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The Otherworld Prisoner

The two stories titled "*The Man Who Visited the Thunderbirds*" and "*The Orphan Boy Who was Captured by the Bad Thunder- Birds*" have dealt with the same themes of survival, courage, and the eternal battle between good and evil, but in different ways. The same symbols of the thunderbird, snakes, and clubs are used to demonstrate the struggles of human beings when they interact with the "bad spirits" or with divinity. The humans do not seem to find their place in the world unless they go on the "warpath," where they imbibe all the powers of the thunderbirds, snakes, and other creatures to help them overpower evil. The two stories have been based on a representation of the same native symbols that portray the battle between good and evil. The Winnebago has a special association with thunderbirds and humans to transform into thunderbirds periodically and then have to choose the warpath to justify their mortal existence by battling evil is the dominant theme across the two Winnebago theories. Whereas the first story takes the tenth brother to be the human who has been thrust into a battle with evil, the second story does so by portraying an orphan who the "bad spirits have abducted".

When the first story begins to narrate the travails of the tenth brother, he is the heroic sibling who avenges his brothers by going on the warpath and fighting the forces of evil with the clubs awarded to him by the thunderbirds. The fact that his nephew is his savior and confidante among the immortal world of thunderbirds assists the tenth brother in imbibing more strength than it would have been possible for a human being. He possesses the power and strength of the

thunderbirds. His travails, while he tries to overcome the brother-in-law who has turned out to be an evil spirit and has killed all his brothers, are symbolic of the battle between good and evil that resides inside human beings. The tenth brother has to overcome the forces of evil that have found their way inside his family. In doing so, he has to rid himself and his family of his sister. The theme of bravery always being rewarded by the divine presence of the Earth Mother remains manifested in the tale and all the experiences of the tenth brother.

The same theme unfolds differently in the second story, where an orphan is abducted by evil spirits only to be helped by the thunderbird he had looked after when the bird was young. The tale of the orphan has been punctuated with the same struggles. These struggles have been depicted as the ones discussed in the former story, except that the orphan does not have to rise to the status of a being who deserves to be helped by divinity due to the travails encountered by the tenth brother. The orphan deserves help because he deserves the virtue of kindness. The thunderbirds assist him, but, like the tenth brother, he has to find his way in the world by being on the warpath, where he uses the same clubs used by the tenth brother to avenge evil and restore good. The second story has the same themes but a different storyline that extols virtues differently than the one appreciated by the first story.

To conclude, the two stories possess the same motifs that are apparent in Winnebago mythology. The enduring themes of divine help for those who dare to be virtuous have been explored in both stories. Also, both tales portray the same struggle of human beings to carve their path through life as they can only be helped by divine beings and imbibe some of their characteristics but not become one of them. The clubs represent strength and knowledge. However, the virtues portrayed by the two protagonists are different as the two tales can be understood to be two different lessons in life and morality.