



Power Lies in the Eye of the Beholder

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“Power has only one duty – to secure the social welfare of the People.” In proclaiming this, Benjamin Disraeli touched upon one of the most important pieces in explaining exactly what power truly is. Power is easy for anyone to grab, but using that power to create profound change in one’s community is much more difficult to accomplish. These two pictures of the Massachusetts State House differ in one prominent way, one shows democracy and social change in action with protestors at the steps of the official building, while the other portrays a calm exterior and almost tensionless image. On the left, the photograph captures a protest for licenses for undocumented immigrants in action; these people are utilizing their natural rights and proclaiming their beliefs on the steps of the building that has the power to decide whether their beliefs will come to fruition or not. The protestors have the power to profess their perspectives and positions on the state of the world around them, but they don’t have the power to send these proclamations into action. Instead, they must work diligently and wait for the government of Massachusetts to make a decision regarding their declarations. Therefore, the Massachusetts government represented in the photograph on the right has the power to write grievances into guidelines and compose new constitutions from criticisms. While it may present a peaceful outward appearance, the inner workings of this powerful building are anything but. These photographs may appear very similar at first sight, but in reality they highlight a prevalent part of American society, the power of the people as opposed to the power of the council. This contrast that founded our nation can be found in so many fragments of it, and this country could not exist in the way that it is without it. Yet, with the ongoings of turmoil and violence in our communities and because power can be so easily abused, one may ask if that is a good thing at all.