



Hi! Do you mind if I ask you some questions?

Not at all!

WHAT MAKES GOOD ART GOOD?

WELL, SINCE YOU ASKED NICELY, GOOD ART PROVIDES PLEASURE IN THE SEARCH FOR PROFOUND, PERMANENT FRUITFUL, PHILOSOPHICAL AND MORAL TRUTH.

WHO DECIDES WHAT THIS TRUTH IS?

THE BEST AUTHORITIES OF COURSE. THEY KEEP ALOOF FROM PRACTICE AND REMAIN CRITICALLY DISINTERESTED.

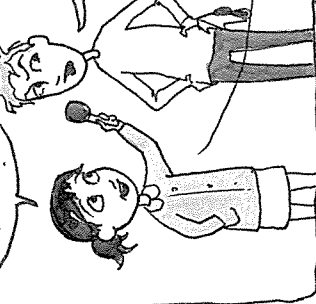
ARE TODAY'S AUTHORITIES DOING THIS?

REGRETTABLY, NO. MANY ARE PANDERING TO POPULAR TASTES IN ORDER TO FILL SEATS - RUSHING FORWARD WITH HALF-FORMED IDEAS - TRYING TO SUBSTITUTE THEIR "RIGHT" FOR OUR FORCE! IT'S TYRANNY! AND ANARCHY. WE NEED TO COME TO SOME CONSENSUS ABOUT WHAT WE LOVE AND WHAT WE WISH TO TEACH OTHERS TO LOVE.

WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THIS?

I DON'T SEE WHY WE NEED TO CREATE "CONSENSUS." IN FACT, I DON'T THINK WHAT HELEN HAS IN MIND IS EVEN POSSIBLE.

WHY NOT?

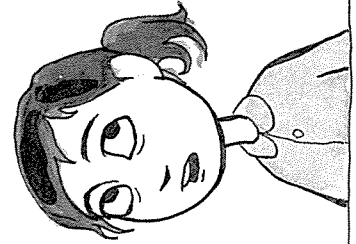


SO WHICH OF US IS RIGHT?

ANYWAY, FOR ALL HER "TRUTH" AND "REASON", SHE STILL DIDN'T CONVINC ME THAT "BRAZIL" IS BETTER THAN "THE MATRIX." WE JUST HAVE DIFFERENT "IDEOAFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS"*. WHAT MAKES ART GOOD DEPENDS ON THE PERSON AND NO ONE CAN CHANGE THAT.

HMMM...

WELL, BOTH OF YOU PARTIALLY AND NEITHER OF YOU ENTIRELY.

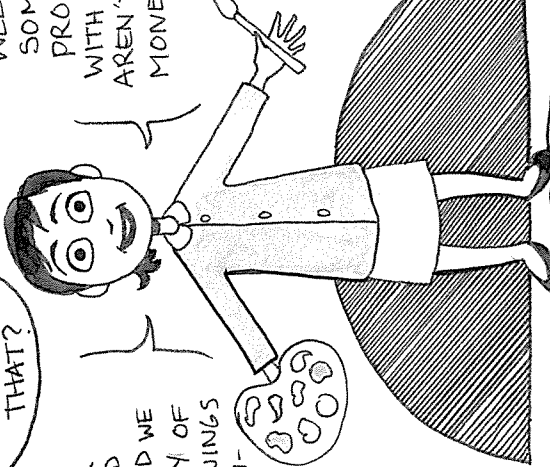


WELL, WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE WE DO ABOUT THE VALUE PROBLEM?

MY POINT HERE IS TO SEEK A WAY ESCAPES BOTH UTTER SKEPTICISM AND RABID DOGMATISM; WE CAN, INDEED WE MUST, ASSENT TO THE VALIDITY OF SOME VALUES, WHILE REMEMBERING WARNINGS THAT ANY ONE OF THEM AS THE ONLY TRUE CONCEPTION IS ALWAYS QUESTIONABLE.

HOW WILL YOU DO THAT?

WELL, FIRST I'M GOING TO TRY TO GET SOME THINGS STRAIGHT ABOUT WHY WE PRODUCE AND CONSUME ART I BELIEVE, ALONG WITH PLAYRIGHT DAVID MAMET, THAT ARTISTS AREN'T DRIVEN TO "HELP PEOPLE" OR "MAKE MONEY" - THEY'RE DRIVEN TO "LESSEN THE UNBEARABLE DISPARITY BETWEEN THEIR CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS MINDS AND SO ACHIEVE PEACE."

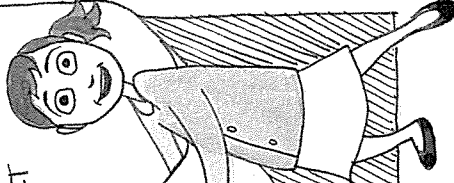


WHEN THEY CREATE ART, THEIR NONRATIONAL SYNTHESIS HAS THE POWER TO BRING US PEACE.



SOME SUGGEST AN ADDITIONAL BIOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THIS TYPE OF "MENTAL CONDITIONING." BARGARA HERENSTEIN SMITH SAYS THAT THOUGH INDIVIDUALLY WE MAKE ART FOR OUR OWN GRATIFICATION, OUR DOING SO APPARENTLY YIELDS A LONG-TERM PROFIT IN ENHANCED COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT, BEHAVIORAL FLEXIBILITY AND THUS, BIOLOGICAL FITNESS.

ART, THEREFORE, DOESN'T HAVE AN OBJECTIVE MORAL DIMENSION, BUT NEITHER IS IT PURPOSELESS OR ARBITRARY. WITH THIS IN MIND, I'D LIKE TO SHOW YOU WHAT I BELIEVE MAKES A WORK OF ART TRULY SUCCESSFUL IN MORE CONCRETE TERMS...



* Ideoffective organization: a system of interrelated emotions and beliefs.