

## Model 1-

In the novel by Geraldine Brooks titled "Year of Wonders", the character of Rector Michael Mompellion becomes particularly prominent in his sermon during the first half of the novel. The particular sermon is given in order to persuade the villagers to save their lives of the others in their shire by quarantining themselves, and in doing so prove their worth to God. The very idea itself goes against the Human nature to run from a disaster such as the plague, and yet through the use of persuasive techniques, rector Mompellion is able to convince the village to hold out against what he believes is God's wrath. By appealing to several classes of Eyam's society on different levels he is able to convince each of them to join him on his mission. This is achieved by the use of inclusive language that joins the village into a single God-fearing entity that can combat His wrath as one. The repetition of his words, particularly scattered terms of endearment, aids his contention by once again classing Eyam as one group of villagers and strengthens their unity. By using vivid imagery to describe the Plague as well as metaphors of their salvation he puts a face on the evil that faces them. He then contrasts those who were once Plagued with his audience using Biblical allusions to show that this is a gift rather than a punishment from God. These techniques air Rector Mompellion's contention in his memorable, life-changing sermon.

Although addressing the people of Eyam as an entirety, the Rector divides the church-goers into groups in order to target them individually from separate points of view. By doing so, each segregation may see the Plague as their own to fight for the sakes of their families and their fellow Humans in neighbouring settlements. Firstly, the miners are picked from the crowd, as Mompellion is described as "searching out the miners and their families". In this, it is seen that it is not only the men of the family who are taken, but the women and children as well. The aspect of family, and with it love, comes into the picture. Even if the family is to die, what they did in life will be recalled at judgement, as Mompellion says to the miners, "like the ore that must be melted all to liquid to find the pure metal, so must we be rendered in the fiery furnace of this disease." In this metaphor aimed at the miners and smithies, the Plague is seen as God's trial to the people of Eyam. Second of all to be targeted in the sermon are the farmers. "The Rector turned his eye to where the... other farming families sat." This is a deliberate aim to the farmers of the village, who are reminded that "good yield does not come without suffering", meaning that if they are to be graced with Heaven after death, they must endure the Plague fist as God's trial. Lastly, the appeal to Human kindness as the Rector aims his sermon towards the Bradfords, described as having the "means to go far from here." The landed gentry are able to desert their people and escape the Plague, but if they were to stay like the rest then their souls would reach Heaven among the farmer's and miner's. This did indeed fall upon deaf ears, but to better examples of Humanity, this plea would have kept even the King in the village. Rector Mompellion is also able to unify all the classes by the use of inclusive language.

Having divided each of Eyam's social classes and appealed to each of them, Mompellion also brings unity to his sermon as he addresses the entirety as a single mass by use of inclusive language. This is almost subliminally done as he constantly describes the Plague as "our" struggle, that "we" must endure it, that it is up to "us" to sacrifice "ourselves". By maintaining the flow of the sermon like

this, he easily creates an atmosphere of unity without trying to build up what faces them to an exaggerated extent. It is with lines such as “I believe we must accept this gift “that Mompellion shows that not only is this an opportunity of salvation sent by God, but that they cannot endure it alone. On a wider scale, “were we not bound to return this love to our fellow Humans”, implies that this is not only something that they must all do together, but they must do it to save other innocent lives near to where they live. Also, the term “love” implies that such a sacrifice takes love, and so will love be returned upon Eyam for their bloodshed and tears, many times over. Mompellion uses certain terms of endearment such as “my friends” to promote the connection between he, the voice of God, and the people, and to say that their sufferance will be his as well. It is the repetition of these phrases that leave such a strong impact.

In his repetition, Mompellion follows the rule of three, an easy yet effective tool used to capture his audience with ease, but also with care. The first example is as he enthusiastically shouts “let us not flinch, let us not fail, let us choose not the dull lustre of our base state.” Such repetition drives the message home and makes it memorable to those who hear it. It is also in “the dull lustre of our base state, when God wants us to shine” that his belief that God wishes them to endure truly shown. The second example of the rule of three is when he addresses the farmers, claiming that they “cried for the crop blighted...” as in those who be lost, “cried as you did what you knew you must...” as in the perseverance they must show in such a trying time, and thirdly, “cry now, my friends, but hope, also”, meaning that for those who die they will go to heaven, and those who survive will live out their days, their salvation merely postponed. Mompellion cries to mourn not the dead, for they are free, and guilds a silver lining upon the brooding cloud that threatens to entomb them all. He is able to warm the cold church and its patron’s heavy hearts as he repeats that they are of his kin, that they are his friends, that they have strength in unity. It is indeed with grim imagery that he describes the Plague, but also with vivid images of strength that he describes the people before him.

“I believe we must accept this gift. It is a casket of gold!” Perhaps one of Rector Mompellion’s strongest lines of the entire sermon, for in it is such imagery of death and glory. This is the most direct claim that the Plague is a gift from God, but also it will be their glorious death. For if they sacrifice themselves to save their neighbours, they will be buried as heroes, each and every one of them. Yes it is also imagery of the plague as “Grim Death, King of Terrors” that is evoked by Mompellion. From this he can both spread and quell fear, for out of darkness must always arise a dawn. Strangely, a gift from God is given a somewhat demonic face, a deliberate ploy by the Rector in order to provide satire on how deceptive the work of the Lord might seem, as many thought it was in fact the work of the Devil. Also, from a view from the audience, it is said that “his voice bathed us in affection” as he spoke. It is not literal, but symbolic of the comfort he brought, with each word like a drop of hot water filling the tub on a chilled winter’s night. Another, more subtle, piece of imagery is the story of the Israelites and their connection, metaphorically, to the people of Eyam. Mompellion uses many such Biblical allusions in his sermon.

It is all too appropriate for a rector to include a series of references to the Bible in a sermon decreeing a trial sent by God, the first of which is a reference to Jesus Christ. "The sufferings His son had endured for our sake" makes it clear that to earn a place in Heaven, they must sacrifice themselves just as Jesus had done for Humanity. By drawing the people almost equal to such a powerful figure of the Bible he makes their own sacrifice seem like so much more. Yet he skips from praising the New Testament to borderline abhorrence of Old Testament figures as he tells of Isaiah and the Israelites. Their story is of the Israelite's betrayal of God, and how they chose to run until those left were weak and starved of praise. Mompellion claims that they should stay, obey God, and in doing so they will be a strong people in death. Throughout the sermon Mompellion makes reference to the Pharaoh of Egypt who enslaved God's People and was therefore cursed with ten Plagues. "For is not the first Plague in all of Human history the one that God sent to smite Egypt?" Mompellion does not, in fact, liken them to Pharaoh, but claims that they are under trial rather than punishment from God. Indeed many first-borns died in Eyam, and enough blood fell to fill a stream, and many did break out in calluses, carbuncles and boils, yet it was a test of faith, as Mompellion so fiercely contended. He merely stated, "let us accept this Cross. Let us carry it in God's Holy Name!" Again, Jesus bore his Cross to Golgotha, so must the people of Eyam bare this trial to the highest peak and onward to death, if need be. It was this talk of such familiar themes that securely strengthened Rector Mompellion's sermon to persuade his people that they must endure this test of faith and save the lives of those in neighbouring villages.

Perhaps the most defining moment in the story of Eyam, and indeed in Geraldine Brook's novel, "Year of Wonders" is the speech given by Rector Michael Mompellion, when he instructs the entire village to contain the contagion of the Black Plague within the confines of their innocent hamlet. It is only with the use of great persuasive techniques that he is able to convince so many people to go against their instinct or flee. Such techniques included the appeal to several audiences within the whole of the populace, use of inclusive language to draw the audiences as one, repetition to further unite the people under a single God-loyal banner, grim and glorious imagery to define the Plague as God's trial and the people as God's chosen, and biblical allusions to relate the population of Eyam to significant roles such as Jesus Christ himself. It was by these means, as well as his fiercely compassionate tone, that one man could convince several hundred people to lay down their own lives in order to save those of countless others and in doing so attain salvation and eternal afterlife in the grace and presence of their God.

## Model 2-

Michael Mompellion's speech in the novel 'Year of Wonders' by Geraldine Brooks, published in 2001, was given in response to the plague occurring in the village of Eyam. Mompellion's main contention was to persuade the people of Eyam to stay within the village to quarantine themselves so that they do not spread the plague. Mompellion's tone throughout the speech was extremely affectionate and unctuous, alluring listeners to his

understanding of the issue. Mompellion used his tone and his body language to entice and flatter his audience into agreeing with his contention, as well as metaphors and similes, inclusive language, rhetorical questions and the power of three/repetition. Mompellion manipulates his audience into making an oath to stay within the boundaries of the village.

Mompellion used his affectionate and unctuous tone and body language to entice and flatter his audience into agreeing with his contention that the people of Eyam should stay within the village to quarantine themselves so that they do not spread the plague. "He intoxicated us with his words, lifting and carrying us away into a strange ecstasy, taking each of us to the place where we kept our sweetest memories." Anna's description of the power Mompellion's voice had over them show the effect of how mesmerising Mompellion's tone was to them. "He bathed us in affection" Mompellion talked his audience up, making them feel as if they had the power to do the most extraordinary thing; quarantine themselves, "who among us would not seize such a chance?" It is extremely unctuous the way Mompellion does this; it manipulates the audience into doing what he wants them to. Mompellion's body language did the same thing, "His face was alight and wreathed in such a smile that the church felt suddenly warmer." Mompellion's body language put the whole audience at ease. This aided him in persuading his audience because it made almost his whole audience willing to do whatever he asked of them.

Mompellion used various metaphors and similes in his speech to persuade his audience to his contention that the people of Eyam should stay within the village to quarantine themselves so that they do not spread the plague. The most important metaphor Mompellion used was that the plague was a gift from God, a "casket of gold." The purpose of this metaphor was to encourage the people of Eyam not to fear the plague, but to take it as a blessing from God. "He is giving us here an opportunity that he offers to very few upon this Earth... Let us plunge in our hands to the elbows and carry away these riches!" Here Mompellion is extending the metaphor, in a ironic way, making the audience transfixed on the "riches" rather than the death the plague is genially related to. He is also supporting his contention, expressing that they should act upon the plague wisely. A simile Mompellion used which was directed at the miners of the village and their families also supports his contention. "Like the ore that must be melted all to liquid to find the pure metal so must we be rendered in the fiery furnace of this disease." In this simile, Mompellion is comparing the duties of a miner, to the duties they all now have to restrict the plague from spreading further than the village.

Mompellion used the subtle techniques of inclusive language, rhetorical questions and the power of three/repetition to manipulate his audience to agree with his contention that the people of Eyam should stay within the village to quarantine themselves so that they do not spread the plague. Inclusive language such as "it is a trial for us... we must accept this gift... let the boundaries of this village become our whole world" This inclusive language invites Mompellion's audience to agree with him by including them in the same group as him.

Similar to this is Mompellion's use of rhetorical questions. "Were we not bound to return this love to our own lives, if that was what God asked of us?" Here Mompellion is implying that the answer is obvious, that they must do what "God wishes" and stay within the village for the greater good. Therefore the use of Mompellion's rhetorical question positions the audience to agree with Mompellion because what he suggests is the 'right' thing to do. Mompellion also used the power of three/repetition; "Therefore, let us not flinch, let us not fail! Let us choose not the dull lustre of our base state when God would have us shine!" Here Mompellion is emphasizing the "let us not" basically saying that they must not run away and spread the plague. This power of three attracts listeners into agreeing with his contention, same as when Mompellion repeats "stay here" numerous times in his speech, implying that the audience have no other choice, like it is the moral thing to do. Consequently, this supports Mompellion's contention that the people of Eyam should stay within the village to quarantine themselves so that they do not spread the plague.

Michael Mompellion's speech in the novel 'Year of Wonders' by Geraldine Brooks, published in 2001 was given in response to the issue of the plague occurring in the village of Eyam. Mompellion used his affectionate and unctuous tone and body language to entice and flatter his audience, metaphors and similes to encourage the villagers not to fear the plague, but to take it as a blessing from God, and also subtle techniques such as inclusive language, rhetorical questions and the power of three/repetition to manipulate his audience to agree with his contention that the people of Eyam should stay within the village to quarantine themselves so that they do not spread the plague.