

A Historical-Critical Examination of the Evolution of North Korea's *Juche*
Ideology Using Fantasy Theme Analysis: A Vision Transformed

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Thesis Committee Signature Sheet

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Dedication

For Beth, Mr. Lee, and 23,301,725¹ North Koreans.

¹ As of July 2007 (Central).

Acknowledgments

To say that I wrote this thesis alone would be fiction. I am the one who sat at the word processor, pressed the keys, and did the research. However, many others must be acknowledged for their contribution. Thanks go to Kevin Mahan for getting me started, without your insight into rhetorical criticism this thesis would not exist. Once Kevin guided me to the trailhead another friend, a North Korean refugee living in central Virginia, who asked to remain anonymous² for fear of reprisal against his and his wife's family, who are still in the DPRK, blazed the trail with me. Without his help this thesis would have been impossible.

Also, without the assistance of Dr. Michael Graves I would have attempted to analyze several hundred speeches, thank you for showing me that limitations in academic research are not unreasonable. I am grateful to Dr. Terri Lynn Cornwell who provided thorough grammatical corrections, as well as much positive criticism. Throughout the process Dr. Cliff Kelly, my thesis chairperson, offered his faith in me as a scholar and encouragement. Thanks Dr. K.

Many hours were spent at my parents home, thanks is due to Jim and Cozee for providing me a grotto of escape. My wife, Beth, also deserves thanks, for showing admirable patience and support through a long, and sometimes emotional, process.

Finally, I thank Jesus for giving mankind hope, even amidst the desperation of North Korea.

² Since my friend's personal experiences are shared throughout this thesis a pseudonym is necessary, he will be referred to as Mr. Lee.

Abstract

Scholarship on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is severely limited due to the secretive nature of Kim Jong Il and his regime; much of this secrecy and, generally, the closed nature of North Korean society is due in part to an ideology based on self-reliance, *Juche*. Through a communication scholarship based rhetorical examination this thesis aims to understand and explain how Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il have been able to create and sustain the *Juche* ideology in spite of North Korea's poor economic and social condition. The research traces the evolution of North Korea's *Juche* ideology from 1955 to 1990, using Ernest Bormann's Fantasy Theme Analysis, by examining two key speeches. The first speech was given by Kim Il Sung and has been pinpointed by scholars as the symbolic inception of *Juche*. The second speech is thematically similar and was given by Kim Jong Il in 1990. The two orations are compared and the ideological differences between the two are parsed out and summarized. This thesis found that the *Juche* idea began as a legitimate lifestyle rhetorical vision cast to the people by Kim Il Sung which met the needs of the people. The purpose of the original *Juche* idea proved effective at overcoming the conditions present in 1955 and was adopted by the nation as a whole. However, under Kim Jong Il the nature of *Juche* changed from serving to the people to serving the Korean Worker's Party. The implications extend to the North Korean situation today and this thesis suggests a new paradigm for understanding North Korea's possession of nuclear and biological weapons, hostility towards South Korea, and general attitude towards outsiders.

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I. Introduction

The Purpose

Jim Carrey, in the film The Truman Show, plays Truman, a man raised from birth in an artificial and controlled environment: a television set designed for him to perceive as reality. As the movie progresses one is able to see the process of creation and simulation beginning with a camera dangling above his crib along with his mobile, leading all the way to his final condition – in which his wife and best friend are an actress and actor respectively, simply playing a role. Or rather, living a role. Of course, since Truman's life is broadcast globally on live television "Save Truman" activist groups begin to form, in order to release Truman from his enslaved state. And, of course, the protagonist is cast as the television producer commandeering the role of God in Truman's life.

Similar in many aspects to The Truman Show, more than 20 million North Koreans also live in a controlled environment. Unfortunately, it is not artificial, nor can we simply turn it off and forget about it after 90 minutes of entertainment – as we can with Jim Carrey's film. There are several striking similarities between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and The Truman Show. For example, Kim Jong Il – the current dictator/deity who exerts iron handed control of North Korea plays the role of protagonist and is also, in many respects, commandeering the role of God in the subjugation of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK). This is manifested in his control over the ability of North Koreans to travel domestically, the work each citizen does, and the education each citizen is either commanded to, or not to, receive. In many

ways, due to extreme use of propaganda and information control, the culture of the North Korean people is one invented by Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il, and their advisors.

Glaring dissimilarities also exist between the DPRK and The Truman Show. First, there are no metaphorical cameras hung over cribs, nor is North Korea contained inside a massive television studio in Los Angeles that dwarfs the famous HOLLYWOOD hillside letters as in The Truman Show. Rather, North Korea is the most closed and secretive nation on earth, with very little known about any aspect of the nation. What the outside world knows about North Korea has been gleaned from refugees' personal recollections, rare and highly supervised journalistic forays, and first hand accounts of tourists³ who have gone on North Korea's sanctioned tours of Pyongyang.

Second, Truman escapes his prison and, in his escape, is let go by the director-god of his life. North Korea, as a nation has not escaped; further, their dictator-god will not permit them to escape. This thesis aims to illuminate further the idea of *Juche* and the powerful grip it has on North Korea. Specifically, the communication of the *Juche* idea, by Kim Il Sung and then Kim Jong Il, will be analyzed using Fantasy Theme Analysis. While true change in North Korea is unlikely to come anywhere but from within, I hope that this piece of scholarship can act as an activist group to "Save North Korea," similar to those that rallied around Truman and yearned for his freedom.

³ North Korea's tourism industry is meager. According to Mr. Walter L. Keats, founder and president of Asia Pacific Travel Ltd., speculates that fewer than 500 American tourists visit North Korea annually. In contrast, 1.7 million Americans visited China in 2007. Asia Pacific Travel Ltd., based in Wilmette, IL is the only tour operator licensed by North Korea to bring American tourists to North Korea, and then only for 5 days at a time within a 9 week annual window which fluctuates from year to year. Mr. Keats has been to North Korea 6 times over 13 years.

Justification

Juche is a little known tenet⁴ that governs 22 million persons on the northern half of the Korean peninsula. As will be demonstrated in this thesis, it governs the entirety of life in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, literally impacting every aspect of every North Korean citizen's existence, constituting what communication scholar Ernest G. Bormann calls a "lifestyle rhetorical vision." The following description, from the preface of *Juche: In Our Revolution* (1977), is an apt introduction to the tenet of *Juche*:

As formulated and developed by President Kim Il Sung, the concept of *Juche* is one of the DPRK's major contributions to world revolution.

The *Juche* idea means, in essence, that the masters of the revolution and the work of construction are the masses of the people and that they are also the motive forces of the revolution and the work of construction. In other words, one is responsible for shaping one's destiny.

President Kim Il Sung has said:

"The *Juche* idea is based on a philosophical theory that man is master of everything and decides everything."

On the basis of this theory, the DPRK has developed from an oppressed semifeudal country into a modern socialist society, completely rebuilding in the process from the destruction wrought by U.S. imperialism during the Korean War.

⁴ That is, outside of Korean scholarship and South Korean popular culture.

Among modern revolutionary leaders in the world today, President Kim Il Sung – who has led the Korean people to national independence, the building of a modern socialist state and to the front lines of the worldwide struggle against imperialism - is among the most profound thinkers and prolific writers. (vii, viii)

This thesis is a study of *Juche* through a communication studies framework. Specifically, this thesis describes the evolution of *Juche* from a seemingly legitimate lifestyle rhetorical vision to a constructed reality necessary for the current power-holding organization in the DPRK, the Korean Worker's Party, to maintain their hold on the nation. The methodology used to perform text-in-context analyses on two key speeches is the rhetorical tool of Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA). The first speech analyzed is a 1955 speech given by dictator Kim Il Sung; scholars see this speech as the symbolic inception of the *Juche* idea in the DPRK. The second speech was given in 1990 by Kim Jong Il, Kim Il Sung's son, protégé, and the current dictator⁵.

Specifically, since FTA is an effective tool for explaining social movements this project will use FTA to expose the injustice inherent in the *Juche* idea by extrapolating the true nature of *Juche* through an analysis of Kim Il Sung's 1955 Speech, "On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work," and Kim Jong Il's 1990 speech "Let Us Prepare the Young People as Thoroughly Reliable Successors to the Revolutionary Cause of Juche," it will then compare the two speeches in order to further understand this social

⁵ Detail on the choosing of these speeches is outlined in Chapter 3, Methodology.

movement. The goal of this thesis is to assist in illuminating an obscure political doctrine hereunto overlooked by communication scholars.

Significance of the Study

The author of Proverbs urges, “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute” (31:8 NIV). This project will in many ways fit that calling. The people of North Korea cannot speak for themselves domestically or internationally. They have known only totalitarian propaganda for the last four decades. Information control is ubiquitous in the DPRK: “A loudspeaker is installed in every home,” writes Iyer (“In the Land”). With the information control present in North Korea, as well as the miserable conditions ranging from concentration camps to government involvement in global narcotics rings it is appropriate to espouse to the academic community, and perhaps to some degree the general population, a basic understanding of *Juche* as seen through the framework of FTA.

Additionally, *Juche* has been categorized as an ersatz religion (Hale 283) and a rudimentary theocracy (Park 254) and Alan Kang writes that *Juche* is currently “a religious cult like-following under Kim Il Sung’s son, Kim Jong Il” (43).

As Kim Jong Il puts it:

Man alone in the world lives and conducts activity in social relationship. He maintains his existence and achieves his aim only socially [. . .] *Jajuseong*⁶ is the life and soul of man, the social being.

⁶ *Jajuseong* is a term Kim Jong Il uses to mean “independence” and “autonomy.”

When *jajuseong* is referred to as man's life and soul, it means social and political integrity. Man has a physical life and also social and political integrity. The physical life is what keeps a man alive as a biological organism; social and political integrity is what keeps him alive as social being. (Hale 302)

Hale continues by observing that although Kim denied the existence of God, "therefore denying that *Juche* was a religion," the religious qualities contained in *Juche* "advance the idea of an immortal and sociopolitical life [. . .] that would conveniently provide a theological basis for the deification of Kim Il Sung after the Great Leader's Death" (302).

It should be noted that three years following the death of the Great Leader, in 1998, the constitution was amended and the preamble was rewritten to say North Korea is a:

Socialist fatherland of Juche which embodies the idea of and guidance by the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung [. . .] who regarded "believing in the people as in heaven" as his motto, was always with the people, devoted his life to them, took care of and guided them with a noble politics of benevolence, and turned the whole society into one big and united family." (Hale 303)

The author continues to note that this preamble to the constitution attributes qualities to Kim Il Sung "that Christians and Muslims usually reserve for Jesus and Mohammed" (Hale 303). The further illumination of this de facto theocracy will further global understanding of the *Juche* ideology.

By the nature of North Korea, as an extremely closed society I have had to, become familiar with original straight-from-North-Korea manuscripts, documents, and teachings. The immersion in primary source analysis, I believe, increases the academic strength of the thesis. Additionally, the need to find secondary sources to supplement my necessary primary resources forced creativity. Research from documentaries and interviews, as well as relying on a multitude of media was necessary. Specifically, to find supporting evidence of the fantasy of *Juche* chaining out, per the operational guidelines of performing a FTA, I observed video of North Korea's annual Mass Games held in honor of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, resorted to memoirs of, and dinners with, refugees familiar with the national sentiment in the "Hermit Kingdom," as well as other sources.

Now, the idea itself does not justify study. But its historical and current impact on the millions of people who have lived with it as the center of their worldview for more than 40 years demands further study (Gills 108). The implementation and enacting of the *Juche* ideology has led to the deaths of at least hundreds of thousands and the imprisonment of millions based on political dissent alone ("Children of The Secret State"). The shocking atrocities in North Korea are enough to fill several volumes.

Additionally, the human rights violations alone make this a country worth studying. As does the Cult of Personality flourishing there, manifested in the nation-wide state-endorsed *Juche* idea described as "a religious, cult-like following." Or, as Kim Jong Il puts it, "The chuche [or juche] idea indicated [. . .] true human life [. . .] can only be realized admirably in a socialist society based on

collectivism. In this society, people are free from all manner of exploitation and oppression, domination and subordination and can lead an independent and creative life” (Kang, Alan, 43).

Contrary to the above quote North Korea has been suffering continuously since 1991. Hardly a year has gone by which has not been marked by natural disaster and an economy on the brink of utter collapse. One of the functions of the modern iteration of *Juche* is to create a reality that blames American imperialism on the suffering economy of North Korea.⁷

Finally, it seems that a critique of the *Juche* idea through an established framework such as FTA could be an invaluable building block for future Western and Eastern scholarship. In many ways it will be following in the footsteps of other scholars, who have forged ahead in writing about North Korea from a socio-economic or geo-political perspective.

⁷ One of the functions of FTA is to create in an individual (or group of individuals) a sense of identity and meaning that averts the pressures of social and natural disasters (Bormann, “Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality” 400).

II. Literature Review

Juche: An Introduction and Literature Review

The basic premise of this thesis is an analysis of an idea; the idea in question is in many facets entirely unique in the history of the world. The historical and current implementation of this idea is broad enough to encompass every aspect of a person's life, yet concise enough to summarize in just a few sentences. It is an idea created from one man's consciousness, yet adopted by, an entire nation-state (Gills 113). It is an idea with benefits and flaws that has been the root of both good days, pragmatically speaking, and some of the most horrendous days on earth for the 20 million plus citizens of North Korea.

In 2002 President Bush announced that the DPRK is one third of the triad of the "axis of evil." More recently, Kim Jong Il made the news by developing and, in 2006, testing nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missiles.

Kim Jong Il is the protégé and son of Kim Il Sung, the first, and "eternal," president of North Korea and a long time de facto fascist dictator (Hale 283). Kim Il Sung's primary contribution to North Korea was the *Juche* idea, which can be thought of as an oeuvre (Chung 283; Gills 107). That is, the *Juche* idea is a complete work, including extensive writing and theorizing on how to apply it to heavy industry, agriculture, the national economy on a macro scale, military planning, and virtually any other aspect of Marxism-Leninism-based socialism one could fathom (Johnson).

Juche as an ideology simply represents the idea that the North Korean people are united with a strong national identity, live in complete socialistic

harmony with each other in a literal utopia, and, most importantly, are, as a nation, an isolated, self-supporting, indigenous community (Alan Kang 43). *Juche* is most commonly explained as being a form of socialist self-reliance, and sometimes as an exotic strain of Marxism-Leninism (Bartholet and Lui; Glain). Plainly, North Korea desires to be a metaphorical island – isolated from the rest of the world.

Historically *Juche* started out well. It was borne out of two conditions present at the conclusion of the Korean War. The first condition was the desire for the Korean people to have a united country (Gills 108). Prior to the collapse of Japan in 1945 the Korean peninsula had been brutally occupied by the Japanese (Kang 42). Upon liberation from Japan at the conclusion of WWII, the Northern part of the Korean peninsula was occupied by the Soviets, and the South by the United States, similar to the division of Germany, whose post-war division was occurring at the same time (Gills 107-108). Following Japanese colonization and then the arbitrary division of the Korean peninsula by the allies after WWII, the Korean people had a strong desire to reunite as a nation, which they hadn't experienced since 1910 (Alan Kang 42).

Secondly, the devastation of the North Korean infrastructure caused by the United States and the United Nations during the Korean War left North Korea in economic ruin. The *Juche* idea, partially based on Marxism-Leninism's socialist ideals of equality, appealed to a war-torn nation, as did the emphasis on rebuilding heavy industry and agriculture for the purpose of complete national indigenous self-reliance (Gills 111). According to a reprinted article from Time magazine in 1951 the Allied retreat during the Korean War is to blame for much

of the destruction: “The planned Allied retreat began. Once more, the bumper-to-bumper vehicle columns rolled south. It was a scorched earth retreat⁸: the troops and the aircraft burned every building in which the pursuing foe could take shelter” (“Scorched”).

By 1956 *Juche* had been adopted by the masses (Gills 113). Through the 1960s it was showing itself effective at bringing North Korea out of economic ruin. Through the 1960s North Korea was the most industrialized nation in Asia (Gills 115). However, the 1970s-1980s were difficult and led to increased subsidies from China and particularly the U.S.S.R.. Then, in 1991, disaster struck. The U.S.S.R. dissolved and with it went 50 percent of North Korea’s GDP, which was coming from Soviet subsidies (Iyer, “Juche State”).

From 1991 to the present an estimated 500,000 (western estimations) or 4.4 million (refugees’ estimations) North Koreans starved to death, most in the early to mid-1990s from famine brought on by natural disasters and “a totally inefficient and inept bureaucratic management” of the government-controlled agriculture sector (Sungoo Kim 37 “Children;” “Welcome”). In 1997 Newsweek reported, “Many of its 23 million people are on the brink of famine, reduced to rations of just 3.5 ounces of grain per day,” which is the equivalent of 1/3 of a U.S.-sized common kitchen measuring cup (Bartholet and Lui). Today hundreds of thousands (more than 2,000,000 by some accounts) political prisoners, and

⁸ The result of the United Nation’s “scorched earth” policy and the war in general is summarized by Bradley K. Martin in Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader: North Korea and the Kim Dynasty, “In this war approximately 3.5 million Koreans had died – 2.5 million of them Northerners, representing a quarter of the DPRK’s prewar population. Perhaps a million Chinese had died. The UN death toll including battle-related deaths of 33,629 Americans plus 3,194 others – Turks, Greeks, French, British, Canadians, Thais, Colombians and so on – pales beside the Korean and Chinese numbers.”

their families, are in concentration camps and political prisons (“Children”). The current economy has literally ground to a halt and U.S. Congress estimates that the government of North Korea makes about \$1 billion a year on the production and global sales of heroin and other narcotics (Central). As The Economist noted in 2003, “Kim Jong Il and his elites get by economically using the country’s shadowy trade in everything from missile technology to fake banknotes and narcotics” (“Desperate”). According to refugee accounts the government directs which crops are to be grown. Farmers are commonly instructed to grow opium poppies for the production of heroin to be exported on the international black market (“Children”).

The *Juche* idea states that the head of state, currently Kim Jong Il, should lead the people to utopian perfection of the *Juche* idea (“Welcome”). The current execution of this axiom gives Kim Jong Il, and gave his father before him, complete authoritarian control over a landmass the size of Mississippi with a population the size of Texas (Central).

This power is maintained primarily through information control. North Korean radios are not tunable; they have a switch: listeners may choose one government broadcast station or the other. The country is devoid of Internet access and the Korean Central News Agency – the official organ of the state – is extremely effective at controlling all media; essentially they function as a very large and powerful nationwide propaganda machine (“Children”). Even cell phones are banned in the DPRK.

Repression and depression are clear from examples taken from this quote from The Economist in 2003: “Two West Europeans, visiting as guests of the

government, were taken recently to a hospital south of Pyongyang; it turned out to be the only one, in an area serving 1.6m people, that was equipped to handle major operations. Officials accompanying the visitors became ‘very, very nervous’ when hospital staff let slip that their two ambulances were no longer useable” (“Desperate”).

Most publications, books, and articles look at North Korea from a socio-economic or geo-political perspective. One of the most comprehensive articles written on *Juche* was published in The Review of International Affairs, “The Lens of Juche: Understanding the Reality of North Korean Policymakers,” which interprets the worldview of North Korean elites as seen through the looking glass of *Juche* (Alan Kang). The purpose is to enlighten American policy makers to the framework in which North Korean elites view the current nuclear crisis. This article is typical and representative of virtually all articles that make mention of *Juche*, most dealing with economics, Korean reunification, or the nuclear program of the DPRK. Within communication scholarship most articles deal with the western media’s framing of North Korea, Korean reunification/unity, and journalistic freedoms.

In order to fully understand *Juche*, the reader must have an overview of two other forms of communism, which emerged around the same time. Marxism-Leninism is the bedrock of *Juche* and from its inception Maoism and Stalinism heavily influenced its creation and direction. Stalin himself installed Kim Il Sung as the first Premier of the newly formed Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in 1948.

In Russia the October Revolution, which is said to be the seminal revolution of world communism, took place in 1917. This revolution was led by Lenin himself (Shub i). Albert Marrin writes: “Lenin established a pattern for Communist revolutions. First, he used force and terror to take control of the government. Then, he ruled as a dictator, banning all other political parties and all anti-Communist speeches and publications” (World Book). Both Stalin and Lenin were believers in “World Communism,” that is, a communism that is appropriate for all nations. According to Lenin’s vision “World Communism” would, eventually, come to rule all nations of the world. This idea of World Communism led Stalin to view global conquest as a goal of all communist states, leading to the Cold War.

Prior to Lenin’s death he appointed Stalin to rule the newly formed U.S.S.R., which he did until his death in 1953:

Even after Stalin's death, many Communist governments continued to use his style of rule, which became known as Stalinism. Stalinist governments eliminate all opposition by employing terrorism - that is, by threatening or using violence to create widespread fear. These governments maintain total control of the media for propaganda and force economic production without considering market conditions or the needs of workers. (World Book)

China celebrates its most important national holiday, its Independence Day, annually on October 1. It was on this day in 1949 that the Communists, led by Mao Zedong, declared victory in the civil war against the Chinese Nationalists who were driven in exile to the island of Taiwan. This also paved the way to the

Cultural Revolution. This particular revolution was driven by fundamental application of Marxism-Leninism and adhered to ideology over pragmatic politics and national policy. The axiom of this ideology is a classless society. Second to this fundamental axiom was World Communism, in the “Little Red Book,” the official Cultural Revolution handbook, officially titled Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, the second page opens with, “WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!”

In addition to the focus on World Communism, violence has been, intentionally, a key tenet of the spread of communism; no communist revolution can be discussed without the communist axiom of bloodshed. This is evident in Mao’s quote: “Every communist must grasp the truth ‘Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun’” (Quotations 121).

All three communist ideals were reactionary in nature, that is, they primarily came to power on the basis of appeal to the masses perceived needs, as left unfulfilled by other groups. For example, Karl Marx formed the first seedlings of communism, in reaction to the industrial revolution and the emergence of capitalism in France and Great Britain. Communism has never been a new phenomenon, rather, it has cast itself as an antithesis to the status quo by promising what the proletariat need, and want. In the October Revolution the catchphrase used by the Bolsheviks was “Bread, peace, land” (World Book). The promise of bread, peace, and land was a attractive proposition to a country in an intense food and electricity shortage, still embattled with Germany in WWI, and just beginning to emerge out of a period of governance through autocracy and de facto feudalism (Shub 89-90; World Book).

The Cultural Revolution was a reaction to overbearing landlords who mistreated peasants, during this revolution between 200,000 and several million landlords were executed, and their land redistributed. Like the October Revolution, Mao Zedong's coming to power was during a time of war (civil war with the Chinese Nationalists⁹ which followed WWII) and in an era, which China could be described as being under autocratic rule and also in a state of feudalism (World Book).

Juche shares several similarities with these two revolutions; it was also born out of a need for the citizens to reclaim their identity after the dictatorship-type governance of Japan from 1910 to 1945 and emerge out of a disadvantaged feudalistic economic situation. Similar to the emergence of communism in China, there was a civil war immediately following WWII, the Korean War, which led to two separate governments and nations: South Korea and North Korea, similar in some regards to the People's Republic of China and the de facto democracy governing Taiwan.

More important than the similarities between *Juche* and North Korean style communism and other forms of Marxism-Leninism, though, are the differences. As mentioned above, the conditions in North Korea following the Japanese attempted colonization of Korea, WWII, and the Korean War made the people ready for unity. Kim Il Sung envisioned this unity in a new way, in some aspects it is an antonym to Lenin's idea of "World Communism" which imagined communism sweeping the globe and becoming a global political-utopian reality.

⁹ The Chinese Nationalist Party fled to the island of Taiwan after their defeat in Mainland China, where they established a de facto democracy and strong economy, both of which are still in existence today.

It is also markedly different from Mao's hard-line commitment to the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism that espouse a classless society as preeminent.

Kim Il Sung envisioned independence as tantamount, and contrary to Lenin's fear of nationalism, Kim embraced nationalism. Self-reliance and national autonomy are the primary indicators that set *Juche* apart from other brands of Marxism-Leninism.

Fantasy Theme Analysis: An Introduction

The theory I plan to utilize to understand and analyze *Juche* – briefly introduced above - is Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA). It is, in fact, an application of Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT). This theory elucidated claims that people create reality through communication and that groups create a unified reality through communication. Although the theory has Freudian roots, it is primarily based on small group research performed by two scholars, Robert Bales at Harvard and Ernest G. Bormann at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (Mohrmann, "An Essay"). Their research dealt initially with how small groups create group realities.

SCT is a "humanistic approach to the rhetorical criticism of human communication" (Bormann, Force 3) and forms the vertebrae of FTA. One of the key contradistinctions necessary to understand SCT outlined by Bormann is the difference between general and specific theories, in which special theories are "artistic formulations that [. . .] relate only to the communication practices" within a restricted culture to which it can be applied. A general theory, on the

other hand, is universally applicable to “the entire process of communication, practice, criticism, and special theory as the object of analysis.” SCT is a general theory, one that is universally adaptable (Bormann, Force 4).

How FTA and SCT evolve from the field of small group research to application on a large scale to an entire national rhetorical movement and several party-wide (e.g. GOP, Democrat) political campaigns is explained by Bormann in his essay, “Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality.”

Bormann points to Bales’ research on small groups at Harvard as the catalyst to understanding his own small group research he was simultaneously performing at the University of Minnesota. Later, however, Bormann distances himself from Bales and acknowledges that their individual research went down divergent paths (Bormann, “Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: Ten Years Later” 290-291).

The discovery Bales made, published in 1970, was “the dynamic process of group fantasizing” (Bormann, “Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality” 396). These happenings of group fantasizing occur not only in small group situations, Bormann argues, but “also in larger groups hearing a public speech” (398).

Summarily put by Bormann:

The dramatizations which catch on and chain out in small groups are worked into public speeches and into the mass media and, in turn, spread out across larger publics, serve to sustain the members’ sense of community, to impel them strongly to action (which raises

the question of motivation), and to provide them with a social reality filled with heroes, villains, emotions, and attitudes. (398)

Narratives are the historical basis of FTA. For a narrative to be counted as a fantasy it must involve real or imagined characters that takes place in a “setting other than the here-and-now communication of the group” (Bormann, Force 4). That is, a discussion over a current conflict would not count as a narrative to be studied in a FTA. Once a discussion about either a past or future, but not present, conflict or event occurs, the basis for study emerges. The narrative takes on a technical term once it meets this requirement: *fantasy*. Fantasy in this context is different from, say, the Oxford American Dictionary denotation, “the faculty or activity of imagining things, esp. things that are impossible or improbable,” or the popular connotations it elicits in many persons’ minds. In the context of performing a FTA on a text, Bormann states as the definition of fantasy: “The creative and imaginative interpretation of events that fulfills a psychological or rhetorical need.” Although fantasies in their technical use can represent “fictitious scripts of imaginary characters,” they also may represent “things that have actually happened” (Bormann, Force 5)¹⁰.

The primary purpose of performing a FTA, according to Bormann, is to find evidence that symbolic convergence has taken place. The following clues should be looked for to verify the presence that symbolic convergence has occurred. First, “similar dramatizing material” (i.e., wordplay, narratives, figures,

¹⁰ Much recent scholarship concerning Bormann’s FTA has been done by scholar Joshua Gunn who argues that rhetorical scholarship concerning imagination would be well served by not omitting the unconscious nature of imagination. Gunn points to the strong connection between Freudian thought and FTA as evidence that imagination can exist in unconsciousness. Scholarship should, he writes, consider the collective unconscious of audiences in rhetorical studies concerning imagination and invention (Gunn).

and analogies) could provide evidence that symbolic convergence has taken place. Cryptic allusions to symbolic common ground could serve as another clue; this is commonly identified as the “inside-joke phenomenon.” The allusion does not need to be an inside joke, but could be a word, phrase, or non-verbal clue that “may arouse tears or evoke anger, hatred, love, and affection, as well as laughter and humor” (Bormann, Force 6). Presence of such triggers inside the discourse, that is, the text to be examined are clear evidence that fantasy theme sharing has occurred.

Speaking of fantasy theme sharing, sharing of fantasy themes occurs through a process known as chaining. As people in groups become more excited, involved, and attached to the fantasies that emerge, the fantasy is said to “chain out.” Chaining occurs not only in small groups, but also:

In face-to-face interacting groups, in speaker-audience transactions, in viewers of television broadcasts, in listeners to radio programs, and in all the diverse settings for public and intimate communication in a given society. Once such a rhetorical vision emerges it contains *dramatis personae* and typical plot lines that can be alluded to in all communication contexts and spark a response reminiscent of the original emotional chain. The same dramas can be developed in detail when the occasion demands to generate emotional response. (Bormann, “Fantasy and Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality” 398)

Once it has been established that fantasies and symbolic convergence have occurred, fantasy types begin to emerge. Bormann gives the example of St. Paul’s

conversion on the road to Damascus as an example in his book The Force of Fantasy. Paul, he says, experienced the first “new birth” after a paradigm shattering emotional conversion, which has been repeated countless times since St. Paul’s experience. This is an example of a “stock scenario,” which is a scenario continuously and repeatedly reenacted by different, but similar, persons in different contexts. These stock scenarios are known as fantasy types (7).

Thus it has been established that fantasy types emerge from fantasy sharing, and fantasy types lead to the emergence of rhetorical visions. “Rhetorical visions are often integrated by the sharing of a dramatizing message that contains a master analogy,” writes Bormann. Generally the master analogy is pulled together through a key word or slogan. Some recent rhetorical visions in American history include the New Deal, Black Power, and The Moral Majority (8). A rhetorical community emerges from such rhetorical visions and membership is often formalized. Formalization would take place for members of the rhetorical vision of Born Again Christians through baptism, for members of China’s Communist Party through carrying a card, and most importantly for this proposed thesis, through all adults of the *Juche* rhetorical community wearing a badge of either Kim Il Sung or Kim Jong Il over their hearts every time they appear in public (Iyer, “In the Land” 48). The first and last of the previous examples are examples of what Bormann calls life-style rhetorical visions. This self-explanatory description implies that the rhetorical vision has encompassed “an individual’s social reality in all aspects of living” (Bormann, Force 8).

Fantasies, the core of FTA, are at their core stories about people. According to Bormann, “Interpreting events in terms of human action allows us

to assign responsibility, to praise or blame, to arouse and propitiate guilt, to hate and to love.” Simply put, to understand the world around us. Human experiences are often confusing; however, fantasy themes are “organized and artistic” (9). Because of the central role of human narrative in FTA and the dramatic nature of FTA characters that represent protagonists and antagonists (heroes and villains) are employed in the narratives. These dramas “always interpret, slant, suggest, and persuade.” In short, create meaning. Specifically, they create communal meaning (10).

The origins of FTA are often the result of groups beginning to share fantasies together. An example could be a committee meeting at which a new idea for implementing podcasts of lectures into the curriculum of a university’s department. If such an idea were proposed, and the committee approved of the idea and excitement were built around the idea and a brainstorming session ensued, a fantasy would have been born. However, some, albeit fewer, rhetorical visions, particularly life-style rhetorical visions, are begun when “one creative person fantasizes a powerful personal consciousness and does so with such skill that his or her consciousness is shared by converts and becomes the rhetorical vision that forms a community’s consciousness” (Bormann, Force 10). Such is the origin of the rhetorical vision of *Juche*, formed at the conclusion of the Korean War by Kim Il Sung. It is a life-style rhetorical vision shared by the national community of North Korea.

In short, rhetorical visions, born out of fantasy types, born out of the chaining out of fantasies, which are simply narratives about people or using personification, are tools used for communities to “identify their collective

selves¹¹” (Bormann, Force 11). Fantasies that clearly divide “us” from “them” by applying labels of “evil” to “them” are particularly powerful. As Bormann writes in his essay on Social Criticism, “The explanatory power of the fantasy chain analysis lies in its ability to account for the development, evolution, and decay of dramas that catch up groups of people and change their behavior” (399).

The above description of FTA is from Bormann’s point of view. He, and his theory, are not without criticism. Most of the criticism makes gentle recommendations towards making FTA a stronger framework to perform rhetorical studies. But some – notably G.P. Mohrmann – are advocates of FTA being abolished in its entirety.

Mohrmann and Bormann actually, in 1982, had an open debate through the Quarterly Journal of Speech, in which each would air his opinion and research on FTA, Bormann clearly arguing for FTA, Mohrmann vehemently opposed to it. Mohrmann, though, was not pleased with the dialogue:

Having accepted “An Essay on Fantasy Theme Criticism,” (*QJS*, May 1982) the Editor suggested that the discussion continue, and when agreement was reached, a copy of my essay was forwarded prior to its publication, with the understanding that I would receive a response in time to react before the August deadline. All the deadlines were met. From that I take satisfaction – and I must. I must because there is so little else in the exchange that can gladden my heart. (“Fantasy Theme Criticism” 306)

¹¹ The rhetorical vision of *Juche*, it should be noted, began as a narrative about the Korean people as enunciated first by Kim Il Sung.

Mohrmann is pessimistic due to his perception that the response to his prior essay had been mostly a glorification of the publication of FTA, with minimum content addressed to his grievances. His primary complaints are two-fold, the first being with the historic basis of SCT. Research by Bales is the mark in his attack. Bales was a Freudian, “Freudian theory [. . .] is linchpin in Bales’ interpretation of fantasy,” writes Mohrmann (308). Yet, Bales rejected Freudian thought as the basis of his work on studying fantasy chaining in small groups. This leads Mohrmann to rant, “Surely we have a right to ask for – no, demand – an acceptable alternative, a rationale of substantial theoretical grounding” (308). Additionally, Mohrmann also complains that applying small group-based principles of fantasy chaining to other forms of communication is ill advised:

It is one thing to acknowledge fantasy chains and their functions in the histories of groups, but it is quite another matter to argue that the fantasy chain is a quintessential symptom of symbolic processes obtaining in all forms of communication, still another to argue concomitantly that to understand the phenomenon in the small group is to establish a purchase throughout the realm of symbolic transactions. Wanting to an acceptable rationale, those claims border on the magniloquent. (308)

As you can see, Mohrmann was not a fan of the theories of Robert Freed Bales, a professor emeritus at Harvard, who died in 2004.

Bormann himself summarily dismisses Mohrmann’s critiques in another 1982 essay.

The most important criticism of FTA during the 1978 SCA Seminar was not provided by Mohrmann's long attack on Bales and Freud nor by his quest for more evidence connecting small group processes with other communicative contexts nor his charge that sharing fantasies does not motivate action. Rather, it was Hart, who was in overall sympathy with the approach, who raised the most cogent questions. ("Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: Ten Years Later 293)

Roderick Hart's main criticism was that "FTA is not cut out of a theoretical wholecloth" (qtd. in "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: Ten Years Later" 293).

Bormann's reply is: "no research program worth its salt should wait for a theoretical whole-cloth to be produced before studies begin." He argues that a "theoretical frame is emerging" (293).

In fact, Bormann's response to Mohrmann is relegated to the last pages of the article, in which he criticizes Mohrmann's diction and clarity and offers a measured response to each of Mohrmann's claims (302-305).

The fight between Mohrmann and Bormann is largely cleared up by Charles E. Williams. Bormann had equated his FTA to a horse which he was riding as hard as he could, leaving it to other scholars to reign the theory "within its proper limits" (qtd. in Williams 11). Mohrmann responded by beginning his aptly named article, "Fantasy Theme Criticism: A Peroration" by quoting Laurence Stern's The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman, "*De gustibus non est disputandum*; - that is, there is no disputing against HOBBY-

HORSES” (306). This was a not-so-subtle allusion that the horse that Bormann was riding was in fact a hobbyhorse.

Williams makes it fairly clear that the 1982 QJS debate had turned mostly into two persons arguing their own point of views. His literature review quotes Farrell, saying that:

FTA has made “real and significant contribution to the critical literature” by succeeding in “its stated aim of grouping together aspects of discourse and social reality that might otherwise have been overlooked.” (4)

However, Williams’ main goal is not to clear up the controversy raging in the early 1980s of the execution of FTA, but to outline how one performs a FTA. This article will be crucial and very helpful in performing a FTA on *Juche*. This article, in conjunction with Bormann’s seminal book-length application of FTA, will serve as apt guides to utilize this method of rhetorical criticism to *Juche*. William’s article will be discussed further in the methodology chapter.

In summation, in spite of some early (and some continued) objections to the saliency of FTA this author will use this theory based on his own perceptions of its ability to explain how *Juche* is successfully “sold” to the people of North Korea, most of whom have “bought into” the rhetorical vision that it is. More importantly, dozens of articles, dissertations, and master’s theses have been written using FTA, many of them recently, showing that FTA continues to be a widely accepted practice of rhetorical criticism in the communication scholarship world.

Further, a “Fantasy Theme” is defined by James A. Herrick as “a story line involving characters with whom individuals may identify themselves and other members of their organization or group, and plots that these characters can participate in acting out.” (235)

There are more than 20 million individuals who identify themselves with the idea of *Juche*, as pure Korean nationals who are completely self-reliant. Nobody has written academically about *Juche* from the perspective of the identity of the proletariat and its socialistic viewpoint.

Bormann writes that fantasy themes cause groups to become “excited, involved” and that the realities chain out to create, “a common symbolic reality filled with heroes and villains” (399). This idea fits the *Juche* idea perfectly, in that the North Korean government must continuously uphold a continual and literal fantasy. Theoretically each member of North Korean society (aside from those in political prisons with their families) believes in the evils of America – whom they view as an occupying force in South Korea.

III. Methodology

General Application of FTA to Juche

The primary goal of the proposed study is to understand and then explain how *Juche* captured the hearts and minds of the North Korean people, and how it has been maintained by the citizens of the DPRK in spite of evidence suggesting its failure. This will be done by examining the efficacy of the rhetorical vision from 1955, when the vision was originally cast to the North Korean population, through an important *Juche*-defining speech given by Kim Il Sung December 28, and then examine a speech given in 1990 by Kim Jong Il in order to examine the evolution and history of the adoption of the *Juche* idea (Kim 135, v.2).

In terms of “heroes and villains,” consider what Kim Il Sung wrote in 1965 in a letter to the president of the Korean Affairs Institute in Washington D.C.:

The US imperialists have brought south Korea completely under their colonial domination in all political, economic, military and cultural fields and brought utter ruin to the life of its people [. . .] Any people who have the least spark of national conscience ought to demand the withdrawal of the US troops and work to expel them from our territory. We must stir up the indignation of the entire nation against the US imperialist aggressors and mobilize all the patriotic forces in the struggle to drive the US army out of south Korea¹². (Juche 2: 389-390)

¹² Interestingly, American troops were almost withdrawn from South Korea by Jimmy Carter, who campaigned for the presidency on a platform partially based on bringing all American troops

In fact, one of the main tenets of *Juche* is that America is a colonial force that is bent on world domination through forcible submission. Creating fear of American invasion is key to maintaining the *Juche* ideology amongst the proletariat. As Alan Kang writes, in order to hold economic and political stability together in North Korea Kim Jong Il must be certain to portray to his compatriots that danger, war, and invasion are imminent. Violence, revolution, and reactionism are axioms of Marxism. Without something to fight against and rebel against *Juche* cannot survive (48).

Much of the communication used to create and maintain the national idea of *Juche* could be considered propaganda. Very few studies previously have looked at symbolic convergence experiences born out of movements that used propaganda¹³. Even so, this study is not without precedent. The book Rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Impact on Chinese Thought, Culture, and Communication by Xing Lu analyzes a large number of artifacts used to uphold Maoist thought and the ideals of the Cultural Revolution; among the rhetorical criticism performed in Lu's book is a fantasy theme analysis. In chapter five she writes that "mass hypnosis" and "myth and mass hysteria" are achieved through group fantasy:

home from Korea. However, South Korean lobbying, heavy criticism, and congress generally persuaded Carter to renege his plan by 1979 (Martin 138 – 139, 792).

¹³ Study of propaganda use in China has found three goals of propagandist communication: 1. Create a new communist persona; 2. Mobilize the masses to support the Party; and 3. Repress political dissent. These goals are in line with North Korea's goals. The findings of the efficacy of the three goals are that the highest efficacy is in the third goal, repression, while support of the Party had moderate success, and the reshaping of the ideals of Chinese persons into communist ideologues was the least successful. The extension of this research to this thesis is that the same can be presumed by China's close neighbor, North Korea, thus lending more credibility to the legitimate acceptance of the lifestyle rhetorical vision of *Juche* in the DPRK (Zhu).

According to Ernest Bormann (1972), a group fantasy is created through the communication process in a dramatic setting, which leads to a rhetorical vision that provides a coherent and mythic view to hold the public together. Slogans eulogizing Mao and sloganized Maoist quotations functioned in this way. (70)

The “coherent and mythic view” held by Chinese during the Cultural Revolution can be considered analogous to North Korea’s adoption of the *Juche* ideology.

Further, an unpublished dissertation from the University of Iowa performed a FTA on cults, “The Rhetoric of the New Religious Cults: A Fantasy Theme Analysis of the Rhetoric of the Unification Church.” Finally, a peer-reviewed study in Journal of Communication Inquiry, “Web of Hate: A Fantasy Theme Analysis of the Rhetorical Vision of Hate Groups Online” analyzes the efficacy of the persuasiveness of hate groups operating on the World Wide Web. All three of these studies illustrate that; although FTA has seldom been performed concerning rhetorical visions achieved through the use of coercion or propaganda; it has been done before and has been well received. Further still, Bormann does not eliminate the possibility of performing a FTA on artifacts that may be coercive or propagandist; the fantasy in FTA must fulfill “a psychological or rhetorical need” (Bormann, Force 5). *Juche* does just that in the lives of the North Korean people.

Additionally, FTA creates in an individual a sense of identity and meaning that averts the pressures of social and natural disasters (Bormann, “Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality” 400). North Korea

has been suffering both continuously since 1991. Hardly a year has gone by which has not been marked by natural disaster and an economy on the brink of utter collapse. One of the functions of the modern iteration of *Juche* is to create a reality that blames American imperialism on the suffering economy of North Korea. According to Alan Kang's analysis of North Korean propaganda, "By peace the imperialists mean aggression and war" (45).

As Scott Snyder writes: "At the level of the state, survival, endurance and resistance against foreign forces who seek to dominate or subjugate the Korean people are recurrent historical themes that date back to the Tang Dynasty" (qtd. in Alan Kang 42). *Juche* is part of an illusion declaring "the nation to be independent and free in all domestic affairs of the nation, unaffected by international circumstances" (Alan Kang 43). This is in sharp contrast to the intense international food aid the country currently receives.

The current efficacy of this illusion can be seen in the article "North Korea's Top Ideologue," which comments on the internal state of affairs after Hwang Jang Yop, one of Kim Il Sung's closest advisors, defected through the South Korean Consulate in Beijing. Hwang Jang-Yop¹⁴ wrote a memo repudiating the idea that North Korea might collapse in "two to three years" as predicted by former CIA director John Deutch. "There is no risk of North Korea collapsing because it is politically very united," Hwang said (Bartholet and Lui). It is also noteworthy that the North Korean position on Hwang's defection is that he was kidnapped by South Korea (Butler and Palmer).

¹⁴ Hwang Jang-yop was Kim Il-Sung's ideology secretary from 1958 – 1965 (Martin 116). He also served as president of Kim Il-sung University (Martin 170).

The national political unity under *Juche* is in part due to “the understanding of the world that Kim Jong Il creates and becomes a virtually unquestioned reality for North Korea’s elite and its people” (Alan Kang 42).

Methodology

The method used to understand *Juche* in this thesis is fantasy theme analysis, developed by Professor Emeritus at the University of Minnesota, Ernest G. Bormann. This theory is apt at explaining the origins and nature of social movements. In the first book to use the rhetorical critical method of fantasy theme analysis, The Force of Fantasy: Restoring the American Dream, the theory is explained and then applied to religious persuasive communication from the Puritans of the late 16th century through the time of President Reagan. In this thesis the same method will be applied to *Juche*.

The steps necessary to perform a FTA are laid out by Bormann, in brief, in his essay “Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision,” and his book The Force of Fantasy. Bormann’s essay lays out a five-step process. First, the critic must collect evidence that points to the existence of a rhetorical vision. Once evidence has been collected the scholar’s job begins, step two’s task is to discover and describe the narrative that chained out. When the narrative has been discovered the scholar-critic is then able to examine the narrative for patterns of characterizations and settings. With the narrative and patterns have been established the rhetorical vision must be creatively reconstructed. Finally, specific questions must be asked in relation to the elements of the dramas found in the texts studied. These five steps are outlined more fully below.

1.) *Collect Evidence*

This crucial step involves discovering and selecting the text or texts to be used as evidence of the rhetorical vision and subsequent analysis. For any FTA this evidence can be video, audio, manuscripts, recollection of participants, or the researcher's direct observations.

In North Korea all media is limited to official propaganda tools; the nation only has one television station, two radio stations, one newspaper, and one magazine. It is possible to strictly apply Ernest Bormann's Fantasy Theme Analysis to any of these media, as he writes in his illuminating essay, *Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality*: "A rhetorical vision is constructed from fantasy themes that chain out in face-to-face interacting groups, in speaker-audience transitions, in viewers of television broadcasts, in listeners to radio programs, and in all the diverse settings for public and intimate communication in a given society" (398).

Of all the available options considered, speeches given by Kim Il and his successor, Kim Jong Il, were chosen. The reason for choosing speeches is based on their fit to FTA texts as outlined by Bormann and the relative availability of speech manuscripts in English.

For this thesis I selected two manuscripts from among thousands of discrete texts available and translated into English. The texts used are manuscripts of speeches, both given to Korean Workers Party loyalists in Pyongyang, and published by the DPRK's Foreign Language Press, as well as presses sympathetic to the DPRK.

Several scholars outlined very specifically that one speech, given in 1955 by Kim Il Sung, was the seminal speech of the establishment of *Juche*¹⁵. For example, Ralph C. Hassig writes that this particular speech, “sets forth the core *Juche* idea of national self-reliance and pride” (Lee 17). More explicitly Hy-Sang Lee defines the etymology of the *Juche* as stemming from a term suitable to describe either master or bodily self-control. He writes, “[Kim Il Sung] first enunciated the *Juche* idea in the often-referenced speech of December 28, 1955, “On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing *Juche* in Ideological Work” (Lee 26).

Kim Il Sung’s writings and teachings on *Juche* have been judiciously published by the now defunct Weekly Guardian Associates, formerly based in New York City. The manuscript for “On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing *Juche* in Ideological Work” was taken from their book *Juche: In Our Revolution*, a collection of speeches, presentations, question and answer sessions, and writings by Kim Il Sung published in two volumes. These two volumes contain more than 1000 pages. Further, North Korea has published *Works*, a 44-volume set, which is said to be a complete compilation of the teaching, writing, and speeches of Kim Il Sung. In short, analyzing Kim Il Sung’s *Works* alone would constitute an analysis of 1300 plus individual manuscripts.

On the other hand, Kim Jong Il, the orator of the second speech manuscript, is tremendously private and since he took power of North Korea after the death of his father in 1994 he has seldom spoken in public. However,

¹⁵ Bradley K. Martin also mentions that the introduction of *Juche* came from this speech, “It was in that 1955 speech that Kim gave full voice to his arguments for *Juche*” (Martin 111).

cross referencing articles found in the Northwest Florida Daily News, Kim Jong Il's official biography¹⁶, as downloaded from the official DPRK website: www.korea-dpr.com, globalsecurity.org, the New York Times, unpublished master's thesis, and other sources I have found the most prominent recent speech given by Kim Il Sung dealing with the *Juche* idea is the 1990 speech, "Let Us Prepare the Young People Thoroughly as Reliable Successors to the Revolutionary Cause of Juche."

The full-text of this speech is available on the Uriminzokkiri website, which is presumably operated by the Korea Central News Agency (KCNA), the media arm of the DPRK, from a server in China¹⁷. It is also available in pamphlet form from the DPRK's Foreign Language Press. Only six manuscripts of this speech exist in North America, the Library of Congress's copy was loaned for this paper. Thus, I was able to compare the pamphlet and the online text for accuracy and have verified their congruence. The second speech was delivered January 17, 1990 to the Senior Officials of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea. The speech is dated, as it is 18 years old, but the major transformation, according to research done at the Korean National Library in Seoul by Mr. Lee, a friend of mine¹⁸, found that the major transformation of the *Juche* idea occurred in the 1970s, and the 45-year gap between the two speeches is enough to accurately document the differences between the inception of *Juche* at the beginning of the cold war and its state after the collapse of the Iron Curtain. It is

¹⁶ Kim Il Sung's biography was also used as a source to verify the importance of Kim Il Sung's 1955 speech.

¹⁷ I was unable to verify the veracity of this claim, but have no reason to believe otherwise.

¹⁸ The author's friend, Mr. Lee, is also a North Korean refugee and graduate of Kim Il Sung University. He escaped from North Korea into China in 1997 and finally entered South Korea where he claimed asylum and was granted citizenship in 2001.

for this reason that two speeches were chosen. One will be analyzed to establish the nature of “original” *Juche* while the second will be analyzed in order to understand “modern” *Juche*.

2.) Discover and Describe the Narrative that Chained Out

Narratives in the speeches chosen showed themselves to be easily identifiable. The villains, generally imperialist and colonialist nation-states, and heroes, generally the Korean people and the Korean Workers Party, are clearly recognizable, as explained in Chapter 4, Analysis. The narratives found in these speeches are characterized by praising past exploits as motivation for continuing the Korean struggle for a socialist utopia.

3.) Look for Patterns of Characterizations and of Setting

The characterizations and settings are generally at sites of either ideological or literal socialist construction, with characterizations portraying all of Korea as inherently and inexplicably revolutionary.

4.) Creatively Reconstruct the Rhetorical Vision

Two visions are recreated in this thesis, the vision of “original” *Juche*, as seen in 1955, as well as “modern” *Juche* based on the 1990’s speech.

5.) Ask Specific Questions Relating to the Elements of the Dramas

Questions adapted from Bormann’s work included in this thesis are: Who are the dramatis personae? How does the fantasy theme work to attract the unconverted? Who are the heroes and the villains? And, How are the members of the rhetorical community characterized?

There are several more questions, but Bormann writes, “A critic need not, of course, raise all of such questions for a given piece of criticism but for some in-

depth critiques of a single message the critic might ask more questions and search for more details” (402).

IV. Emerging *Juche*: The Vision Serves the People

Introduction to Kim Il Sung's "On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work"

My good friend Mr. Lee, a North Korean refugee living in Lynchburg, Virginia, told me about his escape from a regime that said he must go to college to study geophysical surveying. He wanted to be a doctor. He told me how his father starved to death, as did one of his nephews, in the great famine of the 1990s. Not incidentally, this famine was brought about not directly by natural disaster, as the popular media like to report, but it was the result of a catastrophic failure of the *Juche* ideology. Succinctly, one of the tenants of *Juche* is self-reliance. Kim Il Sung himself said in 1966 that part of *Juche* is creating a state of "self-sustenance in the economy" (429, v.1). So, in the 1990s as part of a nationwide expansion of the agriculture industry Kim Jong Il had the idea to expand the arable land of the nation by expanding it to the hills and mountains of North Korea (which is a rugged nation, geographically speaking). This arable land movement led to the deforestation of mountainsides, which – when the rains came – meant the water rushed down the barren "arable" mountainsides which had been cleared of the natural buffering trees. The lack of trees led to the mountainside being washed out, pouring silt and water into the valleys, leading to massive flooding. Since Kim Jong Il's campaign was nationwide, virtually the entire nation's agriculture was destroyed, with the mountainside agricultural plots being washed away and the valleys being layered in silt even after the

floodwaters receded, all as a result of *Juche's* tenant of "self reliance" in economic matters (Kim, "Agricultural").

It is not floods, though, that urge me to write about *Juche*. My friend Mr. Lee said it best when he said the biggest problems are not the famine, the concentration camps, religious persecution, constant government surveillance, or nuclear weapons. The greatest ill of *Juche* is that it destroys people's minds. I agree with my friend's claim and am convinced that the plight of 20 million North Korean citizens who, today in 2008, live under a system of *Juche* must be investigated. The reality of its ambiguity in the Western mind is then not to be seen as a hurdle, but as a challenge, a challenge to elucidate, explain, and further illuminate *Juche* as to persons previously in the dark concerning this ideology.

As covered in the methodology section this chapter will follow a four-step process of analyzing Kim Il Sung's 1955 speech "On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing *Juche* in Ideological Work," Kim Jong Il's 1990 speech will be analyzed in the following chapter. The first step of analysis is to discover and describe the narrative that chained out. Second, Look for patterns of characterization and of setting. Third, reconstruct the rhetorical vision, and finally, ask and answer specific questions relating to the elements of the dramas.

The questions that will be answered in the final and fourth step of this chapter are the following, adapted from Bormann's essay "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality": Who are the dramatis personae? How does the fantasy theme work to attract the unconverted? Who are the heroes and the villains? How are the members of the rhetorical community characterized? (402). However, before this methodology can begin a historical

summary will be provided to set the context for the speech analyzed in this chapter.

The speech in question was delivered by Kim Il Sung on December 28, 1955 in Pyongyang to the Party Propaganda and Agitation Workers, a division of the Korean Workers Party. This speech has been pinpointed by several scholars of the DPRK as the origination of *Juche* as a national imperative and as such can be considered the most important speech on *Juche* given. The title, “On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing *Juche* in Ideological Work,” and the content of the speech quite literally set the stage for the rest of North Korean history, even up to the present moment.



Fig. 1. Kim Jong Il on a Billboard in Pyongyang. from Tatlow, Dermot. “Taking Photographs in North Korea.” Nieman Reports. 2004.

It must be noted that in many ways *Juche* in the Democratic People’s Republic of North Korea today is similar to *Juche* as envisioned by Kim Il Sung in 1955. However, it has also changed dramatically from a Marxist-Leninist based ideology into a rudimentary theocracy and ersatz religion (Hale 283, Park 254).

The analysis of this speech, while able to stand alone, does not adequately address *Juche* as a whole, rather, it lays the historical groundwork of the ideology which the next chapter will build upon.

To fully understand how *Juche* became a lifestyle rhetorical vision it is imperative to first be aware of the situation on the Korean peninsula in the 20th century up to the middle of the century. A brief history of Korea leading up to the implementation of *Juche* is provided below.

Historical Background

North Korea is an island among nation-states. It has been known for generations as the “hermit kingdom.” Recently Kim Jong Il and his repressive nation have been in the spotlight for their attempt to build up a nuclear arsenal and, in recent history, a devastating famine that swept through the nation in the 1990s.

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, as North Korea formally calls itself, is used to being in the international spotlight. Centuries ago they were dubbed “a shrimp among whales,” due to their strategic position between China, Russia, and Japan and their relatively diminutive size. This title, which is not honorific, is fitting. Nearly 40 years before WWII the Korean peninsula had been colonized by Japan, in the harshest sense of the word. During the occupation of Korea by Japan an attempt to assimilate the Korean people into Japanese culture through the devastation of their culture via oppression and subjugation created resentment amongst the Koreans. The Japanese were slowly chipping their nationality away, year after year. The occupation lasted from 1910 to 1945.

After WWII Korea was, in a sense, liberated from Japanese colonialism. However, the liberation led to a new problem, unification. The disagreement of the Allies of WWII over which form of government with which to govern led to two nations being established; above the 38th parallel was the DPRK governed by the U.S.S.R. and communism and below South Korea, governed by the United States and representative democracy.

After the DPRK was given a measure of autonomy it wasn't long until they invaded South Korea, attempting to re-unify Korea through force. The Korean War, as we now know it, pitted Chinese and North Korean soldiers against South Korea and the United Nations, at the time led militarily by the United States. This war's importance cannot be underestimated in the role it plays and has played in developing, strengthening, and upholding the *Juche* idea. America, in this war, bombed North Korea extensively, literally flattening the capital city of Pyongyang and destroying a majority of the infrastructure and heavy industry factories of the nation.

It is in the wake of these three conditions: the colonization of Korea by Japan, the separation of Korea by the Allies of WWII, and the destruction of the subsequent civil war between North and South that laid a fertile ground for a *lifestyle rhetorical vision*, which Ernest Bormann says is "so all-encompassing and impelling that they permeate an individual's social reality in all aspects of living" (Force, 8).

Analysis

1.) Discover and Describe the Narrative the Chained Out

First, the narrative that constitutes the substance of the fantasy theme must be established. “The scholar’s main task,” writes Bormann, “in making a fantasy theme analysis is to find evidence that symbolic convergence has taken place” (Force, 6). The evidence of fantasy theme analysis may be wordplay, narratives, figures, and analogies, which occur repetitively. These evidences are “similar dramatizing material.” This step sets the groundwork for the remainder of the application of fantasy theme analysis.

Bormann writes that in order for dramatizing messages to be considered part of a fantasy theme analysis and constitute symbolic convergence the event must have happened in the past or be occurring in the future. The present cannot account for symbolic convergence. The narratives, or dramatizing material, in fantasy theme analysis represent, “creative and imaginative interpretation of events that [fulfill] a psychological or rhetorical need (Bormann, Force 5).

Symbolic convergence is evident in the text of Kim Il Sung’s December 28th speech to the Party Propaganda and Agitation Workers. The narratives are reoccurring, and evident from the beginning of his speech, in the opening paragraph Kim sets the stage for dramatizing material and the requisite creative reimagining of the future and the past, opening by saying he will address shortcomings in the Korean Workers Party ideological work “and how to eliminate them in the future” (135, v.1). Much of his creative re-interpretation of past events deals with Korean history, which he outlines as important because failure to understand the past “does much harm to our revolutionary cause” (Kim 136, v.1).

Understanding Korean history is crucial in understanding *Juche*, according to Kim Il Sung. Speaking of the propaganda workers he was addressing he said:

Why does our ideological work suffer from dogmatism and formalism? Why do our propaganda and agitation workers only embellish the façade and fail to go deeply into matters, and why do they merely copy and memorize things foreign, instead of working creatively? This offers us serious food for reflection.

What is *Juche* in our Party's ideological work? What are we doing? We are not engaged in any other country's revolution, but solely in the Korean revolution. When we study the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the history of the Chinese revolution, or the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism, it is entirely for the purpose of correctly carrying out our own revolution.

(135-136, v.1)

It is clearly evident from this passage that the emphasis of *Juche* is on Korea, which explains why, in spite of speaking briefly on the Chinese cultural revolution and the ongoing worldwide-focused communist revolution in the U.S.S.R., sparked in 1917 by the October Revolution, most of his narratives which serve as evidence of the symbolic convergence refer to Korea.

The narratives that show symbolic convergence has occurred begin on page 2 of his printed speech. He makes reference to 1945, ten years prior, and tells of how the Korean Workers Party urged Koreans to study and learn Korean history, as the foundation of revolution. From this reimagining of the past he

predicts the future, saying that the future of Korea will have seen the stimulation “of [Korean] national pride and rouse the broad masses to revolutionary struggles” (136, v.1). In the following three pages there are 12 references to past events, which are creatively re-imagined. Including dramatic narratives about mistakes made by Pak Chang Ok “and his kind” (136, v.1), the retelling of the Kwangju Student Incident in which Kim Il Sung claims “tens of thousands of Korean students and other young people rose against Japanese imperialism,” and another past-future comparison of his visiting a People’s Army rest home:

Once I visited a People’s Army rest home, where there was a picture of the Siberian Steppe on the wall. Russians probably like that landscape. But we Korean people prefer the beautiful scenery of our own country ... if we are to inspire in our People’s Army men a love for their native place and their country, we must display many pictures of our landscapes (139, v1).

Bormann writes: “The most important element of dramatizing messages for the rhetorical tradition of romantic pragmatism is a narrative or story about real or fictitious people in a dramatic situation or setting other than the here-and-now communication of the group” (Force 4). It must be said that a speech standing on its own is not evidence of a fantasy chaining out. In the original research in small group communication performed by Bormann which led to fantasy theme analysis he found that some fantasizing “fell on deaf ears” while others shared the fantasy, evidenced by group members who “grew excited, interrupted one another, laughed, showed emotion, and forgot their self-consciousness” (Force 5). The large group equivalent of this would be members

paying close attention, through emotionally audible cues from the audience, and in the case of the Puritan services that Bormann wrote about by “verbal exclamations such as “Hallelujah!” and “Glory be to God!” (Force 5).

This is impossible to perceive from a speech that is only recorded in print; however, there is clear evidence that the group bought into the narratives. Membership in groups can be categorized by “formal symbols” including “induction ceremonies, confirmation and baptism, paying dues, and carrying a card” (Force 8). In China members of the rhetorical vision of Chinese Communist Party carry a card, in North Korea every adult member of the *Juche* rhetorical vision – to show allegiance to the father of *Juche* – wears a badge of either Kim Il Sung or his son and protégé Kim Jong Il (Iyer, “In the Land” 48). This is true in 2008, which not only establishes the legitimacy of the rhetorical vision that was born from this speech, but the long-lasting legacy of *Juche*. Rhetorical visions given by Bormann include, “*The New Deal, The New Frontier, Black Power, The Cold War, The New Left, The Silent Majority, and The Moral Majority.*” All of these rhetorical visions were set in motion after December 28, 1955 and now in 2008 have all but vanished. Although the U.S. Peace Corps remains from John F. Kennedy’s *New Frontier*, and the Evangelical Political Right are powerful today in large part due to the *Moral Majority*, none have had the consistency of *Juche*.



Figure 2. A couple wear badges of Kim Il Sung on their clothing on their wedding day. from Tatlow, Dermot. “Taking Photographs in North Korea.” Nieman Reports. 2004.

2.) Look for Patterns of Characterization and Setting

Second, after the narratives of the fantasy theme have been described, patterns of characterization, including those in the categories of “hero” and “villain,” must be identified. Self-identity is important to the Korean people. In this rhetorical vision the Korean people, specifically North Koreans, are the insiders. Without outsiders (Bormann refers to insiders and outsiders as “heroes” and “villains,” respectively) there can be “little drama” (Force 9-10). There are two sets of villains outlined in this speech, which is a theme consistent even today.

Quotations such as the following show the villains: “[The Kwangju Student Incident] played a big part in inspiring broad sections of Korean youth with the anti-Japanese spirit,” and “The US imperialists scorched our land, massacred our innocent people, and are still occupying the southern half of our country. They are our sworn enemy, aren’t they?” The villains are primarily the United States of America, and also Japan. My friend Mr. Lee, when asked about North Korean views of Americans had only one reply, “They are our *sworn enemy*.” Recently my wife told Mr. Lee about an account one of her indirect colleagues, who occasionally visits North Korea, reported. The colleague and his associates were passing out candy to North Korean children and the colleague asked the children if they knew where the people were from. When they responded in the negative he told them “from America.” The children ran away screaming, and one peed in his pants. Mr. Lee’s reaction: “Of course.” He said this would be a natural reaction for children who are taught from birth to hate America.

This anecdote and the substantiation taken from Kim’s speech affirms Bormann’s assertion:

When people share fantasies celebrating the insiders, they answer the question “Who are we?” In the process of answering this question, they often share fantasies that depict themselves as better than outsiders and their rhetorical innovations as an improvement over current ways of viewing the world.” (12)

The most obvious pattern of characterization is the independence of the Korean people. In a later speech, in 1966, Kim Il Sung says that *Juche* ideology means “independence in politics, self-sustenance in the economy and self-

defense in national defense – this is the stand our Party has consistently adhered to” (Kim 429, v.2). As phrased in the preface of the volume I am working from, which was published by Guardian Associates of New York, a now defunct American communist group, *Juche* means true self-reliance:

In essence, that the masters of the revolution and the work of construction are the masses of the people and that they are also the motive forces of the revolution and the work of construction. In other words, one is responsible for shaping one’s destiny.

President Kim Il Sung has said:

“The *Juche* idea is based on a philosophical theory that man is master of everything and decides everything.” (vii, viii)

The Korean people are portrayed by Kim Il Sung as devoted revolutionaries who have been prepared for the purely Korean revolution through their history. “Devotion to the Korean revolution is *Juche* in the ideological work of our party,” Kim said (136). Kim creatively casts the Korean Workers Party of the past as persons with a “fighting spirit” in “the anti-imperialist struggle of our people” while caring deeply about the importance of “fine traditions” of Korea (136 – 137, 142, v.1). Not only are they parochially-cosmopolite revolutionary fighters, they are stalwart and persistent, able to “learn a lesson from failure,” with undeniable “revolutionary character,” who even prior to their liberation from Japan after WWII were all party to a “nationwide resistance movement against Japanese imperialism,” and “under Japanese imperialist rule, the peasant movement grew and the revolutionary spirit of the peasantry ran very high” (138, 141, v.1). Most importantly though, Kim emphasizes an *extreme* self-reliance and

hyper-nationalistic pride, going so far as to specify the correct placement of the table of contents of North Korean books in, “the front of the book” (139). Further, Kim clearly states the differentiation between the Korean revolution and others’ revolutions:

It is important in our work to grasp revolutionary truth, Marxist-Leninist truth, and apply it correctly to our actual conditions. There should be no set rule that we must follow the Soviet pattern. Some advocate the Soviet way and others the Chinese, but is it not high time to work out our own?” (143)

3.) Reconstruct the Rhetorical Vision

Once the narratives have been described and the patterns of characterization established it is the job of the scholar to creatively reconstruct the rhetorical vision. The *future* North Koreans, according to Kim’s speech, if they adopt his recreation of the nature of North Koreans, will have higher living standards and a stronger national economic system, and “Pyongyang [will be] built into a much more beautiful city than before [. . .] This is what will happen when we carry out construction successfully” (147).



Figure 3. Modern Pyongyang. from World Book. 2005 ed. Software MacKiev Company. 2005.

This fantasy about the future will result in a North Korea that is the envy of the South:

Before liberation, merely to hear that in the Soviet Union the working class held power and was building socialism made us yearn greatly for that country where we have never been. How then can the people in the south not yearn to see the socialist construction in the north carried out by our people who are of the same stock as they? (148)

The “yearning” for socialist construction that will happen in the south when they gaze upon the north will lead the south to be “roused to action against

US imperialism [. . .] [and] peaceful reunification can be brought about” (148).

Kim’s optimistic vision of the future on that December 28th was so strong that he claimed the Korea Workers Party should begin to consider training North Korean communist cadres to be sent into South Korea: “What is wrong with our training a large number of Party members in the northern half from now on and assigning them to work both in the north and the south after reunification?¹⁹” (149).

It has been said that it is impossible to discuss North Korea without also mentioning reunification, this is evident in my interaction with Koreans living in central Virginia whom with I’ve had the pleasure of spending time. For example, Mr. Yun, a South Korean, and Mr. Lee, my North Korean friend see themselves as compatriots of the same nation and see the 38th parallel dividing North and South Korea not as a nation-state border, but as a travesty of illegitimate separation of a unified people.

Reunification is, in fact, much of the motivation of the *Juche* idea:

I would just like to stress once more the prospects of our revolution. Our revolution has two prospects. One is the peaceful reunification of our country, and the other is its reunification in circumstances in which the forces of imperialism are drastically weakened by a big war. (146)

Kim further dramatizes this future of peaceful reunification by telling the narrative of the hero Kim Gu:

¹⁹ Journalist Bradley K. Martin, while visiting North Korea in 1978, was told by a tractor factory official that Kim Il-Sung told him, “we should produce more tractors so that we could supply tractors to the southern part of the country when we reunify” (Martin 143).

This is what Kim Gu said: “I have found north Korea to my liking [. . .] I thought before that communists were narrow-minded and evil people, but I have found that here that you are broad-minded and generous people.”

In the view of the fact that even Kim Gu, who once regarded communism as an inveterate enemy, changed his ideas of our endeavors to build up the country, it is quite easy to imagine what workers, peasants, and public figures with a national conscience in south Korea will think once they come and see the northern half of the country. (147 – 148, v.1)

In 1955 a more urgent motivation for the *Juche* idea and its focus on self-reliance was reconstruction of the infrastructure of the nation after the devastation of the Korean War. This focus on reconstruction was intended to impress South Koreans into adopting the *Juche* rhetorical vision, which would subsequently lead to a non-violent communist revolution in the South. In spite of the focus on reconstruction, the primary motivation remained reunification.

Another sub point of motivation leading towards reunification is anti-imperialism, manifested most clearly in anti-Americanism and Anti-Japanese sentiments. Kim envisioned an Asian “national-liberation movement” in which:

The peoples of India, Indonesia, Burma, and other independent states in Asia and the peoples of the Arab countries are fighting for peace and against imperialist aggression.

All this constitutes a telling blow to imperialism, especially US imperialism. As the forces of peace, democracy and socialism

grow stronger, the US imperialists will finally be compelled to withdraw from Korea. (148, v.1)

Here anti-imperialism, the reason for America being the “sworn enemy” of North Korea, is not directly a part of the motivation of *Juche*, but rather a result of Kim Il Sung seeing America as an occupier of South Korea and their presence as a hurdle to overcome before reunification can become a reality. Although peaceful reunification is *Juche*’s primary goal, Kim makes it clear through a narrative of the future in which, if America is involved in another world war, “we should be able to defeat it relatively easily ... In that case we shall sweep the forces of US imperialism from Korea and achieve the reunification of the country” (149).

Reunification, though, is not the final motivation of *Juche*. Kim Il Sung quoted the commander of the U.S.S.R. army, and said he was in full concurrence. “Korean people! [. . .] You hold your happiness in your own hands [. . .] Koreans must create their own happiness themselves” (145, v.1). This Russian quote embodies the independent nature of *Juche* as Kim Il Sung envisions it, as the pinnacle of the acceptance of *Juche* leading to a universally enthusiastic Korean proletariat which can only occur when the entirety of the masses realize the truth of *Juche*. That is, they “will throw all their energy and zeal into their work when they are clearly aware that their labor is for their own happiness” (156, v.1).

This lifestyle rhetorical vision of *Juche* is the result when “one creative person who fantasizes a powerful personal consciousness and does so with such skill that his or her consciousness is shared by converts and becomes the rhetorical vision that forms a community’s consciousness” (Bormann, Force 10).

This is in contrast to how most fantasies develop, through innovation born out of several like-minded persons' discussions.

The primary fantasy themes in Kim Il Sung's December 28th speech are the Korean people, reunification, anti-American and Japanese imperialism, rebuilding of Pyongyang, a peaceful communist revolution in South Korea or, if necessary, and an opportune situation arises, violence against the U.S.

Juche, in its original form, was born out of a historical situation in which the nation of Korea was desperate for autonomy, freedom, and independence. This desperation created a psychological and rhetorical need met by the skillfully crafted and communicated ideology of self-reliance, known as *Juche* (Force 5). Its primary focus was on resilient independence and hyper-nationalism, which in Kim's speech was portrayed by reconstructing the Korean people as able revolutionary visionaries fighting against the tangible enemy of imperialism. The protagonist, or hero, is the workers and peasants – the proletariat – while the villains are Japan and the United States. If this vision of past revolutionary visionary Koreans were adopted and pursued in the present, then the future would lead to a peaceful communist revolution in South Korea. South Korea would then expel the American occupiers and rush headlong to join the socialist construction of North Korea. The attraction to the North would be higher living standards, strong economy, beautifully rebuilt cities, and freedoms.

4.) *Ask and Answer Specific Questions Relating to the Elements of the Dramas*

Thus far we have examined Kim Jong Il's 1955 seminal speech of *Juche* using fantasy theme analysis, uncovered the heroes, villains, and several fantasy

themes within the speech that constitute the core of the *Juche* idea. To conclude this chapter, I will revisit some of the questions raised earlier in the chapter.

Who are the *dramatis personae*? They are the Korean people. The Korean revolution is a purely Korean one; it is distinguished from the worldwide communist revolution promoted by Stalin and is specifically differentiated from Maoism.

How does the fantasy theme work to attract the unconverted? As seen earlier, Kim Il Sung is establishing a fantasy theme that will inspire the South Koreans to rush to join the Korean socialist construction based on the high standards of living and the rebuilding of the nation's infrastructure, and the freedoms and liberties held by North Korean citizens. The South's yearning for a great nation, and seeing a great nation to the North, will bring about a peaceful reunification.

Who are the heroes and the villains? Korea is the hero, portrayed historically in the rhetorical vision as freedom fighters of a revolutionary mindset, while Japan and America are the villains. Kim Il Sung makes it evident that his rhetorical vision, *Juche*, is staunchly anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist.

How are the members of the rhetorical community characterized? The heroes, the members of the rhetorical vision, are portrayed as able revolutionary visionaries fighting against the tangible enemy of imperialism. The protagonist, or hero, is the workers and peasants, the proletariat.

V. Post Cold War *Juche*: The People Serve the Vision

Introduction to Kim Jong Il's "Let Us Prepare the Young People as Thoroughly Reliable Successors to the Revolutionary Cause of Juche"

For the sake of congruity, this chapter will mirror the previous chapter, by performing a similar analysis of a speech by Kim Il Sung's son, protégé, and replacement dictator, Kim Jong Il, also using fantasy theme analysis. In the next chapter the two analyses will be compared and the contradistinctions in ideology will be parsed out and summarized. In the current chapter the text in question, Kim Il Jong's 1990 speech "Let Us Prepare the Young People as Thoroughly Reliable Successors to the Revolutionary Cause of Juche," will be analyzed to extrapolate the true nature of "modern" *Juche*.

The analysis of a second speech is necessary because in the 1970s *Juche* underwent a monumental change. Under the leadership of Kim Jong Il, whom Kim Il Sung gave increasing power leading up to the decade of the 1970s. It was during this time that the cult of personality, now widely known, began to develop. It is also the time that *Juche* gained incredible prominence as a national-ideology.²⁰ The transformation can be summarized by saying the *Juche* idea changed dramatically from a Marxist-Leninist based ideology into a rudimentary theocracy (Hale 283). This chapter will make progress on the work of explaining the evolution of the *Juche* idea. The evolution of *Juche* is not well documented in

²⁰ This was confirmed by research done at the South Korean national library by a friend of the author, Mr. Lee, while in Seoul for a conference on North Korea and Christianity. A fuller explanation of his findings are found in the Korean language handbook [The New Analysis on the Forming and Transformation of the Juche Idea](#), published by the Reunification Research Institution, located in Seoul, South Korea.

English language literature, but is covered briefly by Christopher Hale's 2002 article, "Multifunctional Juche: A Study of the Changing Dynamic Between Juche and the State Constitution in North Korea."²¹

The content of the speech deals with patriotic and *Juche* education of the youth, which parallels with Kim Il Sung's 1955 speech dealing with the establishment of the *Juche* idea. The major premise of both speeches is quite similar: the establishment of the *Juche* idea in the minds of North Koreans in 1955 in the nation at large and in 1990 in the youth and children. This speech was given on the 44th²² anniversary of the inception of the League of Socialist Working Youth (LSWY),²³ an organization created by the Korean Worker's Party, and deals with – as the speech title suggests – the ideological education of the youth. In addition to this theme, a very clear additional theme becomes almost immediately apparent in the analysis of this speech, which is seen first emerging in the opening section:

The LSWY is a single, political organization of the masses of young people in our country which educates them in a revolutionary manner so that they are rallied closely around the Party and are actively organized and mobilized for the implementation of the Party's policies. (Kim Chong-Il²⁴ 1)

²¹ Korean language literature on the evolution and historicity of *Juche* is widely available, but very seldom translated into English.

²² The League of Socialist Working Youth was incepted January 17, 1946.

²³ The LSWY was renamed in 2006 and is now the "Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League" ("History").

²⁴ Kim Chong-Il is the spelling of Kim Jong Il in the text used for this analysis. See Works Consulted.

As evidenced in Chapter 3, the first step in performing a FTA is to establish that fantasy themes have, in fact, chained out by describing the narratives that constitute a fantasy theme. In spite of the fact that *Juche* is a lifestyle rhetorical vision, which is still virtually universally accepted in the DPRK today²⁵²⁶, the chaining out will be re-established for the analysis of the second speech. Much of the evidence of *Juche* being accepted as a lifestyle rhetorical vision discussed in the analysis of the previous speech applies here as well. Rather than repeat that discussion, I will simply establish that the past-future dialectic of the speech, that Bormann says is necessary, does in fact exist in this speech while describing the narratives that chain out from Kim Jong Il's 1990 speech.

Once the first step of establishing the past-future dialectic has been completed the analysis will follow the remaining steps as outlined in the methodology chapter. Second, look for patterns of characterization and of setting. Third, reconstruct the rhetorical vision, and finally, ask and answer specific questions relating to the elements of the dramas. The questions asked in this chapter will be the same used in the previous chapter, Who are the dramatis personae? Who are the heroes and villains? How are the members of the rhetorical community characterized? How does the fantasy theme work to attract the unconverted?

²⁵ According to Bradley K. Martin in the late 1950s "Most ordinary North Koreans, however, did not have direct knowledge of Japan and other outside countries, and they knew their own living standards had improved after the advent of communist rule. Thus, Chong told me, they were inclined to believe Kim Il-Sung's boast of having unfolded a paradise" (104). The information control present at that time has changed only negligibly and the access to outside information can be assumed to be the same today as in 1959 (Song).

²⁶ I use the term "virtually" because there is a large population of political dissidents who have either been executed or sent to labor/reeducation camps. However, in the general population the legitimacy of *Juche*, is still widely accepted.

Analysis

1.) Discover and Describe the Narrative the Chained Out

As mentioned in the previous chapter and in the literature review, for a fantasy theme to exist it must be concerned with either the past or the future. The beginnings of fantasy themes evident in this text emerge very early in the speech, in the third paragraph. Kim Jong Il conveys and imparts the importance of the history of the League of Socialist Working Youth: “The LSWY has grown from deep, historical roots” (Kim Chong-Il 1). By looking back at the inception of the LSWY Kim Jong Il attempts to foster a communally congruent memory of the organization. Bormann tells us that fantasy themes begin to emerge when groups become “excited” (Bormann, “Social” 399). To this end, Kim Jong Il creates in the minds of his audience a connection between the “Great Leader,” Kim Il Sung, and his exploits to the history of the LSWY. In a sense, Kim Jong Il is exciting his audience about the past in two facets, by orally memorializing Kim Il Sung, who held incredible popularity at that time,²⁷ and the LSWY simultaneously. Kim Jong Il extrapolates the concept of the “deep historical roots” of the LSWY:

The great leader initiated the revolutionary youth movement of our country long ago, trained hardcore elements for the revolutionary youth organization in the flames of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle and established brilliant traditions for the youth movement in our country.”

²⁷ Kim Il Sung died in 1994, the year that Kim Jong Il took control of the DPRK. At the time of this speech Kim Il Sung was still the functioning leader of the nation.

On the basis of his own valuable achievements and experiences in the youth movement gained during the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, the great leader founded the Democratic Youth League, a mass organization for young people from all walks of life, immediately after liberation and firmly united the young people into a single, political force. (Kim Chong-Il 1)

Mention of Kim Il Sung is used, by Kim Jong Il, as an attempt to extend the original fantasy theme/lifestyle rhetorical vision of the 1950s by connecting Kim Il Sung to the League of Socialist Working Youth during the original revolution, which was based on the Korean people.

Similar to Kim Il Sung speaking 45 years earlier, Kim Jong Il – after looking backwards – looks ahead. In his transition to looking forward he states that the LSWY is in a good spot, ideologically speaking, and that their “spiritual qualities” are “very sound.” Specifically he points to actual (albeit ambiguous) evidence: “Our young people [. . .] are fighting with devotion to the fore in difficult and hard undertakings on all fronts of socialist construction, holding firm to the Party’s lines and policies” (Kim Chong-Il 1, 2). Kim Jong Il continues: “[In] many countries young people are cause of anxiety,” however, “in our country the youth are the pillars of the revolution [. . .] We should take pride in the excellent training of the youth so far” (Kim Chong-Il 2).

Looking forward, Kim Jong Il emphasizes that the youth are the “future national cadres who will take over the revolution,” concluding that resting in status quo of *Juche* will be unsatisfactory (Kim Chong-Il 12). The solution is to “intensify their ideological education,” or else:

Young people may be affected by bourgeois ideas and lapse into an idle and slack, decadent and corrupt way of life, disliking work and becoming lazy. Then, the youth cannot conduct the revolution and become the reliable successors to our revolution. (Kim Chong-Il 3)

The ideological education of the youth will be discussed below, in step two of the analysis of this text, in the discussion of patterns of characterization and settings.

To illustrate the fact that symbolic convergence did, in fact, occur I will now highlight four more examples in which Kim Jong Il looks into history, deconstructing and reconstructing historical Korean moments, and telescoping past exploits into future necessities for the purpose of creating excitement in the here and now of this 1990 speech. After these five examples I will look at general characterizations and patterns found throughout the speech.

First, future dictator Kim uses a potent metaphor again connecting Kim Il Sung to the LSWY and to the Korean people and their “revolutionary identity.” He tells his audience, the Senior Officials of the Central Committee, that the platitude-ridden anti-Japanese exploits of Kim Il Sung, the “Great Leader,” are the “historical roots and arteries of our revolution” (Kim Chong-Il 4). These roots, he says, are necessary for the youth to understand if they are to continue in the revolution.

the reconstruction seen in the second example looks backward, but presumably also applies to the present. Discussing education of class and imperialism, Kim Jong Il states that the youth of North Korea, up to this point,

have not “experienced the exploitation of landlords and capitalists but lived happily in the embrace of our Party” (Kim Chong-Il 5).

Third, Kim Jong Il transitions from discussing class to sharing a moving tale of patriotism, which casts the Party as a magnanimous and unsparing. The following narrative discusses the story of three sets of infant triplets, who were reunited in their youth at an annual LSWY conference:

The leader [Kim Il Sung] said, had the triplets not been born under our socialist system not all of them would have survived. A mother’s milk alone is not enough for a child to live, but thanks to the embrace of the Party and the advantageous socialist system the triplets grew up healthily without any worries and became proud soldiers. In fact the triplets grew up not by suckling their mothers but by drinking milk given them by the Party while living in incubators at the Pyongyang Maternity Hospital that is permeated with love [. . .] Our Party spares nothing for the younger generation. Our Party gives all that is best to the children. (Kim Chong-Il 7)

The idea of the Party as “munificent” is an important idea, which will emerge more fully as I discuss the characterizations and in the comparison of the two speeches surveyed in this thesis. For now it will suffice that Kim Jong Il is creating excitement about the Party in order for to sustain the Party’s future. The fourth example of Kim Jong Il recreating the past is a relatively long discussion of Korean culture, highlighting Korean cultural pride:

There is no nation like the Korean nation with its long history and brilliant culture as a single nation living in the same land from early

historical times [. . .] the Korean people form a resourceful nation that has a long history and brilliant culture. (Kim Chong-Il 8, 9)

Predictably, the purpose of this quote is to compare the past to what is coming next. After discussing the brilliant culture of Korea, Kim Jong Il tells his audience that the culture is at the “vanguard of the struggle to realize the independence of the popular masses, holding high the banner of the *Juche* idea under the leadership of the great leader and the great Party” (Kim Chong-Il 9).

2.) Look for Patterns of Characterization and Setting

Having presented evidence of symbolic convergence and the narratives of the fantasy theme, I will now move to the second step, examining the patterns and characterizations throughout the speech. This section will cover the characterization of the Korean Workers’ Party, the Korean people including the youth, and Imperialism as personified by the United States.

The Korean Workers Party is portrayed as “munificent,” as evidenced by the narrative concerning the sets of triplets nourished by the Party’s hospital; powerful, as evidenced by their direction of the construction of the revolution; and wise, as evidenced throughout the speech, particularly though the didactic – almost Aristotelian nature²⁸ – of the following excerpt: “Young people are responsive to the new, like to follow positive examples, and are ambitious to win fame by doing something better than others” (Kim Chong-Il 11).

Additionally, the epistemology of the party seems to be that all wisdom and knowledge comes from the “Great Leader”:

²⁸ I am referring to Book 2 of *The Rhetoric*, in which Aristotle outlines the distinctions in character between the youth, middle aged persons, and elders.

Today our nation is taking the lead in constructing a socialist paradise in which people can enjoy an independent and creative life to their hearts' content, raising high the banner of the *Juche* idea, under the leadership of the Workers' Party of Korea, holding in high esteem great Comrade Kim Il Sung, the sun of the nation, as their leader. (Kim Chong-Il 9)

The Party is characterized as powerful and as the director of the revolution, as seen throughout the speech in several statements dealing with the Party's direction of the youth. For example, "Our Party has summoned young people to the construction of major projects, such as transforming nature and building monumental structures" (Kim Chong-Il 15). The structures in question include a national canal system, coal mines, regional railway systems, Kim Il Sung Stadium, and the Tower of the *Juche* Idea.

On the other hand, the Korean people are cast not as revolutionaries, but as agents of revolution. The task of the youth, the main subject of the speech, is to further the revolution. The obligatory "glorious" history of the Korean nation is not omitted from this speech; however, a close reading clearly reveals that the revolution is not of the youth – it is being forced upon them:

It is necessary to instill the *Juche* idea thoroughly in young people [. . .] Principled and profound education in the *Juche* idea needs to be conducted among young people so that they will accept the *Juche* idea's own revolutionary outlook on the world and live and work only as required by the *Juche* idea. (Kim Chong-Il 4, 5)

Kim Jong Il outlines several reasons why the ideological education of the Korean youth must be increased. He says the result of the intensification of the ideological education of the youth will be for them: a.) To learn “infinite loyalty” to Kim Il Sung; b.) To learn “belief in the victory of the revolution;” c.) To learn “self-reliance and fortitude in surmounting all difficulties;” d.) To learn to execute “revolutionary tasks without fail;” e.) And to personify the revolution in their “life and work” (Kim Chong-Il 4).

Another de rigueur characterization is the United States, the “sworn enemy” of the DPRK. While not mentioned as often as in other speeches and DPRK propaganda, such as the North Korean official web-presence, the words are unmistakably clear:

The US imperialists occupying south Korea forcing oppression and exploitation on the south Korean people through the exploiter class and reactionaries there [. . .] [We must] ensure that the youth totally hate the exploiting class and its system and fight relentlessly against them. (Kim Chong-Il 5)

In addition to the negative description in the above quotation is the explicit labeling of the U.S. as having “corrupt characteristics” and being “wicked and cunning in nature.” To broaden Kim Jong Il’s characterization of imperialism²⁹ there are no less than eight references to “anti-Japanese” exploits by Korea.

²⁹ Kim Jong Il is not referring to specifically Japanese or U.S. imperialism, rather, his use of imperialism here is broader, referring both to military and cultural invasion of North Korea by both Japan and the U.S.

The settings in this speech, which are the last characterization to be addressed before reconstructing the rhetorical vision outlined by Kim Jong Il, are varied in scope and range from universities to factories to rural massive civil engineering projects. The pattern that emerges within each described setting is that the action happening in each instance is cast in the light of a “vanguard” construction of socialism while urging for the ultimate goal of “socialist victory,” after which the Party seems to be striving – but which is left undefined.

3.) Reconstruct the Rhetorical Vision

With the narratives described and the patterns of characterization discussed the third step, reconstructing the rhetorical vision, can be done. Leaving the victory of socialist construction undefined fits the overall rhetorical vision of Kim Jong Il’s *Juche* perfectly. Ernest Bormann writes that a fantasy theme analysis must fulfill a psychological or rhetorical need (Bormann, Force 5). The fantasy theme that emerges in this speech meets a psychological need in the Korean people; however, the psychological need that is being met is one and the same as the need for revolution created by the Party – through its power directing the revolution.

Kim Jong Il does not try to disguise the purpose of the LSWY. The theme that emerges is that the LSWY exists for the purpose of supporting and upholding the preeminence of the Party. In fact, it appears, from the quote above, that the LSWY is an explicit propaganda machine whose sole purpose is to implement the will of the Party. This is similar to the idea in religions, such as Buddhism³⁰,

³⁰ I mention Buddhism specifically because of its focus on education, and the subsequent knowledge acquired, as a means of achieving the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. Buddhism’s view of education is similar to the constructivist theory of learning, in which the

which is strongly reliant on educating followers to devote their lives to a divine cause. Kim Jong Il supports this idea when he says that the anti-Japanese revolutionary guerillas who expelled the Japanese from the Korean peninsula, “fought to the last for the liberation of the country with an unshakable conviction in the victory of the Korean revolution, believing in and following *the leader alone*.”^{31 3233}

The need, which is being met by the Korean Worker’s Party, is based on the creation of a need that fits the recurring theme of “rallying around” a particular created entity, namely, the “Party.” In large part, the revolution discussed in this 1990 speech – and in North Korea today – is an artificial construct. By 1990 the cold war had ended, globalization was on the brink of emerging as the next major world stage as the imperial age was being ushered, sometimes quietly and sometimes not, into the history books (Friedman, The World is Flat). Further, the most recent international incident involving the DPRK, the Pueblo incident of 1968³⁴, was by the time of this speech at least a generation removed. The modern revolution of North Korea, based on the *Juche* idea, is a faux-revolution.

student is the center of process. “Learning for learning-sake” is one of the goals of education from a Buddhist perspective, “it is the student’s mind which is most important” (Bright).

³¹ Emphasis added.

³² Noteworthy here is the intentional failure to mention the Allied forces, who during WWII were also partially responsible for the expulsion of the Japanese from the Korean peninsula following the unconditional surrender of Japan in September of 1945.

³³ It is notable here to see the words “the leader alone.” While Kim Il Sung was, at the time the speech is given, a dictator with absolute authority over the DPRK and the Korean people, he did not consolidate absolute power until the 1960s.

³⁴ The capture of the USS Pueblo and the detainment of 82 U.S. navy personnel nearly triggered a second leg of the Korean War. In fact, only a \$100 million promise of economic aid from the United States prevented the South from staging a unilateral invasion (Martin 129).

Kim Jong Il outlines this faux-revolution. For example, he tells his audience, “In the world there still remain exploiting classes, and a fierce class struggle is taking place between working classes and exploiting classes, socialism and capitalism.” This antiquated bourgeois vs. proletariat thinking, which does not fit the international culture of the 1990s, is an example of the revolution being created. The Kims (Il Sung and Jong Il) are using this lifestyle rhetorical vision to keep the Korean people stuck, ideologically, in the 1960s.

Generally, the concept of the Party cyclically creating and fulfilling a rhetorical/psychological need is similar to a child who watches a Saturday morning television show only to see, and consequently desire, an advertisement for a new toy. Upon seeing the advertisement the child develops a self-perceived need for the toy. Of course, the toy manufacturer, who sponsored the stimulating commercial, can meet said satisfaction³⁵.

In *Juche*, as evident by this speech and other avenues, the Party plays the role of the toy manufacturer; developing the revolution and selling it to the nation, which creates a perceived psychological need in the Korean people, which, in turn, the Party meets by directing the Korean people in their roles in the revolution. The end result of this cyclical process is that the Party is empowered over the lives of North Koreans. In this speech Kim Jong Il is speaking in order to gain control over the youth – whom he recognizes as important in the party:

³⁵ Monroe’s Motivated Sequence is another apt description of this phenomena, as is any basic form of advertising.

The young people are the successors to the revolution. How they are brought up is a serious matter with a direct bearing on the prospects for the revolution and the future of the nation [. . .]

Historical experience shows that when young people are not trained well it is possible to ruin the revolutionary achievements made during a long and arduous struggle and to fail in the work of promoting and completing the revolutionary cause pioneered by the leader. (Kim Chong-Il 2)

In short, the rhetorical vision is one of the Korean people, embodied by the youth in this speech, acting as agents of the revolution on behalf of the wise, historically sound, and magnanimously generous Party. This appeal is necessary, as the urgency of the original nature of the revolution following the Korean War had subsided by the time Kim Jong Il gave this address. The *Juche* idea at the juncture that this speech was given was merely a power-holding device. The Party's legitimacy was upheld by reconstituting the history of the Party through telescoping the original revolution and expulsion of the Japanese after WWII in 1945 to the Party's work in 1990 (Kim Chong-Il 1).

One of the ways in which Kim Jong Il increased the Party's power, and affirmed its power over the youth in the speech, is by using the power of language. Kim Jong Il's rhetorical vision blurs any contradistinction between the Korean nation and the Korean nation's government; that is, he proposes that they are to be thought of as one entity. His goal is for North Koreans to see the Korean Workers' Party as a synonym for the Korean nation.

Kim Jong Il said, of the revolution, showing that this revolution is not meant to aid the Korean people, but the Party: “When young people are fully armed with the spirit of the anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters they will be able to defend and safeguard the Party and the leader staunchly and to fight for the completion of the revolutionary cause of Juche” (Kim Chong-Il 4). There is a clear hierarchy in this passage, where the importance of the Korean nation has been replaced with the Korean Workers Party and the revolution has been changed from serving the people to “safeguarding” the Party, and the “Great Leader.”

Had Kim Jong Il been speaking in 1955 rather than 1990, “to defend and safeguard the Party and leader” would read “to defend and safeguard the Korean nation.” By re-visioning the past in order to create a vision for the future the Korean nation has been brought down to the level of the Party and its “Great Leader,” Kim Il Sung.

Further, the mention of “infinite devotion to the leader” in Kim Jong Il’s speech points to the ascension of Kim Il Sung as being symbolically equal to the *Juche* idea, which is in turn symbolic of the Korean Revolution, which is symbolic of the Korean people, who are, by nature of the reverence of history in their culture, deeply proud of their 5000 year homogenous history. The result, then, is that Kim Il Sung is seen, when historically reconstructed by Kim Jong Il, as a savior of the Korean people.

4.) Ask and Answer Specific Questions Relating to the Elements of the Dramas

Finally, questions concerning the dramas can be asked.

Who are the *dramatis personae*? There are two sets of primary characters in Kim Jong Il's rhetorical vision, the Korean Workers Party and the League of Socialist Working Youth. These two groups represent the power of Kim Il Sung (and Kim Jong Il by relation) as director of the revolution and the Korean people as agents of the revolution, respectively.

How does the fantasy theme work to attract the unconverted? Due to the long period between the inception of *Juche* and the delivery of this speech the unconverted have presumably had enough time to decide their stance towards *Juche*. However, increasing the fierceness of devotion of the youth can be substituted for "attracting the unconverted." In this sense, the "unconverted" are brought on board by promising them a role in fighting, patriotically, for the nation and the "Great Leader," Kim Il Sung, by dedicating their youth to industrial construction. Of course, the Korean Workers Party must construct the revolution; however, the end goal of the revolution – if it can be completed – is a socialist utopia, similar to Christianity's heaven or Buddhism's nirvana.

Who are the heroes and the villains? The hero, primarily, is Kim Il Sung, who is historically recast as being integrally important in the founding of the LSWY and the KWP, and as a fearless and wise leader. Imperialism, generally, is cast as the villain. With Japan taking partial blame, but America being overtly characterized as innately corrupt and wicked.

How are the members of the rhetorical community characterized? The rhetorical community is the Korean people, represented by the LSWY. Their characterization is as an ideologically correct group of labor-loving youth who are susceptible to corruption and complacency due to the sheltered and utopist

upbringing. They are a group in need of further ideological strengthening and education. This education is necessary because they haven't seen the evils of capitalism or an oppressing class dominated society.

It is evident from looking at Kim Jong Il's 1990 speech "Let Us Prepare the Young People as Thoroughly Reliable Successors to the Revolutionary Cause of *Juche*" that *Juche* in its modern form has changed dramatically from the original vision presented by Kim Il Sung's 1955 speech, "On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing *Juche* in Ideological Work." Modern *Juche* seems to be legitimized not on the basis of meeting a specific rhetorical or psychological need, but rather being part of a cyclical process in which the Party creates a perceived need in the minds of the Korean people based on a faux-revolution in which the United States is cast as a murderous villain and illegitimate occupier of South Korea bent on conquest and domination of North Korea as well. Based on this scenario the *Juche* idea – in this thesis seen as a lifestyle rhetorical vision – is used to fulfill the perceived need in the Korean people by presenting to them a specific Party-assigned role in the revolution. This, in turn, gives power and legitimacy to the Party, which appears to be the motivation for sustaining this particular lifestyle rhetorical vision, which – as seen in the introduction to *Juche* in chapter 3 – has clearly failed to meet the tangible needs of the people.

VI. Discussion: The Rhetorical Visions Compared

The transformation of the nature of *Juche* into a cyclical power-wielding tool can be better understood by examining three specific aspects of the change which occurred between 1955 and 1990: North Korea's focus on rebuilding, attitude towards reunification, and stance towards imperialism.

The legitimacy of the rhetorical vision, as understood by *Juche's* goals and purpose, has changed. Original *Juche* was born out of a legitimate need of a homogenous culture to strive to gain independence after three consecutive devastating historical events: the occupation of the Korean peninsula by Japan, World War II, and the Korean War. The *Juche* idea was used as a tool by Kim Il Sung to meet this very pertinent need, and his vision was met with such great success it grew into a lifestyle rhetorical vision throughout North Korea.

There are two distinct purposes that set the two rhetorical visions (original *Juche* and modern *Juche*) apart. In addition to the historical background of original *Juche* being born from a realistic need and modern *Juche* being maintained under a premise of deceit, the purpose of the *Juche* ideology has changed. The *stated* purpose has not wavered, that is, from 1955 to 1990 self-reliance has been the official justification for the rhetorical vision; however, the pragmatic application and end goal has changed. There were three primary goals of *Juche* outlined in the seminal speech of the *Juche* idea in 1955: first, the rebuilding of the nation, since the United Nations "scorched earth" retreat left North Korea's infrastructure in ruins and only one building still standing in the city of Pyongyang; and second, the reunification of the Korean people. This

second goal can be said to have two “sub goals,” the autonomous governance of Koreans by Koreans which would be no small feat given their history and the reunification of North Korea and South Korea; the third goal is to destroy the sworn enemy of the United States.

Of these three goals, the rebuilding of the North Korean infrastructure was achieved within 30 years. As seen in the image of Pyongyang in chapter 4 it is now a very large city,³⁶ and as evidenced in Kim Jong Il’s 1990 speech since the Korean War much of the infrastructure has been rebuilt, including railways, chemical factories, stadiums, and monuments. The original *Juche* idea was successful in achieving the goal of rebuilding.

On the other hand, under the guise of modern *Juche*, the rebuilding of the infrastructure has continued without clear economic benefit. By 1990 the physical devastation left by the Korean War had been overcome through the previous four decades’ reconstruction of the infrastructure. Kim Jong Il’s following claim seems to point towards a motivation of building and advancement for the sake of advancement:

In the 1990’s we must complete many projects, including large power station, the second state of the Suncheon Vinalon Complex, the Sariwon Potassic Fertilizer Complex, an up-to-date steel plant with a 2,000,000-ton annual capacity, 50,000 houses in

³⁶ Although the economy today is virtually ground to a halt from the 1960s through the 1980s North Korea was one of the most industrially advanced nations in Asia. Martin writes of the advancement referring to the period of 1946 - 1960, “Pyongyang took effective advantage of the country’s high degree of centralization, its compact economy and an unusual lack of corruption and mismanagement. Its success “makes North Korea’s model unique among the world’s many aid-receiving aspirants of development,” said a study published by a conservative American think tank” (Martin 97).

Pyongyang, the reclamation of tidal lands on the west coast, railways and motorways. (Let us 16).

The motivation behind this building is to complete an undefined “socialist victory.” It is a clear manifestation of the cyclical nature of the modern *Juche* idea, in which the leader, here Kim Jong Il representing the Party, dictates the need for work to be done to complete a revolution that is not needed, for the purpose of maintaining power over the nation-state of the DPRK.

Building projects and the utilization of youth “shock brigades” on “construction sites” is the means to the end of a victory of socialist revolution, however, reunification, according to the rhetorical vision and fantasy themes cast by Kim Jong Il is not. Reunification is not mentioned in Kim Jong Il’s 1990 speech; in fact the only mention of South Korea by Kim Jong Il is as follows:

The US imperialists occupying south Korea are forcing oppression and exploitation on the south Korean people through the exploiter class and reactionaries there [. . .] Education in the sense of class should be conducted effectively among young people, using material about the atrocities perpetrated by the US and Japanese imperialists in their aggression in our country and clear material showing the present oppression and exploitation of the people in south Korea by the puppet clique and exploiting class there.

The glaring omission of educating the youth on, as Kim Il Sung said, the “prospects of reunification” is not inconsequential. When taken in the context of the thoroughness of Kim Jong Il in explaining which areas of ideological education need to be focused on, the lack of mention of reunification is clear.

According to Kim Jong Il the areas that ideological education needs to address include learning the spirit of anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters and the spirit of the revolution, a sense of hate towards landlords and the bourgeois exploiting classes represented by American imperialism, a devout focus on patriotism defined as loving the fatherland and loving the Party, and a sense of Korean pride in the resourcefulness and history of the nation as personified by Kim Il Sung and the *Juche* idea. The idea of reunification is omitted.

The second goal, that of unity, was partially reached by Kim Il Sung and the original *Juche* idea. That is, the North emerged as a Korean-governed nation-state. The goal of reunification remained aloof, however. The unity within the North only left a stronger desire to reunite with the South. The desire for one Korean nation was so strong in the North that Kim Il Sung sparked a vicious and deadly civil war. Even after the Korean War the confidence and optimism was so high that Kim Il Sung recommended, in 1955, training educational forces to inculcate South Koreans with the *Juche* idea. Clearly, the North at that time thought that unification was imminent in the near-term.

The third goal, destroying the U.S., North Korea's *sworn enemy*, also remained aloof. America's destruction, through, has not remained a priority in modern *Juche*. Examining, through the two texts analyzed here, North Korea's treatment of imperialism, Japan, and the United States, substantiates this. Anti-imperialism is a pervasive theme throughout North Korean literature; however, the scope and severity of said treatment varies dramatically between Kim Il Sung's 1955 speech and Kim Jong Il speaking 45 years later. There is a *small* change of the focus being on the enemy of Japan in 1955, to the focus being on

the United States in 1990. This is due to the North's perception of Japanese and American "interference" in Korean issues. Japan has not disturbed Korea since the end of WWII. However, since 1945 America has engaged in a deadly war with the North and "occupied" the South continually since the North invaded the South and began the Korean War. A more substantial change than the focus moving from Japan to the United States is the severity of animosity towards the United States. Kim Jong Il had nothing nice to say about the U.S. in 1990:

The imperialists, particularly the US imperialists, are stepping up their vicious reactionary propaganda against socialism to an unprecedented degree in an effort to disarm people in socialist countries ideologically, and so undermine socialism from within.

The US imperialists occupying south Korea are forcing oppression and exploitation on the south Korean people through the exploiter class and reactionaries there. (Kim Chong-Il 5)

He continues after this excerpt and discusses the wickedness of US imperialism and instructs his audience about the paramount importance of teaching the youth of the DPRK to hate America. While extreme, and potentially unsettling to American citizens, when taken in hand with the historical view of America North Korea held in 1955, Kim Jong Il's casting of the *Juche* lifestyle rhetorical vision can be understood as "mere rhetoric." That is, it seems practically harmless when contrasted with Kim Il Sung threatening the U.S. with a "big war" (Kim Il Sung 146). Kim Il Sung, who was at the forefront of the Korean War, and in fact responsible for the decision to invade South Korea, wanted to cause physical destruction to the American government. Kim Jong Il

seems to be paying lip service to the idea of America as “sworn enemy,” discussing hate and atrocities, but not threatening or implying any tangible action to be taken against the U.S. or Japan. While in 1955 war was an option verbally confirmed by Kim Il Sung with no pretense or stipulations.

Taken together, these goals represent the pragmatic purpose of *Juche*. Their purpose was to serve the Korean people, each end goal was destined and created for the betterment and well-being of the Korean people, albeit not all South Koreans would agree that imminent reunification with the North under the guise of *Juche* is in their best interest. The Korean People are implicitly disenfranchised while the Party is elevated.

A final change, not related to the goals and purpose of *Juche* is that of utopian paradise. Kim Jong Il proposes that without “proper revolutionary and class education” the youth will not be able to fight against the “exploiting class” or for the “revolutionary cause” since up to this point the youth of North Korea have lived “happily” and without the “exploitation of landlords and capitalists.” Kim Jong Il is asserting that the children of the DPRK live, compared to South Korea, in a virtual utopia. In one sense, he is continuing the vision of rebuilding North Korea into a utopia, but his implication that it has already happened, as Kim Il Sung predicted in 1955. The difference here is Kim Il Sung forecasting a Korean socialist utopia in 1955, which his son declared to exist by 1990. In another sense, which is much closer to reality, the children of the DPRK live in the most closed and centrally controlled society in modern times.

VII. Conclusion

Summary and Current Ramifications

This thesis has outlined the fantasy themes in two major speeches in North Korean political history. The first speech, given by Kim Il Sung in 1955, was the seminal speech at the inception of the *Juche* idea in North Korea. The analysis of this speech revealed a lifestyle rhetorical vision that served the Korean people and a legitimate psychological need. The second analyzed speech, given by Kim Jong Il in 1990, found that the rhetorical vision still remained; however, it had changed from a legitimately functioning ideology realized in the success of the original vision to one of continual re-envisioning of “revolutionary socialist victory.” Simply put, the vision has evolved into a power-wielding device used by the Korean Workers’ Party to maintain its monopoly of control on North Korea.

With Pyongyang being rebuilt and the economy becoming re-established throughout the decades of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s and a strong heavy-industry based infrastructure developing, the great need for a drastic and dramatic lifestyle rhetorical vision had all but vanished by the time Kim Jong Il gave his 1990 address. The need for the rhetorical vision of modern *Juche* to be sustained through a faux-revolution created by the Party is even more necessary now than in the 1990s. Since Kim Jong Il delivered the speech in question the North Korean economy has been receding up to 5 percent a year. Today, after nearly two decades of recession the economy is beyond crisis mode, it has virtually ceased to function. In sum, without a revolution to wage and without an enemy to defend against the party would have neither purpose nor power.

This thesis' understanding of *Juche* as a power-wielding tool used by the Korean Workers Party can be applied to several aspects of life in North Korea today. Information control, for example, as said by Wonsook Song, is “of the Party, by the Party, for the Party,” and is very effective in controlling the information available to the citizens of North Korea³⁷. It is necessary to keep outside information on the reality of life in other countries, even other communist countries such as China, from the citizens of the DPRK, since seeing the disparity would lead to a lack of belief in *Juche*.

Due to severe information control in North Korea the reality of South Korean's living standards and vibrant economy, which are both exceptional by global standards, is unknown. Thus, Kim Jong Il is able to paint a picture of South Koreans as huddling and hiding from an occupying military force, not the attitude and atmosphere of collaboration between South Korea and the United States which reflects the current situation. The Kims' deceiving of North Koreans is not a new phenomenon. During the Korean war, “Most believed the North had been the target of a Southern and U.S. invasion, an invasion that the North Korean People's Army had turned back heroically. Pyongyang's phony unification appeal just before the attack had fooled Kim's own people” (Martin 73).

Additionally, the power-wielding function of modern *Juche* ideology is a partial explanation of the percentage of the GDP the DPRK spends on military endeavors, which stands at over 30%. The function is to portray to the North

³⁷ It should also be noted that Kim Il Sung, and presumably his son, are not privy to reliable intelligence. According to Katsumi Sato, editor of *Gendai Korea* one of Kim Il-Sung's delegates gave a favorable report of conditions in South Korea in 1972 and was promptly sent to a camp for ideological reeducation. Sato says, “The point is, everybody has seen this sort of thing happen, and therefore nobody working for Kim and his son will tell them the truth” (Martin 154, 794).

Korean people the legitimacy of key tenets of *Juche*, such as imminent attack by the “sworn enemy” of the U.S. By possessing an army that stands at over 1 million men, and the recent development and testing of nuclear weapons³⁸ Kim Jong Il and the Korean Workers Party demonstrate to the Korean people that a.) they are defended against their enemies and b.) their enemies do, in fact, exist. It is, based on the conclusions of this thesis, that the DPRK’s nuclear weapons are neither for use on foreign soil nor for international intimidation. Rather, it is a show of might by the Korean Workers’ Party to show its own people, the current adherents of the *Juche* idea, that *Juche* is a functioning and successful ideology.

North Korea’s possession of nuclear weapons confirms to the North Koreans that the *Juche* idea and its accompanying revolution are still necessary and pertinent. Since, logically, if North Korea possesses nuclear weapons as a deterrent then the deterred threat must be real. Rather than a threat, though, their nuclear weapons serve only as confirmation to the Korean people that they do, in fact, live in a utopian heaven on earth. This approach to understanding North Korea’s military presences can be used to explain both sides of the North-South divide in the current day, as well as in the future. For example, in March of 2008 the Korean Central News Agency told South Korea, “Everything will be in ashes, not just a sea of fire, if our advanced pre-emptive strike once begins.” This

³⁸ In addition to nuclear weapons North Korea also possesses biological weapons. In 2002 North Korea’s biological weapons program was described as, “biotechnology infrastructure, capable of producing infectious agents, toxins, and other crude biological weapons. It likely has the capability to produce sufficient quantities of biological agents for military purposes within weeks of deciding to do so, and has a variety of means at its disposal for delivering these deadly weapons” (“Biological Weapons Overview”).

stronger than usual remark³⁹ is in response to South Korean's newly elected President's hard-line stance.⁴¹ The contrast between Seoul's reactions to these statements is marked. In 1994 Seoul was visibly alarmed when North Korea made similar threats, evidenced by citizens stocking up on food; however, in 2008 Seoul seemed demonstrably unperturbed (Sang-Hun, "North Korea Says"). This evidence supports the point that North Korea's grandiloquence is unimpressive to the South. In light of the South's de facto ignoring of the DPRK's threats they can be understood to be fustian, the intended audience of inflammatory remarks made by the Korea Central News Agency is the North Korea people for the purpose of intentional deception to mask the failures of the *Juche* ideology. A final example of this idea is summarized by Thom Shanker, speaking of the U.S. military's proposal to bring troops' spouses and family with them on tours of duty in South Korea:

It would reverse decades of policy for South Korea, recognizing that an attack from the North has become unlikely given the enduring

³⁹ This is a reference to the infamous 1994 North Korean threat to turn Seoul into a "sea of fire" when the North was first discovered by the popular press and Western media to be developing nuclear weapons (Sang-Hun, "North Korea Says").

⁴⁰ A few days after North Korea threatened to destroy Seoul President Lee Myung-Bak was insulted directly, the first time a Southern president had been directly insulted in 8 years (Sang-Hun, "North Korea Attacks"). The previous president, Roh Moo-hyun, had continued to implement a "Sunshine Policy" which had been implemented by his predecessor, Kim Dae-jung. The policies overt goals were political cooperation, however a widely held conception in the South is that reunification will be possible only after economic equality between the DPRK and the ROK has been realized.

⁴¹ President Lee Myung-Bak was elected December 19, 2007 on a conservative platform which included cutting economic and humanitarian aid to North Korea until progress in areas of human rights and nuclear non-proliferation are addressed by the Korean Workers Party and Kim Jong Il (Sang-Hun, "South") Also notable is that Lee Myung-Bak's platform was based largely on domestic issues, including real-estate and the general economy. Further, he defeated Park Geun-hee, daughter of former Republic of Korea General and leader of South Korea until his assassination in 1979, in the Grand National Party's competition for presidential candidate (Onishi).

American presence as a deterrent and the growth in size and sophistication of the South Korean armed forces.

Perhaps one of the reasons North Korea's stance towards America has changed from one of necessary destruction to mere verbal abuse is that *Juche* must not fail. If *Juche* is to fail, the Party will fail. Failure of the Party would destroy the entirety of the power structure of the central government. The Party, it seems, is so hell-bent on maintaining power and control in North Korea that it will not risk the *Juche* idea being compromised in any way, including international war. The need to sustain this ideology outweighs the risk of infiltration of outside information that would be present in the chaos of war.

Recently the New York Philharmonic played a monumentally groundbreaking concert in Pyongyang. The New York Times reported that it was the largest contingency of Americas to visit North Korea since the end of the Korean War. There has been speculation surrounding this unprecedented event of North Korea opening up its economy; similar to the economic reforms China and Vietnam have taken recently. However, North Korea has a long history of making promises to Western agencies and nations in return for economic and humanitarian assistance and breaking those promises upon receipt of aid. Based on the analysis of modern *Juche* it seems that North Korea is "playing games" with the west, appearing progressive and implicitly pro-American.⁴²

In summation, *Juche* today seems to be tantamount to a lie that grows larger the more it stays hidden. Kim Jong Il and the Korean Workers' Party are telling the lie of a socialist utopia to the North Koreans. And the longer it stays

⁴² Among the pieces played in Pyongyang at the concert was "An American in Paris" (Wakin.)

that way the more credibility the Party will lose when the insurmountable force of globalization infiltrates North Korea. Further, the strength of the grip of *Juche* and the Korean Worker's Party on North Koreans in general seems to be insurmountable using mere information penetration. Radio Free Asia and others, while worthwhile, are not sufficient alone. As mentioned in the introduction, real change must come from within, but the catalyst to that change may very well be via creative and persuasive communication with North Koreans.

Future Research and Limitations of Current Research

Through FTA this thesis has uncovered a new understanding of *Juche* as a power-wielding tool that employs a rhetorical vision to maintain power in a nation bereft of a stable economy or human rights freedoms. The implications of the conclusions are far reaching and applicable to all aspects of North Korean life. Further, research based on discoveries found in this research is far reaching. Of course, a more thorough study of additional speeches, in addition to the two speeches analyzed here, would lend more clarity and legitimacy to the claims and conclusions of this thesis. Valuable supplementary research could be done through a qualitative study of refugees' narratives of North Korea in which the emerging narratives could be analyzed to further understand the *Juche* idea, which in spite of the reach of this thesis still remains tremendously opaque to the world, at large, beyond the DPRK. Several additional "texts" were also discovered in the research for this project, including no less than three North Korean state-sponsored web sites: the official website of the DPRK, the Korea Central News Agency website, and a website, Uriminzokkiri, with several North Korean

produced documentaries and North Korean propaganda. This would be interesting and pertinent to study as they show how North Korea postures itself to the outside world. Finally, an issue dealt very narrowly in this topic is the de facto deification of, first, Kim Il Sung and then Kim Jong Il. Additional research, perhaps similar to that done in this thesis, could trace the historical process of military leader to president to deity through an analysis of verbal and visual evidence.

Finally, due to the limited nature of information on life in North Korea an exact tally of the scope of real devotion to this lifestyle rhetorical vision is difficult to know. However, based on my research it seems evident that Plato's allegory of the cave can be adapted to understanding the total efficacy of the *Juche* lifestyle rhetorical vision. Simply put, due to information control and authoritarian oppression of independent thought has resulted in a situation where most North Koreans know nothing else but what they have been taught from childhood, and that is that Kim Jong Il and Kim Il Sung are, as described on the DPRK official web presence, "the sun of the nation and of mankind."

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