

children's stories such as "Puss in Boots," in a blend of miming, music, and dialogue. In America and many other countries, circus clowns are expert pantomimists, and miming has recently been revived in the theater for the deaf.

A **dumb show** is an episode of pantomime introduced into a spoken play. It was a common device in Elizabethan drama, in imitation of its use by Seneca, the Roman writer of tragedies. Two well-known dumb shows are the preliminary episode, summarizing the action to come, of the play-within-a-play in *Hamlet* (III. ii.), and the miming of the banishment of the Duchess and her family in John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (III. iv.).

See R. J. Broadbent, *A History of Pantomime* (1901).

papyrus: 30.

parable: 9.

paradigmatic (in linguistics): 176.

paradox: Paradox A paradox is a statement which seems on its face to be logically contradictory or absurd, yet turns out to be interpretable in a way that makes sense. An instance is the conclusion to John Donne's sonnet "Death, Be Not Proud":

One short sleep past, we wake eternally
And death shall be no more; *Death, thou shalt die.*

The paradox is used occasionally by almost all poets, but was a persistent and central device in seventeenth-century *metaphysical poetry*, both in its religious and secular forms. Donne, who wrote a prose collection titled *Problems and Paradoxes*, exploited the figure constantly in his poetry. "The Canonization," for example, is organized as an extended proof, full of local paradoxes, of the paradoxical thesis that sexual lovers are saints. Paradox is also a frequent component in verbal *wit*.

If the paradoxical utterance conjoins two terms that in ordinary usage are contraries, it is called an **oxymoron**; an example is Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "O *Death in life*, the days that are no more." The oxymoron was a familiar type of *Petrarchan conceit* in Elizabethan love poetry, in phrases like "pleasing pains," "I burn and freeze," "loving hate." It is also a frequent figure in devotional prose and religious poetry as a way of expressing the Christian mysteries, which transcend human sense and logic. So John Milton describes the appearance of God, in *Paradise Lost* (III, 380):

Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear.

Paradox was a prominent concern of many *New Critics*, who extended the term from its limited application to a type of *figurative language* so as to encompass all surprising deviations from, or qualifications of, common perceptions or commonplace opinions. It is in this expanded sense that Cleanth Brooks is able to claim, with some plausibility, that "the language of poetry is the language of paradox," in *The Well Wrought Urn* (1947). See also *deconstruction* for the claim that all uses of language disseminate themselves into the unresolvable paradox called an *aporia*. For references to *paradox* in other entries, see pages 193, 217.