Annotated Bibliography: Martin Luther King, Jr.


Two to three sentences that summarize the article, followed by two to three sentences explain how or why you plan to use the article. If you don’t plan to use the article, explain what you learned from it. (4-6 sentences total written here about the article.)


Richard Besel and Bernard Duffy of California Polytechnic State University begin their essay by examining the legal proceedings in the 1990s over who owns copyright privileges to Martin Luther King, Jr.’s historical “I Have a Dream” speech. While they present some interesting facts about how the court cases affected the sharing of King’s famous words, this was not the main point of the article. Besel and Duffy instead are “primarily interested in how King’s speech has become a permanent fixture in the collective memory of American citizens” (185). The article compares the effect, delivery, appeal, and transmission of King’s memorable speech to President Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. Besel and Duffy present support for the popularity of King’s words using quotes from important figures in literature and politics. These quotes provide some evidence to capture the impact of King’s speech, while the authors also supplement this with valuable historical facts surrounding the audience. This article is beneficial in highlighting how King’s words gained greater prominence with each generation.