

# The Power of Film

- Dan Rosenberg

One of the best things about movies is their ability to allow people an escape from reality. Motion pictures bring our wildest thoughts and fantasies alive, and are really the pinnacle of humanity's ability to combine the arts with science and emotion. But movies have another incredible ability, one that is perhaps more important than their ability to distract and delight. Movies have the power to bring moving and important stories to a broader audience. Movies can galvanize movements, and they can bring about change. The cinema has the power to inspire people to action, and that's a big part of what makes them so special. Both Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor went this year to the men of Dallas Buyer's Club.

That seems itself fairly unremarkable; it has certainly happened in the past. However, what is so incredible about this victory is the roles they won for. It is truly unbelievable that a movie addressing the AIDS crisis in America, as well as the struggle millions go through every day with sexual identification. Just a very few years ago, these subjects would have been taboo. These stories would have been covered up, and hidden in the shadows. But the movies have the power to bring stories like Dallas Buyer's Club to life. They have the ability to illuminate struggles and hardships that otherwise would have remained in the shadows.

One of the most moving moments of the Academy Awards came in Jared Leto's acceptance speech. Leto dedicated his award to people undergoing hardship and oppression everywhere, and people who keep fighting for freedom worldwide. Steve McQueen echoed a similar sentiment in his acceptance of Best Picture. Frequently, movie stars and celebrities are in the news for the wrong reasons. We hear about their abuse of drugs, or alcohol, or social media. But this year especially, Hollywood showed its good side. Hollywood showed its ability and willingness to address important and controversial issues, and bring them to a bigger stage. It's really amazing to see the way cinema can incorporate risky topics, like AIDS, Somalian piracy, and racial discrimination, into popular culture. It seems producers and directors have realized how powerful of a tool for change their films can be, and they should be commended for their willingness to take risks, and bring divisive stories to the silver screen.