

## THE CONTEMPORARY EPIC MODE: DIGITAL GAMES AND THE JOURNEY MOTIF

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**Abstract:** *As part of a project that investigates the translation of the epic mode in contemporary digital games, the present paper starts from the premise that the principal medium of epic production has shifted from literature, comic book franchises, and film to video games. More specifically, my aim is to explore the motif of the hero's journey, which has always been congenial to the anthropological and literary category of the epic, and which has maintained its central position in fiction since the epics of the ancient world. Within the theme itself, the hero must face various trials, confrontations, and obstacles, which lead to a process of self-discovery, offering a cultural learning experience and a gateway to the exploration of knowledge about human existence in general. The same is maintained throughout video games designed in the epic mode, yet the configuration of the journey has suffered some changes in its translation towards the digital. At large, these revisions reflect the postmodern and posthuman turn, and therefore alter the fundamental process of initiation expressed through the journey motif. To illustrate the above, I propose a form of digital game criticism whereby I comparatively interpret the theme of the quest in its past and present manifestations.*

**Keywords:** *epic mode, video game epic, journey motif, epic genre, role-playing game (RPG), video game culture, game philology, video game criticism*