

Mlk obama comparative essay

[People](#), [Barack Obama](#)



MLK/Obama Comparative Essay On September 18, 1963, in Birmingham, Alabama, tragedy struck Sixteenth Street Baptist Church when a bomb planted in the basement detonated and killed four young teenage girls, who were changing into choir robes. Nearly 50 years later, a similar tragedy occurred in Newtown, Connecticut. Twenty-six were shot multiple times at Sandy Hook Elementary school, 20 of those killed victims being kindergarteners. After the bombing, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave a public eulogy in the same church the young girls were murdered. Similarly, President Barack Obama delivered a speech of consolation to the public on such a heartbreak as the occurrence in Newtown. The eulogy by Dr. King and speech given by President Obama are similar in content and references throughout, but are very different when it comes to the purpose and literary devices used in each. Both the bombing and the shooting were mass killings of children, a very emotional and tender subject for many Americans. " You know, someone once described the joy and anxiety of parenthood as the equivalent of having your heart outside of your body all the time, walking around, " said Obama in his speech, which helps explain the amount of grief that both the bombing and shooting produced in each community. Also, both the eulogy and speech quote the Bible and allude to Christianity throughout, which is no surprise in concern of the eulogy, since Dr. King is also a reverend, that is only to be expected. Dr. King quoted Isaiah 11: 6 while President Obama chose to quote 2 Corinthians 4: 16-18, 2 Corinthians 5: 1, and Matthew 19: 14. Unlike President Obama's speech, Dr. King also quoted Shakespeare twice, once from MacBeth, and at the end of his eulogy saying, " I paraphrase the words of Shakespeare: Good night, sweet princesses.

Good night, those who symbolize a new day. And may the flight of angels take thee to they eternal rest. " Both speeches differ largely in the figurative language used in each. It appears in Dr. King's eulogy that every other sentence contains a metaphor or parallelism. Dr. King also uses anaphora and similes, comparing life as " hard as crucible steel, " and " the ever-flowing waters of the river. " Obama also uses anaphora, the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of successive clauses, sentences, or lines, as well as simile when referring to parenthood as having your heart out of your body, on its own. A prime reason for this large difference between the two speeches, is the purpose behind each speech. Unlike the speech delivered to Newtown, the eulogy given at Sixteenth Street Baptist Church was used more for political purposes. The bombing occurred during the height of the Civil Right's Movement, and King's first statement in which he politicizes the event is the first sentence after the first paragraph. " These children-unoffending, innocent, and beautiful-were the victims of one of the most vicious and tragic crimes ever perpetrated against humanity. " When King says this in bold relief, he begins to set his political agenda. King continues when he goes on to say that, " They, " being the murdered girls, " have something to say to a federal government, " and " to every Negro who has passively accepted the evil system of segregation. " King continues on throughout his eulogy trying to gather the black community to unite in nonviolent protesting against segregation. Another difference which supports the difference in purpose, is King never once in his eulogy mentions the victims names, while Obama names not only the children, but the adults that were murdered as well in his speech. Naming

the victims makes the speech seem more personal, less political. Obama, being the President, needed to make his speech to Newtown very political neutral, something everyone could enjoy and appreciate in such a delicate and tragic time. Dr. King only refers to his victims, not even as victims, but as “ martyred heroines. ” As part of his political agenda, King was trying to inspire change, to eliminate segregation. Similarly, President Obama asked for change when delivering his speech, but change on a different level. Once again, Obama asked for something that both political parties desire, for putting a stop to school massacres, a stop to killing innocent children. “ Since I’ve been president, this is the fourth time we have come together to comfort a grieving community, torn apart by mass shootings, fourth time we’ve hugged survivors, the fourth time we’ve consoled the families of victims. ” President Obama also points out, the many killings, on smaller scales, in between the four mass killings, and references school shootings of years ago, such as Columbine. While both Dr. King’s eulogy and President Obama’s speech have similarities in allusion to Christianity and the circumstances of which they come from, they also differ in their purposes and amount of figurative language and literary devices used throughout each one. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a prominent Civil Rights Leader and made such position evident in his eulogy, which was beautifully delivered, but delivered on a political agenda. President Barack Obama delivered his speech to Newtown on a more personal, less political level, with less metaphors and parallelisms, but more to console the families of the victims as well as the nation grieving with them.