The Hero and the Internet: Exploring the Emergence of the Cyberhero Archetype

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Abstract:
Although the bulk of psychological research continues to focus on the negative uses of the Internet, i.e., cyberbullying and the cyberbully, the total number of people engaging in acts of digital altruism and other forms of pro-social digital activism exceeds 100 million (Klisanin, 2011). Who are these people? While there has been little investigation in this area, Klisanin (2010a) theorized that the most dedicated among them represent the first incarnation of a new archetype: the cyberhero. Embodying a transpersonal sense of identity, as ideal forms, the cyberhero represents individuals motivated to act on behalf of other people, animals, and the environment using the Internet and digital technologies in the peaceful service of achieving humanity's highest ideals and aspirations, e.g., world peace, social justice, environmental protection, and planetary stewardship. To investigate this theory, a self-report questionnaire was designed and distributed on-line to individuals engaging in digital altruism, a form of digital activism considered to result in benefit to others. The results support earlier theory, suggesting that the cyberhero is a viable embodied archetype worthy of further investigation.

Introduction

For years, researchers have been investigating the negative uses of the Internet, coining the term "cyberbully" to reference an individual using the Internet to harm other people, and the term "cyberbullying" to refer to their actions (Belsey, 2006; Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2008). In keeping with the humanistic tradition (Maslow, 1971), Klisanin (2009, 2011) began a theoretical investigation of the opposite end of the moral spectrum, beginning with an exploration and description of a form of pro-social digital activism resulting in benefit to others known as "digital altruism," and defined as "altruism mediated by digital technology." The research resulted in the identification of three distinct forms of digital altruism including: "everyday digital altruism, creative digital altruism, and co-creative digital altruism."[1] This theoretical investigation extends that work, focusing on the individuals actively engaging in digital altruism described herein as representing an emergent "cyberhero archetype". The term "cyberhero" refers to an "individual actively using the Internet to benefit other people, animals, or the environment," and the term "cyberheroing" refers to their actions (Klisanin, 2010a).[2]

Although the rate of technological evolution has far exceeded the rate of human evolution (Banathy, 1996; 2000) communication technologies are considered to be one means through which we might address and perhaps correct this imbalance (Laszlo, 1997; Hubbard, 1998; Elgin, 2000; Klisanin, 2005; 2010b; 2010c), facilitating the emergence of higher stages of consciousness, for example, integral-level development (Wilber, 1998). Social media, in particular, has already begun transforming culture, resulting in collaborations with valuable social outcomes (Negroponte, 1995; Rheingold, 2002; Shirky, 2010). In addition to the above impetuses, this research arises from the perceived need for a new mythos (Krippner, Mortifee, & Feinstein, 1998) capable of promoting virtue, compassion, and planetary consciousness (Laszlo, 1997; Dalai Lama, 1999).

Literature Review

The author's background in humanistic and transpersonal psychology predisposed an interest in individuals functioning beyond the norm: in this case, reaching out to help others in a novel way. This background led to the recognition that, just as early researchers in the field of psychology had focused on the pathological aspects of human behavior, so too were contemporary psychologists focusing their gaze on the negative aspects of human interaction with the Internet. Although there were literally hundreds of studies about individuals using the Internet to harm others, a.k.a., cyberbullies, there was not even a single term coined to reference individuals using the Internet to *benefit* others. It seemed appropriate to address this imbalance.

While the term, "digital altruist" is an appropriate referent for an individual who engages in occasional acts of digital altruism, the term "cyberhero" is more appropriate for describing an individual who engages in frequent or outstanding acts of digital altruism. More specifically, cyberheroes appear to be individuals motivated to act on behalf of other people, animals, and the environment using the Internet and digital technologies in the peaceful service of achieving humanity's highest ideals and aspirations, e.g., world peace, social justice, environmental protection, and planetary stewardship. This article explores the theoretical foundations undergirding this hypothesis, the approach is transdisciplinary, with a strong grounding in humanistic, transpersonal, and integral studies, as well as "evolutionary guidance media," a specialized area of media psychology research focused on positive media, conscious media, green media, and transformational media (Klisanin, 2005).

Exploration of Origins

The evolution of human consciousness is a dynamic and complex process: a spiral movement through various stages of development (Wilber, 1995). At the societal level our evolutionary development is reflected back to us in our changing social norms/policies, for example, the extension of equality beyond gender and racial lines. Technology is an integral aspect of our evolution (Campbell, 1972; Burke & Ornstein, 1995) and information and communication technologies our most recent evolutionary catalyst (McLuhan & Fiore, 1966; Davis, 1998). It is not surprising then, that as our sphere of concern expands (i.e., from the personal to the global-planetary) we are creating technological means through which to address those concerns. Transception, described as, "Internet technologies fused with moral concerns," is one embodiment of that evolution (Klisanin, 2005; 2007). Transception enables digital altruism, for example through websites designed to support caring and sharing behaviors, i.e., the ability to add content to informational sites such as Wikipedia (2011); the ability to contribute to charity through viewing advertisements via "click-to-donate" formats such as available at Care2.com (2011); the ability to help solve complex problems through donating unused (idle) computer time to scientific research, for example, through the World Community Grid (2011). Transception enables individuals to reach beyond the confines of the physical body not simply to act, but to *act compassionately on behalf of other sentient beings*.

Carl Jung (1968) described "archetypes" as "collective patterns, . . . a typos [imprint], a definite grouping of archaic characters containing, in form as well as in meaning, mythological motifs." Jung explained these motifs as "appear[ing] in pure form in fairytales, myths, legends, and folklore" and cited "the Hero, the Redeemer, the Dragon," as some of the most well-known (p. 41). In 1938, the hero took on another form: the "superhero." Packer (2010) describes superheroes as "secularized forms of supernatural beings that populate folklore and legend and religious literature" (p. 23). As humanity blends moral action with digital technology, another variant of the hero, i.e., the cyberhero, is emerging. Interestingly, this merger enables certain characteristics of the superhero to find embodiment in the phenomenal world.

Positive psychologists are beginning to explore the character strengths and virtues associated with heroism, however we currently have few measures of this construct (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Although understudied, heroism has been traditionally associated with courage, valor, and bravery: heroes are considered to be those individuals willing to risk their lives on behalf of others (Franco & Zimbardo, 2006). Researchers examining the social construction of heroism have, however, identified additional elements of heroism including benefiting others and acting selflessly (Rankin & Eagly, 2008, p. 416).

Individuals using the Internet to act on behalf of other people are not risking their lives, however in some instances, websites that support digital altruism are designed such that the visitor confronts, not one, not two, not three, but a seemingly endless number of challenges in the form of "causes" that need urgent attention (see Care2.com, 2011). From poverty to global warming to the threat of mass extinctions, these challenges are not easily solved, thus the individual seeking to bring them to an end, certainly faces some degree of psychological angst. Importantly, rather than turning away from these challenges, or pretending they do not exist, individuals who actively engage in digital altruism are confronting these challenges with the new tools that have become available to them.

To engage in this manner, the cyberhero archetype is embracing paradox. Traditionally, the hero is reactive, i.e., acting when the need to act arises. The cyberhero however, arising as it does from our globally interconnected "wired" world, is both reactive and proactive. It is "reactive" in that reaches beyond physical boundaries to address existing problems (e.g., clicking-to-donate food), and it is "proactive" in trying to prevent the worst consequence of social inequality (i.e., starvation, disease, death) and environmental destruction (global warming, loss of habitat, extinction of species). The individual

embodying the cyberhero archetype chooses to act all the while recognizing a certain futility in his or her singular act. To overcome this frustration, the cyberhero must posit individual action and collective action in simultaneity. The cyberhero knows he or she will not save the whales from extinction alone, but recognizes that we–an active community of like-minded individuals–may well succeed.

The cyberhero archetype appears to recognize global threats to social and ecological wellbeing as personal threats. Rather than requiring a personal confrontation with immediate danger, the cyberhero archetype requires a personal and collective psychological confrontation with current and/or impending species-wide dangers. Rather than setting out on an epic adventure to far away lands and encountering life-threatening dangers, as in the traditional heroic narrative (Campbell, 1949/1972), the cyberhero, paradoxically, both stays at home and sets off--into cyberspace with the goal of benefiting others.

The elements of heroism identified by Rankin and Eagly (2008), "benefiting others and acting selflessly" provide a solid foundation for the hero aspect of the cyberhero archetype, however additional characteristics, such as universal compassion, dual-persona, shape-shifting, and speed, can be said to mimic characteristics common to superheroes. Superheroes represent society's vision of men and women endowed with extraordinary abilities. They emerged at that onset of World War II, largely from the pen of Jewish writers in response to Hitler's persecution of the Jewish people (Packer, 2010). This was an unparallel time in history, a time when the agrarian way of life was ending and value systems associated with agrarianism, such as equality and community were in direct opposition to the value systems of industrial capitalism: individualism, self-fulfillment, and competitiveness (Connor, 1980). From the psychoanalytic perspective, the superhero, through the use of mask and costume, symbolized the "split between the egalitarian common man and the individualistic, self-reliant, achievement-motivated superhero" (Connor, 1980, p. 339). While it is beyond the scope of this exploration, Packer (2010) has also explored the mask and costume of the superhero in terms of the Jungian concepts of the persona and the shadow.

Because the Internet is the modus operandi of the cyberhero, s/he is able to imitate the dual persona, shape shifting, and speed of the superhero archetype. Dual persona and shape shifting are enabled through the use of an avatar, i.e., self-selected digital persona; and speed via the Internet's rapid transfer of data. When an individual uses the Internet, or a gamer sits down to play a video game, he selects a digital representation of himself, i.e., an "avatar". The individual is free to select his sexual identity, race, hair color, as well as a variety of other features; depending on the choices available he may choose to "shape-shift," identifying, for example, as a mythological creature or a Jedi knight. This ability to create a new identity for oneself, while in reality remaining the same person, mimics the dual-persona and shape-shifting characteristics of the superhero. Unlike the superhero, however, the cyberhero does not require an avatar in order to act on behalf of others, thus it cannot be said to inherit the psychic split posited of the superhero. Through embodying individual action in tandem with collective action, the cyberhero overcomes the split between communal and individual value systems.

While the hero archetype speaks to moral action, heroes are often associated with acting on behalf of a specific in-group (e.g., one's neighbors, community, or nation), the superhero, as originally conceived (e.g., Superman), embodies universal compassion and magnanimity (Packer, 2010). In using the Internet to act globally, on behalf of individuals of all religions, ethnicities, and nationalities, as well as animals and imperiled environments, the cyberhero appears to be embodying these ideal qualities. The cyberhero archetype provides an avenue through which a number of the superhero's characteristics are finding expression in the phenomenal world, albeit in a radically different form. In this regard, the archetype appears to be acting as a bridge, or conduit between the physical and imaginal worlds.

The psychological profile described above may represent an embodiment of the "transmodern psyche," characterized by O'Hara (1997) as a psyche that: "Lives, thinks and acts locally and globally; embraces spiritual yearnings; tolerates ambiguity and difference; . . . empathic with others; ethics based on right action over fixed principles; assumes personal and social accountability; . . . reasons abstractly and normatively; . . . respects non-rational ways of knowing; collaborates and competes in the service of the whole" (1997, p. 5). The transmodern psyche is one in which the subject is capable of transpersonal identification with the other. Such identification enables the individual to empathize with all sentient beings. Importantly, the transmodern psyche welcomes paradox: instead of necessitating "either/or" thinking, it allows for the exploration of "both/and" thinking. It is considered to "combine intuition and spirituality with rational brainwork" (Luyckx, 1999).

Significance & Raison d'être

The human family is quickly approaching a point in time when global problems threaten to overwhelm social systems and psychological strength (O'Hara, 2010).

If history and psychotherapy provide any guidance to times of anxiety and threat, it might be in the observation that when people can contain their anxiety long enough to tolerate and actually face the dissolution of past certainties, they can often find the growing or emergent edge of insight and innovation. *If, instead of denial or collapse, individuals and collectives can expand their awareness and allow themselves to clearly see what confronts them, they can rise to the occasion and become more than they were before.* (O'Hara, p. 115) [Italics added]

The hero archetype has traditionally been associated with courage and fortitude, however Franco and Zimbardo (2006) suggest that the hero archetype has been diluted in contemporary times, having become an adjective used to describe "inventors, athletes, actors, politicians, and scientist." They warn that by "diminishing the ideal of heroism, our society makes two mistakes . . . we dilute the important contribution of true heroes, [and] . . . we keep ourselves from confronting the older, more demanding forms of this ideal."

At first glance, the cyberhero might seem to add to such diminishment, i.e., rather than risking his life to help others, the cyberhero uses the technologies of cyberspace to actualize good deeds in the world, however upon closer examination we find that through extending the psyche to take on global challenges, the cyberhero archetype demonstrates expanded awareness, as well as psychological strength (having refused to permit the psyche to collapse under the weight of anxiety and threat). The archetype provides an innovative means through which individuals and collectives are using the tools at hand (e.g., smart phones and computers) to extend their humanity, becoming "more than they were before". Rather than diminishing the ideal of heroism, the cyberhero is poised to respond to an important need, that of "fostering heroic imagination" (Franco & Zimbardo, 2006)3.

The cyberhero appears to be an emergent archetype arising from a transpersonal identification with the 'other' due to an enhanced understanding of interdependence that recognizes global threats to social well-being and planetary survival as significant consequences of non-action. Its emergence at this critical juncture in history, speaks to the superhero's manifestation at the beginning of World War II, which, from the Jungian perspective, symbolized humanity's joint psychological cry for power, strength, and immortality (Rovin, 1985; Packer, 2010). Today, we call for the survival of our ecosystem, and with it the preservation of a host of species, including our own. In response we have created a digital "caped-crusader." The cyberhero archetype may be understood as a harbinger, an evolutionary guide of society. Banathy (1996) described "evolutionary guides" as entities (e.g., individuals, groups, corporations) that "giv[e] direction to the evolution of human systems and develop in those systems the organizational capacity and human capability to

1. nurture the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual development and self-realization of individuals and the systems
2. extend the boundaries of the possibilities for freedom and justice, economic and social well-being, and political participation
3. increase cooperation and integration among societal systems and manage conflicts in a nonviolent manner
4. engage in the design of societal systems that can guide their own evolution by purposeful design (Banathy, 1996, p. 323)

The cyberhero speaks to each of these mandates, and as such, this archetype may well serve a useful and important role as a guiding force in the continued evolution of humanity; indeed, the integration of compassionate action within digital technologies may well support the evolution of "homo curans," described as "compassionate man, man who cures" (Takenouchi, 2006).

Purpose

In order to explore the theoretical underpinnings of the cyberhero archetype, this research involved the creation and on-line distribution of a self-report questionnaire designed to investigate the following premises: 1) Some individuals are motivated to use the Internet and digital technologies to act on behalf of other people, animals, and/or the environment, in the peaceful service of achieving humanity's highest ideals and aspirations, e.g., world peace, social justice, environmental protection, planetary stewardship; and 2) Such individuals have a transpersonal sense of identity.

Method

A self-report questionnaire was generated based on the author's theoretical research in which cyberheroes were defined as "individuals motivated to act on behalf of other people, animals, and the environment using the Internet and digital technologies in the peaceful service of achieving humanity's highest ideals and aspirations, e.g., world peace, social justice, environmental protection, planetary stewardship," and in which, cyberheroes were described as representing "an emergent archetype arising from a transpersonal identification with the 'other' due to an enhanced understanding of interdependence that recognizes global threats to social well-being and planetary survival as significant consequences of non-action (Klisanin, 2010a)." In order to qualify the term transpersonal, Walsh and Vaughan's (1993) definition of "transpersonal" as involving experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (trans) the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche, and cosmos" (p. 3) was used. Initially 35 questions were generated, of which 15 were selected. (See Appendix for a complete list of questions.) The questions included 9, 5-point Likert scale questions (1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 unsure, 4 agree, 5 strongly agree), 1 open-ended question, 1 multiple-answer question, and 4 multiple-choice questions. In an effort to reduce response bias, 3 of the 9 questions were worded negatively.

Questions number 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 were selected to investigate the premise that respondents are motivated "to act on behalf of other people, animals, and the environment using the Internet in the peaceful service of achieving humanity's highest ideals and aspirations, i.e., world peace, social justice, environmental protection and planetary stewardship" (Klisanin, 2010a). Of these questions, two were worded negatively. Questions number 1, 2, 4, 5, were selected to explore the premise that the respondent's have a transpersonal sense of identity, one that "extends beyond the self, to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche, and cosmos," (Walsh & Vaughan, (1993, p. 3). Of these questions, one was worded negatively.

Questions number 3 and 11 were included to confirm that respondents engage in some form of Internet Activism considered beneficial to other people, animals, or the environment (i.e., herein described as "digital altruism".) Questions number 12, 13, 14, 15 were included to collect basic demographic information.

To reach the target demographic, a "cause" was created on the social networking site, Causes (2011b). Invitations to join the group and complete the "cyberhero questionnaire" were sent to Facebook "friends" who were themselves members of Causes, along with a request to forward the invitation to "Friends" and "Causes members" who fit the cyberhero description, i.e., "individuals who actively use the Internet to help other people, animals, or the environment." In addition, "Causes" members with active records of participation were chosen at random and invited to complete the cyberhero questionnaire. Additional respondents were recruited from six communities with active on-line memberships, including: CauseCast (2011), CharityFocus (2011), the World Futures Studies Federation (2011), Saybrook University (2011), c3: Center for Conscious Creativity (2011), and the Institute of Noetic Sciences (2011). The questionnaire was made accessible to those groups in the following manner: in the first case, a routine weekly newsletter; in the second, a "Yahoo group"; in the third, an email to a list-serve; in the fourth, fifth, and sixth, through a routine monthly newsletter. In all cases, the "cyberhero questionnaire" was accessed by respondents via a link hosted by SurveyGizmo, a web-based company specializing in survey generation and distribution. The questionnaire was also visible to the general public via a web search.

Results

A total of 304 individuals responded to one or more of the questions, with 298 answering all questions. Of 302 individuals, 207 respondents were female, 90 male, and 5, transgender. Respondents were from 32 countries, with 69.7% from the United States. Of respondents, 301 reported engaging in one or more form of Internet activism considered beneficial to other people, animals, or the environment.

Results of Questions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 support the premise that some individuals are motivated to act on behalf of other people, animals, and the environment using the Internet and digital technologies in the peaceful service of achieving humanity's highest ideals and aspirations, i.e., world peace, social justice, environmental protection and planetary stewardship.

Q6) Combined, 84.4% of respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that through using the Internet to help others, they are contributing to conditions that promote peace in the world.

Q7) Combined, 74.0% of respondents either "agree" or "strongly agree" that through clicking-to-donate or signing on-line petitions, they feel a sense of unity with all the other people who engage in these activities.

Q8) Combined, 75.9 % of respondents either "agree" or "strongly agree" that clicking-to-donate can have a significant impact on a cause, when a lot of people click each day. (This question was worded negatively, and is being reported positively).

Q9) Combined, 82.7% of respondents believe the Internet enables them to help others more than they could without it.

Q10) Combined, 85.4% of respondents either "agree" or "strongly agree" that they are being pro-active when they use the Internet to support the needs of other people, animals, or the environment.

Results of Questions 1, 2, 4, and 5, support the premise that respondent's (i.e., cyberheroes) have a transpersonal sense of identity.

Q1) Combined, 93.7% of respondents either "agree" or "strongly agree" that their life is interconnected with all the life forms on our planet.

Q2) Combined, 93.0% of respondents either "agree" or "strongly agree" that they enjoy acting on behalf of people in need regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, religion, or gender.

Q4) Combined, 86.4% of respondents either "agree" or "strongly agree" that they use the Internet to act on behalf of more than one "cause" or "charity".

Q5) Combined, 85.2% of respondents think the needs of other people are as important as their own needs. (This question was worded negatively, but is being reported as a positive value).

In summary, the data supports the stated premises. Some individuals are consciously choosing to use the Internet and digital technologies as a means to help other people, animals, and the environment. These individuals have a transpersonal sense of identity and view their on-line activity as contributing to conditions that promote peace in the world.

Limitations

The results are limited by a small sample population; though every effort was made to collect responses from individuals who actively use the Internet to help other people, animals, and the environment (i.e., the target demographic), the sample population is low relative to the demographic.

In addition, respondents were recruited from seven groups, two of which have populations that can be said to self-select persons interested in expanded states of awareness and/or transpersonal studies. The latter include the Institute of Noetic Sciences and Saybrook University. Respondents from these groups may have distorted the results, such the cyberhero archetype appears to embody a transpersonal sense of self, when in reality this may hold true for only a small percentage of those individuals actively using the Internet to help other people, animals, and the environment. These limitations can be addressed by future research incorporating results from larger web communities that support digital altruism.

Implications and Conclusion

The bulk of research and media attention has focused on the negative uses of the Internet, especially the activities of the cyberbully. This study demonstrates that there are also individuals using the Internet and digital technology for positive aims. While this statement may appear glaringly obvious, until now researchers have neglected to acknowledge or study this population. Through recognizing these individuals and their activities, as worthy of research and attention, we promote the positive side of human nature and the ethical use of the Internet.

While the characteristics and traits of cyberheroes must be studied in a larger population, the archetype currently appears to embody a transpersonal sense of self. Importantly, 93.7 % of respondents recognize their lives as interconnected with all the life forms on our planet, and 84.4% of respondents believe that through using the Internet to help others, they are contributing to conditions that promote peace in the world. If this recognition and pro-active stance holds true across the larger population of individuals who are actively using the Internet to help other people, animals, and the environment, (the "Causes" community alone currently has a membership of 150 million), it is not an exaggeration to infer that they hold great potential to address global challenges, especially when acting in concert. Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; 1996) and research in social persuasion (Fogg, 2002; Bogost, 2007) suggest that this pro-social behavior may increase as more individuals become aware of it and use social media to spread that awareness.

And awareness is spreading rapidly. Televisions with Internet-enabled capabilities now air programs with weblinks designed to support public health education (Hollywood, Health & Society, 2011) and social networking sites, such as Causes (2011) already offer cause-marketing platforms through which users can

elect to watch advertisements that result in donations to charity. Likewise, on-lines games have been designed for the purpose of addressing social problems (Games for Change, 2011; McGonigal, 2011); some such as Zenga's Farmville (2011) have raised money for disaster relief through the sale of virtual game products (Adams, 2011), other's, such as Tim Kring's, Conspiracy for Good (2011), have used a combination of mobile and on-line gaming to build libraries in Zambia. More recently, the World Food Programme (WFP) and Konami Digital Entertainment have partnered to create Food Force, a game in which players fight hunger around the globe, i.e., the "money spent by players goes to fund WFP school meals projects in the real world" (WFP, 2011). Games are evolving at a rapid pace (Bogost, 2007; Chatfield, 2010; McGonigal, 2011) and, as the above examples demonstrate, digital altruism has already become woven within them. As these initiatives expand, more individuals will have the opportunity to join the collective in addressing a myriad of challenges—in doing so they will be embodying the cyberhero archetype. Their actions will affect change in larger systems, for example changing economic structures through consumer mandated corporate social responsibility (e.g., requiring that donations be made to charitable organizations in exchange for viewing advertisements results in a larger percentage of revenue moving into the hands of non-profit organizations).

While this archetype requires further investigation, it is an important construct, for, in order to promote our higher natures, we must recognize and support acts of goodness, acts of compassion wherever we find them, including the Internet. Doing so means that rather than placing all of our attention on cyberbullying, we need to begin giving equal attention to the opposite action: cyberheroing.

Negroponte (1995) stated, "being digital" as "almost genetic in its nature, in that each generation will become more digital than the preceding one" (p. 231). In choosing to identify, study, and celebrate "cyberheroes" we provide a form through which individuals, especially the young, can recognize their ability to use Internet and mobile technologies to act compassionately on behalf of others. In summary, the cyberhero is a viable embodied archetype poised to expand the heroic imagination into the new millennium.

End Notes 1.

Everyday digital altruism is the most common form of digital altruism. It is expedient and requires little more than the willingness to help another, e.g., clicking-to-donate or adding content to informational websites. Creative digital altruism involves the creation and maintenance of websites and social platforms that support digital altruism. It requires creativity, cooperation, and heightened moral engagement (e.g., creating and maintaining Care2.com). Co-creative digital altruism involves the creation of digital initiatives that support digital altruism that 1) are initiated at the systems level, i.e., corporate level, or similar 2) involve transdisciplinary creativity; 3) entail sustained moral engagement, 4) require cooperation that is transnational, transcorporate, transNGO, and transpersonal__meta-cooperation (e.g., creating and maintaining the World Community Grid) (Klisanin, 2009).

2. The term "cyberhero" represents individuals of both genders. 3.

Franco and Zimbardo (2006) have proposed the need to expand the "heroic imagination." "If we lose the ability to imagine ourselves as heroes, and to understand the meaning of true heroism, our society will be poorer for it. But if we can reconnect with these ancient ideals, and make them fresh again, we can create a connection with the hero in ourselves. It is this vital, internal conduit between the modern work- a-day world and the mythic world that can prepare an ordinary person to be an everyday hero".

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APPENDIX

Cyberhero Questionnaire

1) I believe my life is interconnected with all the life forms on our planet

2) I enjoy acting on behalf of people in need regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, religion, or gender.

3) I have engaged in the following forms of Internet Activism

[ ] Created or Signed Digital Petitions

[ ] Clicked-to-donate

[ ] Answered questions that resulted in a donation to a Cause or Charity

[ ] Played games that resulted in a donation to a Cause or Charity

[ ] Used Search Engines that donate a portion of revenue to a Cause or Charity

[ ] Shopped at Websites that donate a portion of revenue to a Cause or Charity

[ ] Posted something positive, or uplifting, on-line about other people, companies, institutions, or charitable organizations.

[ ] Posted informational content on-line for the purpose of helping others

[ ] Used the Internet, or mobile phone to donate to a Cause or Charity

4) I use the Internet to act on behalf of more than one "cause" or "charity"

5) I do not think the needs of other people are as important as my own needs

6) Through using the Internet to help others, I am contributing to conditions that promote peace in the world.

7) When I click-to-donate, or sign on-line petitions, I feel a sense of unity with all the other people who engage in these activities.

8) "Clicking-to-donate" cannot have a significant impact on a cause, even if a lot of people click each day.

9) The Internet does not enable me to help others more than I could without it.

10) I am being pro-active when I use the Internet to support the needs of other people, animals, or the environment

11) Will you please share the main reason(s) you engage in digital activism?

12) Will you please share your age range?

13) Will you please share your gender?

14) Will you share your race?

15) What country are you from?