

Coursework commentary

After countless nights of my mum pouring her heart out about her traumatic experience of postpartum depression, I deemed it an important moral duty as her daughter to show her the gratitude and emotional support which she did not receive, for the countless women all over the world, stunted by this depressive stage post-partum. This is why I aimed to express the magnitude of postpartum depression as I composed my two writing pieces in which I explore the severity and suffering of this medical condition, to educate and encourage societal change upon the view of this depressive disorder in hopes of providing women with a mouthpiece against societal constructs. My non-fiction article piece titled: *The Unkept Secret of Motherhood (Secret)* is intended to be emotive and engage my reader as I aim to educate and enforce awareness upon my reader through an insightful, informative writing piece. *Secret* was inspired by *Cupcakes and Kalashnikovs*, edited by Mills et al. My fiction piece: *A journey of hope (Journey)* further reinforces this emotive aspect as I engage my reader on a mother's journey through pregnancy, birth and post-partum depression and was inspired by my two chosen stimulus texts, *The Kite Runner (TKR)* written by Khaled Hosseini and *The Yellow Wallpaper (Yellow)* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

AO1
Aim/rationale
behind
work - explained
with some
clarity.

AO4
Stimulus
texts =
identified
clearly.

My fiction piece is a thought-provoking, emotive short story in which I address the ongoing stigmatism for women affected by postpartum depression with a view to exploring the damaging consequences. This has a strong resemblance to *Yellow* which represents how a mind that is already plagued with anxiety can deteriorate and begin to prey on itself. Similarly, this is representative of the psyche of a woman when battling with post-partum depression, spiralling into a state of harm, anxiety and dangerous

AO4
Relevant
link to
stimulus
text.

urges. I also aimed to encapsulate these unnerving emotions within *Journey*, with the aim of showcasing the reality for the thousands of women worldwide, who have little or no agency. This is demonstrated through the use of the fragmented narrative style, similar to that of *Yellow*. Unlike Gilman's hard-hitting story, I deliberately used a less ambiguous title – *Journey of hope* – to indicate that this story would have an underlying positive message. It is evident through this title that my story has connotations of adventure, but the main aim is to effectively engage an audience that would like to educate themselves upon this medical condition. Similarly, *Journey* utilises stylistic elements of *TKR* through the personal, hard-hitting writing style prevalent within the novel, effectively engaging the readers. There is a strong resemblance in tone between my fiction and non-fiction piece (*Secret*) as they both illustrate the consequences of a life changing incident with apparent emotional repercussions. *Journey* is an emotional and abrasive piece of writing, used as a voice for those suffering from the medical disorder of postpartum depression. I used the damaging impact of the narrator's waning mental state throughout my writing piece as shown in *Yellow* to give insight towards a woman suffering with this depression.

I convey a hard-hitting portrayal of a character infatuated by this medical depression, who is victim to violent tendencies and a fragmented emotional state through an array of emotive language throughout my piece, more specifically as her "heart opened a floodgate to the reservoir of emotions from within". Here, the metaphor of a "opened floodgate" to a "reservoir" creates an image of distress in my reader's mind as the abrasive action depicts an out of control, abrasive movement, symbolic of uncontrollable emotions which immerses the reader into this frenzied experience, provoking their sympathy for mothers who are impacted by post-partum depression.

A02.
clear understanding of how meaning has been shaped in own writing and A03 - clear recognition of how contextual factors affect own writing.

A02.
Demonstrates understanding of how methods have shaped meanings.

This use of emotive language is something I have aimed to emulate throughout the constant, brutal narrative of postpartum depression.

Another way in which I aimed to convey the emotional side to postpartum depression and leave the reader with gained knowledge was through the consistent use of ✓ metaphorical language. Effectively, the use of metaphorical language within *Journey*; “batters against my pale chest” as the “persistent whines whip around” accentuates the extent to which the emotions can stretch for women impacted by this depression, this metaphorical language also contains connotations of violence- a common emotional repercussion of this depression- which further reinforces my readers gained knowledge. ✓ The verb “batters” provides a tone of aggression, as the erratic movement contains connotations of violence which is symbolic of a mental battle in which a brain battling with the physicality of the body and resisting dangerous urges. ✓

A02
some discriminating
analysis of
how meaning
has been
shaped.

clear,
relevant
understanding

Within my non-fiction piece *Secret*, I aimed to leave the reader [?]impotent through the inclusion of frequent numerical statistics throughout to effectively educate the reader on the extremities of postpartum depression as I repeatedly address how postpartum depression has a prevalence for 10-20% of mothers worldwide to reinforce the purpose of my article to enforce awareness. This is inspired by India Knight’s article within *Cupcakes, Thank God I Let My Baby Live*. Knight continually references statistical evident when discussing her controversial view on abortion, “6 week or 20-week-old”. Here, the statistical data further reinforces her beliefs in which she portrays to her reader.

A04
clear link to
stimulus text
not the
best choice
of “statistic”!

Furthermore, I aimed to provoke an emotional response from my reader through the continual use of metaphorical language, similar to that within *Journey* as I depict how “thrilling moments of joy and happiness are enshrouded by waves of anxiety and anger”. Here, the verb “enshrouding” has connotations of capture and lack of escape, which is indicative of the emotional war within the psyche of a woman who has succumbed to this depression. Moreover, this sharply juxtaposes the positive connotations of the adjectives “joy and happiness” as it accentuates the quick nature in which this depression can “switch on” and turn lives upside down, provoking an emotional response from my reader as they are forced to comprehend the intricate details and emotional effects that are attached to this form of depression in which they may not have thought about prior to reading. This technique was inspired by Angela Carter’s article within *Cupcakes, Notes From a Maternity Ward*. Carter frequently uses metaphorical language within her piece as she reflects upon her personal experiences, activating her audience's imagination and reinforcing her relaxed, colloquial voice.

#01
terminology
used and
ideas expressed
with clarity.

#03
secure
awareness
of contextual
factors.

#04
clear/
relevant
link to
stimulus
text

Total word count: 1027

This is mostly Level 3 : relevant concepts and methods of analysis - although limited in range - ~~has~~ have been applied to texts when explaining choices that were made. There is a clear awareness of contextual factors and the connections between stimulus texts and the original writing have been explained.

✓
mal

Fiction writing

Title: Journey of Hope

Audience: Adults, particularly those interested in gaining a further knowledge in the medical field.

Form: short story

Journey of hope

February

Two blue lines beamed up at me, as I eased my head against the under-sink cabinet. An electrical current of emotions pulsated through every artery within my body, battering my heart against my pale chest, threatening expulsion. Each beat echoed in the eerie silence of the bathroom as my mind raced with a million possibilities. All those trials and tribulations we experienced when trying to conceive, faded and were replaced by the profound gratitude and fulfilment. I couldn't stop crying; tears flooded into my shuddering hands- the hands that still grasped the pregnancy stick that was evidence of what I believed was my entire life's purpose.

A little over-written.

voice = starting to emerge.

As moments passed, my tears came in waves, as if my heart had opened a floodgate to the reservoir of emotions from within, leaving me in a profound state of dizziness and disorientation. The symphony of sobs from the bathroom grew louder and mingled with laughter. They alerted my husband, who rushed to my side. We had been walking on air for days before, sensing the subtle reposition in our universe; there was a hushed anticipation that everything was unravelling and seeping into the cracks of our foundations.

some well chosen words.
foreshadows something unexpected is happening.

We embraced, the weight of our newfound parenthood sinking in with each heartbeat, in sync with the new life within my abdomen. A moment of profound connection occurred as our eyes mirrored the same assortment of emotions. We rejoiced despite being aware of the sheer magnitude of what was to come; our shared plans and dreams felt tangible as we began to embark on this journey of parenthood. It was obvious to us both that our love and excitement bound us even closer than we had been.

Character's feelings are explained clearly.

I know it sounds clichéd to those who have never had the special experience of being pregnant, but it's true: having a tiny being of your own growing within you is one of the most incredible feelings you could ever experience. Frequent fluttering of hands and feet create a strange -almost surreal - sensation. My baby was a revelation that solidified my purpose in life and gave me hope that everything would be okay.

varied use of punctuation

For the months following we eagerly anticipated the arrival of our own little human, my contentment grew with as my baby thrived within my womb. I sought approval from fellow expectant mothers, attended pre-natal classes and frequently read novels on women's experiences of motherhood, friends and family eagerly counting down the days in which she would arrive. On the gender reveal, which took place on a beautiful autumnal day, we celebrated 'her' with everyone near and dear to us, overjoyed as an influx of toys, nappies and baby grows began to litter her nursery. Doctors' appointments became sacred rituals in which the fluttering movements within my womb were nothing short of wondrous, every

voice is more engaging here.

kick, roll, and bump decoded in our secret language between mother and baby and further captured on our digital camera and transported into the memory book. ✓

voice is convincing here.

We spent hours upon hours marvelling at the ultrasounds during our regular checkups. We watched in awe as the tiny limbs danced upon the screen, seeking a tangible connection to the life in which we had created. The mere concept of nurturing the life inside me - feeling ✓ that raw unconditional love - was a dream that I had first had when I was a little girl myself. It felt natural. I felt special. ✓

Short sentences used for impact.

December

My ears protested ✓ against the wails - pitches so high my ears may as well puncture and bleed. Despite the morning sunrise seeping ✓ through the slither ✓ in the blinds, I remained dormant, my limbs moulded into the cushioning comfort of the mattress, shielding my every thought for the few hours I managed to sleep. ✓

Effective lexical choices here.

Isolation suffocated me as the persistent whines ✓ whipped around the four walls of my top floor townhouse apartment and startled me awake, again. Pulling back the sweaty ✓ linen, I unbuckled my legs with a stretch and a click. ✓ As I made contact with the carpet, I stepped carefully across the littered ✓ floor, over the array of debris of all shapes and sizes (nappies, empty bottles, used baby grows). Reluctantly, I stumbled over to where she lay. Her cries were commands; demanding my attention. Her screams of desperation directed me to where ✓ she lay within her bespoke crib. I glared at her as the complex emotions lingered within me; ✓

my thoughts were a storm of despair, guilt and overwhelming anxiety. Our bond was broken.

Effective use
of triplet and
the plosive
short
sentence.

Those delicate baby fingers lunged towards me, as if she was reaching for something transient, something better than I'll ever be. Those two dismal blue orbs gazed up at me, reflecting the same blue gaze my mother saw all those years ago. I sought a connection I so desperately wanted; moments like these would bring any mother joy but, instead, fuelled the guilt firing up inside of my very core, that threatened to escape.

Christmas that year should have been extra special. Instead, it was a blur of constant chores, punctuated by anxiety and fear. Fear of my baby. Fear of being an inadequate mother. As the days turned to weeks, I lay awake in the darkness, my mind a battlefield of intrusive thoughts and self-doubt. I questioned my ability to be a mother, let alone a good one for my little girl. The family home was now a well of sadness. Strangely, I found an unsettling peace amongst the darkness which shrouded me, providing a flicker of hope and desire.

Evokes
sympathy
for the
speaker.

crafted - use
of anaphora
for
emphasis.

Hope and desire. These were twitching inside me, itching to get out but they were suppressed by the weight of the anxiety that consumed me. And guilt. So much guilt, about not loving my baby.

April

Days...weeks...months passed. I was pushed to breaking point. Finally, I reached out. I got the acknowledgment from the nurses I so desperately craved. Therapy appointments became my lifeline – a time when I could express my inner turmoil in the safety of my counsellor's

office. Persistent effort and small victories were celebrated from day to day. I revelled in hours of conversations, countless medications and hours of sitting in waiting rooms. Eventually, I began to sense a reconnection with myself, and with my baby. Newfound strength and resilience grew, and I could finally be the mother I always wanted to be. ✓

TOTAL WORD COUNT: 1056

There are occasions when the work has been over-written but the mother's voice is mostly believable and there is evidence of some carefully chosen lexis and some crafting.

A clear structure which helps to follow the journey of the mother and create the mother's voice. There are elements of cliché within which limit literary flair.

C.T. Mod. 24/04/2024.

Creative non-fiction writing

Title: Postpartum depression: the unkept secret of motherhood.

Audience: New mothers, those in relation to someone struggling with Postpartum depression.

Form: Article

Postpartum depression: the unkept secret of motherhood.

Having a baby is one of the happiest times in life but can also be the saddest.

_____ outlines what Postpartum depression is, its symptoms and advice for those seeking help.

✓
use of
article
conventions.

voice =
established
as
knowledge-
able.

Bringing a new life into this world is often portrayed to expectant mothers as a joyous, fulfilling experience, a time of happiness and change for the family. However, for up to 20% of new mothers, the reality can be far more complex than ever imaginable. If you are expecting or have recently delivered, odds are you will learn something about postpartum depression on your journey through motherhood. This is for you. ✓

Postpartum depression is a complex mental health condition that affects between 10-20% of new mothers worldwide. Despite its prevalence, this form of depressive state remains widely misunderstood and stigmatised within modern day society. As a result I have crafted this article to delve into the complexities of postpartum depression, its symptoms, causes and - most importantly – advice about the range of avenues that can be taken when someone who is suffering needs to seek help and support, so every mother can experience the beauty of watching their baby grow and develop through childhood. ✓

some
carefully
chosen
lexis + the
stats
add
credibility.

A dummy
phrase about
crafting, unusual
for the text
type.

So what is postpartum depression? ✓

Postpartum depression, also often referred to as postnatal depression is a clinical depression that occurs post- childbirth that most commonly manifests within the first few weeks to months post-delivery, although can develop at any given time within the first year postpartum. Postpartum depression has an overwhelming prevalence of 10-20% for mothers worldwide shockingly. Thousands of mums spiralling into a depressive state in which they endure severe emotional and psychological challenges that may lead to severe emotional repercussions for both mother and baby. ✓

Formal tone is appropriate here.

It is crucial to recognise the difference between the common “baby blues” and the severe postpartum depression. ✓

Short paragraph used for impact.

For 80% of new mothers, the first few weeks' postpartum is a whirlwind of fragmented emotions in which thrilling moments of joy and happiness are enshrouded by waves of misery. ✓ However, this emotional stage is generalised as the “baby blues”, which are common feelings of sadness, anxiety and fatigue. While these “baby blues” when treated effectively leave as quickly as they came within a couple of weeks, depending upon the mother's medical history. The causes of postpartum depression are complex and multifaceted due to the complexity of this disorder, as thrilling moments of joy and happiness are enshrouded by waves of anxiety and anger. The causes come in a wide-set variety which can usually is a result of a combination of hormonal changes due to the drop in the female hormone-oestrogen after pregnancy and birth, a history of mental health issues or a lack of a strong support system through the duration of this time period whether that be from parents or a partner. ✓

Some research has clearly been done

Symptoms- recognising the risks and taking action.

It is essential for new mothers, their partners, and healthcare providers to be vigilant and proactive in identifying these symptoms so women can receive early intervention and support based upon their needs. ✓

Postpartum depression can manifest itself in a variation of ways for women and vary in severity dependent upon the individual. Symptoms may include persistent feelings of sadness and emptiness that may restrict you from engaging in a full emotional attachment to your newborn, difficulty in sleeping which may lead to insomnia or weakness of your mind and body and most detrimentally dangerous urges either towards yourself or your newborn. ✓

Clear description of symptoms, understands requirements of audience and purpose

It's essential to recognise that postpartum depression can affect any woman, regardless of her age, race or physicality. ✓ Additionally- postpartum depression is not a sign of weakness nor does it represent who you are as a mother. It is a medical condition that requires professional treatment and support. It is not your fault. ✓

Seeking help and support- what's best for you?

Within recent years, there has been a growing movement to spread awareness about Postpartum depression and how we can reduce the societal stigma surrounding it. ✓

Celebrities, healthcare professionals and advocacy groups have spoken out about their own, personal experiences with postpartum depression, encouraging other women to seek help and support without the prior shame or judgement. Importantly, public health campaigns

Structure effective and appropriate for genre / mode

[REDACTED]

and educational initiatives have also been launched to increase understanding and access to resources for women in need. ✓

As a society, it is critical that as a collective we continue to prioritise maternal mental health by breaking societal conceptions and fostering open and honest conversations about postpartum depression so we can create a culture of acceptance and compassion, where all mothers feel empowered to seek help and receive the care they deserve. ✓

Good, clear
element of
voice here.

(Not suitable for style, form or audience

Here are some steps to take:

1- Talking to a healthcare provider, whether this be your midwife or primary care physician, they are here to help you, no matter how big or small you make think the issue is, it's important to them that they provide you with the best care possible, they are essential in determining the appropriate treatment plan for your individual needs. ✓

2- Prioritising self-care. Taking care of yourself is essential within everyday life, especially when you are in a depressive state. It is essential for your well-being and your baby that you prioritise your relaxation and activities that bring you a form of happiness. ✓

✓ 3- Learning about postpartum depression and what it means to you. It is important that you know what this means to you separate from what the medical professionals say knowledge empowers you to advocate for yourself and seek the support you need.

TOTAL WORD COUNT: 922

A fairly successful article although the purpose is not always consistent.
The voice is (mostly) credible.

[REDACTED]

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