

**RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF A POLITICAL SATIRE PODCAST,**

***NANEUN GGOMSUDA***

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A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

San Diego State University

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Rhetoric and Writing Studies

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by

Kyoo Sang Jo

Summer 2015

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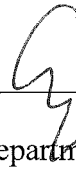
Thesis of Kyoo Sang Jo:

Rhetorical Analysis of a Political Satire Podcast, *Naneun Ggomsuda*



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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my loving wife, Boram.

## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Rhetorical Analysis of a Political Satire Podcast, *Naneun Ggomsuda*

by

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Master of Arts in Rhetoric and Writing Studies  
San Diego State University, 2015

In December 2012, much attention was paid by the public to the presidential election in South Korea because the political podcast, *Naneun Ggomsuda*, (*Naggomsu*) engaged young people in political activities. The podcast gained enormous popularity by revealing the corruption and immoral behaviors of the Korean President Lee and his associates to the public. It was a kind of social phenomena and played an important role not only in encouraging the public to become interested in politics, but also in spreading the podcast media in South Korea. In the sense that its popularity proved its persuasive power, the podcast raised a number of rhetorical issues. In this respect, I identify four rhetorical devices—hangout talk, role play, satire, and deliberate bias—that motivate the audience to listen to the podcast by analyzing its narrative. Through a fantasy theme analysis derived from Ernest G. Bormann, I discover that the “David and Goliath” fantasy theme is constructed and the audience experiences the rhetorical vision of “resistance,” which functions as the audience’s motivation for public action. In addition, by exploring a podcast’s characteristics as a new media platform, I show that they are an important factor of the podcast’s success as well as a technical strategy planned by the podcast’s producer.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In December 2012, the presidential election was one of the most important events in the political history in South Korea. It was a significant milestone in that the country had the opportunity to select either the extension of the vested regime, which set democracy back, or governmental change, which could restore a true democracy. The former government and the ruling party implemented corrupt policies undemocratically, which inflicted great losses on Korea socially, economically, and politically. Under these political circumstances, a new podcast program named *Naneun Ggomsuda*, (*Naggomsu*) (which means “I am a Weasel”) attracted public attention. *Naggomsu* played an important role in encouraging the general public to become interested in politics. Some opinion leaders criticized the podcast because of its explosive popularity which led the podcast’s fans to almost religious devotion. This intense interest in the podcast, including both positive and negative assessments, demonstrates that it had a tremendous influence on Korean society in 2011-2012. *Naggomsu* broadcast its first episode on April 27, 2011, which dealt with the corrupt acts of President Lee Myung-bak<sup>1</sup> and his cronies. Contrary to the established media, *Naggomsu* investigated scandals and corruption of the President and his confidants and generated a lot of issues so that young voters became excited. This public interest triggered coverage by the established media, which had tried to turn a blind eye to the phenomenon. As a result, the podcast became a genre recognized by the public.

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<sup>1</sup> The names of *Naggomsu* hosts and President Lee will follow the Korean naming convention in this paper. (e.g. last name then first name)

On December 1, 2011, MBN (an economic news network in South Korea) surveyed 1,000 adults between the age of 19 and 59 on the reliability of news media. According to the results of the survey, *Naggomsu*'s reliability was 40%, more than double the 17.2% of major newspapers such as the *Chosun-Ilbo*, the *Joongang-Ilbo*, and the *Donga-Ilbo* (M. Lee 75). The episode broadcast on August 22, 2011 ranked in first place on Apple iTunes podcast popular episodes. It was the only one in the Korean language in the top 200 popular podcasts. In response to *Naggomsu*'s popularity, Kim Yong-min, producer of *Naggomsu*, said:

Our story is not a whole new story, not a huge scoop. So far, most of the story had already come out in the media. But we tried to pull out the story that mainstream media ignored, but should not be forgotten again. That's why the listeners are craving this podcast, I think. We made efforts to dispel the suspicion of the public such as doubt that mainstream media didn't tell the truth and left questions unanswered. (J. Lee)

In the field of communication and journalism, several studies investigating *Naggomsu* have been carried out. Kee-hyeung Lee et al. examined the role of this podcast both thoroughly and contextually to shed light on its multifaceted and provocative role through textual reading, discourse analysis, and email interviews. In their opinion, traditional Korean media do not meet the requirement of balancing political issues in Korean society and one-way political comments are rampant (K. Lee et al. 76). They argued that the media and the political environment disappointed the general public and as a result, *Naggomsu* could quickly widen its influence (K. Lee et al. 76). They expected that *Naggomsu* would still play an important role in providing political content (K. Lee et al. 102). In her Master's thesis, Mi-sun Lee analyzed the viewpoint of traditional newspaper media regarding the highly biased venue, *Naggomsu*. She featured three general newspaper companies—the *Donga-Ilbo*, the *Hankyoreh*, and the *Hankook-Ilbo*—that reported on *Naggomsu* as subjects and analyzed the content and the frame of the reports in those three newspapers. Her analysis showed that the existing newspaper companies, proud of their objectivity, criticized the non-standard characteristics of *Naggomsu* intensively in order to place the validity of their own objective report on a firm basis, and rarely reported its role as alternative press and its positive function (M. Lee 88).

In addition, the study of the *Naggomsu* phenomenon was undertaken in the field of political science. A recent study by Cha and Jin looked into the process by which new

internet media's influence such as the influence of *Naggomsu* was forged and diffused, and the dynamics that caused its influence to lead to political participation or joint behaviors in Korean society in 2011. Their research found that the pre-existing media's report on *Naggomsu* played a large role in its perceptual diffusion among ordinary citizens (Cha and Jin 188). As a result of analyzing social data such as online comments written on the downloaded websites, news reports regarding *Naggomsu*, and a number of *Naggomsu*'s online fan communities, they argued that the pre-existing media are the main carriers to enable social media's strong influence on the public rather than a pervasive power of social media itself (182).

Of course, there were several studies that examined successful factors of *Naggomsu*'s popularity. Seung-ho Cho and Sook-yeong Hong investigated people's motivations for using *Naggomsu* by an online survey. Their findings showed that almost half of the participants were introduced to podcasting by *Naggomsu*, and their motivations of using *Naggomsu* was attributed to one factor including information seeking, entertaining seeking, relaxation, and escape (Cho and Hong 354). Also, the motivation significantly influenced the number using podcasting and the number hours of daily they used podcasting (354). That is, the higher motivation, the more active use in podcasting. This implies that *Naggomsu* has contributed to diffusion of podcasting. The research of Minchul Kim and Ji Eun Kim aims to examine what factors influence on the listeners' intention. The result of their study revealed that trust in mainstream media significantly affected the intention. More importantly, the significant interaction between trust in mainstream media and political anxiety suggested that there are two paths that motivate the intention to listen to the show (M. Kim and J. Kim 20-21).

So far, most studies of *Naggomsu* have tended to focus on its role or influence rather than the rhetorical perspective of its meaningful features. It has many elements that can be understood with the rhetorical perspective because its content was transmitted via a new media platform podcast. Its narrative includes a variety of rhetorical characteristics such as satire, metaphor, and irony. Such rhetorical strategies enable the program to gain tremendous popularity. In addition, *Naggomsu* provides the listeners with a kind of fantasy, which creates a rhetorical community and allows them to share a specific rhetorical vision in their rhetorical community.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate *Naggomsu*'s characteristics to discover how it functions rhetorically for the listeners and how it reflects attributes of the podcast. To examine the rhetorical strategies of *Naggomsu* and its potential influence on its listeners and the Korean society, I will adopt the methods of fantasy theme analysis. The fantasy theme analysis is an effective way to identify a shared reality or community consciousness within a group of people involved in the communication so that we can understand the participants' motive to act. Through the fantasy theme analysis, I will discover what rhetorical vision is created by *Naggomsu* and how it influences the listeners' action. I will also analyze *Naggomsu* to identify its substantive or stylistic features and formulate a list of rhetorical devices. Although I will analyze *Naggomsu*'s influential power on the Korean society, it might be helpful to understand a genre of political podcasts in general not simply *Naggomsu* itself specifically. The research questions in this paper are also meaningful to an international audience as well as *Naggomsu*'s listeners because *Naggomsu* effectively utilized the technical advantages of the new podcast platform and persuasively employed a variety of rhetorical devices in its own way in order to encourage the general public—in particular, young people—to civic engagement.

This paper has been divided into four parts. The first will describe the background information of *Naggomsu* and explain who the four hosts are and their roles in the podcast. In the second part, I will deal with what a podcast is generally and examine how *Naggomsu* uses the technical characteristics of the podcast. Then, *Naggomsu*'s unique rhetorical strategies and their effects will be unpacked based on evidence in the narrative of *Naggomsu*. Lastly, through a fantasy theme analysis, I will identify a rhetorical vision shared by the four hosts and the listeners and what kind of effects is resulted from the vision offline.

## CHAPTER 2

### BACKGROUND

#### WHY *NAGGOMSU*?

*Naggomsu* exhibited a high level of political impact in the Korean presidential election in 2012. More traditional media, such as major newspapers and television networks, did not have a politically strong effect on the Korean society at that time. *Naggomsu* was regarded as a kind of social phenomena and the public's enthusiasm about it was an important factor in the Korean presidential election. A survey by Realmeter, a professional survey firm, ran a national poll using 750 male and female subjects over the age of 19 and reported that 8.6 out of 10 people surveyed had either listened to *Naggomsu* (30%) or had frequently heard the name on the news (56.4%) (Ko). *Naggomsu* ranked the first place in both the politics and new categories of Apple iTunes podcasts on August 8, 2011 and among all episodes in Apple iTunes podcasts on August 22 and 27, 2011 (qtd. in U. Jung 6). According to the the *Hankyoreh*, a newspaper, the number of people listening to *Naggomsu* counted by the podcast server was over six million, which included the number downloaded through smartphones and PCs, and the number listening through streaming services (qtd. in U. Jung 6). Also, several books written by the four hosts of *Naggomsu* became bestsellers, and the tickets of talk concerts that they held in domestic and overseas places were sold out in a few minutes. As *Naggomsu* gained popularity, online fan clubs for each host were organized. Among these, Jung Bong-ju's online fan club, "Jung Bong-ju and the future powers," had nearly 200,000 members. As such, the *Naggomsu* have drawn many people's attention dramatically in a short period of time and led them to become concerned with politics.

*Naggomsu*'s influence was not confined to politics. It played a pioneering role in spreading the podcast platform in South Korea. Most popular podcast programs were created after *Naggomsu* came out. In November 2009, after the iPhone was introduced in South

Korea, most podcasts had only retransmitted the main broadcast program of three major television and radio networks. In other words, before *Naggomsu*, the podcast seemed only a means for people to listen to the same old programs. However, when *Naggomsu* appeared for the first time in 2011, it established its own independent position based on its influential power outside the pre-existing media. Since then, a number of podcasts have been created in South Korea. The number of operating podcasts was over 3,700 in 2012. *Naggomsu* helped the podcast platform to have its own position as a new media genre. Another podcast's host, Seok-hoon Woo, also pointed out that:

It is true that *Naggomsu* opens new era of the podcast; however, it is not appropriate to entitle it to the alternative media because it is temporary from the beginning... The seed that *Naggomsu* sowed will grow into a different type including the alternative media... It will be divided into more specific podcasts for college students or particular generations. (qtd. in U. Jung 38)

### **THE FORMAT OF THE PODCAST DEDICATED TO PRESIDENT LEE**

Once a week, the four men sat around in a rented studio, laughing, blurting occasional expletives and making fun of South Korea's leader, President Lee Myung-bak. Then they posted the recording of their talk online. Their podcast was the most popular in South Korea, with each session logging as many as two million downloads. The four men "dedicated" their show to Mr. Lee, or "His Highness." But they called their talk show "Naneun Ggomsuda," "I'm a Weasel," or "I'm a Petty-Minded Creep," borrowing nicknames Mr. Lee's most vociferous critics applied to the President. Kim Ou-joon, the show's leader, stated that "we try to entertain people by raising all kinds of allegations against His Highness. We offer data to support the allegations, but what really matters is our attitude. We believe that His Highness's conservative regime has intimidated people. We tell our audience: 'Let's not be intimidated! Let's say whatever we want, even if we're thrown into jail tomorrow'" (Choe).

At first, *Naggomsu* was made and uploaded to the Apple iTunes by three men: Kim Ou-joon, who is still a chairman of the internet newspaper, the *Ddanzi-Ilbo*; Jung Bong-ju, who was a congressman in the 17<sup>th</sup> National Assembly; and Kim Yong-min, who is a political critic. After the 8th episode, Joo Jin-woo, a journalist of the *Sisa-IN*, joined *Naggomsu*.

Some critics defined *Naggomsu* in their own way. Kyung-wook Min regarded it as “oral pop literature distributed by the podcast” because it has three characteristics of literature: language arts, imagination, and emotional function (292). Chang-nam Kim, a professor at Sungkonghoe University, defined it as “the national sport for anti-president” (Y. Lee 319). Whatever people called it, it was obvious that *Naggomsu* started with a clear political intention. In his book, Jung Bong-ju described the *Naggomsu*’s subject by stating that “*Naggomsu*’s theme is simple. It is to find the real intention of the government, to disclose hidden, twisted truth made by the conservative media with insistence. And it is also to communicate with the general public” (32-33). In addition, the objective of *Naggomsu* was to tell the truth by means of a lively debate and communication. *Naggomsu* showed that the right shape of politics is to illustrate world we live in as it is. Politics reveals its interior workings through *Naggomsu*. *Naggomsu* aimed for a new kind of political commentaries which certainly break the existing frame of Korean politics. To change authoritative, severe, and complicated politics is the role of *Naggomsu* (B. Jung 47). Kim Ou-joon also drew people’s attention to politics in his book:

Just directly, without using any theories or technical terms, let’s talk about politics easily in everyday language. To those who think that apathy toward politics is cool, those who says that politicians are all bastards, those who have no idea what liberals and conservatives are, those who do not comprehend the cause of daily life stress, those who do not understand why the political parties behave in an irresponsible manner, those who do not know what to do in the presidential election, and those who keep politics away, I want to exclaim at this time, “Shut up! Do politics!” The current situation is very serious. (29-30)

Kim Ou-joon, the show’s leader, actually made the plan to launch the podcast. Despite only managing one political parody website, the *Ddanzi-Ilbo*, he has called himself the chairman of the Ddanzi Group since 1998. He has served as a host of radio programs in various media such as the *Hankyoreh*, CBS, SBS, and MBC. While the show went on, he played the role of criticizing President Lee, quickly switching between multiple subjects. With his unruly mustache and wild hair, he made the purpose of *Naggomsu* clear by his introductory statement in the first episode of the podcast:

안녕하십니까? 총수 김어준입니다. 새로운 방송을 만들었습니다. 나는 꼼수다. 이 방송은 이명박 대통령 가카에게 헌정하는 방송입니다. 가카가 퇴임하는 그 날까지 이어집니다. 가카의 그 끝을 알 수 없는, 깊이를 알 수

없는 치밀하고 정교한 극강의 꼼수. 앞으로 매주 여러분 앞에  
바치겠습니다. (“The 1st Episode”)

Hello! Chairman Kim Ou-joon. I made a new talk show. *Naneun Ggomsuda*. This broadcast is dedicated to His Highness, President Lee. The podcast will continue until President Lee’s term of office ends. President Lee’s corruption is so careful and elaborate that we cannot calculate its exact depth. We will show you it in detail every week. (“The 1st Episode”)

The second host, Jung Bong-ju, a political member of the opposition Democratic United Party, accused then-presidential candidate Lee Myung-bak of being affiliated with BBK, a company that manipulated stock prices in 2007. When he was in college, he went to jail for the pro-democracy movement for one and half years. After graduation, he joined the monthly magazine *Mal* as a journalist. In 1991, he failed to win the Seoul Metropolitan Council election, then entered politics and was elected to Parliament in 2004. Relatively unknown before the podcast rose to fame, Mr. Jung played a character who made endless bragging comments. He was given the nickname of “Funnel,”<sup>2</sup> because everything he said channeled down to self-praise. He was the most talkative of all the hosts. He cut off the others mid-sentence and punctuated almost every statement with a laugh he himself called “silly” (Choe). He promoted himself as “a great politician with a beautiful soul and fatally attractive” (Choe). He mentioned his soon-to-be-released book every chance he got (Choe). When his book on current issues, *Run, Jung Bong-ju*, came out, it became an immediate best-seller. His online fan club, “Jung Bong-ju and the future powers,” had nearly 200,000 members. Unfortunately, he had to stop hosting the podcast because he was sentenced to a year in jail for spreading false rumors. According to Korean law, he could not work as a legislator and lost his eligibility for reelection for 10 years until 2021.

The third host, Joo Jin-woo, has been an investigative journalist with the newsweekly *Sisa-IN* since 2007. His muckraking drove his pet enemy, the country’s leading Protestant

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<sup>2</sup> In *Naggomsu*, “Funnel” became a buzz word since Kim Ou-joon described as “funnel pulling” Jung Bong-ju’s trick of finishing his speech with self-praise. It means that no matter what he starts to say, he ends with praise for himself, so his speech resembles the shape of funnel.



churches, to call him “Satan’s reporter.” “These days, I am going after one man and one man only: His Highness,” he said about President Lee in an interview (Choe). Along those lines, he boldly raised sensitive subjects such as corruption in the biggest church and nepotism in the district courts. Mr. Joo was the first to report that President Lee had bought an expensive piece of real estate in Seoul under his son’s name to build his retirement residence. These actions led him to be involved in many law suits. In *Naggomsu*, he explained his findings in detail including the names of people involved, related places, and surrounding circumstances based on facts he collected. He even added behind-the-scenes stories which the general public did not know. His powerful investigative reporting provided significant credibility to the show’s discourse.

The last host, Kim Yong-min, was a former radio commentator. Educated in a Christian seminary and nicknamed “the preacher’s fat son”—his father being a preacher—Mr. Kim swayed his girth and belted out songs mocking President Lee to the tunes of church hymns. Since the President is an elder at one of the major Protestant churches in Seoul, this form of mockery was very effective as well as entertaining. He was the quietest person of the four hosts and, moreover, he was often caught dozing during the show. He played the moderator’s role to create a format in which each host had the opportunity to speak his own opinion. He also corrected wrong information quoted by the hosts, edited the show’s content, and was responsible for uploading the podcasts to iTunes.

## CHAPTER 3

### PODCAST PLATFORM

#### WHAT IS A PODCAST?

As *Naggomsu* succeeded in gaining popularity through a new podcast platform, it is necessary to understand what is meant by the term “podcast” as a particular medium. Podcast developer Mark Curry conceived of the podcast by using Real Simple Syndication (RSS) technology “to identify and automatically deliver MP3 files to his computer” (McClung and Johnson 83). Curry offered up the technology to open source developers and eventually over 100,000 podcasts became available through the iTunes software (McClung and Johnson 83). *The Podcasting Bible* defines podcasts as:

A series of audio (or video) programs delivered through a static URL containing an RSS feed that automatically updates a list of programs on the listener’s computer so that people may download new programs using a desktop application. Programs can be delivered to the listener automatically or when they choose to download them. (qtd. in Chen)

Podcasts’ producers or hosts are named “podcasters” and the files that they produce are “episodes.” Podcasts are used in the following way: Listeners select and subscribe to what they want from a myriad of podcast programs that podcasters upload on the website. At this time, if they use a typical aggregator, the RSS reader, they can automatically download periodically updated podcasts through the internet onto their own device: a personal computer, a portable MP3 player, and a smartphone.

Above all, the podcast format is the most important characteristic that appeals to the audience. The format centers on its capacity to break down the barriers of both time and space, known as time- and location-shifting (Wolfram 5). After users download audio podcasts, they can listen to the episodes anywhere and at any time—driving down the road, running on a treadmill, walking to lunch, or taking a bath—and they are not dependent upon broadcast signals, reception, or internet connectivity (Wolfram 5-6). Unlike a radio show, for

example, where the listener must be present at a scheduled time, podcast episodes can be saved and listened to whenever the listener chooses and as many times as he or she likes (Wolfram 6). Podcasts also give their audiences control over navigation, allowing listeners to scan forward and backward or pause episodes, none of which is an option in either traditional oratory or in other electronic aural technologies (Wolfram 6). The time- and space-shifting characteristics and the increased user control can, at times, give the podcast an advantage over more traditional modes of communication, such as reading, because the user can access the information while engaging in other activities (Wolfram 6).

The start-up costs of podcasting are relatively inexpensive, and it is possible to create a podcast with recording equipment that is standard for most new computers. This is an appealing option for individual hobbyists, non-profit administrators, or teachers, who do not have a budget for more expensive equipment and must keep production costs low (Wolfram 6). The podcast is both inexpensive and relatively easy to produce because of the minimal equipment needed—a computer, a microphone, an inexpensive editing software application, and an internet connection. This makes it an appealing way to broadcast a message to a potential audience of millions. The podcast is made unpredictable because it is able to circumvent the traditional media gatekeeping process and skirt all FCC (Federal Communications Commission) regulations with regard to language and content (Berry 143-144). The podcast is filtered through no overriding authority and its content is subject to no time restrictions or advertising requirements.

### NEW MESSAGE-DISTRIBUTION STRUCTURE

The podcast platform's characteristics mentioned in the previous section provides advantages for *Naggomsu* members to tell their own stories in public because its production and distribution are different from those of the pre-existing media. The podcast medium offers a good strategy to the members, and functions as new message-distribution structure under the circumstances in which the traditional media dominated the media outlet. An internet journalist of the *PDjournal*, Cheol-woon Jung, analyzed the influence and the significance of *Naggomsu* in South Korea as follows:

*Naggomsu* weakened the platform of the traditional media such as newspapers and broadcast companies and promoted the podcast platform extensively. Now, each episode of *Naggomsu* has been downloaded more than 7 million times and it

has become much more influential in forming public opinion than the three major newspapers in South Korea. In the past, most people were limited to only a selective few mainstream broadcast channels. However, the number of active viewers who select a variety of programs on different platforms without time and space limitations is on the rise. Many people were disappointed by the existing media which represented only the view of vested groups. This created a new demand for an alternative media platform.

The podcast platform made a large contribution to *Naggomsu*'s success because the platform made it possible to criticize political issues freely. Just as UCC (User Created Content) became very popular because it enabled anyone to produce any podcast content, the podcast also achieves popularity in part due to the attribution of user creation. In South Korea, podcasts as well as social network services such as Facebook and Twitter are not controlled by the law because they fall under the domain of individual privacy. Podcasts are different from the radio shows which transmit their content to the listeners one-way because the listeners selectively download podcasts that they want to listen to. Unless podcasts spread false information and attract lawsuits by those who are hurt by the rumors, their content poses no legal problem. In this manner, the podcast platform is a useful online space for the hosts who want to feel free to comment on politically sensitive issues. The podcast's characteristics, which are unregulated, led the hosts to become confident enough to speak against the government.

In addition, podcasts can spread their content around the world because they use the internet. The global distribution and archival nature of podcasts mean that consumption is widely distributed across both space and time. Moreover, the introduction of smartphones made podcasts' social impact even stronger. Smartphones played a significant role in *Naggomsu*'s world-wide popularity. In fact, the number of the *Naggomsu*'s listeners increased more and more outside of Korea. As a result of the demand of listeners overseas, the hosts gave several lectures and talk concerts in the United States and Europe. Kim Ou-joon kept his eye on the dispersive aspect of the podcast platform from the beginning. Also, he regarded the podcast as a powerful tool to change the biased media environment shaped by the government and traditional major newspapers. He explained his intention to launch *Naggomsu* as follows:

Currently, what is the biggest obstacle for the liberals to gain ruling power? It is *the fact that the message-distribution structure was dominated by the*

*conservatives*. The message-distribution is vitally important because the frame is spreading through it. The frame set up in our consciousness is the most powerful. No matter how sophisticated our argument might be, if it is only transmitted in the frame of the conservatives, we never overcome their social structure. (O. Kim 301, emphasis added)

As the conservatives, including President Lee and his government, controlled the message-distribution structure, a dominant frame was created as they planned. Such a frame can be a value system or a worldview. If the frame is continuously exposed to people's minds for a long time, their thoughts are formed or molded by the frame unconsciously. In other words, the frame controlled by the conservatives conceals their corruption or the wrong policy of the government so that those who are exposed to the frame could not criticize their leaders' behaviors or policies, and even have a positive viewpoint on them. Kim Ou-joon also pointed out such a problem of the monopolized message-distribution structure:

By the way, the liberals already were deprived of nearly all message-distribution structures considering three major newspapers and three major television networks... We all do not like to admit it, but it is true. Moreover, looking into news contents that three major television networks deal with, or rather, do not deal with, we could recognize that the message-distribution structures were totally occupied. In a strict sense, news' real power comes from the fact that it does not deliberately cover something that it should do. *If the news does not deal with something, it is same thing that it did not exist originally*. That's the power of news. (301, emphasis added)

Jung Bong-ju already recognized the media control plan of the Lee administration:

In fact, when Mr. Lee took over the government, his intention of media control was beyond the public's imagination. He appointed one of his aides, the chairman Si-joong Choi, to the Korea Communications Commission, the government institution that manages broadcasts and media. Then, he replaced the presidents of the nation's two major public broadcasters unilaterally despite tremendous public opposition. In addition, *the Lee administration and the ruling party railroaded the broadcast and media laws so that the laws gave the gift of a television broadcast channel to the major conservative newspaper companies advocating for government policy*. (49-50, emphasis added)

Jung Bong-ju raised concerns over the media environment, which was made more biased by the Lee administration. The Lee administration planned to control media early in its term by giving preference to the major conservative newspaper companies. Due to the framing of the public's viewpoint by the government and media, there are rarely changes once the official

viewpoint is established. The framing by the government was maintained for a long time because the vested interests, including the conservatives, dominated the media channels.

This biased media environment was the starting point of *Naggomsu*. Kim Ou-joon suggested two possible approaches to solve the problem of government control of the media:

There are two ways to resist the enormous structure. One is to break the structure directly and the other is to create a new competitive structure. The former method is impossible. I don't have that much money. That is a one-sided game due to an imbalance in capital, man-power, and political power... I think that the latter method is entirely feasible. In other words, *we can make a new message-distribution structure which produces a liberal frame.* (302, emphasis added)

He already planned to utilize the podcast platform to create a public voice because a new media platform, the podcast, was available. The podcast platform is a new networking foundation to create a new liberal frame. If the podcast was filled with good contents, it is possible to reframe the issues and reconstitute the audience through the podcast. Furthermore, if the podcast is connected to social media, it will have much more influential power as a competing message-distribution structure. Kim Yong-min also revealed this idea in his book: "I recognized a niche in the existing media that had listed a piece of facts without analyzing the nature of the facts. So, I wanted to expose the essential element of the facts to the world... Finally, the podcast seemed to be the answer" (150-151). The podcast is a very effective means to transmit critical messages against the government. As mentioned in the previous section, podcasts are free from the government censorship and their production cost is relatively low. Moreover, with the development of SNS (Social Network Services) such as Facebook and Twitter, the speed at which podcasts spread increased. Therefore, the podcast was a very useful vehicle for *Naggomsu*'s message as well as a key technology to support its strategy against the dominant media.

## CHAPTER 4

### RHETORICAL DEVICES

*Naggomsu* efficiently utilized a variety of rhetorical strategies. From the rhetorical perspective, I identified four rhetorical devices: hangout talk, role play, satire, and deliberate bias. These features not only drew the listener's attention but also added entertainment to *Naggomsu*.

#### HANGOUT TALK: EAVESDROPPING

*Naggomsu* uses a different format from general podcasts. It is neither a monologue nor a dialogue. It appears to be the kind of talk which happens in a local pub, a lounge bar or a living room. The leader of *Naggomsu*, Kim Ou-joon, rarely speaks to the listeners during the broadcast except briefing listeners on the subject of the episode or introducing himself initially. The four hosts laugh and chat among themselves without paying attention to the listeners as if they do not have an audience. Therefore, the conversation could distract the listeners quite a bit because it has a storytelling format, taking fragmented facts and reconstructing events to make a semi-fictional narrative. Their opinions are not scripted and they interrupt each other continually. Such a discursive format enables the listeners to feel like they are eavesdropping because the hosts rarely seem to take into consideration that the listeners hear their conversation. In the 10th episode, *Naggomsu* talked about the "Four Major Rivers" project, which is one of President Lee's biggest plans ("The 10th Episode"). Originally, it was called "Grand Canal" because its aim was to link all four of Korea's river into one that would run literally through the whole country. President Lee first insisted that the plan was a realistic way to bring economic advantage to Korea with cheaper transportation. However, only a little later, he argued that it was actually linked for sightseeing and not for transportation. Public opinion took a stand against his plan because it required a lot of money while the economic advantage would be minimal. Notwithstanding

public opposition, he renamed it “Four Major Rivers” project and pushed ahead. He then explained that the project’s purpose was to secure abundant water resources to combat water scarcity, implement comprehensive flood control measures, improve water quality and restore river ecosystems. However, in the government’s official document, it was disclosed that President Lee ordered the depth of the rivers to remain at six meters, the depth needed to transfer sightseeing cruises into the river. The hosts of *Naggomsu* explained President Lee’s deception as follows:

**김어준:** 4 대강에 대해서는 오해가 많아요. 일단 환경파괴, 대운하, 리버크루즈, 이걸 페이크 모션이고 사람들이 속고 있어요. 낙동강 9 개 공구 중 8 개를 우리 각하께서 졸업하신 동지상고 출신들이 다 먹었다는 거 아닙니까? 각하의 이 애교심.

**Kim Ou-joon:** There is a misunderstanding in the Four Major Rivers project. Most people paid attention to its harmful influences such as environmental destruction, an uneconomical grand canal, and unprofitable river cruises. However, they are overlooking an important point. Those who graduated from the Dong-ji High School, in which President Lee studied, took over most of the construction work in Nak-dong River. How amazing his Highness’ school spirit is!

**정봉주:** 그런데 이렇게 먹습니다. 디테일은 모르시잖아요. 어떻게 먹냐면, 동지상고 출신들이 CEO 로 있거나 재정담당 이사로 있거나 이런 건설회사들이 먹는데 이 회사들이 대부분 이 공사를 책임질 정도의 대형규모 건설사가 아니에요. 그러니까 턴키 방식입니다. 계약을 하면 설계에서 시공까지 끝내요. 각하의 통큰 호연지기가 나와요. 동지상고 출신들의 회사가 연매출이 몇 조되는 대우건설과 컨소시엄으로 묶습니다. 각하는 이렇게 일일이 챙겨주시죠.

**Jung Bong-ju:** By the way, you don’t do justice to such a wonderful thing. Most construction companies run by the Dong-ji High School’s alumni are very small so they could not afford to participate in the Four Major Rivers project. Therefore, they formed a consortium with major construction companies like the Daewoo construction company. Daewoo lends its name and then the smaller companies do everything including contracting, planning, and constructing. His Highness took care of everything.

**김어준:** 여기서 가장 큰 오해가 뭐냐면 대운하를 할 거다라고 사람들이 생각을 하는 거예요. 왜냐면 6m 를 판다고 해놓고 5m 를 판다고 치면,



6m 를 팠는지 5m 를 팠는지 어떻게 알 수 있나요? 게다가 강물은 항상 토사가 흐르게 되어 있습니다. 6m 판다고 돈을 받아놓고 5m 만 파도 아무도 모른다는 거죠. 게다가 실제 현장에서는 준설량을 보여주지 않아요. 그러면 그 돈이 어디로 가는지 누가 알 수 있느냐. 물론 가카가 그 돈을 받았을 리는 절대 없죠. 가카는 절대 그럴 분이 아니니까. 단지 제 추정이죠. (웃음)

**Kim Ou-joon:** Civil engineering professionals stated that 1.8 billion dollars would be necessary to dig the bottom of the river one meter deeper. Maybe they dug only five meters deep despite saying that they dug six meters deep. Who knows how deep they dug? We will never know because the bottom of the river is covered by sand. They got money for six meters, but may have only dug five meters. Moreover, they did not show the amount of dredging. Where does the money go? Of course, His Highness is not likely to get the money because he would never do something like that. That's just my guess. (laughs)

**정봉주:** 국민들이 실제로 현장에서 만나보면 국민들이 왜 하는 지 몰라요. 제가 굉장히 국민들을 많이 만나는 사람 아닙니까? 이게 건설업자 배불리고 특정 몇 몇 업체 돈 벌어주기 위해서 한다는 걸 몰라요. 머릿속에 국가는 부도덕한 짓을 한다는 걸 몰라요. 국가를 수익모델로 한다는 걸 상상하지 못하는 거예요. (“The 10th Episode”)

**Jung Bong-ju:** When I met with citizens, they did not understand why such a thing happened. Who is the politician who meets the citizens most often? That's me, Jung Bong-ju. Most citizens whom I met do not believe there is corruption in the government. They cannot imagine that there is a man who regards the country as a personal bank. (“The 10th Episode”)

Their conversation above illustrates characteristics of eavesdropping well. They talk about one political issue among themselves very privately without considering the audience. There are no cameras and no audiences. Not only do they tell what they know, but also they guess results, make bragging comments, or ridicule the President. The subject that they discuss is a new story uncovered in the public. These characteristics create the appearance of privacy and secrecy, which leads the listeners to feel like they are eavesdropping on *Naggomsu's* stories. Everybody is willing to listen to secret stories. To eavesdrop on the telling of a secret allows the listeners to feel that they become special members or secret keepers of the community. Furthermore, to share special knowledge of *Naggomsu* generates the sense of being engaged in the community of *Naggomsu*.

In their article, *Blogging as Social Action: A Genre Analysis of the Weblog*, Carolyn Miller and Dawn Shepherd introduced Clay Calvert's concept of "mediated voyeurism" to explain the cultural moment in which the blog as a genre appeared. Possibly, with respect to similarity, "mediated voyeurism" which Calvert defined, is useful to understand the effect of eavesdropping in *Naggomsu*. In *Voyeur Nation: Media, Privacy, and Peering in Modern Culture*, Calvert defines mediated voyeurism as "the consumption of revealing images of, and information about others' apparently revealed and unguarded lives, often yet not always for purposes of entertainment ... through the means of the mass media and the Internet" (qtd. in Miller and Shepherd). Mediated voyeurism traces its origins to the sensationalized tabloid journalism of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. By faking insanity to be committed to an insane asylum or strapping a camera to an ankle to capture photographs of the execution of a convicted murderer, early tabloid reporters offered their readers glimpses into the lives of others, glimpses that seem more real because they are secret. The conventions of film have been said to make voyeurs of the audience (qtd. in Miller and Shepherd). Calvert notes a number of contemporary social forces that promote mediated voyeurism, and three of them are especially meaningful for the eavesdropping effect as well as for understanding the kairos of the blog as Miller and Shepherd stated. First, there is the pursuit of "truth" in an increasingly media-saturated world; dissatisfaction with the increasing mediation of journalism leads to an interest in information that seems to provide a less mediated and thus more authentic "reality." Next, there is the desire for excitement, to see others face a "moment of reckoning" in a talk-show confrontation or a "pulse-pounding" amazing home video; in these moments we may vicariously experience challenges that give meaning to life. Last, there is the need for involvement, the desire to be part of the world around us, even though voyeurism by its very nature can provide only the illusion of involvement (qtd. in Miller and Shepherd).

The social forces which Calvert notes, including the pursuit of truth, the desire for excitement, and the need for involvement, correspond to eavesdropping as well as voyeurism. In *Naggomsu*, such social forces as those mentioned above, played an important role in tempting the audience. For example, unrefined stories that *Naggomsu* provides stimulate the pursuit of truth, which leads the listeners to tune in the hosts' voices. In case of the talk show, there are listeners with speakers in the same place; even the listeners

sometimes are able to communicate with speakers both in verbal and non-verbal language. In contrast to the interactive environment of the talk show, the listeners in *Naggomsu* are spatially separated from the speakers. This spatial segregation causes the listeners to eavesdrop. They also feel special and privileged to overhear private conversation. This feeling fulfills their emotional need for involvement in the listeners' community. Furthermore, involved in the moment of four hosts' hangout talk, listeners feel excited in a vivid situation and curious about stories that four hosts tell while they are together. In this way, *Naggomsu* has the rhetorical power of seductiveness.

### ROLE PLAY: SPECIALIZED CHARACTERS

*Naggomsu* appeals as a kind of literature to the audience by showing a role-playing feature. During the entire podcast, the four hosts seem to carry on informally without direction; however, those four play their own roles in the show with decisively specialized characters. In their article, Kee-hyeung Lee et al. describe each of the four hosts' characters as follows:

Above all, the key member is Chairman Kim Ou-joon. He is, to coin a phrase, something. He has a remarkable ability to catch the imagination of the public. He explains complicated political issues easily to the general public. The former congressman, Jung Bong-ju, adds an element of interest to the podcast using the so-called "Funnel." The journalist, Joo Jin-woo, provides evidence of the podcast with his remarkable investigating power. Kim Yong-min, the former broadcast producer, edits the content of the podcast in a sophisticated manner. (78)

The combination of these specialized characters is one of the primary reasons for *Naggomsu*'s success. The four hosts have their own specialties. Jung Bong-ju, the former congressman, makes the listeners laugh by self-praise with his passionate voice. Most of the time, he also laughs loudly with Kim Ou-joon while they make fun of President Lee. Especially, his bragging, so-called "Funnel" is one of the most powerful features in entertaining the listeners of *Naggomsu*:

**정봉주:** 잘 모르고, 공부를 안 하고, 연구를 안 해도 다른 사람들보다 10 배는 더 잘 아니까. (폭소)

**Jung Bong-ju:** Despite my lack of expertise, study, and research, I know everything ten times better than any others. (laughs)

**정봉주:** 이미 트윗에서는 정봉주가 어마어마하게 유명한 인사가 됐더라고요. (“The 1st Episode”)

**Jung Bong-ju:** I have already become the most famous man in Twitter. (“The 1st Episode”)

**정봉주:** 지금도 심장이 벌렁벌렁 해요. 제가 당시에 저렇게 뛰어난 활약을 했는지. (폭소) ... 대한민국 국회 정치인, 교육 전문가들 중에서 이 교육 문제를 철학까지 검비해서 정확하게 아는 사람은 저밖에 없어요.

**Jung Bong-ju:** Now I feel my heart pounding if I recall my great performance at that time. (laughs) ... There is only one Jung Bong-ju who understands the Korean educational problem very well with the right educational philosophy among all politicians and education experts in Korea.

**김어준:** (폭소) 듣기 싫어요...

**Kim Ou-joon:** (laughs) I don't want to hear you...

**정봉주:** 김어준 총수는 교육을 전공하지도 않았는데, 어떻게 그렇게 정확히 알아요?

**Jung Bong-ju:** How do you know the education problem exactly without majoring in education?

**김어준:** 놀라워요, 저도. (폭소) 깜짝깜짝 놀랍니다.

**Kim Ou-joon:** It is amazing to me. (laughs) I am also surprised at my knowledge.

**정봉주:** ... 저는 가끔씩 발언하고, “주여! 과연 이 생각이 제 생각입니까?” 어마어마하죠. 저는 깜짝 놀라는게 아니라, 깜짝깜짝 놀랍니다. (폭소) (“The 6th Episode”)

**Jung Bong-ju:** ... Whenever I say something often, I ask like this, “Oh God, is this what I think?” It is fabulous. I even impress myself too much. (laughs) (“The 6th Episode”)

**정봉주:** 저는 3 일 반만에 한 500 매 정도 썼어요. 말을 하면서 그걸 타이핑하는 거예요. 근데 너무 빨리 치는 바람에 말이 손을 못 쫓아갈 정도예요. 와이프가 감동하더라고요. 폭풍 집필에. 그래서 출판사에 보냈더니 처음에는 재밌다고 좋아하더니 검토한 후 하는 얘기가 살릴 거는 100 매 플러스 마이너스. (“The 22nd Episode”)

**Jung Bong-ju:** I wrote 500 pages of my book just in three days. I typed what I speak at the same time. However, my words don't catch up with my hands. Even

my wife is surprised at my writing with one stroke of a brush. I sent my writing to a publisher and an editor said that it is very interesting. After the editor reviewed it, he said that only about 100 pages are useful for publishing. (“The 22nd Episode”)

In addition to giving the audience a laugh, Jung Bong-ju provides insight on political affairs based on his experience as a politician. He also changes the common image of politicians as being authoritative and serious. With humor symbolized by the “Funnel” and real stories from his experience, he demonstrates his rhetorical power that leads the audience to share his message.

Joo Jin-woo’s explanations are elaborate and powerful because he has investigated socially and politically sensitive issues for a long time. He supplies the multiple facts about each episode’s issue in order to make a full story episode. His strength is the detailed information of his investigation that cannot be found elsewhere in the official media. Moreover, the facts that he uncovers reinforce *Naggomsu*’s ethos and strengthen the audiences’ loyalty to *Naggomsu* at the same time. For example, Joo Jin-woo fully explains the truth about the Cheonggye foundation which was built by President Lee, supposedly to donate all of his wealth to the public.

**주진우:** 청계는 각하의 아호입니다... 복잡했죠. 하도 재산이 많다고 돌팔매질을 당하니까 가카께서 용단을 내리셨어요. “내가 살 집 한 칸 이외의 모든 걸 내놓겠다.” 그런데 차일피일 미루다가 2009 년에 재단을 설립합니다. (“The 8th Episode”)

**Joo Jin-woo:** Cheonggye is a pen name of President Lee... It was complicated. A lot of his assets were the subject of much criticism in public opinion. So, His Highness made a drastic decision and said, “I will donate most of my fortune except only a house to live in.” Afterwards he kept putting off his promise and he finally established the Cheonggye foundation in 2009. (“The 8th Episode”)

Through the persistent investigation, Joo Jin-woo illustrates President Lee’s cheating related to the scholarship policy of the Cheonggye foundation as follows:

**주진우:** 청계재단이 장학금을 2010 년과 2011 년 각각 6 억 2 천만원, 6 억 8 천만원을 냈는데, ... 공익재단을 만들면 세금 감면 혜택이 있습니다... 가카께서 청계재단에 내놓은 빌딩 3 개만 놓고 볼 때 35%가 세금을

감면받은 셈입니다. 2009 년 청계재단의 수입이 19 억 2 천만원 가량 됩니다. 그래서 6 억원 정도의 장학금을 주는 겁니다.

**Joo Jin-woo:** The Cheonggye foundation granted a scholarship of \$550,000 in 2010 and \$600,000 in 2011... The government offers tax incentives to a public welfare foundation such as the Cheonggye foundation... The tax incentive is about 35%. In other words, His Highness gave three buildings in Seoul to the Cheonggye foundation and as a result, he didn't have to pay a tax on the three buildings. In 2009, the Cheonggye foundation's income is about \$170,000. So, the amount of the scholarship is about \$600,000.

**김어준:** 그게 35%?

**Kim Ou-joon:** The amount corresponds to 35%?

**주진우:** 딱 그 수준에 걸립니다... 영포빌딩 건너 건너에 있는 건물의 주인을 어렵게 만났습니다. "자식한테 건물 한 채 물려주면 증여세 등으로 40% 이상 뺏기지만, 재단을 만들어서 주면 5-10%에서 막을 수 있다." 이런 이야기를 하세요. "건물 하나 가지고 재단을 만드는 사람은 없고, 서너 채 되는 사람이 재단 만드는 게 이 동네 트렌드다." ("The 8th Episode")

**Joo Jin-woo:** Yes, it is almost same portion... When I met a landlord of a building next to President Lee's building, the landlord said, "If one leaves a building to one's children, he or she has to pay about 40% of the property value as a tax; however, if one makes a public foundation with one's property and gives the foundation to one's children, he or she pays only 5-10% of the property value as a tax. So, it is trend for landlords who own three buildings or more to establish a public foundation in this community." ("The 8th Episode")

Clearly, Joo Jin-woo has excellent ability in uncovering detailed information that common people cannot easily access.

Kim Ou-joon leads the program by summarizing the whole story in each episode. Based on the facts that Joo Jin-woo provides, Kim Ou-joon constructs a narrative that includes President Lee's intention as drawn from his imagination. When he explains his fiction, he says that "this is nothing but a novel that I try to imagine" ("The 10th Episode"). But his so-called fiction is very often persuasive, and sometimes turns out to be true. While Jung Bong-ju makes the listeners laugh with his bragging comments, Kim Yong-min adds an entertaining element to the podcast by imitating President Lee's voice. Kim Yong-min also takes care of all technical issues such as editing, recording, and uploading.

## SATIRE

*Naggomsu* conveys a serious message very lightly by means of a well-known rhetorical tool: satire. The topics that *Naggomsu* covers are not trivial at all, but actually very serious. The various topics discussed in *Naggomsu* can be roughly classified into four categories: the pursuit of private profit by President Lee and his cronies; election intervention by the ruling party and its key figures; the immoral and unethical behavior of the privileged, such as the super church, mainstream media and prosecution; and the introduction of the opposition party's candidates. Despite such diverse topics, the main subject is always President Lee, just as the subtitle exhibits: "the show dedicated to His Highness, President Lee."

*Naggomsu* calls President Lee "Ggomsu"<sup>3</sup> (which means a weasel) because his corruption is too complicated for listeners to understand, yet it discloses his petty-mindedness in the end. Anyone who listens to an episode of *Naggomsu* understands the metaphor of "Ggomsu." Nevertheless, whenever Kim Ou-joon analyzes President Lee's hidden motivation for his corruption, he ends with the following statement: "His Highness is not that kind of person. If somebody insults our President's character, it is not acceptable" ("The 10th Episode"). The other hosts as well as Kim Ou-joon never seem to denounce President Lee in the podcast. For example, in the aforementioned conversation, Jung Bong-ju says that "His Highness took care of everything." He also sometimes defends the President by stating that "His Highness is never such a man to do such a bad thing." This ironic situation, which allows them to make sarcastic remarks about the President while, in fact, appearing to support him outwardly, is a dominant and entertaining feature that attracts the audience. In his article, Kyung-wook Min points out that the repetition of "never" in the host's discussion brings about the ironic effect of affirmation, which means "certainly true," indicating that the President definitely did those actions (277). Through the sarcastic repetition of the hosts' argument that President Lee is not a weasel and does not do such bad

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<sup>3</sup> "Ggomsu" is translated into several expressions in English newspapers as follows: a weasel, a petty-minded creep, a sneaky trickster, and a cunning swindler.

things, the listeners become convinced that their choice of making him president has been totally wrong.

There are some interesting examples that show satire in many places. Kim Ou-joon introduced the podcast with these opening comments: “이 방송은 이명박 대통령이 가카에게 헌정하는 방송입니다... 가카의 그 끝을 알 수 없는, 깊이를 알 수 없는 치밀하고 정교한 극강의 꿈수. 앞으로 매주 여러분 앞에 바치겠습니다.” ‘This broadcast is dedicated to His Highness, President Lee... The endless, bottomless, immeasurable, elaborate, delicate, and extreme tricks of His Highness! We will present it to you every week’ (“The 2nd Episode”). Especially regarding establishment of the Cheonggye foundation, these sarcastic remarks about President Lee were made:

**김어준:** 가카께서 사회 환원을 위해 설립한 청계재단.

**Kim Ou-joon:** The Cheonggye foundation was established by His Highness for the purpose of donating his possessions to society.

**정봉주:** ‘가카재단’이라고 부르면 되죠.

**Jung Bong-ju:** You would rather call it “His Highness foundation.”

**김어준:** 가카재단을 실질적으로 운영하고 있는 사람은 가카의 사위가 됩니다. 사회 환원이 아니라 가족 환원이라고 해야죠.

**Kim Ou-joon:** It is His Highness’ son-in-law who actually manages His Highness’ foundation. It is back to family not back to society.

**김용민:** 사회 환원이 아니라 사위 환원. (폭소) (“The 3rd Episode”)

**Kim Yong-min:** Back to son-in-law not back to society. (laughs) (“The 3rd Episode”)

**주진우:** 가카께서 마음 쓰시는 게 크고 섬세하시잖아요. 아드님과 따님을 150 만-200 만원씩 주면서 영포빌딩에 취직시켜서 취업률을 높이겠다는 마음 씀씀이.

**Joo Jin-woo:** As you know, His Highness is much warm-hearted and generous. His broad mind can be seen in the fact that he gets his son and daughter employed in the Cheonggye foundation paying a monthly salary of \$1,500-2,000.



**정봉주:** 당시 따님이 줄리어드 음대에 다니고 있었는데, 음대생을 거기 관리인으로 등록한 거 아닙니까. 3년 가까이. (“The 8th Episode”)

**Jung Bong-ju:** At that time his daughter was still at the Juilliard School. Nevertheless, she was hired as a manager of the foundation. For 3 years. (“The 8th Episode”)

In the 22nd episode, Kim Ou-joon taunted President Lee regarding the illegal purchase of a private residence for himself by his son and the presidential security service as follows:

**김어준:** 아들 집 사주는 데 청와대와 세금을 동원하는, 이런 거 아무나 못하죠. 우리 가카니까 가능한 거예요. 우리 가카니까. 우리 헌정 사상 최초야. 이런 게 바로 국가를 수익 모델로 삼는 거다... 우리 가카 방식은 무궁무진해. (“The 22nd Episode”)

**Kim Ou-joon:** Exploiting the presidential office and tax to buy a son a house. Nobody dares to do such a behavior. Only His Highness can do it. Only him. It is the first time since the establishment of the Korean government. This is really a way to take advantage of the country as a business model... His Highness’ method is infinite. (“The 22nd Episode”)

In the end, the listeners take *Naggomsu*’s story as factual rather than as merely an insult to the President’s dignity. This satire demonstrates not only an element of entertainment but also great rhetorical power in *Naggomsu*.

### DELIBERATE BIAS

*Naggomsu* does not pretend to be objective and is, in fact, very one-sided. Kim Ou-joon introduced another internet news program in the first episode:

How are you? I’m Kim Ou-joon. When I named my program *Kim Ou-joon’s New York Times*, many people asked me, “Does it have anything to do with the *New York Times*?” Nothing. So, why is that? Just for fun. That’s it. What am I going to do in this program? I will just criticize President Lee. Why not? There is no reason why I cannot hate him. Every citizen has a choice to like or dislike the President. That’s not a big deal. Anyway, I dislike him. So, I am going to broadcast my program in a slanted way. I will do my best to make the process for a biased result as fair and objective as I can. (qtd. in G. Choi 107)

*Naggomsu*’s goal is not merely to criticize the President and the ruling party and to cheer on the opposition party and liberals. The hosts’ major concern is to help the citizens to see one-sided perspective of the vested interests and to stand up for equal rights. They say that the

podcast is also slanted in order to check the vested interests. Kim Yong-min pointed out the problem with media under the political circumstances in South Korea as follows:

Right now, I will end my comments by speaking to former and current journalists. They always emphasize fairness and dignity and considered expression of one's own opinion about current issues of low-level behavior. That is really ridiculous. Now, we are faced with crisis of democracy. Even if you do not stand on the side of the powerless, you have the responsibility to restrain the rich and powerful. Listen carefully! Unless you identify what is right and wrong, you are a spokesman for the vested interests. You should know that it is also one-sided action... *Naggomsu's* popularity results from media's dereliction of duty. Shame on you. (111-112)

*Naggomsu's* deliberate bias is the reason why the listeners on the side of the vested interests criticize and reject it thoroughly. On the other hand, the very bias as a driving force to constitute a collective identity for those who are indifferent to political issues and those who do not have their own political opinions, especially young people. If *Naggomsu* covered both the positive and negative views of President Lee and followed the norm of the government-controlled press, in other words, presented a fair balance, the listeners could not select either side. However, *Naggomsu* highlighted only the negative behavior of President Lee based on factual stories so that the listeners who agreed with *Naggomsu* became opposed to President Lee. *Naggomsu's* listeners were mostly composed of young people who are familiar with portable electronic devices such as smartphones, tablet PCs, and MP3 players. They sympathized with *Naggomsu's* contents and added political issues to their lists of personal concerns. Politics was, therefore, transformed from a dull, boring, and messy problem that young people did not care about, to an interesting and important issue that they became concerned about. Through *Naggomsu*, they realized the importance of politics after they learned how much corruption was committed by President Lee. As a result, they spontaneously got involved in politics. In fact, the voter turnout from young people in the 2012 presidential election was very high in South Korea. According to the National Election Commission, the turnout of voters in their 20's and 30's for the 2012 presidential election was much higher than for the 2007 presidential election: 69.3% compared to 50.9%.

## CHAPTER 5

### FANTASY THEME ANALYSIS

How does the audience's experience constitute a constructed reality? This question is important because the shared experience of the audience is one of the most powerful rhetorical tools that led to *Naggomsu*'s tremendous popularity. To respond to such a question, I will use the fantasy theme method of criticism because it provides an effective approach to gain insights into the shared worldview of groups. Fantasy theme analysis, derived from Ernest Bormann's symbolic convergence theory, applies the central metaphor of drama to examine an artifact in terms of its settings, characters, and actions. Regarding those three elements necessary to create a drama, Sonja Foss explains, "Statements that depict where the action is taking place are setting themes... Character themes describe the agents or actors in the drama, ascribe characteristics and qualities to them, and assign motives to them... Action themes, which also can be called plotlines, deal with the actions in which the characters in the drama engage" (99). According to Ernest Bormann, a fantasy theme is a dramatizing message in which characters engage symbolically in acts and settings somewhere other than the here-and-now of the people involved in the communication episode ("The Symbolic Convergence" 52). The fantasy theme can be found in texts of oral or written messages as the fossilized remains of shared group fantasies, which enable people to have the basis for communicating with one another to create community, to discuss their common experiences, and to achieve mutual understanding. Therefore, fantasy themes offer people a way to make their common experiences visible and shape them into social knowledge (51-52). A rhetorical vision is constructed from fantasy themes and the people who participate in the vision, then, constitute a rhetorical community.

As *Naggomsu* tells stories about President Lee and his cronies, the shared social knowledge it creates builds a sense of community. Using evidence from *Naggomsu*'s narrative and research articles about *Naggomsu*, I will argue that *Naggomsu* created a

rhetorical trope that advised its listeners not be intimidated so that they resist the vested interests, and participate in politics in order to change them. *Naggomsu* consistently raised problematic public issues which had been hidden previously, but which needed to be discussed and resolved. Moreover, it articulated the spirit of resistance and emphasized the importance of politics. This position can be identified in the rhetorical vision resulting from the fantasy theme of *Naggomsu*. The fantasy theme identified here is not simply present in *Naggomsu* itself, but shared with the audiences so that listeners develop the same rhetorical vision.

### SETTINGS

The physical background of *Naggomsu* is a small studio in Seoul, South Korea. *Naggomsu* members rented a tiny studio to transfer their own messages spontaneously. Of course, they paid for all expenses without any outside funding. They produced the program without the support of any television network or any media company. For the presenters of *Naggomsu*, nobody covered what they wanted to talk about and they could not find what they wanted to listen to in any other media. Therefore, they decided to talk about their own story in their own place. They did not insert commercials into the podcast or try to look for sponsors because they did not pursue private profit by the program. Regarding the reason why *Naggomsu* had no commercials, Kim Ou-joon said, “We are not interested in commercial advertisements. We cannot talk about what we want to say if we depend on commercials financially” (Y. Kim 39). *Naggomsu* members tried to make the podcast program with minimal expenses as much as possible. Their rented studio was the protected space for the underdog; however, it was also the room for resistance that challenged the government and its vested interests for public good, not for private benefit.

The South Korean media environment was also a key setting theme. The mainstream media have been subordinate to capital and government power in South Korea. They have perverted and hidden the truth under the political and capital power. In response to the subject of *Naggomsu*, Jung Bong-ju mentioned that “our role is to pertinaciously seek out the hidden intention of the government and the truths twisted by the traditional media. And it is also to communicate with the public” (qtd. in U. Jung 10). From the establishment of self-government in 1945 to democratization in 1987, the media’s role was very limited due to the

media control by political power. Since the establishment of the Korean government, President Syngman Rhee and his followers controlled media outlets in order to solidify the young, unstable regime. Afterwards, when military dictators, such as Chung-hee Park and Doo-hwan Chun, appeared, the media situation became much worse, and finally, media outlets were completely dependent on government power. Furthermore, media actively played a role in promoting government policies. After democratization in 1987, the Korean media had greater autonomy and influence; however, the mainstream media still functioned as a representative of the vested interests or remained silent rather than tell the truth.

In addition, when Mr. Lee took over the government, his intention of media control was beyond the public's imagination. He appointed one of his aides, the chairman Si-joong Choi, to the Korea Communications Commission, the government institution that manages broadcasts and media. Then, he replaced the presidents of the nation's two major public broadcasters unilaterally despite tremendous opposite opinion. Moreover, the Lee administration and ruling party railroaded the broadcast and media laws so that it gave the gift of a television broadcast channel to the major conservative newspaper companies advocating for government policy.

Korean philosopher Shin-ju Kang has criticized the current mainstream media's role as follows:

In the Korean media landscape these days, *Naggomsu* represents the weak. Only the government had the facts so that the weak had to simply interpret the facts in their own way. However, *Naggomsu* will disappear if the existing media fulfill their own duties just as *Naggomsu* has done because the media cannot advocate for the weak as long as they are parasites to power and capital. (qtd. in U. Jung 39)

Considering a biased media environment, a setting theme, such as a society consisting of the weak, the minorities, and the outsiders against strong vested interests, builds a fantasy of space for unfair confrontation. *Naggomsu* represents the minority and the outsiders in the sense that from a lonely isolated place, it continues to raise different voices than those in the most mainstream media.

## CHARACTERS

*Naggomsu* has two conflicting elements in the character themes: the four members and President Lee. The four hosts are definitely the main characters. A common feature of

the four members is that they are courageous outsiders. They continue to raise their voice to resist social injustice in spite of persecution by those people who have political power. Kim Ou-joon always pronounces his opinion on political issues without the slightest hesitation and emphasizes freedom of expression at the same time. He even responded to the listeners' demand about tone, volume, and speech style of *Naggomsu* in this way:

게시판에 웃는 소리가 너무 귀가 아프다느니, 욕을 한다느니, 누군 말을 많이 해라, 누군 말을 하지 마라, 이런 소리 하는데, 싫다! 자꾸 귀찮게 하지 마! 우리 맘대로 할 거야! ... 그냥 이어폰을 떼세요, 귀에서. 자꾸 우리보고 뭐라고 하지마! (“The 13th Episode”)

On the bulletin board, there are a few who complain that the speakers' voices are too loud, disturbing listeners' ears or that there are too many abusive words in the podcast or that same host speaks too much. I do not care. Do not bother me. I will make it just the way that I want no matter what others say... Just take your earphones off your ears. Do not bother me with judgment. (“The 13th Episode”)

Under the government oppression, it was none other than Jung Bong-ju, himself a politician, who has had a very hard time. After he was elected to Parliament in 2004, he brought up allegations against one presidential candidate, Lee Myung-bak, in a stock price manipulation case. The Supreme Court upheld a lower-court verdict that had sentenced Mr. Jung to a year in prison for spreading false rumors about President Lee. Many ordinary people strongly doubted the result of the trial because all the accused people except Mr. Jung related to the disclosure of President Lee's stock fraud were found not guilty. Moreover, one day after he announced that he would run for the 19th Parliamentary elections, the Supreme Court suddenly confirmed the sentencing date and sent him to jail. At that time, the truth about the BBK case (the BBK Company owned by President Lee falsified stock prices) was partially revealed to the general public. Interestingly, Jung Bong-ju could not be released from jail until the next presidential election ended. At that time, Mr. Jung's supporters claimed that the timing of the verdict led them to suspect that it was designed to stifle *Naggomsu*. When he appeared at the prosecutors' office, he said to surrounding reporters and supporters, “The Pandora's box is opening again; the fight for truth has just begun” (Choe, “A Leading Critic”). What he meant by these words was that the stock fraud case, which was closed by prosecutors after President Lee was cleared of any charges, might be reopened in the coming months as the President entered his lame-duck year in office. After the guilty

verdict came down, Mr. Jung said, “I had my hopes up, but now it looks like the rest of the hosts will have to carry on with the podcast. I believe my colleagues will keep doing the job of informing you what you all need to know” (J. Choi). Mr. Jung added, “Maybe today or tomorrow I will be going to jail,” (J. Choi) and he took a deep bow on the ground. In the sense that he was one of the powerless who could not but be hurt under the political system, he was a victim of a power struggle. But he was a true hero who showed defiance to absolute power for his supporters.

Joo Jin-woo also has faced powerful opponents such as the President, politicians, pastors of big churches, and the heads of conglomerates. Kim Ou-joon introduced Mr. Joo as the first among Korean investigative reporters. Mr. Joo always challenged the sensitive events that journalists generally were reluctant to deal with and as a result, he broke a lot of exclusive news stories. For example, he uncovered corrupt actions of David Yonggi Cho, who is the pastor of the biggest church in Korea. The church’s members regarded Mr. Joo as impure and reckless, and called him a devil reporter. Due to his fearless investigation, he suffered from dozens of legal cases. His character-supported credibility and detailed investigation remind the audience of the detective Sherlock Holmes as well as a hero fighting against the evil.

The secondary character in *Naggomsu* is President Lee and his associates. In particular, President Lee is described as “Ggomsu,” which means a petty means or method. This metaphor constructs the negative image of President Lee in minds of the listeners. Regarding metaphor’s various functions, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson explain that “metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action... The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another... The metaphor is not merely in the words we use—it is in our very concept of an argument” (3-5). People’s thought processes are structured by metaphors, and thus the metaphors play an important role in the communication process by shaping people’s framework of understanding. The “Ggomsu” metaphor is imprinted on the audience’s memory as revealing President Lee’s immorality because it is connected to a variety of negative terms: liar, trick, fraud, false, hypocrisy, duplicity, pretention, dishonest, and corruption. Because a metaphorical concept can keep us from focusing on other aspects of the concept that are inconsistent with the metaphor as Lakoff and Johnson mentioned, the

listeners focus only on the negative images of President Lee while disregarding his achievements (10).

Another metaphorical form of address, “His Highness,”<sup>4</sup> is employed in almost every episode. We need to focus on its implied meaning rather than specifically explicit one. Whenever *Naggomsu* hosts make a mockery of President Lee, they ironically call him “His Highness” which is an outdated title no longer in general usage since it was used in Korea only under the military regime. Despite knowing that the term is used satirically, the listeners also recognize President Lee’s authority, power, dignity, and influence because of metaphorical conception of “His Highness.” In general, “His Highness” suggests a series of expressions of rank and the respect such high rank demands: high class, lord, royal, loyalty, salute, bow, and obedience. Moreover, from the associated terms, a dynastic society, not democratic society, comes into the listeners’ mind. With His Highness versus the *Naggomsu* hosts, this metaphorical concept creates a fantasy theme of the powerful versus the weak.

Because metaphor is a conventional way of conceptualizing one’s experience and conceptualization is based on embodied cognition, metaphor enables a group of people to conceive of a specific idea when they share with it. For example, the “Ggomsu” metaphor portrays the President as a weasel so that the audience can feel like the President deserves to be punished and they should be opposed to the President. On the other hand, the satirical expression, “His Highness,” not only symbolizes President Lee’s authority, but also means President Lee’s power abuse so that the audience can feel like they should resist him and his power. Therefore, these two rhetorical expressions, “Ggomsu” and “His Highness,” are significant terms because they contribute not only to implant a rhetorical vision of “resistance” in the audience’s minds, but also to construct a series of fantasy themes: good vs. evil, hero vs. villain, and weak vs. strong. Also, these fantasies can be summarized in the metaphor of David and Goliath.

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<sup>4</sup> It is a translation for a Korean term, “Gaka.”



## ACTIONS

The action theme is also illustrated with a striking contrast. The key action of the main characters—*Naggomsu*'s four hosts—is to raise serious questions related to powerful figures including journalists, politicians, religious people, and corporate chairmen, who have a negative impact on ordinary people through their pursuit of private profit. President Lee is centrally located among them. There are many examples of such unethical and immoral behavior; for example, the case of the BBK Company, seemingly founded by President Lee. BBK made over ten billion dollars of unfair profits and embezzled funds through stock price manipulation. In another example, President Lee bought expensive land, using his son's name, on which to build his private residence after leaving office. In another case, President Lee promised to donate all of his wealth to the public. He gave his money to the foundation he built and then appointed a board of directors for the foundation composed of his cronies and relatives. Above all, posing such an issue presents not an irresponsible comment but well-grounded suspicion based on the facts that Mr. Jung and Mr. Joo found and revealed to their listeners. The four hosts of *Naggomsu* consistently investigated socially and politically influential people such as President Lee as if they are detectives in order to reveal the truth.

President Lee, by using his political power, placed a lot of pressure on *Naggomsu* members. In December 2011, the Supreme Court convicted and arrested Jung Bong-ju with charges of defamation and violation of the election law for his disclosure of the relationship between President Lee and the BBK stock price manipulation. In fact, his conviction generated a huge controversy among the people because the ruling party leader, Geun-hye Park, had also raised strong suspicion about the stock price manipulation by President Lee. But Park and other people related to uncovering the BBK case were either found not guilty and discharged, or charges were dismissed. Moreover, the day after Jung Bong-ju announced his intention to run for election, the Supreme Court suddenly fixed the date of the final trial and sentenced him to one year in prison, which also disqualified him from running for public office for ten years. Many called the judge's decision a political death sentence, and raised questions about the timing of the trial and Jung's arrest. Because the trial was postponed for three years after Jung Bong-ju was indicted, the verdict was seen as a push to stop the podcast. Moreover, Jung Bong-ju could not be released from jail until after the 2012 presidential election. Obviously, there are some dubious aspects to the Supreme Court

decision, especially if we consider fairness in the way other people related to the same event were not sentenced. Through various social media, the South Korean citizens voiced their anger over the verdict. “Where is justice in this country?” (J. Choi) one blogger ranted. “I can’t believe that the government thinks its citizens are blind. If they can’t understand that, they’ve done something that would set off the built-up of public discontent on them, they are in a big trouble” (J. Choi). Therefore, many people, especially listeners of *Naggomsu*, could not but regard the Supreme Court decision as a counterattack of the Lee administration against *Naggomsu*. Watching the spread of anti-government opinion and the rising popularity of *Naggomsu* via SNS, President Lee and his cronies felt it would be difficult to preserve his regime unless they stopped *Naggomsu*.

There were external threats not only to the hosts but also to the podcast program. The Korea Communications Commission (KCC) said that it had plans to enact a new law for censoring the application of programs to smartphones. In response, Jung Bong-ju argued that the plan by the KCC was a conspiracy to shut down *Naggomsu*. He also insisted that according to media laws, there were no legal grounds to control *Naggomsu* and therefore, the government was trying to enact the new media law.

In the actions themes, a two-way race between the actions of characters is also identified. *Naggomsu*’s action is to do the right thing, that is, to tell the truth and investigate illegalities of the vested interests, whereas President Lee and his government committed bad acts by abusing their political power. *Naggomsu*’s action makes a striking contrast with the opponent’s action and these two actions constitute the fantasy theme of conflict between right and wrong.

### RHETORICAL VISION

Various fantasy themes identified in *Naggomsu* establish a rhetorical vision of “resistance.” With regard to the two conflicting characters and the power imbalance between them, it is easy to identify the “David and Goliath” theme. The four hosts were ordinary people and neither famous nor influential. They have only a computer, a microphone, and a shabby studio. While President Lee and his associates represent giants having enormous political and economic power, they represent political and economic minorities as well as underdogs. Nevertheless, *Naggomsu* members were not frightened of the opponents and even

thought that they had a chance of winning. This circumstance also reminds listeners of the underdog fantasy because it is analogous to a battle between David and Goliath. Kim Ou-joon's shout-out suggests this fantasy:

가카 팔들에게 한마디. 당신들은 조중동, 방송 3 사, 검찰, 국세청, 경찰, 국정원 다 가지고 있잖아? 우린 골방에서 이거 하나 하고 있는데, 달랑. 우릴 조지면 니네 진짜 쪼잔한 거야! 우린 배후도 없어. 독고다이야. 우릴 건드리지 마라! (“The 18th Episode”)

Hey! The President's right-hand men, I will give you a word. You guys had things like major media, major television, prosecution, national tax service, police, and national intelligence service. But we only chatted here in a tiny studio. Such a little mucker you are because you screwed us up. Nobody is behind us. We are alone. Don't touch us. (“The 18th Episode”)

Malcolm Gladwell points out that “in general, the phrase ‘David and Goliath’ has come to be embedded in our language—as a metaphor for improbable victory” (8). According to his opinion, however, in fact, the driving force that makes David defeat Goliath is David's effective strategy for coping with the giant rather than simply his courage. The Israeli minister of defense Moshe Dayan—the architect of Israel's astonishing victory in the 1967 Six-Day War—also wrote an essay on the story of David and Goliath. According to Dayan, “David fought Goliath not with inferior but (on the contrary) with superior weaponry; and his greatness consisted not in his being willing to go out into battle against someone far stronger than he was, but in his knowing how to exploit a weapon by which a feeble person could seize the advantage and become stronger” (Gladwell 15). Just like David used stones and a sling against Goliath, *Naggomsu* members marshaled a new weapon, the podcast platform, which was a strategic means to resist the huge power and domination of the mainstream media. This has something in common with the fact that David recognized that stone-throwing is a better way to fight than a hand-to-hand battle against Goliath.

In a similar way, *Naggomsu* constructed the fantasy theme of a battle between good and evil. Kim Ou-joon always said that His Highness was not that kind of person to do such a bad thing; however, the listeners took it for granted that it is irony because the title of *Naggomsu* means “I am a weasel,” which implies that President Lee is a swindler. In fact, most of *Naggomsu* is filled with references to the corruption of President Lee and his cronies; *Naggomsu* never mentions any great achievements of the Lee administration. On the other

hand, *Naggomsu* members do not explain why they are important, or how they have done the right thing, or why they are needed in the society at all. They just talk together, mocking or laughing at President Lee. *Naggomsu* offers the listeners President Lee and his cronies as important villains and portrays them as evil. Furthermore, the listeners naturally accept this fantasy theme as they realize that *Naggomsu*'s stories are not simply based on speculation but on hard facts revealed in other sources. Kyung-wook Min also pointed out a battle of good and evil from the narrative structure of *Naggomsu* as follows:

*Naggomsu*'s strong emotional and persuasive power basically originates from the narrative structure of *Naggomsu*... According to narrative theories, ... the more attractive the characters, the greater hardship they face, and the worse the villains are, the more fascinating the narrative becomes. If this is applied to *Naggomsu*, it basically can be defined as the narrative that the righteous four men against the absolute evil led by His Highness, inform the public of the hidden truth of Lee's administration by bravely disclosing the corruption of President Lee and his cronies. (279-280)

David versus Goliath and good versus evil combine to form the rhetorical vision of "resistance" in *Naggomsu* members as well as *Naggomsu* listeners. A rhetorical vision is a "unified putting together of various shared scripts which provides a broader view of a culture's social reality" (Bormann, "The Symbolic Convergence" 52-53). The worldview suggests that Koreans should not be intimidated to keep silent. Instead, they should tell the truth and fight against the abuses of power. Consistent with the intended message of *Naggomsu*, this position is evident in Kim Ou-joon's interview in a newspaper, the *Kyunghyang Shinmun*:

The majority of the messages that *Naggomsu* presents is that we should think that it is natural to freely express our opinion. Even if it gives rise to disadvantage or penalty, I am willing to accept such a risk. So, do not be scared, everyone. We do not have to be intimidated at all. Everything is due to His Highness. Some may call it demagoguery. It is true, demagoguery. However, the demagoguery is not to instigate a specific argument that *Naggomsu* mentioned but to *instigate an attitude that allows anybody to make a specific argument*. Some agree with this message and others do not. *We want to spread the attitude itself*. This is the most important message of *Naggomsu*." (K. Park, emphasis added)

As Mr. Kim pointed out, the belief that everybody should tell his or her messages is directly connected to the rhetorical vision of "resistance" that *Naggomsu* created. In other words, *Naggomsu*'s real aim is to persuade the public to adopt a resistant manner rather than to

inform the public of President Lee's corruption. Such an attitude is the significant message that *Naggomsu* tried to present. Their spirit of resistance can be found in Kim's book:

What are new features in the smartphone's podcast? Am I overstating its value? As I've said, physical structure is not the whole structure and violent revolution via tank is not the whole revolution. Only a small podcast program can fight against huge traditional media. That's the converted idea that overcomes the frame. I will make this podcast in order to win against the three major newspapers, two leading television networks, prosecution and the Blue House.<sup>5</sup> (laughs) It might just work. Let's see." (O. Kim 308)

Sonja Foss argues, "The presence of a rhetorical vision suggests that a rhetorical community has been formed that consists of participants in the vision or members who have shared the fantasy themes" (100). In other words, "a rhetorical community consists of the people who participate in a rhetorical vision" (Bormann, "The Symbolic Convergence" 53). Moreover, the rhetorical vision of a group of people contains their drive to action. People who participate in the vision are "powerfully impelled to action" (Bormann, "Fantasy" 406). Bormann also explains, "Motives do not exist to be expressed in communication but rather arise in the expression itself and come to be embedded in the drama of the fantasy themes that generated and serve to sustain them" (406). In the case of *Naggomsu*, those who participate in the "resistance" vision share motives of change and solidarity. To them, the current political and economic reality is asymmetric, lopsided, and advantageous only to the privileged; therefore, they want to change it and they should not stay quiet.

Also, as a result of this newly formed rhetorical community, *Naggomsu* listeners began to talk together offline. From October 2011 to March 2012, talk concerts with *Naggomsu* hosts were held all over the country including in Seoul, Busan, and other major cities. When the concert opened, the fans screamed, chanting their heroes' names. According to a concert production agency, all the tickets at each site were sold out in a few minutes and talk concerts drew a great number of audiences (qtd. in U. Jung 125). Afterwards the *Naggomsu* hosts held seminars or concerts in several places in the United States including

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<sup>5</sup> The Blue House is the executive office and official residence of the South Korean head of state, the President of the Republic of Korea.

New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Washington, DC, and San Francisco. Ji-young Gong, a Korean novelist accompanying *Naggomsu*'s concerts in the United States, said, "There are many people who drove six hours to the concert and some drove as much as 14 hours. Others flew with their families from South America" (qtd. in U. Jung 125).

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

It is evident that *Naggomsu* played a positive role in Korean society in the sense that it engaged young people in political activities. Many young people had been indifferent to politics for various reasons. They did not have an opportunity to know politics, and could not afford to pay attention to politics because they were spending most of their time preparing for their future lives. Above all, their distrust of politics was deeply rooted. However, after listening to *Naggomsu*, they realized that politics is an important means and method to secure their lives and make their country a better place. In this respect, Ui-jung Jung argued that:

*Naggomsu* hosts who recognized the importance of politics well have used a lot of different ways to encourage people to get involved in politics ahead of the presidential election in 2012... As a result, they prevented the privatization of political power, influenced the election results, disclosed the corruption of President Lee, and raised suspicions of the election fraud so that they contributed to solving the political issues that could have a harmful influence on our lives... *Naggomsu* has performed political activity spontaneously. (i-ii)

As Ms. Jung mentioned, *Naggomsu* itself can be regarded as a kind of political activities. In addition, it can also be regarded as meaningful political rhetoric because its popularity proved its persuasive and convincing power. The *Naggomsu* phenomenon raises a number of rhetorical issues. How did *Naggomsu* gain people's attraction so quickly and so widely? What motivates the audience to keep listening to *Naggomsu*? Why does the audience like *Naggomsu* presenters and become their fans? What rhetorical work does *Naggomsu* perform? What features and elements make *Naggomsu* so popular? And what causes the audience to take part in collective behavior? This analysis answers these rhetorical questions based on a few episodes of *Naggomsu*, several books written by *Naggomsu* hosts, and some rhetorical theories. The goal is to investigate the significant role of *Naggomsu* as political rhetoric and to explore potential applications in the future.

First, *Naggomsu* efficiently utilized the characteristics of the podcast platform as a new medium. Podcasts provide low cost, time- and space-shifting, ease of use, and no censorship. These benefits are very attractive for the distribution of messages. Therefore, the podcast platform functioned as a strategic tool for *Naggomsu* hosts because not only did they lack political and economic resources, but also they were not influential and famous to the public under the circumstances that the pre-existing media dominated nearly all the mass media channels. At first, *Naggomsu* members thought that under the Korean media environment, it would be a very serious problem that the traditional main media exclusively controlled most message-distribution structures and produced the conservative frame defending the government and vested interests. As a new media platform, podcast, arose from new multimedia devices, *Naggomsu* members strategically chose the podcast as a new message-distribution structure.

Second, a list of rhetorical devices that they used can be identified through content analysis. These rhetorical devices not only add entertaining components to *Naggomsu*, but also provide the listeners with motivation to get involved in *Naggomsu*. Looking into the circumstance in which the four hosts talk together, the listeners are reminded of guys hanging out in a local bar because the presenters laugh and chat among themselves as if there were no camera or audience. Moreover, their conversation allows the listeners to feel as if they are eavesdropping by creating an atmosphere of privacy and secrecy. Similar to the social forces which Calvert noted in “mediated voyeurism”—the pursuit of truth, the desire for excitement, and the need for involvement—these very social forces can be applied to the eavesdropping, which works in tempting the audience to listen. This eavesdropping effect is one of rhetorical devices which led to *Naggomsu*’s success.

Also, a role-playing feature with specialized characters contributed to *Naggomsu*’s success. Each member seems to say what he wants at random without any script; however, the four hosts each play their own roles by demonstrating their specialties. Kim Ou-joon leads the program and easily explains complex political issues to the audience. Jung Bong-ju provides laughter for the listeners by endless bragging comments. Joo Jin-woo establishes the credibility of *Naggomsu* by supplying detailed facts through persistent investigation. Kim Yong-min takes charge of technical issues including editing, recording, and uploading while adding humors by his vocal mimicry of President Lee and other political figures. The format



which consists of private conversation among four specialized hosts is a unique feature, which contributes to the *Naggomsu*'s popularity.

Satire is the most prominent mode in *Naggomsu*. It is an important rhetorical device that *Naggomsu* consistently adheres to in every episode throughout the series. *Naggomsu* discusses very serious issues in a light manner. The hosts call President Lee "His Highness" and at the same time, often discuss President Lee's corruption. Even if they seem to respect President Lee by stating that "His Highness is never such a man to do such a bad thing," ("The 10th Episode") they, in fact, criticize, ridicule, and laugh at him using the name "Ggomsu" which evokes the image of a swindler in reference to President Lee. It is also used in title of the podcast to stand for the President. The satire provokes the listeners to ironic laughter and leads them to take part in making fun of the President. In fact, many listeners composed parody songs to make a fool of the President. These were inserted into the episodes of *Naggomsu* as if they were commercials breaking into a radio show. *Naggomsu*'s satire is important rhetorically because it enables the listeners to participate in the program. This also means that the hosts understand how their audience could be persuaded to be openly critical of political issues.

By positioning itself on one side of the argument, *Naggomsu* became a target of criticism from the traditional media. The main reason why critics took a negative view is that *Naggomsu* did not follow conventions concerning fairness, which is a basic value for media to maintain. However, *Naggomsu*'s deliberate bias is one of driving forces that constitutes a collective identity for young people. The young people who hated politics could develop interests in politics because its bias led them to stand on its side. If *Naggomsu* presented a fair balance in their stories, the listeners would not be able to select either side. After becoming aware of *Naggomsu*, young people realized the importance of politics. A 26-year-old listener, Ji-hyuck Yoo, pointed out the positive function of *Naggomsu*:

I could not always support *Naggomsu* without any reason, but I thought that it had a positive effect on our society overall. Many people thought that there was something wrong in our society; however, most of them did not know what is wrong exactly. Meanwhile, after learning about the ways of the world through *Naggomsu*, I naturally became critical-minded about social and political issues. (qtd. in U. Jung 36)

Third, through the fantasy theme analysis, I identified the “David and Goliath” fantasy, which established a rhetorical vision of “resistance” within the rhetorical community that *Naggomsu* constructed. With respect to three themes of settings, characters, and actions, *Naggomsu* revealed sharp conflicts between the two sides: good vs. evil, right vs. wrong, the weak vs. the powerful, hero vs. villain, and the honest vs. the Ggomsu. As such, those listeners who experienced the fantasy of “David and Goliath” naturally identified with “David.” Therefore, the ideologies that they shared are good, right, and honest. On the other hand, the shared fantasy theme creates a particular interpretation of reality, a rhetorical vision. As a unified worldview, the spirit of “resistance” can be discovered in *Naggomsu*. This rhetorical vision has something in common with Kim Ou-joon’ customary message, “Let’s not be intimidated!”

The audience who experienced the rhetorical vision of “resistance” constitutes a rhetorical community. The people who participate in the rhetorical community have a motive for action in harmony with the shared rhetorical vision. In fact, most listeners of *Naggomsu* showed a wide variety of collective behaviors. In *Naggomsu*’s first offline concert, young people packed a 1,600-seat auditorium in Seoul. When the concert opened, the fans screamed, chanting their heroes’ names. In the October 26, 2011 mayoral election in Seoul, exit polls showed that the independent opposition candidate who won took in nearly three times as many votes from people in their 20s, 30s and 40s as the government-backed candidate. A 34-year-old fan, Hae-young You, was reported to have said, “They channel our anger at the government; it’s a catharsis” (Choe).

*Naggomsu* revealed the corruption and immoral behavior of President Lee and his aides to the general public. The hosts really wanted citizens to become more interested in politics and to accomplish a regime change. Their goal was ultimately not achieved because President Geun-hye Park, who was the candidate of the ruling party, was elected in the 2012 presidential election. However, *Naggomsu* itself was a meaningful phenomenon because it had enormous influence on both the political and media environment. Moreover, it thoroughly taught the people why privatized political power is dangerous to people’s livelihood by giving some examples of President Lee’s corruption. *Naggomsu* stopped podcasting in 2012 as it had already promised that it would air only until President Lee’s term was over. During its lifetime, it went viral in South Korea. It showed unique features as

a political podcast. Contrary to expectations, other political podcasts having the same format as *Naggomsu* have not been released since it ended. However, the number of political podcast programs dealing with sensitive political issues keeps increasing since *Naggomsu*. Also, each host now runs his own political podcast and these are still positioned as very popular podcasts.

Finally, I want to focus on the application of political podcasts in the light of *Naggomsu*'s position under the biased Korean media environment. As mentioned before, *Naggomsu* fulfilled the role of alternative media so that we Koreans could discover the potential of alternative media which the podcast platform makes possible. If *Naggomsu* had not gotten involved in politics, we would not have known that the President bought his son an estate with taxpayers' money, that the mayoral candidate who was willing to do his best for citizens would lose the election, and that election fraud was threatening the basis of democracy. In this respect, *Naggomsu*'s model as a political podcast might be applied to the promotion of political parties, in particular, the weaker political parties with few resources or supporters. For example, in December 2014, South Korea's Constitutional Court made an unprecedented ruling to dissolve a small left-wing party, the Unified Progressive Party, accused of being pro-North Korea. South Korea's constitution has a clause that allows political parties to be disbanded if they pose a threat to the national order, but it had never been invoked until this case. The court also stripped the party's five elected lawmakers of their positions in the National Assembly. The conservative activists cheered at the news, but this verdict was regarded as stifling free expression and political repression.

Regarding this verdict, there was little media coverage which represented the dissolved party's opinion. Most media reported only the decision or the judge's opinion. This decision should not have happened because it ruined democracy in the sense that the lawmakers of the disbanded party had been elected by voters. Nevertheless, no media listened to their voice because they were a minority and labeled as pro-North Korea by the conservatives. In this case, if a political podcast such as *Naggomsu* had actively represented the party's opinion, the public opinion on this issue might have been different, and might have influenced the court's decision. In a modern democratic society, a balanced media environment is very important politically because we cannot but view the world only through

media. In order to watch and check political power, political podcasts can function as alternative media.

The variety of rhetorical features shown by *Naggomsu* are not useful and meaningful only in South Korea. They are common enough to be applied to any different political system or media environment in any countries. From the technical aspect of the podcast platform, the *Naggomsu* model is an effective tool for minorities to disclose their own messages to the public. The rhetorical devices used by *Naggomsu*, including the hangout atmosphere, role play, satire, and deliberate bias are also available for nearly all narratives as rhetorical strategies in order to capture the listeners' attention. Moreover, how *Naggomsu* constructs the rhetorical vision clearly shows a good method to lead people to civic engagement. *Naggomsu* constructed the fantasy theme of David and Goliath by constantly contrasting two characters: the righteous four hosts and the immoral President. The David and Goliath fantasy combined with the argument of "do not be intimidated" to create the rhetorical vision of "resistance." This rhetorical vision had a strong influence on the listeners' thoughts and constituted a rhetorical community of the listeners who shared the vision. I am one of them. After I experienced this vision, I realized the importance of politics and paid more attention to politicians and social issues. I was always skeptical about politics and politicians in the past. I thought that politics had nothing to do with me and did not directly affect my daily life. However, *Naggomsu* taught me that due to politics, I and our society lost a lot of valuable public resources. It let me know that because of the corrupt political power, our taxes were wasted, our welfare benefits were reduced, and our lives were becoming worse. Moreover, I realized how important it is to elect the right political leader. Also, I made a resolution not to remain passive. To become active, to resist abusive political power, and to develop better society, I will keep my eyes on politics, examine who is a qualified political leader, and cast my vote very carefully. This is the rhetorical vision as well as the important lesson that *Naggomsu* taught me.

In sum, through its own rhetorical characteristics, *Naggomsu* can be shown to have proposed a new rhetorical model of political satire and opened the possibility of the podcast platform as a rhetorical tool. I expect that more podcast programs will go on the air nowadays and more diverse podcasts will evolve further using a wide variety of topics and formats in the future.

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