

The Narrative Characteristics of 'Lying' Oral Narratives

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Abstract

This study examined the narrative characteristics and origin of 'lying' oral narratives that have been orally transmitted in Korea. 'Lying' oral narratives consist of several levels, from short stories exhibiting only delicateness of expression to long ones that also exhibit delicateness of content. Regardless of length, however, they can all be categorized as 'lying' oral narratives, and thus it is necessary to explain the unique nature of these narratives. There have been few studies on 'lying' oral narratives, and no attempt has been made to analyze them as a separate type of oral narrative. Thus, regarding 'lie' oral narratives as an independent form of orally transmitted narrative, this study analyzed their narrative characteristics and presented everyday, goal-oriented, paradoxical, and argumentative characteristics. In addition, when we consider that lies are not a desirable form of discourse but still have elements capable of attracting people's interest (or are worthy to be valued positively), the characters in 'lying' oral narratives are comparable with 'tricksters' in myths. This suggests that the origin of 'lying' oral narratives is in myths, which are representative products of an oral society that invests the 'word' with authority. In other words, we may see 'lying' oral narratives as variations of oral cultural memories of mythological tricksters in the transmitters of these 'lying' oral narratives.

Keywords: Lies, orally transmitted narratives, everyday, goal-orientedness, paradox, argument, trickster

1. “On the road, I saw a persimmon tree without roots. Persimmons were growing on the tree in clusters. I picked them and put them into a sack without bottom and put the sack on a back rack without arms. I tried to go Gangreung Market but was blocked by a river, and I tried to go to Yeongguk Market but was blocked by a mountain ridge. I struck a bonanza at a marketplace with no people.”¹ This short story is one of several versions of a tale titled “Lies”. While walking along the road, the man finds a persimmon tree without roots. He picks persimmons from the tree and carries them on a back rack without arms. He tries to sell them in two markets but is blocked by a river and a mountain ridge. Finally, he goes to a marketplace with no people around, and makes a lot of money by selling the persimmons. It might be titled “Lies” because its contents go against common sense.

However, ‘a lie’ is a part of verbal communication, so it can be discussed from the viewpoint of communication. But from the position of the author as a literature researcher, this study focused on how such a pattern of communication is implemented in literary works and what the narrative characteristics and origin of lies are. Previous studies on these subjects include Ryu Jeong-wol², Kim Yoo-jeong³, and Shim Woo-jang⁴. Among these researchers, Shim Woo-jang examined the literary characteristics of lies closely. He analyzed ‘fictitiousness,’ one of fundamental qualities of tales, using a tale that deals with lies, that is, “The Man Who Got a Wife with Three Lies”. His study analyzed not the nature of the ‘lying’ oral narrative itself but the narrative as a meta-tale. In the area of oral literature, lies themselves are accepted as a branch of orally transmitted narratives. For this reason, it is necessary to explore the narrative characteristics and origin of lies as a branch of oral narrative. Here, we need to keep in mind that, in many oral narrative works represented by

¹ Lim Seok-jae, *Lim Seok-jae’s Collection of Korean Orally Transmitted Tales IV: Hamgyeongbuk-do, Hamgyeongnam-do, Gangwon-do*(Seoul: Pyeongminsa, 1989), 161.

² Ryu Jeong-wol, “A Study on <False Stories>,” *Journal of Korean Classics*, Vol. 5(1999): 183-209.

³ Kim Yoo-gyeong, “A Study on Korean Folktales of Lies,” *Graduate School of Education, master’s thesis*(Seoul: Kyungsoong University, 2001): 1-71.

⁴ Shim Woo-jang, “The Dilemma of Lies and the Paradox of Stories,” *Journal of Oral Literature*, Vol. 28(2009): 301-331.

tales, lies can be used in different types of tales, from those in which the lie itself is in the center of the story to those using narrations that can be regarded as lies. With the problems raised above, this paper chose to examine the narrative characteristics and origin of 'lying' oral narratives, and the materials analyzed for this purpose are the *Collection of Korean Orally Transmitted Tales*, compiled by Lim Seok-jae. These materials include tales collected in a relatively early period but, despite their high historical value, they have not been analyzed sufficiently. Moreover, the collection presents a number of 'lying' oral narratives to be discussed in this study. Also, because it is beyond the scope of this research to examine all tales of a specific type, we do not need to scrutinize all materials related to old tales. Accordingly, we expect that the outcomes of discussion may not be much different even if we limit the discussion to the 'lying' oral narratives contained in Lim Seok-jae's collection.

2. According to the general lexical definition, a lie is "a fabrication that differs from the facts." A lie is not much different from deception in the sense that deception is "making one accept a lie as true." If we must draw a distinction between the two, a lie is focused more on 'word (language)' and deception is more focused on 'deed (action).' Let's look at the episodes below.

(A) "At that house, too": On a rainy day, he could not go to work. Idling at home, suddenly he wanted to do it. However, he was bothered by his son. Thus, he sent him out on an errand that would keep him away long enough for him to finish. As soon as the son left home, he started and was about to reach the peak. Then, he heard his son coughing outside. The father yelled, "Son, why are you still at home?" In reply to that, the son said, "It's raining.

Didn't you know that they would be doing the same thing at that house, too?”⁵

(B) “Try to deceive, but”: Once upon a time, a farmer borrowed his neighbor’s cow and fed it, and the cow gave birth to twin calves. In order to hide one of them away, he told the owner, “Yesterday your cow gave birth to one calf.” Hearing this, the owner suspected the farmer because the farmer emphasized ‘one’ calf, even though cows normally gave birth to only one calf at a time. So the owner of the cow asked, “My cow usually bears twins, so why has she produced only one this time?” Ashamed, the farmer confessed that she had produced twin calves⁶.

In (A) the father is deceiving the son, and in (B) the farmer is deceiving the cow owner. Strictly speaking, however, (A) highlights the father’s false words and (B) highlights the farmer’s false words and deeds. This shows that if a false word, that is, a lie, is followed by a deed, it becomes deception. There may be deception made in deed alone, but deception accompanied by words is much more effective. This is why a lie is more conspicuous even though lies and deception are like two sides of a coin. A word is audible, so it can stimulate the listener’s inner mind, but a deed is visible and thus not as capable of disturbing the viewer inwardly.

Fraser clarified the typical behavioral structure⁷ that forms the foundation of lies as follows.⁸

⁵ Lim Seok-jae, *Lim Seok-jae’s Collection of Korean Orally Transmitted Tales III: Pyeonganbuk-do, Pyeongannam-do, Hwanghae-do* (Seoul: Pyeongminsa, 1988), 326-327.

⁶ Lim Seok-jae, *Collection of Korean Orally Transmitted Tales I: Pyeonganbuk-do* (Seoul: Pyeongminsa, 1987), .238.

⁷ Here, the deed is ‘the action of uttering,’ that is, ‘telling a lie,’ so it is distinguished from the deed in explaining lies and deceptions.

⁸ Park Seong-cheol, “A Study from the Viewpoint of Pragmatic Language on Typical Lies – About So-called Naked Lies,” *German Literature*, Vol. 80(2001): 382, required.

- (1) The speaker fabricates information on the world and conveys it to the listener by stating p , the contents of a proposition on the state of the world.
- (2) The speaker is aware of his psychological state, namely, his belief in a specific state and is not willing to change the belief voluntarily.
- (3) The speaker manipulates the listener's belief on the contents of the proposition. That is, although he does not believe p , the speaker intends to force the listener to believe p .
- (4) The speaker covers up his insincerity and, at the same time, fakes sincerity.
- (5) The speaker manipulates the listener's belief in his psychological state. He makes the listener believe as if he has belief in p .
- (6) The speaker fakes cooperation with regard to his intention on the listener's belief in the contents of the proposition and his psychological state.

According to this behavioral structure, a lie is not a collective belief but a shrewd manipulation of individual belief. In this sense, in order for a lie to work, belief is essential not only for the speaker who tells the lie but also for individual listeners who hear the lie. Of course, the belief is different according to whether it is the speaker's or the listener's: the speaker's belief is hypocritical, pretending to believe in order to deceive the listener, and the listener's belief is sincere, induced to believe fully by the speaker's words. Whatever the meaning is, we need to be aware that a lie is closely connected to people's inner beliefs. In daily life, we are always faced with the issue of belief among humans. As a result, lies may have functioned as a source that generated various topics in oral culture society. In such a situation, oral narratives would be an optimal branch of literature for reflecting problems such as lies and deceptions.

Here, we cannot help mentioning that, in oral narratives, a lie has **the characteristics of being everyday occurrences as well as goal-oriented**. Do people tell lies only in special

cases during their everyday lives? Probably yes. For a particular individual, we cannot say that he makes up and experiences lies every day, but for the entirety human society, it is undeniable that lies are heard and experienced every day. As shown in episodes (A) and (B) above, lies are commonly used to expose a private relation between a couple⁹ or a transactional relation between individuals. Of course, they may be different in that the lie in (A) is not malicious while that in (B) is ill-intentioned, and in their everyday nature. However, we should note that they try to achieve something through the lies. This is because a lie aims to achieve a specific goal, whether it is a sexual pleasure or material wealth. Strong goal-orientedness induces one to tell a lie, and goal-orientedness is critical to sustaining daily human life. Therefore, although lies are not the whole of daily life, they still play a part in it positively and negatively. In this sense, the everyday nature and goal-orientedness of lies seem to be obvious.

Of the everyday nature and goal-orientedness of lies, the latter is associated with **the paradoxical nature of lies**, so it requires a more detailed discussion. Because lies are also words, they have communicative goal like all words do. As the information provided by the speaker is false, though, the speaker's lie has an anti-communicative goal. In this way, lies pursue both communicative goals and anti-communicative goals at the same time, and in this sense, they are paradoxical. Furthermore, this paradoxical nature of lies leads to a paradoxical situation in which the speaker, who thinks that he is lying and is confident that he will never be deceived by a falsehood, is rather fooled by the listener: either the speaker who tries to cheat the listener with a lie is actually deceived by the listener's lie, or the listener believes he is not deceived because he knows it is a lie but later discovers that he was in fact deceived.

⁹ There are many others more bold than this. For example, there was a poor couple who shared a room with their children. When they wanted to do it at night, they played with each other's private parts, and they called the man's a 'chestnut,' and the woman's a 'fire pot' to deceive their children. One night, hearing the word 'chestnut,' the children woke up and asked their parents to give them the chestnuts if they were done. Then, answering 'Yes,' the couple kept enjoying each other and made noises as they got more excited. The children complained, "Why do you eat chestnuts without us?" The couple, who had just reached the peak, was perplexed, not knowing how to handle the situation.

Such paradoxical situations, in which individuals try to deceive but are deceived themselves, or believe that they have outwitted someone else only to find out that they have been outwitted, are more clearly understandable when the verbal duality of lies are presented in the form of a narrative. It is probably because the paradoxical nature of lies was recognized clearly by people in oral society.

(C) “One who is not deceived has been deceived”: Once upon a time there was an old man who was never deceived by others’ words. Many people tried to cheat him but failed. Therefore, the old man was confident in himself. On a cold winter day, someone came to the old man and told a lie, saying that he had seen a cherry tree when crossing over the mountain in front and many cherries as large as millstones were growing on the tree. However, the old man did not believe him, saying that there could not be cherries as large as millstones. So the man reduced the size to vats, jars, chamber pots and bowls, but every time, the old man refused to believe him. Lastly when the man said that the cherries were as large as acorns, the old man accepted that there might be cherries of that size, and boasted that he was not tricked by the lie. However, the man laughed at him, “How can cherries grow in the cold winter?” Realizing that he was fooled, the old man said with a smile, “I see! I can also be the victim of a trick.”¹⁰

(D) <Dancing mouse>: Once upon a time, a salt peddler living in a coastal village came to stay overnight at a house in a mountain village. Finding that he came from a coastal area, the host treated the salt peddler well. After having dinner, the owner had some conversation with the salt peddler and then said that he had a dancing mouse. The salt peddler did not believe it, saying “How can a mouse dance?” The host suggested that if the mouse did not

¹⁰ Ibid. (1987), 294.

dance he would give half of his properties to the salt peddler, but if it did the salt peddler should give up his salt and the donkey to the owner. Then, the host sang, “Jwihudongdang Palojwi! You mouse in the barn! Come out here and dance for us! Cheer up our life!” Soon a white mouse appeared and danced to the song. The salt peddler lost his salt and donkey to the man. Returning home, the peddler told his villagers what had happened. A neighbor asked about the details, and then he loaded his donkey with cattle dung and horse dung and carried a cat inside his sleeve and visited the house in the mountain village. While the host was outside for preparing dinner, the neighbor called the mouse out and had the cat caught and eats it. As expected, the host said that he had a dancing mouse and offered to bet the neighbor, and the neighbor accepted it. The host began to sing, but the mouse did not appear. He had to transfer half of his properties to the salt peddler’s neighbor.¹¹

In (C), the old man was confident that he would never be deceived by the words of others. In winter, however, he was tricked by a man who kept telling a lie by reducing the size of cherries from millstones to vats, jars, chamber pots, bowl, and acorns. Even the old man did not realize that he had been cheated until the man explained ‘how he had been fooled.’ In this episode, we can see that both the words found to be a lie and the time when these words are uttered are at issue, but unfortunately, the old man focused on the words alone. Focusing on the words alone, the old man judges that the man’s words have changed from a lie “On the way, I saw cherries as large as millstones” to a fact (or plausible words) “On the way, I saw cherries as large as acorns.” Therefore, by accepting the man’s final words, the old man argues that his judgment is right and he has not been cheated. However, the final words can be true by themselves but false at a specific time. This is an example showing how the paradox of lies is realized. In this episode, the paradox is realized through time (temporality).

¹¹ Ibid., 306-307.

The old man overlooked the fact that cherries cannot grow in winter. As the debate was focused on the size of cherries, he failed to consider the time when the lie had been uttered.

Here, we can see that the paradox of lies is closely linked to time. In addition, time extends from the past to the present, and if one hears about something at a time that he has not experienced, namely, in the past, he is more likely to judge that the thing a lie. Considering the opinion that, in oral culture society, one's judgment is dependent fully on one's experiences,¹² the old man in (C) likely did not experience either the point in time when the man saw the cherry tree or the cherries as large as millstones. However, what the old man knows from his experiences is the fact that a cherry is as large as an acorn. He was cheated by the man since failed to recall another empirical fact that was shared by the two men. One who belongs to oral culture has a strong tendency to deny what he has not experienced and rely on his experiences. Taking advantage of that, the man who came to trick the old man told a lie, purposefully focusing on the size of cherries so that the old man would miss the fact that cherries cannot grow on a cherry tree in winter. He penetrated the past-orientedness of lies and the tendency of humans in oral culture to judge between truth and falsehood based on their past experiences.

On the other hand, the episode in (D) raises the question of whether the **paradoxical nature** of lies is connected not only to temporality but also to spatiality. This is because a person living in a coastal area is meeting one living in a mountainous area. Here, the space where they live functions as a device that minimizes shared experiences. Therefore, when the mountain dweller tells the coastal dweller about a dancing mouse and suggests a wager for their property, the coastal dweller accepts the suggestion. This is because, from the coastal dweller's perspective, or based on the coaster's experiences, it is impossible for a mouse to dance. Drawing on his experiences, he denied the possibility that a mouse living in the

¹² Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy; The Technologizing of the Word*, London & New York: Methuen, 1982, 42-43.

mountains might be able to dance. However, mice at a specific place may be able to dance. Thus, the mountain dweller knew whether the mouse could or could not dance, but the coastal dweller did not. In this setting, the mountain dweller won the bet. According to this episode, spatiality results in the non-sharing of experiences between the speaker and the listener, and this non-sharing functions as a factor in deceiving each other.

The proposition that the **paradoxical characteristic** of lies is guaranteed by temporality from the past to the present is also supported in (D). This is clarified by the fact that the second coastal dweller, who knows all that has happened to the first coastal dweller, deceives the mountain dweller. At that time, the mountain dweller tries to take in another coastal dweller based on the empirical fact that the mouse under his care can dance and the past fact that he defrauded a coastal dweller of his belongings. Although the mountain dweller did not tell a lie, because his mouse was in fact able to dance, his words are close to a lie because, with these words, he revealed his intention to take another's belongings. Even if it is a fact, if that fact is used to mislead others it is a lie. The mountain dweller uses a fact known exclusively to him as if he is telling a lie. However, not knowing the fact that the second coastal dweller has learned everything from the first coastal dweller whom he had deceived before and that his dancing mouse has been devoured by the second coastal dweller's cat, the mountain dweller tries to cheat the second coastal dweller based on his past experiences. As a matter of course, the mountain dweller is instead deceived and what he tells as if telling a lie becomes a lie indeed. The mountaineer becomes a deceiver and a deceived; that is, he faces the paradox of lies.

Lastly, let's examine the **argumentative characteristic** of lies. The situation in which a lie is uttered is usually created through a conversation between two persons. In this situation, one tells a lie and the other raises a question about the lie, and naturally this leads to an argument over whether or not the words are a lie.

(E) “Lies”: An old man had a book that collected only lies. One day, he announced that anyone could come and deposit a sum of money and then tell a lie, and if the lie was not in the book he would double the deposit. Many people came to him and told lies, but all the lies were found in the book. One day, a child around the age of six came and said that if the lie he told was in the book he would work for the old man for 10 years without pay, but if it wasn't the old man would pay him a thousand dollars. The first lie: “In my village, there is a way that one can eat their full of pork without paying a penny. If a piggy is born, an iron pelt is put on the piggy. The pelt has holes here and there. If the piggy is well-fed and and fattened, the fat is pressed out of the holes. Then the owner cuts the protruding fat and eats the meat, and the pig keeps growing and produces meat continuously. In this way, they eat as much pork as they want without paying a penny.” Because the lie was not in his book, the old man gave a thousand dollars to the boy. However, he could not let the child go with the money and he also wanted to work the boy without paying for 10 years. So he suggested telling one more lie. The second lie: “In my village, people do not work busily but farm as if they were playing. This is how they work. First, they spread millet seeds in the field, and pitch a net wide over the field with piles on the four corners to fix the net. Then, the millet grows and the ears make their way through the net. When the ears ripen, the farmer loosens the net from the piles and pulls it away. Then, the ears are harvested but the stalks remain in the field. Farming in this way, they are not busy at all.” This lie was also new to the old man. So he scraped up all the money that he had earned and saved and gave it to the boy. The child asked if he wanted another lie. The old man told him, “Enough!”¹³

(F) “Getting a wife with lies”: Once upon a time, there was a man who had only one

¹³ Ibid. (1987), 289.

daughter. When she reached the marriageable age, he advertised that he would accept as his son-in-law any bachelor who could tell three lies. Many people came and told lies, but he accepted only the first and second as lies, but not the third one, and dismissed the bachelors. One day, a young man came and told lies. This time as well, the father accepted the first two lies: in the first lie, the man showed a pear and said that he had picked it from the head of the Buddhist Statue in Eunjin; and in the second one, he showed a snare and said that he had caught 100 ducks at once with the snare. The father asked for the last lie. Then, the man showed a deed of debt and said that he had received it from the father for lending 200 dollars. The father had to acknowledge either that the deed of debt was true or that it was false. Pondering for a while, he took the man's words as a lie and gave his daughter to the bachelor.¹⁴

In (E) and (F), those who tell lies are in such a position that the falsehood of their words is judged by others. Depending on the judgment, they may be rewarded with money or a wife. In this situation, whether their words are lies or not is judged seriously and definitively. That is, there is an argument over lies. In addition, because (E) and (F) are orally transmitted stories, they may be treated merely as a fun, but arguments over lies in real life will be more serious. Then, what ends the debate? As in real life, an argument over a lie can be stopped by presenting evidence. The book of lies functions as the evidence in (E), as does the deed of debt in (F). Therefore, in (E) the old man has to admit the boy's words as lies because they are not in the book, and in (F) the deed of debt presented by the liar pushes the father into the dilemma of having to give the liar his daughter or his money.

There are two things that that this present author considers interesting. One is the effect of 'text' in oral culture society. Both a book and a deed of debt are in written form, and they

¹⁴ Ibid., 290-291.

function as grounds for judging lies presented orally. This suggests that a written text is regarded as more authentic than an oral statement. A shaman's act of mediating a message from a deity is called 'gong-su.' Just as one cannot argue with the shaman over gong-su, the old man cannot refuse the boy's lie based on the argument that his book is wrong, and the father cannot argue with the bachelor over the authenticity of the deed of debt – though they might argue if the lies were presented only in oral form without written evidence. In a debate over an oral statement without evidence one can refute the statement, but the debate comes to an end with the presentation of evidence, and this is the way arguments are handled in oral culture society. In particular, the episodes in (E) and (F) suggest that a written text has absolute authority as evidence, but in some oral narratives, an object or a different form of evidence other than a written text plays the same function. Considering this, we can see that in oral culture society evidence was perceived to have absolute authority, as strong as gong-su, and it was taboo to judge evidence itself. Another interesting point is that telling or hearing a lie had a social value high enough to bet money on and even to decide a daughter's marriage. As is well known, false words and true words are the opposite of each other, and lies are considered socially unacceptable compared to the truth. Yet let us consider how unlikely it would be for one to give money or one's daughter to someone for telling the truth. This is boring and hardly accepted as an innate talent considering human relations in the real world. On the contrary, telling lies is interesting in that it can manipulate people's beliefs with disguised truth. Is it a common ability for one to be able to control others' minds as he wishes? If he uses the unusual ability to tell lies for a good purpose, he can get along with people well and make their lives exciting and happy. Considering that the ability to tell a lie is regarded as evidence of smartness, betting money on a good lie or selecting a son-in-law from among good liars is, though an expression of exaggeration found in tales, sufficient to reflect the fact that the ability to tell a lie is of interest to people.

3. We have examined the characteristics of lies, namely, their everyday nature and goal-oriented, paradoxical and argumentative characteristics. In this section, we will discuss another characteristic, which was mentioned briefly above: namely, that a lie is not a desirable form of discourse but has an attractive element that draws people's attention and, thanks to this element, always has potential for being transformed into a desirable form of discourse.

(G) "The man who shoots arrows falsely": A country man who could not shoot arrows at all came to Seoul with a bow in his pack. On the way, he got a sparrow from children who had caught the bird and were playing with it. He pierced the sparrow through its left eye with an arrow and threw it over the fence of the Prime Minister's house. Then, he knocked on the gate of the house and said that he came to recover a sparrow with an arrow through its left eye. The Prime Minister thought that the country man might be a good archer, and asked him to catch the golden bird that flew onto the willow in his yard and cried every night. Furthermore, he promised that he would give his daughter and a position in the government if he succeeded. At night, the countryman took off all his clothes and, climbing up the willow, lay down and pretended to be a branch. The golden bird flew in and perched on his left arm. The man grabbed and killed it, pierced its left eye with an arrow, dumped the bird on the ground, and returned to his room. The next morning, the Prime Minister asked him if he had caught the bird. He answered that he had shot it last night and it might have fallen to its death somewhere on the ground. When the Prime Minister looked under the willow, the bird was there just as the man had said, killed with an arrow in its left eye. As he had promised, the Prime Minister took him as his son-in-law and gave him an official position. Hearing this,

people came to the Prime Minister's house and held a feast in celebration. At that time, there were many doves in a nearby mountain. They requested that he shoot the doves in their presence. So the countryman aimed at the doves, but did not shoot an arrow until noon. Impatient at this, his wife, the Prime Minister's daughter, hit his arm, saying "Why do you take aim for such a long time?" Then, the arrow left the bow and hit five doves at once. The countryman complained that he could have caught ten if he had aimed a little longer. The people gathered there exclaimed at his extraordinary shooting skill.¹⁵

In (G), the country man does not know how to shoot arrows at all. However, he falsely claims to be a good archer and ultimately becomes the Prime Minister's son-in-law. But it is not only to his lie that he owes his success. He has also wisdom and wit – or guile, to use a negative word. That is, he covers up his lies with wisdom and wit. Here, we can see that a lie is not merely a false statement but is connected to the liar's wisdom and wit.

Of course, there are many different patterns of lies in oral narratives like folktales, and not all of them are connected to human wisdom and wit. Nevertheless, this characteristic needs to be discussed carefully. This is because, in that his lies are developed into false actions, the country man in (G) is close to a so-called typical trickster who not only tells a lie but also deceives people. A trickster, which is a term used in mythology, is understood as 'a mythological figure who uses black magics.'¹⁶ A representative example is Shakyamuni in the shamanistic myth "Changsega." In this story, Shakyamuni competes with Mireuk to see who can flower first, with the loser promising to concede sovereignty over the human world to the winner. In the competition, he moves the flower on Mireuk's lap to his own lap while Mireuk is sleeping and declares, "I have flowered first, so I will rule the world!" Another

¹⁵ Ibid., 108-110.

¹⁶ Paul Radin, *The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1956.

example of a typical mythological trickster is Seoktalhae. In order to take Hong's house away, Seoktalhae secretly buries charcoal under the site of Hong's house and falsely insists that his family has been blacksmiths for many generations, and that the site of Hong's house belongs to his ancestors. From this, King Namhae discovers that Seoktalhae is smart and takes him as his son-in-law. Besides these, we can identify many mythological tricksters who uniformly use lies and deceptions to cheat others.

However, mythological tricksters are unique in that they challenge and overcome established order and authority, as shown in the examples of Shakyamuni and Seoktalhae. Although not mentioned above, Jumong shows the same characteristics in his feud with Songyang. Considering this, the country man in (G), though quite comic, can be said to be a descendent of mythological tricksters like Shakyamuni, Seoktalhae and Jumong in that he fools the authority figure of the Prime Minister with his faked shooting skill and lies. We can say that skillful liars who tear down people's authority based on those people's inner beliefs that they would and could never be deceived are true descendents of mythological tricksters. Accordingly, oral narratives, in which the characters bet money on lies and look for a son-in-law candidate among good liars, and are then completely deceived by lies, are considered the variations of oral cultural memories of mythological tricksters in the transmitters of oral narratives.¹⁷

¹⁷ In the composite animal story titled "A Quail's Trick", the fox as a deceiver and the quail as a deceived can be understood in the same context.

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