

Metaphor and Cognition in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: A Study on the Use of Heuristic Rhetoric in Shakespeare's Dramatic Language

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Synopsis

This essay reconsiders the role of rhetoric in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* from a linguistic point of view. By adopting the cognitive linguists' view that rhetoric reflects our cognition, I argue that there is a strong correlation between each character's cognitive status and their uses of rhetoric. I infer that Shakespeare was in effect well aware of the importance of metaphor in our cognition, because in his drama some of the characters use metaphorical expressions effectively when they try to understand incomprehensible situations.

Rhetoric has traditionally been considered to be an art of persuasion used especially in public speaking. It is generally seen as a matter of wording, an unusual expression, or a superficial adornment, which may sometimes obscure the truth. However, cognitive linguists such as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have come to believe that rhetoric, especially metaphor, has a *heuristic* aspect in nature; i.e., metaphorical thinking helps us understand abstract concepts by comparing them with more familiar concepts and getting a new perspective on them.

I re-examine the role of rhetoric in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, applying the cognitive linguists' view of metaphor into the analysis of his dramatic language. The use of rhetoric reflects characters' cognition, and it varies depending on how the characters recognize the immediate challenges that they are facing, and how they attempt to negotiate it. For example, Theseus hardly uses heuristic rhetoric, but instead he uses traditional types of rhetoric repeatedly when he tries to persuade others. He is confident of his knowledge and believes such a clichéd use of rhetoric in his speech has a persuasive power, but in fact he fails to persuade or affect other characters. It is also true of Lysander and Demetrius, who are not aware of their ignorance. Since they believe they adequately understand the current situations, they do not use heuristic metaphor, but rather feel it conventional expressions sufficient to employ. In contrast, Helena acknowledges that she has no idea of what is happening. When she struggles to understand problems, she unleashes a torrent of novel metaphors which evoke vivid images. By creating such tropes, she successfully avoids going into a panic, and finds a satisfactory answer enough to cope with the incomprehensible situation. Bottom, one of the mechanics, differs from the other characters in that he enjoys the situation when he is

involved in incomprehensible turmoil. Unlike theseus or the young male lovers, Lysander and Demetrius, he does not have confidence in his knowledoe, and unlike Helena, he dose not try to understand his situation by speaking expressively. He, as a clown, seems to ignore the heuristic power of rhetoric.

Although there is some difficulty in dealing with the cognitive processes of fictional characters, this essay reveals that the uses of rhetoric in Shakespeare's dramatic characters' speeches correlate to how they understand immediate challenges they are confronted with. When characters are embroiled in an incomprehensible incident, metaphor offers them familiar images or new perspectives on it, which enables them to deal with their problems successfully. Shakespeare's drama made use of rhetoric not simply as the art of persuasion but also as people's essential means of cognition.

1.Introduction

Rhetoric has been considered to be an art of persuasion used especially for public speaking from a traditional point of view since the days of Aristotle. Rhetoric was one of the major subjects in humanistic education of the Renaissance period, and was a toolkit to be memorized as a guide to eloquent and persuasive speech. It is seen as a matter of words, an unusual expression, and a superficial adornment, which sometimes could obscure true meanings. This view of rhetoric is based on the assumption that words have objective meanings and correspond to entities in the actual or imaginary world; therefore, using words rhetorically constitutes a departure from true meanings. However, opposing to this objectivist view, experientialists claim that meanings of words emerge through human construal about the world, and many cognitive linguists have suggested that rhetoric has a fundamental role in the process of human construal.

In *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), George Lakoff and Mark Johnson reveal that rhetoric, especially metaphor, is pervasive in everyday language, and contend that our conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. They suppose that we construe a vague, abstract concept by comparing it with a more familiar concept obtained through our everyday experiences. Among other tropes metaphor plays a great role in helping this process of understanding because it structures an abstract concept, by revealing or creating similarity between two different concepts. One of the metaphors they refer to as typical of this type is the LOVE IS WAR metaphor. This type of metaphor is called a *conceptual metaphor*, and constitutes a foundation for individual expressions. The LOVE IS WAR metaphor is instantiated as the following expressions: "she *fought for* him, but his mistress *won out*," "she *pursued* him *relentlessly*," and "she is *besieged* by suitors" (49). Those expressions are based on the idea that love can be understood as war, and various cases of love are expressed with the terms related to war. We generally use such expressions at the unconscious level; however, Lakoff and Johnson maintain that how we speak is the reflection of how we think. Therefore, conceptual metaphors are considered to construct our way of understanding abstract concepts by connecting them to their more accessible counterparts.

Since 1980s, several literary critics have developed ideas of cognitive science, including cognitive

linguistics to apply them to the study of literature, as well as to that of rhetorical expressions which appear in literary texts. Peter Stockwell draws on the theory of cognitive poetics to explain an aspect of readers' intuitive sense of appreciation of literary works. Cognitive narratology, which is specifically advocated by Hiroshi Nishitaya in Japan, views a literary text as a manifestation of the author's construal of the world.¹ Regarding individual expressions, including figures of speeches, cognitive linguists as well as literary critics have adopted the view of Lakoff and Johnson mentioned above to analyze poetic expressions. George Lakoff and Mark Turner carefully examine metaphoric expressions in poems, revealing the underlying conceptual metaphors of these expressions. Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner reconsider the mechanism of understanding metaphor by developing the theory of conceptualization called the *conceptual blending theory*.² These studies reveal that not only everyday conversation but also poetic expressions can be explained in terms of our cognitive abilities. However, what they primarily deal with is limited to the cognitive function of rhetoric on the part of authors or readers, but not the cognition of fictional characters and its relationship with rhetoric.

One of the latest experiments that focus on literary characters' cognition is observed in Raphael Lyne's *Shakespeare, Rhetoric and Cognition* (2011).³ In order to analyze characters' cognition, he applies the cognitive linguists' view of metaphor to literary criticism of Shakespeare. Though he does not dismiss the traditional idea that rhetoric has a persuasive and eloquent function, he also argues that rhetoric represents a process of thought. He focuses on characters' cognition and examines how each character speaks using various kinds of tropes, especially when they face an incomprehensible situation or a cognitive crisis. He concludes that thoughts are developed through speech rather than speech being merely the result of thoughts, and that rhetoric has a great significance in this process of thought.

Lyne discusses the relationships between rhetoric and cognition, referring to the texts of Shakespeare's plays and poems. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example, each character tries to understand their cognitive predicament in a distinctive way of speech. When Demetrius praises the beauty of Helena, he represents the intensity of his passion using conventional rhetoric. By contrast, Helena mourns over the loss of Demetrius using metaphors in an unconventional manner. Bottom also tries to handle his situation when he first meets fairies, by making a quasi-metaphorical link between fairies' names and the objects that their names represent in our natural world, and then his clownish talk presents an image of his usual manner of contact with those objects in everyday life. Lyne suggests that characters think differently when they speak differently, and that a metaphorical apprehension of a predicament proves effective to some extent in that speakers can cope with such predicament without getting into a panic, though they do not necessarily gain a perfect understanding (100-131).

The cognitive theory of rhetoric as a foundation of thought is especially useful because it sheds light on the rhetorical resourcefulness of Shakespeare's language. What I would like to provide through this essay is a linguistic and rhetorical analysis of the speeches of the characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in order to reveal the role of tropes when each character tries to understand difficult situations. As Lyne observes, almost all the characters have to face incomprehensible situations in this play, but how they represent their situations in words and their choice of rhetoric vary considerably. Each of them shows idiosyncratic use of rhetoric, which indicates differences in their cognitive processes. First, Chapter I will

introduce the cognitive theory of rhetoric and discuss how effectively we can apply it to the understanding of Shakespeare's dramatic art, taking speeches in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as examples. Chapter II will compare the qualities of rhetorical expressions in persuasive speeches with those employed in the process of thought. Then Chapter III will examine the variety of rhetorical styles used by individual characters and their relation to how each character recognizes their situations, comparing, for example, the speeches of the young lovers, and finally that of the clown, Bottom.

Chapter I : Cognitive Linguists' View of Rhetoric and Some Examples in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

The aim of this essay is to provide a linguistic analysis of the role of metaphor and other rhetoric as they are employed in the speeches of Shakespeare's dramatic characters when they try to cope with certain situations, taking examples mainly from his comedy, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In cognitive linguists' view, rhetoric is considered not only as decorative use of language which is aimed at persuading others, but also as an indispensable basis for human understanding of the world. In addition, it seems that rhetoric has a power to encourage our thought as well because it helps us construct our ideas, occasionally offering novel images of things. According to cognitive linguists, we understand what we perceive or experience by representing them in words and then conceptualizing them. They say that humans do not conceptualize situations just as they perceive, but they analyze the situations and construct them as meaningful images within the frame of a certain language. When humans conceptualize something, human cognitive features inevitably influence their cognitive process. Rhetoric serves an important function in this cognitive process because it reflects the way humans transform their experiences into linguistically conceptualized images, from which they construct their own thoughts and opinions.⁴

One of the key tropes that are intimately involved in the human cognitive process is metaphor. The function of metaphor is to compare something hard to grasp to an easily comprehensible concept on the basis of a similarity between the two. For example, a man would call his girlfriend his sunshine. In this case, the speaker finds a similarity between the woman and the sun. What is important here is that the similarity does not evolve independently from the speaker's cognition. The speaker finds the similarity between otherwise unrelated concepts by using analogy. Through this cognitive process, people can so that they can comprehend even a complicated situation because they are aware of its similarity to some familiar and accessible concepts.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, there are several good examples of how metaphors are used by the speakers to comprehend their situations. For instance, in Act 2, where Helena comes into the wood following Demetrius, she entreats him not to abandon her and says:

I am your spaniel, and, Demetrius,
The more you beat me I will fawn on you.
Use me but as your spaniel: spurn me, strike me,
Neglect me, lose me; (2.1.203-206)⁵

Here, Helena uses a metaphor, 'I am your spaniel,' which compares her with a dog. She sees a similarity between these two concepts when she, as a neglected lover, behaves loyally to her beloved in order to get his attention if only a little. She regards her situation as that of a dog trying to gain its master's favor. Then, she continues to use a series of verbs which are related to that metaphor, i.e., beat, fawn, spurn, strike, neglect, and lose, to describe her desperate relationship with Demetrius. Those verbs are usually used to describe how cruelly humans sometimes treat their pet dogs. Before she uses this metaphor, she appeals to him without a clear understanding of what she is doing; however, once she comes up with the metaphor, she finds what her beseeching posture and its consequences are like and organizes them into those of dogs. Subsequently, she becomes conscious of her miserable position in which the only thing she can beg is permission to follow him like a dog.

Metaphors are one type of tropes intimately related to cognition, but there is another level of rhetoric. Cognitive linguists put an emphasis especially on the existence of general-level metaphors, such as the LOVE IS WAR metaphor referred to above, which constitute a foundation of our various expressions. This fundamental metaphor is called conceptual metaphor. The reason behind the strong emphasis on the conceptual metaphor is that it is not merely a matter of words, but a matter of thought. The fact that it underlies our everyday expressions so deeply can be a strong proof that we understand the world by representing it in words. This view is supported by Lakoff and Johnson's claim that we talk about abstract concepts such as love according to the way we conceive of them, and we act according to the way we conceive of things. Lakoff and Turner insist that there are a number of conceptual metaphors for comprehending one abstract concept, and each of these metaphors focuses on different aspects, highlighting them, and giving rise to different inferences, which often conflict with each other. They maintain that though poetic expressions are doubtlessly unique, the conceptual metaphors underlying them may nonetheless be extremely common in Western thought as they recur in poem after poem. Conventional conceptual metaphors are so deeply put in our minds that we hardly notice that our various thoughts and behaviors are structured by such metaphoric inference.

Chapter II : Rhetoric for Persuasion and Rhetoric in Cognitive Process in Shakespearean Characters' Speeches

Adopting Lakoff and other cognitive linguists' view of rhetoric, this essay emphasizes the conjunction of rhetoric and cognition; however, it does not mean that when tropes are used in speech, they always reflect the process of thought. In the tradition of humanistic education, rhetoric has been considered to be an indispensable technique for effectual persuasion and argumentation. In Shakespeare's dramas too, some characters use rhetoric for the purpose of persuasion. When speakers try to persuade some other people, tropes of a certain characteristic are observed in their speeches. Mostly in such cases, they express or think they express what they have already understood, and therefore they simply put established ideas in their minds into words. It is seemingly unnecessary for them to benefit from the heuristic power of rhetoric, because they do not think that they are facing any incomprehensible situations.

First of all, in order to examine the rhetorical features of speeches in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I listed all the tropes I could find in a table and analyzed the data. In the issue of the categorization of

tropes, I followed *A Dictionary of Rhetoric* by Nobuo Sato et al., and focused on two types of rhetoric: tropes of signification such as metaphor and metonymy belong to the first type, and what the authors call the mode of thinking, such as allegory, enumeration, and allusion, belongs to the second type of tropes. Although they do not explain the basis for classification, I assume that the first type is based on the effect created by incongruity between the literal meaning of the word and the speaker's implication, and that the second one, tropes of mode of thinking, represents the speakers' emotional attempts to express their conceived thoughts. This analytical procedure reveals that tropes in speech vary according to the speaker's understanding of a certain situation in which he or she is involved. For example, when speakers try to persuade some other people with confidence in their knowledge of the situation, they often use accumulation, which is the technique of piling phrases or sentences to give a vivid impression or to make an argument more eloquent.⁶

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Theseus makes what he believes a persuasive speech to Hermia when she rebels against her father about her marriage:

Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires,
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,
You can endure the livery of a nun,
For aye to be in shady cloister mewed
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
Thrice blessed they that master so their blood
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
But earthlier happy is the rose distilled
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness. (1.1.67-78)

While these lines contain various tropes, accumulation appears at the beginning: "question your desires, know of your youth, examine well your blood." This rhetoric itself is supposed to have an effect to give a strong impression, but here, Theseus's words do not have such a persuasive power as he supposes them to, but remain vague and superficial. This deficiency of power results from his choice of words. He does not specify individual behaviors and attitudes, but simply mentions them as abstract concepts—desires, youth, and blood. In fact he fails to persuade Hermia, and makes her more obstinate. Although those engaging in the act of persuasion often use accumulation, contrary to their intention, it has little power as long as it is a series of clichés like Theseus' speech above.

A striking example of rhetoric other than accumulation found in this speech is two metaphors. Firstly, Theseus uses a metaphor, which compares a woman to a rose. He teaches Hermia how happy women can be by getting married, saying that the rose distilled is happier than the one withering and dying naturally. This metaphor has literary grace and is repeatedly used in the tradition of love poems, including

sonnets, especially when a man woos a lady. Secondly, the metaphor “the cold fruitless moon” also gives an impression of being poetic and sophisticated. The reason why we have such impression is confirmed by the fact that it is a complicated metaphor composed of two conceptual metaphors. One is CHASTITY IS COLDNESS, and the other is HUMANS ARE PLANTS. Both of them, especially for the latter one, are productive conceptual metaphors used frequently in literary works as well as in everyday conversations, but such a combination of two or more conceptual metaphors often produces a poetic effect. Theseus probably believes that those poetic words are beneficial in moving Helena. However, in spite of the fact that both of the metaphors of the distilled rose and of the fruitless moon are surely poetic, they offer no novel view about women or their marriage. Theseus’s metaphors are based on clichéd images which were already common in Petrarchan poems. Therefore, far from being convinced by Theseus, Hermia uses his argument against him and refuses his suggestion, using straightforward words: “So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord, ere I will yield my virgin patent up unto his lordship” (1.1.79-81).

Lyne argues that there is an important distinction between the language in which speakers convey the results of thoughts, and the creative means by which they work towards understanding (10-11). In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, characters are involved in mysterious happenings or problems in the wood ruled by fairies, which for the most part they must struggle to find the best way to solve. As Lyne suggests, when they face a cognitive challenge, “rhetoric comes to look like a problem-solving process whose goal is to make sense of things that are not easily made into sense” (11). If they successfully understand the situation, they can make their next move with the newly discovered logic of their heuristics. If not, they can at least cope with inexplicable happenings without going into a panic.

One example of the speeches with heuristic rhetoric is Helena’s soliloquy when Hermia and Lysander have confessed to her that they are to elope into the wood. She cannot see any reason why only she endures hardship to be rejected inhospitably by Demetrius while Hermia is succeeding in love. She starts her speech comparing her situation with Hermia’s, “How happy some o’er other some can be! / Through Athens I am thought as fair as she” (1.1.226-227). Then, she considers that Demetrius’s change of heart and her doting on him are similar in that both are wrong. This idea is seen in her cry, “And as he errs, doting on Hermia’s eyes, / So I, admiring of his qualities” (1.1.230-231). However, this comparing does not seem to work well enough for her to find out the reason of his betrayal. Consequently, she continues speaking, and there cognitive rhetoric flourishes:

Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity.
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.
Nor hath love’s mind of any judgement taste;
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste.
And therefore is love said to be a child
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,

So the boy Love is perjured everywhere. (1.1.232-241)

In this passage, Helena strives to capture the reality of love. First, she states that “love can transpose to form and dignity.” Love described in this remark is just an agent, which has a power to change a vile thing into a worthy one, but it is personified in the line that immediately follows with a strong image of a human with eyes and the mind. Then she introduces the traditional image of Cupid as a blind boy with wings in order to account for the unwelcome aspects of love such as lack of judgment, rashness and hastiness. Or else, if she does not mean to identify known qualities of love when she refers to Cupid, she comes up with some ideas of them by talking about Cupid. Through the image of Cupid, personified love then turns into a more specified human, a child. She concludes, “...therefore love is said to be a child.” That love is a child is for her a new discovery about love, and this helps her think forward. Now she successfully gains a vivid image of love as if it were a boy next door, and hence she produces such a simile as “as waggish boys in game themselves forswear,” and states “the boy Love” as if there were a boy whose name is Love. This image is so real and strong that she seems to be satisfied with this way of understanding the qualities of love. She stops thinking about love and then her target turns to Demetrius’ change of heart. In order to understand it, she uses metaphors in her speech below:

For ere Demetrius looked on Hermia’s eyne
He hailed down oaths that he was only mine,
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt. (1.1.242-245)

She begins by comparing his oaths to hail, and then imagines him as ice, which is easily melted by heat. The image of ice suggests his frozen heart to her. She accepts that his betrayal was meant to happen because he is ice, which is subject to the effects of heat from someone’s love. Since her rich rhetoric ceases with her calming down, the following lines contain no notable tropes. Rather, they indicate that she now has an idea of what to do next — to tell Demetrius about the elopement of Hermia and Lysander.

In this chapter, I have discussed two ways of speech concerning the roles of rhetoric: one is persuasive speech in which characters use rhetoric as a tool to state more effectively what they already know, i.e. the result of thought. The other is cognitive speech, in which characters try to understand incomprehensible situations in the process of speaking. The second type is important to us in that it shows the role of rhetoric when characters develop their thoughts. Rhetoric is not just a toolkit but also a cognitive activity, especially when it is not used as a conventional expression but is invented by the speaker’s original conceptualization. The latter types of rhetoric can offer somewhat new views of the world.

Chapter III : Dramatic Characters’ Awareness of Their Situation and How It Affects Their Use of Rhetoric in Shakespeare’s Comic Scenes

In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, most characters are involved in inexplicable events by fairies’ manipulation in the shadows of the forest. How to conceive the situations and how to deal with them vary

according to individual characters. For example, Theseus is representative of those who are perfectly confident of their knowledge while the female lovers feel frustrated from not knowing what is going on. In contrast, there are such characters as can enjoy incomprehensible situations without going into a panic at all, like Bottom. When the characters think differently, their use of rhetoric appears differently in their speeches.

I want to begin my analysis of rhetoric by comparing the speeches of the young lovers. The male Athenians, Lysander and Demetrius, mostly believe with confidence that they behave rationally even after drops of love juice are applied on their eyes by Puck. While these men think that they understand their situations, two Athenian ladies, Helena and Hermia, have no idea of what is going on when the hearts of their lovers change suddenly. These women struggle to deal with the incomprehensible states, or the troubles with which they are involved, showing an emotional outburst.

When Lysander sees Helena with his enchanted eyes immediately after waking up, he begins to explain passionately to her why he loves her without suspecting the cause of his change of heart. He shows no anxiety over this inexplicable change in the following speech:

Who will not change a raven for a dove?
The will of man is by his reason swayed,
And reason says you are the worthier maid.
Things growing are not ripe until their season,
So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason.
And, touching now the point of human skill,
Reason becomes the marshal to my will,
And leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook
Love's stories written in love's richest book. (2.2.120-128)

These lines are full of conventional types of rhetoric. First, he starts his speech with a pair of banal metaphors, which compare a beautiful woman to a dove and an ugly woman to a raven. Then he uses allegory when he develops his theory on a conflict between reason and will. Since such conflicts often occur in traditional morality plays, his allegory gives the impression that the character Reason is acting in a morality play. Following that, in order to explain the reason why he did not love Helena previously, he compares his youth to that of a fruit, having recourse to a common conceptual metaphor, HUMANS ARE PLANTS. Subsequently, his argument goes back to allegory that suggests the victory of reason over will, and finally he closes his speech by introducing a conventional image, which relates a human's face to a book cover. This image can be found in Shakespeare's sonnets as well as in other poets' love poems, in which a man praises his lover's appearance especially about their faces. Although he tries to persuade her with all his skill of rhetoric, Helena only thinks that his praise is a "keen mockery" (2.2.129), and merely a "scorn" (2.2.130).

Demetrius is also unaware that he does not know the true state of things. While being ignorant of the fact that his sight is enchanted by love juice, he declares his love for Helena with exaggerated expressions.

He accumulates overstated compliments like “O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!” (3.2.145), and begins to praise her parts with conventional comparisons:

To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!
That pure congealed white—high Taurus' snow,
Fanned with the eastern wind—turns to a crow
When thou hold'st up thy hand. (3.2.138-143)

He compares Helena's eyes, lips, and hands with crystal, cherries, and Taurus' snow respectively. Those metaphors are intended to be poetic, but indeed they are well-worn clichés; therefore, those compliments do not sound genuine, and instead make Helena feel that they are empty, or as extremes, and stupid. In short, he fails to provide a vivid description of Helena's beauty.

However, Demetrius does not always use such clichéd figurations. When he gives details to Theseus about what happened during the night, the quality of his rhetoric changes a little. The difference from the above case is that he accepts the fact that he does not know the exact reason for his change of heart. This is confirmed by his statement: “I wot not by what power— / But by some power it is—” (4.1.163-164). After expressing his lack of confidence in his knowledge, Demetrius tries to illustrate how his mind has changed:

my love to Hermia,
Melted as the snow, seems to me now
As the remembrance of an idle gaud
Which in my childhood I did dote upon, (4.1.164-167)

He uses an ordinary simile “melted as the snow” at first, and then shifts to use somewhat an idiosyncratic thing as a target for comparison. He introduces the image of a kid's toy, which he actually played with in his childhood. It is his original simile based on his own experience, so it achieves a relatively vivid impression even though it might not have a heuristic power to find a satisfactory reason. Presumably he is able to produce such a unique simile because he is aware of his lack of knowledge and no longer uses rhetoric simply to declare his fixed thought.

Meanwhile, their partners, Helena and Hermia, are aware that they are involved in incomprehensible situations from the beginning. Especially, Helena is the most expressive of all the characters of this play. She unleashes creative metaphors and similes against her cognitive crisis, although her attempt does not always find satisfactory answers. When she mistakenly thinks that Hermia is making a mockery of her in conspiracy with Lysander and Demetrius, she accuses Hermia of being unfaithful to her friend. Attempting to find a satisfactory reason, she creates novel similes:

So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry: seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition,
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem.
So, with two seeming bodies but one heart,
Two of the first—like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one and crowned with one crest.
And will you rend our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend? (3.2.208-216)

In order to describe her friendship with Hermia, she comes up with two different similes to make one single assertion that their bodies seem two but their hearts are one. The first simile is about a cherry. In comparison to metaphor, simile is said to be suited for comparing two different subjects whose affinity or similarity is difficult to find or is not yet established. The more remote the target is from the compared image, the further the speaker's thinking is encouraged. This is because the speaker tries to find a relationship between them more intensively if a larger incongruity is perceived. In her second simile, which is composed of technical terms of heraldry, the similarity between a coat of arms and women's friendship is not very explicit either. Therefore she is in need of a detailed explanation again. Its innovative similarity is based on the appearance of the coat of arms whose shield is a complex combination of those of several families. Her words give a strong impression with tangible images, while she manages to reach the conclusion that what Hermia is trying to do is to tear an inseparable thing by force.

Although Hermia's situation is almost the same as Helena's in that both of them are aware that they cannot understand what is happening to them, the former's rhetoric differs from that of the latter. As far as my analysis of the characters' speeches has revealed, Hermia does not use any remarkable cognitive rhetoric. Sometimes her rhetoric rather resembles that of Lysander, who is confident in his knowledge. As an example, I want to examine her speech as she accuses Demetrius of having killed her lover. She cannot accept the fact that Lysander left her unless he was forced to. She tries to explain why such a thing is impossible by focusing on magnificent images of planets. Firstly, insisting on Lysander's fidelity, she compares their relationship to that of the sun and the day: "The sun was not so true unto the day / As he to me" (3.2.50-51). Then she expands the celestial image to a more detailed and larger scale. If she should believe the fact, she says she would rather believe this bizarre notion: "I'll believe as soon / This whole earth may be bored, and that the moon / May through the center creep, and so displease / Her brother's noontide with th'Antipodes" (3.2.52-55). The image is presented not as a metaphor but as an allegory; more specifically, a parable is seen in this exaggerated statement. In spite of her cognitive crisis, she chooses allegory and exaggeration, both of which are principally used to explain what is already known. Perhaps the lack of heuristic rhetoric in her process of thought has something to do with her cognitive failure. She fails to solve the problem after all, and when she is left alone in the forest, she sighs at last, "I am amazed, and know not what to say" (3.2.344).

I want to conclude this chapter by discussing Bottom's speeches. His distinctive attitude toward incomprehensible happenings is most evident in his comment immediately after he wakes up. He expresses his amazement like this: "I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream past the wit of man to say what dream it was" (4.1.201-203). He considers the strange experiences in the forest as an inexplicable dream. He fails, or does not dare to find a meaning in them, but instead he concludes that it is impossible to understand such things by verbalizing them. Still, he tries to describe what happened: "Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had—but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had" (4.1.204-207). He attempted to find an appropriate way to express his experiences through his repeated use of the phrase "methought," but finally he gives up representing them in words.

The following part of his speech is famous for confusing senses: "The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report what my dream was" (4.1.207-210). It is an allusion to the Bible, but he garbles correspondences between the senses and their corresponding organs. It is important to note that under the dramatic convention at that time, dramatic characters are to tell the truth when they speak a monologue; therefore, Bottom speaks what he believes is true in this speech too. He does not have the aim to teach someone a lesson or make someone laugh by his clownish speech. In other words, his garbled expression above is not a means to tell his opinion to other people, but just a comment on his intuition. Although his speech is a kind of speech error, it gives a strong impression. It is because malapropism sometimes has an effect of evoking a novel image, emphasizing the incongruity between a 'right' expression and a 'wrong' one. This effect is similar to that of metaphor since metaphor is also based on the incongruity between a literal meaning and a speaker's intention. As a result, he happens to succeed in producing an impressive description with a synesthetic-like trope.⁸ His remark is nonsensical, but paradoxically he seems to tell the true state of his experience of the 'translation.' However, the fact that he produced a novel image of his experiences has no effect on his process of thought because he just poured out his feelings about them without any intention. As a kind of dramatic irony, only the audience can find the metaphoric truth implied in his words in the case of Bottom's apparently incongruous speech. Bottom's speech is a clown's parody, or a burlesque, of metaphor and human cognitive process.

He is not aware that he almost found the answer, but anyway he is no longer lost in abstraction, and says, "I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream ... and I will sing it in the latter end of a play" (4.1.210-213). Though this remark might seem contradictory to his decision not to speak, what he means is that he can present his strange experience as a part of a play without interpreting it. He does not show any interest in explaining or providing the exact interpretation of it, but would rather enjoy things as they are no matter how strange they may be. His response contrasts with the lovers' responses after waking up since they decide to give a full account of their experiences as is shown in Demetrius's remark: "by the way let us recount our dreams" (4.1.197).

From his speeches and rhetoric in them, it is conspicuous that Bottom can enjoy the situation without going into a panic when he is involved in incomprehensible turmoil. He neither has confidence in his knowledge like Theseus or the young male lovers, nor struggles to understand anything by speaking

expressively like Helena. Whenever people try to put things into words, they often find it irresistible to make their speeches contain some sort of moral interpretation. But Bottom thinks of simply conveying his experience by performing it as a ballad or a play, without explaining the reason or the meaning of it.

3. Conclusion

A Midsummer Night's Dream was written and first performed in 1595 or 1596.⁹ The sixteenth century was an age of great changes: England underwent social and cultural confusion which was partly caused by the Reformation under Henry VIII, and people faced spiritual crisis. European countries were voyaging around the world in search of new lands, which brought a significant change in the world map and an influx of exotic cultures. Science was gradually taking the place of mysticism of the Middle Ages, and signs of the rise of rationalism were seen as well. People had to cope with this profound shift of world-view and needed a new way of describing the world in order to respond to such changes. Renaissance poets, including Shakespeare, were aware of the importance of metaphor and other heuristic tropes when people were embroiled in incomprehensible circumstances.

Shakespeare in his works used various types of rhetoric, but not just as adornments of words. His way of using rhetoric was revolutionary in comparison with the traditional view of rhetoric in humanistic education—a tool for persuasion. In this essay, I applied a cognitive view of rhetoric to the analysis of several cases of dramatic characters' speech in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The reason why I have chosen this play as a text for linguistic analysis is that we can find many key functions of metaphors within the entirety of the play. The role of metaphors in the characters' cognitive processes is just one of many examples of their roles. Firstly, the audience can perceive a kind of metaphor that has a strong presence at the level of story lines. For example, Puck's love juice is a higher-level metaphor that can account for inexplicable happenings. The transformation of Bottom is also metaphoric. According to Lyne, the word "translation (*translatio*)," meaning translation, and the word "metaphor (*metaphora*)" are etymologically equivalent (124). Moreover, the setting of the play is metaphoric. Helen Hackett argues that the wood is at once a place of disorientation and liberation, of confusion and discovery, of danger and play, where characters are removed to an unfamiliar setting to undergo revelatory experience (lii). In short, it is considered to be a place that symbolizes a carnival state, i.e., the world of the upside-down value system. All the turmoil of love takes place in the wood because the wood is possibly a metaphor of such a state. Furthermore, this play is metaphoric in its structure in that various strange happenings in the wood and the whole fanciful story of the play are both absorbed into a dream. In the story, characters think of the mysterious incidents in the wood as a dream so that their actual experiences turn "to airy nothing." As to the play as a whole, Puck, in the epilogue, encourages the audience to regard it as something that has occurred while they have been asleep. Dream functions as a metaphor of the theater where such condition happenings – however uncertain and illusory it may be – take place.

In the world of Shakespeare's comedy, the use of various levels of metaphors in the characters' speech plays a crucial role in their understanding of the strange circumstances in which they find themselves unwittingly involved. Whether the rhetoric they use is heuristic or not, almost all the characters in this

play take advantage of the power of rhetoric to some extent. As a result, the lack of metaphors and other tropes in mechanicals' speeches is outstanding among them. They cannot understand things beyond the literal sense of the word. When they have a rehearsal of the play of Pyramus and Thisbe in Act 3, they worry that their audience might think their play is not a fiction but a reality. Bottom is concerned about the impact of the self-killing scene on ladies, and Snout and Starveling fear that a lion also would frighten ladies. Their answer to such problems is to explain to the audience that they are all fictional characters played by actors, and therefore harmless. Their inability to think metaphorically is excellently shown in the way they play the roles of Moonshine and of Wall. While Snout as Wall reveals his name to the audience, saying "I, one Snout by name, present a wall" (5.1.155), Starveling likewise explains, "This lantern doth the horned moon present, / Myself the man i'th' moon do seem to be—" (5.1.239-240). They cannot make metaphoric expressions like 'I am a wall' because such expressions require them to distinguish the represented wall from the representing actor. They worry that the audience would confuse these two unless they emphasize that they are just representing something imaginary by using the words such as "present" or "seem to be." This complete lack of metaphorical thinking among the mechanicals ironically reminds the audience how deeply our thought depends on metaphors.

Hippolyta, who has seen all the turmoil from an objective perspective, lastly indicates the process of metaphorical thinking in understanding the unknown. Regarding the story told by the lovers, she makes the following comment:

But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigured so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy;
But howsoever, strange and admirable. (5.1.23-27)

While she straightforwardly accepts the strangeness of their story, she senses the process by which the mysterious and unbelievable experiences transfigure into "something of great constancy." Although she could not reach any satisfactory answer here, her comment above illustrates the cognitive process when people find themselves involved in incomprehensible situations. Although she rarely shows her ability to use heuristic rhetoric throughout the play, her potential for it is apparent in the comment she gives to the workers' play. While other people sitting as the audience on stage, such as Theseus and male lovers, can only jeer, ridicule, and make a mockery of the play, she frankly drops a word of sympathy to Pyramus played by Bottom: "Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man" (5.1.284). She is the only character who is compassionate enough to "feel" a metaphoric meaning in the nonsensical performance of the play, appreciate the good intention of the mechanicals, and transfigure them all to something that actually moves her heart. That is the power of metaphors, making the incomprehensible comprehensible.

Rhetoric has a signification for human cognition. Shakespeare seems to have been well aware of the power of rhetoric not only as a persuasive and expressive art but also as a means of thinking and understanding. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, he dramatizes the way people struggle to understand

incomprehensible situations. Helena is the most expressive of all the characters and constructs her thought through the process of inventing inspiring metaphors and similes. Her ability to think metaphorically is remarkable because other characters such as Theseus and male lovers are mostly not aware of their ignorance and keep using conventional tropes. My reading of the play has shown that those who can think metaphorically tend to be more successful in achieving a new perspective of the unknown than those who think without them. The use of rhetoric in the speeches of these dramatic characters reminds us that the human ability of metaphorical thinking and of using heuristic rhetoric is essential to live in a world filled with things that we have never seen, heard, conceived or tasted before.¹⁰

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Note

- 1 For details of the theories of cognitive poetics and cognitive narratology, see Peter Stockwell, "The Cognitive Poetics of Literary Resonance," *Language and Cognition*, 1(1), 25-44. 2009, and Nishitaya, Hiroshi, *Ninchi Monogatari-ron towa Nani ka? (What is Cognitive Narratology?)*, Tokyo: Hitsuji Syobo, 2006, respectively.
- 2 See Gilles Fauconier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and The Mind's Hidden Complexities*, New York: Basic Books, 2002.
- 3 See Raphael Lyne, *Shakespeare, Rhetoric and Cognition*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- 4 For further discussions on cognitive linguists' approach to our conceptual system, see Yamanashi, Masa-aki, *Ninchi Imiron Kenkyu (Cognitive Semantics)*, Tokyo: Kenkyusya, 2012.
- 5 Shakespeare. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Ed. Peter Holland. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- 6 Regarding detailed explanation and examples of this definition, see Sato, Nobuo, et al., *Rhetoric Jiten (A Dictionary of Rhetoric)*, Tokyo: Taishukan-shoten, 2006, p.324.
- 7 Many researchers argue over the definition of allegory. In this essay, I follow the definition of Sato et al.(2006). They define allegory as it has an independent system of expressions, which as a whole indicates a different thing or event. Parable is a typical subtype of it.
- 8 In synesthetic metaphors, words that pertain to one sensory modality are extended to express another sensory modality (Cristina Cacciari 2008: 427). For example, the cross-modality expression "bright sound of battle" is based on the links connecting bright colors and loud sounds. In this expression, the word "bright," which is a term for vision, is used to express a property of auditory stimuli. I regard Bottom's speech here as a synesthetic-like metaphor. He shuffles the correspondences between sensory organs and their functions, and consequently, he produces cross-modality expressions, which seem to reflect the perception of his confusing experience.
- 9 The estimated date of production of this play follows Peter Holland (110).
- 10 This article is a revised version of my thesis which was submitted to the Department of English of Ochanomizu University in December 2012 in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of B. A. I would like to express my gratitude to my former supervisor, Tetsuro Shimizu, Associate Professor at Ochanomizu University, for drawing my attention to Raphael Lyne's study on this theme. Dr. Lyne's book, which was published in 2011 when I was an undergraduate student at Ochanomizu University, was very informative and full of useful insights to me, and indeed inspired me to take up for my thesis the dramatic language of Shakespeare in the light of cognitive linguistics. I am also grateful to Professor Takeshi Matsuzaki of Ochanomizu University for his valuable comments, and to Yukinori

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