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| Institution: University of Warwick |
| Unit of Assessment: 32 Philosophy |
| Title of case study: Engaging the Public with Philosophy |
| <p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>'What sort of person should I be?' is central to Plato's ethical framework, and carries significant relevance for reflection on modern society. Based on her research into Plato's virtue ethics, Angie Hobbs, Associate Professor and Senior Fellow for the Public Understanding of Philosophy (until 2012), has sought to engage the public with philosophy. Regularly appearing on radio, television and in print media, Hobbs has encouraged the public to engage with the knowledge and skills offered by philosophy as a means of understanding contemporary issues. Her public advocacy for philosophy also includes promoting philosophy in schools. She has engaged with educators, policymakers, broadcasters and audiences of all ages.</p> |
| <p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Dr Hobbs' research at Warwick (1992-2012) has explored Plato's concept of ethics by exploring his ideas on courage, manliness and heroism. She has also examined the use of language and metaphor in his philosophy, especially in relation to the female body.</p> <p>Her monograph <i>Plato and the Hero</i> (2000; paperback 2006) explored the nature of true heroism through Plato's dialogues. By focussing on courage as the central theme, Hobbs elevated courage to a new level of prominence among the Platonic virtues. She examines Plato's critiques of the notions and embodiments of manliness prevalent in his own culture, particularly those of Homer, and his attempts to re-define them according to his own ethical, psychological and metaphysical principles. Hobbs locates the discussion of courage and manliness within the broader framework of Plato's general approach to ethics – an approach which focuses on the concepts of <i>eudaimonia</i> (flourishing) and virtue. She argues that Plato's approach to ethics leads to close structural links between ethical and aesthetic judgments – both are concerned with proper mathematical relations between the parts and the whole. This attempted unification creates tensions between human and divine ideals. To address these themes Hobbs studied 10 of Plato's dialogues: <i>The Republic</i>, <i>Laches</i>, <i>Protagoras</i>, <i>Gorgias</i>, <i>Apology</i>, <i>Hippas Minor</i>, <i>Hippas Major</i>, <i>The Symposium</i>, <i>Politicus</i> and <i>Laws</i>.</p> <p>Dr Hobbs highlighted the important place of the <i>thumos</i> (spirit) in <i>The Republic</i> as a major component of Plato's psychology. The <i>thumos</i> is the part of the soul that centres on 'the need to believe that one counts for something'. At the heart of this need is the 'tendency to form an ideal image of oneself in accordance with one's conception of the fine and noble' (p.30). It manifests itself both in the capacity for anger and shame, and in the need for role models that embody one's aspirant self-image. Closely associated to the <i>thumos</i> is Plato's concept of <i>andreia</i> (courage) introduced in Book IV of <i>The Republic</i>. Hobbs shows how the tripartite psychology of <i>The Republic</i>, which now includes the <i>thumos</i>, allows Plato to account for the virtue of courage, something he failed to do in previous dialogues. The <i>thumos</i>, understood in Plato's earlier dialogues as 'manliness', can be influenced by proper education in which role models play an important role.</p> <p>Another central theme of her book is whether Plato's concept of courage should be equated with the predominantly male attributes of warfare and physical prowess. This has implications for whether women can have courage and thereby true human flourishing. Hobbs argues that Plato re-shapes the notion of courage to make it suitable for philosophical life and therefore gender neutral, but that Plato continued to use 'manly' language as a way of attracting men to the philosophical life. This use of gendered language and imagery and how it reflects Plato's views about women is also explored elsewhere in Hobbs' research. Hobbs argues that Plato uses both male and female imagery to represent philosophy. Gender is an inevitable part of everyday life and thus an acceptable reference point for rhetorical and pedagogical purposes. Ultimately, Plato believes that ascension to the realm of non-gendered forms is the ultimate human goal, rendering gender irrelevant.</p> |
| <p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p><u>Monographs:</u> <i>Plato and the Hero</i>, Cambridge University Press, 2000; Pbk, 2006. [Peer Reviewed; international</p> |

Impact case study (REF3b)

university press]

Contributions to Collections:

'The Symposium' and 'Women' in *The Continuum Companion to Plato*, ed. Gerald A. Press, associated editors Francisco Gonzalez, Debra Nails, Harold Tarrant. Continuum: London and New York, 2012, pp. 93-5 and 255-7.

'Female Imagery in Plato' in *Plato's Symposium: Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, eds. Frisbee C.C. Sheffield, J.H. Lesher, Debra Nails, Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA and London, 2006, pp. 252-271.

'Plato on War' in *Maieusis*, ed. D. Scott, Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 176-94. [Peer reviewed; international university press]

'Plato', 'Aristotle', 'Greek Political Thought', 'Socrates', and the 'Sophists' in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*. Oxford University Press, 1996; 2nd edn., 2008. [Peer reviewed; international university press]

'Virtue, Philosophical Conceptions of' and 'Virtue, Popular Conceptions of' in *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. M. Gagarin. Oxford University Press, 2010. [Peer reviewed; international university press]

Evidence of quality:

Reviews: *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* (13.4.2001) described *Plato and the Hero* as a 'thoughtful and important book' and *The Review of Metaphysics* (Dec 2001) described it as a 'remarkable study [which] breaks new ground in Platonic scholarship'. It has also been reviewed in the *American Journal of Philology* (2002), *Classical Philology* (2002), *Classical Review* (2003) and the *Philosophical Review* (2002).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Hobbs' research on Plato's ethics has underpinned her work engaging the public with philosophy. In her media appearances and public talks she has used ancient Greek philosophy to present new arguments and expression for public discourse about contemporary social and political issues. She has provided expert advice to government departments and charities on the value of philosophy in education. The beneficiaries of her activities include UK and international broadcasters and their audiences, primary and secondary schools, policymakers, and educational charities.

Media

By speaking about her research on a range of television and radio programmes, including historical programmes, features, current affairs and news shows, Hobbs has offered new knowledge about the ancient world, skills in reasoning, and a different perspective on social and political issues. For instance, Hobbs participated in a panel discussion on the London riots, a live broadcast from Birmingham city hall of the BBC Radio 4 programme *Today* (live audience of 800; 5.9.2011). In response to government comments that the rioters were 'a shameless, feral underclass', Hobbs argued that 'few human beings are without a sense of honour and shame and a desire for status and desire to count for something', which draws directly on her research about Plato's concept of the *thumos* and 'the need to believe that one counts for something'. Her appearance a few days later on *The Moral Maze* 'What are prisons for?' elicited a number of listener responses. One email from a former criminal defence solicitor said, 'I feel very strongly about the way people talk about youths who commit criminal offences and I found what you said both sensitive and sensible and I really appreciated hearing your viewpoint. I thought that you showed a true understanding of the way those who I used to represent functioned.' [08.09.2011]

Her media appearances since 2008 include the *Today* programme on morality and tax avoidance (28.7.2012; avg 6.6 million listeners), *Nightwaves* (17.5.2012 on athletic performance and human potential; 8.11.2010 on Heroes; 300,000 on the day listeners), *Start the Week* on heroism and bravery (23.5.2011, avg 1.5 million listeners), *Woman's Hour* (29.12.2011 on New Year's Resolutions, self-fulfilment and human flourishing; avg 4 million listeners) and more than 20 appearances on *In Our Time* (sample topics: Aristotle's Politics and Poetics; Neoplatonism and Heraclitus; avg 2.2 million on the day listeners). She has written articles for national newspapers on ethics: *The Guardian's* 'Citizen's Ethics in a Time of Crisis' ('Ethics of Money'; 11.7K reads and 5.1K embedded views on Scribd) and has been interviewed for the *Financial Times* and the *New*

York Times.

Many of her media appearances have been on programmes that cover news and current affairs showing that producers recognise the value that a philosophical perspective can bring to discussion about contemporary issues. Audience responses demonstrate that her input resonates with the listening public. As an example of the many emails she receives from listeners: 'Firstly I should say I would have previously been a little dismissive of philosophy or the study of philosophy as a course. However, listening to your interview on Radio 4 was really interesting and you drew me in with what you had to say and how the study of philosophy can enrich your life....As a 36 year old sales manager, I am not likely to go back to university but I would be interested in learning more.' [17.10.2009]

Media producers who have invited Hobbs on to their shows have expressed their appreciation for the value her perspective adds: 'Thank you so much for coming on STW [*Start the Week*] this morning – I thought you presented your definition of heroes extremely well, and I'm very grateful for the work you did in thinking about the questions for the other guests. Think of us in the future if you have any interesting projects.' [23.05.2011] Melvyn Bragg, presenter of *In Our Time*, has said that Hobbs has been on the programme 'more than any other contributor since it began 14 years ago! Her ability to explain philosophy is remarkable. She can explain it to the lay person both succinctly and comprehensively while never letting go of the complexity and weight of the issue involved.' [20.04.2012] Fellow public philosophers have also expressed admiration and appreciation for Hobbs' work: 'I've been following your work for a long time now, with huge appreciation. You have utterly mastered your brief, delivering first rate philosophy and true public engagement.' [10.01.2011]

Public Events

She has contributed to public discourse and enriched cultural life by speaking about her research at public events such as the Hay-on-Wye Literary Festival (2012), Bristol Festival of Ideas (2011), Cheltenham Literary Festival (2011) and the BBC Radio 3 Free Thinking Festival (2010). Broadcast simultaneously on Radio 3, her talk on 'Heroes' was the 'Radio Choice' in *The Daily Express* (08.11.2010) and the 'Pick of the Day' in *The Daily Telegraph* (06.11.2010). As Chair of the Trustees of the Institute of Art and Ideas (2010-11) she was responsible for overseeing the organisation of the Trust's festival *How the Light Gets In*, which aims 'to get philosophy out of the academy and into people's lives.' She has also spoken at the festival (2010-12) about her research on Plato, love, metaphor and the myth of Atlantis. The Event Producer said of her contribution that 'the truth talk was one of the highlights of Saturday.' [01.06.2010] In 2010, she was appointed 'Town Philosopher' for Malmesbury, Wiltshire where she also speaks at their annual philosophy festival.

Educational and Charitable Activities

Hobbs has provided expert advice to government departments and charitable organisations about the benefits of teaching philosophy in schools. She was invited to become an Honorary Patron of the educational charity, The Philosophy Foundation, and supports the voluntary organisation SAPERE who promote philosophy in schools and communities. As Honorary Patron of The Philosophy Foundation, Hobbs was invited to attend a meeting with the senior policy adviser at the Department for Education and staff from the National Curriculum Review and the Curriculum Policy divisions to discuss including philosophy in the new national curriculum (07.12.2011). She participated in the Philosopher's Football Match in May 2010 to raise awareness of the 4Rs campaign (reading, writing, arithmetic and reasoning). She has spoken at conferences on philosophy in education: she was the keynote at the 'Philosophy and Education' conference at Rugby School, May 2012; *The Sunday Times* 'Festival of Education', June 2011, where she spoke to audiences including politicians and educators; and she was an invited speaker at the LSE's Roundtable on 'Philosophy for Children' (23.06.2011) where she spoke about how a school philosophy programme can benefit from ancient Greek philosophy to an audience which included school heads, charities, academics and policy advisors. The organiser has said that 'The feedback I have had from everyone I have spoken to has been incredibly good – an in particular about your presentation, which was brilliant! Thank you so much for all your support and help here.'

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[30.06.2011] Hobbs has also given talks to A-level students (nearly 20 schools since 2008). Feedback from her school visits include: 'Thank you so much for another stimulating talk. The students were both stretched and fascinated, and I was reminded that Aristotle's position is far more complex than A Level textbooks allow.' [16.05.2011]

Further evidence of the sapience that philosophy can contribute to public discourse on major issues is highlighted by a speech in the House of Lords by Bragg about cuts to arts funding (03.02.2011), 'By chance, I did a radio programme on Aristotle last week...Professor Angie Hobbs of Warwick University pointed out that Aristotle thought of art as much more central to human existence than mere pleasure. He believed that the correct appreciation of art was crucial for the formation of a person's character and would improve their behaviour in society as a whole.'

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Select media appearances:

Radio: *In Our Time*, *Today*, *Start the Week*, *The Moral Maze*, *Women's Hour*, *In Doubt we Trust* (2 part series) (all BBC Radio 4), *Nightwaves* (BBC Radio 3), BBC Scotland, BBC Coventry and Warwickshire, 16.10.10 (Fairness) and 12.2.10 (Love) (avg. weekly listeners 86,000), Just Radio London, Newstalk Ireland, North Cotswold Community Radio.

Television: 'Finding Atlantis' (Documentary), Discovery Channel (CAN) 27.3.2011, National Geographic (USA) 13.3.2011, 'Atlantis – the Evidence', Timewatch Special, BBC 2, 2 June 2010 (1.95 million viewers, BARB; 11th highest ranked programme on BBC2 that week); also repeated nearly 20 times up to 2012.

Print and Online Media:

'A government that doesn't look at equal access to basic healthcare and education can't be fair', *The Guardian*, 3.1.2011 <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/video/2011/jan/03/philosophy-education-angie-hobbs>;

'Citizen Ethics in a Time of Crisis', *The Guardian*, 20.02.2010

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/feb/20/citizen-ethics-time-of-crisis>;

'A Platonic Tonic for the Bleak Greeks', *Financial Times*, 30.4.2010 (2.1 million readers print and online). Reprinted in *The New York Times* (3.5.2010) as the 'Idea of the Week' (1.5 million daily print readers).

Select public engagement events:

- Hay-on-Wye Literary Festival, June 2012
- 'How the Light Gets In', Hay-on-Wye, June 2011 and 2012
- Free Thinking Festival, BBC Radio 3, November 2010
- Bristol Festival of Ideas, May 2011
- Cheltenham Literary Festival, October 2011
- Malmesbury Festival, from October 2010-present

School Talks: She has given talks to students at nearly 20 schools since 2008 including Bournemouth School for Girls, November 2010; King Edward School, Birmingham, Oct. 2010; Kenilworth School, Sep. 2010; Malmesbury School; Norwich School Mar. 2011; Oakham School; The Philosophy Zone, Rugby School (various events), 2009-10.

School Conferences: *The Sunday Times*' 'Festival of Education', Wellington College, Jun. 2011; LSE's Roundtable on 'Philosophy for Children', Jun. 2011; 'Education and Philosophy', Rugby School, May 2012.

Membership in charitable organisations:

- Chair of the Trust, Institute of Arts and Ideas, 2010-2011
- Honorary Patron, The Philosophy Foundation, 2011-present
- Town Philosopher, Malmesbury, Wilts, Jan 2010-present

Melvyn Bragg's speech: *Lords Hansard*, Vol. 724, No. 106, (03.02.2011), p. 1530.

Feedback from audiences, event organisers and media producers was collected by email.