

<p><b>Institution: University of Roehampton</b></p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> Panel D, UoA 33 Theology and Religious Studies</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> Catholicism, authority and dissent – academic freedom and magisterial authority in conflict.</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This case study focuses on Professor Tina Beattie’s contribution to high-profile debates concerning academic freedom, Catholic universities and church teaching. Beattie’s research has had an influential impact on public discourse, through her interventions on same-sex marriage, the new atheism, and women in religion. The reach and influence of her public work is extended by journalism and media appearances, international lectures, and contributions to education and awareness-raising programmes in religious orders, parishes, universities and schools.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>This case study is underpinned by Professor Tina Beattie’s body of published research, undertaken at the University of Roehampton, since 2002. Three monographs constitute an extended investigation into the significance of gender in the Catholic tradition, augmented by published research on Catholic social teaching and theology and human rights, including women’s reproductive rights. <i>God’s Mother, Eve’s Advocate</i> (2002) is an inter-disciplinary study of the cult of the Virgin Mary, focusing on patristic and contemporary theology, French feminism and the visual arts. This was followed by twelve years of further research into gender in the Catholic tradition.</p> <p>Developing this research in engagement with the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar (a significant influence on postconciliar theology), <i>New Catholic Feminism</i> (2006) was the output of a Leverhulme research fellowship. By analysing gender constructs in theology and theory, <i>New Catholic Feminism</i> challenges the sexual essentialisms and heterosexual norms of modern Catholic teaching, bringing into play a more polymorphous sacramentality of gender. It offers a searching critique of Anglo-American feminist theory and feminist theology, arguing that a more radical appreciation of the significance of sacramental practice is needed if the inherently deconstructive potential of sacramental theology is to disrupt the dualistic essentialisms of modernity’s sexual constructs.</p> <p>Probing into these questions more deeply, <i>Theology after Postmodernity</i> (2013) is an in-depth study of Thomas Aquinas’s <i>Summa Theologiae</i> in engagement with Jacques Lacan. The result of six years of research, partly funded by the AHRC, this engages with recent studies that point to the influence of Aquinas on Lacan’s thought. Focusing on Lacanian themes of desire, sexuality, mysticism, embodiment and violence, and taking seriously his preoccupation with the formative influence of the doctrines of creation and incarnation on western culture, it seeks to unearth neglected and repressed themes in Aquinas’s work, allowing for the emergence of a creation-centred, maternal Trinitarian theology. Learning from but going beyond Lacan, it offers a Thomism for our times, in which the ‘unspeakable abyss’ of postmodern nihilism becomes the ‘unsayable plenitude’ of the divine mystery.</p> <p>These three books form the scholarly bedrock of Beattie’s public engagements, journalism and collaborative work, which is supplemented by a large number of journal articles and book chapters.</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b> (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>Beattie, T. <i>Theology After Postmodernity: Divining the Void</i> (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). REF2</p> <p>Beattie, T. ‘The Baptism of Eros’ in <i>Theology and Sexuality</i>, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2003/2: pp. 167-179 – journal article reprinted in Stephen Hunt (ed.), <i>Christianity</i> (London: Ashgate, 2010). DOI: 10.1177/135583580200900115.</p> <p>Beattie, T. ‘Queen of Heaven’ in Gerard Loughlin (ed.), <i>Queer Theology: New Perspectives on Sex and Gender</i> (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2007).</p> <p>Beattie, T. <i>New Catholic Feminism: Theology and Theory</i> (London and New York: Routledge,</p>

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2006).

Beattie, T. *Gender, Religion & Diversity: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004) – co-edited reader with chapter and introductions written by Beattie.

Beattie, T. *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate: A Marian Narrative of Women's Salvation* (London and New York: Continuum, 2002). Available on request from submitting institution.

### Research Grants:

**Autumn 2004:** Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship (£9,300) for one semester's sabbatical to enable completion of book subsequently published by Routledge (*New Catholic Feminism: Theology and Theory*)

**Spring 2008:** Research leave funded by AHRC (£25,275), following institutional research leave in Autumn 2007. The project on women's rights, human rights and natural law was ranked 5\* by the AHRC referees. (Research published as *Theology after Postmodernity* and in several journal articles)

**June 2011:** Award from Southlands Methodist Trust (£10,000) to organise a conference in September 2012 on 'Women, Authority and Leadership in Christianity and Islam' (joint application with Dr. Simonetta Calderini).

### **3. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

Beattie's high public profile and impact on public discourse has been sustained through non-academic publications, the communication of her research more broadly, and collaboration with NGOs (CAFOD, Joint Learning Initiative, Progressio, QUEST). These research-driven interventions have been a key resource in challenging cultural values around some of the most neuralgic issues affecting Catholics in contemporary society.

#### *Reach:*

Beattie is committed to engaging with wider publics in ways which draw on her body of research. Since 2008, public lectures and media appearances have reached a wide international audience. She has participated in debates about changes in civil law relating to same-sex marriage, including the Westminster Faith Debates in 2013, and a debate between the British Humanist Association and Catholic Voices when she was part of the BHA panel in 2012. Beattie has also contributed to online debate in *The Guardian*, including an online series of eight articles on Thomas Aquinas for *The Guardian*. Based on the research for *Theology After Postmodernity* (2013), the series attracted over 3,000 comments from registered website users, and stimulated debate about the rationality of religious faith and differing interpretations of Aquinas. Media appearances include BBC, Sky, RTÉ, Al Jazeera, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and various American news and television outlets, which have contributed to public awareness and discourse. Beattie is also consulted and widely quoted by journalists (*The Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, the *BBC*). Her writings have been translated into Norwegian, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, French and Romanian.

As a member of CAFOD's Theological Advisory Group, Beattie's research on Catholic social teaching and women's rights reaches beyond public audiences, and has informed CAFOD policy relating to the development and promotion of the 'Live Simply' campaign, and the implementation of Catholic Social Teaching in policy and education. She writes for CAFOD publications and contributes to CAFOD'S awareness-raising campaigns, including the World Social Forum in Nairobi. She is also a Director of and theological advisor to the influential Catholic weekly, *The Tablet*. She has acted as an advisor to various women's religious orders (such as the Little Sisters of the Poor and the Society of the Sacred Heart), in helping them to develop their charisms and formulate their visions through an informed dialogue with feminist theology.

#### *Significance:*

The significance of Beattie's research-led intervention in public discourse is illustrated by one high-profile example. In August 2012, she and twenty-six others signed a letter to *The Times*, arguing

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that Catholics could in good conscience support same-sex civil marriage. Her decision was informed by her research and demonstrates its social relevance. A complaint was made to the Head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the Vatican (CDF), who instructed the Bishop of Clifton to cancel a public lecture Beattie was due to give in Clifton cathedral. This unprecedented intervention with regard to a lay theologian in a secular university caused widespread protest. No other signatory was censured, despite the fact that these included several priests and theologians. Beattie might have been singled out because of her high public profile and the nature of her research, which has also been the target of conservative Catholic bloggers, and is evident in commentary on the range of public engagement activities she undertakes.

Following this event, in November 2013, Beattie's visiting fellowship at the University of San Diego (USD) was cancelled at short notice by the USD President, after a campaign by a powerful coalition of funders and Catholic public figures, supported by a senior Vatican official (full report in the *National Catholic Reporter*: <http://ncronline.org/news/theology/theologians-disinvite-linked-vatican-supported-group>). The extensive media coverage prompted on-going international debate. USD students formed a Facebook group – 'Toreros Stand With Beattie' – attracting over 500 supporters, with demonstrations and debates on campus, and public lectures. The faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences passed a vote of no confidence in the President, and several senior faculty members and alumni called for her resignation. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) with 47,000 members, wrote to the USD President expressing serious concern about the violation of academic freedom, and in September 2013 the President of the AAUP took part in a debate about the case at USD, organised by concerned faculty and students.

The controversy generated widespread discourse not only about the nature of academic freedom, but also around Beattie's theological perspectives on homosexuality in particular. Since the cancellation of Beattie's lecture and visiting fellowship, it has become evident that her work on religion, sexuality and gender has become a valuable resource - extending and increasing the quality of debate and discourse within the Catholic church and increasing the possibilities for more informed debate. For example, she has been approached by an Ambassador to the Holy See for advice on Catholic theological attitudes towards women, sexuality and reproduction

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

*Examples of Beattie's contributions to public discourse, through high-profile lectures and commentary in the media:*

Westminster Faith Debates: <http://faithdebates.org.uk/debates/2013-debates/religion-and-personal-life/do-christians-oppose-gay-marriage/>).

British Humanist Association: <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/same-sex-marriage-debate-held-in-england>

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/cardinals-resignation-fuels-crisis-of-churchs-moral-authority/2013/02/25/7ea1e346-7f8e-11e2-a671-0307392de8de\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/cardinals-resignation-fuels-crisis-of-churchs-moral-authority/2013/02/25/7ea1e346-7f8e-11e2-a671-0307392de8de_story.html)

'What Has Religion Done For Women', BBC Radio 2, 25 October 2011. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b016c6kx>

Eight-part series on Thomas Aquinas: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/series/how-to-believe>

*Evidence of debate around academic freedom and same-sex marriage:*

<https://www.facebook.com/TorerosStandWithBeattie>, 536 'likes'. <accessed 10th April, 2013>.

Lizzy Davies, 'USD university accused of "Sovietisation" of Catholic intellectual life', *The Guardian*, 1 November 2012: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/nov/01/us-university-sovietisation-catholic>

*'A leading British historian has accused a US university of "colluding in the Sovietisation" of Roman Catholic intellectual life after it rescinded an invitation to a prominent liberal theologian who has argued the case for same-sex marriage on the grounds that she "dissent[s] publicly" from the Church's moral teachings. ... Eamon Duffy, professor of the History of Christianity at Cambridge, has urged the university to reconsider. "It is deeply dispiriting that the president of a Catholic university should characterise academic discussion and debate among Catholics as 'dissent', and should seek to suppress academic exchange by black-balling an individual whom the church has not condemned," he wrote in a letter to the university's president, Mary Lyons.'*

Matthew T. Hall, 'Same-sex marriage debate roils USD campus', *UT-San Diego*, November 19, 2012: <http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2012/nov/19/same-sex-marriage-debate-roils-usd-campus/all/>:

*'The Catholic University of San Diego has become an unlikely battleground in the culture war over marriage. ... [T]he fact that Catholics are rushing to defend Beattie's ability to tell others they can "in good conscience" support same-sex marriage speaks to how far we have come in recognizing this as a civil-rights issue.'*

Michael J. O'Loughlin, 'Theologian uninvited to U of San Diego', *America* magazine, 3 November, 2012: <http://americamagazine.org/content/all-things/theologian-uninvited-u-san-diego>:

*The University of San Diego has rescinded an invitation to a British theologian who had been asked to spend several weeks at the Roman Catholic university as a visiting fellow because of her views on social issues, including her public support for gay marriage. ... Beattie, a practicing Catholic, has published extensively on gender issues and the church.*

Joseph Patrick McCormick, 'US: University accused of pulling fellowship for pro-marriage equality theologian' *Pink News* – 'Europe's largest gay news service', 3 November 2012: <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2012/11/03/us-university-accused-of-pulling-fellowship-for-pro-marriage-equality-theologian/>

*'The University of San Diego has been accused of withdrawing a fellowship which had been offered to a theologian, after it found out she was in favour of marriage equality.'*

*The Tablet*, 'Academics protest against university's ban on Beattie': <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/article/163419>

*'LEADING THEOLOGIANS have written to protest against the decision by an American Catholic university to rescind a visiting fellowship to Professor Tina Beattie. She has also received personal support from the Catholic Theological Association of Great Britain (CTA), of which she is a former president.'*

Anne Hendershott, 'The Upside-Down World of Catholic Higher Education': *Crisis* magazine, 30 November, 2012: <http://www.crisismagazine.com/2012/the-upside-down-world-of-catholic-higher-education>

*'[A]fter a decade of honors and accolades from Catholic institutions, Beattie's writings are finally receiving some criticism.'*

Protect the Pope, 'One hundred people attend Tina Beattie's Year of Faith lecture for Archdiocese of Westminster': <http://protectthepope.com/?p=6857>

*'One hundred people attended Prof Tina Beattie's lecture for the Archdiocese of Westminster's Year of Faith series held at St John Vianney parish on the 16th February. Just the week before Prof. Beattie had again publicly supported gay marriage on the day of the vote in the House of Commons, and will speak in favour of same-sex marriage in an upcoming Westminster Faith debate. ... Did the CDF contact the Archdiocese of Westminster about their plans to allow Prof. Beattie to speak in their official Year of Faith lecture series?'*