

POWER IN PURSE STRINGS AND MELANIN SHORTAGE



Through these photographs, power is displayed through the distribution of wealth and influence of skin color. The Robert Gould Shaw Memorial and the Brewer Fountain both solely recognize the person who held the majority of influence. The first picture depicts a copy of Michel Joseph Napoleon Leonardo's sculpture; however, it was named and is remembered after Gardner Brewer, the man who gifted the sculpture to the city. While it is Leonardo who brought this piece to life, it is and will be Brewer who is praised because he had the monetary funds to give a cast to the city, preserving the idea that value comes from fictitious value of monetary wealth. Perpetuating the idea that wealth is the only factor that can insite change if we live in a society where politicians do not need to hold substance if votes can be bought, and innovation is pointless if the person credited is whoever can buy it. In contrast, the second picture displays the first all black regiment to serve in the Civil War, while it is meant to be empowering to represent the liberation of the previously enslaved, the monument is recognized and centered around Robert Gould Shaw, the white military officer who was merely legally in charge of the troop. Shaw is shown as hanging above the other soldiers, physically taking up more area riding atop his brethren imposing his superiority through military rank and social status. While it is not uncommon for military troops to be represented by their commanding officer, this troop was composed of African Americans fighting for their own freedom and should not be remembered for the sole white figurehead who already had his. His superiority lies in his lack of melanin. It is evident through the artists choice to focus on Shaw as the main point of focus rather than the people of color the war was meant to support. While in each instance power is obtained in different ways, the only reason power could even be obtained was through the locality of power. Brewer received the recognition, but it was his hometown of Boston that aided in his popularity. Leonardo did not receive credit because of Brewer's monetary power, however there was also a disconnection he bore as a Frenchman. While the African American men who marched in the 54th Regiment were not given proper recognition due to the United States discriminative mindset, another factor to consider was the Bostonians' failure to connect with them. These soldiers traveled from places as far as Canada and the Caribbean; however, Shaw was selected for his family's well known abolitionist viewpoint and more importantly for his Bostonian background. In our current society, power and persuasion are obtained from skin color and wealth, but in these instances location also placed a crucial role. Showing, in the grand scheme of the universe, these men hold nothing.

