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PREVIEW

**THE CAPTIVATING QUESTION:
THE RHETORIC AND ONTOLOGY OF THE INTERVIEW**

by

Kevin Joe Peters

A DISSERTATION

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PREVIEW

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**THE CAPTIVATING QUESTION:
THE RHETORIC AND ONTOLOGY OF THE INTERVIEW**

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University of Nebraska, 1998

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The interview is a modern formulation of rhetorical strategies that can be traced as far back as Plato's dialogues. These rhetorical strategies are the initial departure of philosophical, religious, and scientific investigation. As such, they are the foundation of western heuristics and western thought.

In my dissertation, I argue that the interview is not merely a recent phenomenon. Interview strategies and devices can be found at the foundation of investigative fields such as philosophy (the Socratic dialogue), religion (the confession), and medicine (psychoanalysis). Although these investigative approaches represent diverse fields and times, they nonetheless possess common traits. The interview is an expression of a heuristic method driven by a desire for proximity, affinity, and understanding of others, a desire that is timeless. However, the manner in which the subject of the interview is thought of and approached is specific to the ontological assumptions of the questioner.

Interviews are improvisational and seemingly entropic; a dynamic happening confined within a private space. Yet the structure of the written interview strives to bring the dynamic discourse and an individual subject to a public audience. As readers, we consume written interviews as if were a part of the extemporaneous conversations, and we assume that the inscribed words deliver the subject of the interview. Traits of interviewing

and interviews, which I call the “technologies of abduction and dissemination,” produce this misconception in the reader. These technologies include the structure of the interview, the topography of the interview, and the traditional forms of written interviews.

In my final chapter, I argue that the interview provides for a profundity other than the traditional profundity of dialectical discourse. The interview makes a part of its form the ambiguous qualities of language. The combination of these two capabilities into a formalized structure provides for a constant challenge to dialectical, objectifying discourse. This in turn allows for a more just relation with the Other.

PREVIEW

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PREVIEW

Chapter 1

The Approach and Elicitation of the Other

Interviews do not appear to be likely candidates for scholarly research. Interviews are not taught in colleges and universities as are great works of prose and poetry. Bookstores do not shelve interviews between histories and journals. It is difficult to think of great women and men of letters whose reputations are built upon interview questions or responses. In fact, interviews seem to be merely a recorded derivative of the act of speaking, as important as photographic paper which merely holds an image. The interview's proper station seems to be in contemporary journalism and schlock television. Interviews are distrusted, held in contempt, and have been from their very first appearance in modern journalism.¹ So why study interviews?

It is easy to assume that interviews are merely a fashionable way for the modern television, publishing, and journalism industries to feed the appetites of the public. But to do so would be to suggest that the desire for proximity, affinity, and knowledge of other minds and other experiences is a recent phenomena.² Interviewing is more than reportage. Interviewing and the texts that result are expressions of the most basic questions -- who am I, who are you, and where are we? The venture that begins as a question which leads one to approach and question another is a pursuit for understanding of our own existence.

And as Maurice Blanchot has argued, our existence is tied to questioning:

Every question refers back to someone who questions, that is to say, to the being we are and for whom alone exists the possibility of questioning, or of coming into question. A being like God (for example) could not put himself in question -- he would not question; the word of God needs man to become the question of man. When after the Fall Jahweh asks Adam "Where are you?" this question signifies that henceforth man can no longer be found or situated except in the place of the question. (14)

We are beings that question, beings that question one another, and our questions place ourselves, others, and our surroundings in question. Therefore, as Blanchot argues, it is 'in question' that we are situated.

What we are speaking of is dialogue in its most basic form. Dialogue manifests in different forms at different times. Rhetorics of approach and elicitation, such as the Catholic confession and a police interrogation, are forms of dialogue that are marked by their historical and political context. The specific historical and political context in which a given rhetoric develops and is used conditions the approach and provides strategies for the elicitation of another. For example, though a modern confession and a confession of the fourteenth-century may appear similar, the historical contexts shape these rhetorics differently. Though the questioning and responding found in modern confessions and police interrogations seem similar and share a historical context, the political context shapes the approach and elicitation differently. However, all rhetorics of approach and elicitation share some common traces, and this is because the participants in these rhetorics remain the same -- one questions ones self, another, or a group of others. The interview, as we understand it today, is the most recent manifestation of rhetorics of approach and elicitation.

If this is the case, the study of the rhetoric of the interview will not only tell us about this recent manifestation, but also help us to understand the philosophical assumptions and theoretical constructions that we assume and deploy when we approach another individual. What we put in question and how we respond when we are placed in question can tell us how we conceive being and identity. The way we approach and question another can tell us about how our historical and political context shapes our conceptions of our selves and others. To fully understand modern contexts' conditioning of the interview it is necessary to examine how other historical and political contexts have shaped other attempts to approach and elicit another. An analysis of rhetorics representing different historical and political contexts will also reveal the traces that remain constant whenever someone approaches and questions another individual.

Even though the interview in its modern form is closely associated with the age of mass media, philosophical, religious, and therapeutic precedents to the interview can be found in the Socratic symposia, Catholic or auricular confessions, and, to borrow Anna O.'s phrase, Freud's 'talking cure.' This is not to say that interviews are everywhere nor that one can follow a linear development of the interview from the time of Socrates. Not every encounter with an Other can be described as an interview. Within what we now call an interview are imbedded aspects that have also appeared in dialogues, conversations, debates, etc.. As such, these rhetorical practices may reveal much about the ubiquitous act of approaching another, engaging another in dialog, and questioning another that is often taken for granted or simply unseen.

It is not my purpose at this point to make an exhaustive examination of the

rhetorics I have chosen; but rather to point out common traces in these rhetorics that can also be found in the modern interview. For that reason, the rhetorics I have chosen are not intended to be representative of interrogative practices of any given period. Rather they have been chosen because they are well known incidents of specific, codified interrogative approaches. My focus is their common traces and aspects. I will argue that when an individual approaches and elicits another individual three things happen. These three things are constants, yet they are affected by the immediate historical and political context in which the discourse proceeds.

First, there is an assertion of differential space. Within a larger public space a private place is inscribed. When a person develops a question, either a formal question or what could be called an undefined curiosity, that person typically seeks out another speaking subject. Such a subject can be another person, a group of people, or one can question them self. A person approaches another with a question because it is assumed that another subject may provide information that will answer the question or satisfy the curiosity. The questioning individual then engages the other in private dialogue so as to question. Approaching and putting a question to another defines a private space removed from others who occupy the larger public space. As we shall see, each of the rhetorics to be examined inscribe a private place differentiated from the public space. All of the rhetorics construct the approach and elicitation of another differently, and as a result, each rhetoric defines what falls within and what is excluded by this private place differently.

The second constant in the rhetorics of approach and elicitation is that the immediate presence and live utterances of the subject questioned are perceived and carried

from the confrontation. Both participants come to the space of the dialogue with an image of the other who speaks to them. What this preliminary image may be is impossible to determine. It may be vague or detailed, and as the two converse, it is revised, confirmed or negated. The participants retain the memory of the utterances, images, and the memory of the engagement itself as they leave the private discourse. The image of the other is in a sense abducted from the private space of discourse. This departing image carries with it the traces of the discourse of the private place, and this image is carried back into the public space and can re-emerge in other private conversations. Therefore, something of the other, the discourse, and the private place is carried into the public space. However, it is important to note that what is carried from the private discourse is merely an image of the other and the discourse shared. It is not the essence of the other or the actuality of the discourse itself. How the other is perceived, the way in which the image is constructed, and what is carried from the private place is determined by the strategies of the approach and elicitation as conditioned by the historical and political context.

Transference is the third constant. Transference is a psychological act of repetition that is typically beyond the awareness and control of the transferring individual. It is a return or repetition of past experiences, and the representations generated from these experiences, in the present moment. In a clinical situation, a patient may see in the analyst the image of important persons from his or her past. The patient transfers upon the analyst feelings and reactions of the repeated person from the past. These repetitions manifest as reactions, thoughts, and utterances which are not directly related to, or out of place in, the immediate context. However, transference is not merely a function of the

psychoanalytical situation. Any use of language presupposes a listener and implies a relationship with the other which is all that is needed for transference to exist. All engagements in discourse are subject to transference. Rhetorics of approach and elicitation, therefore, are subject to not only the immediate contexts, the utterances and reactions of the participants, but these rhetorics are also subject to the representations, phantasies, and tendencies drawn from the past of each participant in discourse.

Transference occurring in non-clinical discourse resembles that of clinical situations. For example, someone might respond to an interlocutor in seemingly inappropriate ways, a questioner and respondent may exchange positions, or one or both of the participants may mistake, misread, or avoid the issue before them.

In the following chapter, I will examine these three common traces as they appear in three different rhetorics of approach and elicitation. I will begin by looking at the assertion of private and public space in Plato's *Phaedrus*, Catholic confession, and psychoanalysis. I will then discuss abduction -- the transport of the image of the one approached and elicited from the private to the public space. Again, I will trace abduction in the three rhetorics mentioned above. Finally, I will examine the manifestation of transference in these rhetorics. By examining different rhetorics of approach and elicitation and the way these strategies construct and condition their common traces, I hope to show that the interview is not merely a symptom of the modern media age. The desire for proximity, affinity, and the desire to know and understand the mind and experiences of other individuals is not limited to our age. The form of the modern journalistic interview may or may not survive as we know it today. It is, nonetheless, the

most recent attempt to ask and respond to the most basic questions of being, existence and identity.

An assertion of private and public space: the *Phaedrus*

John Brady, editor and chief interviewer for *Writer's Digest* writes in his book, *The Craft of Interviewing*, the object for an interviewer is “to build an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect” so that the interviewee talks instead of just answering questions (49). Quoting what Brady calls one “veteran magazine writer”, he emphasizes that the interviewer and interviewee must develop an intimate relationship. “You want him to accept you as a friend, or at least a substitute doctor/psychologist to whom he can unload his problems” (54). And to build this type of rapport “It’s important that you be alone with the subject in a quiet place if at all possible. The presence of a third party may create interruptions and responses that are biased” (160). The necessity of a private, quiet place which permits the interrogator to delve into one mind and limited subjects, free from the distraction of other minds and other subjects, is also present in many of Plato’s inscription of Socrates’s dialogues. One of the best examples of a Socratic dialogue in which a private space is secured prior to the discourse is the *Phaedrus*. I want to emphasize that the *Phaedrus* is not an interview, nor do I intend to read it as an interview. The *Phaedrus* is a depiction, on the part of Plato, of a very specific form of approach and elicitation of another, the Socratic dialogue, which Plato was to have observed on numerous occasions. It is a manner of approach and elicitation distant from what we now call the interview.

Socrates meets Phaedrus just outside the city walls and begins the conversation by asking Phaedrus how he has been passing his time. Upon hearing that Phaedrus has been

studying under Lysias, Socrates states "if your walk takes you to Megara, . . I certainly won't be left behind" (227d5). This may appear to be a simple statement, but it suggests that Socrates will not leave Phaedrus until some condition has been met. And the condition is to share the speech of Lysias, which Phaedrus has been practicing, and Phaedrus's thoughts on the topic. But Phaedrus is not immediately forthcoming. Socrates notes Phaedrus's hesitancy when Socrates describes what he knows of Phaedrus's character. "But when the one in love with speeches [Socrates] asked him [Phaedrus] to speak, he put on a pose, as if not eager to speak; . ." (228c1-3). Recognizing his position, Phaedrus states "the best thing is to speak just as I can, since it seems to me that you do not intend to let me go until I speak . ." (228c6-9). But before Socrates permits Phaedrus to hold forth with what he has learned of love from Lysias, Socrates redirects Phaedrus away from the roads of Athens into the country following the Ilissus (229a1).

This move beyond the city seems odd for someone like Socrates who states, "I'm a lover of learning, and the country places and the trees won't teach me anything as the people of the city will" (230d3-5). What is Socrates pursuing?

But you seem to have found the prescription to get me out. Just like people who lead hungry animals on by shaking a branch or some vegetable in front of them, so you seem to be capable of leading me round all Attica and wherever else you please by proffering me speeches in books in this way. (230d5-e1)

Socrates is pursuing knowledge found in the cloaked book of Lysias's speech and in the cloaked mind of Phaedrus. Socrates is also pursuing the education of Phaedrus. The city teaches Socrates many things, but for Socrates to teach Phaedrus, they must remove themselves from the distractions of the city. As they sit in the shadow of the plane tree in

the open country, a sense of intimacy develops. Phaedrus drops his pose and the two speak as friends and lovers, Socrates flirting and Phaedrus flattering, unconcerned that anyone may be listening. It is this sense of intimacy that defines the shadow of the plane tree as a private place where truth may be sought and revealed free of distraction. The shadow of the tree is thus differentiated from the space of the city.

The city and the polis, seemingly distant, function as the larger topographical context from which Socrates tries to remove Phaedrus for a time. The city of Athens was for Socrates a hostile environment ethically, philosophically, and politically. Socrates was seen by the Athenians as the source of ill wind, spreading disruption and disorder. In the *Symposium*, Alcibiades accuses Socrates of seducing young boys, and then refusing to return their affections (222b2-6), and of overwhelming and carrying away listeners with mystical, nefarious arguments (215c10-d4). The most serious of charges were those brought by Meletus which led to Socrates's conviction and execution³. Plato reinterprets the accusation in the *Apology* drawing upon the slander that had been spread through the city for many years previous:

Socrates does injustice and is meddlesome, by investigating the things under the earth and the heavenly things, and by making weaker speech the stronger, and by teaching others these same things (19b3-c1).

After Socrates's death, Plato found himself in the same hostile city that destroyed his teacher and threatened his own philosophical teaching. As a result, he wrote the *Phaedrus* which is, as R. Hackforth states, an attempt "to vindicate the pursuit of philosophy . . . as the true culture of the soul" and an attempt to propose "a reformed rhetoric" in the hostile climes of the contemporary rhetoric of Athens (9). Lysias' speech and Lysian rhetoric

represent the political and philosophical status quo of Athens. In this topography, Lysias is the distant city. The walk of Socrates and Phaedrus has placed distance between them self and the city. Nevertheless, Lysian rhetoric and ideology moves as easily from the public space to the privacy of the plane tree as do Socrates and Phaedrus.

Therefore, we must remember that while the shadow of the plane tree provides a sense of intimacy, it is only a sense brought about by an artificial inscription of a private place within a larger public space. Socrates and Phaedrus are still in public space of the city, and the shadow of the plane tree cannot exclude the laws, debates, and the sentiments of the populace. No manner of discourse can occur outside the social arena, for it is the social frame that makes communication, even in a private manner, possible. Phaedrus and Socrates use the language of the city, abide by its norms of propriety and draw upon the debates and sentiments occurring within the city even as they sit at some distance from the city. The distant city is in fact the intended audience for their seemingly private discourse.

The walk of Socrates and Phaedrus from the city walls to the shadow of the plane tree is much more than simply a bit of stage craft on the part of Plato. It provides benefits. The topographical distinction between the plane tree and the city conditions the manner in which they perceive, approach, and engage one another. The private topography provides the participants in the dialogue with a pedagogical site in which a sense of intimacy may develop. The Socratic dialogue and the Greek system of education depended upon intimate relations and a discourse composed of exposition and interrogation free of distraction so that false beliefs could be exposed and truth emerge. Under Socrates's tutelage, the student would come see the desire of beauty in the mind of the teacher, and

in this way a hunger for methods of detecting and perceiving beauty was transmitted to the student. A Socratic dialogue could not easily occur in a public arena composed of many discordant voices or convergent voices enforcing norms. As the *Apology of Socrates* shows, a large arena of many voices does not permit the interrogator to develop an intimate sense of rapport with a large group, or a jury of 500 as in the case of Socrates.

The assertion of privacy also provides each with a sense of security. Removed from the streets of Athens and the ears of the polis, both Socrates and Phaedrus are free to develop their discussion unrestricted. They need not worry about hurting Lysias' feelings, offending the sophists or other political groups, and they are free from the accusations heard in the city.

Whether Socrates actually entices Phaedrus to the intimate shadow of the plane tree or whether this was purely a bit of stage craft on the part of Plato is not relevant; what is evident is that a private space which would distance the discordant voices and distractions of the larger public arena is a necessary condition of a Socratic dialogue, even if this distancing is purely a rhetorical convenience. The Socratic dialogue, as described by Plato's *Phaedrus*, inscribes a private, pedagogical space. The rhetoric of the Catholic confession also inscribes a private place removed from the public space, but this space, the discourse, and the relations found therein are conditioned and shaped differently.

An assertion of private and public space: confession

Though spontaneous and free confession was uncommon in the early Church, both public and private confession were sporadically practiced. But by the eighth century, Christians were expected to confess, publicly or privately, at specific intervals during the

ecclesiastical year. In 1215, under the influence of Irish monasteries and Irish missionaries, the Fourth Council of the Lateran decreed that in all of Western Christendom the laity were to be taught to make private confession at regular intervals, typically once a year. However, due to the isolation of the average parish priest from the centers of learning, the manner and conduct during confession varied greatly (Daly xix-xx). As a result, a great many books of canonical law and penitential books came into service for the parish priests. One such work was the *Oculus Sacerdotis*, a fourteenth-century manual of pastoral theology for priests written by William of Pagula⁴. The *Oculus Sacerdotis* is a long work of three books written at different times. It was expensive, rare, and because of its intellectual tone, difficult for the poor parish priest to access. For this reason, it was often reduced to short, practical handbooks. The *Judica Me Deus*, written by Richard Rolle in the early fourteenth century, is one such practical handbook by which the theology and penitential procedures were known.

Because priests are bound to inviolable secrecy concerning sins revealed and revelations made during sacramental confession, the only available path into the rhetoric of practical auricular confession is through penitential handbooks such as the *Judica Me Deus*. I have chosen the *Judica* because it is a practical handbook derived from, and on occasion a verbatim copy of, the *Oculus Sacerdotis*. The *Oculus Sacerdotis* was one of the most influential manuals of its time. Because of its efforts to normalize the sacraments, its rigorous theological content, and its exhaustive inclusion of Church legislation, it earned a significant following during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Daly xiii). By comparison, the *Judica* was a field manual intended to educate and guide

the common parish priest in the execution of the sacraments, and therefore, provides a glimpse of the common practices of auricular confession.

Similar to the topography of the *Phaedrus*, the site of the confession is inscribed as a private place. However, there are significant differences in the manner of inscription and in the space inscribed. The private place of the confession pervades the interior of the penitent and the differentiation between the public and private is more proximate and subtle. In the *Judica*, Rolle instructs the priests to receive the penitent with humility and devotion, and the sinner must be taught to come “humbly before the priest for confession, throwing himself down, should say, ‘Sir priest, who are the minister of Christ, I come here to God and to you, penitent and seeking counsel about my sins’” (97). Rolle advises priests to comfort and exhort when hearing confession, and, like a spiritual doctor, the spiritual judge must “be a diligent investigator, and that he wisely draw from the sinner by questioning what he [the penitent] perhaps is unaware of” (100). With these brief injunctions, Rolle defines the topology of Catholic, auricular confession.

The first demarcation of space is the privacy of the conversation marked by mutual humility and gravity. The confessional procedures at this time anticipated the confessional boxes which came into use after the second half of the sixteenth century. During the fourteenth and fifteenth century, priests were instructed to hear confession in an open and public place in sight of all, so as to avoid any suspicion of evil (Tentler 82). Most confessions were heard within a Church, though this was not required. The conversation between priest and penitent occurred beyond the ears of other parishioners so as not to embarrass the penitent and maintain the secrecy of the confession (Rolle 100). The

penitent typically kneeled before the priest, and in humility whispered his or her sins while the priest, with downcast eyes, sat close before them. Such intimacy beyond the prying ears of others was absolutely necessary so as to remove hesitation thereby securing a good and complete confession. The dangers of an incomplete confession were manifold. If a penitent withheld one mortal sin during a confession,⁵ the absolution granted by the priest was void despite the penitent's belief that they had achieved absolution. The priest, unaware of the penitent's private sin, would have admitted an unworthy soul to the altar to partake of the Eucharist, compounding the penitent's sin.

Due to the gravity of the situation, a priest could not simply rely on the penitent to reveal their sins, because they may be unaware of the gravity of their sin or reticent to speak of sins they may have committed. On such occasions, as Rolle states,

many things have to be proposed to the simple and to the layfolk so that they will have knowledge of their sins which, unless they are instructed by a priest, they would never confess, and so their ignorance would be damnable. (100)

In an effort to instruct the penitent of sin and to provoke a complete confession, most manuals instruct priests to interrogate the sinner thoroughly prior to giving absolution. In fact, interrogative procedures and model questions are the most prominent feature of penitential handbooks (Tentler 88). The questions were designed to gently probe the penitent according to their age, class, and heritage,⁶ but the priests had to be careful not to plant sinful ideas "for there are some ignorant persons who long to experience an unknown sin when they hear it" (Rolle 100).

The private space of the confession not only enveloped the priests and penitents

sitting in some corner of the Church, but was also projected into the soul of the penitent. Through questioning, the priest penetrated the soul of penitents to relieve them of their sins, both known and unknown. Many penitential handbooks speak of priests as spiritual physicians or surgeons and the sinner as a patient ("Penance" 627). Another metaphor used by Rolle, drawn from Lamentations 2:19, is that of the penitent as a vessel which must be emptied of sin:

a man's speech is said to be acceptable to God when, with an integral confession and devout prayer, he pours out himself in an attempt to cast off from himself all the vanity of the world. Therefore, pour out thy heart like water, not excusing but bravely accusing, allowing no sin nor any delight in sin to remain in you, because the man who wants to keep one fault does not attain pardon. (99)

For absolution to be granted, the penitent had to become exposed, like an open wound or empty vessel, to the view of the priest. The soul of the penitent was, therefore, part of the inscribed private place that could only be exposed and examined in an intimate relation free of distraction and other prying eyes which would lead the penitent to conceal his or her sin out of embarrassment or shame endangering their soul.

Like the Socratic dialogue, the private place of the confession is inscribed within a larger public arena, the social community of the Church and the ear of God. This is an arena in which one's standing within the Church is marked by participation in and exclusion from the rituals of the church. Those who sinned were subject to various exclusionary practices by the Church, and could only regain communion through penance. Depending upon the circumstances of the sin, such exclusions could range from the denial of absolution within the confines of the confessional, acts of public penance, to the very

public act of excommunication. However, exclusionary practices are not purely external. It was not necessary for the Church to carefully record every vice of its parishioners, because the parishioners themselves understood, even if on a basic level, the effects of sin upon their relationship with the Church community. To be penitent is to recognize that one's acts have broken the dictates of appropriate behavior as declared by the Church and to seek reconciliation. A parishioner in a state of sin was expected to, and taught to, exclude themselves from the sacraments and the public space of the Church until they could make confession and achieve reconciliation. Reconciliation through private confession, is therefore, necessarily bound to the public exclusionary practices of the Church.

As stated above, to confess is to seek reconciliation with God and the Church. Though the private confession appears to be an intimate conversation between two, like Socrates who noted that Lysias was also present, the Church teaches that Christ is present via the mediation of the priest who is *in persona Christi*. So, too, the expectations and sentiments of the Church community are present in confession. Reconciliation through confession can not be achieved if a penitent confesses in his or her own mind, to a layman, or to any other representative of human authority. Only such a priest can establish a site of confession. And only an ordained priest within his jurisdiction has the 'power of the keys;' the power to act as mediator between Christ and man to forgive sins, as Matthew 16:19 is interpreted by the Catholic Church⁷. Sin can not be absolved in private unless the absent/present ear of God, Christ, is also present *in persona Christi* of the priest in the seemingly intimate, confessional dialogue. Rolle reminds parishioners to acknowledge

both the priest and God; “Sir priest, who are the minister of Christ, I come here to God and to you” (97). Thus, confession is not a private act, merely an act occurring within a space inscribed so as to lead the penitent to believe that his or her words and acts are held in absolute confidence. Confession is in fact a very public act penetrated by the social community of the Church and the presence of God.

Nonetheless, the topography of confession is differentiated between the privacy of the confession and the public community of the Church and the ear of God. The private place includes the soul of the parishioner which was to be revealed as an open wound or vessel to the priest. However, unlike the *Phaedrus*, the public space is not a distracting nor hostile environment. The privacy of the confessional is structured to rectify the penitent to the public space of the Church. In this sense, the private place is a transitional and transformational place. The priest serves as a guide or a midwife who has a clear view of both the private, the soul, and the public, the Church, and directs the parishioner from sin to a righteous public existence. Again, the distinction between private and public is merely a rhetorical convenience which conditions the approach and elicitation of each person within the privacy of confession.

The Socratic dialogue asserts a private, pedagogical place free of distraction where intimacy may emerge and truth may be pursued. The Catholic confession also inscribes a private place removed from the public space. However, the topography and discourse of confession is juridical -- a place where sins are investigated and the truth of Church theology is reaffirmed. The private space of confession is summoned only when the parishioner has distanced him self, through sin, from the public community of the Church.