



## Epic Technology to stop the corruption in Chile: an alternative inspired from the literature

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**Abstract.** Given the growing corruption uncovered in Chile over the last two years, this essay proposes a novel approach, inspired by the epic literary genre, as an alternative to conventional anti-corruption measures. It centers on the actions of a citizen who, when confronted with adversity, performs a heroic gesture in pursuit of a goal cherished by the nation. Though initially conceived with a playful spirit, it aims to inspire unconventional yet efficient solutions through a blend of courage and ingenuity.

**Keywords:** epic, corruption, technology, simile, literature, courage, intelligence.

### 1.- Problem

Corruption is one of the major problems faced by different nations and many international organizations concerned with this evil have proposed solutions that insist on transparency, meritocracy, punishment and other actions to combat it.

However, these actions to achieve a space-time impact need just a low-level of corruption, an unlikely situation in countries as Chile.

On the other hand, accepting as a definition of technology the way in which human beings change the environment with a certain purpose using scientific knowledge; traditional technologies have not delivered satisfactory results.

### 2.- Objective

The purpose of this essay is to present the characteristics of a new type of technology that, unlike others, takes advantage of art, particularly from literature.

Indeed, regarding the failure of technologies that rely on economics, politics, sociology and other social sciences in the fight against corruption, this work turns instead to literature.



### 3.- State of the Art

#### About Technology

Definitions of technology vary. Val Dusek proposes three common characterizations: (a) technology as hardware, (b) technology as rules, and (c) technology as systems [1]. The economist John Kenneth Galbraith defined technology as “the systematic application of scientific or other knowledge to practical tasks” [2]. According to this view, technology is limited by the progress of science—if science stalls, so does technological innovation. This constraint motivates the exploration of art as an alternative force for social transformation.

#### About Corruption

Transparency International recommends a set of anti-corruption strategies: ending impunity, reforming public administration, promoting transparency and access to information, empowering citizens, and closing international loopholes [3]. They emphasize the importance of civic engagement, institutional accountability, and technological tools for public monitoring [4].

The World Bank, for its part, notes that while the complete eradication of corruption is unrealistic, the goal should be to transition from systemic corruption to well-functioning governance. Its strategy stresses the importance of understanding types of corruption, integrating citizen participation, aligning policy with market forces, leveraging international cooperation, and continuously evaluating policy effectiveness [5].

The United Nations describes corruption as “an insidious plague” that undermines democracy and the rule of law, violates human rights, distorts markets, erodes

quality of life, and enables organized crime and terrorism [6]. However, a persistent challenge across all strategies is that their success tends to correlate inversely with the intensity of corruption: the more entrenched corruption is, the harder it becomes to dismantle.

#### About Epic

The epic is one of the oldest and most enduring literary forms. Traditionally, it is a lengthy narrative poem that chronicles the adventures and moral struggles of a heroic figure, often a national or semi-divine character, who embarks on a journey of existential importance. The epic is not merely a story: it is a cultural technology that encodes moral values, collective identity, and societal aspirations [7].

Core characteristics of the epic genre include:

- A heroic protagonist who exhibits extraordinary courage, strength, and wisdom.
- A dangerous quest that typically serves a national or universal purpose.
- An adversarial force or corrupt environment that represents an existential threat.
- A divine or extraordinary intervention, often symbolizing fate, destiny, or moral order.
- A moral transformation of the hero or society through the journey.

Epic narratives provide more than entertainment; they offer symbolic blueprints for overcoming adversity, channeling chaos into order, and restoring justice in times of widespread crisis.



Works like *The Iliad* and *The Aeneid* justify the founding of nations through heroic sacrifice. *The Divine Comedy* is a spiritual epic that redeems not only the soul of the protagonist but also serves as a mirror to moral corruption in Dante's Florence. More modern reinterpretations—like J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*—situate small, unexpected heroes against the backdrop of massive evil and institutional decay [8].

In all these narratives, the epic is not a tale of bureaucratic procedure, but a radical personal transformation. It is precisely this personal transformation—against odds, fear, and social pressure—that this essay proposes as a metaphorical technology for combating advanced corruption.

#### 4.- Method

To identify and formulate the central simile that frames this proposal—namely, the comparison between epic narrative and the citizen's role in confronting entrenched corruption—this essay undertakes a qualitative interpretive methodology rooted in bibliographic exploration. The approach does not rely on empirical data collection or statistical modeling, but rather on the conceptual analysis of three distinct thematic pillars: technology, corruption, and epic literature.

Firstly, sources on technology are reviewed to interrogate the definitions, boundaries, and purposes traditionally assigned to technological development. The objective is to examine whether the notion of technology can be broadened beyond the conventional domains of hardware, engineering, and institutional process. Specifically, this research explores whether a narrative or symbolic action—like those found in epic

literature—might be considered a form of “cultural technology” capable of reshaping social behavior.

Secondly, the essay examines corruption from a systemic perspective. Rather than focusing solely on individual cases or legal definitions, the investigation seeks to understand corruption as a pervasive and adaptive ecosystem. The reviewed materials include characterizations of corruption as both moral decay and institutional failure, enabling a deeper understanding of the barriers that limit the success of traditional anti-corruption strategies. This analysis allows for the identification of key structural challenges that may be resistant to normative reforms, but potentially vulnerable to cultural or symbolic disruptions.

Thirdly, the analysis of epic literature offers a lens through which to reinterpret citizen action. Epic stories are examined not merely as artistic products, but as repositories of moral imagination and narrative technologies. Through their repeated motifs—heroism, sacrifice, adversarial struggle, and moral restoration—epics provide a conceptual framework for reimagining the social role of the individual. This section of the method seeks to extract archetypes, structural elements, and emotional resonances from the epic genre that can be translated into practical metaphors applicable to civic engagement.

The triangulation of these three bibliographic domains facilitates the construction of an interdisciplinary simile in which the ordinary citizen, guided by ethical resolve and intellectual resourcefulness, is cast in the role of a literary hero confronting a pervasive and corrosive societal evil. Rather than seeking to verify the effectiveness of this metaphor in measurable terms, the method



aims to propose it as a cultural intervention—capable of inspiring imaginative responses, emotional mobilization, and symbolic realignment in societies paralyzed by high-level corruption.

Finally, this methodological framework operates on the assumption that certain forms of human action—particularly those motivated by moral imagination, narrative coherence, and symbolic meaning—can act as catalysts for change, even in contexts where institutional trust and formal mechanisms have collapsed. The essay thus positions itself within a growing interest in affective and narrative strategies as complements to rational-institutional approaches, especially in settings marked by civic despair.

## 5.- Results

The methodological articulation of epic structure, corruption analysis, and the broader understanding of technology yields a conceptual model in which the citizen-hero emerges as a transformative agent operating in adverse, systemically corrupted environments. This model is not intended as a literal prescription, but rather as a metaphorical solution, a symbolic instrument capable of mobilizing imagination, ethical resolve, and civic agency.

The components of the epic structure, reinterpreted within the context of contemporary civic corruption, generate a series of parallelisms that allow for the construction of an interpretive framework:

### Protagonist = Citizen

At the core of the epic is the protagonist—an individual who does not begin as a hero, but who becomes one through a decisive

encounter with injustice. In the anti-corruption context, the citizen occupies this role. Far from being a public official or institutional leader, the epic citizen is often an anonymous figure, invisible within the bureaucratic apparatus, yet morally alert and emotionally compelled. This citizen is characterized not by institutional power but by moral dissonance: a deep internal conflict provoked by the normalization of corruption. This dissonance becomes the origin of the epic gesture.

The citizen's transformation into a protagonist occurs precisely because of their refusal to accept systemic decay as inevitable. In this sense, the emergence of the hero is not a function of charisma, status, or education, but of moral clarity and emotional endurance.

### Quest = Death of Corruption

The hero's journey, or quest, takes the form of an existential mission: to dismantle, symbolically or materially, a corrupt order. This "death of corruption" does not refer to the eradication of all wrongdoing, which would be an idealistic and naive aspiration. Rather, it refers to a ruptured singular, defiant act capable of breaking the sense of inevitability and hopelessness that characterizes deeply corrupt societies. The quest, then, is to restore the possibility of justice, not necessarily through institutional channels, but through symbolic action that realigns collective perception.

In epic tradition, the quest usually carries immense risk and minimal probability of success, which makes it worthy of moral admiration. Similarly, the citizen who confronts entrenched corruption does so without guarantee of efficacy or recognition, and frequently with the expectation of isolation, retaliation, or failure.



### **Deeds = Facing, Harangue, Sneak Attack**

The epic hero's deeds are characterized by tactical versatility and symbolic resonance. In the civic context, these deeds may include:

**Facing:** the act of publicly denouncing or resisting corruption, even when the cost is personal exposure, reputational risk, or professional sanction. The courage to face the problem, not abstractly but concretely, distinguishes the epic citizen from passive observers.

**Harangue:** the verbal act of mobilization—whether through speech, writing, or digital expression—that breaks the silence surrounding corruption and reactivates the collective conscience. Like ancient heroes who rally their allies before battle, the civic hero's harangue seeks not compliance but awakening.

**Sneak Attack:** the subversive action, often creative or symbolic, that circumvents official channels to generate rupture. This might involve investigative leaks, anonymous interventions, performative protests, or aesthetic disruptions. The sneak attack introduces unpredictability into an otherwise rigid and fossilized system, demonstrating that not all resistance follows institutional scripts.

### **Intervention = Unexpected Help**

A recurring trope in epic narratives is the appearance of unexpected allies. In the civic adaptation, this takes the form of solidarity from unlikely quarters: a former accomplice who confesses, a journalist who amplifies the hero's voice, or a judge who defies pressure. The function of this intervention is not to displace the hero's effort, but to

validate it, often tipping the balance between silence and visibility, futility and momentum.

These interventions often arrive without being sought, as a response to the hero's example. Thus, the initial epic gesture becomes catalytic, producing ripples of moral reactivation in an otherwise paralyzed civic environment.

### **Risks = Threats to Family or Friends**

Epic heroes often face collateral risks, where the price of action is not only personal danger but also the endangerment of loved ones. In deeply corrupt societies, this condition is particularly relevant: retaliation against whistleblowers or civic actors frequently targets their social and familial circles. The hero's perseverance under such conditions represents the ultimate ethical wager—the willingness to uphold moral action even when the cost is diffused, delayed, or inflicted upon others.

This risk dimension also underscores the collective vulnerability of civic resistance. The hero's journey is never fully individual; it is embedded within a network of affective relations that are inevitably impacted by his or her decisions. This complexity deepens the moral value of the gesture and reaffirms its epic nature.

### **Genre Fusion: The Epic and the Civic Thriller**

Beyond the classical literary epic, modern audiovisual narratives—particularly cinematic thrillers—have explored similar dynamics. A recurrent plot involves a young, lucid outsider who discovers an invisible evil—such as vampires or aliens—camouflaged within everyday institutions. His initial attempt to seek help is met with indifference or betrayal, as he realizes that





the very figures meant to protect the community are themselves the enemy. This trope resonates with real-life civic disillusionment, where authorities entrusted with justice become embodiments of corruption.

Such stories often culminate in vigilante action, not as endorsement of illegality, but as a narrative dramatization of ethical frustration. The analogy suggests that in extreme circumstances, where institutional remedies are fully co-opted, symbolic or imaginative transgression becomes a necessary language of protest. Literature and cinema, through these hybrid forms, anticipate the moral and psychological terrain of civic resistance in contexts of advanced corruption.

### Conclusion of Results

The application of the epic simile to the civic context does not seek to prescribe heroic behavior, but to unlock an interpretive horizon in which ordinary citizens recover their moral agency through narrative imagination. By viewing themselves not as passive victims but as protagonists of a larger story, individuals may find emotional resources to resist resignation, cynicism, or complicity.

The key result, therefore, is conceptual: the identification of a narrative structure that reintroduces purpose, coherence, and dignity into civic action against corruption. In a landscape where traditional technologies of reform falter, the epic provides a symbolic grammar for ethical insurgency—one rooted not in procedural rationality, but in the deep cultural memory of heroic transformation.

### 6.- General Conclusions

When corruption is installed in a country, the people that seek to eliminate it feel that society is in a kind of blind alley and therefore resort to any alternative, even if this one is inspired by art.

Thus, an epic gesture characterized by courage and intelligence as generally absent attributes can be considered as a legitimate but unlikely departure.

In literature, film and possibly other artistic expressions linked to the epic genre, highlight the courage and intelligence as two necessary virtues to transform a situation that overwhelms a country.

Certainly, when advanced corruption is evil, the confidence rests on citizens who assume the role of heroes.

Finally, in this article Epic Technology can be understood as one that, applying scientific knowledge, seeks to achieve the great goals of the Nation-State by who are willing to take big risks towards themselves, family or friends, facing such threats with enormous courage and surprising intelligence.

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