
Abstract**On “Dream” Speeches and Sermons by Martin Luther King, Jr.****Michiyo Morita**

The purpose of this article is to discover the characteristics of “Dream” speeches and sermons by Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–1968) through examining his ten speeches and sermons on “Dream” from 1959 to 1968.

The first and most important characteristic is that King’s “Dreams” is comprised of two things: The Declaration of Independence and The Constitution of the United States, and Christianity. This characteristic is consistent in King’s speeches and sermons on “Dreams.” King used the term “The Declaration of Independence” much more than the term “The Constitution of the United States.” This is reasonable because the Constitution of the United States sanctioned the slavery system. In his speeches and sermons, King used the term “The Constitution of the United States” two times in the “I Have a Dream” speech (1963) and the “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech (1968). Furthermore, King repeatedly said that the American dream has not yet been fulfilled.

The second characteristic is King didn’t use the words “dream” when he led the Montgomery bus boycott movement. He did not use the word until 1959.

The third characteristic is that the “I Have a Dream” speech is King’s most famous speech. In addition, with regard to structure and content, this has the highest quality of all King’s speeches.

The fourth characteristic is, since the “American Dream” sermon (1965) and “A Christmas Sermon on Peace” (1967), the content of King’s sermons began to fluctuate from “dream to nightmare,” and “from nightmare to dream once again” in one sermon.

The fifth and final characteristic is the “Shattered Dreams” sermon and the “Unfulfilled Dreams” sermon (1968) are similar in two ways: The Declaration of Independence is not used at all in both of the sermons; and both sermons say that the life is a continual story of shattered dreams. In this way, these two sermons are different from the rest of King’s sermons and speeches.