

Places and Times: Searching for a Theological *Topica*

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THE PHRASES “signs of the times” and *loci theologici* are oft-cited headings for two intersecting themes in theological research that continue to provide an interpretative matrix and in their combination something of a *sensus communis* for perceiving many of the recently resurgent controversies in the Church of our day. The following reflections will attempt to show some commonalities and intersections between these two sites of theological discourse, including the need to situate both within a larger theological discussion.

The first phrase has been a central and frequently used *topos* for the program of Catholic reform and updating, which not only achieved instant popularity but then also matured during the Second Vatican Council, thanks to some key ecumenical lessons, some of which meanwhile seem to have been largely forgotten. The phrase gained its initial currency especially with the publication of the vernacular versions of *Pacem in Terris* by Pope John XXIII between the first two sessions of the Second Vatican Council.¹ It was assigned significant weight in the commission work on what would become *Gaudium et Spes* [GS] and especially in the drafts discussed in 1964.

¹ Even in today’s Italian version of the encyclical on the official Vatican website, the expression *Segni dei tempi* occurs eight times, introducing the sections beginning with §§21, 45, 67, and 75 and in footnote 1, with its citation of the first Italian version from 1963, where the phrase is used to articulate four of the major sections of the text. The seemingly secondary, Latin version posted on the same site lacks the corresponding terms (e.g., *signa temporum*) in the body of the encyclical text, but quotes *Segni dei tempi* in the Italian citation included in note 1. All citations from magisterial documents are taken from the Vatican website unless otherwise stated. All translations from others sources are original to the present author unless otherwise stated.

The “signs of the times” took on nuance and complexity in the final year of the Council, due in no small part to the influential interventions of Lukas Vischer, official observer from the World Council of Churches.² At least since his critical letter of April 18, 1963, to those responsible for the commission on the laity, Vischer’s voice was welcome in particular for the development of what was still called schema XVII, soon schema XIII, and finally *Gaudium et Spes*.³ Particularly influential for the topic under discussion here was Vischer’s memorandum from October 1964, with reference directly to the amended “Zurich draft” (February 1964) of what was developing into *Gaudium et Spes*.⁴ Though less than six pages in length, Vischer’s widely distributed memorandum warned convincingly against viewing “the signs of the times” in an overly optimistic, even romantic, exaggeration of the beneficent divine dynamic immanent in cultural trends. Vischer’s alternative sense of the complexity and ambivalence of the signs of the times led already during the Council to that more qualified use of the term found in *Gaudium et Spes* §4 and to greater attention to the structures of sin frequently present in the signs of the times and their readings, anticipating the impressive Latin American reception of the theme in the first years following the Council.⁵ Although Vischer did not cite it as an argument, his sense of the biblical meaning of the task of scrutinizing the signs of at best ambivalent times corresponded more closely to the *Zeitgefühl* of a century marked spiritually by its two world

² The text of Lukas Vischer’s memorandum, entitled “Signa temporum,” was widely disseminated and can be found today among others in the Archives du Conseil Oecuménique des Églises, Geneva, 5.17. It will be cited here from Bishop Marco McGrath’s copy, preserved by University of Notre Dame Archives: Marcos McGrath Papers, Box 1, Folder 3, University of Notre Dame Archives, Indiana, USA (CMCG 1/03, UNDA). We will return to Vischer’s temporal semiotics after a consideration of loci-theology. The author wishes to thank the archivists at the University of Notre Dame for their hospitality and assistance.

³ See Charles Moeller, “Pastorale Konstitution über die Kirche in der Welt von heute: Einleitung,” in *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil. Konstitutionen, Dekrete, Erklärungen. Kommentare Teil III*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler et al., Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche 14 (Freiburg: Herder 1968), 251–60.

⁴ See Norbert Tanner, “Kirche in der Welt: Ecclesia ad extra,” in *Geschichte des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, vol. 4, *Die Kirche als Gemeinschaft, September 1964 – September 1965* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters 2006): 317–18.

⁵ See Richard Schenk, “*Officium signa temporum perscrutandi*: New Encounters of Gospel and Culture in the Context of the New Evangelisation,” in *Scrutinizing the Signs of the Times in Light of the Gospel*, ed. Johan Verstraeten, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 208 (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters 2007), 167–203.

wars and by much of what had occurred in their shadows. The excessive optimism of the myth that Vischer criticized as unbiblical would soon be out of date again, even in the wider cultural world of our times. Contrary to initial plans, the “signs of the times” were no longer read in *GS*, nor later by CELAM (*Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano* [Latin American Episcopal Council]), merely as expressions of God’s good favor. The dialectic surrounding the *signa temporum* found a parallel in the reception of the second phrase, *loci theologici*, refigured in light of the attention paid in theological circles to the rediscovery of the importance of “place” in the cultural sciences. The significance of geographical and metaphorical place, as opposed to the notion of mere space, would eventually provide a new lens of “local” intentionality by which to look with greater nuance and precision than before at the debates on temporal semiotics focused on the theological significance of human history and cultural transformation.⁶ The following reflections will deal chiefly with recent developments of local or loci-theology.

The intersection of these two fields of theological reflection on times and places became a major theme in the post-conciliar refiguration of Melchior Cano’s writings on the authoritative “places” or sources of theology, most especially the last of the *loci* that Cano himself had identified, the one that he predicted would be key to future theological work: the *humanae auctoritas historiae*.⁷ Notably, in German-language theology since the Council, two alternative attempts to develop Cano’s loci-theology emerged on the localization of theological sources, the authoritative place of human history in theology, and more specifically how these considerations might help the Church to fulfill the task identified in *Gaudium et Spes* as “the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel” (*GS* §4). While the distance between the two lines of development in local or loci-theologies might be narrowing in some of

⁶ See above all Hans-Joachim Sander, “Theologischer Kommentar zur Pastoral-konstitution über die Kirche in der Welt von heute *Gaudium et spes*,” in *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, vol. 4, ed. Peter Hünermann and Bernd Jochen Hilberath (Freiburg: Herder 2005), 581–886.

⁷ In the following, the Latin text of Melchior Cano, *De locis theologicis*, will be cited according to the electronic version prepared and made available by Juan Belda Plans: [scribd.com/doc/36459123/Melchor-Cano-De-locis-theologicis-latin](https://www.scribd.com/doc/36459123/Melchor-Cano-De-locis-theologicis-latin). Belda Plans used his informal Latin edition as the basis for his Spanish translation of Cano’s *magnum opus*, adding an introduction, an apparatus of sources, and footnotes: Melchior Cano, *De locis theologicis*, ed. prepared for Juan Belda Plans (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2006). The most obvious mistakes of the scanning program have been corrected here without further record.

the most recent theoretical discourse among leading specialists, the better known differences regarding place and time seem to remain paradigmatic for the current state of more broadly discussed controversies in much of German-language theology and ecclesiastical polity.⁸

Rival Retrievals of Theological Locality

With characteristic *parrhesia*,⁹ Michel Foucault, whose work would become especially important to one of the directions in loci-theology, began a radio talk in 1966, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,” with the bold claim: “The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history. . . . The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space.”¹⁰ Foucault did not shy away from characterizing his own fascina-

⁸ See on the web page of the German Bishops Conference (DBK) the representative remark by its deputy president, Franz-Josef Bode, bishop of Osnabrück: “What is needed is a prophetically critical and at the same time positive, appreciative, and challenging perception of today’s realities. For the ‘listening heart,’ the one listening namely to the reality of human beings in their joys and hopes, their sorrows and anxieties (see *GS* §1), this reality will be come, perhaps not a source of revelation or faith, but a voice of God, expressing his will in the signs of the times, which can lead us to deeper theological insights” (katholisch.de/aktuelles/aktuelle-artikel/absage-an-eine-alles-oder-nichts-moral).

⁹ See Joseph Pearson’s edition of the final English-language lectures that Foucault held in Berkeley in 1983. Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech* (Los Angeles: Semiotext[e] 2001). Corrected by Foucault, they have also been made more accessible to German readers by Mira Köller’s translation as *Diskurs und Wahrheit: Die Problematisierung der Parrhesia* (Berlin: Merve, 1996). The characteristic dismissal of the New Testament sense of parrhesia in comparison to pre-Christian antiquity need not preclude a theological appreciation of Foucault’s analysis.

¹⁰ See the trans. by Jay Miskowiec, web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf. Michel Foucault, “Des espaces autres” (1967), in a redaction somewhat more prosaic than the initial radio talks. The text was included in the posthumous collection *Dits et Écrits*, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), vol. 4, no. 36, and translated into German by Michael Bischoff, in *Schriften in vier Bänden: Dits et Écrits*, vol. 4, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 2005), 931–42, and reproduced in an influential collection of pioneering texts on theories of place, *Raumtheorie: Grundlagentexte aus Philosophie und Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. Jörg Dünne and Stephan Günzel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2006), 317–29. The text of the earlier radio broadcast was translated for Foucault, *Die Heterotopien, Der utopische Körper: Zwei Radiovorträge* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2014), 7–22, 37–52. In an afterword, “Raum zum Hören” (67–92), Defert describes in detail the broadcasts, their transcription in the periodical, *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité* (October, 1984), and the minor redactions for *Dits et Écrits*. The explicit concept of “heterotopia,” which does not find the extensive discussion in Foucault’s works that its theological reception would suggest,

tion with cultural space as obsessive. He articulated the progression of the images of space dominant in successive historical epochs as a shift from (1) the medieval predominance of “emplacement,” where different beings had in advance their proper places, through (2) the sense of abstract and pluripotent “extension” in early modernity, to (3) today’s preoccupation with “sites” as constructed, neighboring places viewed in their qualitative difference from other such places. “Today the site has been substituted for extension which itself had replaced emplacement.”¹¹ Shortly before his death in 1984 Foucault recalled with critical irony the widespread rivalry that some twenty years earlier had played off one party against another in competition for the primacy of time or place before its counterpart.¹² Without a doubt, however, the greater recent attention to the theological significance of place has qualified the kind of meaning sought in the signs of the times.

The rival post-conciliar refigurations of Cano’s *loci theologici* confirm Foucault’s sense of site, at least inasmuch as they situate opposite sides for reading and reworking Cano’s topics, with different weights ascribed to what Cano called the *loci proprii* and/or the *loci alieni* of theology. Neither line of recent development is concerned with a rehabilitation of Cano’s personal, ecclesiastical, or political polemics, which have become ever more documented in recent research.¹³ Both of these newer directions see

appeared several months prior to the radio broadcast in the preface to *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1966). In the context of a reference to Jorge Luis Borges, Foucault contrasts the all-too stabilizing effect of utopia with the unsettling dynamic proceeding from heterotopia. The recent reception of Foucault’s brief references to heterotopia by local theologies is interested chiefly in this latter dynamic, e.g., Christian Bauer, *Ortswechsel der Theologie. M.-Dominique Chenu im Kontext seiner Programmschrift Une école de théologie: La Saulchoir* (Berlin: LIT, 2010). Other, more programmatic concerns of Foucault, notably the power dynamics hidden behind the academic management of scientific concerns, implicitly including the internal dynamics of theological faculties, have yet to receive comparable theological attention. This omission has not been advantageous for a frank and accurate analysis of the places of safety and risk within the academic professions of our times.

¹¹ Michel Foucault, “Von anderen Räumen,” in Dünne and Günzel, *Raumtheorie*, 318.

¹² Foucault, *Die Heterotopien*, 88.

¹³ See Ulrich Horst, “Die ‘Loci Theologici’ Melchior Canos und sein Gutachten zum ‘Catechismo christiano’ Bartolomé Carranzas,” *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 36, no. 1/2 (1989): 47–92, and Boris Hogenmüller, “Cano und Carranza: Studien zur Authentizität von Melchior Canos Gutachten zu den ‘Comentarios al Catechismo christiano’ (1558) des Bartolomé Carranza,” *Theologie und Philosophie* 87 (2012): 18–24.

unrealized potential in an expanded and refigured consideration of the metaphorical use of *topos*. The kinds of authority associated with the *loci proprii* of theology have been understood by both lines of interpretation as distinctive witnesses to the faith (Bernhard Körner: *Bezeugungsinstanzen*), taken by diverse authors on both sides of the debate as corresponding to “extrinsic” or non-experiential sources of the faith of believers.¹⁴ Were the *loci proprii* the only sources of faith, the danger of extrinsecism would be difficult to avoid. For Cano himself, the *loci proprii* include (1) Scripture, (2) the oral Tradition of Christ and the Apostles, (3) the wider Church, (4) the Councils, (5) the Roman Church or Apostolic See, (6) the saints of the early Church, and (7) Scholastic theology and canonistic thought. Though, as Cano argues, the “authority” of these “authorities” differs from text to text and is often initially elusive (e.g., due to apparent conflicts between scriptural texts) but eventually accessible for each *locus*, these seven *loci* or *topoi* share with one another the direct intention to express the faith. In newer and thoroughly plausible interpretations, this list of *topoi* has been extended. The *loci proprii* enumerated by Cano himself have been broadened to include liturgy, ecumenism (pace Cano), and the spirituality expressed in the literary work of more recent believers, saintly in act or merely in potency. All are seen as distinct and irreducible dimensions of the *loci proprii*.¹⁵

Of a different genre, not initially or intentionally expressive of faith, are the three classes of *loci alieni* that Cano also identified for legitimate theological argumentation and, at least implicitly, for faith itself: (8) natural reason, taken *latissime* to include neighboring academic disciplines or sciences, augmented (9) by the work of philosophers or what since Hegel we have called the history of philosophy, and finally (10) by the work

¹⁴ For a notable exception, see Bernhard Körner, *Orte des Glaubens—loci theologici: Studien zur theologischen Erkenntnislehre* (Würzburg: Echter 2014), esp. 249–54.

¹⁵ For the line of interpretation consistent in its maintaining the differentiation and also the unity-in-tension of *loci proprii* and *loci alieni*, see: Bernhard Körner, Melchior Cano, *De locis theologicis: Ein Beitrag zur theologischen Erkenntnislehre* (Graz: Styria 1994); Körner, “Welche Rolle spielen die loci theologici in der Fundamentaltheologie?,” in *Wozu Fundamentaltheologie?*, ed. Josef Meyer zu Schöcktern and Roman Siebenrock (Paderborn: Schöningh 2010), 15–37; Körner, *Orte des Glaubens*. Körner develops here an interpretation first articulated by Max Seckler, “Die ekklesiologische Bedeutung des Systems der ‘loci theologici’: Erkenntnistheoretische Katholizität und strukturelle Weisheit,” in *Weisheit Gottes—Weisheit der Welt: Festschrift für J. Ratzinger zum 60. Geburtstag*, vol. 1, ed. Walter Baier et al. (St. Ottilien: EOS, 1987), 37–65, included the following year in Max Seckler, *Die schiefen Wände des Lehrhauses. Katholizität als Herausforderung* (Freiburg: Herder, 1988), 79–104.

of historians. These three *topoi*, all positions of direct or indirect experience—potentially, if not actually, one's own experience—by which or within which faith can be tested, affirmed, interrupted or revised (Körner: *Bewährungsinstanzen*). They are more “extrinsic”¹⁶ to the intentions of faith, but they are more intrinsic to the subjective experiential world of the believer. Were the *loci alieni* the only sources for speaking of the faith, the danger of “immanentism” would be difficult to avoid. Though not at first intended as expressions of faith, they are necessary for any adequate theological explication of what the faith is about. Though *alieni* in origin and character, they have become genuine *loci theologici*.

Two movements in recent local theology can be distinguished by the “direction” of their interest in the two genera of *loci*. In German-language theology, the two most prominent, in good part rival attempts at a contemporary reading and development of Cano's work on the “places of theology” could be described as “integrative” and “alienational” interpretations. The latter direction is most prominently represented by Hans-Joachim Sander's initial reception of Elmar Klinger's post-conciliar renewal of interest in Cano's ideas. Sander's own creative development of the possibilities of “local theology” is unsurpassed in German-language theology, generating an entire vocabulary of “local” theological terminology and identifying fields for its meaningful application. The alternative, more integrative project was developed thematically by Bernhard Körner's systematic extension of Max Seckler's responses to the criticisms of Klinger. The more integrative reading tries programmatically to maintain and synthesize the two genera of *loci* (*proprii* and *alieni*) in a relation that could be represented by the two *foci* of an ellipse; in this, it expresses many of the features articulated by Paul Ricoeur as the tension-in-unity of the idem and the ipse identities that a flourishing self must integrate with and for others in just institutions.¹⁷ The more alienational development of Cano's topics, while occasionally endorsing the elliptical metaphor,¹⁸ sought by means of an

¹⁶ Cicero will use the adverbial sense of *extrinsecus* to qualify the accidental relation of such *topoi* to the matter discussed, in *Topica*, 2.8: “Sed ex his locis in quibus argumenta inclusa sunt, alii in eo ipso de quo agitur haerent, alii adsumuntur extrinsecus, . . . extrinsecus autem ea ducuntur quae absunt longeque disiuncta sunt” (“Among the *topoi* in which arguments are involved, some of these belong to the very matter under discussion, others have been assumed from without [*extrinsecus*], . . . where the arguments drawn from without were initially missing and unconnected”).

¹⁷ See especially the 1990 studies by Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

¹⁸ For his earlier work, see Hans-Joachim Sander, “Die Kirchenkonstitution Gaud-

incompatible local model of the outside (das Aussen) and the “outsider” the normative dominance of what initially were foreign and uncongenial or “alien” places, sources, standards and situations of theology.¹⁹ Interpreters of this type refer frequently to the language of “heterotopology” in Foucault’s work, though with less concern for his more programmatic critique of contemporary non-ecclesial science and society. The alienational interpretation of Cano tends far more programmatically than its alternative or Foucault himself to equate the *humanae auctoritas historiae* with the authority of synchronic cultural trends in specific, contemporary *milieux*, close in their meaning to the earlier optimistic reading of “signs of the times.” The goal of theology is seen in the alienational model less as the search for a convergence of arguments drawn from irreducibly diverse sources into a faith identity (as in Seckler’s integrative development of Cano), and more as the emphatic preservation of a central place for the theologically normative and political power of that creative dissent from and within the magisterium which is drawn from a culture that does not

ium et spes: Die pastorale Ortsbestimmung kirchlicher Identität,” in *Kontroversen: Worum es sich in der Seelsorge zu streiten lohnt*, ed. Bernhard Spielberg and Astrid Schilling (Würzburg: Echter, 2001) 13–18, at 16; and Sander, “Fundamentaltheologie—eine Theologie der Andersorte der Theologie. Stellungnahme zu Bernhard Körner,” in zu Schöchtern and Siebnrock, *Wozu Fundamentaltheologie?*, 39–57.

- ¹⁹ See the observation by Klaus Müller on Sander’s earlier confusion of the metaphors of the ellipse with a nearly exclusive excentric: “On the credit-side of our ledger on this hermeneutic, I would include in the tally the identification of ecclesial identity with the figure of an ellipse. The stress just on the attention to be given to the alien character of what is addressed here falls, however, outside this elliptical logic” (“Auf Kenntlichkeit verpflichtet. Die Replik von Klaus Müller auf Hans-Joachim Sander,” in Spielberg and Schilling, *Kontroversen*, 27–29, at 27). Müller’s objection could well be sustained by contrasting the emphasis on alienational locality with the elliptical metaphor, implicit in Helmuth Plessner’s notion of the excentric positionality of the organic, with Remi Brague’s reflections on the excentric identity of “Roman” culture, or again with John Henry Newman’s remarks on the deficiencies and excesses of the assimilative power of faith in the development of doctrine. It is too soon to say where the intriguing geometrical metaphor of the “Moebius strip” in Sander’s recent work will lead, which visualizes in three dimensions the twists of historical development and some of the difficulties involved in distinguishing between inner and outer sides of the Moebius strip, or between intrinsic and extrinsic sources of theology, and between insiders and outsiders in academic and ecclesiastical circles. The image could be cited to illustrate synthetic and/or alienational models of local theology. See the first of the four volumes planned in cooperation with Gregor Maria Hoff: Hans-Joachim Sander, *Glaubensräume—Topologische Dogmatik*, vol. 1, *Glaubensräumen nachgehen* (Mainz: Grünewald, 2019).

otherwise tend to identify itself as Christian.²⁰

The alienational development of Cano stands in the service of a robust assimilation of ecclesial identity to select aspects of contemporary Western society. Given the external sources selected (without much account of how or by whom), it is *de facto* though not *de iure* a force of ecclesial self-secularization. The *loci alieni*, including the site described by Cano in a long and innovative chapter eleven as *historia humana*, are viewed here chiefly rather as expressions of our own and our times' immediate experience, articulated by increasingly "managed" sciences (8a), select late modern and postmodern philosophers (9a, notably Foucault and Charles Sanders Peirce²¹) and contemporary Western European cultural trends (10a), understood positively and paradigmatically as the *signa temporum*²² that urge an accommodation of present-day pastoral practice to contemporary thought and custom previously outside the Christian community.²³ Cano's

²⁰ See the critique of Seckler's defense of plurality as still too integrative in Elmar Klinger, "Der Dissens—ein Prinzip der Evangelisierung," in *Fides quaerens intellectum: Beiträge zur Fundamentaltheologie. Festschrift für Max Seckler*, ed. Michael Kessler, Wolhart Pannenberg, and Hermann Josef Pottmeyer (Tübingen: Franke, 1992), 210–21. A pastoral theology and praxis "criminalized" by the magisterium is said to be "possible and necessary—for dogmatic reasons" (Elmar Klinger, *Mich hat an der Theologie immer das Extreme interessiert: Elmar Klinger befragt von Rainer Bucher* [Würzburg: Echter, 2009], 100).

²¹ Though sometimes simply referenced under the shorthand of "heterotopology," more sustained developments of aspects of Foucault's thought have been provided by: Bauer, *Ortswechsel der Theologie*, 1:131–56; Ulrich Engel, "Ortswechsel. Das Kirche-Welt-Verhältnis in der Pastoralkonstitution Gaudium et spes als theologischer Interpretationsschlüssel für die Sozialenzyklika *Populorum progressio*," *Angelicum* 84, no. 3/4 (2007): 567–87; and, with an abstinence from the themes of cultural localization uncharacteristic of his earlier or later work, Hans-Joachim Sander, "Gott im Zeichen der Macht—ein Diskurs über die Moderne hinaus," in *Gottes und des Menschen Tod? Die Theologie vor der Herausforderung Michel Foucaults*, ed. Christian Bauer and Michael Hölzl (Mainz: Grünewald, 2003), 105–25.

²² See, e.g., Kuno Füßel, "Die Zeichen der Zeit als locus theologicus," in *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 30 (1983): 259–74.

²³ For the interpretative primacy of the *loci alieni* above all in the sense of the *signa temporum*, understood here consistently as genuine developments but never also as potential corruptions, together with the synchronic sense of the *locus theologiae alienus* of human "history," interpreted here (unlike in Cano) largely as the normative weight of contemporary social facticity, see the extensive work of Hans-Joachim Sander, "Das Außen des Glaubens—eine Autorität der Theologie: Das Differenzprinzip in den Loci Theologici des Melchior Cano," in *Das Volk Gottes: Ein Ort der Befreiung* (Festschrift Elmar Klinger), ed. Hans-Joachim Sander and Hildegard Keul (Würzburg: Echter, 1998), 240–58; Sander, "Theologischer

sense of a diachronic temporality is thus replaced here by a synchronic fixation on our own present cultural facticity viewed with minimal regard for either older traditions or the *saeculum futurum*. Alienational interpretations develop “local” theology with four steps that lead progressively away from Cano’s own intentions: first, “loci-theology” means here less a unity-in-tension of the two genera of *loci* than a decisive shift of gravity towards “alien” sources and contexts, an *Ortswechsel*; then, among the three groups of “alien” sources, “history” is accorded more weight than natural reason or philosophical discourse; and thirdly, history is considered less in its diachronic quality than as a synonym for select regions of the cultural world of our own times, typically without an account of how one “world” is preferred over another.²⁴

The fourth difference is the most basic. In book 11, Cano thematized the difficult but not insurmountable challenge that conflicting historical claims can pose to those who wish to utilize history in theology and other sciences.²⁵ He brings over twenty examples of contradictory claims to facts of sacred and secular history, but he then also resolves decisively or plausibly the conflicts. Cano offers a rough account of which historians are most reliable for which fields. Where a consensus of historical judgment is

Kommentar zur Pastoralkonstitution über die Kirche in der Welt von heute *Gaudium et spes*”; Sander, “Fundamentaltheologie.” Although the language of heterotopy and alterity is dominant throughout, the assimilation of faith to contemporary social facticity and the rejection of the kind of theocentric characterization of the loci once suggested by M. Seckler moves this position *nolens volens* in the direction of interiority. Sander is developing here the line of interpretation first suggested by: Elmar Klinger, *Ekklesiologie der Neuzeit: Grundlegung bei Melchior Cano und Entwicklung bis zum 2. Vatikanischen Konzil* (Freiburg: Herder, 1978); Klinger, “Der Dissens.”

²⁴ See on the official website of the German Bishops Conference (synodalerweg.de/english/) the presentation of “The Synodal Path” 2020: “Four Forums that worked until September 2019 had been set up to prepare the Synodal Path. . . . These are preparatory working papers which will be used in the deliberations of future Synodal Assemblies. The four Forums established so far, dealt with the topics of, Power, Participation and Separation of Powers,’ ‘Sexual morality,’ ‘Priestly form of Life,’ and Women in ministries and offices in the Church.” The refusal of the request by several participants on the “synodal path” to follow a suggestion by Pope Francis in his letter of June 29, 2019, to add a fifth forum on the renewal of the Catholic faith in the region reflects a choice for an alienational over an integrative model of theological locality.

²⁵ Cano begins his response in chapter 5 of book 11 to the objections against the reliability of history and historians with the remark: “It is necessary to answer the contrary objections, even when that proves difficult” (“Non est facile contrarias obiectiones excutere, sed excutiendae sunt tamen”; Belda Plans ed., 350).

reached, it can be viewed by the theologian as having the same certitude as evident human reason. By this process, Cano recalls Aristotle's sense of "topics" as a method for developing rational plausibility in fields of initial uncertainty, but he also suggests that a genuine development of his own thought would demand a similar account of how to test and navigate the conflicting claims of social and political facticity. This need for adjudication among conflicting claims characterizes the entire work. No *locus* of theological argumentation, from the Scriptures to human history, can be of help without a corresponding method of scrutiny and examination.²⁶

In sharp contrast, the synthetic or integrative interpretation of loci-theology seeks more programmatically than the alienational to read the abiding plurality and differentiation of necessary sources as key to the identification of a distinctive and genuine Christian faith. The flight from this identity can lead the alienational interpretation, despite its romantic emphasis of local terminology, towards what Marc Augé has described as the "non-place" of homogeneity and assimilation.²⁷ What ceases to come from and inhabit a particular place and situation starts to resemble all others, and loses its "place." The shopping mall, the airport, and the fast-food outlet are examples of contemporary non-places. The assimilation of Christian existence to a common sociological facticity, like the replacement (rather than the augmentation) of genuine theology by comparative religious and cultural studies, is in the greater danger of this form of placelessness. While claiming to develop Cano's *loci* into a program of alienation from a previously situated ecclesial identity in favor of a more fluid accommodation to the factual experience of the present day, local systematic-pastoral theology of this type is less sensitive than its chief philosophical authority, Foucault, to the *luctus et angor* needed to interpret something like the *signa temporum* of the wider culture.

²⁶ Recent criticism by Manfred Lütz, Bishop Rudolf Voderholzer (Regensburg), and others of the scientific solidity of the Mannheim-Heidelberg-Göttingen (MHG) study offered in support of the four initial fora of the "Synodal Path," cited above, questions whether the evaluation of the conflicting claims around current history has been adequate. For the MHG study, see "Sexueller Missbrauch an Minderjährigen durch katholische Priester, Diakone und männliche Ordensangehörige im Bereich der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz" on the official internet page of the German Bishops Conference (dbk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/diverse_downloads/dossiers_2018/MHG-Studie-gesamt.pdf), and for the review of the document by Manfred Lütz, reprinted in *Die Tagespost*, February 2, 2020, die-tagespost.de/kirche-aktuell/Manfred-Luetz-Missbrauchsstudie-mangelhaft-und-kontraproduktiv;art312,192172.

²⁷ Marc Augé, *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity* (New York: Verso, 2008).

To some degree the theological debate between integrative and alienational developments of Cano runs parallel to the philosophical debate between Ricoeur and Foucault.²⁸ Despite the pathos of otherness and (in Emmanuel Levinas's sense) of the "exteriority" that should enrich theology, the alienational development of local theology threatens to lose the capacity for difference, including that which J. B. Metz, following Ernst Bloch, once described as "productive non-contemporaneity."²⁹ The alienational interpretation of Cano, claiming "the" contemporary experience of cultural facticity as the privileged locus for understanding the faith, must see the worry that Cano could possibly be identified as the "father of extrinsecism" (Körner), as "simply absurd."³⁰ In fleeing the Scylla of extrinsecism, it is threatened by the Charybdis of an intrinsecism in the shape of a new dispositive of what Metz has described as collective *amnesia* and simultaneity.

The opposed argumentative goals of these two interpretative developments of Cano have also made for two very different assessments of Cano's reception of Thomas Aquinas. A well-known historian in his own right and author of systematically important investigations on the thought of Aquinas,³¹ Seckler had pointed to the continuity between Thomas and Cano, notably on the theocentric sense of the *loci proprii* and the pluralism of sources needed to attain "epistemological catholicity." In its systematically motivated critique of Seckler, the opposite alienational interpretation portrays Cano "as separated from Thomas in essence and by an entire world."³² Key to this difference is especially Cano's final *locus alienus*, the "witness of human history."³³ Neither interpretation denies the creative development of Thomas's thought by Cano, occasioned in good part by the Reformation and the Europeans' conquest of the Americas.

²⁸ For arguments that speak for Foucault's alternative to Ricoeur's sense of inclusivity, Patrick Gamez, "Ricoeur and Foucault: Between Ontology and Critique," *Études Ricoeuriennes / Ricoeur Studies* 4, no. 2 (2013): 90–107.

²⁹ See Johann Baptist Metz, "Productive Noncontemporaneity," in *Observations on "The Spiritual Situation of the Age,"* ed. Jürgen Habermas, trans. Andrew Buchwalter (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1984), 169–77.

³⁰ See the email correspondence of Elmar Klinger, *Mich hat an der Theologie immer das Extreme interessiert*, 111.

³¹ See: Max Seckler, *Instinkt und Glaubenswille nach Thomas von Aquin* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1961); Seckler, *Das Heil in der Geschichte: Geschichtstheologisches Denken bei Thomas von Aquin* (Munich: Kösel, 1964).

³² Klinger, *Ekklesiologie*, 24, cited frequently by H.-J. Sander, "Fundamentaltheologie," 41–43, esp. note 8, in his summary of the debate between Klinger and Seckler.

³³ Klinger, *Ekklesiologie*, 24, appropriated by Sander, e.g., in "Das Außen des Glaubens," 245.

Cano himself describes his self-understanding as a student of Francisco de Vitoria (†1546) and a member of *nostra familia Divi Thomae* in his very willingness to expand upon and correct Thomas.³⁴ Cano claims sensibly to have learned especially from Vitoria that an older master—and Thomas Aquinas in particular—is shown the greater reverence when his students are willing to correct his errors and fill in his omissions. Following Vitoria, Cano states that genuine reverence for the Thomistic commentary tradition demands this degree of variation and innovation.³⁵ Vitoria had shown the way by laying the foundation of what would become known as the “law of nations.” Cano shows his support for continuing along Vitoria’s lines the School of Salamanca, especially in its critique of the Spanish exploitation of the Americas even after the Disputation of Valladolid (in the autumn of 1550 and the spring of 1551), quite in opposition to the *de facto* direction of the state and social policy of his time. Cano had served on the jury of the debates between J. Ginés Sepúlveda and B. de la Casas in Valladolid, in which representatives of the School of Salamanca failed to dissuade but also refused to accommodate dominant state policy or the social backing for the Spanish colonization of the Americas. In book 11, Cano criticizes Juan Ginés (“Gennesius”) de Sepúlveda (†1573) for false conclusions stemming from a weakness of historical reason.³⁶

In concluding his major work, Cano poses, but also resolves, possible objections to the cogency of continuing Thomas’s basic theological project.³⁷ That continuation must be able to correct what was wrong or too harsh, to supply what was lacking, to integrate overlooked sources, including neglected aspects of Aristotle (like the *Topica*), and to simplify and clarify what the pioneers had left entangled. Theology lives not only from its great innovative geniuses, but from the work of lesser spirits who complete their discoveries. Cano identifies the lack of a sustained and systematic account of the sources of theological argumentation as a gap not only in Thomas’s writings but in the history of theology as a whole, and he sets out to make up for this omission by developing the *topics* beyond what Aristotle and Cicero or their later reception had developed. Cano had shown this “congenial” development of Thomas’s basic intentions

³⁴ See the introduction to what would be the twelfth and final book of Cano’s *De locis theologicis* in the Belda Plans edition (for Cano’s frequent references to “*Divi Thomae familia nostra*,” see 166, 218, 303, 318, 382, 429, and 433).

³⁵ See especially Cano’s prooemium to book 12 and the references in Klinger, *Ekklesiologie*, 23–35. Klinger’s habilitation shares with the defenders of a petrified Thomistic tradition the conviction that variation and innovation preclude continuity.

³⁶ Cano, *De locis theologicis* 11.2 (Belda Plans ed., 339).

³⁷ Cano, *De locis theologicis* 11.2 (Belda Plans ed., 416–28).

already in his commentary on the *Summa theologiae*, articulating nine *loci theologici*, though even they were merely implicit and scattered throughout Thomas's work.³⁸ What will appear in Cano's *opus magnum* as the tenth *locus* of theology, human history (including biblical, ecclesiastical, and secular history), was rarely an explicit theme in Thomas's work. While Cano in book 11 of his study on theological *loci* defends Thomas's relative dating of John of Damascus, he does not look at Thomas's reflections on history and its importance for theology, as found, for instance, at the beginning of *Contra errores Graecorum*. The explication of human history as a *locus* of theology is Cano's most obvious development beyond the letter of Thomas's thought. Cano senses that the recognition of human history will open new horizons, which he hesitates to predict, lest, as he put it, he might seem to be promising golden mountains.³⁹ Thomas had reflected far more widely on the other two *loci alieni*, on his use of natural reason and the history of philosophy as necessary theological resources. For that project, Thomas drew only briefly on a dual use of the rhetorical category *locus* as authority in the sense both of a significant faith tradition and simply as writings or sources in general, including philosophical resources.⁴⁰ Only to a lesser degree did Thomas offer mostly indirect reflections on history and experience that stand in continuity with Cano's thoughts, be it in their integrative or their alienational interpretation.

Unlike recent alienational models of local theology, Cano follows one of Aristotle's more programmatic directions in the *Topica*, where the philosopher argues for the need to sort through and evaluate received theory and practice. As Oliver Primavesi recalled in his 1994 dissertation on Aristotle's *Topica*, Aristotle's own dual goal in this work, namely to draw conclusions from common language (the *endoxa* or widely accepted sayings) and to formulate considered arguments about uncertain matters, requires something quite different from the passive acceptance of social conversations at their face value.⁴¹ G. E. L. Owen had long ago shown that Aristotle, not just in the *Topica*, treats "what is said" (what theology knows today as *signa temporum*) like the physical phenomena that need to be

³⁸ Juan Belda Plans, *Los lugares teológicos de Melchor Cano en los comentarios a la Suma* (Pamplona: Eunsa 1982).

³⁹ Cano, *De locis theologicis*, lib 11.2: "Nam quam magnus postea [historiae humanae usus] facturus sit, non audeo ego in presentia dicere, ne montes aureos videar polliceri" (Belda Plans ed., 338).

⁴⁰ See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [ST] I, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2.

⁴¹ Oliver Primavesi, *Die Aristotelische Topik: Ein Interpretationsmodell und seine Erprobung am Beispiel von Topik B*, Zetemata 94 (Munich: Beck, 1994).

“saved” by explaining how they come to appear other than they are.⁴² With his *Topica* Aristotle had initiated a form of dialectical reasoning about the realm of the merely plausible. The task which the treatise sets itself from the start is “to find a method by which we could develop conclusions drawn from probable sentences to address controversial issues and to offer answers that are free of contradictions.”⁴³ If this is true regarding the place of arguments close to the essence of a controversial matter, it is no less the case when the arguments are connected to it only as “accidents”: the exclusive theme of books 2 and 3 (*beta* and *gamma*) of Aristotle’s treatise. It belongs, for example, to the central goals of the work to identify criteria for choosing what is truly best among the conflicting and accidental *endoxa*, say on the basis on what more closely corresponds to the proper good of the matter under discussion or to a reasoned judgment about which of two rival alternatives makes their agent good or not.⁴⁴

As briefly noted above, Cicero’s comments on Aristotle’s project describe adverbially how accidental arguments can bear on a matter *extrinsecus*,⁴⁵ presumably a source for Cano’s category of the *locus alienus*. Writing during the political and personal upheaval between Caesar’s murder and his own, at a time when Cicero turned away from earlier temptations to an all-too “pragmatic” and accommodating form of political discourse, and paying with his life for his open critique of the new political realities of his times, Cicero emphasizes the *ars inveniendi* of political debate to find an alternative to *Realpolitik*, scrutinizing publicly rather than passively following the initially contradictory signs of the times, for such contradictions do not disappear simply because sites of arguments arising *extrinsecus* are identified and drawn upon. “A place [*locus*] can be defined as the seat of an argument, an argument in turn can be defined as a reason for confidence in a dubious matters.”⁴⁶

In book 11 of *De locis theologicis*, Cano recalls that, because on the one hand history seems so obviously necessary for theology and all the sciences, he worries if its necessity can be dealt with argumentatively, while on the other hand it might seem for opposite reasons impossible to negotiate at

⁴² G. E. L. Owen, “Tithenai ta Phainomena,” in *Aristotle: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. J. M. E. Moravcsik (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 167–90.

⁴³ Aristotle, *Topica* 2.1.100a.

⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Topica* 4.3.118a.

⁴⁵ See Cicero, *Topica* 2.88 (see note 16 above).

⁴⁶ Cicero, *Topica* 2.8: “Itaque licet definire locum esse argumenti sedem, argumentum autem rationem, quae rei dubiae faciat fidem” (“And thus it is possible to define ‘place’ here as the seat of an argument and to define ‘argument’ as a reason that provides confidence in an uncertain matter”).

all, given the contradictions among sources and historians. Cano answers that the truth of history is neither too evident nor too elusive to no longer be in need of and capable of being strengthened in its rational plausibility. Of the alternative forms of local theology, the integrative model stresses more programmatically the abiding difference between *loci proprii* and *loci alieni*, *Bezeugungsinstanzen* and *Bewährungsinstanzen* for the faith. Only on that basis is it also able to take more seriously the need established by Cano for discourse among the diverse *loci* for theology. The “epistemological catholicity” (Seckler) sought here presupposes both a unitive goal and an abiding plurality of sources. A parallel could be drawn to the convergent plausibility sought by John Henry Newman in identifying seven notes of genuine development. Such notes need not only to complement one another but also to be scrutinized internally, for instance, to discern between too robust and too weak powers of assimilation, between preserved type and the changed appearance, or between the continuity of a principle and the discontinuity between the doctrines capable of expressing it in altered contexts.⁴⁷ Innovation is a necessary but not a sufficient condition and criterion of genuine development.⁴⁸ In denying the self-evidence of the significance of such varied authorities, Cano, too, underlines the necessity and the possibilities for plausible deliberation both within each authoritative place and among them all.

Open Questions of Theological Spatiality

Despite his critique of early Martin Heidegger’s “unabashed temporocentrism” and its lack of reference to embodiment, Edward S. Casey, one of the leading researchers into the history of the philosophy of place, has pointed to the importance of three structures of existential spatiality (*daseinsmässige Räumlichkeit*) articulated by Heidegger in *Being and Time* in 1927: failing distantiation (*Entfernung*), directionality (*Ausrichtung*), and regionality (*Gegend*).⁴⁹ These headings can serve as existentially spatial

⁴⁷ John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1878) (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1989).

⁴⁸ See Reinhard Hütter, *John Henry Newman on Truth and Its Counterfeits: A Guide for Our Times* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press 2000), 130–66.

⁴⁹ See Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 243–84; Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993; repr. 2009); Casey, *The World at a Glance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007). For a close examination of spatiality in Heidegger, see also the extensive work of Jeff E. Malpas: *Place and Experience: A Philosophical*

vectors for mapping out the situation demarcated by the recent theological emphases regarding times and places. The situation can be charted with reference to the still open question of what two momentous interventions at the Second Vatican Council in the preparation of *Gaudium et Spes* might still tell us today about the *sensus communis* of theologies of times and places.

Failing Distantiation

The description in *Being and Time* of the structural and inevitable “tendency towards nearness” in the work-world (a theme in chapter 3 of the first division) would have gained much had it also been applied analogously to the social world in the all-too-short following chapter.⁵⁰ It is not just for tools in the work-world that the tendency to proximity and to being overlooked is a given that can be interrupted. The experience of other co-existents as missing (including the cherished deceased and the *Desaparecidos*) or broken, as not fitting in or as difficult for others to live or work with—all that will again call attention to those who might otherwise have been taken for granted or simply forgotten, but will call for something other than their replacement as instruments and human resources. The loss of an acknowledgement of the dignity of other human beings which Heidegger himself documented in the *Black Notebooks* was anything but abrupt. Not just for the philosopher, the instrumentalization of the divine and human Other is unavoidable with the loss of the distancing sense of something like *timor filialis* or the *bonum honestum*, the acknowledgement of the irreducibility of the other to my own projects and concerns. Such a loss of the distance that allows genuine proximity has led in less dramatic ways to what Alasdair MacIntyre has described as the overbearing predominance of the “manager” as characteristic of many of today’s societies,⁵¹ part

Topography (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999); “Heidegger’s Topology of Being,” in *Transcendental Heidegger*, ed. J. E. Malpas and Steven Crowell, (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007); *Heidegger’s Topology: Being, Place, World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008); *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place: Explorations in the Topology of Being* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012).

⁵⁰ See Richard Schenk, “The Place of Mimesis and the Apocalyptic: Toward a Typology of the ‘Far and Near,’” in: *Contagion* 20 (Spring 2013): 1–24.

⁵¹ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007). MacIntyre names the “manager” (as portrayed in a wider conversation as a transformation into the private sector of Max Weber’s state official), alongside the “therapist” (taken from the Freudian scholar Philip Rieff) and the “aesthetic elite” chiefly addressed by the first two prominent character types. MacIntyre did not yet ask about the share by the

of that *luctus et angor* in which the Church too has its inevitable share (*GS* §1). The initial distance of the kind of alterity which could make possible a closer proximity can easily be lost in the social and ecclesiastical management of the Other. The corresponding question for local and temporal theologies can be formulated accordingly: What structures and forms of distantiating need to be strengthened so as to enable the more felicitous closeness to God and neighbor, to the culture, the cosmos, and the ecclesial *communio*?

The question was very much in play near the end of the Council in a striking intervention by German-speaking theologians and bishops, most prominently by Karl Rahner. The most detailed commentaries on *Gaudium et Spes*, from Giovanni Turbanti⁵² to Sander,⁵³ have described in detail these nearly successful attempts in the summer of 1965 to postpone or diminish the proclamation of *Gaudium et Spes* for a number of reasons, chief of which was the impression of an unfounded and uniquely untimely optimism about the cultural dynamics of the day. The influential “Animadversiones” or remarks by Karl Rahner on the amended Arricia draft of *Gaudium et Spes*, though long available in various archives,⁵⁴ were published only recently.⁵⁵ The various reasons for this puzzling delay in publication are unclear, but among them is the uncertainty about how to interpret the significance for today of the intervention of 1965 in light of the more dominant motifs in Rahner’s own thought and in the majority

Church in this threefold sorrow of our times.

⁵² Giovanni Turbanti, *Un concilio per il mondo moderno: La redazione della costituzione pastorale Gaudium et spes del Vaticano II* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000), 617–26.

⁵³ Sander, “Theologischer Kommentar zur Pastoralkonstitution über die Kirche in der Welt von heute *Gaudium et spes*,” 650–69.

⁵⁴ The Karl Rahner Archive in Munich has long housed the typed thirteen-page memorandum from the Rahner Archive of Elmar Klinger in Würzburg, no. 476, as well as Rahner’s handwritten draft (no. 453). The author wishes to thank the archivists for their hospitality and assistance.

⁵⁵ Karl Rahner, “Animadversiones de Schemata,” in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 32/1, *Ergänzungen und Register* (Freiburg: Herder, 2016), xvii–xix and 289–323; see also 334–35. The editor, Albert Raffelt, has also contributed a perceptive German-language translation together with precise annotations. The edition is meant as a complement to Karl Rahner, *Das Zweite Vatikanum: Beiträge zum Konzil und seiner Interpretation*, ed. GüntherWassilowsky, *Sämtliche Werke* 21/1 and 22/2 (Freiburg: Herder, 2012). Raffelt’s edition also includes two pages (324–25 and 526) of the address by Munich’s archbishop, Julius Cardinal Döpfner, a central figure at the Council, who in the name of ninety-one bishops (including Elchinger) made his own key passages from Rahner’s text in his address to the aula of the Council on 22 September 1965.

positions of post-conciliar and post-Rahnerian theology. Where the best alienational variant of the local theological account of *Gaudium et Spes* could express nothing but criticism for Rahner's "Animadversiones,"⁵⁶ still more recent studies by scholars in the United States, though also circulated prior to the publication of the text for a wider public and discussion, have taken up the open hermeneutical questions, interpreting Rahner's remarks as a model even for today's theological engagement with the problems addressed in 1965.⁵⁷ Brandon Peterson shows a broad consensus among the German theologians and bishops in the final months of the Council about the weakness of the revised "Arricia" draft of 1965 of what will be promulgated as *Gaudium et Spes*. Peterson also showed that the disagreements in these circles had to do with the question of how best to approach the concerns expressed in the draft and, if the document was to be kept in substance, how then best to amend its positions. Despite widespread consensus among the German-speaking bishops and theologians regarding the excessive cultural optimism of the draft, Peterson sees the chief division even within this critical German-speaking subgroup as regarding the question of whether the text should move from Christology to an analysis of common cultural tenets (which he calls an "Augustinian" approach) or just the reverse, beginning with common cultural positions and disclosing from them the need for a Christology (which he terms a "Thomistic" methodology).

Though not the topic of Peterson's essay, the five points of critique leveled by Rahner at the content of the revised version of the Arricia draft (as of May 28, 1965), numbered below, overlap at key points with Vischer's analysis in 1964 of the weaknesses of a one-sided reading of "signs of the times" in the Zurich draft. Rahner no longer needs to mention the *signa temporum* in his "Animadversiones." And yet, Rahner's "Remarks," articulated under five headings, though they might sound (at least at first⁵⁸) to be

⁵⁶ Sander, "Theologischer Kommentar zur Pastoralkonstitution über die Kirche in der Welt von heute *Gaudium et spes*," 650–69.

⁵⁷ See Brandon Peterson, "Critical Voices: The Reactions of Rahner and Ratzinger to 'Schema 13' (*Gaudium et spes*)," *Modern Theology* 31, no. 1 (2015): 1–26; see also, although with less explicit attention to Rahner's intervention, Joseph A. Komonchak, "The Redaction and Reception of *Gaudium et Spes*: Tensions within the Majority at Vatican II," first published as "Le valutazioni sulla *Gaudium et spes*: Chenu, Dossetti, Ratzinger," in *Volti di fine Concilio: Studi di storia e teologia sulla conclusione del Vaticano II*, ed. Joseph Doré and Alberto Melloni (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000), 115–53 (also at jakomonchak.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/jak-views-of-gaudium-et-spes.pdf).

⁵⁸ Peterson documents the continuity of the less "optimistic" arguments by Rahner

uncharacteristic for his thought, document an ecumenical lesson that had been accepted by the majority of German-speaking Catholic participants during the Council's final months.

(1) Not altogether different from the accompanying address by Oswald von Nell-Breuning, Rahner expressed his worry about the lack of a theological epistemology (*theologica gnoseologia*) for the novel theological and social-political claims made in the draft about the contingent matters of the world of today.⁵⁹ Vischer had written less than a year before:

The draft text does not say in what ways God speaks to us through the times. It names nowhere the criterion which would allow us to distinguish his voice from fraudulent voices. It never mentions that the phenomena of the times have an ambivalent character and therefore are not so easy to interpret. It simply asserts that God's voice *is* heard in the times.⁶⁰

(2) Rahner criticized the revised draft for its inattentiveness to the distinction and relations (*theologia habitudinis, distinctionis et mutuae inclusionis*) of the order of creation *vis-à-vis* the order of redemption. Vischer's memorandum had articulated the following concern:

We know that Christ has been raised to the right hand of God and rules over all things. Therefore we could never understand the revelation that has taken place in him, were we not at the same

in this expertise at the Council with the qualifications that Rahner articulated in earlier and above all in later writings, arguably an intended and consistent if subordinate part of his own version of the dialectic that Erich Przywara had described as God's being "In/Above" the controversies of the world. Peter Eicher showed in *Offenbarung. Prinzip neuzeitlicher Theologie* (Munich: 1977) how the different thematic emphases at least implied by this dialectic, while never completely absent in any phase from Rahner's intentions, had dominated different stages of his work: (1) the effective philosophical mediation of theology, (2) the effective theological mediation of philosophy, and (3) the apophatic *Aufhebung* of philosophical theology into a less determinate or categorical form of thinking. Particularly this final moment is freer to express, if belatedly, the experience of human limitation.

⁵⁹ Rahner, "Animadversiones de Schemata," 32/1:289.

⁶⁰ Vischer, "Signa Temporum": The draft does not state in what way God speaks to us through the times. It mentions no criterion which would enable us to distinguish his voice from any number of deceptive voices. It does not even mention that the phenomena of the times have an ambivalent character and so are not simple to interpret. The draft is content to assert simply that God's voice *is* heard in the times."

time to keep the whole universe before our eyes, which is subject to him. We live and work under his dominion, but we are not the ones to first establish it. And at the same time we know, too, that his kingdom has not yet been completed.⁶¹

(3) Rahner criticized the revised draft of Ariccia for lacking an adequate theology of sin.⁶² Vischer had expressed parallel concerns about the use of “signs of the times” in the Zurich draft from the year before:

Evil is and remains a powerful reality. Though it is not in a position to retain its victory, it nevertheless remains powerful today, and *vis-à-vis* the proclamation of the dominion of Christ it shows itself as particularly and pointedly powerful. Whenever we consider time, we therefore hear not just the voices of God but also the voices of darker, destructive powers. And we ourselves by no means stand simply on God’s side, but rather our eyes are often blind and captivated. We cannot so simply and easily perceive the voice of God in the times. The Holy Spirit must identify for us God’s voice in the midst of a sea of ambiguities. As a Church we must pray without ceasing that God will give us illumined prophets who are able to understand the phenomena of the times not just in a superficial manner, but in their profound reality.⁶³

(4) Rahner criticizes the comparative absence of an eschatological dimension in the text, including a sense that the transformation of history through the incarnation, passion and resurrection of Christ does not leave the world untouched. An adequate theology of history would teach us to expect an increasingly bitter antagonism between Christ’s disciples and the world in which we live: a “mundum in maligno positum.”⁶⁴ This makes both dialogue and confrontation with innerworldly models of eschatology, like the Marxist one, possible and necessary. Rahner sees here too little of that “legitimate and necessary pessimism” that Christians should develop towards the world, and he calls for a renewal of a sense of the radicality of sin, to which handbook scholasticism had not given sufficient consideration.⁶⁵ Vischer had suggested similar criticisms of the earlier draft:

⁶¹ Vischer, “Signa Temporum.”

⁶² Rahner, “Animadversiones de Schemata,” 32/1:289.

⁶³ Vischer, “Signa Temporum.”

⁶⁴ Rahner, “Animadversiones de Schemata,” 32/1:294.

⁶⁵ Rahner, “Animadversiones de Schemata,” 32/1:293–94: “A true and profound theol-

If we compare the biblical references to the 'signs of the times' with their mention in the draft, we will find that the two texts have little more in common than the expression itself. The New Testament understands by 'signa temporum' the characteristics which show our time to be an eschatological time. The signs are references to our great hope; they convert us to penance. Like many other New Testament concepts, this concept brings together, on the one hand, the hope which carries us and, on the other hand, the fact that we are living under the Judgement. The schema understands with 'signs of the times' rather the historical phenomena of today's times, which we must correctly assess.⁶⁶

(5) The fifth critical area that Rahner named in his "Animadversiones de Schemate" was the *theological anthropology* suggested by the revised Arricia draft. Rahner articulated five subordinate areas of anthropology for which a further revision of the text would be needed. In three of these five final areas of anthropological concern, an affinity to the issues identified in Vischer's memorandum might be construed, although it did not address the broader issues of anthropology explicitly.

(5.1) There is need for a kind of contemplation that includes a concern for action for the sake of redressing injustices that are part of the world of our times.⁶⁷ Vischer, too, was concerned that the pastoral constitution, if too easily accommodationalist, would play down the practical challenges posed by the human condition and the events of human history.

(5.2) For Vischer and Rahner, this attention to injustice must occur without the reduction of the contemplation of the world to a pragmatically narrow "moralism," which Rahner describes here in surprisingly harsh terms as a particularly offensive deficit of the revised Arricia draft.⁶⁸

ogy of *sin* is missing here. . . . Nowhere in the text is evident that depth of sin which cannot be eradicated from the world (matters on which a theology of original sin could shed far more light and with greater depth than was understood by scholasticism."

⁶⁶ Vischer, "Signa Temporum."

⁶⁷ Rahner, "Animadversiones de Schemata," 32/1:289–91. See the similar insistence of Aquinas that wisdom as a gift of the Holy Spirit necessarily extends to the *regulae contingentium* and to an urgent concern about the injustices that violate them: ST II-II, q. 45, a. 3, ad 2; a. 6, ad 3.

⁶⁸ For Rahner, there is "aliquis 'moralismus,' qui schema pervadit, quique facile 'taedium' hominis moderni excitare potest" ("Animadversiones de Schemata," 32/1:297). Though not always false in themselves, the norms and idealistic exhortations, because all too dominant in the text, "facile nauseam movent."

(5.3) These twin revisions could be achieved only in the context of an overarching and not merely individualistic “theologia crucis,” which Rahner saw as sorely missing from the draft.⁶⁹ Vischer had located the weakness of the earlier draft in an unbiblical optimism which cut it off from both a Christological emphasis and the hope associated with that more dramatic and troubled sense of history.

The draft in its present form is too shallow and expresses too little of the significance of Christ’s coming for the course of history. It underrates the “dramatic” character of history and offers too “harmless” a picture of the world. For that very reason it is not capable of offering to the world any real hope.⁷⁰

(5.4–5) By contrast, the remaining two anthropological themes that Rahner urges for inclusion in the document are of a different quality. They are the first and third in his enumeration (his 5.1 and 5.3), and they manifest a distance not from the anomalous optimism of the early 1960s but from the *Gottesferne* characteristic of recent centuries. Unlike the other remarks, these two remaining anthropological themes seem more characteristic of the major motifs of Rahner’s own thought at the time, with little (arguably too little) in common with the dominant concerns of Reformational theology or the *Zeitgefühl* of the twentieth century. These aspects of a theologically mediated anthropology point well beyond the immediate exigencies of the draft.

Without using the term, Rahner first suggests (5.4; his “5a”) the inclusion of something like his own developed sense of a “supernatural existential,” a hypothetically contingent but, in reality, ever universal dynamic structure of factual human nature that enables, from the time of the first emergence of human beings, the unity of human self-salvation and salvation from without.⁷¹

⁶⁹ For Rahner: “The anthropology in the draft is lacking a theology of the Cross. Those things that are mentioned, will not suffice, especially as this Christology is applied here uniquely to just one singular human. What is the “significance” of the Cross for the history of the world and of the human race as such?” (*Animadversiones de Schemata*,” 32/1:297). On Rahner’s own theology of death, see Gerd Neuhaus, *Transzendente Erfahrung als Geschichtsverlust: Der Vorwurf der Subjektlosigkeit an Rahners Begriff geschichtlicher Existenz und eine weiterführende Perspektive transzendentaler Theologie* (Duesseldorf: Patmos, 1982).

⁷⁰ Vischer, “Signa temporum.”

⁷¹ Rahner criticizes the Ariccia draft for its lack of the “key idea for the entire conception of the human being: the self-revelation of God to others, which, even though

In what Peterson wants to describe as a “Thomistic” rather than an “Augustinian” perspective, Rahner (in 5.5; his point “5c”) then describes it as the “doctrine of the Church that we know God not from God himself, but from ourselves, as creatures, in the end as spiritual creatures.” The distinctive take suggested here on the mediation of the relation to God through the relation to self and world implies, however, that quasi-formal structural participation in divinity as the fundamental dynamic of human spirit that Rahner had proposed in his earlier works. This means for Rahner’s “Animadversiones” that “Christian anthropology ought to and can easily [*facile*] be so presented that the human beings of today, though infected by an obscure atheism, might come to see that their own interior existential experience implies inescapably that absolute mystery which we name God and which is made known to us only in the free acknowledgment of this experience.”⁷² It might be argued that a greater sense of the difficulty (*non facile*) and of the distance to be overcome in order to know God on the limited basis of the experience of self and world, even for the mainstream of Catholic teaching and notably for Saint Thomas Aquinas,⁷³ would have made possible a closer and more productive proximity to central concerns of the Reformational communities and of the cultures most marked by the world wars of the twentieth century.⁷⁴ A less “apologetic” admission of the difficulty to believe (*non facile*) would, however, arguably be less of a distancing from the spiritual situation of our age.⁷⁵ In contrast to Rahner’s other remarks on the draft, this more apologetic distance from the signs of the times and contemporary history represents also less of an entanglement of Christians in the *luctus et angor* of the last

it is supernatural and freely given, is also the foundation of a created natural order and thus ought to constitute the beginning of all anthropology” (“Animadversiones de Schemata,” 32/1:295).

⁷² Rahner, “Animadversiones de Schemata,” 32/1:296.

⁷³ See Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 1, a. 1, corp.: “Because truth about God, investigated by reason alone, would reach humanity only in a few persons, and even then only after much time and still with an admixture of errors.” Even the First Vatican Council’s dogmatic constitution *Deus Filius* cites this as a limit of natural theology (DH, no. 3005), even while asserting the basic possibility of natural theology.

⁷⁴ See Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990) [originally: *Einführung in das Christentum: Vorlesungen über das Apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis* (Munich: 1968)]. For an attempt to situate the legacy of Thomas Aquinas between Karl Rahner and Martin Heidegger, see Richard Schenk, *Die Gnade vollendeter Endlichkeit: Zur transzendentaltheologischen Auslegung der thomanischen Anthropologie*, Freiburger Theologische Studien 135 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1989).

⁷⁵ See Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*.

century as a whole. Rahner's "Animadversiones de Schemate" display two distinct movements of distantiation, moving away from different positions and heading in different directions. They make apparent the need to address other structures of theological spatiality.

Directionality (Ausrichtung)

As welcome as it is that Peterson takes up the question of what Rahner's intervention of 1965 might still contribute today to the best possible contemporary reading of a pastoral constitution that meanwhile has been woven too seamlessly into the fabric and texture of Catholic thought to be torn out again without destroying (or in Newman's terms, corrupting) it, equally questionable would be a reversion to the search for the direction of that new interpretation along the single line of a one-dimensional alternative, be it with Augustine *or* Thomas Aquinas, be it in terms of recent local theology in the alternative of *loci alieni* or *loci proprii*, be it in the context of semiotic temporality as the alternative of discontinuity *or* continuity with the past (which, again in Newman's terms, in their pure forms as exclusive alternatives are both sources of corruption rather than development). Like innovation in terms of time, so too is a certain complementarity of directions a necessary but not a sufficient condition and criterion of genuine locality. No theology is coherent without a mix of affirmative and negative directions, but not every such mix succeeds in relating the human being to God. The contrary but not necessarily contradictory character of the two lines of reflection discussed here could be suggested by greater attention to Thomas the Augustinian,⁷⁶ to Rahner the Augustinian (or perhaps better the Eckhartian), or to the synthetic and critical potential of the necessarily multiple *loci theologici*, multiple both between and within each of their two *genera*.

The two points of departure identified by Peterson in rival suggestions for the draft could not both be used at the same time as a beginning by which to structure the text of *Gaudium et Spes*. In accord with the report by the chief editor of the Ariccia draft, Pierre Haubtmann, that seven out of ten Council fathers favored a starting point in the wider contemporary experience, followed by the ascending disclosures of and in Christ, this favored ordering of the themes, which had been set aside in the experiment of the Zurich text, was adopted once again for the final text.⁷⁷ The two directions of theological discovery cannot both be used by the same text as

⁷⁶ See *Aquinas the Augustinian*, ed. Michael Dauphinais, Barry David, and Matthew Levering (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007).

⁷⁷ See Peterson, "Critical Voices," 6.

its starting point, but they can both find in the same text a non-contradictory affirmation and mutual enrichment through a complementary change in perspective. Léon Bloy's remark on how the Cross of Christ shifts back and forth from his shoulders to ours, eliciting alternately compassion and pain, describes a similar *Perspektivenwechsel*, not a contradiction.⁷⁸ A broad sense of the need for salvation, on the one hand, and clarity about that need stemming from articulate belief in the event itself, on the other, clearly differ, but they need not be contradictory. This distinction between legitimate vectors of theological perception leads to a discussion of the third constitutive of existential spatiality articulated in *Being and Time*.

Regionality (Gegend)

The structure constitutive of existential spatiality to which Heidegger even after *Being and Time* devoted the most attention was *Gegend*, by which he described various spaces within which concrete beings could encounter each other and be encountered in their being. For the determinate sense of Catholic theology, this analogous sense of regionality can frame several questions, including those of the external parameters of what is genuinely Catholic and of internal sites of legitimate rivals for and counterpoints to the most coherent syntheses. To borrow terms from the article by Peterson discussed above, it seems plausible that this region or "country" of what is Catholic must be defined by theologies beginning with contemporary human situations and by counterproposals beginning with Christ, as the mendicant *renovatio accommodata* of the thirteenth century made places for Saint Dominic's beginning with the difficulty of his contemporaries to believe and then turning anew to God for help, and also for Saint Francis's beginning with the crucified Christ and then turning anew to those whose suffering was reminiscent of his own. It has been one of the hallmarks of the Academy of Catholic Theology that it has brought into conversation theologians dedicated to each of these directions. It may not be helpful to group them neatly into Thomist and Augustinian camps, nor even to assign their directions as from below and from above, as from the world or from its Savior, or as proponents of *Gaudium et Spes* §1 (in its fourfold entirety) or of *Gaudium et Spes* §22. It is also more difficult than is often suspected to assess which direction of experience is the more "contemporary." A "transcendental" (or better "transcendent") beginning point that starts from *ens summum* as the *primum cognitum* or from a universal, supernatural, even uncreated participation in God's own becoming is not

⁷⁸ See Léon Bloy, *Pilgrim of the Absolute*, ed. Raissa Maritain (New York: Pantheon, 1947).

as strictly “from below” as contemporary thought might seem to expect.⁷⁹ The admission of the difficulty to believe (the *non facile*) is arguably less outdated.⁸⁰ Whether this particular initial, Rahnerian distantiation from many signs of the times and much of contemporary history and philosophy, seemingly more reminiscent of the decades prior to 1848 than to those following 1918, is in fact the one most suited to identify both the *Gaudium et Spes* and the *luctus et angor* of our day is a decision that should be left to the contest of theologies within the region of Catholic debates for the most coherent account of faith and experience. As the reception of the Second Vatican Council has shown, such a differentiated region must be given not only space but also time for the coherent synthesis of heterogeneous claims and *loci* to mature. The hermeneutic of reform for a synthetic reading of the compromise texts of the Second Vatican Council only gradually showed its superiority to strategies of one-sided continuity or one-sided discontinuity.⁸¹ This multidimensional sense of the space and time needed for the convergence of competitive regional theologies has the advantage ascribed by classical mereology to what was termed the “potential whole”: the ability to acknowledge the need for heterogeneous parts (in as much as they are genuine parts of the same whole) without foreclosing debate about which parts more fully express the potentiality of the whole.⁸² N.V

⁷⁹ Karl Rahner’s programmatic criticism of Kant and Heidegger has often been downplayed or simply overlooked, made easier by the pseudonym attached in 1940 to his “Introduction au concept de philosophie existentielle chez Heidegger,” *Recherches de science religieuse* 30 (1940): 152–71, now in *Sämtliche Werke* vol. 2 (Freiburg: Herder 1995): 319–46 and 473–75, and to the revisions by J. B. Metz in the second edition of *Hörer des Wortes*, which eliminated the references to Heidegger and Kant as the rare and unfortunate exceptions to the *philosophia perennis* running from Plato to Hegel (*Sämtliche Werke*, 4:94–95). Taken together, they help us recognize the programmatic critique of Heidegger, more obvious in 1936, informing already the overall argumentative direction of *Geist in Welt*.

⁸⁰ This long overdue reversal of the common pre-understanding of which epistemological starting point for the doctrine of God is more topical opens another field for applying Sander’s recent metaphorical use of the Moebius strip (see note 19 above).

⁸¹ See Kurt Koch, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil: Die Hermeneutik der Reform* (Augsburg: St. Ulrich, 2012). For the critique of one-directional theology, see Koch, *Universalität und Kirche: Zu einer notwendigen Beziehung mit Spannungen* (Basel: Schwabe, 1999).

⁸² For the ecclesiological significance of the mereology of the potential whole, see Richard Schenk, “Eine Ökumene des Einspruchs. Systematische Überlegungen zum heutigen ökumenischen Prozess aus einer römisch-katholischen Sicht,” in *Die Reunionsgespräche im Niedersachsen des 17. Jahrhunderts. Rojas y Spinola—Molan—Leibniz*, ed. Hans Otte und Richard Schenk (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 225–50.