

From “Being-with” to Public Realm: Heidegger and Arendt on Speech¹

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Abstract: Aristotle famously defined the human being as ζῶον λόγον ἔχον (a living thing with logos). Heidegger and Arendt both questioned the interpretation of *animal rationale* (rational animal). Tracing back to ancient Greek thoughts, they both regarded the original meaning of λόγος as speech and illustrated the relationship between speech and human existence. Heidegger elucidated the disclosing nature of speech and distinguished between authentic and inauthentic forms of speech. Heidegger emphatically examined inauthentic everyday speech, while Arendt was more concerned with exploring an authentic form of public discourse. This paper explains the connection and distinction between Heidegger’s and Arendt’s views on speech. It argues that Arendt develops Heidegger’s notion of speech by expositing an authentic and active public speech.

Keywords: Arendt, Heidegger, being-with, idle talk

In Book 1, Chapter 2 of the *Politics*, Aristotle defined the essence of human beings as ζῶον λόγον ἔχον, which means the human being is a living thing with λόγος (logos).² λόγος makes human beings different from plants and animals. The Latin translation of this term is “*animal rationale*.”

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² I cite Aristotle’s text ζῶον λόγον ἔχον from Heidegger’s work. See Martin Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, trans. by Robert Metcalf and Mark Tanzer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 32.

This translation has had a great impact on people's understanding of the essence of human beings throughout the ages. In chapter 34 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger proposes that the Latin translation *animal rationale* is problematic.³ He argues that if people consider the human being as the *animal rationale* (the rational animal), "it covers over the phenomenal basis from which this definition of *Dasein* is taken."⁴ Like Heidegger, Arendt has also pointed out that the Latin translation is misleading. As she puts it in *The Human Condition*: "The Latin translation of this term into *animal rationale* rests on no less fundamental a misunderstanding than the term 'social animal'."⁵ When she interprets the concept of *λόγος* in Aristotle's philosophy, she mentions that the original meaning of *λόγος* has been distorted into reason and argument.⁶ What is the genuine meaning of *λόγος*? The answer to this is closely related to their understanding of the fundamental determination of the human being.

In this essay, I attempt to compare Heidegger's and Arendt's interpretation of the concept of speech to uncover the difference and relations between the "being-with" and the public realm. I have divided this essay into three sections. The first section is to investigate Heidegger's analysis of the concept of *λόγος* to explain the relationship between speech and *being-with-one-another*. Next, I wish to clarify Arendt's interpretation of *λόγος*, which plays an important role in constructing her theory of the public realm. Finally, by comparing the interpretation of the concept of speech by Heidegger and Arendt, I argue that although Arendt agrees with Heidegger's views of the revealing character of speech and his explanation of idle talk, she criticizes that Heidegger does not pay attention to the question of the positive public discourse. Therefore, she expositis the authentic and active public speech in response. Besides, she analyzes the important role of authentic speech forms emphasized by Heidegger, such as silence and poetry, in the public sphere. In this sense, she develops Heidegger's speech theory.

³ In section 7 of the introduction of *Being and Time*, Heidegger examines the traditional interpretations of *λόγος*, including reason, judgment, concept, definition, basis, and relationship. He believes that these traditional interpretations cannot explain the primary meaning of *logos*. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time (A Revised Edition of the Stambaugh Translation)*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh, revised by Dennis J. Schmidt (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), 28–30.

⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh, 155.

⁵ On this critique, see Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 27.

⁶ She wrote, that "the current English translation distorts the meaning because it renders *logos* as 'reason' or 'argument'." See Arendt, *Human Condition*, 291.

Speech and Being-with-One-Another

Heidegger's Interpretation of ζῶον λόγον ἔχον

In *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, Heidegger proposed that λόγος means speaking (*sprechen*) in Aristotelian philosophy.⁷ Speech, as Heidegger pointed out, does not refer to uttering a sound but “speaking about something in a way that exhibits the about-which of speaking by showing that which is spoken about.”⁸ The genuine function of λόγος, according to Heidegger, is the ἀποφαίνεσθαι (*apophainesthai*), that is, to bring a matter to sight by speaking about something.⁹ According to Heidegger, in Aristotelian philosophy, the human being is a living thing with logos, which means “a living thing that has language.”¹⁰ This is the fundamental determinant of the being as a human being.

We can examine Heidegger's interpretation of the concept of λόγος in Aristotelian philosophy from three aspects. First, Heidegger claims that ζῶον λόγον ἔχον represents the ancient Greeks' thinking about the uniqueness of human life. According to Heidegger, the ancient Greeks regarded human beings as ζῶον λόγον ἔχον, indicating that the human being is the being of life (*Sein-in-einer-Welt*).¹¹ Heidegger further explains that the living mode of human beings is a mode of being-in-a-world.¹² In Heidegger's view, human beings are different from other beings because human beings have their unique way of living.

To be specific, human beings are concerned with their own existence, which is manifested in the fact that they can understand the world, ask questions about the world, and talk about the world. This is something other beings cannot do. This fact shows that the original meaning of ζῶον λόγον ἔχον is closely related to human existence and speech. Heidegger proposes that this quote from Aristotle's writings can be understood as: “Language is possessed, is spoken, in such a way that speaking belongs to the genuine drive of being of the human being. Living, for the human being, means speaking.”¹³ Thus, the unique living mode of human beings, according to Heidegger, is basically determined by speaking. This is because, through speech, human beings can disclose the concrete situation of themselves and

⁷ Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*, 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie*, ed. by Mark Michalski (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2002), 18.

¹² Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*, 16.

¹³ *Ibid.*

what is spoken. In speaking of something, we not only express ourselves but also express what is said, bringing a matter to self-showing. For example, mountains, flowers, and insects can only show themselves in the world through the speech of human beings. Human beings are always revealing these things from different and specific angles in their speech.

Second, in chapter 2 of *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, Heidegger points out that Aristotle not only defined human beings as "the being of life" but also gives priority to the political life of human beings. Heidegger notices that Aristotle's discussion of the human being as a living being with speech also appears in *Politics*. According to Heidegger, from the genuine life of human beings, Aristotle found a basic possibility of human life which is living in a polis. Aristotle's point of view is described by Heidegger as being-in-the-polis (*being-in-the-πόλις*).¹⁴ Heidegger points out that in the eyes of the ancient Greeks, only a person who lives in the polis is a real human being. Heidegger further elaborates on Aristotle's idea and claims that the being who speaks with the world was such a being whose living mode is being-with-others (*Sein-mit-anderen*).¹⁵

In Heidegger's view, speech and phones are considered the characteristic of humans and animals respectively. Speech brings the human being into the world of sharing with others. Speaking to the world and being-with-one-another is the fundamental living mode of being human. Heidegger claims that a relationship between the household and polis could only be constructed through speech, i.e., through self-expression and dialogue with others. The household and polis, according to Heidegger, are "being-as-speaking-with-one-another through communicating, refuting, confronting."¹⁶ For Heidegger, relationships in family and city-state can only be constructed on the basis of speech, that is, by self-expression and dialogue with others.

When people speak with each other, they share information with each other. Speaking has the characteristic of communication, which means one discusses something with others, then listeners will have a shared world with the speaker. Therefore, it is the speech that constitutes a particular being-with-other, i.e., being-in-the-polis.¹⁷ In Heidegger's view, ζῶον λόγον ἔχον also contains the determination of the human being as a political being. Therefore, he discusses the speech in the assembly of citizens, the defense in the court, and the praise in the celebration.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁵ Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe*, 46.

¹⁶ Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*, 35.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

Third, when Heidegger interprets ζῶον λόγον ἔχον, he not only pays attention to the political life of human beings but also focuses on the everydayness of human life. By examining Aristotle's concepts of "encouragement," "admonishment," and "accusation," Heidegger points out that human beings are not only speakers but also listeners in specific situations in their life. People not only listen to their own words but also listen to those of other people when interacting with others. In everyday life, people hold different views on certain things and share their views with each other. Heidegger emphasizes that views are the basis and motivation for conversation and consultation.¹⁸ Heidegger also examines the theoretical and practical consultation proposed by Aristotle.¹⁹

Nevertheless, Heidegger points out that the uncritical use of speech is inauthentic and pernicious, which might lead to dangers, such as special control, in people's everyday life. For example, some people do not seek to disclose the truth of things, and just repeat the views of others. Then, there is the danger of them being controlled and dominated by others. This is the danger that speech may bring.

In *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, we learn about Heidegger's view of speech by examining his interpretation of the concept of λόγος in Aristotelian philosophy. The discussions in this early work also laid the foundation for the elucidating of speech in *Being and Time*.

Being and Time: *Two faces of speech*

In section 7 of the introduction to *Being and Time*, Heidegger reiterates some of the basic elements already developed in *Basic Concepts*, particularly the original meaning of λόγος as speech (*Rede*).²⁰ Heidegger emphasizes the explication of ἀποφαίνεσθαι (letting something to be seen) in Aristotle, which is letting something to be seen from being itself. According to Heidegger, through speech, people manifest what is being talked about and make this accessible to the other party.²¹ In *Being and Time*, he carefully examines the different forms of speech, including listening, silence, and idle talk.

Heidegger regards speech as primarily constitutive of this disclosedness of being-in-the-world in the existential analytic of *Dasein*, as the attunement and understanding. In other words, speech constitutes and

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 167.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 168–190.

²⁰ There are two English words in translating this term *Rede*. Joan Stambaugh uses "speech," while John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson use "discourse." Both express the same meaning, so I adopt both of them in this essay. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward S. Robinson (New York: Harper, 1962).

²¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time (A Revised Edition of the Stambaugh Translation)*, 28–29.

discloses that *Dasein* is a being that has been thrown and submitted to the world, maintaining itself in a way of being-with-one-another. The speech of *Dasein* includes not only speaking but also listening and silence.

According to Heidegger, as a being-in-the-world with others, *Dasein* is open to others. *Dasein* not only speaks to others but also listens to them. *Dasein's* listening comes from its understanding, and only with the understanding of hearing can sound be heard. In addition, Heidegger points out that another possibility of speech is to keep silent. The person who is silent in conversation may also develop an understanding of the meaning of things. To talk about something extensively, for Heidegger, hinders the clarification of what has been understood. On the contrary, Heidegger believes that "keeping silence" also conveys the intention of the interlocutor and the meaning of things. Thus, Heidegger points out that people and others may be able to develop a more authentic understanding by keeping silent.

Heidegger further points out that in the everydayness of *Dasein*, speech has the possibility of becoming idle talk (*das Gerede*).²² When *Dasein* is being there with others, it will be separated from its authenticity, immersed in *das Man* and publicness (*Offentlichkeit*).²³ In Heidegger's view, idle talk mainly refers to the way of talking in way of gossiping and passing the word along. There are two important characteristics of idle talk: groundless and closing off. Speech discloses what is talked about, while idle talk hinders the disclosedness of things by discouraging inquiries and disputation. As a result of idle talk, people lose the connection with what is talked about. To be more specific, when someone says something, the other accepts and repeats it without thinking or without going back to what is talked about. In this regard, Heidegger continues his discussion in *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*. He points out that *Dasein* is ruled and controlled by the opinions of others when it relies on idle talk. Heidegger thinks that this is the inauthentic state in which *Dasein* is indulged in publicness.

In contrast to the inauthentic idle talk, Heidegger also discusses some authentic forms of speech. The authentic state of *Dasein*, such as "the call of conscience" and "being-toward-death," is related to the speech form of silence.²⁴ In section 34 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger also discusses another speech form: poetry. Heidegger believes that poetry is disclosed and clear speech, which is also the path for people to return to their authentic life. The speech forms of silence and poetry allow *Dasein* to transcend the publicness of *das Man* and return to an authentic state.

²² Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, ed. by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), 222.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ See Heidegger, *Being and Time (A Revised Edition of the Stambaugh Translation)*, chapters 34 and 55.

From Heidegger's perspective, poetic speech and keeping silent is very essential for *Dasein* to return to its authenticity, because it can make *Dasein* focus on itself, and no longer indulge in listening to *das Man*. This juxtaposition seems dangerous since it may lead to the simplistic presumption that the only alternative to idle talk is solitary meditation or poetic dwelling in Heidegger's theory. What is active communal speech like in an authentic "being-with?" Can solitary meditation or poetic dwelling emphasized by Heidegger help *Dasein* communicate with others and deal with public affairs? What is the relationship between solitary meditation or poetic dwelling and authentic communal speech? These questions seem to be unresolved by Heidegger. In my opinion, Heidegger does not clearly exposit a convincing conception of "authentic" public discourse that includes controversy, dissent, and disagreement as much as listening and understanding.²⁵ This unresolved problem in Heidegger's theory, as I will show in the next section, is explored by Arendt.

Speech and Public Realm

Arendt's interpretation of *lóγoc* is associated with her interest in Greek philosophy and her investigation of the living conditions of human beings. We can understand her views in *The Human Condition* from two aspects: on the one hand, Arendt reinterprets the concept of *lóγoc* and the definition of the human being in Aristotelian philosophy; on the other hand, inspired by Greek thought, Arendt also expounds her views on speech.

Arendt's Interpretation of Zôon Logon Echon

Like Heidegger, Arendt also points out that the Latin translation of *zôon logon echon* is *animal rationale*.²⁶ This translation, according to Arendt, is rooted in a fundamental misunderstanding. She interprets the basic meaning of this definition as: "a living being capable of speech."²⁷ To understand the meaning of this sentence, we must first return to Arendt's interpretation of the first definition of the human being in Aristotelian philosophy.

In *The Human Condition*, Arendt points out that Aristotle's first definition of man (the human being) is, that man is a political animal (*zôon politikon*).²⁸ It is political life that shows the uniqueness of human life. The

²⁵ On this unresolved problem, see also Qingjie James Wang, "Heidegger's Who's Analysis in *Being and Time* and the Communal Being," in *The Gift and the Common Good: An Intercultural Perspective*, ed. by Walter Schweidler and Joachim Klose (Academia Verlag, 2020).

²⁶ See Arendt, *Human Condition*, 27.

²⁷ Arendt's analysis can be seen in Chapter 2 of *Human Condition*. See *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

ancient Greeks divide human life into two categories: private life and political life. Private life mainly refers to the way of family life characterized by being based on blood kinship with the aim of meeting people's natural needs, such as food and fertility. People are united and engaged in labor for subsisting and prolonging their lives. Arendt points out that it is the principle of necessity that governs private or domestic life. This principle can be seen as a shared characteristic of the lives of both humans and animals.

By contrast, Arendt points out, according to Greek thought, political organizations are opposed to the natural union centered on the family and clan. Life in the polis represents political life outside of people's private lives. A polis is a space where people pursue freedom. For ancient Greeks, to be free, as Arendt elaborates, means to be no longer constrained by the necessity of life. Citizens conduct activities in the city-state and participate in politics. According to Arendt, Aristotle defines man as a political animal because political life highlights the difference between human and animal life.

Arendt points out that to fully understand the definition of man as a political animal, it is necessary to combine the second definition of man: as a speaking being (*zôon logon echon*).²⁹ Arendt explains that this second definition shows Aristotle's understanding of human beings and their political life. Speech is the foundation of what makes the human being a political being. Political activities are carried out in special modes of action and speech, not in the way of labor and production. According to Arendt, in ancient Greek thought, it was action (*praxis*) and speech (*lexis*) that constituted the political life of humans and gave rise to the sphere of human affairs.³⁰ Everything merely useful and necessary is excluded from political life.

According to Arendt, the ancient Greeks believed that action and speech allows people to move out of family life and enter political life. Speech, including arguing, persuading, and sharing, is the distinctive way to live in the polis. On the one hand, people maintain relationships with others and participate in the life of the polis through speech. On the other hand, speech can help people distinguish themselves from others and show their unique achievements in the life of the polis. Conversely, violence and force are both ways of life outside the polis that are characterized by silence or speechlessness.

Besides, Arendt points out that thinking is a secondary level to speech and action in the ancient Greeks' view. People can think about public affairs, such as right and wrong, good and evil. Nevertheless, it is the speech that conveys the results of people's thoughts to others. In this sense, real

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

political action takes place by way of speech. These interpretations of Aristotelian philosophy by Arendt contribute to her thinking about speech.

From Speech to Public Realm

After analyzing the definition of human beings and their unique way of life in Aristotelian philosophy, Arendt also constructs her view on speech. Arendt first examines the basic conditions of human existence. She proposes that the basic condition of human existence is “plurality.”³¹ When people deal with the world, according to Arendt, they cultivate the land and make products. These activities are no different from those of animals. The more important fact for human beings is that there are differences (distinctness) between people.³² This distinctness is the main character of human plurality. Moreover, the uniqueness of human life is that people can disclose their distinctness in speech and action. In other words, people can show their differences by expressing their distinctions and communicating with others. In this sense, speech is inextricably related to the existence of human beings. This relationship can be further elaborated from the following two points.

First, Arendt points out that speech has the agent-revealing capacity, which means to disclose what was formerly obscured. She believes that speech reveals the fact that the human being lives as a unique being among his fellows. In her view, speech among people enables the appearance of the public sphere. By tracing back to ancient Greek thought, Arendt distinguished between the private and public spheres. The private sphere is related to the labor and private feelings of individuals, which are veiled and hidden.³³ Action and speech enable people to get out of the hidden private realm and enter into a space shared with others, which is the public realm. The public realm means the appearance of things. Anything that appears in the public realm can be seen and heard by all. Others see what I see and hear what I hear from different perspectives. The presence of others assures us of the reality of the world and ourselves. It is through speech that people themselves and others are revealed together, and a public space is created. Therefore, the public sphere can be seen as the result of human interaction and speech. Furthermore, speech reveals unique personal identities that allow people to appear in the public sphere. Everyone has different characteristics from others, such as performance, talent, and personality. Therefore, people see and talk about things from different perspectives. Speech discloses the unique and distinctive identity of a person.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

³² *Ibid.*, 178.

³³ *Ibid.*, 58.

Second, Arendt discusses the danger of speech degenerating into "mere talk."³⁴ When speech is used by some people to deceive the enemy or used as demagogic propaganda, the existence of things and the actions of actors are obscured. Words fail to reveal the unique and distinctive identity of a person. At this point, speech becomes the so-called "mere talk." Arendt also explains mere talk in *Men in Dark Times*.³⁵ She points out that people enter a dark age when facts in the public sphere are overshadowed by high-profile rhetoric and empty words.

Here, Arendt offers a commentary on Heidegger's concept of idle talk. She believes that Heidegger's analysis of idle talk has extraordinary accuracy. Heidegger believes, according to Arendt, that the emergence of idle talk in the public sphere obscured the real thing and became the dominant force in people's daily life. Facing the dilemma of the dark ages, Heidegger's way of salvation, as Arendt points out, is to escape from the idle talk of the public and return to a state of loneliness. Nevertheless, Arendt offers a different outlet and insists on the important role of "illumination." Arendt argues that illumination does not depend on the guidance of a definite set of theories or concepts. The solution Arendt gives is to return to the public sphere and allow people to communicate with each other.

A key issue is involved here, namely, how to get rid of the erosion of mere talk in the public sphere. Arendt's analysis of this problem can be divided into two steps. The first step involves her explications of the relationship between mere talk and the human living condition. According to Arendt, the human living condition corresponding to mere talk is loneliness (*Verlassenheit*), that is, the state of losing the sense of human belonging. Specifically, there are two kinds of loneliness: living for others and being enemies of others.³⁶ When one trusts others too much and does not seek the truth of things, one will be manipulated by the "high-profile words" of others. Conversely, when people fear each other and do not trust each other, deceptive words are also rife in everyday life. In Arendt's view, loneliness and "absolute silence" cannot help people get out of the trouble of mere talk but may destroy people's ability to think and speak.

The second step is more crucial and concerns Arendt's inquiry into a public discourse that reveals the existence of things. What is a revealing public discourse that is different from mere talk? Based on Arendt's text, we can offer at least three responses to this question.

First, Arendt emphasizes the importance of "the thinking dialogue" or "the dialogue of solitude," that is, dialogue with oneself or a dialogue

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 180.

³⁵ Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1983), 7.

³⁶ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 180.

between the “two-in-one.”³⁷ In Arendt’s view, people are always “two in one,” even when alone. When a person thinks, one is talking to another self. Arendt points out that Socrates can serve as a model for dialogue with oneself. She writes that:

Socrates, spending his life in examining himself and others, instructing them and himself in thinking, cannot but question all existing standards and measurements Furthermore, as he himself admits, his calling had led him into (*idiotuein alla me demosieuein*) a life of privacy in which he has shunned life with the people at large, which is public life ... all he could show for himself when it came to actual conduct was a voice speaking from within himself that would turn him back from something he intended to do but that never urged him to act.³⁸

As seen in this excerpt, Socrates’s dialogue with himself is an activity that helps him reflect on the norms he accepts and his actions in his daily life. Based on her analysis of Socrates, Arendt points out that individuals can examine their speeches and actions in dialogue with themselves. In this process of dialogue with themselves, people can judge whether their opinion and actions contradict themselves. Arendt accepts Socrates’s claim that one cannot always be in a situation of disagreeing with oneself. Therefore, she also emphasizes that people agree with another self through having a dialogue between the two-in-one. Then, they can determine the criteria for their actions. This process lays the foundation for people to observe the world, participate in political affairs, and communicate with others.

Second, Arendt points out that a revealing public discourse is also concerned with mutual dialogue with others. Due to human plurality, everyone hears and sees the world from different angles. Speech in the public domain is not one voice or one point of view, but the mutual arguments and persuasions between different opinions. Arendt also uses Socrates as an example to illustrate speech and action in the public sphere.³⁹ In Arendt’s view, Socrates unified thought and speech. Socrates was willing to express his thoughts and talk to others. He encouraged others to express their opinions (*doxai*) positively and to reflect on the fallacies in their views. By

³⁷ Hannah Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, ed. by Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2005), 20.

³⁸ Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment* (New York: Schocken Books, 2003), 106–107.

³⁹ Arendt, *Promise of Politics*, 14–16.

accepting the responses and criticisms of others, one constantly improves one's understanding of things in the question and answer with others. Through mutual dialogues, people can make friends with each other and develop commonness in the political world. Arendt appreciates Socrates's way of communicating with others. In her view, speech in the public sphere is presented in a dialogical way. In this way, people can disclose their opinions and unique identities to others and participate in public affairs.

Third, Arendt points out that speaking in the way of "storytelling" can break people's silence and loneliness in the public sphere.⁴⁰ A story is a representation of what other people say and do. When participating in public affairs, people tell stories to describe historical figures and events and communicate with others. The story reveals the actions and deeds of a person, which influences things and people that are related to it. Arendt writes:

To the extent that the teller of factual truth is also a storyteller, he brings about that 'reconciliation with reality' which Hegel, the philosopher of the history *par excellence*, understood as the ultimate goal of all philosophical thought We may see, with Aristotle, in the poet's political function the operation of a catharsis, a cleansing or purging of all emotions that could prevent men from acting. The political function of the storyteller—historian or novelist—is to teach acceptance of things as they are.⁴¹

As seen in this paragraph, Arendt points out that storytellers, including poets, historians, and novelists, record and disclose factual truth about events and figures. Their stories not only make historical heroes and events appear in the public sphere but also stimulate listeners to think about them. Different from Heidegger, Arendt explores the political function of poetic speech.⁴² Arendt argues that through the way of storytelling, people can better reveal the actions and roles of others in the public sphere. People shed light on each other's thoughts on the stories, sharing their understandings of public affairs in the open and free debate.

From the above discussion, we find that Arendt regards contemplative life as a pursuit in the private sphere away from public life,

⁴⁰ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 181–188.

⁴¹ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, with an introduction by Jerome Kohn (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 257–258.

⁴² Arendt, *Promise of Politics*, 123–126.

while speech and action in the public sphere are regarded as real human life. Arendt devoted herself to finding a revealing public discourse in her theory.

From “Being-with” to Public Realm

From the analysis of the concept of *λόγος*, we can clearly see that both Heidegger and Arendt regard *λόγος* as speech and points out that speech has an irreplaceable effect on the existence of human beings. Arendt reflects and criticizes Heidegger’s theory of speech and “being-with” in her discussion. Some scholars, like April N. Flakne and Peg Birmingham, argue that the connection between the theories of Arendt and Heidegger should be emphasized.⁴³ The relationship between the speech theories of Heidegger and Arendt can be illustrated in two aspects: on the one hand, Arendt accepts Heidegger’s views on the relationship between speech and the existence of human beings. She also agrees with Heidegger’s viewpoint of different forms of speech and his criticism of idle talk and *das Man*. On the other hand, Arendt reflects on the unresolved question of public discourse in Heidegger’s theory. She analyzes the important role of authentic speech forms emphasized by Heidegger, including silence and poetry, in the public sphere. Furthermore, she exposita a genuine and active public speech. In this sense, she develops Heidegger’s speech theory.

Heidegger emphasizes the revealing character of speech. He points out that the truth of being lies in disclosedness, which means that something must be taken out of their concealment. Whether in *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* or in *Being and Time*, he regards speech as *Dasein*’s way of revealing things. In Heidegger’s view, speech discloses that the human being is a being that has its own life in conversation with others and that it is always with others. In *Basic Concepts*, Heidegger is concerned with the ethical and political situation of *Dasein*. He underlines the importance of different views of people in public life, pointing out that city-states were actually being-with-one-another in ways of communicating, refuting, and arguing. In *Being and Time*, however, the earlier analysis of the negotiation and rebuttal of different views within the city-state is absent. Heidegger pays more attention to the criticism of the inauthentic speech.

⁴³ See April N. Flakne, “Beyond Banality and Fatality: Arendt, Heidegger and Jaspers on Political Speech,” in *New German Critique*, 86 (2002), 3–18, <<https://doi.org/10.2307/3115199>>. Peg Birmingham, “Heidegger and Arendt: The Birth of Political Action and Speech,” in *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy*, ed. by François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (New York: SUNY Press, 2002); On this point, also see Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, “In Heidegger’s Shadow: Hannah Arendt’s Phenomenological Humanism,” in *The Review of Politics*, 46: 2 (1984), 183–211, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1407108>>.

Heidegger points out that the everydayness of *Dasein* is a state of indulging in *das Man* and publicness. The everydayness is the inauthentic state of *Dasein*. In Heidegger's view, the idle talk in everyday life obscures beings and distorts the truth of things. Idle talk allows *Dasein* to irresponsibly comment on the past and present and speculate on the future. To return to the authentic state of *Dasein*, it is necessary to go beyond publicness and *das Man*. Heidegger points to the possible dangers of being-with-one-another, that is, being dominated by publicness and *das Man*. Nevertheless, Heidegger does not provide an explicit description of an authentic public discourse, which makes many uncertainties hidden in his theory. The transition from *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* to *Being and Time* has caused many controversies over Heidegger's theory among scholars. Some scholars have accused him not only of his misleading interpretation of Aristotle's philosophy in *Being and Time* but also of the absence of politics in his theory.⁴⁴

Arendt retains some insights from Heidegger's theory of speech and "being-with." First, Arendt adopts Heidegger's phenomenological perspective, examining the meaning of the concept of *λόγος*, i.e., speech, from an ontological perspective instead of an epistemological one. Arendt agrees with Heidegger's view that the subject-object dichotomy in traditional philosophy needs to be transcended and people should return to the existence of human beings to investigate the meaning of speech. Arendt neither defines human beings as something present to explain the properties one has in common with others nor does she focus on demonstrating the existence of the external world and the other in epistemology. These questions have been regarded by Heidegger as a pseudo-problem. She follows Heidegger's path and returns to the human experience to understand the meaning of speech. Consistent with Heidegger, Arendt also emphasizes the revealing feature of speech, that is, speech can make people appear in the public realm. Speaking reveals how people live in the world with others in their own unique personal identities.

Second, she accepts Heidegger's distinction between forms of speech and his views on idle talk. Heidegger distinguishes between authentic and inauthentic discourse and pays special attention to the form of inauthentic speech, i.e., idle talk. Arendt also attaches great importance to the encroachment of idle talk on the public realm. In Arendt's view, the facts of the public sphere are overshadowed by the double-talk of official representatives, irresponsible rhetoric, and many sermons. It is these different kinds of idle talk that keep "everything that exists in an opaque, meaningless

⁴⁴ Robert Metcalf has a detailed statement on this debate. See Robert Metcalf, "Aristoteles und *Sein und Zeit*," in *Heidegger und Aristoteles*, ed by. Alfred Denker (Freiburg: Alber, 2007).

thereness which spreads obfuscation and causes disgust.”⁴⁵ Arendt’s description of people’s daily life is no different from that of Heidegger.

Third, like Heidegger, Arendt also seeks to find a way to get out of the trouble of *das Man* and idle talk. Heidegger claims that the state of solitude and silence is essential for people to escape from being controlled by idle talk and *das Man*. Following Heidegger, Arendt stresses the importance of the dialogue of solitude or the silent conversation between two-in-one. She believes that getting away from public life and having a conversation with another self is also necessary for people to know themselves and reflect on their words and actions. The dialogue of solitude helps one to form one’s views, which lays the groundwork for one to participate in discussions in the public sphere. In this sense, Heidegger’s speech theory provides valuable insights to Arendt.

However, Arendt also points out the problems in Heidegger’s speech theory. Arendt believes that Heidegger’s discussion of *das Man* and the publicness is accurate. However, Heidegger fails to clearly articulate an authentic form of public discourse. For Arendt, Heidegger’s theory may lead to the forgetfulness of others as well as indifference and hostility to the public sphere. She points out that Heidegger’s fundamental ontology enclosed *Dasein* in self-practice without contact with the world and others. Public life is seen as the inauthentic state of *Dasein*, which leads to alienation from the real world and political life.⁴⁶ Habermas also underscored this criticism.⁴⁷ Although Arendt’s critique is not entirely accurate, she does point out an unresolved problem in Heidegger’s theory: the lack of a clear analysis of active public speech.

Based on her critique of Heidegger, Arendt continued to think about “being-with” and public speech. She does not merely emphasize the inauthentic use of speech in the public sphere. Instead, she examines an authentic and uncovered public discourse. Arendt believes that action and speech in the public sphere can be considered the unique living way of human beings. An authentic public discourse reveals the uniqueness of the actor and the affairs of the public sphere. It is a form of discourse resulting from individuals actively demonstrating their uniqueness, so it is prone to uncertainty and unpredictability. She argues that storytelling can disclose unique identities and factual truths about events and people in the public

⁴⁵ Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, 7.

⁴⁶ Hannah Arendt, “What Is Existential Philosophy?,” in *Essays in Understanding, 1930–1954*, ed. by Jerome Kohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1994), 180; Hannah Arendt, “Concern with Politics in Recent European Philosophical Thought,” in *Essays in Understanding, 1930–1954*, ed. by Jerome Kohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1994), 432–433.

⁴⁷ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. by Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1987), 150.

sphere. She also examines different ways of storytelling, including poetry, novel, and play. Different from Heidegger, she explores the political function of poetic speech as a way of storytelling.⁴⁸ In her view, storytelling can help people share their understandings and communicate with each other about events and figures in the public sphere.

Meanwhile, Arendt argues that human plurality determines that speech in the public sphere takes the form of dialogue rather than a monologue. It is through open communication and debate of people that a consensus can be reached. Only in the communicative activity of speech can legitimate power arise. Habermas applauds Arendt's analysis of the interactive subjectivity that occurs in communicative action. Habermas points out that Arendt is committed to articulating the structures of non-distorted communication.⁴⁹ This point is emphasized again in Habermas's discourse ethics and deliberative conceptions of democratic life. Habermas believes that the human being is an animal living in the public sphere. This paradigm of a man living in the world determines people's daily self-understanding. It is the public space that makes the human being become the individual, which can reflect the social world. People rely on language to interact with others and exchange points in conversation to ensure that the unforced force of a better argument prevails.⁵⁰

From what has been discussed, we can see the connection and distinction between Heidegger's and Arendt's speech theories. Arendt develops Heidegger's notion of speech by elucidating an authentic and active public speech. This attempt is closely related to her reflection on the tradition of Western political philosophy. The process of developing from Heidegger's theory of "being-with" to Arendt's theory of the public sphere is not only a process in which the political spirit of "being-with" gradually emerges but also a process in which the importance of dialogue and negotiation in the public sphere is constantly highlighted.

⁴⁸ Arendt's viewpoints of the importance of poetry in the public sphere can be confirmed by the political impact of the poetry of some famous writers, such as the Filipino nationalist Jose Rizal and the American theologian Thomas Merton. On Arendt's views, see Arendt, *Promise of Politics*, 123–126. On the relationship between poetic speech and political engagement, see Jose Maria Sison, *The Guerrilla Is Like a Poet – Ang Gerilya Ay Tulad ng Makata* (Brooklyn: Punctum Books, 2013), 5–14; David Orr, "The Politics of Poetry," in *Poetry*, 192: 4 (2008), 409–418, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20608250>>.

⁴⁹ See Jürgen Habermas, "Hannah Arendt's Communications Concept of Power," in *Hannah Arendt: Critical Assessments of Leading Political Philosophers*, ed. by Garrath Williams (New York: Routledge, 2006).

⁵⁰ For Habermas's view, see Jürgen Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion*, trans. by Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008).

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