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**The Rhetoric of Eulogy:
Topoi of Grief and Consolation**

by Michael L. Kent

The Rhetoric of Eulogy: Topoi of Grief and Consolation

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[A]ll make some attempt to sift or support theses, or to defend or attack persons. . . . Success in either way being possible, the random impulse and the acquired faculty alike evince the feasibility of reducing the process to a method; for when the practiced and spontaneous speaker gain their end, it is possible to investigate the causes of their success.

Aristotle (Rhetoric 1354a)

Prooemium

According to Aristotle, it is the ability of the rhetorician to distinguish the causes of success in rhetoric that marks rhetoric as an “art.” Although much is known about rhetorical strategies and genres, as much or more still remains to be understood. The eulogy or funeral oration, also referred to as the consolation speech, is one area in which little direct inquiry has been conducted.

Historically, the eulogy has been a tradition in the West since the fifth century B.C.E. and perhaps before. Eulogies have been discussed by the Greek historian and rhetorician, Thucydides, the sophists, Gorgias and Lysias, and philosophers, Plato and Aristotle.

In the ancient Greek tradition, “[t]he funeral speech developed out of the formal laudation or commemoration of those who had fallen in battle for their country” (McGuire, 1953, viii) (cf. Ziolkowski, 1981). The structure of the funeral speech from this time period consisted of four distinct parts: “Prooemium, or introduction, generally short, in which the speaker would express approval of the funeral custom, attempt to gain the sympathy of the audience, and briefly praise the individual being eulogized; Epainos, or section of praise proper. Here the speaker would praise at length the deceased, touching on his (“his” is used here because of the fact that eulogy was reserved for those who had fallen in battle for their country’, i.e., only men) family, life, deeds, etc., focusing on the glorification of Athens; Paramythia, or, consolations and exhortations to the living; and, Epilogue, or conclusion, in which a final consolation took place, the speaker indicated that he had done his part in the tradition, and the audience was directed to depart” (Ziolkowski, 1981, pp. 174-181).

According to the historian, Menander, writing in the third century C.E., the eulogy functioned in one of two ways: “[the] ‘royal oration,’ for the living, and the epitaphios logos or ‘epitaph’ for the dead. The latter is subdivided into four types: (1) The pure encomium [for one long dead]; (2) The epitaph, which takes two forms: . . . the ancient funeral oration . . . [and, an] individual who has recently died; (3) The monody, a brief but intense lament; and, (4) The consolatory speech . . .” (McGuire, 1953, ix).

Consolation or eulogies “as a literary genre . . . [were] . . . introduced into Latin literature by Cicero. His first work, On Consolation (De consolatione), [was] written to console himself on the death of his daughter Tullia” (McGuire, 1953, xi). According to McGuire (1953), “[t]he Greek treatise on consolation (eulogy) impressed the Romans profoundly and many of its essential features passed into the Latin” (p. vii).

It is from these pagan Greek and Latin traditions that the Christian eulogies come. As noted by McGuire (1953), “[t]he Christian [eulogies come from] the varied pagan literary tradition, [and] . . . exhibit modifications and new elements which give them their specific Christian character” (p. vii). The Christian eulogy “is based on the central doctrine of the Christian religion; belief in a personal God, the creator of the world and man, all-powerful; but all-just and all-merciful, . . . the trinity, . . . [Christ’s] resurrection as the savior of mankind,” (p. xiii) etc.. The Christian eulogies are also most closely related to the ancient funeral orations. An emphasis is placed on praising God, rather than the individual or the state, as was common in classical eulogies. The goodness or worth of the individual is not ignored; however, it becomes secondary to the praise of the higher power through the individual.

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Other forms of eulogies have also been noted. The “satirical eulogy, or mock encomia” (Tomarken, 1990, p. 3) prevalent in the fifth century B.C.E. (cf. Aristides, Aphthonius, Menander, and Quintilian, also Erasmus’ Praise of Folly). Eulogies to science have been noted by Paul (1980), first introduced around the fifteenth century by Bernard Bovier de Fontenelle, “and sought to bridge the gap between the scientific community and the world at large (p. 1), Eulogies devoted entirely to animals and insects have also been noted by Paul, (1980), and Tomarken, (1990).

Although the genre of eulogies has been largely unexplored, they share two distinctive characteristics which have been eloquently described by Owen Peterson (1983) in the 1982-1983 volume of Representative American Speeches, he notes:

“A eulogy has two distinctive characteristics which sets it apart from most other forms of public address: (1) it is meant to be delivered at a ceremonial occasion to honor the subject; and, (2) it is designed to be heard by an audience that already shares the speaker’s respect, affection or admiration for the person being honored. The speaker’s task then is to heighten the auditors’ feeling of regard, love, or appreciation . . .” (p. 174).

Aristotle makes a distinction between praise and encomium. For Aristotle, praise, “is an utterance making manifest the greatness of a virtue. Therefore the speaker must show the actions of his man to be of such and such a quality. Encomium concerns the mans actual deeds” (1367b). Aristotle’s distinction is that, “we bestow encomium upon a men after they have achieved something. And, “. . . we should praise a man even if he has not done something” (1367b). In contemporary application, the eulogy generally consists of elements of both praise and encomium.

In pursuing the genre of eulogies, however, I was unable to discover any contemporary treatment of this rhetorical form either by Christian or non-Christian scholars. It is my intention to reify the contemporary eulogistic framework by identifying contemporary topoi, or commonplaces of argument, present in the eulogistic genre. I will consider the following eulogies: (1) John W. Bricker’s eulogy on Robert A. Taft, (August 3, 1953); (2) Adlai E. Stevenson’s eulogy on Sir Winston Churchill, (January 28, 1965); (3) Carl McGowan’s eulogy on Adlai E. Stevenson, (July 16, 1965); (4) Walter F. Mondale’s eulogy on Hubert H. Humphrey, (January 15, 1978); and, (5) Benjamin E. Mays’ eulogy on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., (April 9, 1968).

The eulogies considered here are eulogies given by men, for men. Also, as mentioned previously, the tradition of the Greek encomium was one in which the deeds of “men” who had fallen in battle were praised. Because of the lack of scholarly research in this area, I have considered no treatment of eulogies either by women, or about women. It is probable that a matriarchical eulogistic framework based on an entirely different set of topoi than the ones considered here exists.

As this is an exploratory effort, I will be limiting myself to eulogies conducted for individuals directly following their deaths, and individuals who died within the last fifty years. This form of eulogy has been most closely associated with the contemporary Christian eulogistic genre, and the classical Greek and Roman tradition previously mentioned, i.e., the second form, the epitaph, which takes the forms: . . . ancient funeral oration[s] . . . [and, eulogies to] individual[s] who have recently died. It is necessary to limit my scope to this form of contemporary eulogy in order to explore a manageable topic.

Epainos

In analyzing these speeches, I will draw on what have been identified as “American Values” by Steele & Redding (1962), and elaborated on by Cooper (1989), as a topological hunting ground. The value system identified by Steele & Redding is useful because it identifies shared cultural values, or commonplaces of argument, an orator can draw upon in constructing an eulogy. This value system can be equated to the various topoi identified by Aristotle, and also

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noted by Ziolkowski (1981) in his discussion of Thucydides' topoi in the eulogy. The value system offered by Steele & Redding is valuable here because it can be contrasted with the values of Ancient Greece. Steele & Redding's value system allows for discussion of contemporary topoi. They identify sixteen American values ranging from "puritan and pioneer morality, a collection of virtues, . . . honesty, self discipline, courage, etc." (p. 85); the value of the individual, "a concern for the autonomy, uniqueness and worth of every individual" (p. 86); effort and optimism, the belief that hard work and a positive attitude will enable one to succeed; and, patriotism, loyalty to the tradition and values of America (p. 90).¹

Topical analysis is a useful strategy for understanding the contemporary eulogistic framework because, combined with Steele & Redding's value system as a system of strategy analysis, we can gain valuable insight into both the content and function, two areas identified by Clark & Delia (1979) as significant in, "guiding the efforts of speech communication scholars," (p. 196) of the contemporary eulogistic framework.

I will consider the extent to which the speeches conform or deviate from the traditional eulogistic ordering pattern of "Prooemium, Epainos, Paramythia," and "Epilogue," (content), and identify the *function* of the topoi common to each section. The first speech, John W. Bricker's eulogy on Robert A. Taft (August 3, 1953) was given in the rotunda of the Capitol. Bricker makes no attempt to apologize for any inadequacy in his eulogy. Bricker's Prooemium consists of nothing more than acknowledging that President Taft is dead. Bricker states: "The heart of the nation is heavy today. Its head is bowed. A grateful people are saddened by the death of their faithful servant, Robert A. Taft" (p. 76). Bricker next moves directly to epainos in which he praises Taft for his: "friendship, humility, concern for his fellow man, sincerity, and piety." The topoi here directly correspond to the classical topoi expressed in this section of the speech, i.e., an attempt to gain the sympathy of the audience. His suasive strategy however, is an attempt to create solidarity between his audience and the deceased by drawing on Steele & Redding topoi of puritan and pioneer morality. The next section of the speech is dedicated to praise of Taft's family, specifically: "history and influence, grandparents/parents, wife and children, and the value of family," which corresponds to the puritan and pioneer morality (Steele and Redding, 1981), and again is an attempt to create a solidarity with his audience.

The next topoi addressed is career, touching on: "educational success, political success, and moral success." Here the topoi, "achievement and success, that the culture offers opportunities for advancement through achievements" (Steele & Redding, 1981, Cooper, 1989, p. 87), is being drawn upon. The audience should be saddened at the loss of someone so productive.

Other topoi are also identifiable. A topoi of fatherland is seen with: "freedom for individuals, opposition of tyranny, and, the ultimate victory of right and righteousness." Finally, a topoi addressing Taft's faith is drawn upon, his: "faith in himself, our kind of government, and faith in God." Here an enthymeme is being utilized of the form: faith is good; Taft was a man of faith; therefore, Taft was a good American.

Bricker combines the Paramythia, and the epilogue, drawing on Christian topoi, he states: "One of the imperishable yearnings of the soul is to live beyond the day of death" (p. 80), and also, "he will live on, and he is an example/inspiration." We can see Steele & Redding's notion of the values of America, specifically the Christian value of role models. By comparing Taft to a Christian role model or image of goodness, Bricker is seeking to provide a means for the bereaved to deal with their loss. Bricker consoles the family, a classical function of the paramythia, when he notes: "A grateful nation bestows its sympathy to his loved ones in this hour of their bereavement" (p. 80). Finally, Bricker is directing the audience to depart when he concludes with a quote by Tennyson:

On God and godlike men we build our trust.

¹ For an extensive treatment of Steele and Redding's Value system see, WSCJ, Spring 1962.

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He is gone who seemed so great--
Gone, but nothing can bereave him of the force
 he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in state,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him,
God accept him, Christ receive him.

The quote brings closure to the proceedings through its reference to God and Christ, i.e., "Christ receive him," in the last line.

Adlai E. Stevenson's eulogy on Sir Winston Churchill, (January 28, 1965) as with the previous eulogy, does not contain an apology from Stevenson as to his inability to do full justice to the deceased. Stevenson begins by praising Churchill and acknowledging that he was "one of the world's greatest citizens" (p. 103). Stevenson appeals to the emotions of the listeners by briefly enumerating aspects of Churchill's character, and contemplating the loss to everyone. His eloquence, wit, courage, defiance & faith (p. 104), are all appeals to American virtues and the concern for the worth of every individual. By drawing on these shared cultural values, Stevenson, tries to create a link between the audience and the greatness of the deceased through the use of an enthymeme: Holding American values is good; Churchill held America values; although he was not an American he is good. It is necessary to bridge the cultural gap between audience and deceased through the use of topoi this audience would accept, i.e., American values.

As Stevenson moves to the epainos, he draws on topoi from Churchill's life, his: "achievements, contributions, and Churchill's belief in the society/people. Words like trust, humanity, and freedom are used because as ideographs they serve to end any debate: Here is an American (although he was not), they express.

He draws on the topoi, God/religion, as he moves to a brief paramythia and epilogue, drawing on the value of the puritan and pioneer morality to argue that God guides Churchill and the audience's paths.

It must be noted that Stevenson's eulogy is quite sophisticated in relation to Bricker's. He is able to interweave American values of the audience such as: "the value of the individual, the autonomy, uniqueness, and worth of every individual; achievement and success, the opportunity for advancement through achievement, regardless of birthright," with praise and consolation. Topoi and values are apparent in both eulogies; however, they are not the focus of theses but support them instead. American topoi and values gives the speaker a place to draw arguments from.

The third eulogy to be considered here is, Carl McGowan's eulogy on Adlai E. Stevenson, (July 16, 1965). Once again McGowan, as the previous eulogists, does not seek to apologize for an inability to do full justice to the deceased. His prooemium consists of acknowledging the sanctity of the funeral occasion: "We are a vast company--we friends of Adlai Stevenson. Only a few of our total number are met here in Washington today to mourn him" (p. 227). Once again ideographic words are used to create immediate acceptance for his praise.

McGowan then begins the epainos with topoi praising Stevenson's actions: "his inspiration, honesty, and influence on posterity," and continues with topoi of Stevenson's political actions: "his public service, (his triumphs and defeats), similarity to other great politicians, his love of politics, his concern for his fellow citizen, and the mark he has left on posterity." One of the dominant values expressed in McGowan's speech is that of, "sociality," (getting along in society, being liked," etc.) (Cooper, 1981). McGowan spends a considerable amount of time

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discussing how Stevenson was a friend of many people of diverse races and walks of life. In his eulogy he draws on the puritan and pioneer morality, a value of his audience, to create immediate images of goodness.

McGowan's paramythia and epilogue are difficult to distinguish. His consolation for the living centers around a topoi of, arete, or virtue and excellence. He states: "If there be reason for despairing on this day, it is because this man has been removed from the important work of war and peace. But he, who knew the perils ahead better than most, was undaunted by them" (p. 230). Self discipline and courage are values used to construct his arguments.

In what seems to be the epilogue proper, he states: ". . . are we now to falter and be faint of heart? We have lost a friend but all the world has lost one. . . . He died as he would have wished, engaged in the countries' business, and mankind's" (p. 230). Here McGowan is indicating that Stevenson has been laid to rest; he draws on morality and courage, and by acknowledging Stevenson's death, he is indicating closure of the ceremony for the audience, and that they should depart.

The fourth eulogy I will consider, and also the most recent, is Walter F. Mondale's eulogy on Hubert H. Humphrey, (January 15, 1978). In his prooemium, Mondale makes a direct reference to Humphrey's wife and family and the audience. He acknowledges the occasion and attempts to garner sympathy from his audience by noting their and his own loss in Humphrey's death. A topoi of family serves to reinforce the greatness of Humphrey's loss to the country, i.e., he was a man with a family, (as is every good American), who has been left without a leader. Through these references, he conforms to most of the classical topoi with the exception of an apology for his inadequacy to justly honor Humphrey.

In the epainos, Mondale touches on topoi of Humphrey's life, and deeds. He refers to Humphrey's, "desire to serve the people, political/professional success, and his desire to help the people." He draws on the topoi and values of: "puritan and pioneer morality, achievement and success, and ethical equality and equal opportunity" (Steele & Redding, 1962, and Cooper, 1989), to reinforce the extent of the audience's loss.

Mondale has a paramythia but no formal epilogue. He quotes Shakespeare in attempting to console the living, but does not bring the eulogistic ceremony to formal closure. He states: "He taught us all how to hope and how to love, how to win and how to lose, he taught us how to live and, finally, he taught us how to die" (p. 208). Mondale draws on the topoi of positive attitude, arguing with a value the audience holds to generate acceptance of Humphrey's death.

Finally, Benjamin E. Mays', probably the most thoroughly versed in the eulogistic genre, conducted the eulogy on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (April 9, 1968). Dr. Mays begins his prooemium by utilizing all of the classical topoi associated with eulogistic tradition. He acknowledges the eulogistic tradition, attempts to gain the sympathy of the audience, expresses his inadequacy at conducting such a ceremony, and praises King's life. In his prooemium he states:

"To be honored by being requested to give the eulogy at the funeral of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is like asking one to eulogize his deceased son--so close and so precious was he to me. Our friendship goes back to his student days at Morehouse College. It is not an easy task; nevertheless I accept it, with a sad heart and with full knowledge of my inadequacy to do justice to this man" (p. 161-162).

Mays utilizes his own humility as a topoi, i.e., loyalty to tradition, in praising King.

Mays then moves to the epainos where he draws on the following topoi: King's religious life, deeds, and arete. Mays first begins by acknowledging topoi related to King's life: "a consolation of King's family, God has called, (a prerequisite to note in a Christian eulogy), and, he lived his life according to God. He addresses King's deeds: "he was a successful humanitarian, worked for the good of all men, and had faith in his country and the people." Finally, Mays discusses at length characteristics of King's arete. King was, "courageous, fair, had love and concern for all kinds of people, and was persecuted for his values." Honesty, self discipline, loyalty and courage, all serve as premises for persuasion.

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Interestingly, Mays in his paramythia does not so much console as exhort the living not to forget King's fight and to carry on in his footsteps, in the way he would have wanted, i.e., nonviolently. His consolation comes in the form of an argument that, if we were to live as King would have wanted, he will not be forgotten. Mays' skill here is exceptional, by turning the American values back on the audience who holds them, i.e., hard work and positive attitude, he utilizes a powerful enthymeme and true self persuasion of the audience.

Finally, Mays in his epilogue uses two strategies to indicate the eulogy has come to an end. He states, "I close by saying . . ." (p. 168), but, more subtly, he comes back to "Morehouse College" which he mentions in the prooemium. Again he turns the American values back to the audience. The College serves as an ideograph for discipline, hard work, and effort and optimism, again drawing American values into his persuasion.

In eulogizing King, Mays draws on the values of puritan and pioneer morality; change and progress, (change is a necessary and valued aspect of society); rejection of authority, (or, the idea of civil disobedience); and, achievement and success, (the American dream that success is measured by one's achievements) (Cooper, 1989). The multiple allusions Mays creates between King and American values goes to the heart of the very movement which was King's life work, the Civil Rights Movement. Common to protest rhetoric are appeals to the values of the dominant group, a form of ethos through association. Mays draws on these values in his eulogy not only to reinforce King's association with them, but to lend credibility to King, who at the time of his death still faced opposition on many fronts.

Paramythia

Before a discussion of the eulogies is put forth, certain obstacles in methodology must be noted. Having no indication exactly how many eulogies were considered by the classical Greek, Roman and early Christian historians in identifying their topoi, probably more than the five I have considered here, it is uncertain how much deviance in topoi actually existed in the classical eulogistic genres. Undoubtedly, some deviance existed in the topoi used in antiquity, as a topoi is a "commonplace" of argument, a rule guided, but not a rule bound, classification. Considerable deviance exists in the contemporary eulogies I have considered; however, considerable convergence also exists. The focus of my discussion will be to identify both the divergent and convergent topoi of these contemporary eulogies.

Divergence

Violation of the classical topoi of apology or inadequacy in the prooemium for one's inability to fully honor the deceased was common to the eulogies of Bricker, Stevenson, McGowan, and Mondale. Of the six eulogies, Mays' is the only one in which an apology is tendered for the speaker's potential inadequacy. An explanation might be that a shift occurred from the eulogy as an honor, to the eulogy as a duty. As part of the Judeo/Christian ideals that flourished beginning about the fourth century C.E., the eulogy shifted from a public ceremony of praise, specifically to the city state, with the individual's death considered a glorification of the city state, to a private matter, with the purpose of acknowledging the individual's deeds, and offering the individual to God.

Eulogies were no longer conducted to honor the city through the valor of the dead, but instead, as part of a ceremony designed to honor the deceased him/her self. It became the duty of the eulogist to participate in the death ceremony as a means of offering the deceased to the Lord. It was no longer simply an honor, but a requirement for participation in the religion, much the same as the emphasis placed on "last rites" by those of the Catholic faith. It makes sense then that Mays, probably the most thoroughly versed in the eulogistic tradition, vis-a-vis his religious background, would follow most closely the classical Christian arrangement pattern and tradi-

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tions.

Another related explanation for the shift away from the traditional topoi of apology might be that the public eulogy is no longer a tradition in western society, with the exception of honoring the very famous. Most individuals no longer have the opportunity to attend numerous eulogies and become as familiar with tradition as once was common.

A final possibility could be related to the subject(s) being eulogized. As noted, in the classical Greek and Roman tradition, eulogies to the recently dead were not common for individuals who had fallen in battle. Generally, the ceremony was held some time after the battle and was delivered for all who had fallen. The form of “funeral oration [for many]” or “a consolatory speech” (McGuire, 1953) for many might be the focus of the topoi identified by Ziolkowski (1981), rather than topoi of eulogies for politically distinguished individuals as is the case with the eulogies considered here.

Another area in which these five eulogies differ in their treatment of the paramythia and epilogue. In two of the five eulogies, Mays’, and Mondale’s, the speakers have a paramythia section in which they console or exhort the living. In the other two eulogies, Bricker, Stevenson, and McGowan’s the speakers either combine the paramythia and the epilogue, or have no directly discernible epilogue.

Rather than try to explain this on a case by case basis, I believe that a plausible explanation exists. Westerners, at least in contemporary times, order in threes. We think in terms of a beginning, middle, and end an introduction, body, and conclusion. We offer examples in sets of three. The conditioned impulse to alter the traditional pattern of ordering in fours, such as is currently found in contemporary Japanese culture, to that of a contemporary ordering pattern of three might influence the arrangement of the eulogy. A contemporary empirically based consideration of the eulogy seems consistent with the classical pattern. It seems reasonable that, when eulogizing a deceased friend or loved one, one would want to both praise the life and deeds of the deceased, as well as, console the living they leave behind. Both of these considerations would then need to be framed within a proemium and an epilogue. The impulse to violate this principle and, instead, arrange a “more natural” three part eulogy, I believe, influences the contemporary eulogistic ordering pattern.

The American values classification offered by Steele and Redding (1962), was included to help explain the divergence in topoi employed in the five eulogies considered. As noted by Ziolkowski (1981), the classical topoi employed in the epainos traditionally focused on exhortation of the Greek City State. The occasion of the eulogy was perceived as an opportunity to praise the lifestyle of the living. Three sections characterized this section of the eulogy: “genos, (the ancestry of the dead), traditionally the longest section, in which the speaker praised the Athenian autochthony, and related several mythological or historical stories glorifying Athens; praxis, (the deeds of the dead), where the men recently buried are praised for living up to the glorious deeds of their ancestors; and, patris (fatherland), or praise of the Athenian form of government, education, and culture” (Ziolkowski, 1981, p. 176-177).

Steele and Redding’s topological classification of American values illustrates that a shift has taken place in western values since the eulogistic tradition first began sometime prior to the fifth century B.C.E.. While praise of the American form of government, i.e., our representative democracy, is still common by occasion and audience, other values have been identified which characterize the American ideal of a good citizen. Drawing on these values is a necessary component then of contemporary eulogistic analysis. Steele and Redding’s topoi of values offers a contemporary method whereby the classical topoi which no longer apply to western eulogies can be considered. Commonplace patterns of arrangement are perceived to exist, and Steele and Redding’s system is the means whereby they are to be understood.

Convergence

The eulogies converge in a number of topological areas consistent with Steele and

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Redding's value system. Praise is given of the individual's contributions to the state, rather than direct praise of the state through the individual. The individual becomes the vehicle of praise for the state, rather than the state being the vehicle of praise for the individual.

Consistent use of topoi praising the state are apparent in all five of the eulogies considered here. The emphasis, however, is on the American values associated with the individual, and not the state. The individual is praised for "achievement and success, effort and optimism," and their "puritan and pioneer morality," the value and loss of the individual to society, rather than society's intrinsic value to those who survive the deceased. The topoi of the contemporary eulogy no longer is externally focused, but instead, inwardly focused on praise of the individuals actions and achievements.

Specific observations beyond these surface observations are beyond the scope of this essay. A more detailed consideration of the occasion, the speakers character, and previous experience in this genre, might explain some of the rhetorical choices made by contemporary eulogists. A consideration of the effects of the mass audience on the eulogistic genre, and, a consideration of eulogistic genre in regard to women might also be revealing.

Epilogue

As an exploratory inquiry into the contemporary eulogistic genre, this essay has been revealing. Perhaps a consideration, specifically, of contemporary Christian eulogies would reveal striking similarities or differences from the classical Greek/Roman, and early Christian eulogistic conception; this remains to be seen. However, one important issue that has been identified is that no contemporary systematic treatment of this genre has been conducted. As noted previously by Aristotle: ". . . the random impulse and the acquired faculty alike evince the feasibility of reducing the process to a method; for when the practiced and spontaneous speaker gain their end, it is possible to investigate the causes of their success" (*Rhetoric* 1354a). Based on this brief survey of eulogies it is unclear exactly what would not constitute a successful eulogy. In this regard, the groundwork needs to be laid. It is unclear what the general length of a eulogy should be. Should the speaker speak until the audience no longer cares to listen? Should s/he focus on consolation or exhortation? Some of these issues have been come to light in an ancillary fashion, and pursuit of the range and scope of the contemporary eulogy might be the focus of future research.

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