The author of “Telling America’s Story: Narrative Form and the Reagan Presidency” is William F. Lewis. Lewis has a BA in Economics and Business, a MBA in Marketing and a PhD in Marketing. He received his PhD from the University of Cincinnati. He is currently employed at the University of Dayton in the School of Business Administration. He is an associate professor for marketing. Since publishing this journal article he has written several other articles related to business and marketing.

In this article Lewis addresses Ronald Reagan, known as a phenomenal speaker. He analyzes Reagan’s style and also takes a look at why Reagan’s critics have failed in achieving credibility in their critiques. His thesis states that, “The purpose of this essay is to account for the distinctive reputation, style, and effect of Ronald Reagan’s discourse by providing a consistent and sufficiently comprehensive explanation for the contradictory perceptions of his speaking and for the related paradoxes of this “Great Communicators” presidency. The main focus of this article is Reagan’s second inaugural address.

Lewis defines Reagan’s speeches as story telling. He attributes this feature of the speeches to why Reagan’s speaking ability was well admired and appreciated. His storytelling ability is the main key to having Reagan’s audience relate to his speech. According to Lewis, Reagan used story telling to inspire his audience and to explain the
direction of his policies. Reagan also reminds his audience that the heroes of America are the everyday people.

The critique of Reagan is that he was very good at using Rhetoric in his favor. He was so good at speaking that most of the time his audience would get enthralled in his story-telling and bypass the underlying issues. An example of this would be during his second candidacy for president, Ronald Reagan over exaggerated the tax proposal by the democrats. Lewis stated that, “The figure was questioned widely, but the charge of inaccuracy never affected Reagan’s credibility or popularity”.

Overall this journal article was fairly legible to the common person. The thesis was well written and Lewis explained everything clearly. He made a lot of good points and showed a lot of examples of Reagan’s story telling abilities. One thing that it did lack was and credit to his speech writers, such as Peggy Noonan. Lewis seems to be giving Reagan full credit for the speeches and does not mention the writers once. This made me almost discredit this article because of the lack of acknowledgement that Reagan did not write his own speeches.

Lewis did not present any bias in his article on whether or not he favored Ronald Reagan. Overall it was a useful article. It helped me to understand what made Reagan such a popular President, since I was too young to remember him. I would recommend this article to future speech writers as well as perspective politicians.