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Analysis of “The Creative Process” by James Baldwin

James Baldwin was a writer and an activist during the civil rights movement. James Baldwin most commonly wrote about the idea of self expression and self analysis. He believed that self awareness of oneself and the world around you would help society progress in the way it needs to. In his piece, “The Creative Process”, James Baldwin emphasizes this idea by stating that the artist has the ability to change society for the better.

According to James Baldwin, the artist has a responsibility like no other and it's his or her duty to keep that responsibility to “make the world a more human dwelling place”. On page 1, paragraph 2, Baldwin states, “The state of birth, suffering, love, and death are extreme states—extreme, universal, and inescapable. We all know this, but we would rather not know it. The artist is present to correct the delusions to which we fall prey in our attempts to avoid this knowledge”. The artist makes the world a more habitable place for humans by revealing the information we as humans wish to hide because we are so ashamed of it. Every positive change we see in society blossoms from the fact that some individuals know their utterly true selves and know how to fully, with no shame, express themselves. These are the people we call artists and they don't conform to society's norms. They don't try and fit themselves into the mold of the status quo, but instead try to change humanity to make it fit for people like them. These artists played a significant role in the civil rights movement. Black people during the civil rights

movement sang songs, made paintings, took photos, wrote poems and books as a way to describe what it was like to be Black in America. These pieces of art were used as a way to protest and bring awareness to the extreme inequality in America. Black art is still being used for the same reasons today. We have rappers like Kendrick Lamar and J. Cole who rap about the situations they encounter while being Black in America. These art forms allow people to see life from a completely different perspective.

James Baldwin perpetuates the idea that an artist has the immense power to be able to change a people but that idea is more evident in America. On page three, Baldwin claims, “. We are the strongest nation in the Western world, but this is not for the reasons that we think. It is because we have an opportunity that no other nation has in moving beyond the Old World concepts of race and class and caste, to create, finally, what we must have had in mind when we first began speaking of the New World... Societies never know it, but the war of an artist with his society is a lover’s war, and he does, at his best, what lovers do, which is to reveal the beloved to himself and, with that revelation, to make freedom real”. The New World presents to us an opportunity like no other, to create something new. We have the opportunity to create new norms that are fit for the people. America is a relatively new country, which gives us a huge advantage. A young country means we don’t have as many norms to dismantle and we have the ability to be completely different than other nations. The artist has the ability to reveal the flaws that have already been implemented in our system. Baldwin claims that reaching absolute freedom is now possible given these several factors. How is an artist expected to change the world if people don’t listen to what’s being said? It is hard to change the world when your voice isn’t being heard. What Baldwin isn’t addressing is the fact that art loses its ability to change the world when it isn’t being seen and understood by people who have the ability to induce that change.

James Baldwin valued self analysis because he believed that it was the one true path to freedom. He elaborated on the idea that artists have this great responsibility to change the world and he as an artist took that mission very seriously. To see change we have to be undoubtedly ourselves and that is a rule that will apply for all eternity.