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College Writing

Martin Luther King Jr, a prominent figure in the civil rights movement. On August 28, 1963, Dr.King gave his iconic 'I Have A Dream' speech at the March on Washington. Within the speech, there are many metaphors that Dr.King uses in order to get his message across to the country. His audience were not only the black brothers and sisters that joined him at the march, it was directed towards America as a whole and as well the American Government and their mistreatment of Black People before the civil rights movement.

King talks about President Abraham Lincoln and his signing of the Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves from their masters and giving them hope of a new life not in captivity or in fear, He says 'It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.' King's metaphor of day and night is very prominent to what the slaves had to do to escape their captors. Slaves would escape the plantations with the guise of night. It would take a long time for them to reach freedom, even though they left their plantation they still were considered slaves and if caught would be returned to captivity by daybreak. When President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation it was as if it was finally daybreak from the suffering and the long and dark nights of fear and captivity. Many members of the audience could have been freed slaves or grandchildren and children of freed slaves and many agreed with what Dr.King said on how it felt the day the Emancipation Proclamation was signed and all the slaves were freed from Slavery.

Dr.King did not end there with his references of Slavery and how the Black Community was still affected by Slavery even after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed. He goes on to say ‘One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles(a metal band, chain, or shackle for fastening someone's hands or ankles) of segregation and the chains of discrimination’ King talks about even though Black People are freed from the chains of slavery they are still chained up segregation and the discrimination that they face from White People. The use of the words ‘manacle’ and ‘chains’ are powerful words within his speech. He talks about how even though the Black Community is free from being slaves, they are still being treated lesser than human beings by White People that still believe that there should have been slavery and that it should have never been made illegal and also believed that Black People didn’t deserve rights at all and should be treated nothing more than just animals and not treated as actual human beings. At the time that the speech was given, Black People were treated as lesser than nothing by White Racists as well as being killed by White Supremacists, the same way the slaves were treated by their masters and bounty hunters that searched for them when they attempted to escape to freedom. Dr.King ultimately is saying though not being sold off to work on fields of cotton, the Black Community is still being chained by racism and discrimination and by the constant fear of being mistreated, abused, or even killed for just being Black.

Dr.King’s use of metaphors throughout his speech makes the speech more impactful for the audience at the time as well as the millions of people who read his speech today. He could have just discussed the way Slavery affected the Black Community outright as well how badly the American Government as well as how the White population treated the community and how

the American Government allowed its citizens to treat human beings but the use of metaphors made more people listen as well understand what he means within the speech.