**Prompt**

***"Time back way way back befor people got clever they had the 1st knowing.  They los it when they got the clevvrness and the clevvrness is gone as well...Lissening back for all the souns whatre gone from us.  The hummering of the dead towns and the voyces befor the towns ben there...That's the woal idear of this writing which I begun wylst thinking on what the idear of it myt be...Stoans want to be lissent to.  The big brown stoans in the formers feal they want to stan up and talk like men....Then when youre sitting on them theywl talk and theywl tel if you lissen.  Theywl tel whats in them..."***

How would you interpret what Riddley is saying here?  Is there a universality to it?  Why or why not?  Answer these questions directly, but in addition to your opinion, provide a direct reference from what Riddley is saying in these quotes to something specific in either Merkoski and Wood (being sure to include the page number) that addresses the future of books and reading in a global sense

**Response**

In literal terms, Ridley is giving the history of his people, akin to what we might call a creation myth. More than this though, he is speaking to a deep and powerful feeling of loss. He wants to feel the connection to generations past, but he knows that life as he lives it is so utterly different from what it was that he feels totally disconnected. His inability, the general inability of anyone in the story, to connect and understand that past exacerbates this.

There is a very powerful idea expressed here: without language and history, what are we? Ridley struggles to find his own identity. He wants to understand and comprehend his situation and who he is. We use language to do this every single day. Even something as simple as reading a street sign gives us a sense of where we are, which is an essential part of how we perceive ourselves. Losing language, especially written language, takes away a process in which we are able to define ourselves and express deeper philosophies.

However, different languages create differing structures in which an individual thinks. The way a person thinks who natively speaks Mandarin, for example, is different from one who natively speaks English. The languages differ in their alphabets, structure, the number of characters, and the ways in which those characters can be combined. Orally, pronunciation and rate of speech also differ. Now, imagine losing the ability to shift between languages, to be unable to translate between them and share the ideas expressed in them.

In biology, the lack of diversity is viewed as a huge threat because it causes populations to be unable to support themselves and eventually die out. Losing language, and the diversity within it, would have the same effect: entire classes of ideology would die out, as well as a sense of history. Merkoski discusses this somewhat in his chapter on globalization (pp.141-146). Wood, beginning on page 97 and then in many places throughout *Creating Room to Read*, shows an innate understanding of this by looking for local-language authors to write children’s books.

By examining this, we understand the danger of eliminating language and the differences therein. These differences are essential to the human experience, and language is a huge part of how we can define ourselves, as individuals, communities, nations, and cultures. Language is a part of everything that we do, feel, think, and, obviously, say. Without it, we are disconnected from what it means to be human, and also disconnected from our entire past.