

## ENGLISH: *YEAR OF WONDERS*

**'In what way does the author's insertion of the Dryden poem at the beginning of the novel foreshadow the themes and ideas explored in the text?'**

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The Dryden poem illuminates the hardships and contradictions faced by Eyam's inhabitants at the time of the plague. 'O let it be enough' relates to the pain inflicted on the people through loss of innocence, superstitious and irrational behaviour, and chaotic response. 'When spotted deaths ran arm'd through every street'; this has warzone connotations in that, Eyam morphed into a war ground filled with brutal deaths and unceasing pestilence which threatened all its inhabitants. 'Spotted deaths' refers to the people also, as the survivors had marks which reflected the pain that the plague had instilled. 'With poisoned darts'; the people turned on one other and placed blame on others due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the plague's nature, thus foreshadowing the concept of science vs. religion and the way in which the people denied science and relied solely on God. 'Which not the good could shun, the speedy outfly, or valiant meet'; this denotes the unstoppable pestilence which nobody was safe from, no matter which position was occupied in the social hierarchy or the bravery and courage characterised by the people. 'The living few, and frequent funerals then' foreshadows the majority of deaths imbued by the plague and how little survivors are left. 'Proclaimed thy wrath on this forsaken place'; this verse denotes the vengeance and 'punishment' imposed on the people whereby their behaviour and character were brought to the surface as the plague was able to bring out the worst in them. 'And now those few who are return'd agen, Thy searching judgments to their dwellings trace'; this foreshadows the enlightenment phase whereby the survivors are left with impending questions and 'wonders' which the plague has imbued, and they no longer turn to religion alone for answers.

### **'Apple picking time'**

#### **1. How is the motif of apples used on page 1?**

Rotting apples are used symbolically to foreshadow the bloody and infectious bodies which lay infected by the plague's brutality. Those with the brown spots signify those of Eyam's inhabitants who were impacted by the fatal plague through beloved losses or innocence. The rotting apples are also symbolic of the way in which the village is left decimated and desolate post-plague, and the rotting apples lie about just as the plague's victims' corpses had when there had been more people dying than living people to bury them. 'There are so few people to do the picking'. The fact that there are scant people left in the village to harvest the apples is a foreshadowing of the terrorising events to come, and the extent to which the number of deceased exceeded the amount of plague survivors.

#### **2. What do we learn about Anna's character in this chapter? In what way has her status changed? (Provide evidence)**

We learn that Anna has a transcendent and courageous character, and although she has had to divulge in unpleasant barricades including the deaths of her husband and children, she still transitions into the heroine of the story and is characterised by unyielding strength and determination in the midst of a threatening plague. She has exceeded the expectations society has of a servant and widow and rises in the face of vulnerability and fear. 'A servant has no right to stay once she's dismissed. But I did stay...' this indicates the way in which Anna no longer feels that she serves only a subservient role in her village, but is a heroic and independent individual. Although her innate proneness to portray common courtesies still exists, she does not possess the fear she once did to stand up to those with a high social standing. '...I had dropped into a curtsey without willing it, my body acting despite the firm resolve of my mind to show this woman no such deference.'

### 3. What are our first impressions of Michael Mompellion?

Brooks' conveys a despondent man who has lost his faith and sense of place in the world. We immediately learn that his beliefs and values once deeply cherished and thoroughly preached, are distant memories now. It is made blatant that something extremely tragic has occurred, something so powerful that a priest's faith is put to the test. Mompellion is clearly in pain and at an emotional loss, causing him to reject his religion and have reluctance to open the very book that leads the village through the crisis.

### 4. "For hundreds of years ... block our way entire." p.11 Explain this metaphor in terms of ideological change.

Anna elucidates the way in which the people of Eyam continuously reject the very prospect of nature and its profound existence in the world. For centuries, the people have lacked the knowledge and yearning to learn all in sacrifice of God and His guidance. The consolidated ideologies of the people only included those which have been preached and worded by the Bible, and conventions which held no practicality for which is needed in time of crisis and burden. However, a tragedy in the form of a plague, was the onset of 'new beginnings' and the development of the enlightenment phase whereby questioning and 'wonders' arose which could not be answered by religion. 'I wonder if... like me, others are so brimful of endings that they cannot bear to wrench even a scrawny sapling from its tenuous grip on life.' Here Brooks' conveys the very significance of natural existence and the way in which a crisis can change the ideologies of people in terms of acceptance and appreciation for prospects they once did not dare to acknowledge as anything more than beauty.

### 'Ring of roses'

#### 1. What do we learn about Anna on page 36? In what different ways does she seem to contradict social expectations and ideologies of the era?

We learn that Anna has a hunger for education/learning. She thrives on high English language rather than the actual words of God, which perhaps indicates the subconscious onset of her half-hearted religious beliefs. This is a strong contradiction to the social expectations in that era as education is not highly valued; religion and common knowledge are the conventions relied upon to survive. Science and nature are 'pushed back to their precincts' and every perspective pertaining to the cyclical nature of life and death derives from religious principles.

#### 2. What is the significance of the stillborn twins "fused together at the breast bone" (p.38)? Why would the author create such unpleasant imagery?

The author has portrayed an unpleasant circumstance in the form of stillborn twins in juxtaposition to Eyam's proneness to superstition. This outlines the ignorance of the people at the time as they have no other relevant explanation for such a predicament to occur, thus leading them to scapegoat Mem Gowdie, a woman they all turned to for herbal remedies in response to illness. The unpleasant imagery is effective as audience are forced to convey the scene as an unbearable and horrid one, whereby in such a case, the villagers are provoked by irrationality and a plethora of superstitions rather than logical explanations and education. Their lack of knowledge is illuminated as they place blame on others devoid of seeking answers in unpleasant circumstances. The concept of science vs. Religion is brought to light as the town's rector at the time, Mr Stanley declares Mem not a witch, yet scolds her in the face of religion for seeking remedies to God's perils.

### 3. Why is Anna reluctant at first to study herbal lore like Anys and Mem Gowdie?

She is reluctant to study herbal lore in the beginning as she worries she may face the madness that 'meddling in medicinal' can provoke in a widowed woman, a superstition shared by the villagers at the time. Also, for Anna to seek knowledge of herbal lore, she will be contradicting the Puritan conventions as mentioned above; 'sickness was sent by God to chastise the souls He would save. If we sought to evade such, we would miss the lessons God willed us to learn, at the cost of worse torments after death'. However, this is ironic as the villagers constantly seek herbal remedies and help with confinements from Mem and Anys. This outlines their value of life over religion, and subconscious necessity for education which religion cannot provide for.

### 4. What is ironic about the quote "He brought the wide world with him"? (p.26)

The author creates a contradiction as George Viccars is a man without confinement and is able to tell Anna of tales in relation to the outside world. Anna, being the excited pupil who strives to learn, 'wished to know how things stood in the world'. However this is ironic as Viccars also brings the plague to the village through a fabric. 'Wide world' includes many conventions outside the boundaries of religion and common knowledge, thus for Viccars to bring the 'wide world' with him is to bring the plague along with the catastrophe and eventually the enlightenment along to the village.

#### 'The thunder of his voice'

### 1. Analysis at the top of page 55 pertaining to the motif of dark/light, or Godly/right, Satanic/evil

The motif pertaining to such conventions is conveyed and explored by Anna as she goes on to elucidate her admiration for Anys Gowdie, a woman who does not allow Puritan principle to shape her life and values. Anna acknowledges that she herself has been ruled by conventions of light and dark, whereby actions and events are either one of two principles; godly and right, or Satanic and evil. This self confrontation is a catalyst for the developing enlightenment brought forth by the plague, as Anna is slowly forced to challenge the very system of beliefs she is accustomed to. The onset of events and Anna's questioning foreshadows the enlightenment phase whereby religion becomes a contradictory characteristic of nature – life and death – and science/education becomes the root of heroism and feminist dominance over the wellbeing and salvation of the village.

### 2. In what way does Anna's conversation with Anys cause her to reappraise women's roles?

Anna's conversation with Anys causes her to question the nature of her beliefs and the institutionalised religious views at the time. Anys illuminates the significance and beauty of freedom, a concept outside the realms of religious ideology, as the villagers are confined to Puritan beliefs, which includes male dominance. The importance of freedom is heightened by the conversation in that, the instilled feminist subservient role is challenged not only by the plague, but by the village's inhabitants via their response to crisis; the women become heroines for salvation whereas the men contributed little in comparison, with the exception of Michael Mompellion. Later on that day, Anna views her friend Lib through Anys' eyes and perceives the stereotypical role of females to be dominated by their men, devoid of freedom.

**3. In what way might the title of this chapter be read ambiguously?**

The title 'the thunder of his voice' symbolises both the significance of God and the impact of religion on the village, and Michael Mompellion's overpowering courage and bravery in the process of leading the village through God's rightful path. He is seen as the epitome of strong will and religious value, an ideal man of moral conscience and patriarchal priority. In relation to God, the dominant nature of religion has Eyam's inhabitants wholly consumed, thereby in the face of a crisis, the scientific nature of the plague is unbeknownst to them and they are forced to completely rely on blind faith.

**4. What does Mompellion mean when he says 'Perhaps they might believe that God is now preaching to the city, and what needs add their small utterance to the thunder of His voice'? (p.63)**

This quote denotes the significant impact of the peril thrust on the city by God, whereby even the Anglican ministers have decided to flee the atrocious crisis. In other words, God is directly addressing the people in the form of evil – pestilence – which is a significant enough sign of His power that cannot be overridden by the voice of a priest. Thus, Mompellion indicates that the people have lost sight of the theoretical belief of Godly being good and right, but rather have attained the belief that God's fierceness has dominated the idea of repentance and goodwill.

**5. In what way does the author use humour in the quote: "...causing Colonel Bradford to expire from shock"? (p.59)**

This quote has been used by the author to outline class distinction and the dominance it holds over Colonel Bradford, to the extent whereby he will expire – die – if he were to see a first class lady such as Mrs Mompellion sharing a friendly exchange with Anna, a servant. This denotes the irony of the colonel's idea of class and hierarchical power, as the plague does not contain itself from the rich. It blindly thrusts death upon the people despite their socioeconomic status, which becomes evident throughout the novel.

**'Sign of a witch'**

**1. Find and explain a reminder of the cyclical nature of life and death on p.87.**

**2. In what way do the villagers find a 'scapegoat' in respond to a crisis?**

In the midst of a brutal crisis shared by the entire village, Eyam's inhabitants seek to find a scapegoat in order to place blame for causing the deaths of their beloved. The plague instils superstition within the villagers and coerces them to accuse Anys and Mem, the town's 'witches', stating it is they who have caused the surfeit of deaths. The many villagers who are holding on to their religion by a thread resort to the brutal and disparaging torture of women who only provided natural remedies for those who sought them. This signifies the extent to which irrationality is sparked due to godly beliefs pertaining to Evil. The plague has coerced them to rely on false notions based on their own religion, rather than seeking the knowledge they need in order to respond logically and rationally in the midst of an atrocious crisis. Being imprisoned within religious ideologies has now resulted in cruel behaviour and doubt; the villagers are confined to scriptures and the words of God, rather than the natural existence of the plague.

3. **'At that time, you see, we all of us believed that God listened to such prayers' (p. 95). How would you describe the narrator's perspective in this line?**

Anna has attained a more realistic mentality whereby she is no longer reliant on an institutionalised religion without reasoning and confined ideologies. She is finally able to break free of impractical confinements and perceive the world through scientific explanations. The concept of nature is no longer a rootless existence, but rather a cyclical ideology which needs thorough knowledge and reasoning to understand. Puritanism and religious beliefs were once enough for Anna and the villagers were able to go through life with only religion and common knowledge. However the crisis in the form of a plague is a confrontation for the people, as they are forced to think outside the realms of their limited ideologies.

### **'Rat-fall'**

1. **Discuss the author's use of vivid imagery in the birthing scene on pgs 66-67. Why would Brooks use such a confronting style?**

This confronting style creates imagery in that; we are able to perceive the very nature of birth and the simple way that life itself is naturally established. This pertains to the theoretical concept of nature vs. faith and the way in which the villagers of Eyam are able to reject the very ideology (science/nature) despite birth being the 'nature' of their being. Also, the confrontation of birth could signify the concept of being confronted with the truth in that, the villagers need to be confronted with 'nature' in the form of a savage plague in order to alter perceptions and conventions which have blinded them from seeing the truth.

2. **This style reoccurs on pg.77, provide and explain an example of this.**

'He cried for a while, when he tried to suckle and couldn't find the strength for it. Then he just lay in my arms whimpering now and then. Soon, his stare became unfixed and distant, and finally he simply closed his eyes and panted.' Brooks denotes more vivid imagery by reiterating the nature of death – not by illness, but by natural means. This example conveys one of the significant juxtapositions between life and death, for it is expressive of the way in which life could easily be taken away and how Anna is ignorant of the cause due to continuously 'pushing nature back to its precincts'. Villagers are oblivious of the nature of their surroundings and place all reliance on blind faith.

3. **What is the major example in this chapter of the juxtaposition between life/death? Discuss this in terms of the novel's major themes.**

Brooks manifests the concept of life and death by creating vivid imagery of both the pain and hardship of death, amidst the struggle to live and strive on common knowledge and a religious system which blatantly defies the villagers. A major example of the juxtaposition between life and death is expressed as such: '...blue bodied dragonflies...the glassy panes of her wings caught the light in rainbow colours, like the stained windows in our church...then she took off, swooping down upon a passing wasp. Her legs had seemed flimsy as threads, but they snapped upon the wasp like an iron trap. Still in flight, her powerful jaws closed on the insect and devoured it. So it goes, I thought idly. A birth and a death, each unlooked for.' The scene that Brooks creates captures the way in which death is effortlessly taken away and life is, just as effortlessly, granted. With this, Brooks conveys the predominance of biblical reliance over science and nature, the very root of every existence and every fatality. The villagers perceived the plague to be punishment and did not dare to acknowledge the existence of science and the reasons to how the brutal deaths came to be. Life was amongst them, and life was given, yet nature itself was unbeknownst to them as they were dominated by a faith which coerced superstition and chaos in the midst of a fatal plague.

4. **'This moment is my miracle'. (p.71) Explain this quote, particularly the use of the word 'miracle', in regards to the theme of religion vs. science.**

This quote signifies a moment of beauty and vitality for Anna, both the rose petals and her children symbolising the beauty of nature, a concept which is blatantly denied in a religiously dominant society. The word 'miracle' pertains to Anna's contentment with what God has given her through the course of nature; she is ruled by religious conventions which she is beginning to challenge, therefore her lust over nature and its miraculous touch leaves her to stand oblivious to religion and rather, observe and appreciate nature itself.

### **'Venom in the blood'**

1. **In what way does Mompellion manipulate the villagers and why?**

Michael Mompellion utilises the powerful and moving words of God and his persuasive aural techniques to lure the villagers into quarantine in order to limit the plague by a boundary stone, so that the plague remains within the village. With an alluring speech of the plague being a gift rather than a punishment and attempting to eradicate superstition, he captivates the villagers and awes them into a calm state of mind. Thus, they are able to see a brutal predicament as a test of their faith, which is a powerful manipulation, as the villagers are highly religious and reliant on Puritanism. Mompellion develops a sense of fear in the villagers in that, if they decide to evade the crisis they will be shunned and consumed by eternal loneliness. By perceiving the plague as a test of their moral and religious conscience, they are coerced to remain in the village and help one another. Therefore Mompellion uses Godly persuasion benevolently and uses his religious good-will to direct the villagers into a path of salvation, despite this path including sacrifice and loss.

2. **List some other reactions to the crisis evident in this chapter.**

The Bradfords, a wealthy family who apparently occupy the apex of the social hierarchy, choose to evade the crisis in time of desperate need and save their own souls rather than assist in the salvation of the village. This denotes a lack of religious and patriarchal strength and moral conscience as they cowardly escape in the face of a crisis, which in turn tarnishes their reputation and leaves them ostracised from society. In the midst of death and superstition, the Bradford's hinder the arrangement to quarantine the village and leave despite the possibility of carrying the plague seeds to another village and causing death which might not otherwise happen.

3. **'...trust in God to perform His wonders' (p.104). In what way is the word 'wonders' used ambiguously throughout the novel?**

This word is evidently consistent throughout the novel, during each season in which the events unfold. It is ambiguously used through Anna's narration, and symbolic of the extent to which the people of Eyam constantly 'wondered' and questioned the profound events and predicaments situated in the year of 1666. Through the duration of the text, faith is challenged, morals distinguished, heroines established, and in the midst of turmoil and heroism, 'wonders' is placed in many different contexts and situations. In this quote, 'wonders' signifies the good of God and the beauty of his mercy on the people of Eyam, despite death and the 'evil' which circulates throughout the village.

## **'Wide green prison'**

- 1. What is implied by the term 'wide green prison'? Discuss in relation to the quote: "And so the rest of us set about learning to live in the wide green prison of our own election." (p.117)**

The term 'wide green' symbolises nature and its relevant beauty as Anna elucidates throughout the novel. However this is contradicted by the insertion of 'prison', as this indicates a lack of freedom, both through confined ideology and quarantine of the village in order to prevent pestilence to other villages. The ideologies of the people in the 1600s were confined purely to religious beliefs and the conventions that the churches set out, which were not inclusive of science and reasoning which was dire in the midst of the crisis. The insertion of 'our own election' signifies the Eyam's willingness to quarantine the village, a selfless act imbued by Mompellion's religious persuade. In contrast, 'our own election' also indicates that the people were willing to allow religious ideology and lack of knowledge to formulate their way of life, despite questioning and wonder which could not directly be answered by the Bible. Thus, they restricted their own freedom in such hues, and now a plague deliberated the consequences of those limitations.

## **So soon to be dust**

- 1. Discuss the quote: "Why, I wondered, was God so prodigal with His creation? Why did He raise us up out of clay, to acquire good and expedient skills, and then send us back so soon to be dust when we had useful years before us?" (p.135)**

This quote denotes the continuum of questioning that death allows for and foreshadows the evolving concept of light and dark, science vs. religion. Anna questions the actions of God in a way that the wording of the Bible cannot directly explain, as it merely depicts evil to be punishment or chastise for those He wishes to save. She develops thoughts of reasoning and rather than passively obeying God's guidance, she questions the very concepts of his actions which indicate that she may now value life and nature over religion, as life itself is not so 'prodigal'.

## **'The poppies of Lethe'**

- 1. In what way is this Anna's lowest point in the story?**

This is the point at which Anna is engulfed by death and forceful brutality due to the plague, and although she shows courage and resilience in the midst of crisis, she still endures emotional anguish.

Therefore Anna discovers a little peace of mind when she steals poppy from Elinor Mompellion, allowing her to forget tormenting memories and embrace beauty rather than pain.

- 2. Often when a character reaches their lowest point in a narrative they reach a turning point. In what way does Anna achieve a new perspective and become more altruistic?**

Anna goes to Anys' and Mem Gowdie's house in order to score more poppy when she finds Elinor there. Elinor displays empathy for Anna and tells details of her discretion, in the hope that Anna will no longer resort to poppy to forget her memories. After their conversation, Anna is able to perceive bravery and withstanding strength in the face of pain and hardship, and the prevailing light to be found at the end of every adversity. Thus, she throws the poppy to the fire and is able to set out philanthropic goals with Elinor in order to help cease pestilence and salvage the village. This shows increasing altruism on her behalf as she develops a stronger sense of heroic ambition to help others rather than act on 'selfish oblivion'.

### **'Among those that go down to the pit'**

- 1. The pit acts as a metaphor for the crisis engulfing Eyam. What motivates Anna and Elinor to venture into the pit?**

The pit is an epitome of fear and non-confronted apprehension imbued by the crisis engulfing Eyam. Literally, Anna and Elinor venture into the hollow pit in a generous act of philanthropy. This venture not only allows them (particularly Anna, as her husband died in one, and she utilised the same strategy of extracting lead that killed her husband) both to confront their inner-most fears in terms of a once hopeful and religious town morphed into a chaotic warzone marked by vile death and burden of loss. They are both driven to the dark nature of the pit in which Anna is close to the summit of death and envisions her children and joyful memories, an ending she is now sure she can bear. 'With the darkness came blissful silence: a sudden stop to the beating of blood...' Anna finds peace in the 'dark rim' of near death whereby she finds contentment with dying, as opposed to her former innate fear of brutal endings and 'reckoning among those who go down the pit'.

### **'The body of the mine'**

- 1. Does Anna's refusal to defend her father show strength or weakness?**

Anna's refusal to stand in defence of her father demonstrates both strength and weakness. She conveys strength through her refusal to participate in the proceedings in that, she believes her father to be an indecent drunkard with no moral guidelines or limitations, thus believing he is deserving of punishment. She justifies this by stating that the manner in which she left him to die is equal to the way in which he fathered her. As she is a profoundly moral and righteous character, her refusal illuminates the extent to which her morals extend, regardless of the familial connection. However, her refusal also contradictorily shows weakness as Anna is prone to impart her personal prejudices toward her father onto his eventual punishment rather than impartially defending him based on the nature of his actions. Especially in the midst of death and her profound distaste for grim endings, she does not cease the punishment imposed on her father despite the already existent burden of losing her husband and children. Scourge

### **'The press of their ghosts'**

- 1. In what way does Anna conclude that human beings might be better served by acting more proactively to free themselves from the plague? Locate and explain a quote to support this.**

'If we balanced the time we spent contemplating God, and why He afflicted us, with more thought as to how the Plague spread and poisoned our blood, then we might come nearer to saving our lives... if we could be allowed to see the Plague as a thing in Nature merely, we did not have to trouble about some grand celestial design that had to be completed before the disease could abate... when we found the tools and the method and the resolve, we would free ourselves, no matter if we were a village full of sinners or a host of saints.'

This demonstrates that Anna is now contemptuously critical of religion and the improper responses it has imbued in the people pertaining to penance, superstition and scapegoats to give blame for the plague's occurrence. This is the point in the story where her questioning and challenging of religion instigates a self realisation within her, and she dismisses religion in general. Her inner conflict of whether to perceive the plague through religious resolve, or by natural means is brought to the surface, as she eradicates religious means as a remedy and illuminates the concept of scientific notion as a response to the plague. Thus, Anna rejects religion – its conventions of good and evil – and expresses the logic in examining the root of the plague's existence instead.



## **'A great burning'**

### **1. How would you describe the relationship between Anna and Elinor in this passage?**

Class distinction is non-existent in their relationship as Elinor does not regard Anna as merely her maid, but a dear friend with whom she is able to confide in. Anna has developed mother-daughter emotions towards Elinor, with whom as her master she did not expect to have. She elucidates the way in which Elinor has become a maternal figure of which she was deprived of, as Elinor taught Anna many things and allowed her to perceive herself in a light that Anna was unable to recognise in herself. Anna's grief during Elinor's sickness demonstrates her affection towards her and her inability to lose a mother figure. 'Because of her, I had known the warmth of a motherly concern'.

### **2. What is symbolic about the death of Aphra's youngest daughter, Faith, and what effect does this have on Aphra?**

Faith's hung position replicates that of Jesus upon the cross. As Faith died of the plague, her death is a representation of every soul which was lost to the same menace. This indicates that death itself is sacrifice in the face of religion. Using this, Brooks conveys Faith's death as sacrifice of life all in the manner of religious penance, which in turn coerces Aphra into lunacy. She becomes consumed by witchcraft and unsubstantiated behaviour, leaving her devoid of comprehensible thought and rationality. However, it has a double meaning; the death of Faith is also metaphoric, in that the village has lost their sense of faith in God.

## **'Deliverance'**

### **1. Discuss the imagery of blood and Elinor's white dress at the time of her death.**

The colour white is usually symbolic of purity and innocence, and as Elinor wears a white dress it reflects her as a person despite her past indiscretions. However, Brooks' conveyance of her death outlined by gushes of blood splattering onto the white dress portrays the loss of innocence and boundless death thrust upon those who are good and those who are evil. This imagery also denotes the way in which a religious village is consumed by a crisis in an instant, which gradually works to destroy the lives of many, just as the death of Elinor leaves Michael Mompellion melancholy and faithless.

## **'Apple-picking time'**

### **1. In what way does Anna 'save' Michael?**

Anna's confrontation to Michael's loss of senses propels him to self-assess and see her as a role model for bravery and perseverance as she has also suffered the brutality of the plague and yet has transitioned into a stronger and philanthropic character. This realisation imbues Michael to help others who still have faith despite his loss of religious belief. Although he is contemptuous toward his own beliefs and the death of villagers it has caused in the name of religion, he discovers the moral compulsion to serve those in need of benevolence.

### **2. In what way is Anna 'rewarded' by the text?**

As the plague subsides and Anna persists with her duties, she is able to discover her own rebirth in the form of midwifery – abandoning death and confronting birth and life. She is also abandoning religion altogether and embracing nature as she is able to rationalise the perils and social disorder of the plague year in a way that religion does not enable. Her perseverance and unyielding strength through the plague allows her to find reason for her life, and thus through the Bradfords' bastard, she regains her sense of obligation to life.

## Epilogue

### 1. Explain why you believe this epilogue was added. What does it add to the story?

In the epilogue, Anna tells of a world outside the village of Eyam and elaborates on the diverse ideologies and beliefs of which she is now exposed to. Her narration of Islamic conventions is in ambiguous juxtaposition with that of the religious conventions founded in Eyam. Although she does not exactly embrace Islam as her own religion, she is able to explore the different beliefs outside the realms of strict Puritanism and thus build her own principles and conventions through experience and exposure to diverse notions. With this, Brooks' denotes that moving away from strict confinement to a particular ideology or concept can leave one with the scope for other notions and beliefs, rather than revolving around restricted conventions.