Don’t you think it’s time to start thinking? Northrop Frye

**ALLUSION**

An allusion found in the third –last paragraph is “[t]his is the kind of thing that George Orwell was talking about, not just in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but in all his work on language.” This dystopian novel warned against the dangers of a society that lacked freedom of expression. Characters in the novel were only allowed to think and speak certain words and this contributed to their lack of power and their ability to be manipulated by a totalitarian government. This supports Frye’s idea that language is power and that it is important for members of society to be able to clearly communicate and express their ideas.

In addition, this allusion provides an image or threat of the type of world ours could become, if society does not place more value on thinking, articulation and questioning the status quo.

There is an allusion found in paragraph 4: “Remember James Thurber’s Walter Mitty who was always dreaming great dreams of glory.” The character, Walter Mitty, is constantly day-dreaming to escape his reality. He goes on wild adventures that exist only in his mind - never really achieving anything. He claims he is “thinking,” which is an incorrect statement, according to Northrop Frye. This reference to Mitty further supports the thesis; thinking requires training and application, and ideas cannot exist without articulation. Mitty’s life changes only when he is able to verbalize and act upon what he is thinking.

**METAPHOR**

A metaphor found in the last paragraph is “[t]he teaching of the humanities is, therefore, a militant job.” By comparing teaching to a military exercise, Frye establishes the gravity of the situation. The purpose of the military is to protect citizens but also to wage war in order to ensure survival. This supports how important Frye believes it is for society and teachers to train young students to think and communicate their ideas. Frye believes that this ability will ensure society’s survival and like the military, we should be disciplined and precise in enforcing these values.

In the last paragraph Frye believes that “the teaching of humanities is, therefore, a militant job”. In this metaphor, he suggests that teachers are soldiers and will engage in combat against thoughtless speech and misconceptions, by that he implies it is an intense and difficult job to teach humanity. He expresses his concern towards the status verbal competency, where people think that ideas still exist even if they are not incorporated into words. He believes that prejudices and cliches are enemies to clear communication and it is important that people realize the problem and make an aggressive change on how to articulate their ideas.

“The kernel of everything reactionary and tyrannical in society is the impoverishment of the means of verbal communication” is a metaphor found in the third last paragraph. A kernel is a starting point and in Frye’s essay represents the lack of proper articulation of ideas. If this seed continues to grow, it will impact other parts of society negatively. Frye uses this comparison to suggest that a lack of proper communication of ideas is the root cause of the breakdown of society and this is something we need to protect ourselves against.

**SIMILE**

A simile found in paragraph 11 is “there are various epidemics sweeping over society which use unintelligibility as a weapon”. A weapon is something that is used to injure someone or cause death. Comparing unintelligibility to a weapon highlights to the reader that they must take the situation Frye is depicting seriously as it is life threatening. The reader wants to defend themselves from this crisis and is forced to reflect on their own ability to think.

The comparison of unintelligibility to a weapon in paragraph 11 is an example of a simile. This simile develops the thesis because it implies that society is linguistically dumbed down to take away the intellect and power in individuals ideas “to preserve the power structure”. The present power structure of society is founded upon the idea of blind obedience and repetitive powers of life. Such a structure cannot be sustained with intelligent individuals because of their linguistic power to think, change, and break away from tradition.

**CONNOTATIVE LANGUAGE**

Frye uses connotative language in the eleventh paragraph by using the word “impoverishment” to describe the lack of verbal communication in society. This word holds negative connotations of weakness and limitations. This relates back to the author’s belief that, without the ability to articulate your thoughts, you render yourself powerless, weak, and limited. Therefore, a society that is impoverished of the ability to communicate their ideas is one that is powerless and fragile and not the type of society anyone would want.

Don’t you think it’s time to start thinking? Paragraph Functions

Paragraph 4 can be identified as an example paragraph. Frye incorporates James Thurber’s Walter Mitty to provide a concrete example of the misuse of the word think. In response to his wife’s asking what he was doing, Mitty states “Has it ever occurred to you that I might be thinking?” This example helps to support Frye’s thesis that thinking is articulating ideas until they are in the right words and when the correct definition of think is not known, the word can often be misused.

Paragraph 5 is an example of a definition paragraph because Frye defines his own understanding of thinking. By criticizing the common uses of the word “thinking”, he sets limitations that thinking is not “worrying, remembering, day-dreaming”. He asserts that thinking is more complex than that, and thus requires training to achieve high order thinking. Frye communicates that his use of the word “thinking” in the essay refers to the ability to communicate clearly one’s ideas.

Paragraph 7 is an example of a thesis paragraph. Frye expresses his main idea that” thinking is the practice of articulating ideas until they are in the right words”. Frye connects his earlier ideas about what it means to think with his later points that society lacks the ability to speak articulately. These points are embodied in the allusion to Pierre Trudeau.

Paragraph 8 is a transition paragraph because Frye’s argument shifts from defining to reasoning. He believes individuals lack the ability to articulate ideas, and in this paragraph, he gives the reason as to why there’s such an incapacity. He points out that our society only views literacy as necessary to perform public services, but overlooks the fact that verbal competency is also an important factor in people’s lives and will affect an individual’s ability to think.

Paragraph 10 is an example of an elaboration paragraph because it expands on the idea that there are “currents at work against the development of articulateness”. Paragraph 10 states that those strong currents are “articulate speech marking you out as an individual” and being an individual is a cause for concern. Frye also states that people are frightened and suspicious of articulateness. These “strong currents” are reason enough to use the “ready- made phrases” mentioned in paragraph 10 to hide yourself.