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DOI: 10.1037/0003-066X.63.6.562

The Legacy of the 38 Witnesses and the Importance of Getting History Right

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We are pleased to respond to Brock's (2008) comment on our article (Manning, Levine, & Collins, September 2007) examining the impact of the 38-witnesses story on the social psychology of helping, particularly because this response allows us to thank the various people who have contacted us following our article's publication to engage us in a number of constructive, scholarly debates. Here we respond to Brock's substantive points in turn.

Brock's (2008) first argument is that the 38-witnesses story "did not launch the social psychology of helping" (p. 561). The implied criticism is that, as the story was not the starting point of the helping research tradition, it cannot have had the impact we suggested. The problem with this criticism is that nowhere in our article did we suggest that the story was the starting point of the helping research tradition in social psychology. Brock is right to caution against collapsing the entire helping tradition into a single research strand: Bystander intervention is not the whole of helping behavior, and if our article gave such an impression then that was unintended. However, we did argue—and continue to maintain—that the 38-witnesses story has had a powerful impact on bystander intervention research in particular and, through that, on the general area of research on helping behavior.

Brock's (2008) second criticism of our article is also based on a misunderstanding. We explicitly acknowledged the inventiveness and scope of studies in the bystander effect tradition, and we are happy to repeat that acknowledgement. Moreover, the claim that Dovidio's (1984) review gives the lie to our argument that the 38-witnesses story has cur-

tailed the psychological imagination is a red herring. The bystander effect literature is an impressive example of creative diversity *within* a particular set of parameters. It is our argument that the 38-witnesses story was responsible for setting those parameters. Much of the substance of our article was devoted to showing how Latané and Darley (1968, 1970) in particular enrolled the negative figure of the group into the study of bystander behavior when it is not clear that, in the story of the 38 witnesses, there was much about the bystanders that can be said to have constituted a group. We suggested that the emergence of the idea of the group as a source of inaction (alongside the established idea that groups are dangerous because they promote excitation) is an important development in the history of the group in psychology. We concluded that the 38-witnesses parable has played an important role in creating a default position in which, for bystander intervention to occur, the constraining effects of the group have to be overcome.

The central charge that Brock (2008) made against our argument is that "(s)cores of conditions under which groups both facilitate and inhibit interventions have now been empirically delineated" (p. 561). First, we acknowledge that there is work in the traditional bystander literature which shows that groups can facilitate rather than inhibit helping—indeed, we cited examples in our article. However, we argue that these studies are a minority and are seen as interesting partly because of the hold the 38-witnesses story has on the imagination of the discipline. They are cast as examples of the group failing to inhibit helping rather than in service of a theory about how groups can facilitate helping. Second, we suggest that, as a result of the 38-witnesses story, the literature on bystander behavior has been working with an impoverished idea of what constitutes a group. We believe there is more to group processes than the presence, absence, or number of others. The fact that a more nuanced approach to the group has failed to make an impact on bystander research is, we argue, something that can be traced back to the 38-witnesses story.

Brock's (2008) third point seems unrelated to the substance of our article. We might question whether the helping literature is any more "vast and nuanced" (Brock, 2008, p. 561) than a number of others or whether Zimbardo's (2004) review is unlike any other in its selectivity or simplification. Furthermore, it was not the only source we used to question the utility of research in the field.

In raising his three considerations of our article, Brock (2008) drew heavily on Dovidio's (1984) authoritative review of the traditional helping literature. We have great respect for Dovidio's work, and we have ourselves been influenced by it. While Brock suggested our argument is undermined by the fact that Dovidio did not include the 38-witnesses story in his 1984 review, we instead point out that, in a more recent review of the literature, the 38-witnesses story is again given prominence: Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin, and Schroeder (2005) stated that "most current research has its roots in lay and scientific reactions to the nonresponsive bystanders in the brutal murder of Katherine "Kitty" Genovese in 1964" (p. 366). The implication is that we cannot use either source on its own to reach conclusions about the historical importance of the 38-witnesses story.

Finally, we turn to Brock's (2008) support for the continued use of "the Genovese story, even as corrected . . . as a revered anecdote in undergraduate textbooks" (p. 561) and to his title referring to the "negligible scholarly impact" of the story. We are happy to leave it to readers of this journal to judge whether it is wise to continue to use in textbooks inaccurate accounts presented as facts, and whether it is sensible to conclude that despite being read by many thousands of students and researchers, the story of the 38 witnesses has had "negligible scholarly impact."

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DOI: 10.1037/0003-066X.63.6.563

The Courage and Strategies of Hardiness as Helpful in Growing Despite Major, Disruptive Stresses

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King and Hicks's (October 2007) article on disruptions of expectations and goals as potentially useful developmental pressures is important. The authors emphasized imposed, dramatic stresses (e.g., an unexpected divorce or having one's child born with Down syndrome), but they also meant to include more ordinary, developmental stresses (e.g., leaving home to go to college or not getting the job one wanted). I could not agree more with the article's emphasis on the importance of having full awareness of the losses and using that awareness in the process of learning and moving developmentally forward, and how this emphasis requires a redefinition of happiness as more mature than a mere expression of easy comfort and security (Maddi, 2006).

In considering the psychological prerequisites for mature adult development, King and Hicks (2007) considered humility, courage, and the resulting acceptance of surprise and self-exploration. Although mentioned only in passing by King and Hicks, hardiness, as a pattern of courage and strategies that facilitate turning stressful circumstances from potential disasters into growth opportunities (Maddi, 2002; Maddi & Kobasa, 1984), is quite relevant for people dealing with major disruptions. Specifically, the attitudes of hardiness are the 3Cs of challenge, commitment, and control, which together constitute the courage needed to be resilient and grow through stresses. If you are strong in challenge, you see stress as a normal aspect of living and as an opportunity to grow through what you learn from disruptions and failures, rather than being naively insistent on easy comfort and security. If you are high in commitment, you believe that when stresses mount, it is important, so as to enhance meaning, to stay involved with the events and people in your life, rather than sink into alienation. If you are strong in control, you believe that, no matter how

bad things get, it is important to keep trying to influence ensuing outcomes, rather than sink into passivity, powerlessness, and reverence for the past. These attitudes of hardiness have been shown to constitute the existential courage to recognize (rather than deny) stresses and to be motivated to try to turn them to one's advantage (Maddi, 2002, 2006).

Building on these courageous attitudes, hardiness also involves strategies for coping, social interaction, and self-care (Maddi, 2002, 2006). As these strategies involve hard, even exhausting work, the courage inherent in the hardy attitudes is a necessary motivation. Hardy coping involves problem solving by putting the stressful circumstance in perspective (so that it is more tolerable), deepening one's understanding of it (by analyzing it in detail), and taking actions that can be decisive in turning it into an advantage (rather than denying and avoiding or exaggerating and striking out). Sometimes, the stressful circumstance is a given and cannot be changed (e.g., your child is born with Down syndrome). In such cases, hardy coping takes the form of compensatory self-improvement (Adler, 1917), which involves turning to the work of transforming other, changeable stressful circumstances that in your mind are related to the one you cannot do anything about (e.g., Khoshaba & Maddi, 1999).

Hardy social interactions involve building social support with your significant others by reducing ongoing conflicts and replacing them with a mutual pattern of giving and getting assistance and encouragement in doing the hard work of hardy coping (Khoshaba & Maddi, 1999). And hardy self-care involves using relaxation, nutritional, and exercise techniques to maintain your arousal at an optimal level for doing the hard work of hardy coping (Khoshaba & Maddi, 1999).

People who have the courage and skills of hardiness are those most likely to react not only to imposed, dramatic stresses but also to ordinary, developmental stresses in a manner that leads toward the maturity emphasized by King and Hicks (2007). Therefore, how hardiness comes about is especially important. My and my research team's longitudinal study at Illinois Bell Telephone (Maddi & Kobasa, 1984), which began before and continued after the stressful upheaval of that company that was produced by the government's deregulation of the telephone industry, is relevant here. The managers who survived and thrived after the upheaval had, before the upheaval, not only tested high in hardiness but had described their

early lives as stressful and their parents as having responded to this situation by designating them the hope of the family. Trying to fulfill this role had led them to try hard in school, which provoked their teachers and parents to admire and support them in their efforts to grow and develop rather than in their efforts to be safe and secure. Thus, it appears that hardiness comes about when someone is encouraged and helped to use stresses as a pathway to development and resilience.

Actually, these results paved the way for our hardiness assessment and training program. The training typically takes place for small groups supported by a trainer and involves several weekly sessions. The content of the training is based on a workbook (Khoshaba & Maddi, 1999) that includes illuminating examples, concrete exercises, and periodic checkpoints in provoking trainees to approach the stresses in their lives by engaging in hardy coping, social support, and self-care and using the feedback from their efforts to deepen their hardy attitudes. Results with this approach have shown it to be effective in deepening hardiness attitudes and skills and enhancing performance and health in working adults, some of whom were in very stressful contexts (Maddi, 2002; Maddi, Harvey, Resurrecion, Giatras, & Raganold, 2007), and in college students (Maddi et al., 2002). Currently, the training program is being used not only with people in everyday circumstances but also with military veterans, firefighters, and athletes in unusually stressful circumstances.

This hardiness training and assessment program might be very helpful in the populations studied by King and Hicks (2007), where the experienced stress was a given that had been a life-changing experience. For example, the compensatory self-improvement element of hardy coping, combined with the assistance and encouragement emphasis in hardy social support, could help a parent whose child was unexpectedly born with Down syndrome to accept what has happened and to simultaneously develop in an unexpected but helpful direction. Perhaps the parent, though having to give up a needed and/or wanted job requiring too much time away from home, could compensate by learning what is needed to carry out a satisfying job that can be done while at home caring for the child.

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