

“I Have A Dream” Speech Analyzation

Black History Month Submission

Black history can be articulated as a tainted portrayal of a disenfranchised race of people due to factors that were beyond their control. America has consistently reiterated the lack of merit that should be attributed to African Americans by forcefully stagnating them into habitual habits that are passed from generation to generation. Although America tried to champion philosophies such as “land of the free”, and “melting pot”, historical examples show the complete and utter disregard of those statements. This country was built upon the backs of African American slaves while using the blood of these individuals as lubricant for this country’s success. This lack of remorse and care for black people created some of the most influential individuals in African American history, as well as some of the most iconic pieces of literature ever composed.

One of the most inspiring written works ever published was the historic “I Have a Dream” speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This speech was pivotal in giving those that had been deprived of hope, a glimpse into what a fair and equal future could be. The implications of this speech have superseded its publication year of 1963 with facets of it still being visible during present day. One of the most iconic lines that still carries an overwhelming amount of weight in our current society is also the most overlooked grouping of words in the entire speech. This prolific line states that: “We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating For Whites Only” (King, 1963).

The saying “For Whites Only” is still an insignificant statement that continuously haunts generation among generation of African Americans. In 1963, this phrase was plastered over businesses, institutions, and ingrained into the minds of minorities, however in present day, this phrase has become privier in nature. This term has been molded into other phrases such “go back

to your own country”, or in more recent news, “just shut up and play”. The latter phrase should resonate with everyone not just the athletes that it is aimed at. This phrase indirectly says the black athletes should only have the power to control how far they can throw a ball or how fast they can run a 40-yard dash, and in retrospect leave the politics to their white counterparts. This scenario diminishes an athlete’s freedom of speech and limits their ability to be a functioning human of American society. Limiting mobility is what this phrase does and is very reminiscent of how slave owners captured the minds of those from years past.

There are also numerous highlights of a positive future hidden deep within the syntax of this speech. The quote that directly explains how African Americans are evolving as a group can be seen when Dr. King states: “With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood” (King, 1963). This brotherhood is not symbolic of all races; however, it is a constant example of how black people have begun to band together in support of each other. Examples of this support can be seen in the constant trends of “buying black” or by supporting specifically black own businesses. Along with this, the constant need for brotherhood is showing up in politics as well. The comprehension of rights makes it clearer that everyone, especially black people, have a voice too. Using voting power, a thriving youth is now able to see faces that resemble theirs within politics, which was once a concept exclusively permitted to those of fairer skin tone.

The “brotherhood” that is fostering and infecting black communities are enabling a once stigmatized group of individuals to become empowered. From the election of President Barack Obama, to now having Kamala Harris, the first black female, serve as Vice-President of the United States, this concept is a direct representation of the state of being black in America. Dr. King strived for a snippet of a future that is currently taking place today. He dreamed of America

that was dictated by a person's actions rather than the melanin that pulses through one's skin. Although some aspects of his speech are still struggling to emerge in everyday life, others are slowly making their way to the forefront in an attempt to create a harmonious environment for all.

References

King, M. L., Jr. (1963, August 28). I Have A Dream. Retrieved February 26, 2021, from <https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/siteassets/Schools/Middle-Schools/A-F/leems/uploadedFiles/news/Full-text-I-Have-a-Dream-.pdf>