

The Stories We Tell

An open book is shown from a low angle, with its pages fanned out. From the center of the book, a bright, golden light bursts forth, creating a large, glowing, fan-like shape. This light is composed of many fine, golden rays and sparkles that radiate outwards, filling the upper half of the frame. The background is dark, with scattered white and golden points of light, resembling a starry night sky or a digital space. The overall effect is one of magic, knowledge, and illumination.

understanding and creating
organisational pasts, presents and futures



Managerialism

Narratives vs Stories

Narrative and Story Forms

Reflexivity and Transcendence

**Using
Them**

Managerialism

“Managerialism combines management knowledge and ideology to establish itself systematically in organisations and society while depriving owners, employees, and civil society of all decision-making powers.”

$$M_A = M + E + I$$





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Sensemaking Registries: Pasts, Presents, and Futures



after David M Boje (2008)
Storytelling Organisations

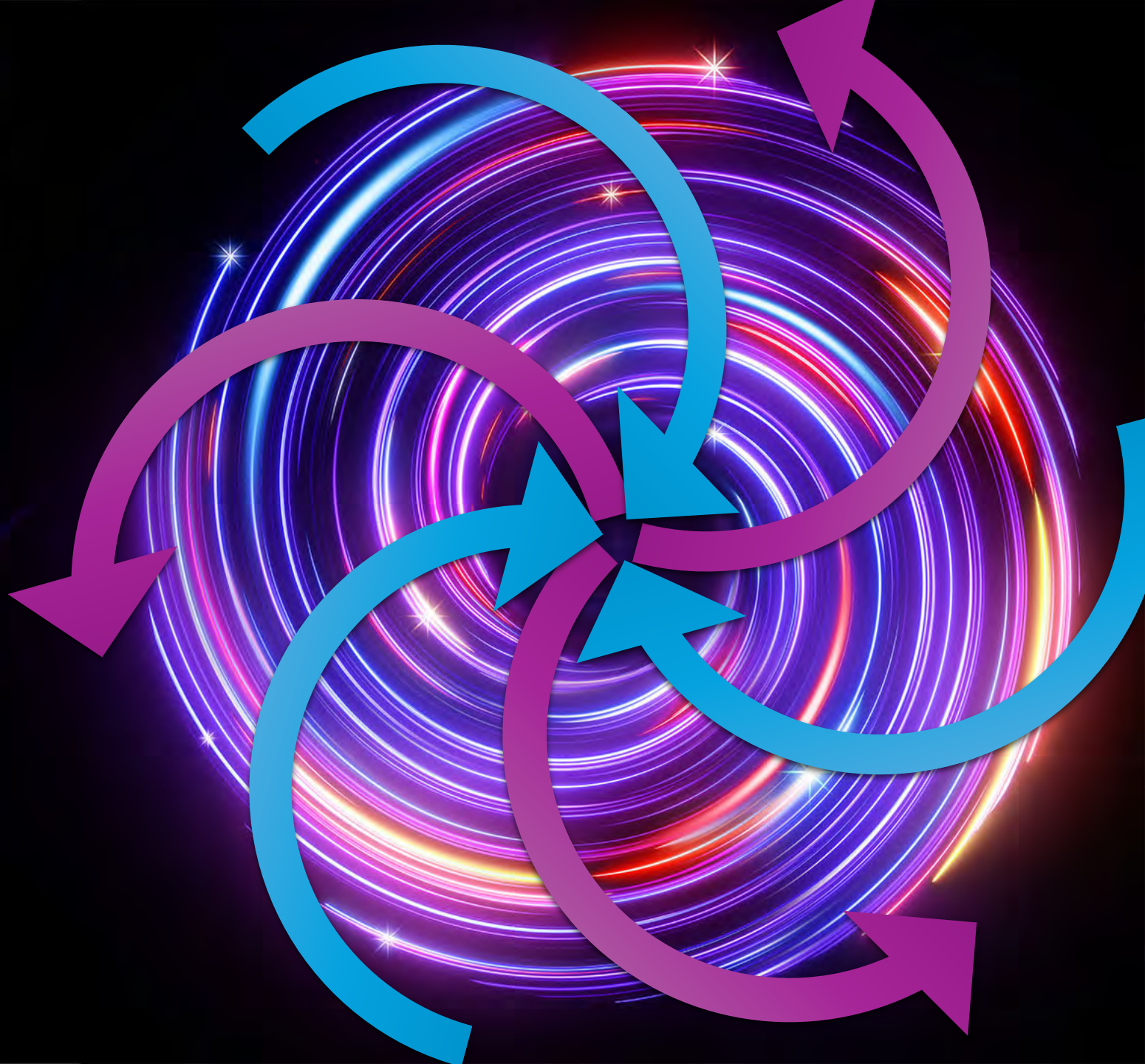
Narrative vs Story

narrative

- centripetal / controlling (towards the centre)
- deviation-reducing

story

- centrifugal / emerging (away from centre)
- variation-amplifying





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Narrative

“a whole telling, with the linear sequence of a beginning, middle and end; usually a backward-looking (retrospective) gaze from present, back through the past, sorting characters, dialog, themes, etc... into one plot, and changes little over time”
(Henderson and Boje 2018, p7)



3 Narrative Ways



BME

direct control
organisation or
founder as hero
revealed by events



Managerialism s Narrative



implied control
historic reference to
events
multi-framed

Antenarrative

potential control
strategic
emergent
opportunities

A young green plant with long, narrow leaves growing out of dark soil. The plant is positioned on the left side of the frame, and the soil is dark and textured. The word "Story" is written in white with a purple glow in the top right corner.

Story

“an oral or written architectural expression involving two or more people interpreting or expressing past or anticipated experience”

3 Story Ways



Simultaneities



Embodied



Emotive-Ethical

Managerialism 🙄 Stories

emergent
stories

living story
web

co-
constructed

unfinished,
unwhole

unmerged
minds

A hand from the left side of the frame points towards a wooden signpost. The signpost has five directional signs pointing to the right. The signs are made of weathered wood and are mounted on a central wooden post. The background is a lush green field with white daisies and yellow wildflowers, with a line of trees and hills in the distance under a cloudy sky.

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Pseudo-Dialogue

A long, narrow prison hallway with blue metal bars on the walls and ceiling, leading to a barred gate at the end. The hallway is dimly lit, with light coming from the end and some wall-mounted fixtures. The floor is a patterned tile.

In managerial contexts, dialogue is often:

- **to achieve consensus**
(ie. reducing to monologue)
- **to persuade people using rhetoric**
(ie. reducing to *my* monologue)
- **a monologue masquerading as dialogue**
(ie. one voice spoken by multiple people)

Sensemaking Registries: Inward & Beyond

*after David M Boje (2008)
Storytelling Organisations*



Dialectics – Reflexivity

debate intended to resolve a conflict or tension between two (apparently) contradictory ideas using logic to identify truths on both sides rather than disproving one argument, often by asking questions and giving answers

seek contrasts in **identity**
sameness vs difference

note effects of **socialisation**
I-ness vs We's (authenticity)

listen to **intuition**
a priori vs experience

explore mixed **purposes**
thesis vs antithesis

Dialogism – Transcendence

text or speech in which multiple voices are at work (homophony), with multiplicity, open-endedness and unfinalisability ...

it may reduce to symphony or diaphony, but never to monophony or monologue

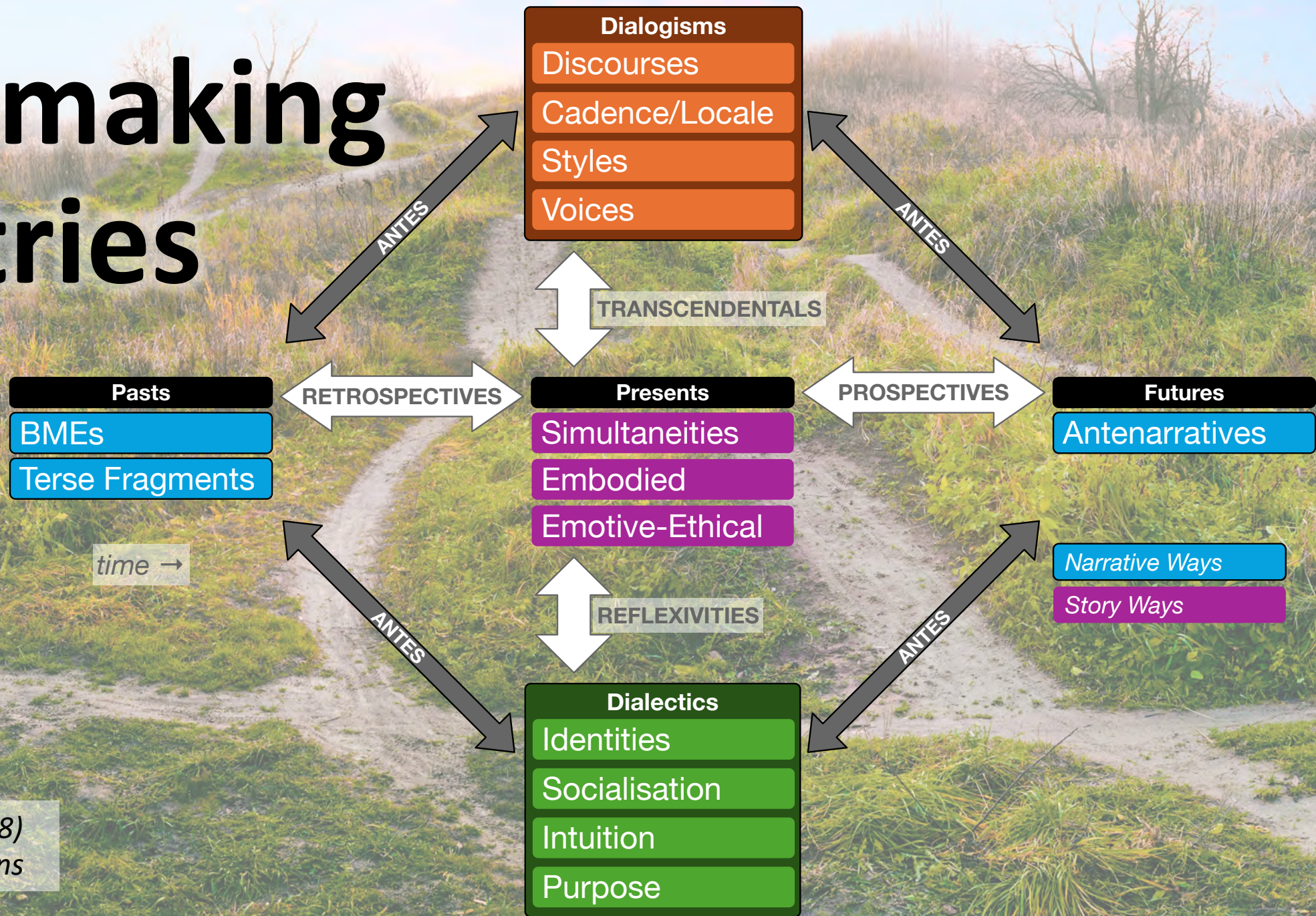
hear many **VOICES**
(not pseudo-dialogue)

engage with multiple **STYLES**
(art, writing, speech)

identify mixed **CADENCES** and **LOCALES**
(space and time)

listen to myriad **DISCOURSES**
(cognitive, aesthetic, and ethics)

Sensemaking Registries



after David M Boje (2008)
Storytelling Organisations

What about Agility?

co-constructed

emergent stories

unfinished

simultaneous

multiple cadences

managerialism vs agility
control vs emergence
A NEW DIALECTIC?!

unm
mir

story
web

mixed styles

multi-voiced

emotive-ethical

centrifugal

Managerialism

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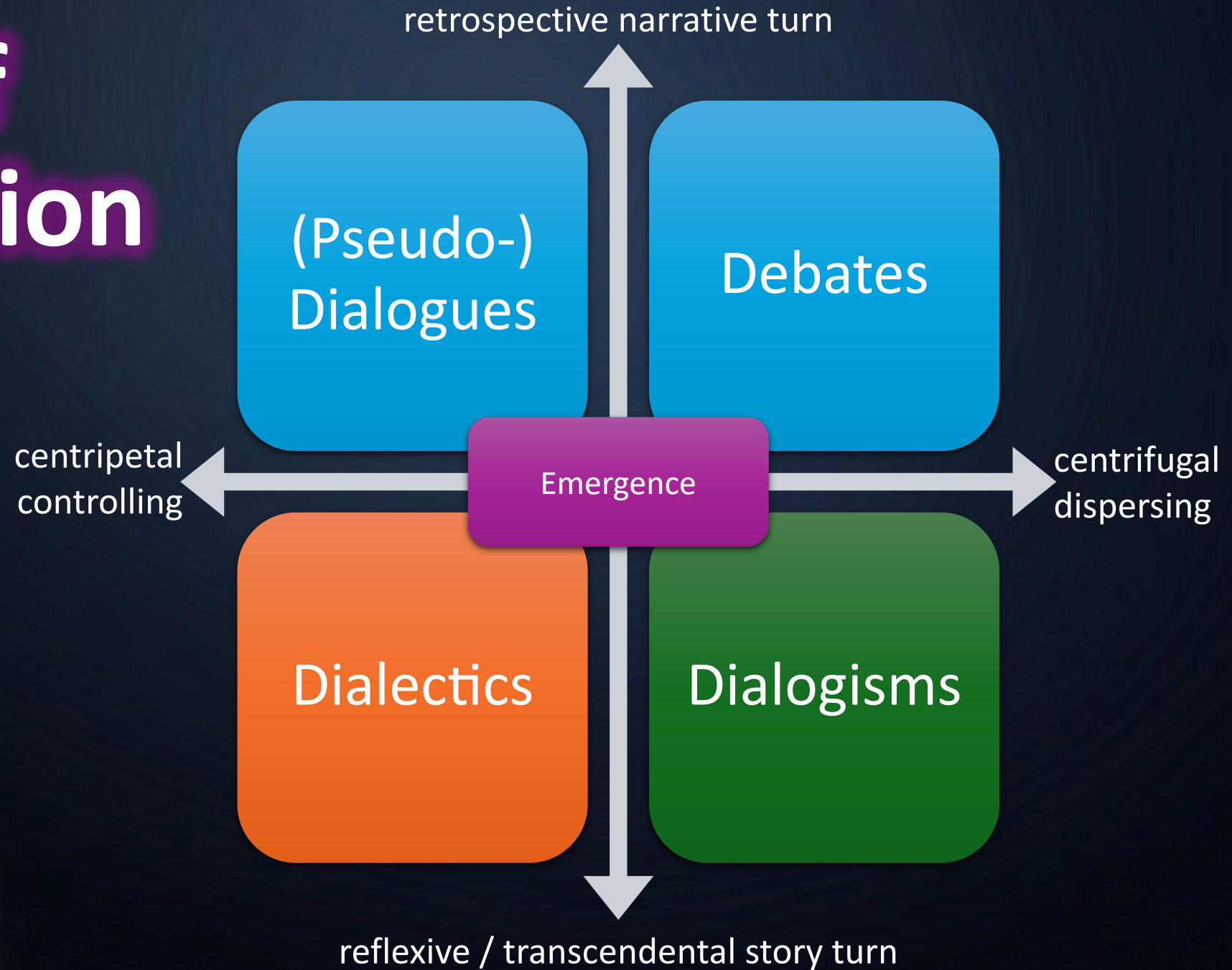
**Using
Them**





I am Grey. I stand between the candle and the star. We are Grey. We stand between the darkness and the light.

Modes of Deliberation



Let's have more Stories...

amplify emergent stories



question control narratives



explore antenarratives



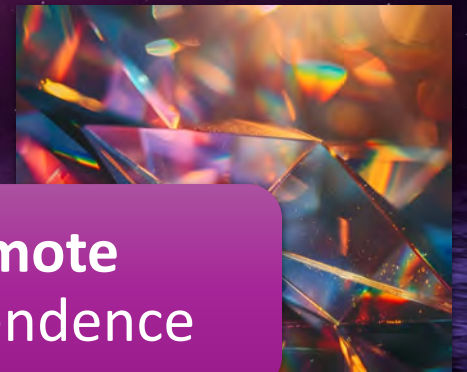
be centrifugal



stimulate reflexivity



promote transcendence



Thank you

Sensemaking
Registries
Handout



Connect with
me on
LinkedIn



Emergence of Stories

Gossip

Rumour

Fad

Propaganda

Rebellion

Innovation

Improvisation

Quasi Object



Point of Emergence



Excitation Phase



Deliberation Phase



Appropriation Phase

Qualities of Story Fabric

Simultaneity

story telling occurs in multiple places at the same time

Fragmentation

incoherent stories without beginning or end, with silences where story listeners fill in the blanks

Trajectory

passageway of an emergent antenarrative as it picks up and sheds meaning along different places and across different time frames

Morphing

as new occurrence in the present prompts storytellers to restory reminiscences of the past to highlight values, persons or episodes differently