**Chapter Four Overview Video Transcript**

Chapter 4 explores Aristotle's highly influential contribution to rhetorical theory. Coming off what we learned from chapter 3, it's really useful, probably the most important thing from chapter 4, to think about Aristotle as someone that reconciles the Big Bang.

Recall the sophists with traveling speech teachers that were focused on the practical art of teaching effective rhetorical discourse. Socrates and Plato didn't think much of that because they felt like that was pandering. They felt like rhetoric was a sham art, not worthy of the pursuit of objective truth.

Into that Big Bang intervenes Aristotle. He reconciles the Big Bang by offering a definition of rhetoric that is incredibly helpful for what came after. He defines rhetoric as the faculty of observing or discovering in any given case the available means of persuasion. The faculty of discovering in any given case the available means of persuasion.

By emphasizing or carving out space for the faculty or the ability to discover or observe the available means of persuasion. And I really want to emphasize the discovery or the observing part of Aristotle's definition. He then carved out space for rhetoric to also be focused on theorizing and criticizing rhetorical discourse. So not merely the effective practice of, but more broadly, more transcendently, the effective study of, the ability to theorize and criticize what effective rhetors are doing when they offer up rhetorical discourse.

This is really important because people like me today, 2,500 years later, don't necessarily teach a lot of public speaking classes, and we don't focus a lot on direct political consulting. Instead, we're kind of a step removed, and we focused on analyzing, theorizing, and criticizing rhetorical discourse.

That capacity, that whole kind of intellectual pursuit, can in some ways be traced back to Aristotle's definition, the faculty of discovering or the ability to discover or observe the available means of persuasion. So more specifically, Aristotle reconciles the Big Bang by systematizing rhetoric.

Systematizing is kind of an academic, jargony term, but I think it's really useful here in explaining Aristotle's lasting contribution to rhetorical theory. He systematized rhetoric. He put it into a system that as a consequence, as a result, legitimized rhetoric as an intellectual pursuit.

Two main areas that we explore in chapter 4, systematizing rhetoric as it relates to the different kinds of speeches or types of speeches. So Aristotle's offers a deliberative speech, political address, usually focused on public deliberation. An epideictic speech was more ceremonial, a speech focused on kind of praising and blaming or holding up a community's values. And then a forensic address, a forensic speaking that is usually focused on the courtroom or legal arguments.

Now what that does, what that systematizing of rhetoric in relation to those 3 speeches does is it then allows the critic to come along and analyze speeches according to how well they fit within those 3 genres. So again, not necessarily speech writing or not necessarily delivering the address in the courtroom or in the after-dinner speech or, you know, on the Senate floor, but more criticizing the effective or ineffective employment of rhetorical techniques in those areas.

Second, as we explore in chapter 4, we talk a little about Aristotle's artistic proofs. And you'll be familiar with these as logos, ethos, and pathos. So logos focused on logical arguments, pathos focused on appeals to emotion, and then ethos focused on the character or the disposition of the rhetor.

And again, in an effort to systematize rhetoric, in an effort to say this isn't just some sham art, Aristotle gives us these artistic proofs to say, again, from the critics' perspective, "Here's a potent, effective rhetorical discourse, and here's why". The appeals to emotion were effective. The rhetor establishes good character, or the rhetor offered sound, logical arguments, and therefore was able to persuade the intended audience.

So taken all together, Aristotle's contribution to rhetorical theory can be understood as a way to add legitimacy, to bring together, to reconcile rhetoric after the Big Bang.

As you read, a point of application that we hope comes out of chapter 4 concerns the relationship between rhetoric and flexibility. Even today, the mark of a truly competent public communicator is nuance and flexibility and sophistication. By that, we mean a competent communicator is able to adjust his or her message to the situation, to the context, to the purpose. And we include some stories and some anecdotes along those ends.

That lasting lesson or principle of competent communication today, in some ways, can be traced back to Aristotle and his contribution to rhetorical theory. Again, by focusing on the faculty or ability to observe or discover the available means of persuasion, he was essentially offering the roadmap for competent public communication all these years later.