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The Owens Valley Epics

DONALD BAHR

One of the best-studied, least-discussed texts of Native American oral literature is a long Mojave "epic" taken down from a man named Inyo-kutavere by Alfred Kroeber in 1902 and published in 1951.[1] The Mojaves live along the Colorado River at the border of today's states of Arizona and California. For his publication Kroeber condensed the text from an estimated one hundred thousand Mojave words to about thirty-five thousand words in English. The Mojave language was not recorded. Kroeber entered the story's details as an interpreter translated them for him over the course of six days. (The old man talked, the interpreter translated, the visitor wrote, and the old man talked again.)

The text was published in twenty-nine pages along with forty-eight pages of commentary and twenty-five pages of notes. In 1999, Arthur Hatto, an Englishman and devotee of epics, produced a second book on the text.[2] It is rare for an oral work by a Native American to be accorded one, let alone two, book-length commentaries; it is also rare for any scholar to call a Native American text an epic. The Quiche Maya's *Popul Vuh* has that status, but north of Mexico the only such work that I know of is *The Trickster*, a Winnebago text given and commented on in a book by Paul Radin in 1955.[3] The trickster may be the best-known type of character in Native American literature, thanks partly to Radin. I do not wish to diminish the importance of tricksters but to complement them by taking up this other and hitherto neglected kind of text.[4] We will consider the following: what did epic mean to Kroeber and Hatto; what should we mean by epic, as work and as hero; and how widely spread were works of this kind in traditional Native America? For this article I follow the definition of epic given by Hugh Holman in *Handbook to Literature*: a long narrative poem in elevated style presenting characters of high position in a series of adventures that form an organic whole through their relation to a central character of heroic proportions and through their development of episodes important to the history of a nation or race.[5]

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This article's main contribution to epic studies is to direct attention to the temporal position or zone where epics may be found in the typical Native American mythology, namely the zone that I call "late ancientness." This zone is distinct from what I call "recentness" and also from "early ancientness." I believe that those three zones comprise and structure the narrated past in all traditional Native American cultures. There is typically a gap of unnarrated time between the first two zones and the third one; and the events of the first zone have a quality different from those of the second and third. I call the events of the first zone "edenic" and those of the second two "naturalistic." Briefly, the events of edenic time lack human marriage, procreation, and permanent death, and the events of the later, naturalistic time zones have at least some human marriage, procreation, and death. Epics, then, fall in the naturalistic portion of ancientness. I will illustrate these ideas relative to the Mojave epic and to another body of Native American texts also called epics by their collector. Julian Steward recorded them in 1927 and 1928 from the Owens Valley Paiutes of eastern California.[6] I know of only one other use of the word *epic* by a student of Native American literatures. This is in reference to a Winnebago text called "The Twin Boys" and published by Paul Radin. (Radin did not call *The Trickster* an epic.)[7]

No doubt the number of epics to be found by future scholars will depend on the definition of the genre. In my opinion the value of a Native American people's literature does not depend on the presence of epics in it. Thus, this article will affirm the Mojave text as an epic but will withhold that status from the Paiute nominees, which are excellent in their own way but lack the epic traits of naturalism (a quality I add to those of Holman), organic wholeness, broad scope, and human heroism. I expect that we can find in Native America many texts that are epics except for the naturalistic criterion of having a mortal human hero, and that through this search we will affirm the importance of what I call edenism in Native American mythologies.

EARLY EDENISM AND LATE NATURALISM

The ideas in this section are consistent with those I've stated and developed in earlier papers on Pima, Maricopa, and Yavapai, Aztec, and Huichol mythologies.[8] They are also consistent with what I have learned about other mythologies from books by John Bierhorst and Christopher Vecsey.[9] Those authors do not state these very ideas, but they share my interest in studying myth texts within whole mythologies. The present goal is to apply that interest to Mojave and Paiute mythologies so as to gain insight into what Kroeber and Steward termed those peoples' epics.

Mythologies tell of ancientness, a time separated from recentness by what Jan Vansina, a student of oral histories, called the "floating gap."[10] The earliest, oldest events of recentness are those that stem from the longest known chain of eyewitness testimony, that is, testimony from those who are genealogically known, for example, "from my great-grandmother" (as spoken by an old person). Such histories may not be factually accurate but at least they are attributed to witnesses. Ancientness refers to events older than those

that can be attached to an unbroken chain from an eyewitness; ancientness, too, generally falls into some sort of chronological order.[11] In oral cultures, as Vansina noted, the oldest recentness generally extends back to a bit more than a hundred years before the present.[12] Between that time and the most recent events attributed to ancientness, which Vansina called the time of “origins,” is a gap of unknown, unnarrated duration. Vansina called this a floating gap because it floats like a haze between the farthest temporal reach back from an eyewitness and the farthest reach forward from ancientness. In the typical mythology, ancientness ends as if on the night before the arrival of the whites, which tends to be from four hundred to five hundred years before 2007. Therefore the gap lacks reference to a period of three hundred to four hundred years.

Sometimes Native American peoples organize their accounts of ancientness around the careers of a few individuals who generally are human in appearance. To say that they look human does not mean they are mortal, and it seems they generally are not, or at least if they die they have the power of physical revival. These persons should be called gods. They generally create or cause the origin of the earth, heavens, tribal ancestors (and often the white race, which then leaves to return unheralded during the floating gap), and the institutions of today, that is, of recentness. These gods may not appear in every story, but they appear in many, even if only in minor roles. Their activities, and all activities that involve creation, comprise early ancientness. In addition to the gods there are myriad characters named for today’s natural species (for example, animals, birds), heavenly bodies, and perhaps other elements (for example, fire). Many of these characters exist as persons in the earliest years of narrated time: their creation is not told. What *is* frequently told is how they lost their human attributes in speech and appearance and became fully “natural,” that is, as they are now.

For this article I define the edenic or early ancient period by the following qualities or conditions:[13]

1. Human-appearing men and women do not copulate and rarely cooperate or even meet.
2. Men and women do not produce children together through copulation, pregnancy, and vaginal birth.
3. Women may produce children by copulating with non-human-looking persons (for example, Sun-man).
4. Men or women may produce children by manufacture (for example, by molding mud), by wound (for example, stepping on a thorn), or immaculately (for example, by men ejaculating children or by a surprising emergence from a woman’s thigh).
5. Persons (who can be either human or animal) kill each other.
6. There is no war, but there is murder. There are no public battles but only public gambling contests with death penalties to the losers.
7. Persons die and return to life.

Late ancientness generally begins with the death or departure (to the sky, the underworld, a sacred cave) of the (generally) human-formed creator gods.

The heroes or principal characters of the stories of this period are mortal humans. If they die, they stay dead, except for a spiritual existence in the land of the dead or, possibly, reincarnation. Here, in contrast, are the seven qualities or traits of late ancientness and recentness, which are the qualities of what I term *naturalism*:

1. Men and women meet, cooperate, and copulate (although the last item is not a frequent topic).
2. Men and women produce children through copulation, pregnancy, and vaginal birth.
3. Women do not produce children by copulating with nonhumans.
4. Men and women do not produce children by manufacture, by being wounded, or immaculately.
5. Persons do kill each other.
6. There is war and murder. There are public battles and public gambling (without death to the losers).
7. Persons die and do not return to life.

In this article, then, I use two terms of the Western tradition, *edenism* and *naturalism*, which are not normally used in regards to Native American cultures or literatures. I am not aware that the first of those terms has been used by anyone for comparative purposes. It must be understood that by this term I do not mean a brief time in which a first man and first woman live in paradise under the supervision of a demanding and almighty God; and by the second term I do not mean a time exactly like today and without magic or miracles. By those terms I mean only the traits listed above. It will be seen that the Paiute stories we will consider have many humans-animals and several revivals from death. They are not fully naturalistic by my terms, which is one reason why I consider them not to be epics. The Mojave text may be unusually naturalistic for Native America, and this may partly explain why Kroeber called it an epic (he was not entirely clear or decisive on that). In my opinion the placement of "epic" in the continuum from edenic to naturalism is the principal accomplishment of this article.

THE MOJAVE AND OWENS VALLEY MYTHOLOGIES

Perhaps because of its length the Mojaves called Inyo-kutavere's text a "great telling" or "great tale."[14] Kroeber also called it a clan-migration legend in his tabulation of all the kinds of texts that the Mojaves know.[15] These kinds are classified into two high-order divisions: those that are "dreamed, therefore supernaturally validated" and those that are not. The dreamed stories are divided into those without and those with songs. In the songless division fall the epics, or great tales, and also the stories Kroeber called "true myths," meaning those that tell the origins of the world, sun, stars, plants, and animals. They are the main body of tales of early ancientness, and they meet all of the criteria listed previously for the edenic period. The great tales in contrast meet all of the criteria for naturalistic late ancientness. The latter clearly pertain to a time later than the true myths, for, as Hatto emphasized,

there is a preamble to Inyo-kutavere's telling that connects the text to the time of creations. Hatto calls the time of creations "Pristine" and the time of the great telling "Profane."

The Mojave situation is complicated by the existence of dreamed stories with songs. Kroeber called these "song-cycle narratives." What they say meets the criteria for edenic early ancientness (lack of human procreation and marriage, lack of warfare, presence of murder). In my opinion they are best thought of as branches from the main line of the songless true myths. With them, as I understand it, the dreamer knows a story before dreaming it (this is true of the true myths, too), and he or she not only dreams a reseeing of the ancient events but also hears songs during the dream.[16] These songs are retained and sung at public ceremonies. The true myths are only told at home in a soft, normal voice, without singing.

The last category is of stories that are not dreamed. These, which also lack songs, are of two kinds: "Coyote fables" and "recollections" of recent events. The Coyote stories pertain to ancientness, presumably the early part. Coyote is the Mojave trickster, and these are stories of that nature: short, funny, cruel, and accomplishing nothing of lasting importance. They were told mainly to children or for adult light entertainment.[17] The recollections pertain to recentness and are the stuff of Mojave oral history. (Some, such as Ronald Mason, call all stories about ancientness "oral traditions," which are distinct from oral history because their truth depends on faith, not on a traceable chain from an eyewitness.)[18]

Among the Paiutes Steward found a three-part division of etiological myths, Coyote cycle stories, and epics. These correspond to Kroeber's true myths, Coyote fables, and great tales. Surely there were also counterparts to the Mojave recollections, but Steward's publication does not give these. Steward presents the types in the time sequence given: etiological, Coyote, and epic. The stories come from nine tellers. The highest number of stories from one teller is eight; the lowest number of stories is one. One gave three epics, two gave two epics, and one gave one epic.[19] I believe his type order conforms with the Paiute chronological sequence: the etiological tales treat origins and creations, the Coyote fables are from a time or a context generally without humans and so presumably also from early ancientness, and the epics are from a somewhat later time with marrying humans but also with talking animals and persons who die and come back to life. We will discuss these departures from the ideal for naturalistic late ancientness in a later section.

Finally, and typical with the Paiutes, is the fact that Coyote appears in more than the midchronology trickster stories. Coyote is a character in several Paiute etiological myths and most of the epics. This is also true of Mojave mythology. There is no Coyote in Inyo-kutavere's text, but there are two Coyote brothers in an epic-like Mojave text called "Coyote."[20] We will deal with the epic Paiute Coyotes in the following text, but suffice it to say that Coyote is not only a trickster, nor did Kroeber or Steward say that he is.

EPICS ACCORDING TO KROEBER, STEWARD, HATTO, AND BAHR

Because Kroeber, Steward, and Hatto did not provide a general, comprehensive definition of epic, I will apply to their works the features that Holman outlined as epic—the long narrative poem in elevated style, characters in high positions and of heroic proportions, adventures, organic wholeness, the relation of episodes important to the history of a nation or race. This definition will guide our discussion of the ideas of Kroeber, Steward, and Hatto. Then at the end I will give a revision of Holman for use on the Mojave and Paiute texts and for future studies of additional texts.

The following is the most concise summary available of the Mojave text:

> *In Pristine Time, the Inaugurator-Spirit Mastamho names the Mojave Clans and gives them the Mojave Valley. Later, in Profane Time, while the Mojave are still hunter-gatherers, they left their fertile valley for no reason, wandered into the desert WSW, dispersed, wandered again, in the main SE to where they learnt farming; then, after two abortive attempts by self-reliant Superheroes to expel Intruders from the valley, [they] were successively reunited by the Supreme Hero Hipahipa; who, after a reverse, leads them to the Reconquest at the cost of his life, a Reconquest the Mojave upheld against counterattack.*[21]

Kroeber was not sure if the Mojave text was an epic. He thought the text was unique in Native North America, and he said of it that "the genre it most nearly approaches is the prose epic."[22] He stayed short of the brasher claim ("Here is the one bona fide epic that has been discovered in Native America") by saying that the text approaches rather than attains epic status and by saying—a disqualifier for Holman—the text is in prose and not verse. He then says in effect that the text meets some of Holman's other criteria: "It deals with national affairs, with the travels, wars, and fortunes of aggregations of kindreds over years and decades." This statement qualifies the Mojave text on Holman's "long narrative" as "important to the history of the nation or race." Still lacking, however, are Holman's criteria of "organic whole" and "central character of heroic proportions."

Kroeber offers very interesting ideas on the preceding matters in his chapter 6. Here I will summarize him and infer some ideas he left implicit. He surely felt and stated that Inyo-kutavere's text is uniquely long for an oral text, too long to attain textual organic wholeness by means of a central character. The character Hipahipa is the outstanding hero according to Kroeber (Hatto agrees) and is active in much of the text including its climax. The trouble is that too much of the text does not involve Hipahipa. There is too much traveling around, and the story mentions many heroes and other characters only to drop them. The text sprawls; it is prolix. Therefore it lacks what we could call (Kroeber doesn't) exquisite organicism. As he puts it, "A more refined and skilful narrator might have achieved this cumulative affect [of climax] and still have maintained sharply differentiated characters."[23] Inyo-kutavere was not a good epic poet.[24]

Kroeber gave two explanations for this shortcoming: Inyo-kutavere was an "unvarnished story teller" (128), meaning that he would or could not make

his story exquisite,[25] and the Mojaves were disposed to form prolix stories by their involvement with song-cycle narratives. These contain as many as 150 songs heard while spirits took the dreamer to places where ancient events were presently happening. The songs are not very informative. They are short and dwell on the places where the events are happening. They are like postcard pictures sent from places where someone had a wonderful time. One does not learn from the postcard what the wonderful time was. "I'll tell you later," the card may say; "check into the story," the songs say implicitly. One must know the story before making the Mojave dream trip, or at least one must have heard the story in prose to understand the import of the songs. Accordingly, the spirits do not speak the story, they only sing their allusive postcards, and, of course, the dreamer can *see* the wonderful events.[26]

The Inyo-kutavere epic and most of the rest of the "clan stories" lacked songs. Kroeber thought these texts may have lost them (130) and that their super-long itineraries, large casts of characters, and prolix plots owed their existence to the practice of dreaming long song-filled journeys not just to places of today (the Pimas did that) but to places where ancient events were still current.[27] According to Kroeber, somehow the original simpler forms of these stories were complicated and stretched beyond exquisiteness by being opened to present-time spirit-directed dream revisiting. The Native American norm for prose stories, he says, is shorter and more trim.

> There is a real difference . . . between a deliberately long-range, multi-personal, quasi-historical [late ancientness] epic-type narration of the present type and the normal short animal tale or myth . . . of the American Indians. These last stories are stripped down to essentials in plot and usually in characters. There is no attempt at diversification. They move rapidly. . . . By their form, these "myths" are actually very similar to the European folk or "fairy" tales. . . . Both are—at least usually—free of geographical baggage. The result is that such tales take a fraction of an hour to tell—most often a minor fraction—and fill only a few pages in a book. As with the modern "short story," nothing is left in that is not directly relevant.[28]

Before taking up Hatto, who refers to the text as an epic, let us consider Steward, who states that the Paiutes' epics are their best stories-as-stories *because* they are of the quality and size (about five thousand words) of modern short stories.[29] The longest of them printed out to ten to twelve pages in English (like Kroeber, Steward took them down in that language), far shorter than Inyo-kutavere's text and the length of a short story. He does not say how long it took the narrators to tell them, perhaps an hour or two each. Less the literary critic than Kroeber, Steward does not say much about what makes the stories good; they are long but are still stripped of nonessentials. He states of one that "the plot pivots on the hero's desire to kill the gambler and recover his lost relatives. . . . [It] moves to an intense climax and closes with the defeat of the villain and the restoration" (361). In sum, Steward called these stories epics partly because they are longer than the other Paiute texts and

partly because they retain the spareness or economy that Kroeber actually felt characterized most Native American stories. This does not exhaust Holman's criteria, but it does exhaust Steward's comments.

Returning to the Mojaves, Hatto says, "Kroeber established beyond doubt that old Inyo-kutavere's narrative is a true member of the heroic [Kroeber said 'historical'] epic genre."[30] Unfortunately it seems that Kroeber did not think he had established this. The truth is he disestablished it on the matters of heightened language and organic wholeness. We can dispense with the issue of heightened language, the perception of which is so much in the eye or mind of the beholder.[31] Of course, organic wholeness also is in the mind of the beholder. Hatto attained a clear vision of the structure and theme of Inyo-kutavere's text, and the prolixity that troubled Kroeber seemed incidental once Hatto understood it. For him the theme is heroism; the structure is a series of hero-led attempts to recover the homeland.

Let us start with the structure because it is already stated in Hatto's concise summary: two "abortive" attempts led by superheroes, then in effect two more, both led by the story's supreme hero. The fourth attempt (four being a favored Mojave number) is successful. Hatto provides a diagram of the text's structure, in which there is a line where he places four "Invasions."[32] These are flanked by "Exodus and Dispersal" on the left and "Repulse of Counter-invasion" on the right: balanced and economical, and all but the first portion is about war. Hatto claims that this structure guided Inyo-kutavere. Kroeber presumably either could not see or was not persuaded by this structure, and he does not state that Inyo-kutavere imparted this concept to him.[33]

On the heroic theme we see a further difference between Kroeber and Hatto in the latter's decision to call the Mojave text a "heroic" rather than a "historical" epic. Hatto argues that there is a worldwide genre of heroic epics, of which this text is an example. His emphasis on superheroes and supreme heroes enables him to discern structure in the Mojave text and will help us to understand the Paiute texts.

Making use of an article that H. G. Fathauer published after Kroeber's book, Hatto says in effect that both the superheroes and the supreme heroes partake in a Mojave "warrior (*kwanami*) ethos."[34] The warriors' code to be austere, to scorn women, and to accept death calmly also required them to scorn the collection of firewood on cold days, insist on keeping the door open while a winter guest in someone's house, and kick dirt in a host's clean water supply.[35] Kroeber surely knew about this ethos, but he did not write it into his commentary. We will see something like it in one of the Paiute texts. As one can guess, the *kwanamis* were not altogether sociable or congenial persons. What is interesting is that the supreme hero Hipahipa, a patient and considerate leader, exhibits the positive part of that ethos and something more. This becomes evident when his actions are compared with those of the superheroes.[36] As Hatto sums up, "[he had] personal courage, endurance and fighting ability, coupled with foresight, wisdom, guile, charismatic leadership, unswerving steadfastness of purpose laced with ruthlessness when it has to be, yet with true solicitude for his people . . . [and] shamanic powers" (70). I assume the Mojave language has a word other than *kwanami* for this

"leaderly" ethos, but neither Kroeber nor Hatto mention it. We will find this kind of character in the Paiute texts but in a story different from those with the *kwanami*-like character.

To conclude, here is my definition of epic, applied below and recommended for use in further studies on Native America: any long, organically whole, naturalistic story of broad scope and with a mortal human hero or heroes.

SOURCES OF THE PAIUTE TEXTS

Steward collected forty-three texts from nine narrators. For two narrators, Jack Stewart and Mose Wayland, both of whom told some epics, he used an interpreter. The rest must have told him their stories in English. Of the eleven texts he classified as epics, three are shorter than average. Called "Nunumic the Giant" (two versions) and "Moon and His Dog" (one version), they tell how a small person defeats a larger one. Because of their brevity I will not discuss them. The remaining eight come in three pairs of the same story as told by different narrators—we will examine the longer version of each pair and an additional story told by just one person along with its short sequel. Thus, we have five texts to consider, one from each pair and the two additional ones. The five are from two narrators, Jack Stewart and George Collins, both of Big Pine, California. Collins interpreted for Stewart and told his own stories in English. Each told a goodly but not immense number of stories (Stewart told six, and Collins told five), mainly of the etiological and epic divisions. I assume that each could have told more, especially Coyote stories, which are underrepresented in their contributions (none from Stewart, one from Collins).

SYNOPSES OF THE PAIUTE TEXTS

I have condensed the texts for two reasons: to place them economically into this article and as a means to learn them myself. They are condensed to about a tenth to a third of their published lengths. I wish for them to be read because, like thousands of other texts, they exist now in solitude in the bound periodicals of university libraries. They need human attention. (Even Kroeber for some unaccountable reason did not acknowledge these Paiute texts when he surveyed the range of North American texts that merited the term, or had been called, epic.)[37] The reason for the variance in the length of the condensations is that some stories have more episodes than others and especially more episodes that are causally connected to each other (because *this* happened then *that* could happen). The reason I wanted to learn them is that I think that a region's different stories are knowingly different (to me the Mojaves and Paiutes are of the same region) so that they "play off from" each other's details.[38] Stories exist in communities of stories. They are social not just in the sense that a person tells one story to another but also in the sense that neighboring tribes deliberately make their stories to be different from each other. To understand the stories properly one should compile a

community of them into memory so one can mull them over and switch from one story to another, from this detail to that. Because the Mojaves and Paiutes learned the stories by memory, so should we. If we don't learn them perfectly then we should learn them at least well enough to switch mentally from one to another and be motivated to return to the written text when memory fails. Then we will have in our mind a key ingredient for forming and having stories at all: knowledge of other echoing stories.

My condensations are less distilled than the one of Hatto, which has the special virtue of stating in few words the abstracted parts of the story (four invasions with something before and something after). My condensations leave fewer things out. They are better referred to as summaries or condensations, rather than as structural abstracts. Here, however, are my briefest possible encapsulations of them, shorter than Hatto's abstract and not purporting to show parts.

Story 28: An aggrieved son defeats and kills his father's killer.
Story 29: The son of story 28 gets his wife back from abductors by stealth.
Story 30: Two brothers travel edenically (not marrying, not having sex) and part company.
Story 32: The whole animal universe runs a race.
Story 34: A war takes place over women.

Story 28: "Tuhukini and the Gambler"
By Jack Stewart, nine pages as published.

A boy living with his mother and wife finds a hoop and pole for gambling and some war implements in the house. The mother first claims these as hers, then admits they belong to his father and uncles, now maimed and kept prisoner by a distant gambler named Kiaonu. The boy makes white egg-shaped balls with which to race with the gambler. He hangs his flute and eagle feathers in the house to serve as signs of his life (if they fall, he has died).

He and his wife set out westward for the gambler. They stop each night to collect various animal assistants. The last warns him to refuse any food and comforts offered by the gambler.

The boy arrives at the gambler. They exchange insincere kind words. The gambler tries and fails to stab him. The boy secretly disposes of the gambler's served food and refuses to sleep with his daughter. The boy's captive animal relatives help keep him alert. At daylight he eats with them and goes to his rival.

The two will run a bat and ball race. The gambler offers the boy a hard-to-see black ball. The boy replaces it with his white ball that will dazzle the gambler. The boy's wife, and a frog, and the wife of the gambler sit by a fire. The frog cools the boy's wife with water, the gambler's wife suffers.

Early in the race the boy cannot hit his ball well, so he lags. One of the boy's helpers improves the lay of the ground for his champion, who gains. Other helpers make holes to slow the gambler who curses them. The boy gains, his rival weakens.

The boy's wife by the fire endures better than her rival, and the boy wins the race. He gets his wife from the fireside and orders the other's wife to be kicked into the fire. The gambler admits defeat, promises to give up his property, and begs to be spared. The boy throws him in the fire.

The boy restores the claws and eyes of his maimed uncles, Bear and Crow. [Nothing is said about his captured father.] They chase and kill the gambler's followers. The boy announces that henceforth the world will be ruled correctly. The winners go home. On the way he fools his mother by causing the life signs to fall. He arrives as she wails and she says, "I am glad my son is a great man, the conqueror of all the world."

Story 29: "How Tuhukini Recovered His Wife"
By Jack Stewart, one page as published.

The boy and his wife and the community live well until the wife is abducted while gathering seeds. The boy learns from his pet hornet that she is in the sky with a group of men. He goes to the sky and disguises himself as an old man. He finds her in a house with two men who lie on her hair so she can't flee. The boy enters the house, sits in a corner, and puts the men to sleep by singing to the sounds of a deer-ear rattle. He frees her hair one strand at a time without waking the men, and the couple return to their country.

Story 30: "Hainanu"
By George Collins, twelve pages as published.

Two brothers, Hai[nanu] and Pa[makwaju] live with their mother who is married to the brother of Rattlesnake. Hai is short; Pa is tall. The brothers go on evenings to hear Rattlesnake's stories. Rattlesnake demands endless payments in seed cakes made by the mother. These he stores uneaten.

The mother goes with the boys to complain to Rattlesnake who imprisons her in his house, the boys remaining outside. Concerned about her, they climb on the roof. Hai drops a louse from Pa's head on the roof and, trying to find it he makes a hole in the roof through which he sees the houseful of snakes. Among them are a baby human boy and girl.

The boys take the babies and set fire to the house. They kill all of the fleeing snakes except one whom they can't catch. Pa says, "You will be a snake in the world." [Nothing is said about the mother who must have died in the fire.] The babies are a brother and sister for Hai and Pa, but they can only keep one. Hai wants the brother and Pa the sister. They note that they already have each other for brothers while a sister could get them a brother-in-law. They don't agree and settle on a race. Whoever wins will push his choice into the fire. Pa wins, the little brother is killed. Hai cries and leaves but returns.

The brothers go hunt for rabbits. Hai carries the sister on his back to free the larger Pa for hunting. She wets on his back. He leaves her. The brother returns and sends Hai back to her with meat. Hai leaves but eats it himself. After some tries he reaches her spot with the meat, but she is gone. He tracks her and notes she is becoming a good walker. At nightfall he returns and reports to his brother. Next day they follow her and see that she is now good at basketry. Pa claims the baskets. Hai cries and they go on.

They reach a big rock with tracks around but not from it. They hear sounds of basket-making inside. Pa orders Hai to open the rock with a deer horn. He does. Inside is a beautiful woman with many baskets. Hai takes the best. The woman says no, this is for my brother. Hai cries. The three make peace and go on. They come to some peoples' camp. Pa tells his sister not to serve him food in the camp, he wants a local girl to do that. No girl does. Next morning the sister serves him with her basket. The brothers scold her and leave without her.

They go north to visit relatives. They come to men digging for nuts buried by gophers. Hai goes to the men, Pa tells him to be nice. He beats them and spoils their work. They reach people playing the hoop and pole game. Hai butts in, plays the game perfectly, then breaks the peoples' hoop and chases them with the pole. He rejoins his brother and says nothing but the other knows.

They reach some women gathering seeds. Hai goes to them. At first he is nice, then he breaks the baskets and hits the women. He returns to his brother and lies again. They reach a lake. Hai wants to go see it, Pa warns him it is dangerous. Pa says not to laugh or throw dirt in the water. He goes and laughs and throws dirt. The water rises and chases him uphill. To escape he jumps through a hole in the sky. The lake calms. Hai climbs down to earth on a spider web. He taunts the water that it will become a normal lake.

Hai goes alone to a bear, his aunt. She is hunting for acorns and her children play by a tree. Hai bends a tree, the children get on, and he catapults them. They break all their bones. He kills rabbits. He puts the children in a roasting pit with the rabbits on top, roasts everything, and leaves. The mother comes, finds the children, and blames Hai. She pursues him.

Hai boasts that she won't catch him. He comes to a house with two old rattlesnake-men, his grandfathers. They leave the house to get food for him, he goes inside and spoils their nets. He leaves, they return, and they pursue him. One bites and kills him. Pa, nearby, is not surprised. He sings, it rains, and Hai revives. Pa points out that Hai has been bad contrary to instructions.

The two go to the ocean. Pa tells Hai to wait as he enters the ocean for meat. The ocean rises and Hai flees to the other side of the sky. Pa returns with meat and finds Hai missing. Pa asks Hawk if he has seen him. Hawk has seen someone near the sun shading himself with an arrow feather. Pa asks Hawk to go and tell him that all is well. Hai descends from the sky. Pa recognizes the whistling but he falsely cries and says the whistling is only like his brother and is not he. Hai returns, Pa offers him meat.

Pa sleeps. The meat disappears as Hai looks away while roasting it. He discovers that Rainbow takes the meat in such moments. Rainbow chases Hai who cannot awaken his brother for help. Rainbow eats Hai.

Pa wakes and cannot find Hai or the meat. He sees Rainbow above near the sun. He shoots at Rainbow but the sun's heat destroys the arrows. He sees bits of Hai in Rainbow's teeth, gets a piece, puts it in a basket, covers it with oil and deer grease, and cries near it through the night.

Next morning he hears Hai whistling. He doubts it is Hai, but Hai comes to him. Hai is angry despite all his brother has done for him. He says Pa's time will come. They go hunting, Hai now being fully grown. Hai chases the meat. One night he doesn't return. In the night Pa sees a distant light. Next morning he finds a camp with much meat and a fresh fire. He waits for Hai and sees another distant light, next day the same travel and discovery. Pa is now old. He cries and sings and sees another distant light.

Hai is angry because his brother did not save him from Rainbow. He leads Pa to another distant place where Pa stops and says that if Hai is like this, he can just be a mountain man.

Pa forgets his brother. He comes to a place with a woman and her daughters. He gives them deerskins and makes dresses for them, then he goes away crying to a spring where the daughters also come, for water.

There are actually two camps with girls, one of Coyote and one of Coyote's sister, Snow-bird. Coyote's daughters see Pa at the spring and say he is old and tear-marked. Pa sings that they should come and wash him since he cries for his brother, now a wild man. The girls beat and spit on him and make fun.

At home they tell their father that a disgusting man wants to be their husband. Coyote says the man is Pa, his son-in-law who lost his brother and has brought them beautiful dresses. He sends them back to Pa. Meanwhile Snow-bird's daughters have gone to the spring and have heard the same things from Pa. They wash him and he becomes beautiful. He gives them dresses (source of the snow-bird's whiteness).

Coyote's girls discover the truth.

Pa walks to the settlement as if going to Coyote's place. Coyote dresses to receive him, but Pa goes to Snow-bird's place. He asks them to borrow a bow and arrows from Coyote so he can get meat for them. They do. Coyote is angry but he agrees to go hunting with Pa. They come to a cliff where Coyote pushes Pa off. He lands on a safe sandy place. Coyote goes home and announces the accidental death of Pa. Everyone cries.

The sandy place is elevated. Bat carries him down. Pa tells him to tell Snow-bird but not Coyote that he is alive. She should come for him with her basket. She does. He rides back with the firewood she has gathered. Coyote notices the woman is gentle with the wood. His daughter goes and finds Pa. She tells Coyote. He lies that a rock, not he, knocked Pa from the cliff. Pa knows better. [Nothing is said about what he does to Coyote.] He stays there until everyone is old. They say good-bye and become animals. Hai remains in the mountains, a master of deer.

Story 32: "Race to Koso Springs"

By George Collins, six pages as published.

In a large community of "Indians" [or pre-Indians] Wolf and Coyote are rivals. They decide to run a race. Each "bird and animal and insect" would pick one leader to run with. The last to choose, Mallard, announces for Wolf then changes for Coyote.

At the start Wolf puts Coyote to sleep. His team starts and only Frog remains to wake him. Coyote runs and comes to Beetle who inopportunely carries arrow canes. Coyote tells him to drop them. Coyote reaches some other bad looking animals, all the good ones being on the other side. Coyote gains but Wolf puts him to sleep. Frog comes and jumps over him, wetting him awake. Frog jumps again and passes all the runners. She lands at Koso Springs. Coyote comes next.

It is agreed that the losers will be thrown in a fire. They go for Bear who sleeps in a cave. Coyote lies to him that he has lost and Bear should throw him in the fire. Bear comes and Coyote throws her in.

He throws Wolf in the fire. He starts to throw Sun, but it rains. Everyone builds a house for shelter. Coyote lays a string from the fire to the house so he can find his way back after killing Sun. The others are angry and change the string.

Coyote kills Sun in the fire, then it rains hard. He follows the string to a bush it is tied to. The people remain quiet so he cannot find them. He wanders howling for a year. The people hear him and Duck recommends that they call for him. They do, and Coyote enters the house.

The people tell him to stay in a corner. He says that being the leader he should stay in the center. He sends two night-traveling rodents to check the world for edible greens. One returns and says there are berries.

Coyote asks Mallard and Goose to make daylight. They say they can't but eventually they sing and a small light appears. Then Coyote sings to strengthen it and the light disappears. Mallard tries again and daylight comes. Everything outside is green. "Coyote ordered everybody to be so-and-so. Squirrel was to eat nuts; . . . [a gopher] was to eat grass and flowers; Goose and Mallard were to live in the water. All the animals were to live where they were ordered."

Story 34: "Wolf and Roadrunner"
By Jack Stewart, five pages as published.

Wolf is a powerful unkillable medicine man who can revive the dead. His younger brother Roadrunner lives with him. Elsewhere lives a powerful woman Tarani and her daughters. One of them is promised to Roadrunner, but Wolf also wants her. He takes his men to Tarani's place with meat and mountain sheep skins. He has imprisoned Roadrunner at home in a flute placed in a wooden cache. He orders his sister, also left behind, not to touch the cache or flute.

Near Tarani's camp is a house. Wolf and his men pass into it unseen through Wolf's [other] flute. Within her own house Tarani feels something "heavy" and sends her daughter to check the other house. The daughter peeps and sees Wolf and others, including Coyote. Wolf asks her to bring water from her home. She returns and tells that to her mother who tells her to take dirty, poisonous water. Wolf throws this away and asks for good water. The girl gets this. Although the cup is not large, it magically refills so each of the party drinks his fill. She returns home with it still full.

At night Tarani sends all of her daughters to the house. There are girls for each man [although Wolf is not mentioned] except Coyote. Then comes an old woman who is actually the one desired by Wolf. She goes to Coyote who refuses her. She limps from the house. Outside she becomes young and runs around the house.

Thinking she is the good one, Coyote goes outside to look for her. He comes to an old woman who will not tell where the young one is. He spits and throws dirt on her. This woman is Aidukana, the mother of men from another place who are married to the girls. She says her sons will kill this party for stealing their wives. They are now hunting and their leader is Puinanuina, a man as powerful as Wolf.

Aidukana goes to her sons and tells them to prepare to fight. She too will fight to kill Coyote. Her son agrees. The fighters approach and Wolf hangs his skin over the house door to show the enemies he is there. The raiders shoot into the coat. Wolf brings it in and gives the arrows to his men. He sticks his flute through the back of the house and a hill. He and his men pass through that.

The battle begins behind the hill. Coyote and Aidukana shoot at each other. Coyote dodges her arrows to the left, then decides to dodge to the right and is killed, the first death. One of Wolf's men kills Aidukana. Soon all but Wolf and Puinanuina are killed. Pui says that since their arrows are gone they must try something else. Wolf says they should jump through a hole, and whoever gets stuck will be killed by the other. Wolf jumps through and evades the other, but the other gets stuck and is killed. Wolf cuts off his head and scalps it.

Wolf plans to go where the girls are and settle down with Tarani's daughter. He kills a deer and sends the girl's mother for it. The old woman, who is also a whirlwind, is angry that Wolf would take the girl whom she intends for Roadrunner. Since she is fast, Wolf has little time to find and get the girl. He finds her in a basket buried by the

fireplace. She laughs at him so he cuts her throat and drags her body away. He hangs his coat on the door so it will seem that he is there, and he leaves.

Tarani reaches the house, sees the coat, then finds her dead daughter. She throws a sharp deadly disc at the coat, finds it is not actually Wolf, and hurries in pursuit. Wolf goes to the dead warriors and revives them. He warns them to hurry lest Tarani kill them. She kills them, but Wolf escapes. He heads home. His sister has disobeyed his orders by getting the flute with Roadrunner inside. She finds a small worm in it. The worm grows into a human male baby. The woman thinks it may be her brother but she wishes to marry it when it grows. It grows, they marry, and they have a son.

Wolf is nearly home with Tarani in pursuit. Roadrunner [somehow also present] tells his son [newly married] to listen for the arrival of his "father's [Roadrunner's] brother." The boy's mother [also wife and actually aunt] says to go listen for his mother's brother [which is correct, but so is the first, if the worm is the son of and is not actually the same as Roadrunner]. The boy is confused.

The boy goes where Roadrunner has said. He hears Wolf's voice telling him to make a house with a hole in the roof. The boy and his father Roadrunner make the house, with rocks all round the bottom. Wolf arrives chased by Tarani. Wolf tells the brother and child to take shelter inside, then Wolf jumps inside through the hole. Tarani also jumps but she cannot pass through.

She asks to be released and for those inside to give her a piece of Wolf's liver. Roadrunner, his son [the ex-worm] and Roadrunner's old mother heat rocks and throw them out. Tarani eats the rocks and dies.

Wolf calls the young man his brother's son, settling the issue. Wolf returns to the dead warriors and revives them. Wolf and the warriors start eastward, leaving meat that they kill along the way. Roadrunner, who remains, goes each day to find and retrieve the meat until the journey becomes too great. The people grow old and become more like animals than like humans: Hawk, Coyote, Wolf, and others. [It is not said what happened to Roadrunner.] Wolf goes to the shore of the great ocean to wander and howl in his loneliness.

AN INITIAL COMMENT

These stories are difficult to like for two reasons: they seem heartless, and the heroes of two of them seem to forget partway through what set them in motion in the first place. The first difficulty stems from the killings in all of the stories. The second difficulty is in two stories: the victorious Tuhukini's failure to think of his father in story 28, and Wolf's cutting the throat of the woman he wanted to marry in story 34. These "forgettings" can also be seen as instances of heartlessness, so my two objections reduce to one. I count the unjustified, uncommented-upon forgettings as defects on the epic criterion of organic wholeness.

CRITERION FOR EPIC: ORGANIC WHOLENESS

In the section on defining epics we noted that the Mojave text has an elegant structure of supreme heroes and superheroes according to Hatto, but there are so many additional characters and so much traveling and palavering that

Kroeber pronounced the text inexquisitely (as I put it) prolix. To pick another word, the text is overfull. Inyo-kutavere had a structured vision, but he heaped his text with extras. Still, a major critical accomplishment of Kroeber and Hatto is to perceive in that oversupply of characters, "whose names are not only strange but long," a structure of emigration and militant migrations. Each author assigns a long chapter to stating and relating the careers, personalities, and "biographies" of the main characters, men and women, Mojaves and non-Mojaves.[39] These chapters are rarely equaled in keenness and thoroughness in any commentaries on Native American literature.

Kroeber made a table to show how Inyo-kutavere deployed his seventeen main characters through the text's 197 episodes.[40] It emerges that two pairs of characters, named Umase'aka (a Hatto superhero) and Nyitse-vile-vava-kwilyeha (superhero and Mojave enemy) and Mathkwem-kwapaiva (hero) and Hipahipa (supreme hero) occur in most of the episodes and connect as follows: Umase'aka and Nyitse-vile-vava-kwilyeha, who belong to different groups, become friends, then become enemies who tear off and swallow each other's nose pendants (small objects hung from the nose septum), and then fall dead—this in the second abortive Mojave attempt to regain their valley. Hipahipa and Mathkwem-kwapaiva participate in the third and fourth invasions (Hipahipa leading). After the third attack Mathkwem-kwapaiva, riddled with enemy arrows, dies in Hipahipa's arms. Previously Mathkwem-kwapaiva had lost his wife to a seducer, and Hipahipa restored her to him; for this the wife bit off and swallowed Hipahipa's nose pendant. Hipahipa dies much later from wounds incurred in the successful fourth invasion, but Hatto speculates that his death is actually the delayed consequence of his pendant being swallowed.[41] Complicating the text's design is a cleavage between the first and the second of those pairs. They never meet face to face, and the first two are actually dead before the second two enter the story. It is as if the story has two halves, each with a peak (or, as Hatto says, an "epic moment"), the first half culminating in the deaths of the first hero pair, and the second half concerned with the deaths of the second hero pair.[42] Neither Kroeber nor Hatto discusses this cleavage. Perhaps they both saw it, but Kroeber thought it was part of the text's general prolix nature while Hatto felt it did not detract from the structure of the invasions. I agree with Hatto but note that the cleavage is important for setting this text apart from the Paiute texts and from the typical short story. Those normally keep the same central character in view from beginning to end. Conceivably the Mojave could have had four invasions led by the same hero, but this would have made the story less vast. Therefore the cleavage is a positive feature for vastness (a criterion for epic).

The four heroes, and the thirteen more that Kroeber tabulated, comprise a Mojave hall of fame, or better, a *certain* Mohave's Mohave hall of fame. All of the characters are mortal humans. Kroeber and Hatto did not say this in so many words, perhaps because it seemed obvious to them, but I believe that Inyo-kutavere must have made his text so complex because he wanted his tribe to know all of these people of whom he had dreamed. When Kroeber compared this text to similar ones of other peoples,[43] for example texts of the Hopis and the Northwest Coast peoples, he did not say whether any other

single narrator produced a text with as many characters as Inyo-kutavere. If they did not, this may be the preeminent Native American national epic, or, let us say, the preeminent one with no gods (except in the preamble) and a multistage, multihero conquest.

The Paiute stories have fewer characters collectively and far fewer in each story. I will defer to the section on naturalism, a discussion of how most of the Paiute characters are humans-animals. Here we note that these stories are true to Steward's designation of the texts as short-story-like. They have central characters, and they keep them in view from beginning to end. The most complex cast of characters is in Wolf and Roadrunner: those two plus their sister (unnamed); Tarani, a human woman; Tarani's daughter, unmarried and intended for Roadrunner but desired by Wolf; Coyote (Wolf's companion in wife-seeking and war); Aidukana, a human woman who makes war like a man and can revive the dead; and Puinanuina, Aidukana's son. I think this text is exploded from the other stories' simple, spare design. The explosion has three aspects. First, one of the brothers, Roadrunner, is held inactive throughout the first half of the story, being replaced by Coyote, who is not said to be a brother. Second, the mother-in-law-to-be Tarani is "double crossed" by Wolf (she intends to have Roadrunner as son-in-law), and then she double crosses herself in effect by marrying many of her daughters, perhaps including Roadrunner's intended, into another band headed by the woman Aidukana. Third, Wolf and Roadrunner have a sister with no name, and I think I can explain the lack. No animal species name is suitable for her (whose brothers are of different species), and a human-style name like Tarani and Aidukana is inappropriate because she has animal brothers.[44] Also, as we know, she marries a worm who is ambiguously the same person and the creation of her brother Roadrunner. Best to leave her unnamed!

Why is the text so complex? I can say what is distinct about it: the splitting of a brother into Coyote and Wolf and of the mother-in-law into Tarani and Aidukana. (I leave the third complication, the worm marrying the sister, alone.) We can see what the story gains by the splits. It gains troubles, resentments, and grievances—for Roadrunner, for imprisonment and for being "horned in on" by Wolf; and for society, we may say, for Tarani's "double cross" in marital promises. I cannot say why the Paiutes told exactly those things. I note, however, that they are all about marriage. Thus, why were these characters split? I believe the splits were for the sake of telling something scandalous, at least abnormal, about marriages.

The other stories keep their prime persons or pairs together. The simplest are the characters in the Tuhukini texts. A boy defeats a gambler to avenge his father's disappearance—and yet, perversely, he does not regain or even remember his father after the victory (the father is dropped from the story)—and then the boy rescues his wife. The "Race to Koso Springs" retains its protagonist Coyote throughout but passes him through two sequences, the first with a race to decide who will survive and the second to solve the problem of a leader who has killed the sun. Finally, Hainanu has a complexity of character second only to Wolf and Roadrunner, but the story achieves this without splitting its two heroes, Hainanu and Pamakwaju. Again the complexities are

marital. The boys' mother has a child from her husband's brother. The boys burn the mother and save the daughter whom they eventually abandon at a camp where the older brother hopes but fails to get a wife. Then near the end, the older brother, now alone, decides to get a wife from a family he does not prefer, is almost killed by the father of the girl he had first preferred, and then kills that man (Coyote) with the help of his mother-in-law. The survivors grow old and become normal animals. Also brought into this story, as interesting minor characters, are the father of the boys' half-sister, the half-sister, the mother-in-law, and the spurned father-in-law of one of the boys. Of course, there are interesting additional characters in the other stories. Foremost among them is Kiaonu, the villain who is undone by Tuhukini in story 28. Steward praised this story above all others for the narrator's "consummate skill" and for the story's broad distribution among the Great Basin peoples.[45] I say it is a bright profamily story, and I admit to preferring the darker ones whose characters are more of a puzzle.

I conclude on organic wholes that the Mojave text with its structured vastness merits the term *epic*.[46] On this point of view, the prolixity that Kroeber objected to is actually a virtue. Regarding the Paiute texts, we see the known virtues of well-formed short stories. These texts succeed on the epic criterion of wholeness, but they will fail on the criterion of scope.

CRITERION FOR EPIC: NATURALISM

As a strong clue to the importance of the Mojave text's naturalism, Kroeber entitled his book *A Mojave Historical Epic*. Hatto disapproved of this and retitled his own book on the same text *The Mojave Heroic Epic of Inyo-kutavere* (11–12). Here is what Kroeber meant by the word *historical*, which is rather the same thing as what I mean by *naturalistic*:

> [The text] has "historical" appearance in that it might actually have happened almost as told. There is no magical or supernatural ingredient in the tale, beyond such occasional deeds as the Mojave believed living members of their tribe were able to perform or experience: sorcery, charming, omens. . . . The story is therefore factually sober. As regards its content and form, it might well be history.
>
> At the same time there is nothing to show that any of the events told of did happen, or that any of the numerous personages named ever existed. . . . In short the story is a pseudohistory. . . . It is also a secular epic: it contains neither mythology [edenic creations] nor ritual elements, just as it is without a trace of metrical or other formally stylized language.[47]

The text is naturalistic by all seven of the criteria I listed above. There must be similarly historicist/naturalist texts elsewhere in Native America. A good question about them will be: if they exist, what else besides war are they about? If they are mainly about war, and because war is a favored topic for epics, this bends Native American late ancient naturalism toward that epic subject matter.[48]

The Paiute texts are less naturalistic or, as Kroeber put it, less historical appearing than the Mojave one. The Paiute texts are inclined to edenism, albeit an eden with war. In story 32 all the characters are humans-animals, and in that story the Sun-man is killed but eventually made to shine again. The same happens to several characters in story 30. (There are no revivals in the Mojave text.) There is gambling to death in the Paiute stories 28 and 30. In the Mojave text the superhero Nyitse-vile-vava-kwilyeha becomes addicted to gambling. He loses for a last time and is scalped but not killed. After a period of isolation he returns to become a champion enemy of the Mojaves, and he dies in battle. I believe his career is typical: in early ancientness there is little or no war and much gambling to death; in late ancientness it should be the reverse. This hero dies, as he should under naturalism.

The first four of my criteria on naturalism concern sex, reproduction, marriage, and creation. Let us take up the last point first. No persons or objects are created or originated in any of the late ancient stories with which we are concerned. To be sure, there is ample creation, as there should be, in the Mojave true myths and the Paiute etiological myths. The nearest instances of this in our stories are all Paiute: Roadrunner either turns into or engenders a worm in story 34, and Coyote gets the killed sun to revive in story 32.

Not much is mentioned regarding men and women together in our stories. One marriage occurs near the end of the Mojave text: after the Mojaves have reconquered their land, a Mojave woman marries a man from the people whom the Mojaves have driven out. She goes to live with her husband. They have a boy child. The woman's father goes to visit them and is killed by the enemy people on his way home. The same people are later defeated while trying to invade the Mojaves. Nothing is said regarding the fate or role of the boy child who is the end of the sole genealogy that runs for three generations in the Mojave text (episodes 180–92). There is also one marital abandonment and attempted remarriage. A man courts a woman over the course of two afternoons as she gathers seeds, and on the third day she says yes to starting a new marriage.

> In the morning all got up and the women went to gather again. This woman went to gather, too. She said: "I am still sick, but I think I shall be able to gather seeds for mush to eat; I will not stay home." So she went off with the other women, but hid, and ran off from them, and went back to the same place as before. There she met Put-mark-around-the-neck the third time; he had four jackrabbits with him; and they did the same way [made love]. Then he said: "What will you do now?" She said, "I want to go back." But he said, "No, no. I am your husband now. Did you not take off your clothes, and I saw you, privates and all? When a man does that to a woman, she is married to him. And you know I am a man and not a bird. I will take you to my house. I want you to come with me." It was midafternoon; then he took her with him. (92)

The preceding is an entire episode, number 105 in Kroeber's rendition. The woman's story occupies three additional episodes, two before and

one after, probably the longest string of episodes centered on a woman. (In episode 107, the supreme hero Hipahipa restores the wife to her husband.) In Kroeber's judgment neither she nor any other woman is heroic because "[no woman] motivates action for more than the most passing [string of] episode[s]" (126). He treats the woman as an adjunct to her heroic husband Mathkwem-kwapaiva "who has not only a wife but two children, yet he loses all: the daughter by marriage, the son by witchcraft, the wife by adultery and elopement, though Hipahipa recovers her for him" (127). Hatto, however, finds the woman sympathetic in her own right: "reduced to gathering seeds as a result of his [her husband's] high policies [to Hatto the husband is a kind of hero rarely found in epics: one who is gentle and just (85–86)], and *very hungry*, she meets a *successful* man on equal terms for the first time, [that is, she] chances on a hunter with abundant meat who finds her desirable to the point of offering marriage" (90, emphasis in original)—and she consents. She receives more comment from Hatto than any other woman, which is to say that for him and for Kroeber, and for me, women are actually *not* prominent in the Mojave text. And about this woman I must say that Inyo-kutavere did not even say her name. (Hatto notes this fact, 89.) She is "Mathkwem-k's wife," period. The husband is named, the seducer is named, and she is not.

On the Paiute side, story 28 has a wife stand by her husband, and the sequel, story 29, has him rescue her from abductors in the sky. In story 30, one brother marries in a way that annoys Coyote, but except for an initial fracas nothing is said of what became of the marriage. In story 34, Wolf unaccountably kills the woman he had wanted to marry.

When I say that both the Mojave and Paiute texts treat sex and marriage naturalistically, I do not mean that their accounts on these topics represent Mojave or Paiute aspirations. *Naturalism* to me means "not edenic," it does not mean "like today's normal life." It must be remembered that these are stories of ancientness, not accounts of present social practice. Ancientness for Native Americans, I suggest, is similar to fiction for modern peoples. The old-time Native Americans did not think of their stories as "made up" and, therefore, as not really true, which is what I take works of fiction to be. But, like some Western fiction, the Native stories were not taken as exemplary of good social practice. They were, I suggest, taken to be slightly terrible, more or less like an album of old family pictures that one would actually prefer that strangers not see: somewhat secret, somewhat upsetting, and slightly scandalous mementos.[49] I say this in particular about the Paiute stories. The Mojave one seems more respectable, which may actually be the exception rather than the rule for Native American stories on ancientness. The norm for ancientness is more like the novels of William Faulkner than like, for instance, John Bunyan's *A Pilgrim's Progress.* That is, they are more dark than uplifting.

I judge the Mojave text to be sufficient and the Paiute texts to be insufficient to qualify as naturalistic. It will be important for future studies to consider the role of this naturalism in the definition of epic and in the tendency or "grain" of traditional Native American literatures. I know too little about epics to answer the question on that genre. Regarding the "grain" question, I think edenism is the main tendency of these literatures, and it will be recalled that

naturalism to me is simply the point-for-point negation of edenism. We do not know enough yet about the frequency and concerns of the naturalistic stories to define this tendency in a positive manner, that is, as inspired by or in pursuit of some positive vision. "Leaving Eden (as a condition of life)" is not the same thing as "going somewhere (in particular)."

CRITERION FOR EPIC: SCOPE

The most basic qualifications to be an epic are that a text is a narrative, that is, it tells a story of interconnected events in time, and that, in the ordering of Holman's definition, the story be long, which I would say is not only a matter of word count but also of its scope in time and number of characters. Granted, scope alone does not make an epic, but too narrow a scope may disqualify a text. I mention this because the Paiute texts are much narrower in scope than the Mojave one, and on that basis I would not call them epics.

Kroeber noted that the Mojave text is unusual among Native American texts north of Mexico in noting the passage of years. Inyo-kutavere was a rare Native American year-telling chronicler of ancient events. As Kroeber said, "this quality of precise internal dating does not occur in the legends or folklore of any tribe north of the Rio Grande" (110). I agree, if we limit the discussion to tellings of ancientness. The Pimas and a few other peoples made "calendar" annals of their recent past, back to about a hundred years before the present. For these they carved year marks and event symbols in wood or painted them on skin.[50]

The individual Paiute stories on ancientness cover much less time than the Mojave chronicle. The old-time Paiutes did not reckon in weeks (they had only days, months, and years), but we who think in weeks would put the time span of their epic stories at a few weeks: the time for a journey to and from a one-day gambling contest in story 28; for retrieving a wife from the sky in story 29; a longer time, perhaps a few months or even a year, for the brothers' trek in story 30 (but afterward there were enough uneventful years for one of the brothers to grow old); for a day's racing and then afterward an untimed period of sunless rain in story 32; and a few weeks or months for the contesting between Wolf, Puinanuina, the latter's mother, and Roadrunner in story 34 (followed by uneventful years in which some of the characters grow old). Discounting the two unnarrated periods of aging, the aggregate of eventful periods might be between two and five years, and, of course, except in stories 28 and 29 there is nothing to suggest that the several stories comprise a connected chronicle. They come from different narrators and might well have run simultaneously. I suggest—do not insist—that to qualify as epic a text should cover (articulate, draw connections between) events more than at least five years. The Paiute stories do not do this, Inyo-kutavere's text does.

Here is Kroeber's summary of the parts and durations of the latter: emigration from the Mojave Valley—six years; Umase'aka's (a hero's) return—two years; Gambler boy episode—unknown duration (the beginning of this substory would run parallel to the time of the previous listed one); Gambler boy's scalping, flight, return, war, and death of Umase'aka—nine

years; the main Mojave body's wandering in the desert and reconquest of the valley—nineteen years; and postconquest episodes—twelve years. The total is forty-eight consecutive years and perhaps more due to the uncertain overlap.

CRITERION FOR EPIC: HEROES

It is tempting to say that an epic must have some certain kind of hero, especially an inspiring one. The farthest I will go is to say that the hero, if there is just one, must be interesting. As hinted earlier, I like the Paiute character Hainanu better than the hero or villain of story 28 even though, perhaps even because, Hainanu seems aimless. Another reason is that he adds depth to the Mojave ideal of heroic warriorhood, and that ideal adds depth to him. The Mojave warriors in life acted nearly as "badly" as Hainanu acts in his story, and Hainanu's actions might strike the Paiutes as how a warrior's manners should be. Of course Hainanu the "warrior" does no useful fighting in his story, and he separates from his brother at the end of the adventure. I take the entire story to be about brothers who do not experience or know normal, good Paiute family life. So it is an edenic story, of life before today's procreation, marriage, and family were established. (Recall that the central part of the story is about Hainanu's uncharitable, warrior-ethic-like visits to his "relatives," meaning, I think, his proto-, edenic-style relatives.)[51]

One more hero requires a mention because he reflects on the leadership ethos of Hipahipa. This is Coyote in the "Race to Koso Springs." He invokes the prerogatives if not the ethos of leadership after he kills the sun. His is the usual Coyote comedy of errors and absurdities: he kills the sun, but he undertakes to restore the light, the latter thanks to Mallard's singing and no thanks to his own. I imagine that the Paiutes knew the same ethos of leadership that Hipahipa represented, only the Paiutes played this ethos through as a Coyote burlesque rather than as a "straight" character like Hipahipa. We cannot call Coyote a trickster in this story, but we can call him a clown, and one for adults, not children. It seems that the Paiutes enjoyed this Coyotism throughout their mythology. It seems certain that they knew of people with haughtier mythologies, if not the Mojaves then *some* neighbors, and that they enjoyed opposing themselves to them. The evidence for this is in their account of their own creation, again by Coyote:

> *The woman, Korawini, lives alone with her mother and goes to visit various camps. She gets men to fall in love with her and leads them to her house to kill them. Only Coyote remains, he being unattractive to her. One day she comes near Coyote who follows her. They reach a lake. She packs him to her house on an island. While riding he "begins to play with" her from the back and she drops him. He turns to a fly and skims on the water and catches some ducks. He and the women feast on them. They put the bones "under the table" and Coyote hears them being crunched. The women have ate their previous husbands in this way, with their toothed vaginas. Coyote makes love with them carefully and survives. He decides to go home. The woman who brought him packs him back to shore. Once there, she feels pain in her belly. She gets Coyote to make a shallow*

> *hole for her to give birth in, then she orders him to bring water. He goes, but plays near the water for some time. He returns and finds she has given birth to people fathered by him and also by her previous husbands. These latter become the neighboring tribes. The poorest-looking remain to become the Owens Valley Paiutes. He announces that they will be the fighting and hunting champions of the world.*[52]

Thus, the other peoples may think they are gifted at fighting (as the Mojave obviously did), but according to their father Coyote, the poor-looking Paiutes can beat all of them. This is parody, the forming of a story by one person to defame a story by another. Coyote the human-animal defames the Mojave supreme hero Hipahipa.

I propose that all of the texts we have considered qualify as epically heroic, all, that is, except the one with an all-animal cast (story 32) and the principal characters, Wolf and Roadrunner, of story 34. In adherence to my earlier definition and to the traditional idea of epics, I limit the class of epic heroes to humans. Granted that human-animal characters are interesting and that Native Americans respect and admire animals, it is worth giving preference to humans just to learn how commonly, or how generally, humans figure centrally into the texts on late ancientness. Of course I say this as an anthropologist, a notoriously anthropocentric science. Thus, I wonder if the old-time Native Americans also privileged humanity.

Here again there is a contrast between the Mojave and Paiute texts. There are not any humans-animals in the Mojave text; there are many in the Paiute ones. My impression is that the Paiute and other Great Basin peoples tended to form their mythologies, including their etiological tales around humans-animals, and their fully human-looking characters were few. Thus, of the eight different etiological stories given by Steward, only two have any human characters. All the rest are humans-animals. It follows that although their epics have humans-animals, these are still more human-centered stories than is the bulk of the Owens Valley mythology.

CONCLUSIONS

This article has dealt with two instances in which Native North American stories were called epics by their collectors, Alfred Kroeber and Julian Steward, one a single long text and in the other a collection of shorter ones. We were concerned with two questions: what is or should be considered an epic in traditional Native American literature, and where can epics be found within the relative chronologies of whole Native American mythologies? I consider the second question to be more important than the first because my definition of epic depends on my assessment of the ordering and content of the whole mythologies. The mythologies, I say, are tellings of an ancientness that divides into two portions, early and late, and those portions have the qualities respectively of edenism and naturalism. Naturalism, along with organic wholeness, scope, and having human heroes comprise my definition for Native American epic.

By that definition the long Mojave text is an epic, and the short Paiute texts are not. I ask for additional students of North American, or New World, mythologies to aid in the search for more epics. This article has brought us to the problem of naturalism. That property as I define it is essential to epic, and it requires mortal human heroes. Thus, epics cannot center on gods (immortals) or on humans-animals. If either or both of those aspects of naturalism are removed, abundant epics will probably be found in Native America. If the requirements are retained, the epics will probably be few. If this is true (and I am not sure that it is), then this is what we have learned: the power or force of what I call edenism in the traditional literatures of Native America.

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NOTES

1. Alfred Kroeber, "A Mojave Historical Epic," *University of California Anthropological Records* 11, no. 2 (1951): i–iv, 71–149.

2. Arthur Hatto, "The Mojave Heroic Epic of Inyo-kutavere," *Folklore Communications* CXXIII, no. 269 (Helsinki, Finland: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1999).

3. Paul Radin, *The Trickster* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955).

4. Not only is the kind of text neglected but also so are the writings about it by Kroeber and Hatto. The evidence for this comes from Hatto who in 1999 found just one review of Kroeber's book, appropriately in *American Anthropologist* (1952) and written by a young specialist on the Mojaves, H. G. Fathauer (54: 546–50). Hatto found only three published citations to the book: an article by Fathauer in 1954, one by another regional specialist in 1953 (Leslie Spier, "Some Observations on Mojave Clans," *Southwest Journal of Anthropology* 9: 324–41), and one by a Russian student of epics in 1963 (E. M. Meletinskij, *Proischozdenie geroiceskogo eposa*, Moscow). The *Journal of American Folklore* noted the receipt of the book but did not review it (Hatto, "Mohave Heroic Epic," 154–55). Hatto came across the book, and Dell Hymes reviewed his book, published in Finland, at length in 2000 ("A Native American Epic," *FF Network* 20: 16–21). In a 2006 book on oral traditions and history, Ronald Mason discussed the Kroeber book and referenced two earlier mentions of it, one by William Sturtevant in 1966 ("Anthropology, History, and Ethnohistory," *Ethnohistory* 13, no. 1: 1–51) and one by Peter Nabokov (*A Forest of Time* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002]). I am not aware of any post-Hymes references to Hatto.

This is how I understand the reception to the two books. In Kroeber's case the reception was slight because the study of Native American literatures had reached a low ebb by 1950 and stayed there until the rise of American "ethnopoetics" led by Hymes, Jerome Rothenberg, Dennis Tedlock, and John Bierhorst beginning in the late 1960s. The ethnopoeticists did not attend to Kroeber until Hatto stimulated Hymes. The fact that between 1954 and 2000 there was silence in America regarding

the text was due, I think, to a puzzlement about "epic" and to a feeling that Kroeber had found a rare, even unique, item. I share the puzzlement and dedicate this article to the proposition that there are many Native American texts on late ancientness that are epiclike in treating humans and war, but there may be few of the scope and with the kind of naturalism of the Mojave work.

5. Hugh Holman, *A Handbook to Literature* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1981), 161.

6. Julian Steward, "Myths of the Owens Valley Paiute," *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* 34, no. 5 (1936): 335–440.

7. Paul Radin, "The Evolution of an American Indian Prose Epic," *Special Publications of the Bollingen Foundation* (Basel, Switzerland: Bollingen, 1954). Besides "The Twin Boys" and *The Trickster*, Radin published three more long Winnebago tales that he called "hero cycles" ("Winnebago Hero Cycles," *Indiana University Publications in Anthropology and Linguistics* [Baltimore, 1945], Memoir 1). From what I understand from part I of "The Twin Boys" publication (there he refers to a part II, but to my knowledge this was not published), he considered this text an epic because its three parts were also told separately, although differently, by the Winnebagos and their neighbors. Here they are creatively formed into one long, interconnected narrative that centers on two boys of human form born of a human woman and fathered by the sun. In my view that paternity makes them edenic, whereas the hero or heroes of an epic should be born of humans. Moreover, they are reincarnated in the second and third parts of the story. Those facts do not totally disqualify them, *The Trickster*, or the other three texts ("Red Horn," "Hare," and "The Twins") from epic status, but for brevity I will not discuss their qualities further.

8. Donald Bahr, "Mythologies Compared: Pima, Maricopa, and Yavapai," *Journal of the Southwest* 40, no. 1 (1998): 25–66; "Temptation and Glory in One Pima and Two Aztec Mythologies," *Journal of the Southwest* 46, no. 4 (2004): 705–61; "La Mitologia Huichola de Juan Real y Robert Zingg," *Dimension Antropologica* 34 (2005): 107–46.

9. John Bierhorst, *The Mythology of North America* (New York: William Morrow, 1985); Christopher Vecsey, *Imagine Ourselves Richly* (New York: Crossroads, 1988).

10. Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

11. Narrators understand that some of their stories refer to events earlier then the events told in other stories. A full telling of ancientness, then, is all of the stories that a given narrator knows, told in the temporal order that the narrator believes is correct for them.

12. Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, 23–32, 116–18.

13. I call this condition or mode of existence edenic because my people call it that. The Bible's story of Eden has just three of my seven traits: two negative ones (Adam and Eve do not copulate and do not produce a child while in Eden) and one positive (God creates Adam and Eve and very much else). In calling this condition edenic, I do not mean that the Bible influenced the Native Americans. Rather, I mean that all peoples, including the ancestors of the Bible or Torah writers, once had some form of edenic telling of ancientness.

14. Kroeber, "Mojave Historical Epic," 71, 109.

15. Ibid., 108–9. The text ends with several Mojave clans taking up land in the Mojave Valley after they conquer it. As Kroeber pointed out, the principal heroes are

all dead from combat by this time, and the most important hero, Hipahipa, is said to have been without clan affiliation. Thus, in general the story is not about the movements of clans.

16. See Donald Bahr, Lloyd Paul, and Vincent Joseph, *Ants and Orioles* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1997).

17. Kroeber, "Mojave Historical Epic," 108.

18. Ronald Mason, *Inconstant Companions: Archaeology and Native American Oral Traditions* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006).

19. I count eight of the total as candidates for epics. There are three more very short texts that I don't count and won't discuss.

20. Kroeber, "Mojave Historical Epic," 136.

21. Hatto, "Mojave Heroic Epic," 9.

22. Kroeber, "Mojave Historical Epic," 107, 109. Future page references will be inserted parenthetically in the text.

23. Perhaps he means the integrations of all the characters in a many-character story from beginning to end; ibid., 120.

24. He used more characters than he could integrate; ibid., 128.

25. I take this term from John Updike who took it from the following passage of Henry James: "How [will an author] boil down so many facts from the alembic, so the distilled result, the produced appearance, should have intensity, lucidity, brevity, beauty, all the merits needed for my [desired] effect. . . . It is only by doing such things that art becomes exquisite (*More Matter: Essays and Criticism* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999], 325). This is from a review of a novel by Tom Wolfe that Updike finds inexquisite.

26. See Bahr et al., *Ants and Orioles*. Kroeber was not exact on how much the songs say and whether one can grasp or hear a whole story simply by means of the songs. I believe one cannot.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., 130.

29. Steward, "Myths of the Owens Valley," 361.

30. Hatto, "Mojave Heroic Epic," 11.

31. Suffice it to say that Hatto and then Hymes thought they detected some heightening in Inyo-kutavere's diction and pacing.

32. Hatto, "Mojave Heroic Epic," 25.

33. Actually Kroeber broke off his dealings with Inyo-kutavere sooner than he wished. They met, and the next day the six days of telling began. At the end of each day Inyo-kutavere said he would finish the story the next day. He said the same at the end of the sixth day, and Kroeber was due in Berkeley, California the next day. By the time he could return, Inyo-kutavere had died (1951, 71–72). Kroeber thought that what was left was a postscript or sequel, and so the six days' telling was actually a completed work. Of course, it would have been good to record the seventh and possibly eighth day and to ask Inyo-kutavere to sketch what he knew of Mojave *early* ancientness. Still, the six days of telling, translating, and writing were a great accomplishment.

34. Harold Fathauer, "The Structure and Causation of Mojave Warfare," *American Anthropologist* 10: 97–118.

35. Hatto, "Mojave Heroic Epic," 48.

36. Kroeber, "Mojave Historical Epic," 120–26; Hatto, "Mojave Heroic Epic," 57–92. Future page references will be inserted parenthetically in the text.

37. Hereafter I will generally refer to the Owens Valley Paiutes simply as "the Paiutes." I thank a reader of the manuscript of this article for pointing out that the Owens Valley people comprise one of three distinct groups speaking the Paiute language. The other two are Northern and Southern Paiutes. They live in large territories to the east of the Owens Valley and other related Paiute peoples.

38. I call this process or condition a parody, meaning that story A is made under the influence of and with the intention to be different from story B. See Donald Bahr, "Bad News: The Predicament of Native American Mythology," *Ethnohistory* 48, no. 4 (2001): 567–612 and Bahr, *O'odham Creation and Related Events* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005) for more on parody in myths and mythologies.

39. Kroeber, "Mojave Historical Epic," 120.

40. The table is grouped into eighteen parts and subsumed under eight larger parts. The table is on his page 127.

41. Hatto, "Mojave Heroic Epic," 68.

42. One character appears at the very beginning of the story and reappears in connection with the second pair of characters. Named Mathkwem-tsutsaam-kwilyehe, he appears in Kroeber's table and is mentioned just in passing in Hatto's (85). Kroeber calls him "pallid," meaning lacking in personality and initiative. Although he bridges between the second pair to the very first events of the story (therefore the events of the "first half"), he does not appear in the first half's episodes that involve the first pair of heroes. (He appears in episodes 1–9 but not in 14–29, which are the bulk and have the peak of the first half.)

43. Kroeber, "Mojave Historical Epic," 107.

44. The names of the characters in these stories are of three types: names of inhuman species or individuals (e.g., "Sun"); names that refer to some individualistic property (e.g., "Vanished-pursue," the name of the Mojave narrator); or they are expressions in the Native language of which no translated meaning is given. I assume that the last two types of name refer to fully human-looking characters, and those of the first type refer to persons of mixed human and inhuman status or nature, e.g., to humans-animals. If a character had some pronounced inhuman property, I assume the character would be called by the inhuman, or species, name. I cannot prove this method for interpreting names; I can only say that the storytellers I have talked with agree with it.

45. Steward, "Myths of the Owens Valley," 361.

46. When it comes to using "structured vastness" to prove my point about "organic wholeness" it is clear that "vastness" addresses the "wholeness" part of my criterion. These are well-established terms in this field of study. However, to further elaborate on how the text is organically whole, I suggest that you consider that "organic" refers to "differentiated" as in "differentiated organisms."

47. Kroeber, "Mojave Historical Epic," 72.

48. In this regard it is worth noting that each of the Mojave text's four principal heroes die in battle, as do seven of the larger group of seventeen leading characters that Kroeber tabulates (127). Most of the others probably just drop out of the story as loose ends. Of the characters the Paiute stories start with, only one dies in battle. This is Coyote in Wolf and Roadrunner. Of course, Hainanu is revived twice and most of the adversaries of the central characters die violently. Most of the central characters, in contrast, either grow old in society or go off into solitude or change to full animals.

This last is not an option for the Mojave characters because as full humans they cannot become something else. (Kroeber comments on this [128].) A change to "full" animals, or the shucking of an original partial humanness is characteristic of early, not late, ancientness.

49. The photographs that families keep are of relatives they know their connections to. The stories we are concerned with are about *ancientness* to whose characters no one can trace a precise connection.

50. Frank Russell, "The Pima Indians," *Bureau of American Ethnology Report 26* (Washington, DC, 1908; repr., Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974), 36–66.

51. Obviously, one's appreciation of a character in literature depends on one's taste and experience. Supposedly literature is meant to enhance peoples' lives by providing them with stories to identify with and compare themselves to. Because this article defines a field of heroes for others to explore, I demur from telling further personal reactions to the Paiute heroes.

52. Steward, "Myths of the Owens Valley Paiute," 365–66.