systems Theory

Key Players

Ludwig von Bertalanffy: a biologist who developed the general system theory which eventually was applied by family therapists to families

Urie Bronfenbrenner: developed ecological systems theory and its various environmental systems

Key Concept

Family System: the individual members of a family, their relationships, and interactions

Key Assumptions

Holism is key . . . all parts of a [family] system are interconnected, therefore a system must be understood as a whole and cannot be comprehended by examining its individual parts in isolation

Systems Theory

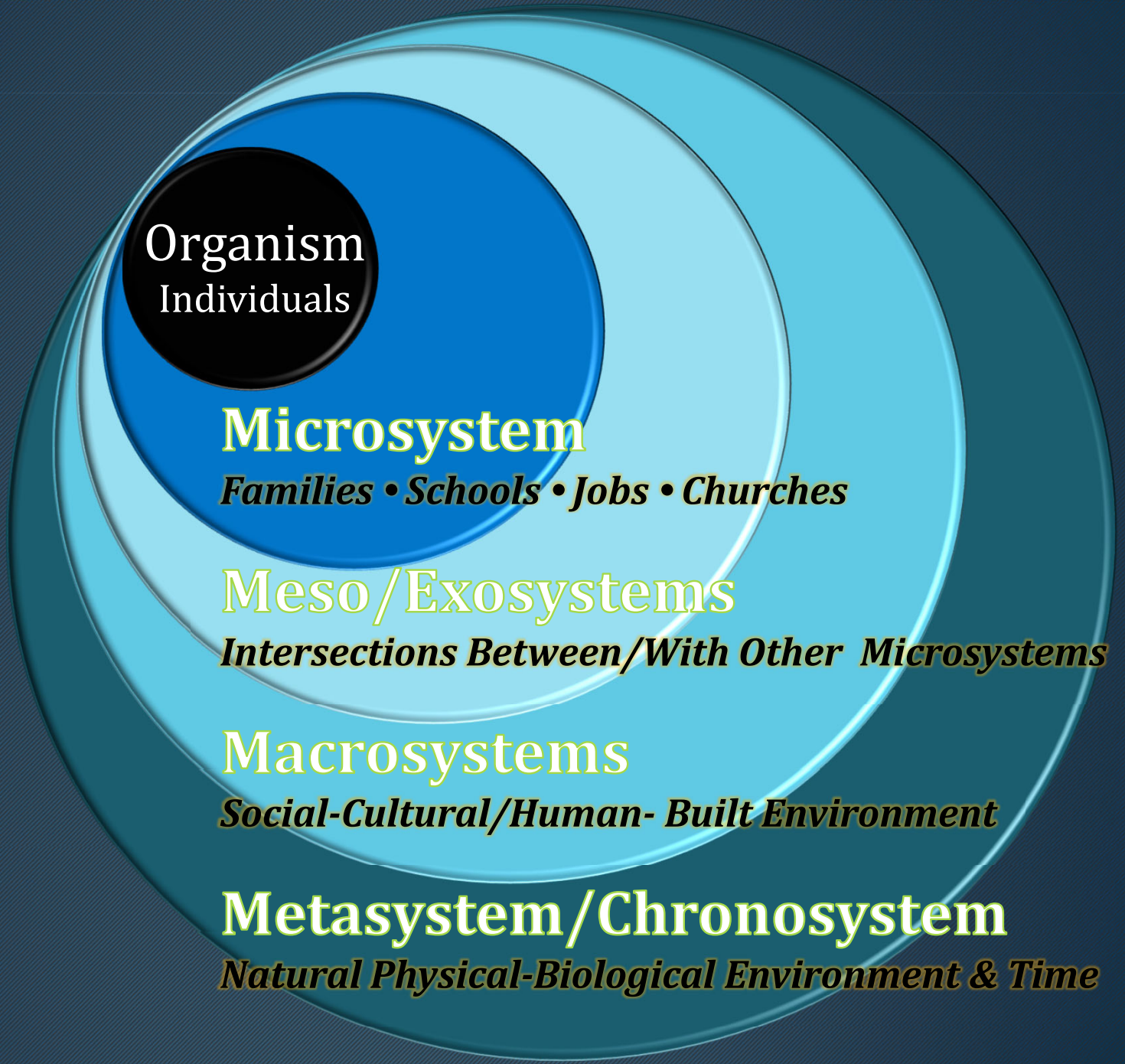
- Systems
  - Interdependence and Mutual Influence
  - Hierarchy (suprasystems and subsystems)
  - Multifinality, Equifinality, and Counterfinality

Ecological Systems

These Interactions Are Guided By

Physical and Biological Laws of Nature

Socially Constructed Rules and Institutions



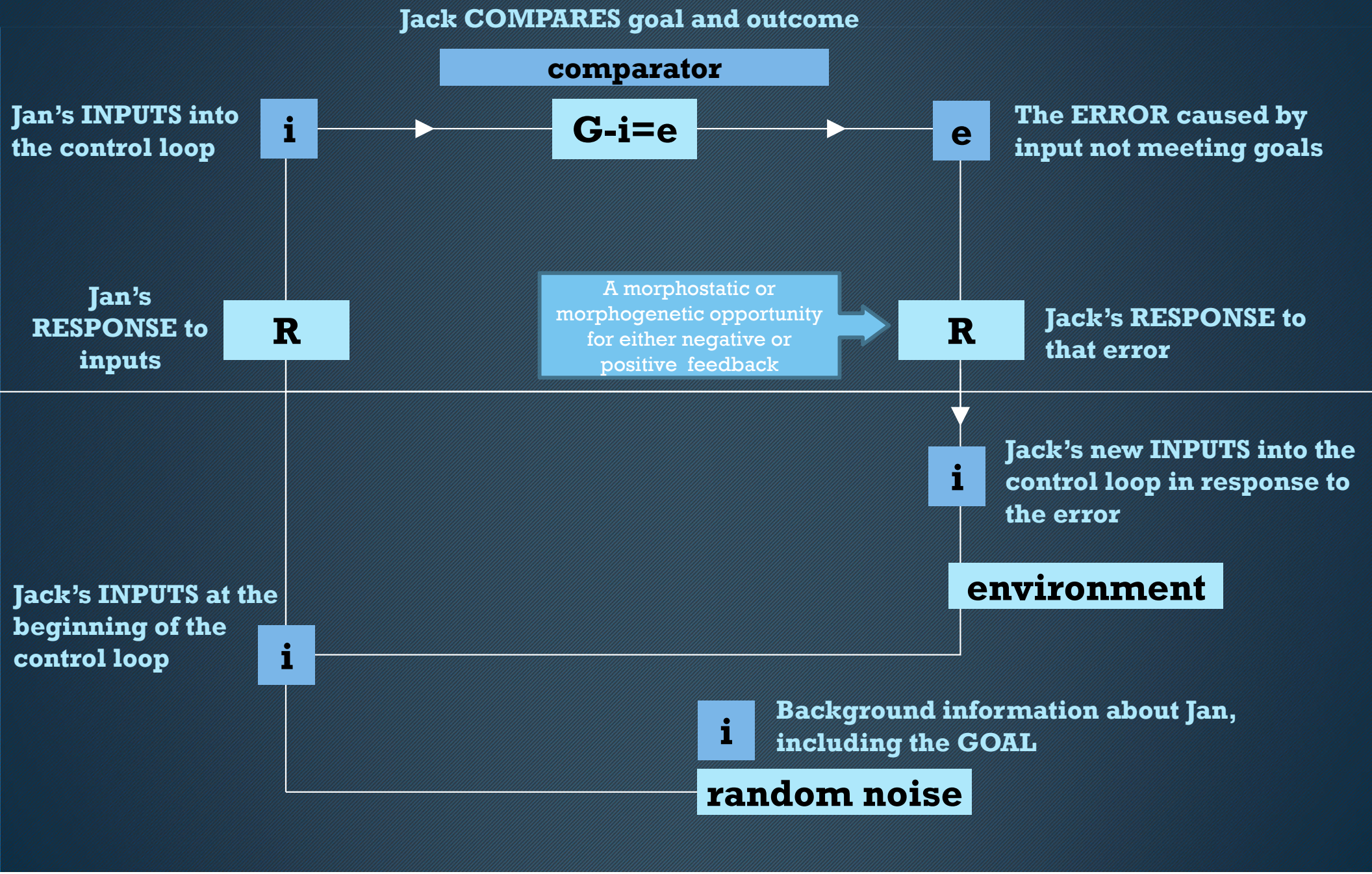
Systems Theory

- Systems
  - Interdependence and Mutual Influence
  - Hierarchy (suprasystems and subsystems)
  - Multifinality, Equifinality, and Counterfinality

Systems Theory

- Systems
  - Interdependence and Mutual Influence
  - Hierarchy (suprasystems and subsystems)
  - Multifinality, Equifinality, and Counterfinality
- Feedback and Control Loops
  - Equilibrium and Homeostasis
  - Negative Feedback (constancy loops)
    - Dampen or attenuate deviations
    - Morphostatic – rigid and inflexible
  - Positive Feedback (variety loops)
    - Amplify or support deviations
    - Morphogenetic – adjustable and flexible

Feedback and Control Loops



Systems Theory

- Systems
  - Interdependence and Mutual Influence
  - Hierarchy (suprasystems and subsystems)
  - Equifinality
- Feedback and Control Loops
  - Equilibrium and Homeostasis
  - Negative Feedback (constancy loops)
  - Positive Feedback (variety loops)
  - Morphogenetic and morphostatic systems
- Boundaries
  - (Im)permeable/Amorphous Boundaries
  - Inputs and Outputs

JOURNAL QUESTION

Think back to the (final) decision to come to UCSD (either after high school or after community college). Major decisions like that are often deviations from family homeostasis and have to be resolved by family system decision-making.

Describe the various ecological systems engaged and any control loops in moments of disagreement in the ultimate decision to come to UCSD.