

## The Three New Yorks E. B. White

There is, of course, only one New York. But our largest city presents a different face to each person who experiences it. E. B. White, who died in 1985, was a student of the city. In this paragraph, he finds that there are three ways of looking at New York, and that these are also, in a way, three ways of using New York—to live, to work, and to dream.

### Words to Know

continuity existence over a long period

Consolidated Edison Company the power company serving New York City

deportment behavior, conduct

solidarity wholeness

turbulence agitation, disturbance

There are roughly three New Yorks. There is, first, the New York of the man or woman who was born here, who takes the city for granted and accepts its size and its turbulence as natural and inevitable. Second, there is the New York of the commuter—the city that is devoured by locusts each day and spat out each night. Third, there is the New York of the person who was born somewhere else and came to New York in quest of something. Of these three trembling cities the greatest is the last—the city of final destination, the city that is a goal. It is this third city that accounts for New York's high-strung disposition, its poetical deportment, its dedication to the arts, and its incomparable achievements. Commuters give the city its tidal restlessness, natives give it solidarity and continuity, but the settlers give it passion. And whether it is a farmer arriving from Italy to set up a small grocery store in a slum, or a young girl arriving from a small town in Mississippi to escape the indignity of being observed by her neighbors, or a boy arriving from the Corn Belt with a manuscript in his suitcase and a pain in his heart, it makes no difference: each embraces New York with the intense excitement of first love, each absorbs New York with the fresh eyes of an adventurer, each generates heat and light to dwarf the Consolidated Edison Company.

### Questions About the Reading

1. Which of the New Yorks does White think is the greatest? Why? Support your answer with statements from the paragraph.

2. What do the people who make up the first New York contribute to it? Which statements tell you?
3. What is the meaning of the essay's final clause ("each generates heat Questions

#### About the Writer's Strategies

1. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence? If so, identify it. If not, state the topic in a sentence of your own.
2. What transitions does White use to help the reader identify the relation of ideas?
3. Identify the metaphor in the essay's third sentence and interpret what it means.
4. Is the paragraph developed by classification, division, or both?

#### Silence

Beryl Markham Born in 1902 in England, Beryl Markham spent most of her life in East Africa. An adventurer and skillful aviator, she was the first to fly solo from east to west across the Atlantic. In this paragraph from her book *West with the Night*, she shows that classification and division can be used not only to categorize concrete objects and ideas but also to give form to abstract sensations and emotions.

#### Words to Know

emanate to come out of, arise

raucous noisy, unrestrained

There are all kinds of silences and each of them means a different thing. There is the silence that comes with morning in a forest, and this is different from the silence of a sleeping city. There is silence after a rainstorm, and before a rainstorm, and these are not the same. There is the silence of emptiness, the silence of fear, the silence of doubt. There is a certain silence that can emanate from a lifeless object as from a chair lately used, or from a piano with old dust upon its keys, or from anything that has answered to the need of a man, for pleasure or for work. This kind of silence can speak. Its voice may be melancholy, but it is not always so; for the chair may have been left by a laughing child or the last notes of the piano may have been raucous

and gay. Whatever the mood or the circumstance, the essence of its quality may linger in the silence that follows. It is a soundless echo.

#### Questions About the Reading

1. Pick two or three of the silences the writer describes and, in your own words, explain how they differ from one another.
2. What does the writer mean by "silence"?
3. What is it that gives silences their different qualities?

#### Questions About the Writer's Strategies

1. Identify the topic sentence in this paragraph.
2. Read this paragraph aloud to yourself, and then describe the effects of sound the writer achieves with the words she uses.
3. The basic contradiction, or irony in this paragraph is summarized in the term "soundless echo." Describe this contradiction in a few sentences of your own. The

### **American Language**

Robert Hendrickson If asked what language is spoken in the United States, most of us would say English, without even thinking about it. Here, Robert Hendrickson suggests that this response considerably oversimplifies matters.

#### Word to Know

infusion putting into; introducing

One British traveler, with a snobbery bordering on self-destructiveness, complained more than a century ago that American was not "pure enough Anglo-Saxon English." The American language, with its numerous native terms or Americanisms (from 14,000 to 100,000 of them, according to various estimates) deriving from local conditions and the infusion of so many foreign tongues, would obviously differ from Received Standard British English on that score alone, not to mention the effect of these tongues on American pronunciation. Perhaps a hundred languages are spoken in the United States in addition to English. The top six, according to the 1970 Census, are German (6 million speakers), Italian (4 million), French (2.5 million), Polish (2.5 million), Yiddish (1.5 million), and Scandinavian languages (1.2 million). Of Native

American languages Navaho is spoken by more people (100,000) than any other, with Ojibwa, or Chippewa, next (30,000) and Sioux, or Dakota, third (20,000). Indian languages alone have contributed a great number of words to our vocabulary, and obviously these and other Americanisms have become part of the true universal English language, just as have words from the scores of languages that influenced British English over a much longer period of time. ... In truth, no such thing as Anglo-Saxon English exists anymore, if it ever did. There are well over a million Latin scientific names for animals used by English-speaking people, a million for insects, a million for flowers. That alone totals over 3 million English words with a foreign base. It seems clear that only a small portion of the 8 to 10 million English words (including technical terms and slang) were native-born in the British Isles.

#### Questions About the Reading

1. Why did the British traveler's snobbery border on "self-destructiveness"? Where do you think the traveler was when the words were written?
2. One non-English language spoken widely in the United States is conspicuously absent from the writer's list. What is it? Why do you think it is not included?
3. List words you can think of that originated in a language other than English. (If you have trouble thinking of any, scan the dictionary for a while and list the ones you find.)

#### Questions About the Writer's Strategies

1. Is this a paragraph of classification, division, or both? Support your answer.
2. Is there a topic sentence in this paragraph? If so, where is it? If not, state the main idea in your own words.
3. What audience do you think the writer had in mind for the paragraph? What is his purpose? About whom or what is he making a statement?
4. What is the writer's tone? Does it change during the course of the paragraph?