Digital Appendix: Analysis sheet 2 (Nicole)

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| No. | Title | Line | beliefs/ assumptions | Narrator agenda | Researchers reflections and overall summary |
| 1 | **School's response** | 3-12 | School didn’t want her | Event significantly impacted on her  Exposing injustice | I wondered mostly about the power relationships between Nicole and school  I noticed that Nicole didn’t mention any ‘contesting’ of the schools decision to send her on extended study leave, even though her narrative suggest she was unhappy with the decision. I wondered if this reflects the power differential and/ or an assumption that this is what has to happen following pregnancy |
| 2 | **finding out I’m pregnant** | 13-21 | Getting pregnant is a crime | Event significantly impacted on her  Exposing injustice | I felt that Nicole’s perception of the situation made it appear like a criminal investigation. As though being pregnant is a crime and she has been found guilty of premeditation.  I wondered what it was that made Nicole think that they didn’t believe her and what she thought the consequence of that was |
| 3 | **Appreciated support** | 22-25 |  | Significant impact on Nicole  To acknowledge Rebecca  To contrast with other professional/ authorities | The description of Rebecca (family health nurse) appeared almost over the top for me at this point and is unqualified, however later in the overall narrative the validity of this grows in my opinion. |
| 4 | **without my consent** | 26-30 | Patients should be fully informed  Patient consent should be sought | Significant impact  Expose injustice | I wondered why it wasn’t clear to Nicole why she was being given extra scans.  I felt that if I was in the situation Nicole perceived herself to be in I would feel betrayed however I also felt sympathetic towards the consultants wish to be able to save Nicole’s life. I personally have no idea regarding the laws around this issue or age of medical consent however I’m unsure why the fact that he was getting permission from the Grandparents wasn’t made explicit to Nicole.  I noticed that Nicole didn’t give the Grandparents an active role in the story. She doesn’t indicate whether they gave permission or not and therefore are spared ‘betrayer role’. This may indicate that the agenda is specifically to highlight the perceived wrong doing of professionals or alternatively may reflect difference in her expectation of the action of professions and those of Grandparents. It also isn’t clear how she found out and whether her Grandparents weren’t in fact complicit in the secrecy. |
| 5 | **The labour experience** | 31-46 | Baby would have died if not gone into hospital  Shared medical knowledge of child birth (3 cm along/ c-section) | To acknowledge that she was right  To try to make sense of it  Significant impact  Expose injustice | In the first part of the story I felt that Nicole presented it as a righteous struggle against authority (hospital) for which she is eventually vindicated (flash forwards, 34). This is a tidy story which I felt reflects Nicole’s clear meaning constructions here. There is no verbal evaluation but it is present both non-verbally and in an implied sense. It’s satisfactory resolution (Nicole went to hospital in time, so the baby survived) gives a sense of relief but at the same time the hypothetical presentation of what Nicole perceives would otherwise have happened evoked an emotional response.  The next part of the story in contrast was difficult to interpret. It felt a lot more like she was reporting things that she remembered but lacked a clear understanding around.  Nicole highlights the input of the trainee nurse with direct speech *‘oh no she’s further than that.’(39)* which made me wonder whether this was the significant event that led to the realisation that a Caesarean section was necessary. Though this isn’t explicitly communicated.  I wondered if it was significant that the character was a ‘trainee’ nurse rather than simply a nurse. It almost seemed to enable the message that comes through later (that the nurses where incompetent) if the person who spots the problem isn’t actually a nurse.  I felt that the family not being able to watch was clearly significant to Nicole and the lack of satisfactory resolution here adds to the discomfort of the story. As we are left with Nicole being prepared for the Caesarean section alone and with no immediate indication of success or being reunited with family.  The evaluation once again is implied. The negative description of the setting along with her tone and other forms of non-verbal communication led me to conclude that Nicole remains upset about her experience. |
| 6 | **Fight to see my baby** | 47-61 | Assumption of shared medical knowledge (special care, morphine)  Baby should be with its mother  Mother should be informed  Hospital staff more likely to respond to ‘Mum’ – more powerful? | To try to make sense of it  Significant impact  Expose injustice | I felt that with the repetition of direct speech evoked the real sense of a fight. Nicole would try to use her weapon ‘want to see my baby’(51,54,57) and the medical staff would use their shield *‘oh no you can’t go yet,’*(52,55) until Nicole turns to a more powerful ally (Mum).  Once again I wondered how Nicole felt about the experience, it was obvious from the delivery that she was still upset about this event which I assumed mirrored some of her emotions at the time however I also wondered about how afraid she might have been at the time and whether the contrast between ‘fine’ and ‘special care’ in the direct speech line *‘oh he’s fine, he’s on neonatal, unit, special care,’*(49) was an attempt to illustrate this emotion.  At the end of his section of the narrative Nicole expresses that she had got the point where she was going to see her baby regardless of whether the staff said she could or not. It is unclear to me whether Nicole believed that the staff where just about to take her at the point when her Mum shows up. I can’t help but wonder whether if she hadn’t called her Mum she would have been left waiting longer.  I wondered why Nicole choose to ring her Mum at that point, understanding that her Mum was not her Mum in the traditional sense. I learned later (outside the interview) that her Mum was not on drugs for a short period of time around the birth. |
| 7 | **What’s wrong with my baby?** | 62-67 | Assumption – the implication of incubators and tubes is understood  Guilt around failure at motherhood  Mother should be fully informed | To try to make sense of it  Significant experience  Exposing injustice/failure of hospital staff | I felt upset for Nicole that she was still physically separated from Jack and worried for her about how this might impact on her bonding with her child.  I wondered about the complex emotions that Nicole might have been feeling at the time. On the one had finally being able to see her child and on the other realising that he could be in danger and not understanding why this was.  I wondered what the guilt was around at this point ‘I’m sorry, I’m sorry’ (64). It’s not until later on in the narrative (story 16) that I being to interpret that Nicole is apologising for what she sees as her failure at motherhood. Failing to give birth to a healthy baby.  Although there is some sense of dependence on her Mum (i.e.) wheeled over I felt that there was no indication of support or comfort in the narration, which may be reflective or her relationship with her Mum or alternatively may indicate that her Mum’s role was not part of Nicole’s agenda |
| 8 | **Physical state not appreciated** | 68-73 | Expectation – nurses should be caring and sensitive  Expectation – nurses should be aware of her physical needs | To try to make sense of it  Significant experience  Exposing injustice/failure of hospital staff | I wondered whether the particular nurse or nurses who challenged her weren’t aware of her procedure. Or whether the expectation would be that the patient should be walking. We later find (story 22) that Nicole continues to experience pain so it’s possible that Nicole’s recovery was not typical.  I wondered whether the age of Nicole and her partner influenced the likelihood of the nurse challenging them. I wondered if this was something that occurred to Nicole.  Nicole’s shock indicates that her expectations of nurses and her situation were very much at odds with what she experienced.  I felt that the repetition of ‘dragging on’(73) really emphasised how miserable Nicole recalls the situation having been |
| 9 | **Between mother and baby: Wishes not respected** | 74-77 | Medical professionals should keep their patients fully informed  A Mother’s rights to her child | To try to make sense of it  Significant impact on her  To expose injustice/ poor care | I wonder whether there was a legitimate reason why her baby was bottle fed. As I learn more in the next story and realise that his blood platelets were low (story 10), I apply my knowledge that formula milk contains vitamin K which helps with this. Information that Nicole didn’t have at the time and possibly still doesn’t have.  My perception of the hospital as busy and understaffed – I wonder whether Nicole shares my perception, whether she considers her treatment to be partially down to the inability of the hospital to meet patients needs adequately, whether she feels that other Mother’s would have experienced a similar thing or whether she thinks it’s more personal. Some later stories shed more light on this. I compare Nicole’s story to the story my friend (a retired medical professional) told me about her child birth experience, which also was an emergency section, I consider how her knowledge of medicine and the hospital environment helped her to make sense of her experience in a way that Nicole wasn’t able to.  In the story Nicole presents herself as assertive at expressing her wishes. I wonder whether it’s possible that medical staff did try to inform her of what was going on but because of her state at the time she wasn’t able to comprehend this.  What particularly strikes me about this story is that although Nicole’s assertive voice comes through, the hospital staff are still positioned as more powerful however despite this it becomes clear in the next story (story 10) that the hospital didn’t get what Nicole perceives as their wish to send her home without her baby.  **Interpreter’s overall summary**  Overall I interpret this as a story about a mother trying to fight to have her baby against the authority (medical), who she portrays as preventing her from knowledge about her baby and from a physical relationship with her child.  Nicole is in one sense is portrayed as the victim, with the more powerful authority preventing her wishes but at the same time she retains the voice of a fighter who knows what she wants and isn’t simply passively led. |
| 10 | **Overwhelmed and in the dark about babies treatment** | 78-82 | Mother’s rights  Medical profession have a duty to fully inform patients  Understanding impacts on experience | To try to make sense of it  Significant impact on her  To expose injustice/ poor care | I wonder whether the medical staff picked up on Nicole’s distress and how they perceived and responded to this.  I wonder what measures medical staff put in place to ensure that Nicole had understood what they told her about her baby’s condition and the implication of this.  As I reflect on this story I can’t help but think about the recent case in the news where parents removed their child from medical care in the UK to take him to what they presumably believed would be better medical care abroad. The subsequent repercussions for the family exposed the patriarchal power of the medical professionals in charge of the case and its tension with the parent’s rights to exercise what they consider to be in the best interest of the child. I wonder whether many parents would feel they had the knowledge or the mind to challenge the medical professional’s power in this way. I wonder to what extend Nicole was overtly aware of the power differential.  I wonder why it was Nicole’s Nana who researched it rather than Nicole and whether this is reflective of Nicole’s state at the time or whether it is reflective of the relationship between Nicole and her Nana, with Nicole being and/ or having been a dependant.  I wondered what it felt like to be kept away from her child and how this impacted on her biologically and emotionally  I wondered how it felt not knowing what was wrong with her child at first and what she might have imagined. I wondered how she felt when she realised what was wrong with her child and what the dangers where and how this impacted on her relationship with the medical authority.  I wondered how different the story and the emphasis of this story would have been if it had been told when she perceived her child to be in danger.  **Interpreter’s overall summary**  My interpretation of this story is that the primary emphasis is on her mistreatment by the medical authority. It portrays Nicole as overwhelmed by what is going on but fighting to try to understand, whereas medical professionals are portrayed failing to help her understand.  She is a *victim* to the authority (they) who have the knowledge and power. At the same time demonstrates a *survivor* voice, actively fighting to gain knowledge and power over her situation.  The story also indicates the fear she had for her child at the time but my perception is that this does not present as the primary aim. |
| 11 | **Unsupported, mistreated and the fight to have my baby.** | 83-91 | Mother’s rights  Medical profession have a duty to fully inform patients  That medical staff have power to determine the best interest of the child.  Medical professionals should be proactive in checking the welfare of their patients  Mothers have a right to be with their children/ should be with their children  Individuals undergoing a new experience need support. | To highlight the perceived failure of the medical staff to meet her care expectations and needs  To demonstrate that she is unsupported  To indicate that this experience continues to be salient to her  To try to recall events she thinks I will find interesting. | I wondered at the discrepancy between Nicole’s expectation of what patient care should be (e.g. checking that she was OK) and the reality of her experience ‘They’d only give me pain killers if I asked for them’ (line 83) and how this contributed to her dissatisfaction.  I wondered about the contrast I felt Nicole was indicating between the Medical staff’s failure to deliver on what she believed to be their obligations but abruptness at pointing out when she should be attending to hers. I wondered whether her larger ‘life experience’ of being unsupported was influencing her perception of her relationship and interaction with the professionals. I also wondered whether the medical staff were aware of this or not, and if not whether if they had been their interactions with Nicole would have been different.  I wonder whether due to limited capacity of and financial pressures on the NHS (as I perceive to be the case) this mean that the psychological wellbeing of the patient/ new mother is of little priority and generally seen as the responsibility of the patient’s family, leaving those individuals without support units especially vulnerable.  I found this story more comfortable to listen to than some of the others reflecting on Nicole’s Medical experience. Most likely because there is what I perceive to be a satisfactory resolve and ending as she is eventually able to be with her child and ‘Then there were no, no problems,’ (line 91)  Baby Jack is depicted as vulnerable in this story, he is believed to be in need of medical care and continuous monitoring. He is also separated from his Mother (just as she is from him) and reported to be in need of her ‘your baby’s crying for you’ (line 85). Understanding the implications of attachment difficulties which can be associated with early separation I found myself feeling that baby Jack is a victim but at the same time I find myself thinking that the medical staff are also saviours, providing the medical care that Baby Jack requires. Based on my own experience and beliefs I assume that based on the evidence at hand the medical professions believed that his interests were best served in neonatal care. I however acknowledge that the perceptions of the medical staff do not necessarily reflect the ‘truth’ of what was in Jack’s best interest. I also acknowledge that my assumption may be false and that other factors such as malpractice and/ or discrimination may also have contributed to decisions around Jack’s care.  **Interpreter’s overall summary**  The story paints the picture of an unsupported mother, whose care is not adequately being met by medical staff, who has to fight for the right to be with her child against the power of the medical authority, eventually securing a partial victory. |
| 12 | **Negative encounter:** **Unexplained criticism of Mothering** | 92-98 | Medical professions should be supportive and kind.  Medical professions should explain their actions to their patients. | Highlight injustice  Make her pain apparent  Report her experience as requested | Delivery – I interpreted a bewilderment and hurt in the way this was delivered.  My discomfort in hearing this very short and seemingly still very raw story of Nicole’s encounter with a medical professional prompted me to try and find a satisfactory resolve. Firstly, by prompting Nicole to reflect further. When this failed I tried to offer a solution myself. I was unsuccessful.  I wondered whether the rawness reflected a perception that her mothering was being criticised or whether it was more a reflection of her unhappiness with her relationship with the medical professionals. As the possibility for a positive, supportive encounter is once again lost.  I wondered whether Nicole was consciously aware that this was yet another story which involved a medical professional standing in the way of her physically being with her child or whether she was simply aware of reporting another negative experience with a medical professional.  **Interpreter’s overall summary**  A story of a negative encounter with a medical professional, where communication is once again portrayed as poor and Nicole’s ‘mothering’ is criticised but no reason given leaving her bewildered and hurt. |
| 13 | **Late information** | 99-100 | Breast milk is better  The medical profession encourages breast feeding | Highlight injustice/ poor communication  Express how important this was to her  Report her experience as requested | Nicole expressed earlier (story 9, line 76) That she wanted to breastfeed, this is obviously important to her. I am aware through public awareness media campaigns that breast feeding is currently held by society to be beneficial both medically (e.g. passive immunity & nutrients) and for Mother-child bonding. I naturally assumed that Nicole has also been exposed to similar media material and holds a similar view. Nicole is referring to just giving her child breast milk here rather than physically breast feeding. I felt that this may confirm the assumption that breast milk is medically better and/ or may reflect Nicole’s desire to give her baby something that is physically hers especially as the usually physical relationship between Mother and child has been disrupted due to medical complications.  I wondered again whether hospital staff had intentionally wanted to use formula milk for medical reasons, which may explain why Nicole hadn’t been told earlier, however wouldn’t explain why this wasn’t clear to Nicole.  **Interpreter’s overall summary**  I felt that Nicole was primarily trying to illustrate once again how medical staff had thwarted her attempts at motherhood and having a relationship with her child (in this case through breast milk). |
| 14 | **The all clear** | 101-104 |  | To give the larger story of her medical experiences an ending.  Gaining independence from the medical power was significant for Nicole.  Receiving the final confirmation that Jack was out of danger was a significant event for Nicole | I feel that the whole hospital experience appeared clouded in mystery for Nicole. It deviated from her expectations of birth and postnatal motherhood. When she narrates ‘they just came and said’ (line 101) that he was fine this appeared very much in keeping with the dominant theme of Nicole remaining unknowledgeable around what was going on with baby Jack in the hospital.  Once Nicole was able to take Baby Jack home she reports that, ‘that were all fine’ (line 102). I got the sense in this story that this marked the return to the expected trajectory, however it seems that it’s not until they are no longer required to attend checkups and her dependence on the medical staff at the hospital is finally over that she is able to conclude ‘and that were it really for the birth and stuff’ (line 104).  I also noticed the shift from ‘I’ (line 101) to ‘we’ (line 103) when Nicole left the hospital environment. It seemed to reinforce that idea of being unsupported and isolated in the hospital and suggested that at least initially she returned home to some support.  The story gives a final satisfactory resolution to the larger hospital experience story. Nicole finally gets what she’s wanted e.g. to take home a healthy baby. She also finally exits the power skewed relationship between herself and the hospital staff, though they retain the power in the process dictating how and when this will happen and requiring Nicole to comply.  **Interpreter’s overall summary**  Interpreting this in the context of the larger story, I feel that Nicole is narrating how she and Jack finally gained their independence from the medical professionals at the hospital. The story documents the final challenge of having to attend checkups before finally celebrating Jack being given a full bill of health. I also felt that it once again suggested that Nicole was still not clear what exactly was wrong with Jack. |
| 15 | **Gas** **and Air birth** | 105-109 | Mother’s share the memories of the birth of their child | The need (cultural) to share the story of the birth  The desire for there to have been a birth story to tell | Nicole had already informed me that she’d had an emergency caesarean section (story 6, line 43) and that she’d had to be gassed as they couldn’t inject her. I found it interesting now that she wanted to say something about her memories of the birth (or lack of memories about this). The birth itself seems to be an important event for Nicole, later I interpret that there is a sadness and even guilt about the fact that she feels that ‘I didn’t give that baby life’ (story 16, line 113). I am aware that biological Mums I’ve know (including my own) have shared their stories of child birth with me. It seems to me to be a cultural tradition to share this significant event. It may be that Nicole feels that she too should have this significant story to tell about the birth and feels that this part of motherhood is missing. I didn’t feel that there was any overt blame towards anyone for this. Hospital staff were very much in the background in this story, carrying out ‘necessary’ (as is the assumption, reinforced by Nicole in story 16) medical procedure. It isn’t until story 16 where I interpret that Nicole may be directing blame at herself.  Despite being background characters Nicole’s situational dependence on the medical staff and the fact that they are in control is still evident.  **Interpreter’s overall summary**  Nicole narrates her memories of the Birth of Jack which are complicated by the fact that she ‘had to be gassed to be put to sleep’. (story 5, line 44) and has no memories of the procedure as she ‘was knocked out’ (line 109). I felt the story gave the sense that something was missing and that Nicole felt that she had been cheated out of a normal birth story. |
| 16 | **An interpretation of Postnatal depression** | 110-118 | Postnatal depression caused by failure at motherhood  Natural birth is best/ water birth ideal | To reflect strength of character  To raise the profile of postnatal depression  To offer an explanation for later stories  To satisfy my request to learn of her experience | Mixed message regarding the hospital staff here on one hand ‘they just said no it’s not happening, not going to happen’ (line 118). Suggesting that they took away her dream and at the very least are the bearers of bad news. On the other hand they are the heroes ‘if them doctors hadn’t been there he ... (Jack)... would have died’ (line 114) although this helps to position Nicole as the failure ‘I didn’t give that baby life’ (line 113) independently.  At this point I wondered whether when she talks about postnatal depression whether she means she was clinically diagnosed with this or whether she’s using the term to describe how she felt. Later (story 23, line 216) it becomes apparent that this was a medical diagnosis.  I wonder whether she considers giving birth naturally and independently to be associated with success at motherhood and thus the deviation from her expectation that she would achieve this makes her feel like a failure. I remember wondering, when she related her previous accounts of the wider negative experience of child birth and postnatal care, what impact the experience was having on her biological and psychological wellbeing. Consequently I find it interesting that despite her hurt and recognition of injustice in her dealings with the medical profession that it is actually her own perceived ‘inferiority’ as a mother that becomes the salient point on which she rationalises her postnatal depression.  I wonder whether her perceived dependence on the medical professionals, (‘if them doctors hadn’t been there’ (line 114)) who she feels mistreated her, contributes to her negative self beliefs here.  I wonder if Nicole has considered other reasons for her depression. I wonder which ‘others’ have contributed to her construction of developing postnatal depression and what their influence may have been.  I wonder whether Nicole’s constructions of herself as a failure as a mother did contribute to ‘real’ underlying mechanism and physical symptoms associated with the ‘depression’ construct.  **Summary**  Nicole uses the story of her birth experience to understand why she experienced postnatal depression. She reports that being unable to give birth naturally made her feel as though she had failed at a significant job of Motherhood (giving birth) and feels that this was the reason (or a major reason) for the onset of postnatal depression. |
| 17 | **An education in Mothering** | 119-133 | Care skills integral to motherhood  Care skills are learned from role models  Medical professions could/ should educate New Mothers | To highlight her lack of support  To give recognition to the ‘character Rebecca’  To relate her experiences to me. | I wondered what Nicole’s thinks the normal experience for learning care skills is for most Mothers and whether this is based on experience.  I feel that the need for support and relationship is a theme expressed in several stories within the narrative. I find that what I feel is almost an over emphasis of her appreciation for Rebecca makes me more sensitive to what I feel comes over as a desperation to have this need met.  I feel that Rebecca is depicted very much as a person with whom she has a positive relationship rather than as a professional. I wonder how Rebecca perceives her relationship with Nicole. I wonder if Rebecca interpreted Nicole’s need for support and relationship in a similar way as I do hearing Nicole’s story. I wonder whether this presented tensions with her ‘professional ‘ role.  I wonder why she classifies it as skills of Motherhood specifically and not parenting more generally. I also wonder at the absence of Nicole’s partner in relation to the learning experience.  I wonder at the barrier’s to her establishing relationships with other individuals who have been parents, who would be able to support Nicole and provide a more intimate relationship with her.  I wonder whether my relationship with my Mother is close to what Nicole imagines the relationship should be. I was not consciously aware of thinking of my Mother during the interview (though my construct of Mother is undoubtedly significantly influenced by my relationship with her). I wonder whether my closeness to my Mother when I was Nicole’s age and my knowledge that if I become a Mother my own Mother won’t be their support me (Died in 2003) effects the impact of the story on me and my interpretation of it.  Nicole refers to the practical skills at accommodating her child’s physical needs. I wonder whether she felt more able to meet her child’s emotional needs without the need for formal learning.  **Interpreter’s overall summary**  Nicole’s entry into Motherhood is hindered by the lack of role models available to her to learn the skills of Motherhood. There is suggestion that medical professions (other than Rebecca) should have given her some advice. Nicole appreciates and recognises her dependence on Rebecca (family Health care nurse) for learning essential skills of caring for her baby’s physical needs and for accessing services. |
| 18 | **belated debriefing on birth and postnatal hospital experience** | 134-144 | Patient/ mother’s rights  Mother’s desire to know what’s wrong with their child  That hospital staff should want to help the mother understand | Expose injustice/ mistreatment  To relate her experience  To impress upon me the importance of this experience and her need for resolve  To champion Rebecca | Again I feel the sense of hurt, rawness and the feeling of unresolved in this medical experience. This is uncomfortable for me also.    This time I was aware of my own need for positive meaning making, for a therapeutic outcome. I wondered whether I would have primarily tried to rationalise that the experience happened because the nurses were too busy or because I had misunderstood what they are saying. I wondered whether to suggest this but because of my failed interjection, in this vain, in an earlier story I hesitate to do so and then I wonder whether trying to make meaning of it in a positive, more comfortable way inhibits the opportunity for change. I felt ethically conflicted between my desire to make us feel better and my concern that this may mask an underlying issue or potential injustice. Instead of trying to establish a more comfortable resolve, I settled for acknowledging her perceived injustice.  I wonder how much Nicole considers it to be a tale of how the medical profession deal with patients more generally and how much of it is a personal tale of her own treatment. I wonder how much Nicole considers her experiences to be the same as that of other mothers with similar medical complications.  I wonder how the medical staff addressed the questions Nicole asked and how helpful they were to her. I wondered what questions I would have asked and whether the answers they gave Nicole would have made me feel more comfortable about the experience.  I wondered how Nicole’s story of her hospital experience, as she recounted it to Rebecca, differed from her narration of events in this interview. I wonder whether Nicole actively expressed a wish to speak to the medical staff or whether Rebecca had a similar discomfort to my own in hearing the story that motivated her to propose the meeting.  I wonder whether Nicole was looking for an apology, though the emphasis was much more on the need for personal understanding. I wonder whether my interpretation of blame and the need for an apology is shared by Nicole. I noticed that she tends to state what they did and ask ‘why?’ rather than directly express blame or say they shouldn’t have done something. I wonder whether I’m the one inferring a greater degree of blame than Nicole personally perceives.  (Through this interview I became more aware of the dilemma of my role of a researcher and of my ethical interaction with my participant. I’m aware that my very presence can impact on the participant’s meaning making. I started the research with a hope that the process might have some therapeutic benefit. Even with the vanity that my own interviewing skill might facilitate this. On the other hand I considered myself to be there to learn from them, from their experiences and meaning constructions. I accept that meaning is often (though not inevitably) co-constructed however I find myself ethically concerned about how my curiosity and my own needs may impact on the participants meaning constructions and how it might impact on the outcomes, both of the research and of the participants’ lives)  **Interpreter’s overall summary**  Nicole meets with medical professionals to help understand her experience. Although they are able to help her with some of her questions they aren’t able to further assist her understanding of her baby’s neonatal care. She learns from her notes that Medical staff thought she was in danger and recalls that this wasn’t made clear to her at the time. She expresses her belief that she (potentially extending to other mothers) wants to know what what’s wrong with her baby. |
| 19 | **Reflecting on a bad hospital experience** | 145-158 | Nurses should be attentive to their patients needs  Nurses should want to do their job  Nurses responded to her differently because of her age  Nurses felt contractually obliged to carry out their duties as they were being paid to do so. | Trying to answer my question | This story was a lot more evaluative and hypothetical, which no doubt reflects the nature of the question I asked her, which was more specifically ‘tell me what you think’. I wonder whether the earlier lack of explicit verbal evaluation in many stories was because I asked her to talk about her experience and she interpreted this to mean that I wanted her to tell me about the events themselves as she remembered them to be, rather than her thoughts about them. Is therefore the previous lack of explicit blame an attempt on Nicole’s part to provide me with a more objective ‘truth’ of facts and events for research purposes? Even here she qualifies that the evaluation is her understanding ‘that’s how I felt about it anyway’ (line 149) rather than the factual ‘truth’.  The increased evaluation here may however reflect her greater conviction around this specific thought, in contrast to the uncertainty of other aspects of her experience, such as why the nurse took Jack off her when she was sat up with him (story 12 line 96 & 98).  I feel that Nicole’s story is based on assumptions that aren’t explicitly communicated to me, so although she persuades me her experience was negative, she doesn’t persuade me that it is to do with her age.  I asked the question that prompted this story was based on two things. Firstly from my experience of working with young people and my memories of being a young person myself I believe than young people are often treated differently. For example a young person may be given more guidance; on the other hand a young person may feel that they have to get their parents involved for their concerns to be taken seriously. The second reason was because of the potential social stigma around younger Mum’s. Consequently I was interested in whether this was interested in whether Nicole felt that there was any differential treatment based on her age.  I feel from her response that this is something that she has ’definitely, definitely, definitely’ (line 146) considered before now and that Nicole is convinced that her age was a factor in her treatment. In the story opening we learn that Nicole perceived that most nurses didn’t appear to like her and given its placement directly after confirming the importance of age I interpret that she feels that they didn’t like her because of her age but she doesn’t make this explicit to me or confirm it with any additional information. In fact the use of the more generalised ‘you’ rather than ‘me’ gives the feel that the nurses treatment is generalised to everyone and not just a sign of discrimination (although the ‘you’ could be specifically young Mum’s rather than the wider population). Thus her story persuades me that her experience was negative but falls short of convincing me that there was age discrimination. It is clear however that Nicole feels strongly that discrimination was present and although it wasn’t effectively communicated to me in this story, her conviction and my own beliefs around social stigma and age discrimination make me wonder whether Nicole was indeed a victim of discrimination. I also wonder whether a lack of ability to make sense of her treatment in a rational positive way, would make Nicole more likely to consider discrimination as a way of making sense of her experience. I also wonder whether because Nicole is aware of her minority status she would feel more vulnerable and more likely to perceive discrimination. That being said my own experiences of talking to individuals about their attitude towards young Mums makes me feel that discrimination was a likely experience.  I wonder what the impact of feeling that your negative experiences were (at least partially) down to discrimination feels like and what the consequences of this are. I consider experiences in my own life when I’ve wondered whether I was positively or negatively discriminated against and recall the uncomfortable feelings, though I’ve never had the level of conviction that Nicole has, that it was ‘definitely’ discrimination. Nonetheless the acknowledgement that you are vulnerable to discrimination, that it is a possible sense making tool and that your experience (e.g. discomfort) may in some way be reflecting the negative feeling, thoughts or actions of others.  The emphasis appears to be on the experience itself, ‘Because it just wasn’t nice, wasn’t a nice experience’ (line 155), rather than on the morality or justice.  **Interpreter overall summary**  Nicole confirms that she feels her age contributed to how she was treated. She tells us that most of the nurses didn’t seem to like her and only came to her when they did because they were paid to be there. Nicole stresses that the impact of her experience was so negative that she wouldn’t return there again. |
| 20 | **Banned from the prom** | 161-181 | The school works in the best interest of the child/ young person  The school works in the best interest of itself  The school has to legally protect itself  The prom is a significant event in the life of year 11 students  The prom is seen as a reward | Injustice?  Impact/hurt of experience | When I initially heard the story I originally thought that ‘everybody’ meant school when she first mentioned it but it became clear ‘everybody’ included family and school. Thus everybody may mean everybody Nicole considered to be an authority figure in her life at that time.  I wondered if a child with a medical condition that made them vulnerable to being knocked, would also have been denied access to the prom or whether more would have been done to ensure them access. Refusing her access to the prom on the basis of her pregnancy is discrimination. I wonder what actual risks the individuals felt there would be to Nicole (and/or the foetus) and why they didn’t feel they would be able to accommodate measures to reduce these risks. I recall a member of staff at a school I taught at attending the year eleven prom when she was pregnant, I wonder whether staff at Nicole’s old school would be advised not to go if they were pregnant or whether they felt that Nicole personally would be at more risk of harm for a particular reason that we are unaware of.  I also wondered what role, if any Nicole’s family played in influencing schools decision. Nicole’s family are not in the position to be a discriminating authority and their motives are not interrogated here. This doesn’t necessarily reflect Nicole’s emphasis as I specifically prompted her to evaluate school’s reasoning but not that of her family. I find myself assuming that although Nicole find’s their reasoning (safety) to be flawed she accepts their motives (protecting her) as genuine.  I thought it was interesting that Nicole perceived that it was the visibility of the pregnancy that made a difference ‘as soon as you could see that I was pregnant’ (line 169). I wondered if there was any truth to it, such as ‘out of sight out of mind’. I wondered whether the school intended in advance not to allow her to go but decided not to communicate it to her until later or whether it was simply a late consideration.  I feel from my conversations with students I previously taught that the prom is a significant life event for many young people and therefore find myself feeling very upset for Nicole that she was denied this opportunity. I relate to buying a dress for an event that was then cancelled. The unworn and expensive dress then served as a reminder of the loss of potential. I can only imagine what it would have been like had I been the only one excluded from attending.  I wonder about the reasons why Nicole feels she was denied access to the prom. In her story there is a sense that she feels that school didn’t want to take the risk that something physically could go wrong but I wondered how much more was being said about their underlying motivation. The story certainly didn’t seem to a portray the sense that they desperately wanted her to be able to go but just couldn’t find a way to make it safe enough (though this could well have been the reality of the motivation of the decision maker/s). In fact I felt as though when Nicole concludes that they ‘were never allowed to go, because I was pregnant.’ (line 177) that there was potentially more than simply a message of a biological state and associated medical risk factors. It came across clearly that she felt that they had discriminate against her by failing to accommodate her needs but what wasn’t clear to me was whether she also felt a real prejudice, as though on some level she was being punished for being pregnant. Nicole suggests that she ‘hadn’t done nothing to not be able to go by school’ (line 162) suggesting that Nicole associated exclusion from the prom with bad behaviour.  Another aspect that I interpret from this story is that unlike Sasha, Nicole doesn’t consider being pregnant to be a crime or something to be ashamed about.  Although I don’t consider this to be the significant emphasis of the story I do however feel that the story eludes to the partner’s support. As I interpret ‘we were never allowed to go, because I was pregnant.’ (line 177) to mean that neither Nicole or her partner went to the prom. Presumably he wasn’t banned on health and safety grounds suggesting that he choose not to attend as Nicole wasn’t able to.  **Interpreter Overall Summary**  Nicole narrates about being denied access to the prom because she was several months pregnant. Her school and family are against her going and inform her that it is because of physical risks towards herself and the child. When prompted to evaluate the motivations of school Nicole reveals that she suspects school are protecting their best interests rather than hers. |
| 21 | **A few supporters** | 182-185 | Catholics consider pregnancy out of wedlock to be undesirable (widely held cultural construct)  Assumption that a Catholic school would be more negative towards pregnancy  That school staff should be supportive of students | To expose injustice  The importance of the experience. | Nicole narrates that they are a ‘Catholic school, so they were yeah’ (line 182) suggesting an assumption that we have a shared knowledge of the implication of ‘Catholic’ in this context. I feel that Nicole is referencing a shared cultural assumption that Catholics are particularly negative towards sex out of marriage and thus pregnancy out of wedlock.  I wonder how Nicole perceives other (non Catholic) schools would have responded to her pregnancy.  I felt that given the surrounding context that when Nicole narrates that only a few members of staff where supportive of her I interpreted this to mean supportive of her during pregnancy rather than supportive over her entire school career.  Nicole lists the things what one of her minority supporters amongst the teaching staff does for her (line 184) that she seems particularly pleased about. When Nicole’s teacher brings her the basket she says ‘oh it was so nice, so nice’ (line 185) my original interpretation was that Nicole is referring to the whole experience (both the basket itself and the fact that someone had brought it for her). I have to acknowledge however that it is possible that she is simply commenting on the basket she has described. I personally however still hold with my original interpretation. The phrase is not only emphasised in its repetition but also in its delivery which I felt conveyed the emotional wonder of her recollection of the experience. The emotional wonder and gratitude are similar to that expressed by Nicole for Rebecca (see story 17). This feeds into my interpretation of Nicole as someone who really wants to be liked and valued and to develop positive relationships. Although this is true of most of us I interpret that due to Nicole limited intimate relationships at times in her life ‘because I don’t have my Mum or ought like that’ (Story 17, line 123) (also see story 30) and of her perceived rejection (e.g. see story 51) that her need for this appears particularly great.  **Interpreter Overall Summary**  Nicole tells me that she perceives that her school was unsupportive of her during pregnancy however indicates that this fits in with her assumptions of Catholic school. Nicole recognises that a few staff were however supportive and in particular is very appreciative of one teacher who visits her and brings her gifts. |
| 22 | **Medical complications** | 186-212 | Expectation of level of medical care  Position of hospital bed contributed to incorrect healing and current physical difficulties | Expose insufficient care | Nicole narrates that in relation to her physical complications she had ‘expressed these concerns’ (line 191) since the birth (19 months ago). This positions Nicole as someone who is actively trying to get attention but at the same time positions her as the victim of an authority who is ignoring her. I relate to this having been originally dismissed myself when complaining about pain and having to be very assertive in order to get the investigations that eventually validated my concerns. Having a very good friend who was a GP helps me to understand the limitations of the medical professional as well as providing pointers as to how to successfully navigate it. My experience of hearing stories that other people have told me about their encounters with GPs makes me aware of the differential expectations individuals have of this profession. I wonder how Nicole’s expectations of the medical profession have changed through her experience.  I wondered who Nicole had been telling, I assumed from my own experience and in the context of the next story (story 23) that this was primarily GPs  I felt that when Nicole reports the doctor’s check up as ‘Just a phone call’ (line 196) that she is expressing that this was not sufficient. In fact Nicole goes further using a hypothetical to illustrate that an in person check up is necessary ‘if someone had have come and seen’ (line 203). I felt that the doctor was just a voice over the phone and someone that Nicole couldn’t really have a relationship with, which is in direct contrast to Rebecca who there in person and was someone Nicole was able to have a positive relationship with.  I sympathised with Nicole’s justification for not reporting her medical issues to the doctor during the phone call check up. ‘I just wanted to get on with my baby’ (line 199). I felt that in the context of earlier stories where the medical profession had seemed (whether for legitimate reasons or not) to get in the way of Nicole being able to get on with being a Mum that I understood her reluctance to have them involved at that point in time. I wondered whether Nicole had regretted this and that when she narrates that she ‘never heard from them again’ (line 200) she does so because she had waited hoping that they might contact her again. I feel that Nicole was quite conflicted at the time. On the one hand she had, had a rather negative medical experience that she wanted to be able to put behind her but on the other hand she is frightened by haematoma and has need of medical advice.  I wondered what implication the physical complication has on Nicole’s identities, I also specifically wonder how it impacts on her identity as a mother as she reports that it interferes with child care chores ‘I can’t reach over to put my son into his cot because it’s painful’ (line 190).  Once again I perceive Nicole as being positioned as dependent on the medical profession. Dependent on doctors and Rebecca who have or at least are perceived to have the knowledge and ability to help Nicole with her medical issues. The dependency on the medical profession generally appears negative as it’s either presented as a fight to get them to help her or as something she’s uncomfortable with and wants to avoid. Rebecca is the exception to this as she is there in person, has time for Nicole, build a relationship up with Nicole, helps Nicole to understand, teaches Nicole skills and generally meets (likely even exceeds) Nicole’s expectations.  **Interpreter Overall Summary**  Nicole tells the story about her ongoing medical issues. These affect her ability to function physically in the way that she was able to prior to the birth as well as impacting on the physical chores of motherhood. Nicole feels that this was caused by the positioning of the hospital bed (sat up) when she was healing. She is frustrated that the doctors have not done anything about this despite making them aware of this for the last years and a half.  Nicole also had a medical issue shortly after returning home from the hospital (haematoma) which frightened her as she didn’t know what it was. She felt that the doctor’s phone call (check up) was not sufficient and in the context of her negative medical experience Nicole didn’t tell the doctor of the difficulties, preferring to be left alone to be a Mum. Nicole felt that the doctor needed to have come in person to see what was wrong with her. Fortunately Rebecca was able to assistant Nicole in the way she needed. |
| 23 | **Age and access to medical treatment** | 213-222 | Assumption that the medical profession are quick to prescribe adults anti-depressant drugs  Assumption that drugs would alleviate symptoms of postnatal depression | Expose age discrimination  Narrate a particularly salient part of her life  Make sense of her experience | I found myself concerned for Nicole that she is still in need of pain killers after 19 months and worried that the doctors had not referred her for any further investigation in this time (see story 22). I find myself wanting her to have the painkillers as she obviously felt she needed them but equally worried that without other intervention she could just become dependent on them.  I find myself fortunate in that thus far I haven’t felt the need for pain killers for long term problems. I have however had ear infections where I’ve felt the need to upgrade from regular paracetamol to co-codamol. I sympathises with the frustration Nicole feels ‘I’ve had enough’ (Line 213).  I thought it was interesting that Nicole had managed to acquire pain killers and wondered how this came about. I felt that this either indicated that Nicole was particularly resourceful, or indicated that she had a supporter or supporters who sourced these items for her.  I was interested in Nicole’s perception of how readily doctors prescribe ‘throw out’ (line 218) medication to the adult community. I assume from Nicole’s narrative that the doctors gave her age as a reason for not prescribing although it is possible that this was an assumption that Nicole made. Age related discrimination in access to medication is something I’ve come across before and believe (though certainly could be wrong) it to be related largely to difficulty in recruiting children for drug trials. I realise that this is of little consolation for those who find that they cannot have the things they perceive they need when others have access. I imagine even more so in Nicole’s case with her being relatively close to eighteen making it harder to rationalise that the drugs might have additional adverse effects. I wonder what Nicole’s constructions are around why individuals under eighteen don’t have the same access to medication.  Nicole uses direct talk when she narrates about finding a drug for postnatal depression that is effective for her ‘*‘it’s trial and error’* they said’ (line 219). I wondered whether this emphasis indicated that this was contrary to her expectation or whether it was the fact that she had already had to wait ten weeks that makes her particularly exasperated that she now could be waiting even longer to find one which actually works.  My recent experience of needing medical intervention is that first you have to fight to be taken seriously, then you have to wait for further investigation which may or may not change things, which then requires you to wait for more investigation and so on until many months down the line you may or may not get treatment. My own experience helps me to relate to Nicole’s account of her journey towards accessing an effective treatment ‘So if it doesn’t work tough, try another one, that doesn’t work tough try another one’ (line 220).  Nicole finally makes the decision to abandon the drug treatment. When she says ‘I’d rather just be with my little un’ (line 222) I wonder whether she feels that the medication is a barrier to her relationship with her child or whether she is indicating that she’s more optimistic that being with Jack will help her than she is that she’ll find an effective medication. I wonder what Nicole’s constructs around postnatal depression and its treatment are. In story 16 (line 113) we learn that Nicole feels she became depressed because of her perceived failings around child birth. Later on in story 25 I interpret that Nicole values the non-drug related therapeutic intervention from the psychiatrist.  Although Nicole has narrated a decisions she has made before, a lot of them have been overruled by more powerful authority. In this instance Nicole reports actually making the decision to abandon the drug treatment which appears to be a decision she is able to uphold. At the centre of her justification for her decision making is her son Jack.  **Interpreter Overall Summary**  Nicole feels that she needs stronger pain killers to manage her pain however reports that because of age discrimination in access to medication she was not able acquire the medication she needs through the doctor. She was however able to get pain killers from adults who have been prescribed them. Similarly she understands that her access to drugs for postnatal depression was also restricted because of her age. Nicole tried four different drugs over a period of time but found none of them effective. She made the decision not to continue trying different drugs. Jack was central to her rationalisation for this decision. |
| 24 | **Depressed and alone: the start of substance abuse** | 223-230 | Psychiatrists are in a position to actively help patients who fall to substance abuse  Alone is negative, vulnerable, miserable? | To report a specifically salient event  To illustrate how people need help  To suggest that she was failed | Although the story mentions Nicole’s split with her partner she didn’t choose to go into this, instead the emphasis was on being alone. She makes it clear that when she moved into her new home she was ‘on my own’ (line 224). The absence of her son was repeated as Jack ‘wasn’t there’ (line 225 & 227). Both being alone and specifically being separated once again from Jack strike me as particularly salient.  The first use of ‘on my own’ (story 11, line 86) also appears to indicate a negative experience and sense of being unsupported and isolated similar to my interpretation of it in this story (story 24, line 224). Being alone appears to be a particularly salient and negative experience for Nicole.  I wondered whose idea it was for Jack to move in with the Grandparents, while Nicole was in the new home. I found this uncomfortable. I suppose I once again found myself worrying about the effects of separating mother and child. I found myself agreeing that it would be difficult for Nicole to look after her child with a broken ankle by herself and I assumed that Nicole’s Grandparents were trying to be helpful in looking after Jack but I found myself wishing that someone had been able to facilitate Jack and Nicole being together.  I felt that Nicole was very vulnerable having the emotional stress of breaking up with her partner, the stress of being separated from her child and coping with postnatal depression. On top of this she is dealing with physical problems (broken ankle) and the long term physical complications (story 22) both of which are likely causing her frustration and impacting on the way she sees herself. I find myself feeling that being alone at this time is not in Nicole’s best interests.  Nicole describes her substance abuse problem as starting ‘gradually’ (line 228) and I wonder what she means by this. I’ve heard it said that when a frog put in water and the water is gradually heated up it doesn’t notice when the temperature gets dangerous for it and I wonder if this is a useful analogy for what Nicole means. Now Nicole appears to recognise her drug and alcohol use at the time as having been a significant problem emphasising that she was eventually using it ‘almost every day’ (line 229). I wonder from what she’s said about it whether she perceived her substance abuse at the time in terms of her being the victim of circumstance. I feel that now it gives Nicole the identity of a fighter someone who was a substance abuser but has managed to overcome that part of her life.  I wondered, when Nicole said the Psychiatrist knew but ‘nought was ever done about that’ (line 230), whether this reflected a feeling that more could have been done to help her at this time and whether she feels that the psychiatrist was in a position to initiate something more. In this respect it seems that Nicole was wanting a more patriarchal authority actively acting in her best interests but with a more nurturing approach as appears to be embodied by the character Rebecca (story 17, 18, 22 & ?) perhaps better described as the type of matriarchy defined by Eller (2000).  Eller, Cynthia, *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory: Why an Invented Past Won't Give Women a Future* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 2000 ([ISBN 0-8070-6792-X](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:BookSources/080706792X))), pp. 12–13.  **Interpreters Overall Summary**  Circumstances, splitting up with her partner and breaking her ankle so she can’t look after Jack, lead to Nicole moving into a new home alone. Nicole appears unhappy about being alone and separated from her son. Nicole develops what she now recognises as a substance abuse problem. She told her psychiatrist about this and feels that the medical authority could have done more to help. |
| 25 | **Problems with** **access to Psychiatric help** | 231-244 | Psychiatric intervention is valuable  Medical decisions should be made on a sufficiently sound basis.  The first psychiatrist valued Nicole | Salient to Nicole  Injustice?  confusion | Nicole’s evaluation of the first psychiatrist is extreme ‘the best person ever’ (line 232) in a similar way to how she talks about Rebecca. It is clear that she feels that he understands her ‘Really got into my head’ (line 233) and I interpret that Nicole feels that she had a positive relationship with this psychiatrist. The positive relationship appears validated by the direct talk that Nicole attributes to the first psychiatrist ‘*I’m going to make it my personal business to see you, I want to see you, I know I can work with you, it’ll be a good thing for you,*’ (line 238). The narration around potentially loosing this psychiatrist is a particularly long piece of direct talk (line 236-238), which makes me conclude that this relationship was particularly important to Nicole. It isn’t entirely clear whether it is the fact that the relationship is valued ‘I want to see you’ (line 238) or whether it’s the potential of a successful outcome ‘it’ll be good for you’ (line 238) that is most salient, though I feel both contribute to the overall importance.  Once again we see evidence of Nicole not simply accepting the decision of authority but questioning it ‘‘why is this happening?’’ (line 235) which may have been successful in inspiring the psychiatrist to ‘*make it my personal business to see you’* (line 238). I suppose I felt quite impressed that she was able to do this though recognise that her questioning was directed at someone she had already established a positive relationship with.  Meaning constructions based significantly on personal experience (e.g. rejection in the past etc.) People who have had experience X are more likely to hold meaning construction Y.  From what Nicole narrates it seems that she perceives that the second psychiatrist is making her conclusion primarily from her interpretation of existing notes made by the first psychiatrist, which Nicole feels wasn’t a sufficient basis ‘there was never ought really taken down about me’ (line 241). I wondered if Nicole found this confusing as the second psychiatrist’s conclusion to discharge doesn’t seem to marry particularly with Nicole’s recollection of the first psychiatrist’s conviction that it would be beneficial for her to see him.  Nicole narrates that the second psychiatrist suggest that postnatal depression is a secondary issue, I wonder what she thought the primary issue was and why she didn’t feel that psychiatric intervention was appropriate. I wonder what the psychiatrist felt was the appropriate intervention for this primary issue and whether this and how to access/ achieve it was successfully communicated to Nicole. Nicole’s final conclusion that ‘that was the end of that’ (line 244) suggests that Nicole didn’t leave with the feeling that there were attainable ‘next steps’ to follow. It is of cause possible that there were and that they either weren’t recalled are didn’t fit with the narrators agenda for this story  I also found it interesting that Nicole didn’t explain what ‘postnatal depression is a secondary issue’ (line 242) meant to the audience. Whether she assumed that the audience or whether she didn’t fully understand herself.  I felt sorry for Nicole both in specifically having lost the first psychiatrist and in ultimately loosing access to this service, which she seems to have thought held promise in terms of wellbeing outcomes.  Again it illustrates Nicole encountering individuals who have the power to determine what she can and can’t do, in this case denying her access to a service.  **Interpreter’s Overall Summary**  Nicole established a good relationship with the first psychiatrist, who she felt had a good understanding of her and expressed confidence in his ability. Due to changes based on catchment area Nicole is to be assigned to another psychiatrist. Nicole however questions this and on later reflection the psychiatrist expresses the conviction that he wants to work with her and that it will be beneficial for her. Unfortunately this psychiatrist goes on long term sick and the next psychiatrist discharges her feeling that postnatal depression is the secondary issue. This conclusion is made on the basis of what Nicole considers to be insufficient notes and contrast with the reported belief of the first psychiatrist that it would be beneficial for her to see him. This ended Nicole’s access to the psychiatric services. |
| 26 | **Social service intervention** | 245-257 | She is being a good Mum | Salient  Validation of good Mum | In story 24 I interpret that Nicole wanted authority figures to intervene when she was abusing alcohol and drugs to help her. In story 26 authority (social service) do become involved but not with the perceived primary intention of helping her. I interpret that Nicole perceives them to be critical of her and wanting to punish her ‘*‘you use drugs, you use alcohol, you’re a bad Mum, you can’t look after your son’* (line 248), rather than to help come off the alcohol and help her to be a successful Mum.  In reference to social services Nicole narrates ‘they’ll not go away’ (249) I felt that this reflected Nicole’s awareness of the power they have over her which is something she’s had to and continues to have to endure. Story 27 expands Nicole’s relationship with social services further.  I felt from Nicole’s delivery of ‘if that makes sense’ (line 254) when discussing the group’s decision to put Jack on the child protection order indicated that she agreed with their reasoning and felt it was fair. I also felt that she felt relatively comfortable and unthreatened by this which contrasts which her earlier experience (see story 27). I wonder whether the difference between then and now is that Nicole physically has Jack now and that Nicole is receiving validation that she is doing the right things ‘they want to make sure that I just carry on doing what I do’ (line 254)  Nicole narrates that she has ‘slipped down when they’ve left’ (line 255) before. I felt that this indicated her vulnerability and need for support. I wondered what support the individuals who are staying involved are providing for Nicole and what my opinion of it would be.  I wonder what Nicole means by ‘slipped down’. I assume that she is referring to failing to do some things that she or others feel that she is suppose to as she had ‘dun what I’m supposed to have done’ (line 255) before slipping. I wonder if Nicole feels that the ‘slipping down’ related to the postnatal depression? I wonder whether or not she was living with her partner when she ‘slipped down’.  **Interpreter’s overall summary**  Social services became involved before Nicole had Jack back when she was living by herself and abusing substances. She perceives that they were highly critical of her and didn’t seem to feel that their agenda was to help her. Nicole continues to endure their involvement. Nicole recently met with a group of professionals to decide whether Jack needed to have the child protection order. The professions validated that Nicole was doing what she need to do to look after Jack and that he wasn’t currently at risk. Nicole however has been (possibly still is?) vulnerable and has ‘slipped down’ (line255) when professionals have pulled out before. Nicole seems to feel that the decision to put Jack on the child protection order to allow professionals to continue to ensure that she is doing the right thing is fair. |
| 27 | **Difficulties with a specific professional** | 258-278 |  | Very salient  Expose bad practice | The first indication of extreme negativity towards another person. Before the negative emotions was primarily directed towards experiences rather than individuals. This is explicit and specifically addressed at the social worker. Nicole refers to him as ‘that social worker’ (line 258) indicating hostility the term ‘hate’ (259 &270) is used to describe Nicole’s emotions towards the social worker as well as his feelings towards her. Nicole describes him as ‘awful’ (line 259 & 266). The magnitude of negative emotions towards him is similar to the magnitude of positive emotions expressed towards Rebecca.  Nicole contrast his relationship with her with that of other professionals and the reaction of other professionals towards him ‘‘I don’t like him either, he’s not a nice person’’ (line 265) validates her understanding that the problem is with the social worker (line 266) and not with her as she perceives he feels it is ‘He seems to think, I’m a problem’ (line 262).  Nicole claims that the social worker describes her as ‘argumentative’ (line 259) and later reflects that ‘doesn’t want to listen’ (264). I wondered whether this reflects my interpretation of Nicole in other stories as someone who will challenge and question if she feels something is unjust or doesn’t understand. I wonder what the social workers understanding of the power differential between them is. I wonder if he finds it difficult to accept challenges to his authority. I wonder whether he would agree with Nicole’s perception of his attitude towards her and of their relationship.  Part of me felt that it was unprofessional of professions to talk negatively of other professionals. Another part of me reflected that if that was their perception and they felt it was beneficial to Nicole to share this with her, then perhaps it was the right thing to do. Otherwise they are potentially in danger of skewing the power differential between the professionals and service users further.  Nicole repeats the threat of having her child taken away ‘*expect a letter’* (line 271 &275) indicating the salience of this event. She felt that it had a negative impact on her ‘sent me down hill’ (line 274) which is perhaps unsurprising. It also illustrates the power the social worker had over Nicole at the time. I perceived that Nicole considers the threat to be over (or at least considerably diminished) now, stating that the ‘that letter never came’ (line 272). This may relate to the perception of allies in other professionals (line 260, also see story 26) and the fact that Nicole now appears confident that she is able to do what she needs to do (story 26). Nicole also indicates that she perceives that she would have the power to change social workers if she wanted to (line 268), which may also increase her confidence. I wonder whether Nicole would actually be able to do this. I am sceptical about the service capacity to change workers as well as the potential reluctance of his supervisors to undermine. I feel however that the relationship from Nicole’s perspective is unlikely to become positive enough to allow for an effective working relationship.  As well as indicating that the threat appears more historical ‘that letter never came (line 272) it also gives the impression of Nicole waiting for that letter to come through the door at the time when the threat was very real to her.  I wonder why the social worker told Nicole that there would be a letter. I wonder whether it was a scare tactic that perhaps backfired as he misjudged the impact it would have on Nicole and their relationship or whether he genuinely intended for this to happen but something or someone else changed this.  When wondered whether when Nicole said that they threatened ‘to take your baby away’ (line 275). That that meant that she physically had her baby back at that point however when I asked for clarification of this in story 28 we learn that Jack was still with his Grandparents at that point.  **Interpreter’s overall summary**  I interpret that Nicole’s story is about the negative relationship between herself and the social worker and justification behind this. In story 26 she informed us that he was immediately critical of her, now she reveals that she feels that not only doesn’t he want to help her but that he actually wants for her not to succeed. Nicole feels that he describes her as argumentative and sees her as a problem. Nicole however is able to rationalise that he is the problem as he isn’t prepared to listen to her and this construction is validated by the revelation that other people have also had problems with him and don’t like him either. Nicole reports that earlier on he threatened that she would not be able to have Jack and to expect a letter. Nicole perceives that this had a significant negative emotional impact on her which I interpret in the context of her already vulnerable emotional state (break up, separation, postnatal depression). |
| 28 | **Social worker, child protection and hypocrisy** | 279-297 | Cultural assumption – better for child to be with Mum and Dad.  The Mother is the best person to protect and safeguard her child | Injustice  Show that she is a good Mum  Help herself to understand  Because it’s salient to her | Once again Nicole’s Grandparents appear to be more plot facilitators that active in the story. Nicole narrates in the passive form, that Jack was ‘at’ his Grandparents (line 280) rather than actively for example that they were looking after Jack. I find myself wondering how Nicole feels about her Grandparents role and whether she perceives them as facilitators or contributing to her separation with Jack. When she does talk more activity about her Grandparents (see story) they are generally perceived positively as her supporters but their role in this salient part of Nicole’s story is not narrated.  It appears to be important to Nicole that the audience knows that the reason that Jack was not with her originally was nothing to do with child protection (line 283).  Again Nicole refers to her broken ankle as compromising her ability to care for Jack (line 284), which represents a circumstance outside of her control that she perceives is dictating the separation from Jack. I still find myself wondering why it wasn’t possible to put measures in place to support Nicole to care for Jack at this important time and wonder whether it was down to a lack of available support (services, friends and family) or lack of ability to access support (knowledge).  I interpret that Nicole doesn’t agree with the social workers analysis of the situation. Deciding that it is better for Jack to stay with his Grandparents ‘for some reason’ (line 285). Nicole admits that  She was struggling with postnatal depression (Story 16, line 112) and had a problem with substance abuse (story 24, line 228 & 229),  which was still an issue when social services became involved (story 26, line 246), however I feel that she felt that despite these difficulties it was in the best interest of Jack to be with her. Her reference to placing a child in potential danger ‘without the Mother’ (line 286) indicates her belief that the mother is the best person to protect and safeguard their child.  Nicole says ‘but yet my Grandfather has got a schedule one offense’ (line 286) when reflecting on the social workers decision for Jack to stay with her grandparents. I interpret this to be a way of supporting her belief that the social worker is unjustly focusing on her issues rather than objectively taking all the evidence on board. In the larger narrative Nicole makes it clear that she doesn’t perceive Jack to be in danger from her Grandfather (see story 53) however she does perceive that other people (see story 52 & 53) did and still do consider him to be a risk and that the social worker himself considers him to be a undesirable (see story 30 & 31).  The experience of getting her window smashed in was ‘awful’ (line 291). The fact that it seemed to surprised her that, ‘that were never any concern to the social worker’ (line 292) suggests that Nicole felt that this was a genuine threat to Jack’s welfare. Later we learn a little more about Nicole’s feelings about one living environment (story 29, line 300 & 302) though it is not clear to me whether it was this place or the place before. The section of the story also both exposes Nicole’s beliefs that she is the best protector of Jack’s welfare and challenges the validity of the social workers decision.  Nicole is explicitly judgmental of the social workers reasoning ‘No it’s not right that is it, not at all.’ (line 287) which is unusual in the narrative as a whole as she tends to present her recollection of the things that happened in a way that allows the audience to infer what her conclusions are likely to be about other actors in the story. Here we evidence the strength of her conviction that the social worker is wrong. It also highlights the power differential. That although she disagrees she can only be aggrieved by it and ultimately her actions are dictated by the social worker.  The separation (continued) between Nicole and her child is once again something that appears out of her power to control.  I assume that when Nicole narrates that the social worker instructed her to ‘”*sort yourself out.”’(line 285)*, this is referring to her behaviour relating to substance abuse and postnatal depression.  Nicole appears particularly proud of her ability to get a house emphasises that she ‘paid for it all myself’ (line 288) by repeating the sentiment ‘my own money’ (line 289). It also positions her as independent and as a provider.  Jack is actually an active character in this story, crying for his Grandma, indicating that he has bonded with her and not Nicole. I wonder how this emotionally impacted on Nicole. It is clear from the narrative that she wants to be a mother and wanted to ‘give that baby life’ (story 16, 113) and bond with her child but factors largely perceived to be out of her control (complications with the birth, broken ankle, lack of support, postnatal depression, social worker) have conspired against this.  I find the story of the prolonged separation uncomfortable due to the impact on Jack, distressed at being taken from his Grandma (line 294) and (possibly originally distressed when he was first taken from Nicole) as well as the negative impact I interpret it as having on Nicole. The resolution that Jack is now ‘settled again’ (line 294) helps to alleviate some of this discomfort.  I wonder whether when Nicole narrates that Jack is now with ‘Mum and Dad all the time’ (295), this reveals an underlying construct that it is best for a child to be with their Mum and Dad. I already infer that Nicole considers that it is in the child’s best interest to be with their Mum. I am aware as I assume Nicole is of the widely held cultural assumption that it is best for children to be living with both parents. It gives the tale a traditional (culturally moralistic) happy ending and despite being located mid way through the overall narrative, is predominately what I consider to be the ending of Nicole’s story. Most probably because it does conform to the usual cultural story ending.  Nicole doesn’t discuss the circumstance around her partner moving back in with her  **Interpreters Overall Assumption**  I felt that Nicole’s tale was both about being separated from Jack but also about the injustice of it. Nicole narrates that she is originally separated because of a circumstance that is not her fault and she has no control over (broken ankle). The intervention of the powerful social worker prolongs this separation as he feels it’s in the child’s best interest to be away from Nicole until she has sorted herself out, Nicole perceives that the social worker is wrong and that it is in Jack’s best interest to be with her. I feel that she perceives that the social worker is particularly biased against her and is not objectively considering the factors around Jack’s welfare. Although she disagrees the social worker holds the power and Nicole has to comply with the enforced separation and the measure that he dictates. Eventually Nicole satisfies the requirements and gets Jack back. Jack however in the meantime has bonded with his Grandma and is distressed at being away from her. Eventually Jack settles in with Nicole and her partner which I interpret as being perceived by Nicole as being in the best interest of the child. |
| 29 | **Surviving with a little help** | 298-311 | Couldn’t have succeed alone | To acknowledge Rebecca  Important to Nicole | Nicole uses the common cultural term ‘honest to God.’ (line 298) to emphasise the sincerity of her gratitude and Rebecca.  Nicole shows evidence of the extended audience (reader) and how it might judge her commenting ‘if I can say that, if I can say that.’ After calling something ‘a shit hole’ (line 302). By the same token it suggest that a least momentarily before this she had lost awareness of the audience. Nonetheless it does evidence that the larger audience impacts on the narrator and consequently the narration.  Nicole narrates, ‘Thank God. She’s an angel’ (line 307) it is unclear whether this reflects an underlying religious type of spirituality or whether it simply reflects that these are common cultural terms for expressing gratitude and admiration. I wonder what Nicole’s meaning constructions around religious spirituality are and how they might have impacted on her constructions around her experience. I didn’t interpret any obvious constructions around ‘fate’ or everything happening for a reason that some people use to make sense of their experiences  I was a little unclear about ‘we’ when Nicole narrated ‘We had an old house’ (line 299). Which probably also fits in with my confusion of whether this was the house she moved into when the window was smashed, the one before, which she moved into by herself and was where she was when social services became involved or indeed whether this was a property that she lived in when she was on anti-depressants and before the break up with her partner. ‘We’ may mean Mother and baby and may apply to a time when they weren’t living together with the assumption that they are a unit and it is Jack’s rightful home.  Nicole reports to have been motivated by Rebecca’s approach ‘and then I’d be like, I’ve got to get up, I’ve got to do it.’ (line 306). Rebecca seems her to draw on the Power of social services ‘”they’d be taking our Jack”’ (line 305) but without affecting the power balance of her relationship with Nicole. Although Rebecca is more powerful and Nicole dependent on her ‘if it wasn’t for Rebecca I’d be nowhere’ (line 298), by reinforcing that they are in it together and that it’s a shared problem ‘we’ll’, ‘together’ (line 304) & our (line 305) the relationship is strengthened and the emphasise of the power differential is reduced.  In my experience as a trainee educational psychologist I have found that some people within the profession advocate considering the problem to belong to the service user, so that they retain ownership of the problem particularly as educational psychologists tend to have short discrete inputs and will often only see particular service users on a single occasion. I have always had mixed views on this as although I sympathise with the above I also feel that shared ownership of the problems can be beneficial. My conflicted beliefs around whether a problem is that of the individual or that of the community likely contribute to this.  **Interpreter’s overall summary**  The story is about the vital role that Rebecca played in helping Nicole to meet the social service requirements when she was suffering from postnatal depression. To me it also emphasises the importance of the relationship and viewing it as a shared problem. |
| 30 | **My saviour, their bad influence** | 312-352 | Granddad left her Nana because of not being able to cope with the children  There is no expectation that a Grandparent should look after their grandchild  A person cannot be judged on a single action  Mum’s are supporters? | Acknowledge supporters  Expose injustice/ get a reaction from another outside party on this injustice  Discuss something that is emotionally salient to her | Nicole identifies supporters however I feel that she perceives a deficit in support ‘not that many people in my life’ (line 315), ‘that’s it really’ (line 320). I wonder whether the absence of her Mum from her life contributes to this overall feeling that she is missing support. Earlier in the narrative I interpreted that Nicole perceived that most people have Mum’s and that she’s at a disadvantage in not having one ‘I’d be nowhere because I don’t have my Mum or ought like that (story 17, line 123).  The story also implies that there are people around Nicole who she doesn’t feel are good influences specifying that those she has identified are the ones she considers ‘are good influences’ (line 321)  Nicole qualifies that they are good influences ‘sort of’ (line 321) however it becomes clear that Nicole is not claiming that she doubts this herself and it becomes clear that it is the view of others ‘apparently’ (line 348) that they are each considered to be ‘a bad person to have in my life’ (335 &348). Suggesting that Nicole rejects the validity of these claims. She also exposes her belief that the view is unjust ‘that’s a thing I don’t like’ (line 323) that in the eyes of ‘all them people’ (line 324), ‘that is it, he’s dammed forever’ (line 333). Similar Nicole indicates the injustice of judging her Nana on something  ‘that happened before I was even born’ (line 247). Not only is it one action in a lifetime of other things Nicole may be suggesting that the person that who committed the crime doesn’t even exist anymore and isn’t the Nana that Nicole has known all her life.  Once again Nicole is very grateful for the support she has received, both the financial support from her Granddad ‘I’ve never wanted for anything off my Granddad’ (line 330) and the home that her Nana provided for her, using hypothetical alternative futures to illustrate the difference she feels her Nana has made to her life, ‘I’d be dead, end of that’ (line 343) I’d have been in child social services’ (line 344). I wondered if she perceived the latter to be a more realistic revision of the former or whether she perceived the both to be equally possible. I also wondered how the prospect of being dead compared to that of being in child social services in Nicole’s imagination.  I wonder if her gratitude towards her Nana stemmed from the fact that there is no societal norm for grandparents to care for their grandchildren (although many do if their children are unable to) and therefore no expectation that this is a requirement as it is often considered of mothers. Nicole recognises the sacrifice her Nana has made to do something she perceives that she was not obliged to do. Nicole holds the belief that her Nana’s marriage broke down because her Granddad wasn’t able to cope with the parental role with so many children. This clearly heightens the sense of her Nana’s sacrifice.  I wondered how much pressure Nicole felt from other people to denounce them as ‘bad’ people. Both the use of ‘sort of’ and ‘apparently’ suggest that she is very aware of the pressure to collude this with view. I also wondered what it felt like to have the people you care about and respect the most being viewed in this way and what the conflict between wanting to honour them and wanting to be accepted by the judging community might feel like. Furthermore Nicole felt that the message that they are a ‘bad’ to have in her life is coming from social service services which, holds a lot of power over Nicole. I felt that it must be awful to have the people that you perceive have the power to take your child away making you feel that the other people you care most for in your life could potentially count against you. I wonder if Nicole imagined a situation where people were telling her that she had to choose between her child or her other family members.  **Interpreter’s overall summary**  The story allows Nicole to acknowledge her supporters and express her gratitude for the home and financial stability her Grandparents that afforded her but it also becomes the injustice of how people who she knows are good people are viewed by the wider community. Nicole seems to feel pressure to collude with this view, particularly when it’s coming from the powerful social services who she perceives have the power to take her child. She however rejects this and is critical of individuals who judge an individual on a single action. |
| 31 | **Social worker, discrimination and a family name** | 353-372 | Being associated with the Steven’s family is prejudicial | Injustice  Emotional salience | Nicole is very clear that the Steve’s are not part of her family ‘That is not my name’ (line 361), ‘I wasn’t born into that family’ (line 362),  ‘nought to do with them’ (line 364). She also perceives this family to have a bad reputation (line 355) so likely feels that being associated with them will be prejudicial against her.  It isn’t clear to me what Nicole considers to be the definition of family, which presumably can’t be based on name as this would exclude her Nana. It certainly doesn’t include individuals that she has ‘nought to do with’ (line 364). I’m not entirely sure that it relates to who she was born to (line 362) either as Nicole has already said that she doesn’t have a Mum (story 17, line 123). I suspect her definition lies around who brought her up (line 336) and supported her.  I wonder what the social worker’s justification for claiming that Nicole is part of the Steven’s family is. I wonder what difference considering her to be part of the Steven’s family makes to him. I wonder if he is aware that Nicole doesn’t consider herself to be part of that family  Once again in relation to the social worker Nicole is very critical and indicates the strength of her conviction that he is wrong to do this by repeating this sentiment (line 369 & 370). I feel that Nicole considers her perception to be validated by claims from other professionals that he is acting unprofessionally (line 371).  **Interpreter’s overall summary**  Nicole does not identify herself as part of the Steven’s family, which she feels has a bad reputation. Nicole believes that the social worker is being prejudice towards her and prejudicing others towards her by repeatedly associating her with this family. Her conviction that he is wrong to do this receives validation from other professionals who think it’s unprofessional of him to do this. |
| 32 | **Transition away from school friends** | 373-389 | Perception that she is friendly | Importance  Present herself as popular | Nicole narrates that she got on with everyone ‘unless you did me wrong and then you wouldn’t get on with me. (line 381). I wondered if this was another indication that Nicole will challenge perceived injustice and is assertive in standing up for herself.  The way that Nicole narrates ‘and then when I got pregnant, there were only a few’ (line 385-6) friends, suggests that she believes that the pregnancy led to the reduction in friends. I wonder what Nicole’s understanding of the reason behind this is.  Nicole narrates that prior to pregnancy she had ‘so many friends in school’ (line 384) she also indicates later (Story 48, line 667) that the school pupils wanted to see her, which suggests that the reduced number of friends may not have been down to prejudice around her pregnancy. I feel that school is the focal point for the majority of friendships in people her age and I wonder whether it was the fact that she ‘‘just wont allowed. Wont allowed’ (story 48, line 671) to go into school that was the significant contributor to this perceived reduction in friends. I wonder is Nicole feels that, that was the case.  The use of ‘but now’ (line 387) to introduce the fact that most of those who remained her friends how have children suggests that this is contrary to expectation. However I’m not sure whether this is not what she expected or whether she perceives that it is audience (researcher and/ or reader) that she feels would find it surprising. |
| 33 | **Friends who understand** | 390-407 |  |  | Once again we find evidence that Nicole feels dependent on services, in this case the baby group, using a hypothetical alternative to demonstrate its perceived importance to her ‘I would have just been sat on my own every day, on my own’ (393). Not only does it facilitate her ability to make friends but it specifically gives her access to ‘friends who know exactly what you are going through’ (line 401). This is something that Nicole has found difficult to acquire elsewhere ‘nobody else ever gives a crap, they don’t want to listen’ (line 404-5).  Nicole does acknowledge that some ‘special people for babies and stuff‘ (line 405), which I assume to mean professionals such as Rebecca (possibly specifically Rebecca), do show interest.  Nicole’s definition of ‘friends’ appear to be people you ‘you see every day and you talk to everyday’ (line 396), which perhaps relates to the type of friendships that are common in secondary school. Nicole now however has developed an understanding of a new type of friend ‘casual friend’ (line 397) who she meets up with less frequently (weekly). Nicole feels that the new type of friend is particularly beneficial as it provides support ‘they just know exactly what you’re saying’ (line 402) but also allows her to have her ‘own space’ (line 400). I wonder whether Nicole means space for her family when she says this. I feel that the perception of missing out on something only exists if those that you consider to be your peers are able to do something you’re not. If everybody is in the same position then this doesn’t become an issue. I know that in my wider friendship groups it is tends to be those individuals who are single and without families of their own who express feeling like they are missing out or disadvantaged because most of their friends are wanting their ‘own space’ for their partners and/ or children and those without are left with ‘space’ to fill.  As well as gaining support from others Nicole also becomes a supporter to the other young Mums. |
| 34 | **Revelation: Young Mum’s against the world** | 408-423 | Age discrimination against young Mums is widespread  Individuals are prejudice against young Mums considering it to be shameful | Injustice  Important  Demonstrate evolving constructions | I wonder why Nicole describes the treatment of young Mums as ‘almost like discrimination’ (line 419), as if she perceives that they are being ‘singled out’ (line 420) and ‘treated differently because of their age?’ (line 417) this would be the very definition of discrimination. I wonder if this reluctance to give it it’s proper name reflect the fact that this type of discrimination isn’t advocated against in society to the same degree as some other types of discrimination, such as that based on disability or race. I wonder if this encourages doubt because surely if it is discrimination it should be being publically denounced.  When Nicole asks ‘Why, why, why’ (line 417) does this discrimination happen, the repetition increases my perception of the magnitude of the question and emphasises the disbelief. I interpret it to be asking, how can this discrimination be happening at this level?  The fact that Nicole thought that ‘I were going to be the only person with a bad experience’ (line 410) may indicate that originally Nicole may not have been so sure that her ‘bad experience’ was down to her age, or alternatively may have perceived that this type of discrimination was rare and that she was just unlucky to have been a victim however once she has discussed this with other Mums she perceives that ‘this isn’t only me, this is happening to a lot of young Mums´(line 413), generating a construct that age discrimination is widespread.  Nicole also indicates an understanding of prejudice against young Mums ‘you’re a disgrace because you’re a young Mum.’ (line 421), indicating that she feels that at least some other people within society consider it to be shameful to have a child at a young age. When Nicole uses what appears to be direct talk ‘”*Oh look at her, how old do you think she is and she’s got a baby”*’(line 422) it wasn’t clear to me whether this was Nicole’s perception of something that had actually been said or whether it was Nicole’s perception of what they were thinking, however when I asked her about it, Nicole confirms that she has heard similar comments (story 35, line 426) |
| 35 | **Prejudice in town** | 424-430 | Open prejudice against young Mums | Expose injustice  To answer my question  Significant experience | Nicole gives an example of her experience of prejudice while breast feeding in town ‘people stare and point and look and snigger.’ (line 429). I felt that because she gave this example directly after talking about prejudice comments relating to her being a young Mum that she was also perceiving this prejudice to relate to her young Mum status rather than a more general prejudice against all Mums who are breastfeeding.  I felt that when Nicole narrates ‘what is your problem?’ (line 430) in response to her experience of prejudice that she is demonstrating her strength in being able to face the injustice and carry on doing what she needs to do and considers to be right (being a Mum), even once again in the face of societal pressure. |
| 36 | **Prefer to be a Mum** | 431-442 | Challenging assumption that you need to go out when you’re young  Challenging the assumption that you would be missing out  Family is the most rewarding thing  Her outcome might be more negative without family | Justifying her choices  Exposing cultural assumptions  Answering my question  Salient information | The use of ‘blah, blah, blah’ (line 431) following the direct talk suggests that she may have perceived the message that she was missing out as a lecture. Her references to ‘everybody’ (line 431) saying this suggests that she feels that it’s the predominant message and one that she’s heard several times. I wonder whether this message was mainly given to influence her decision to have the chid (see story 39) or afterwards as a criticism of her choice.  Nicole also challenges the assumption that the going out life style has to be done when she’s young pointing out that if she wants to it can be done when she’s older ‘why not?’ (line 438). It is particularly salient to me that although Nicole talks about going out in her forties (line 439) Nicole’s son will be considerably less dependent in her early thirties and an adult by the time she’s thirty four. Leaving potentially several decades of time for uncompromised partying, travelling, working and or studying ahead of her.  Nicole rejects the assumption that she is missing out. She refers to people who are making life choices that she perceives as negative. I assume she does this either to contrast it with her own choice making it seem more valid or to suggest a hypothetical alternative of what her life could have been like if she hadn’t had her family. The later would suggest that Nicole perceives her family as having potentially saved her from more negative outcomes.  Nicole’s narration about family love, life, joy (line 434-437) and making memories ‘to remember for the rest of your life.’ (line 437) convinces me that Nicole values family life as a priority over and other experience and is confident that she ‘wouldn’t change it for the world,’ (line 441). |
| 37 | **Benefits of being a young Mum** | 443-467 | Maturity difference between younger and older adults  Child care is easier when you’re younger. | Justify  Challenge  Important to who she is | Nicole reflects on her constructions underlying why it’s better to be a young Mum. She feels that young Mums are more able to do things physically with their children (line 447-8). I understand from earlier in the narrative (story 22) that Nicole has physical difficulties believed to stem from the birth (caesarean section) and I wonder if she worries that as she gets older she’ll find physical tasks even harder. I wonder what Nicole perceives to be the physical capabilities of older Mums. I wonder if her understanding of this reflects her experience of being brought up by her Nana (story 30, line 336).  Nicole also feels that younger Mums are able to better understand (449) and connect (line 459-460) with their children, which she believes is ‘because you’re more immature yourself’ (line 450). Nicole believes that as she gets older she would lose that ability ‘I’d have no idea what were running through his head.’ (line 462)  Nicole provides evidence that she feels that she has bonded with her child ‘it’s like I know what he’s saying I know what he’s doing’ (line 457) suggesting also that she is a competent mother.  The repetition of ‘I wouldn’t wait’ (445 & 446) when talking about wanting to have more children made me feel that this was particularly salient. I suggested to me that Nicole perceived that others felt that she should wait. ‘I don’t care what nobody says.’ (line 467) reinforces that she perceives that others have objections to her plans. I wonder whether this is simply a perception based on the discouragement to have her first child young or whether people have directly encouraged her to wait, perhaps because of fears that it might increase the risk of her becoming depressed again. It isn’t clear who ‘nobody’ refers to and whether this is family, society or social services.  During the narration in lines 463-465 I feel that Nicole is talking about the benefits of having children close together as then it will be easier to remember what you went through with the older child when you have the next one, ‘another one going through the same thing, but just in different stages,’ (line 465) however I found the lack of clear introduction to this topic a little confusing. |
| 38 | **Gaining a child: Gaining direction** | 468-497 | Not worth doing something for self  Child deserving of positives  Self- beliefs boosted (rewarded) by giving child what they deserve | To challenge assumption around what is best for young mothers. | Nicole appears to challenge the concept that people are having a good time (472) or living their life to the full (line 474) when they are out partying, ‘smashed out of their face’ (472) at weekends, when she uses the phrases ‘as people would call it’ (472) indicating that this is no longer a construct she holds. Similarly she describes it as ‘all that foolish’ (line 474). I feel that Nicole perceives that her family has brought her the type of life fulfilment that now renders the lifestyle she thought she was destined for, as a young person, as deficient.  Nicole narrates that ‘Everybody would say you can do what you want and all that’ (line 479). The ‘and all that’ may indicate an awareness that this is a commonly used mantra directed at young people, thus losing some, if not all of its validity. Nicole doesn’t appear to have bought into this idea perceiving that ‘it just wasn’t as easy as that’ (480). Nicole felt that she ‘had nothing in my future, in my eyes.’ (line 478)and didn’t have aspirations towards a job or further study (line 476-7).  It appears that Nicole lacked any kind of constructive concept of a future identity. I also infer that Nicole may have doubts around her own value and self worth ‘it’s like what are you going to give yourself, oh you don’t care do you, it doesn’t matter’ (line 488). I feel that these two things are connected possibly reinforcing each other. With the perception that she isn’t worth it, inhibiting the formation of a positive future identity and in turn this lack of future identity impacting negatively on her self-beliefs.  Being ‘on your own’ (line 488) once again is bleak and representing a lack of point or motivation, possibly stemming from poor self-beliefs.  Becoming a Mum however appears to change this lack of motivation for Nicole because as she puts it, if she doesn’t do something ‘what is he going to have?’ (485). In contrast to her perception of self where she’s ‘not right bothered (line 490) when it comes to her son she appears to believe that his future is worth it, ‘but when it’s somebody else’s life and you have to ... make sure everything is right for them ... it’s just so rewarding when you just see him’ (line 491-495). This new identity (a providing/ good Mum) which serves as a current and future identity now provides Nicole with a purpose ‘an incentive’ (line 494), ‘motivation’ (line 497), which becomes ‘rewarding’ to herself and likely allows her to boosts her self-belief around being a good Mum. |
| 39 | **Other people and the decision to have my child** | 498-534 | Construction of foetus as ‘somebody’.  Immorality of ending the life  Other people (Mum & Nana) felt that ending it was the right thing –because she was a young Mum | Speak out about a moral issue  Say what’s important to her  Reveals the influences placed on her | Nicole indicates that she was aware of the risks of getting pregnant when she reports saying to her partner ‘what if I got pregnant?’ (502). Her partner however is adverse to the idea of becoming a father at this moment in time ‘”*oh no, don’t say that, don’t say that”*’(line 503) – direct talk  I wondered how much risk each of them was prepared to take and what protection they were using at the time. The fact that Nicole was very aware of the risks may indicate why she supports the construct of ‘if you didn’t want it, you should’ve have prevented it’ (522). Although Nicole’s pregnancy was accidental (e..g. however -‘people getting pregnant by accident’ (story 46, line 640) & ‘I was on the contraceptive pill’ (story 2, line 18)) it is clear that she was happy to take the responsibility if pregnancy should occur. ‘Yeah, step up, be a Mum (line 521)  According to Nicole both her Nana and her Mum tried to discourage her from having the child. In this context Nicole interprets ‘”do the right thing”’ (line 508 – direct talk) to mean have an abortion. A phrase used as often to mean the very opposite. I wonder why Nicole felt her Mum and Nana thought that not having the child was the right things to do.  I wondered if when Nicole narrates ‘Even other people would say, *“oh, what are you doing about it?”’ (line 515)* she was indicating that they were trying to influence her and that she felt it wasn’t their place to do so.  Nicole has obviously embraced several constructs supporting her desire to have a child such as responsibility (520-522) and the value of life ‘end somebody’s life’ (519), indicating that Nicole perceives the foetus to be a person.  Although her decision appears assured ‘It’s like, it’s a no brainer,’ (517). The presence of an ally in her Granddad *‘I do not believe in abortion’(line 510)* may have been useful against to take the pressure off, from her Mum and Nana.  The fact that ‘everybody says now, are you using protection’ (523) implies that Nicole feels that other people aren’t supportive of her having more children at this point in time.  Nicole indicates that even when she was very depressed Jack motivated her to try and keep going. ‘I still got up with him in the middle of the night when he cried’ (line 534) |
| 40 | **Moving (instability) and getting enrolled with a GP practice** | 535-552 |  | Injustice  Fighter  Salient emotional experience | ‘one thing that did happen to me though’ (line 535) – done to her, victim  ‘and then’ (line 540) – repetition x3 (listing -continuous) one thing after another. Also ‘back and forth, back and forth, back and forth’ (line 542) These indicate the continuous disruption that Nicole felt it caused. Having recently moved practices myself and found out that it can take a few months for records to be passed from one practice to another I am particularly sensitive to the disruption to care that this causes and the frustration of being between two practices who find it easier to blame the other. I wondered as well for Nicole whether this was interpreted as another form of rejection with nobody wanting to be the ones to help her and take responsibility for her ‘which one of you is going to have me’ (line 544).  The sense of being a fighter and not simply being passed around comes through in the following narration ‘It was like get your facts right, this is where I’m living... This is where I’m staying, I want this doctor’ (546-548). Although it is not clear how much was said out loud and how much was voiced internally it does indicate that Nicole is clear that this is not how she should be treated. |
| 41 | **The baby made us closer** | 553-573 | Joint experience of child care makes relationship stronger | Salient  Positions her successful | ‘I don’t think we’d still have been together if we hadn’t had a baby’ (line 555) - Hypothetical alternative future – illustrate importance of experience  ‘never in a million years’ (line 559)– common cultural term – unexpected. Nicole uses this in the context of relationships, indicating that how comfortable she is with her partner is not what she’d ever expected to be able to have in the relationship. It may indicate her past experience of relationships and barriers to the type of closeness she desired or even legitimately not knowing that that level of intimacy could exist. Nicole’s suggestion that they are closer than normal couples (573) may support this.  ‘But we’ve rolled it out’ (line 566) Thus suggest that they have been problems on the way but they have been able to get past them  ‘we’ve both got a baby’ (line 566). The context of this indicates that the baby is the ultimate prize.  ‘but it’s just so, I don’t know it’s just.’ (line 561)- Difficulties expressing her existing construction in language versus forming a new construction  Perhaps the ‘reality’ of an experience/understanding as oppose to created by language interaction. Nicole gives an example (562) to try and illustrate experience instead. My interpretation is that language is being primarily being used to reflect an experience/understanding. Of cause the language used may in turn change the perception of the experience  ‘He was having it anyway, that was it! ... I decided’ (line 570-71) – her choice, decision to have baby independent of partner |
| 42 | **How has the experience changed me?** | 574-584 | Silly is associated with younger (teenage)  Association of maturation with responsibility? | Trying to answer question  Assertive | Overall Nicole didn’t feel that she had undergone much of a change  ‘I think, I’ve mostly stayed the same’ (line 576)  ‘I don’t think I’ve changed that much’ (line 580)  ‘I don’t know’ (line 583)  ‘if it has changed me’ (line 584)  I wondered whether this was because for Nicole the path to becoming a young parent didn’t divert her from any other expected path and in fact was the aspiration (I’ve always wanted to be a Mum) that she was wanting.  ‘I think I’ve matured a lot’ (line 577)- I wonder what Nicole means by matured. Nicole narrates ‘I still have a silly side, like an eighteen year old side’ (line 578-579) This may suggest that ‘mature’ means less silly, however she still holds onto the identity of being young. ‘just quieter, a lot quieter,’ I wonder if Nicole associated this with maturity. The use of ‘lot’ perhaps suggests that this was a particularly significant change.  ‘if it has changed me it’s changed me for the better anyway’ (line 548) This is in line with other constructions of pregnancy as a positive experience.  This is another sense of Nicole not being passive and being prepared to stand up against injustice ‘unless it comes to something I disagree with’ (582). She appears to embrace this as part of her identity. I interpret this as a positive however I wonder whether some individuals who consider themselves more powerful and knowledgeable than Nicole might resent this and whether in situations where they have authority over her this has got her into trouble. I wonder whether this implies to her relationship with the social worker. |
| 43 | **Looking after little sis: Drug complications** | 585-608 | Her sister identified Nicole as her carer? | Positions as responsible/ mothering & loved  Emotionally salient | ‘I looked after them both’ (596). I felt that there was a sense of pride in this.  ‘That were hard to look after a baby like that (line 599) Interpret this to mean emotionally difficult however it could also mean that is was physically hard to care for her.  ‘She used to get into my bed’ (line 607) repeated (605). The repetition suggests that this was important to Nicole. I feel that within western culture we have an idea of children getting into bed with their parents. The fact that Nicole’s sister sought her out may suggest that her sister perceived Nicole to be the primary source of a nurturing relationship. I understand from other parts of the narrative that Nicole’s Nana originally took them in, however had several children to care for. It isn’t clear why this is important to Nicole, it could be that she valued this relationship or/ and it could be that she takes pride in the fact that her sister sought her out in particular. We also have indication of how this relationship was changed. ‘she’s not like that no more like, she hates me, does my head in’ (608). I perceived this to be a reflection of a more typical sibling relationship. This may reflect changes in her sister’s developmental stage and level of need or may relate to the impact of Nicole moving out of their home. |
| 44 | **How to me a Mum** | 609-619 | Establishing a historical identity as being the carer/ mother | Positions are carer/ responsible  Expose injustice/ need | ‘Yeah, I knew what to do with a baby anyway’ (line 612). There is a contradiction in her knowledge claim in this part of the narrative which conflict with information from other sections. Nicole claims here that she knew about physical care skills however in other parts of the narrative she claims to have been dependent on Rebecca for learning these skills and on more than one occasion suggests that the nurses should have taught her (e.g. 616). I’m inclined to feel that although Nicole was clearly involved in the care of her sister (as indicated by her sister coming into her bed) she either didn’t have the responsibility for some of the physical care skills or had forgotten these by the time Jack was born. I felt here she was more trying to justify her construct of being a ‘Mum’ to her younger siblings than because she had genuinely known what to do with bathing etc. When Jack was born. ‘I’ve always been a Mum really, I really have’ (610). This felt like the emergence of a new construction. The realisation that the way she had cared for her siblings fitted with her constructions around motherhood.  I also felt that Nicole became confused with her new understanding here and started tying to reframe other construction to fit. ‘But it would be a shame for somebody that didn’t know.’ (line 614) ‘Somebody’ replacing Nicole here.  ‘I don’t know how they expect you to go on, cos you’re such a young Mum, you know, expect you just to go home and get on with it do they.’ (line 617-619) - sarcasm & irony interesting use. They have low expectations of young Mums in one sense which is perceived by Nicole as being unjust and yet still just expect them to know skills that Nicole doesn’t feel is reasonable to be expected to know |
| 45 | **Strict Catholic school didn’t believe in it so ‘fogged me off’** | 620-632 | School’s strictness is because it’s catholic  Other schools would be different | Expose Injustice  Salient experience | ‘because they were a catholic school, they don’t allow no sex education, they just don’t allow anything’ (622-624). Nicole again suggests that it is the schools affiliation with Catholicism that influences its attitudes. I felt also that Nicole is suggesting that this is not an attitude that she shared and that her school failed to cater to her needs.  ‘sent home’ (624 & 627) Again I felt the repetition of being sent home for things the school didn’t agree with is once again showing the contrast between Nicole’s values and her schools values.  ‘Yeah, beard sent home, it’s in your diary, in your school diary, no beards, it’s like, what?’ (line 627) illustration of discriminatory practice and how unreasonable school policies were. This is actually a personal annoyance of my own how some cultural arts and expressions are often tolerated by schools, such as stud ear piercings for girls, whereas others are discriminated against and schools show to their students time and time again how some cultures and expressions are more ‘accepted’ by them than others.  ‘It should have no pregnant people as well, on there.’ (line 628) Clear indication that Nicole does feel that the school discriminated against her. Nicole also implies that she feels the discrimination is based on underlying prejudice ‘because they are obviously a catholic school, they don’t like it, believe in it,’ (line 631). ‘why should they have it in their school hey’ (line 632). This again revisits the sense that it is ‘their’ school and ‘their’ values that are imposed.  ‘fogged me off’ (line 629)- Just got rid of her but without having to be direct about their discrimination. |
| 46 | **Not having people you can ask** | 633-650 | Construction you learn and as from your Mum  Women (Mums) are the primary carer  The type of school inhibited relationship  ‘Mum’ as the primary carer |  | ‘you bond with your teachers’ (line 643) – relationship, bonding – close relationship , often associated with mother and child. Nicole needed a more friendly, intimate relationship needing a friend/ mother. Nicole appears to recognise that the school system inhibits the type of relationship she’s seeking ‘Even the teacher that bought me the hamper had to go and ask special permission from the head teacher’ (line 648).  Child care ‘should be taught to all young women.’ (line 638) in schools. I asked the question as having been through the secondary system in the 90s and having taught in one in the 00s, I have never been aware of any compulsory lessons on child care or even optional ones which are focused on parenting rather than becoming child care professionals. I have always wondered what that said about the value of what is the aspiration of a high percentage of women in the UK.  I wondered whether ‘women’ was significant and whether Nicole meant to excluding young men. This perhaps feeds into Nicole’s construct of the Mum as the primary carer.  ‘people getting pregnant by accident’ (line 640) – reinforces unplanned  I wondered whether the use of ‘you’ rather than ‘I’ helped Nicole to distance herself from the experience or whether she was generalising – and recognising that this situation could apply to others teenagers - advocating for more than self.  ‘you daren’t ask them because they are a catholic school’ (line 644) - Teachers unapproachable, suggestion that it’s the setting ‘Catholic school’ that makes them unapproachable. ‘who are you suppose to ask? Yu know if you don’t have a Mum, like me’ (line 642)  ‘that’s awful, that is awful’ (645) repetition – emphasises emotional salience |
| 47 | **Teacher’s expectations** | 651-665 | Some teachers low expectations are because they associate her with the family with the bad reputation |  | ‘She won’t get far’ (line 652) – perception of negative expectations. ‘because it’s like I said, because of the family name, that’s not even my name,’ (661-662) – perceived prejudice around family name rather than down to being a young Mum.  ‘others kept themselves to themselves and then bitched about you in the office’ (line 656) – I wonder why she think this and whether it’s based on things she’s heard or been informed of.  ‘only a selected few’ (line 655) only – not many/ selected – unusual, special – a special few |
| 48 | **Banded from school, banned from friends** | 666-671 | Where friends wanted to see her  The school authority was a barrier to her friends | Emotionally salient experience | Extended direct talk (line 668-670) – suggests the importance of knowing that her friends wanted her.  ‘just wont allowed. Wont allowed’ (line 671) – repetition – salient/ Banned from school/ seeing friends |
| 49 | **Exam provisions** | 672-687 | School weren’t bothered about her achievement  Schools provisions for her learning/ studying were insufficient | Injustice  salient | ‘they sent me out in post just a load of leaflets to read’ (674). I feel Nicole indicates here with the ’just’ that she didn’t feel that this was sufficient. This certainly doesn’t sound sufficient to me either.  When the teachers indicated that they were happy to accommodate her needs if she needed to leave the exam (676). I was rather sceptical to the motive behind this. Although on the surface it may appear that they were being fair and sensitive to her needs, I really wasn’t at all surprised when Nicole interprets that ‘they weren’t right bothered’ (line 679) really not bothered about her achievement  ‘really bad cramps and I had to leave’ (line 678) - Pregnancy (cramps) directly interfering with exam.  ‘*we forgot about you.’* (line 682 & 686)- repeated and direct talk – very salient/ hurt. I assume that the member of staff who said this had no idea how Nicole would take it. Clearly one of the worst possible things that could have been said to a young girl who is desperate for positive relationships and has faced rejection, including rejection from her school.‘That’s what she said as if it were normal.’ (line 687). |
| 50 | **No school: Stranded and without guidance** | 688-709 | School should provide next step information  School should value you | Injustice  salience | ‘I loved’ (689 & 690) –(school/ courses) repeated x 4 – emphasis. This suggests that despite the value differences Nicole engaged with the school community. It is not clear whether she engaged with academic attainment but clearly Nicole feels that she was engaged in school and in learning.  ‘I were stranded, that were it. I was stranded.’ (694) – loss, repetition –significant. Children are expected to start school at a very early age in the UK and by the time they leave some of them may well be considered to be ‘institutionalised’. Leaving school can be difficult with the loss of routine and structure. When it is lost unexpectedly with no plan for anything else and all of your friends still attending, I can only imagine how devastating this might be. ‘It was just knowing I wasn’t allowed to go to school’ (699) - Isolated/ missing a part of her life  Insufficient support and information about next steps (Line 695-6 & 705-707). Having taught 11-19 year olds I know that a significant proportion of them in year 11 do not have any specific aspirations and that where they end up after this depends very much on the school staff and which courses they are supported in applying for. To be left with no information never mind practical support places Nicole at a significant disadvantage.  ‘I didn’t know anything’ (line 698) - Lack of knowledge – he who holds the knowledge holds the power |
| 51 | **Rejected by the old head of year** | 710-716 | School staff should genuinely care | Injustice  Emotionally salient | ‘you build a bond with somebody ... as soon as you move from their year it’s like no don’t speak to me’ (line 714-715) – Relationship/ no relationship // paid to be there? Nicole appears to be suggesting that these are false relationships.‘made out like they cared’ (line 712)  ‘you’ again rather than ‘I’. Once again could be emotionally distancing herself or advocating for others in the same situation -certainly could be a bit of both |
| 52 | **Ambushed at School: the schedule one offence** | 717-734 | The situation should have been deal with discretely, with sensitivity to Nicole and her Granddad | Injustice  Emotionally salient | ‘worst thing ever’ (line 726) – extreme – salient  ‘Why could it have just been my head of year that asked me you know, one to one, why get all them people in, even people that knew my Granddad,’ (line 729 -730)- Inappropriate – should have been discrete and sensitive to Nicole and her Granddad. Nicole is clearly devastated for her Granddad here. She recognises that school were in a position where they where they had a duty to ensure her welfare (hence suggesting the head of year should have asked). |
| 53 | **The sentence** | 735-751 | Doing something wrong  Relationship between Jack and Granddad beneficial |  | Schedule one Interrogation – school (hypothetical Mum) (line 738)  ‘I know, I know I know what it sounds like’ (738) (Audience aware)  ‘and for school to say that I’d be a bad Mum if I did let him see him and stuff, that were horrible, it was.’ (line 744-743) Judgement – bad Mum (school staff)  Relationship between Jack and Granddad beneficial  ‘pays for anything he needs, takes him anywhere he needs to go’ (742)- Importance of Granddad relationship with Jack  ‘He absolutely loves that child.’ (743)  Nicole is able to justify the benefits of this relationship and thus reject the bad Mum construct.  Did I end the interview for my discomfort or Nicole’s apparent emotional distress? Of all the experiences she has gone through is this the most distressing because it’s still current? |