

**Citation:**

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**Abstract:**

Kunkel and Dennis (2003) established a framework for the examination of contemporary eulogia drawn from the comforting and social support paradigms found in psychology and communication literatures. Dennis and Kunkel (2004) applied the framework to eulogies for fallen national heroes (e.g., victims of terrorism and space shuttle astronauts) delivered by American presidents, and both illustrated its utility and noted several minor variations (e.g., presidents did not establish credibility early in speeches or portray emotion as individual experiences). The current study illuminates the nature of eulogies for past presidents by sitting presidents, and examines the eulogies of Presidents John Kennedy, Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan by Presidents Lyndon Johnson, Nixon, William Clinton, and George W. Bush, respectively. As highlighted by Kunkel and Dennis' framework, these eulogists accomplish many of the recognized comforting and consolation responsibilities. The presidents sometimes further their own causes and agendas when considered in hindsight, in ironic and prophetic fashion; thus, also meeting Jamieson and Campbell' (1982) definition of the rhetorical hybrid. Finally, the destiny and glory of the eulogized are often noted by eulogists, continuing the legacy that started with the death of George Washington, America' first president (Berens, 1977).