

## ABSTRACT

Yaamanda yanay barriyaygu? is a Narrative Therapy tool that asks clients to view past events from four different vantage points. It can be used on its own or as part of a longer exploration process. The project began as an application to help deconstruct historical literature on Aboriginal Australians and transformed through client use into its current form. Barriyay, as it is known for short, seeks to unveil the political, social, personal and experiential constructions of a life event so as to determine how the event will be told going forward, and is based on a Constructivist methodology. Note there are variations of spelling of same language words, e.g. Euahlayi and Yuwaalaraay, throughout the essay as an oral language has no correct or incorrect spelling.

Yaamanda yanay barriyaygu?

... Will you come to the window?

## Influence

When people seek healing, they come clutching a story that fuels both a sense of exploration and a need to be heard. Usually they and others around them have only considered that story from one view. Many believe that a story is fixed and to a point it is, like being unable to sleep, scoring zero on a maths test or fighting an overwhelming urge to wash your hands constantly. It's a fact, it's a thing, it's a moment in time. This idea is supported when conventional methods of therapeutic intervention like Psychiatry say, opt to fit that story into a set of criteria, so relief can be applied. For example, symptoms of fatigue, irritability and worry matching a DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) diagnosis of an Anxiety Disorder.

But the way in which we feel about that fact and the impact it has on life is not fixed. There are many influences, many options, many choices at play that determine how a story is told and they can lead in different directions.

For instance, some questions from DSM-5 in the previous Anxiety example relate to normal communication methods which by definition must be put into some context determined to be 'normal'. The direction of this 'story' is dependent on what is

normal, or more so who is determining what normal is. This is influence. Someone, somewhere decided this is the way that normal would be in that context. It is pre-determined. Predetermination is influence. Influence is power.

My Paternal Grandmother had what was termed 'the nerves'. A scared old woman pulling the curtains back on the front window, afraid of who she might see outside. If she started to get frantic or upset, my father would say, "Oh you know what's she's like" so no-one would take much notice, no-one would stop to see if she was in any danger. That is predetermination, that is influence, that is power.

As an adult, I found out that my Grandfather had beaten my Grandmother for decades. It wasn't made part of the story because dirty laundry stayed at home, people didn't interfere in that sort of thing. That is influence, that is power.

Considering all the other stories I know about her, I don't think she was scared of the world outside. I think there was an alternative Narrative, a story of vigilance, of self protection. I think she was at that window, watching for when Grandpa came home. Trying to enjoy rare moments of peace while he was away. But that's not the story that came out. That is influence, that is power.

When we believe that someone or something has a particular trait or disposition, we have been influenced. Something fuelled that belief, something tainted that story, something had power. I am not referring to the power in physical coercion like my Grandfather thought he had, but more the Foucault ideal (Bess, 1988) of power in labels, in accepted knowledges and truths like the Nerves or the Doctor's Diagnosis or the social acceptance of not interfering with someone's dirty laundry.

Influence can be intentional such as a Christian agenda or Tongan Family values or Government Policy, or it can be unintentional like lack of exposure to a higher education or not rocking the boat. Some cultural and contextual influences go so far as to impact what even constitutes a story (McLeod, 2011), for example, for DSM5 research, who says when enough information has been gathered, who determines the end of the story.

Coles (1997) poses the question of how to explain to potential subjects (of documentaries) his purpose, i.e. what he has in mind, because ultimately he is telling someone else's story (AIPC, 2019). Coles provides me a flash of wisdom in that my role is the exact opposite of his. I don't seek the story so much as I seek to empower my Client with vision of all of the story, or at the very least the desire to want to find out. Freire (1999) sees it as a sense of education where we are not teaching skills that will enable a hungry man to eat, but the skills for them to realise why they are not being fed, e.g. social, political, historical etc.

Joseph Agbenyega, in his 2003 thesis on the Power of Labelling on Disability talked about how we humans become convinced by labels and settle for them without digging further to unpack any hidden components, almost like a laziness. In reference to my Grandmother I assume it was much easier for my adult relatives and neighbours to view her as hysterical or emotional rather than ask more questions and get involved. Because people take as fact all they can or care to see, there is a power in being the one who determines the story. Hence this power is apparent in Social Structures, Group Acceptance, Family Values, Religious Agenda, Government Policy, Citizenship, Societal Inclusion and Exclusion.

# Tactics

About a year ago I was reading *The Euahlayi Tribe* (Langloh Parker, 1905), one of the many sources I am using to connect to my Ancestor's experience. The book was an attempt at an exchange of Euahlayi dialect and society. I find that historical documents around language enables an insight into an ancestral world that could never be experienced firsthand. Like many sources, the book was recorded through the eyes of Coloniser assumptions that may or may not have understood the Yuwaalaraay context at the time, so the Reader was only seeing certain interpretations, favoured over other possibilities. For example, the extract in Figure 1 below promotes a derisive description of an Indigenous man of the time. There may be much more to this 'smirking' or his consideration of modern dress.

**I HAVE seen a coloured king simply smirking with pride, in what he considered modern full dress—a short shirt and an old tall hat.**

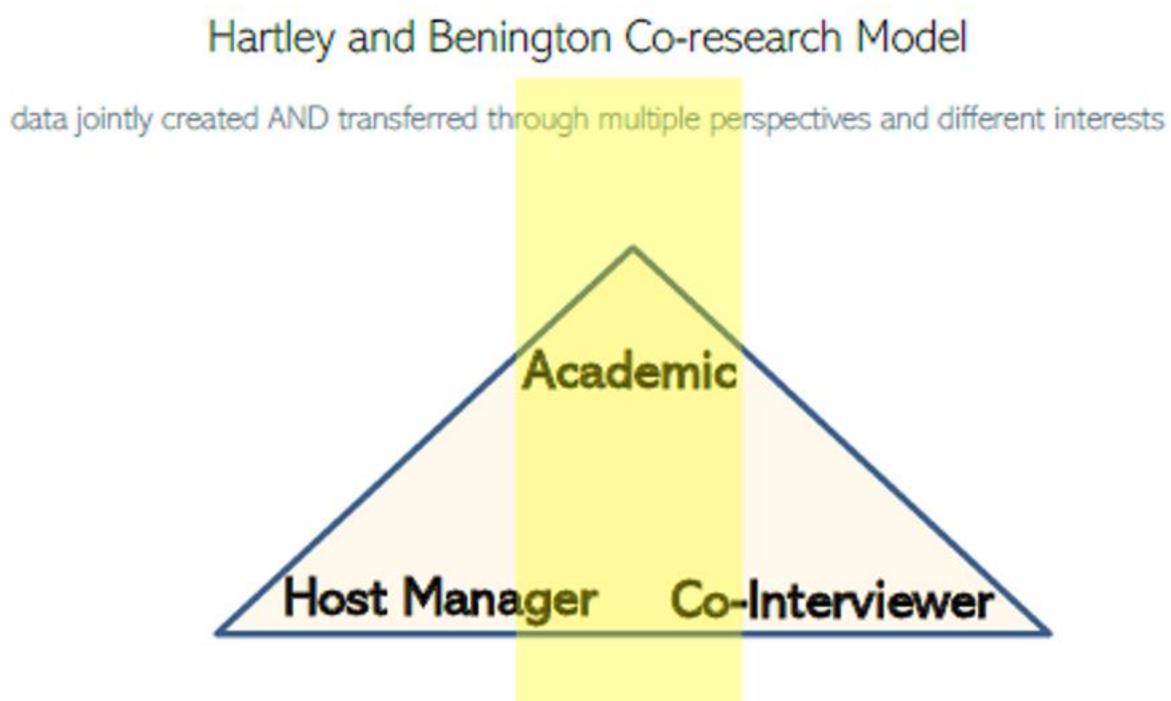
**Figure 1 Excerpt from *The Euahlayi Tribe* (1905)**

Regardless, Langloh's writing was still a trove of information of my people on the brink of colonisation. The book had grabbed my attention because the Author, at the time of publication, was not regarded as having used the proper anthropological methods of the time, so may have contained more 'original' data than assumption. Langloh was almost co-researching with my Ancestors, them sharing language and culture and her documenting it for others to know. I say almost because we have no idea if people truly volunteered their data or were

coerced in some way. I tried several attempts at reviewing the book but kept getting stuck in the Author's interpretations and losing any pleasure of learning from my Ancestors.

A short time later, I came across Hartley & Benington's (2000) model of co-research (see Figure 2 below) where there is a tri-relationship:

- outsider view .. usually the academic
- insider view .. usual the host organisation or subject
- third co-researcher .. usually a different organisation, with insider knowledge of how it all works but outsider view with different context and processes

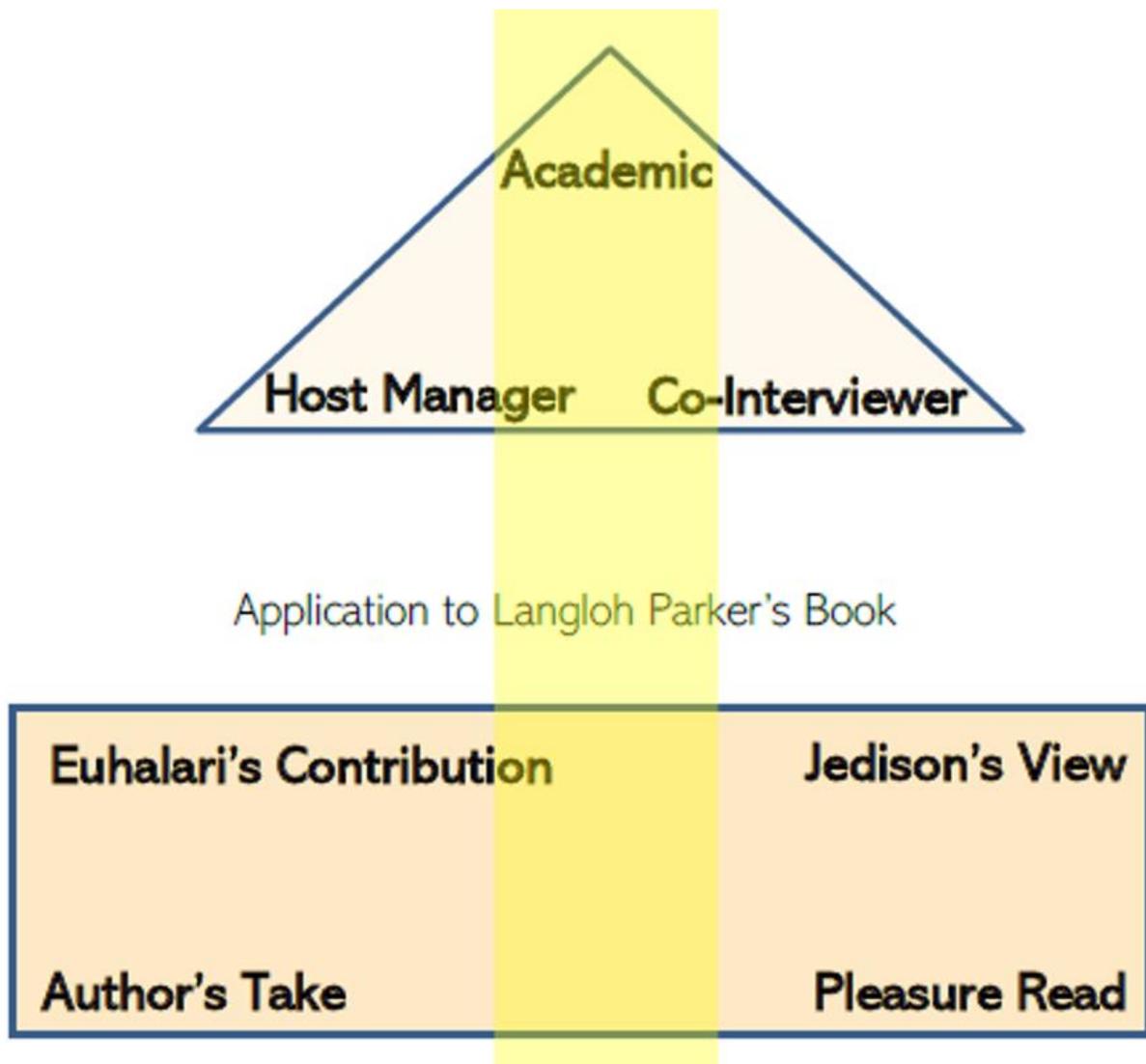


**Figure 2 Hartley and Benington Model**

The idea behind Hartley and Benington's model is that data is being both transferred and jointly created through multiple perspectives and different interests rather than just different data.

I decided to interpret Langloh's book through the eyes of the model. Hartley and Benington would have Langloh as the contributor of the 'outsider view', the Yuwaalaraay interviewed contributing the insider knowledge and I, as the reader with a century more knowledge, as the co-researcher alongside Langloh and the Yuwaalaraay. Together we would be gathering both insider and outsider knowledges, even though now that I am the only person in the trio that is still living. I anticipated that reading from these different views may offer alternative geographic, sociological and time based interpretations of the original material (see Figure 3 below).

The first view was to hear what my Ancestors were saying without any interruption, not taking notice of any thoughts regarding the Author's agenda. Second to recognise the tricks, traits and discourses that influenced the Author's collecting at the time of publication, applying nothing of what I know now, but only what I would have known then. Third take was to re-evaluate what I had learned in the first two readings against all of the knowledge that I had gained since the book was published, e.g. knowing now what the Colonisers original hopes for us were, which were quite dire and included discourses of racism and survival. Then there was a fourth reading, just for me and the enjoyment of a story.



**Figure 3 Application to Langloh's book**

My re-readings were almost like White's reflecting surface for past work (Epston, 2016). Though his focus was more on revisiting missed chances during past therapy sessions, I was revisiting the same information but through missed vantage points. Not so much asking 'What can I do differently?' as he did with his practice, but asking 'What can be seen differently? What other interpretations are now possible? We were both asking what could have been done differently from the point of view of someone who did not hold the same intention.

# Pitavia

About 6 months later, I met a young man named Pitavia who was struggling with an event that happened when he was 11. It was becoming difficult for us to find ways for him to fathom this event in any other way than how he first brought it to the practice. Though trial and error, I adapted the source based vantage points utilised for Langloh's book, i.e. Ancestors, Author and me to time based vantage points of AS IT WAS KNOWN, AS IT WAS TOLD, AS IT IS KNOWN and AS IT IS TOLD. I'll elaborate more by taking you through Pitavia's story.

Pitavia found it difficult to say no to his brother Punctata. When Pitavia arrived, it was with the story of how he had forgotten to lock a gate when he was 11. His then 5 year old brother Punctata came out onto the road and was hit by a car, sustaining a loss of his left leg. That was the storyline Pitavia knew, the storyline at the time of the accident. I called that: AS IT WAS KNOWN, the view of the story that was being seen at the time of the event.

As we talked, I asked Pitavia questions about how he heard and saw the event through others. How adults and family talked about the event at the time of the accident and as the boys grew up. For the first couple of years, everyone was very busy. His Mother gave up her part time job to take his brother to physio so he could relearn to walk again. His Aunts referred to Punctata as a victim and worried about his opportunities. His parents expected Pitavia to watch out for his brother. Family outings like hiking or swimming were put on hold. Many of the things that he was used to doing with his little brother, like riding their bikes or going to the beach,

wouldn't happen again for another couple of years. Also, the gate was now locked with a key.

As exemplified in Figure 4 below, the dominant storyline for Pitavia, after the accident, was that he had damaged his brother. I called this: AS IT WAS TOLD, all the information that Pitavia was given at the time of the event.

*PITAVIA: I took away his ability to be a kid. To ride a bike, to run, to jump, to climb a tree, all those wonderful things that I enjoyed when I was his age.*

#### **Figure 4 Conversation with Pitavia**

Our discussions then turned to contradictions. Now that Pitavia was a grown man, what was now known that could challenge Pitavia's description of having ruined his brother's life. We talked about how 11 year olds sometimes leave gates open. About how Pitavia has contributed to a full and happy life for Punctata who was employed, married with children and a keen surfer. We found out that in Pitavia's culture, the eldest child takes on a parental responsibility and that his parents had always expected him to watch out for his brother, it had nothing to do with the accident. And most importantly, that no-one had ever laid blame on Pitavia, except himself.

We also found out that Punctata is a bit of an opportunist. When he was younger he would get Pitavia to go to the fridge for him or pick up his schoolbag or do his homework. Now as an adult, Punctata asks Pitavia for money. I called this place: AS

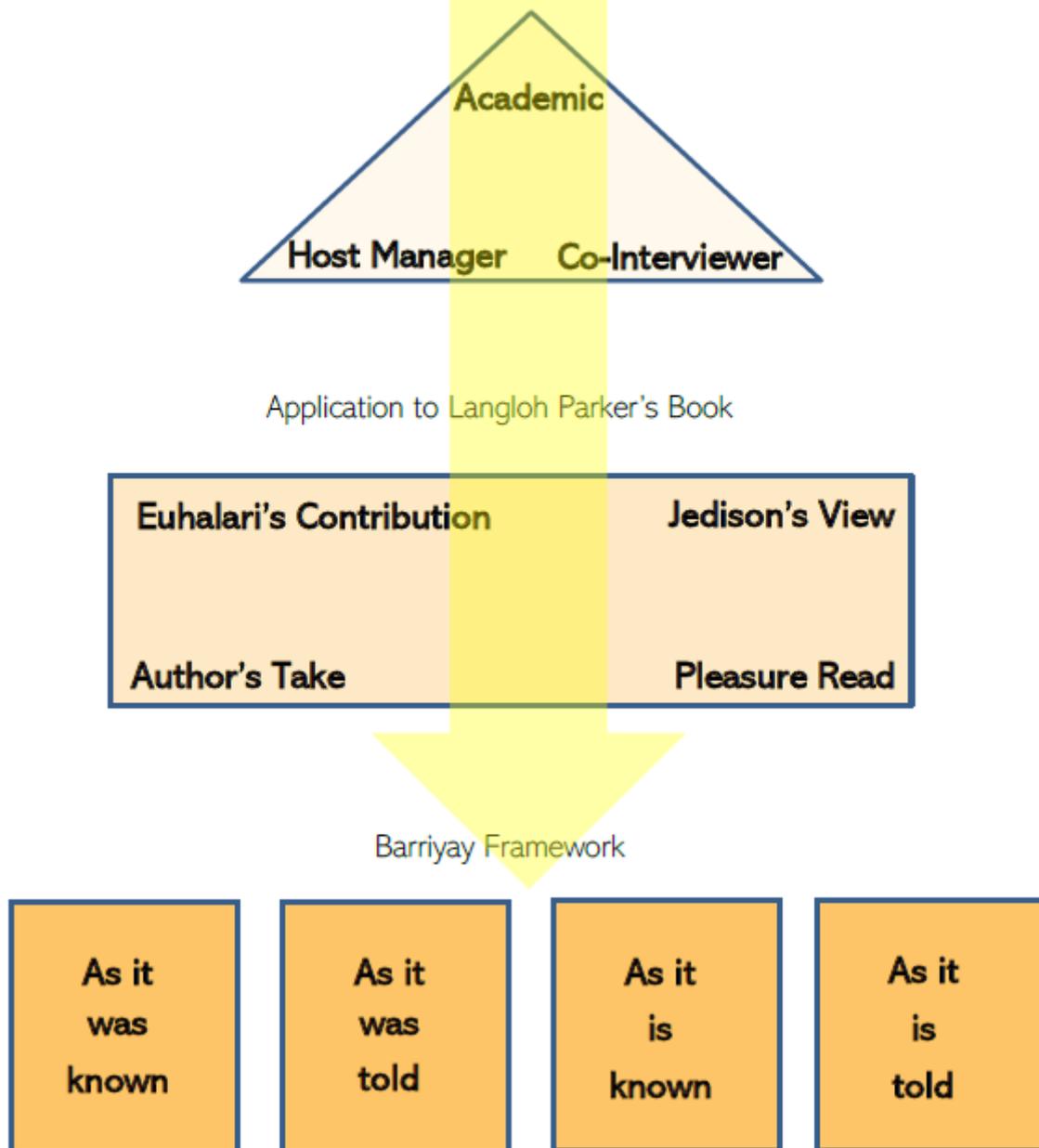
IT IS KNOWN. It contained all those things that he had learned since the event. Things that can now be considered up against the original event.

Together Pitavia and I had investigated what happened, what was said about what happened and any additional information given in the last decades. With all that evidence, Pitavia could decide how he would go forward. That meant narrating an alternative interpretation that he could take into his future, and improve the relationship that he had with his brother. A relationship where they were still very close but Pitavia didn't feel he owed his brother anything. I called this place: AS IT IS TOLD.

That four step practice with Pitavia, became known as Yaamanda yanay barriyaygu? Or Barriyay (see figure 5 below) for short which is the Yuwaalaraay word for windows. When I ask Yaamanda yanay barriyaygu? I am asking will you come to the window. I named this 'place of viewing' with Yuwaalaraay Language because its development was heavily influenced by my Aboriginality. I have visited so many records where the actual story was very different to the Coloniser's interpretation. The preferences in the publications guaranteed only limited conclusions. Barriyay sought not to rewrite a story, not to make up a story or forget about one part of a story but to deconstruct the problematic story, so we are not looking at something, we are looking into the various chasms within it.

## Hartley and Benington Co-research Model

data jointly created AND transferred through multiple perspectives and different interests



**Figure 5** Yaamanda yanay barriyaygu?

In Pitavia's case what happened was an accident. But how Pitavia took it in was this discourse of being the Elder Brother and of Punctata being a Victim, so Pitavia assumed there must be an Assailant, a Transgressor which he could only pin to himself. We added evidence from other parts of the story so Pitavia could consider

other influences like how supportive he had been before, during and after the accident. From there he could make a conscious decision about how to go forward with the relationship with his brother.

## Theories

Barriyay is spawn from Constructivism, where reality is formed rather than fixed. What attracts to me to Constructivism is the embracing of change. There is so much to consider in a person's experience and as more is known "people make new meanings as they develop" (Mahoney & Granvold, 2005). They are empowered from the enabling of exploration, encouragement of exploring questions and the recognition that the relationship is a collaborative partnership rather than an expert matching a diagnosis. In Barriyay, as in Constructivism, as the Therapist, I am no expert, I am the Allie.

Barriyay also relies on the recognition of Politics, that is the principles and/or tactics maneuvered to keep a story 'told'. Rivers (2015) goes so far as condemning the power of politics in not only limiting the story, but also the scale of questions and Questioners. To avoid this, it is imperative that in Barriyay a variety of questions is utilised to expose as many observations as possible. Allow me to illustrate this through Acmena's experience

# Acmena

Acmena came to me for support with her teenage daughter and our conversation was offering a very limited view of Acmena's parenting success, for example:

*ACMENA: When I got pregnant at 16 no-one was surprised. I never remember a time when I wasn't the black sheep, when it wasn't me in trouble. I had no idea of what to do then and I have no idea of what to do now.*

## Figure 5 Conversation with Acmena

We started with just trying to get as much of the original event out as possible. It sounded like Acmena didn't have the most positive experience of being a young Mum so I invite Acmena to share that experience with me, just telling it like it was, as she knew it.

*ME: Acmena, when did you first find out you were pregnant?*

*ACMENA: I was actually at the Doctor's getting the Pill prescription refilled. It was a lot harder back then, you had to have a pregnancy test first. Turns out the pills made me throw up a little and I didn't realise that I was throwing up the pills with it.*

*ME: How did you respond?*

*ACMENA: I was more embarrassed at how it happened. Like I said before, no-one was surprised, least of all my parents. They didn't even ask who the father was, like he had nothing to do with it.*

## Figure 7 Conversation with Acmena

Trust is one of the elements key to the success (Roscoe, 2009) of Narrative Therapy. For trust to ensue in Barriyay, the story is first heard in whatever form it arrives There is no interruption, no paraphrasing, there is just listening. The success is twofold. Firstly, there is an expert stance that is built through the Client telling (Neuger, 2015). As the supporting role, I am taking the back stance and asking the expert to teach me. Secondly, It is important to HEAR THE SERVICE USERS STORY FULLY BEFORE CONSIDERING WHETHER A NARRATIVE APPROACH WOULD BE PURPOSEFUL (Roscoe, 2009). I want to show that I have their best interests at heart, and at this point I may decide on a different route of Narrative Application.

From this introductory vantage point, Acmena also shared that she was unmarried, knew the father for a night only but was not daunted by the prospect of having a baby. She had older sisters and younger brothers and the 'act of motherhood' didn't seem scary to her. Though we can already recognise the start of an alternative story line in her parenting confidence, i.e. the act of motherhood, I take note of it but do not interrupt so the story can flow out.

Some questions I shared with Acmena were straight from Denborough's (2007) Talking with Mothers and Children. Though they were generated from a Bangladeshi context, I felt they could really help in drawing out all the wonderful accomplishments that a Mother achieves in times of love and stress. Other questions in this first window included:

- How did you tell your parents? The father?
- Was there any concern about whether you would keep Sal?

- What previous experience did you have in looking after children?
- How did you respond?
- What changes did you think you would have to make?
- What difficulties were there while you were pregnant?
- What kept you going?
- What previous experience did you have in looking after children?

Barriyay is about recognising influences. Stories take particular shape because people limit the views they have allowed themselves. In the second window AS IT WAS TOLD, we start to discover how those views were limited, how the dominant plots were maintained. How the problem may be historically or culturally situated. We look at the environment around Acmena and how the story was told to her.

ME: You said that you're parents weren't surprised. How did other caregivers respond?

ACMENA: You know family wasn't that bad, it was more people I didn't know. I went back to highschool the next year, thinking I could better my life. Mum looked after Sal and I had to request to go back and the Principal had to decide whether other parents would be comfortable in having me around their daughters. I hated that, I really wanted Mum to come with me to the initial interview but he wouldn't let her. He said at 18 I was an adult. Funny thing was that when I had a day off I had to get a note from Mum because that was the school rule. I don't think they quite knew what they were doing.

ME: There's always been a social stigma to being an unmarried mother but in the 1980s, women were pushing back and expecting some support.

ACMENA: Maybe but if there ever was any support it came with a cost. Everyone thought they had a right to say something. One day I took Sal to one of those Community Centres to get her shots. They went through her like a fine tooth comb, it almost seemed like the Nurse was annoyed because she was battered or bruised.

### Figure 8 Conversation with Acmena

There were strong outside influences. A society where pregnancy out of wedlock brings shame. The institutional practices that did not bend, the expectations in the medical community that she would fail. Events that were recruiting other people into the dominant pattern of thinking. Things like the politics of blame. Remember we talked about Power before, well the power here is the concept of what an unmarried mother can do and cannot do.

Though they may come up, I am not looking for unique outcomes here, for instance just going back to high school was fighting against the stereotype and a very brave act for a teenage girl. What we are looking for are the influences that were trying to be the dominant plots.

*ACMENA: I got pregnant whereas Sal's father was dealt a raw card. How does that work? If he had Sal for an afternoon he was patted on the back for being a great dad. I was raising her on my own, it didn't matter if I did a good job or a shit job, I was just a single mother, a loser.*

### **Figure 9 Conversation with Acmena**

In Figure 9 above, Acmena is acknowledging the politics of blame and how unfair it was on her and not on the father. We are recognising contributing factors such as the dominant discourse or how others arranged their story. Other questions about that era included:

- Was shame a part of your life
- What effect did it have on your life
- What effect did shame have on your relationship with others? Family? Friends?
- Where else did this negativity occur?
- When was shame the most powerful?
- When was shame the least powerful?

For the first two windows, I borrow from Chilisa (2012) (though she is referring to research) because she wants us to start with understanding people within their own social context, and then the global and local influences inside of that. It is possible

that we walk back and forth between the two windows. As long as the Client is the Narrator one hundred percent of the time, the overlap will not impair the process. The client determines the length of time spent at any one window, how long those visits are and how many visits there are. I steer away from naming Barriyay to Clients, as I don't want to stifle the conversation or have them feel as though they have to stick with any particular order. When their answers start to dictate a need to change in direction, I change the questioning to lead us on to the next window.

AS IT IS KNOWN, the third window, has us looking from now and investigating what has happened since the event, against the dominant discourse. We are building up a reservoir of knowledge and developing subplots. Throughout my conversations with Acmena, she strongly supported the idea of herself as a Mum. At this window, I wanted to see if there was any particular influence for her during those years.

ME: Was there someone who introduced you to the idea of holding on to hope for a better future?

ACMENA: You know there was and it was a complete stranger. I started cleaning houses when Sal started school. Most of the women were so up themselves but not Ranjee. She was usually not home when I cleaned but walked in one day and startled me. I dropped and broke a plate. She laughed.

ME: She laughed?

ACMENA: Yes, I was so at ease with her. It was just a plate and she could have had me sacked. She told me how she had the same job with the same company five years before. Now she has this big house and she must have had money, the house was quite nice. I asked her what her husband did. She laughed again because she didn't have one.

ME: How did she influence you?

ACMENA: It took awhile but I learnt a lot from Ranjee about what is important about being a Mum and what's important for a Mum. I was so worried about there not being a Dad around, I forgot how good I could be. This may sound like stalking stuff but I used to read the stuff on her fridge. She had the same electricity bills, the same phone bills, the same permission slips, the same calendar from the butcher. Just knowing that she was around, lit my day up a little more.

### Figure 10 Conversation with Acmena

A popular description of Narrative Practice (White, 1988/89) is to say that the Person isn't the Problem, the Problem is the Problem. To use that analogy with Barriyay would be to say: the person isn't the problem, the problem is the current limited view of the

story. This third window is influenced by Epston's "History for the future" (2016), an approach involving going back over history and watching for things that got lost or got put to one side or deferred along the way. For Acmena, it is recognising how she was attracted by the idea of this successful woman, how it lifted her spirits, how she felt empowered. It's very important here to build up a reservoir of knowledge without re-traumatising. Externalising through the idea of 'looking into a window' comes in handy here in that we are removing ourselves from the event by just sitting on the outside and looking in.

Me: Acmena, what have you learned about what you can manage?

Acmena: I did quite well really. Despite all those toffee noses looking down, Sal never missed an excursion or had to wear a second hand uniform. She always had someone there for every race, every ribbon, every play.

Me: What do you think it says about you that you persisted?

MICHELLE ABOUT PERSISTED: Yes, interested that you name this – as this isn't explicitly said by Acmena. It sounds like a hunch or guess at what it took for Acmena to manage life despite the hardships.

Acmena: Persisted?

Me: That you kept doing what you thought was right for Sal even though strangers were telling you otherwise.

Acmena: Well, it was just the right thing to do. I made the choice to have her, it's not her fault that people look down on us.

Me: What does it say about you, do you think, that despite the effects of being an unmarried mother, you were able to turn up to those events and pay for the uniforms?

Acmena: I'm here because i'm committed to her just as much as I was then. She used to love spending time with me. Right now, she's in a teen place, and some say that's her journey, not mine. But i've never relied on what 'some say' in the past, so why should I rely on it now. I do know what i'm supposed to do. I know i've got to have the uncomfortable conversation. I'm not scared that she or anyone else thinks i'm a bad Mum. I'm scared that she will think I have no right to tell her what's right and wrong as a Teenager.

Me: Why?

Acmena: Ha, ha .. because I fell pregnant as a Teenager.

## Figure 11 Conversation with Acmena

Most of the aha moments in Barriyay occur in Window 3. It could take a couple of sessions and both the Therapist and the Client may visit completely different parts of the story. In Figure 11 above, we are starting to see a clash between how Acmena viewed the judgmental strangers in Window 1 and now she says, "I've never relied on what some say in the past, so why should I rely on it now. I do know what I'm supposed to do".

Where helpful, we also revisit alternative story lines that we couldn't yet act upon in Windows 1 and 2, for instance the 'act of motherhood'. Acmena claimed that this ideal was not scary to her which demonstrates the seeding of a parenting confidence. Other questions we used to explore between now and then, included:

- How did you support yourself in a community that shamed you?
- What proud moments can you share of the children growing up?
- What strengths did you gain
- What do you think got you through those early years?
- What preparations did you make before Sal's birth? Before starting school?
- What do you think spurred you on to make these preparations?
- What do you think was guiding you?
- What was it you were hoping for, seeking out?
- What were some of the things you were thinking about at the time that made it easier?

There is a learning in each window (see Figure 12 below). Window 1 is how the individual constructed the event. Window 2 how their environment constructed the

event. Window 3 has us considering new things about the world, about reality, about deconstruction, about politics, about ourselves.

### Vantage Points

What happened?

**As it  
was  
known**

What was said about what happened?

**As it  
was  
told**

What has happened since what happened?

**As it  
is  
known**

How what happened will be told going forward!

**As it  
is  
told**

**Figure 12 Barriyay Learnings**

In addition to learning more, we are also seeing how people come to their own conclusions. What is influencing those conclusions and how they are choosing to arrange the story, even if someone else is the main character. Barriyay is both a method of Narrative Practice, and a demonstration on how a story is constructed in the first place. That's why I start just with the event and then what people added and then what we have learned since then. We are progressively flattening the space to reveal all vantage points.

In the fourth window, AS IT WILL BE TOLD, we link events and meanings around the new story and determine how the story will be told from this moment forward. It's an intentional choice, an acceptance of a new possibility. Many of the unique outcomes noted throughout the first 3 windows are rekindled here to demonstrate available directions, for instance Acmena going back to high school was fighting against the stereotype and a very brave act for a teenage girl. Other possible questions could be:

- Has anything changed in your thinking today?
- What does this new information tell you about your ability?
- Who would be excited to hear this about you?

The fourth window may also have us revisiting the original reason for seeking the conversation. Acmena did not come to the practice with a problem of how she saw herself, she was seeking help with some challenges with her daughter. Barriyay didn't directly provide the support for those challenges but the exploration put us both in a better place to find that support, now that the dominant story has changed. Barriyay created more options now that Acmena had developed new meanings

from what has happened in her life. We started with a story we thought was a solid fact in Acmena's life. What we got, was something truly solid, Acmena's chosen story of strength and persistence. Going forward I could remind Acmena of these tremendous successes when she doubted herself.

## Practices

In the stories told here, there were examples of Re-authoring, Absent but Implicit and Externalising. Re-authoring assumes that there are always more storylines. We used questions such as How did she influence you? and What have you learned about what you can manage? to navigate to different views and help deepen the story to find those new storylines.

Absent but Implicit arose when I asked Acmena about getting treated quite badly at the Community Centre, when in fact she was demonstrating what a great Mum she was. I asked What do you think it says about you that you persisted? And she was quite surprised that I used the word 'persisted'.

Externalising is a Narrative method where the problem is viewed as separate from the individual and uses a variety of visual and exploratory tools (Knox, Lowe & Munro, 2008) to support the client in re-defining their relationship with the problem and possibly ridding themselves of this separate entity.

What I enjoy about externalising is that it demands that the Client be involved. e.g. they are viewing from a particular vantage point. They are validating that something deserves attention, something previously hidden or unclear or uncertain

and that a safe journey can take place as the Client explores that something in a place removed from themselves.

## Limitations

What I've found most challenging with the model is that unique outcomes pop up all over the place, like Acmena fighting against the stereotype and going back to highschool. A brave act for a teenage girl. When I hear them, I want to jump on them but have to remind myself that Barriyay is a process. In its current form, it works by going through four windows in a sequence.

With Acmena, I went back to collect the unique outcomes when we arrived at Window 4, more as a reminder of what we had achieved along the way. I'm sure that as I grow as a Professional, I will learn how to take note of the unique outcomes but continue to have the story just flow, until the unique outcomes are required.

## Ethics

As a Therapist, a Healer, a Yarner, a person being depended upon for help to make a difference in someone else's life, I am in a position of power. There are many that agree (Raskin, 2017, Green, 2015) that the fact that someone has come to a Professional for guidance, i.e. are recognised as knowing how to do something more than someone else, automatically puts the Professional in a position of influence and power. My mere existence is manipulating someone, somewhere, whether I am actively participating or not, e.g. the woman on a train, the ex-wife, the Indigenous woman working in construction, Punctata or Acmena's therapist. Foucault calls the

power, a 'set of relations' (Bess, 1988) whereby a professional could shape a client's behaviour. This influence is both in the direction I choose to take or the tools I choose to use.

For example, I utilise Narrative Therapy tools in my practice such as Enabling Openings, Therapeutic Letters and Linking in the Past (Miller & Wrate, 2014), all of which are steering people towards different choices. For instance, in White's Remembering, I am attempting to highlight the more credible members of a person's identity over others (Russell and Carey, 2002), there are opportunities here for me to steer the conversation according to my wants, needs and beliefs. So what controls can I put in place to reduce this risk.

With Acmena, there were many commonalities and differences in identity that could influence the conversation. I had a very similar teenage pregnancy experience but even though I had no negative presumptions about teenage pregnancy, I was still fighting a dominant discourse. That is, that everybody in Acmena's life as mine, thought that single mothers were losers. I had to push myself past that by not asking were there people that influenced her positively but who they were. To use a language that assumed good and supporting people were around, we just had to find them.

Pitavia, on the other hand, was an Italian Indian and I had to ask a lot more questions to get an understanding of what was normal as far as Pitavia and the world around him was concerned. There was no nuclear family, a lot of Pitavia's influences came from Aunts, so I had to actively seek those opportunities. My positionality was challenged but as a collaborator in participatory research, it is not

my positionality that is important. Knowing if I'm limiting the experience is what is critical.

For another example, I take you to Catkin, a 31 year old male, separated from his wife of 11 years and their 4 children. His wife was 4 months pregnant at that time and the baby is now due in 6 weeks. His wife will not allow him back into the family home without paid employment. He recently faired very well in a job interview for a forklift driver, only to fail the drug test. He hadn't smoked Marijuana for 3 weeks but did not know it could the stay in the system for longer than that. He shared this information with his wife who did not believe he had abstained for that length of time. Also, his wife has a professional position and Catkin has been taking care of the children, while unemployed, as they cannot afford paid childcare. Catkin enjoys the role though his Wife and his Mother-In-Law believe he is being lazy in offering to stay at home and take care of the baby rather than putting the child into long day care, and him getting a job

While listening to Catkin [on the phone], I recognised my 'distinct social domain' (White, 1995) and all that comes with it. Though I do not share in his relative's ideal of him being lazy, I do sway towards Mothers raising children. With that I have to ask myself if I am in a position to clearly tune in to where Catkin's advantage is being denied? Is it possible that I can continually ensure that it is Catkin's needs being met and not mine, throughout the therapeutic process.

Gillian Proctor (2017) in relation to power in the therapeutic relationship, talks of a two part action: \*knowing our triggers and knowing when to do something different\*. I see this as the influence of our personal boundaries.

Before Catkin's face-to-face visit, I do a few of the exercises from Raheim et al (2004) and go so far as amending the target of one set of questions (see figure 13 below) to fully engage in honest answers. I wanted to prepare myself for slipping into privileged practices, full of centuries of Motherhood ideals from both my Yuwaalaraay and Alba ancestries when next talking with Catkin.

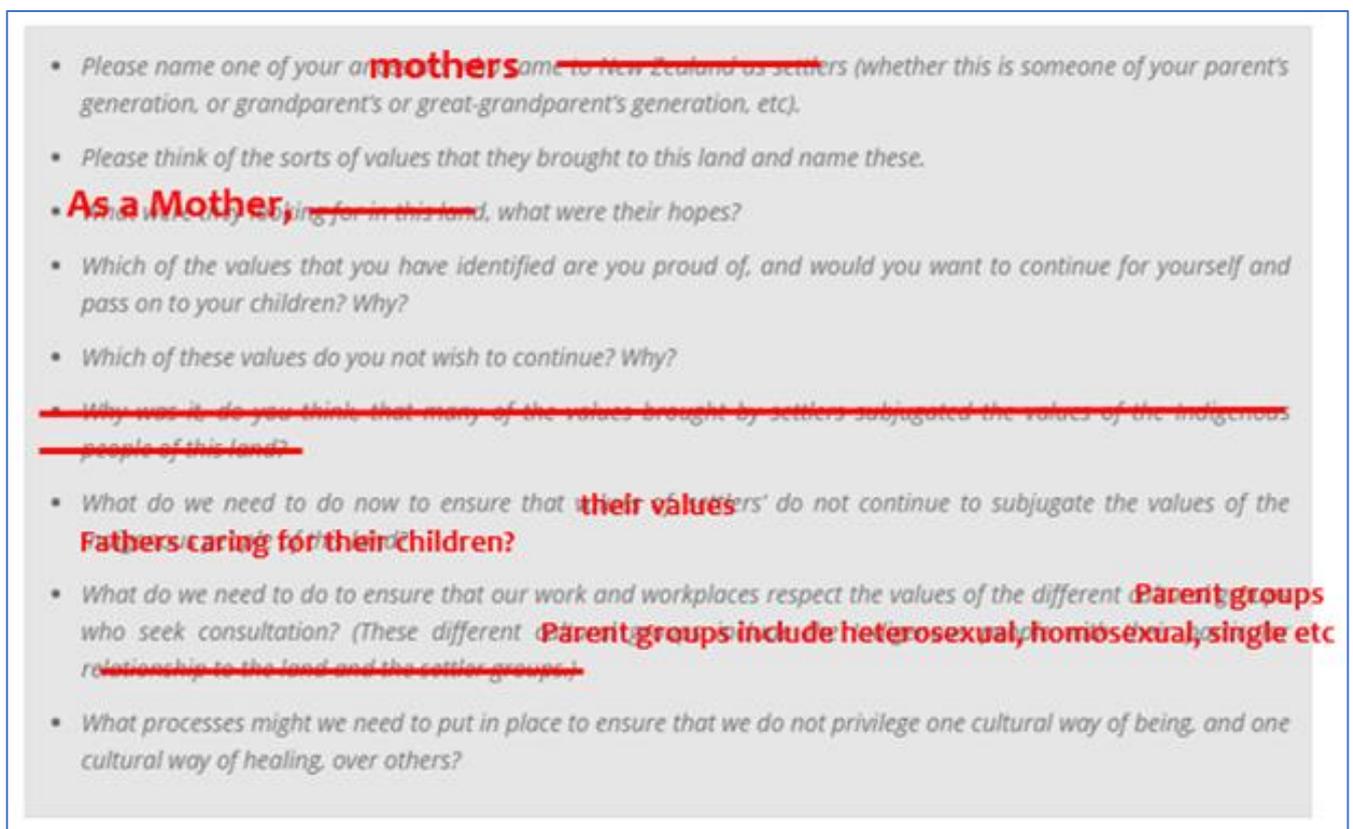


Figure 13 Rhaheim et Al Questions

I also reviewed research on the construction of fatherhood within nuclear family units (Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2013), (Farstad & Stefansen, 2014). I don't particularly support this ideal, but what I support is not important, it's what Catkin is influenced by that is important.

ME: Would you tell me about some father friendly experiences that you've had when you've been out with the kids?

CATKIN: What do you mean Father Friendly?

ME: Oh, I don't know, times when no-one battered an eyelid that it was Tuesday lunchtime and you were pushing Jax in a trolley buying mince.

CATKIN: It's hard to think of them because I think the negative ones just hit you so hard. You know, I used to take the kids to MacDonald's on a Sunday Morning to give my wife some sleep in . I stopped it though, because it was where the 'changeover ' happened for a lot of blended families. I didn't want to be seen that way. My marriage wasn't on the rocks and that made me feel good.

ME: Would you expand on that?

CATKIN: This whole Head of the Household thing, I don't know, it's like if you're a good husband then you're respected by your family. You're not some loser who can't even keep a wife.

Actually, I did think of something and it was when Jax was in the trolley. When I was paying, the male checkout chick said, "Sweet, you on holidays Bro", I didn't think much of it at the time.

### Figure 14 Conversation with Catkin

In the continuing conversation (see figure 14 above), there were many directions that could be followed. That 'Head of the Household' was a big one but I felt that would take us back into the loop of his idea of being a failed father, i.e. the assumption that his Wife and Mother-in-Law were making. I wanted to demonstrate

that the dominant stories of fatherhood weren't necessarily the best measures. So I moved toward the general restrictions in play when patriarchy is not only present but is the dominant power dynamic. The 'changeover' at MacDonald's; the complexity in being both respected by your family and being separated from your wife.

ME: Does your experience in dropping the kids off at school, or volunteering for a school excursion differ from female parents?

CATKIN: I'm not allowed to take a girl to the toilet which is going to be weird because our next kid is a girl. Sometimes I'm patted on the back for babysitting to help out the wife by guys who wouldn't know their kid's middle name. What they think is meaningless to me, so I don't bother saying anything.

ME: Are there people close to you that would think that way?

CATKIN: Yeah, Tina the Mother-In-Law. You know she's not this dragon image of the normal Mother-In-Law, we use to get on quite well. But she is just so uncomfortable with my wanting to stay home. I don't think she genuinely understands that I like doing it. I don't think she sees me as incapable, she just really does not understand how or why a Man would want to stay home with their kids. Because she doesn't get that, all she has to fall back on is me being lazy.

### Figure 15 Conversation with Catkin

It becomes clear (see figure 15 above) that there he has more disdain in his wife's mothers quandary as to why he would not want to "perform the roles allotted to him" (Ozkan, 2014) rather than those of other Men.

On the other side of that, as a woman, It was not until I met Catkin, that I noticed how in policy, e.g. Maternity Leave, Community, e.g. Mother's Playgroup and other places that the dominant Carer narrative was towards the female parent. Catkin seemed to have very little construction in this identity both inside and outside the home.

Catkin found it quite easy to highlight his individual caring practices (Farstad & Stefansen, 2014) so I didn't feel we had to visit how he had endured the problem in the past. In fact, I think initially, I got the problem wrong. It was not him wanting to stay at home or preferring that to paid work, it was how to get his wife, and influential Mother-in-Law on board with the idea of him being a Stay at Home Dad.

## **Applications**

Barriyay is first and foremost, a deconstruction tool to help unravel sources of influence on life events. I have developed the model as a hands on tool for Clients in my offline and online workshops. Figures 13 to 15 on the following pages, includes three templates that have been successfully utilised in the workshops. These handouts are helpful when you are attempting to demonstrate the many facets that contribute to a story, and the last two can be cut out and fastened as a solid shape. If you use any of these tools, or adaptations of them, I welcome your feedback.

As it was Known	As it was Told
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**Figure 13 Traditional Outline of Barriyay**

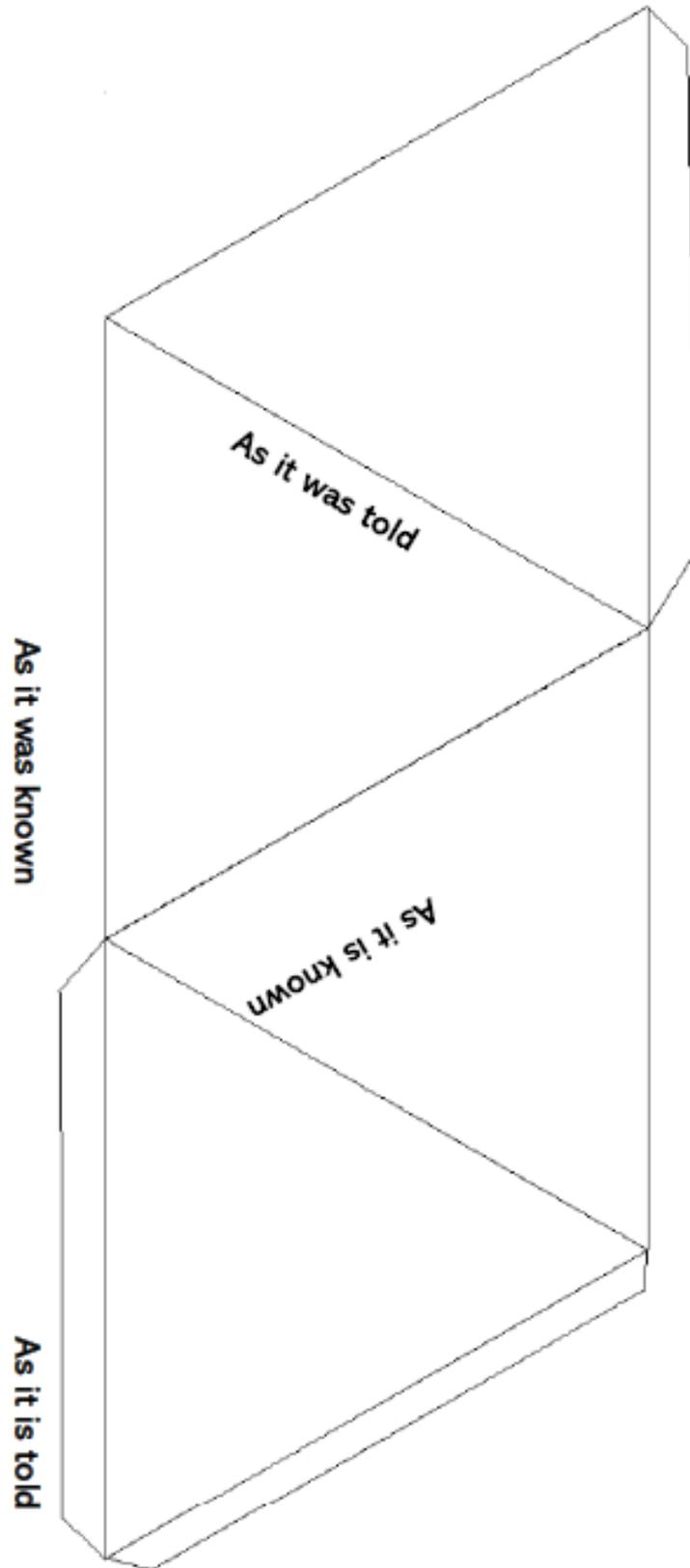
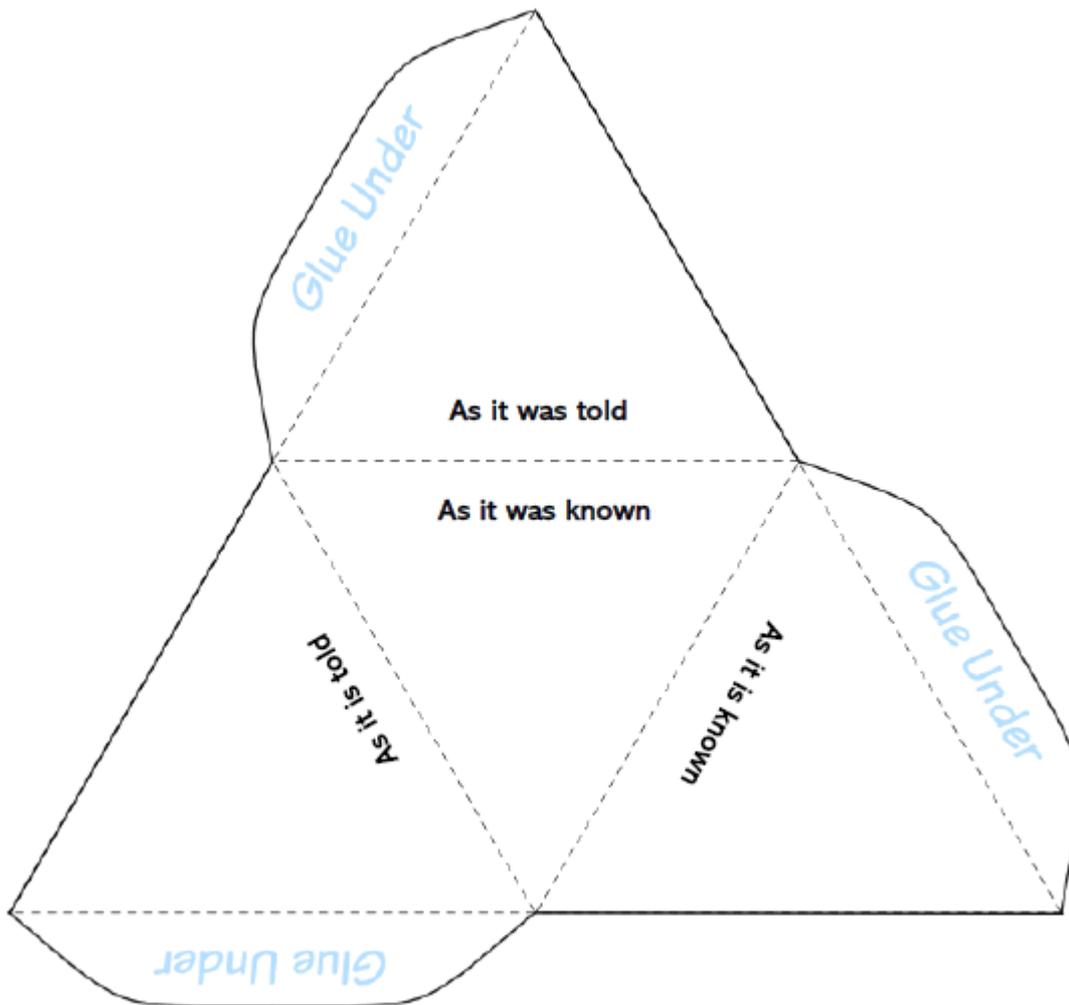


Figure 14 Barriyay Windows Shape Worksheet



**Figure 15 Barriyay Tetrahedron Shape Worksheet**

I've also returned to applying the concept to historical research data carried out on Indigenous Australians to locate alternative themes present at time of collection. I'm looking to expand this idea into a PHD and welcome any and all feedback on the idea and the process.

**Yawu, Yanay ngaya barriyaygu?**

**... Yes, I will come to the window?**

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