

The Evolutionary Value of Art

The Social Topic: Relationship of Art to Society in the Contemporary First World

The relationship of art to society in modern times is my social topic. I myself have made paintings all my life, going to art school and earning a BFA degree. I have shown and sold paintings, without going so far as making it my career. I have always felt that making art is a necessity, certainly for me personally, but also for everyone else. Despite that one conviction I have not been able to define what art is, nor can I articulate what an artist does or why. Neither have I found a satisfactory way of thinking about the question of “good” art and “bad” art. I have always felt dissatisfied with the way the activities of painting, showing and selling fit into the culture in which I live. There are undoubtedly many elements of this unsureness, both personal and societal. This paper is an opportunity to explore what, if anything, my culture might contribute to the uneasiness I feel that is shared by many other artists as well.

The Social Theory: The Evolution of Art

Ellen Dissanayake, taking an ethological point of view, argues for not just a social but an evolutionary theory of art. She asserts that art-making is an evolved tendency; it has selective value for the survival of the human species. This idea fits, more broadly than I ever imagined, with my personal sense as a painter that making art is “necessary.” Thinking of art as a behavior of the human animal, she describes it as “. . . the manufacture or expression of what are commonly called ‘the arts,’ based on a universal inherited propensity in human nature to make some objects and activities special” (Dissanayake, 1988, p. 107). The origin of art behavior, she suggests, lies not in any one antecedent behavior, such as play or magic or body ornamentation, but rather in the

relatively recent (40,000 to 25,000 years ago) combining of many strands of human nature that developed in the process of human evolution long before the beginning of human history. These strands are perceptual, manipulative, affective, symbolic and cognitive (1988, p. 108).

Her ethological interpretation of art requires creating a model of the evolutionary unfolding and interweaving of these strands of human nature into behaviors that eventually produce individual works of art. The time period for this evolutionary course stretches from the pre-Paleolithic, beginning about 4 million years ago - when hominids began to walk upright - to the present day. The environment for human evolution was a tropical one in which hominids lived in nomadic hunting and gathering bands. This “lifestyle” did not change significantly until about 10,000 years ago when settlements dependent upon agriculture formed, creating an “urban” organization (Dissanayake, 1988, p. 109). It was not only the human form and the function of its bodily parts that developed to support such a way of life in such an environment over such a vast period of time; what also developed was a behavioral heritage, an array of cognitive and emotional needs and tendencies. These tendencies, she argues, must not be left out of any consideration of attributes that contribute to the survival of the species (1988, p. 109).

She maintains that art-making originates in the rhythmic sensory behaviors of interactions between mother or caregiver and infant, and has been found to have existed in every time and every society in the world. Art-making, in such examples as body decoration, dancing, singing, carving, painting, poeticizing, designing and building, and play-writing has the social function of connecting people to their community and emphasizing what is important, what is considered valuable to that culture. This social

function contributes to the fitness of the individuals who engage in it as well as the fitness of the groups who observe and “merely” appreciate its products.

But art is not valued by the general public in the modern Western world as an ordinary human endeavour; instead it is either an embellishment, like a frill, or art and its makers are considered outsiders, perhaps even dangerous (Dissanayake, 2000, p. 169) Art in the modern world is frequently regarded as either a status symbol for an elite rich enough in leisure time and money to buy it, or as a subversive anti-social activity carried out by lone rangers. Dissanayake’s assertion that art-making behavior is “. . . rarely accepted even by its advocates as a normal, natural, necessary—if dormant—attribute of every person, (2000, p. 169) challenges the economic and social underpinnings of the modern art enterprise. She strongly suggests that our modern relationship to art is a dysfunctional detour from the relationship that served humanity well from time immemorial.

Ellen Dissanayake theorizes that art-making and art-experiencing served vital evolutionary purposes in the development of the human species. When hominids began to walk upright, their hands were now available to hold things, to carry them from one place to another, and to make things. Over a period of perhaps 3 million years, this ability allowed for a dramatic change in the use of the mind. Homo erectus made stone tools to scrape, to bludgeon, to cut and to pierce. These hominids are clearly thinking ahead, planning, not living entirely in the present. But what of these stone tools? But why should this be thought of as art-making rather than merely tool-making? It is more than tool-making because in many cases the tool is elaborated in ways that do nothing to make it more functional. Citing Oakley, 1981 (Dissanayake, 1988, p. 54), she shows a photo of a

flint scraper or hand-ax from the middle Acheulean times, 500,000 to 200,000 years ago.

The axe is made so that a naturally embedded fossil of a shell is in the very middle of the stone, with the chipped edges equidistant from the center of the round fossil. The impression of the fossil is pleasing and symmetrical, but “non-functional.” This is an example of the cognitive and emotional needs and tendencies that are as much a part of human survival abilities as the ability to make the tool for the function of scraping or bashing to supply food. There is something about the image carefully preserved in the middle of this axe that is also valuable for the preservation of the species. It’s just not as evident what that function is. We must follow her argument closely to understand more.

The origin of art behavior, such hand work, according to Dissanayake, lies in the earliest relationship between mother and infant, precisely in the babytalk practiced by not only mothers and infants but by aunties, grandfathers, passersby and every sentient adult who comes into contact with an infant. This is what Dissanayake calls mutuality and John Bowlby calls attachment. Dissanayake’s emphasis is on the rhythms and sensory modes of the interaction, the mutual gaze, vocalizations, exaggerated facial expressions, whole-body gestures, the wriggling with delight, the happy gurgles and also the screams of hunger or indignation characterizing the infant caregiver exchange. She even suggests that the rounded breast of the human female enabled the infant and mother to look into each other’s eyes during holding and nursing, a phenomenon which is not physically supported by the placement of teats on mammals that are quadrupeds. Why did these long periods of mutual gaze develop? Why so different from other mammals?

Part of the answer may be found in the upright posture now assumed by our ancestors. Developing human posture required the pelvis to remain rather narrow. But the

female pelvis needed to accommodate the birth of infants with a larger brain and head size, proportionate to the body, than the heads of non-human primates; the female pelvis evolved a shape and an elasticity that allowed it to open slightly wider at the time of birth.

Hominid brains developed more than those of the non-human primates because the upright walking posture freed the hands as described above. At the same time the infant skull developed a fontanelle that also eased the birth process. Infants' larger brain-smaller body relationship led to the birth of infants who were more immature than non human primate infants and required a more specialized kind of care over a longer period of time from mothers (Dissanayake, 2000, pp. 13-14). The very long period of immaturity of the human infant is one of the most distinctive features of our species. Long bouts of mutual gaze between primary caregiver and infant are one example of the deep emotional communication that lays down neuronal pathways in both parties' brains, but especially in the infant's, that contribute to the development of affect regulation (Schoore, 2003, p. 75).

Mutuality

But what do these biologically selected human characteristics have to do with art? The more specialized kind of care characteristic of human parenting involves the way the mother holds her infant, stroking it, cooing to it, making faces to engage it, jouncing it; all these behaviors and the infant's responsive behaviors take place in rhythmic patterns, using all the sensory modalities. These rhythms and modes are the means by which the mother and infant form a mutuality, and they are also the means by which the human being carries on spoken as well as other forms of communication as it matures and lives

in community. These gestures, sounds and dancing round while jouncing the teething baby become the mime, painting, acting, singing, sculpting and dancing of adult art behavior. Those behaviors also become the means by which a society calls attention to what is important to it through ceremony, ritual, architecture, and body decoration to name a few cultural examples.

It might be countered that non-human primates also use sounds, gestures and facial expressions to communicate fundamental motivations such as fear, appeasement, hostility and ambivalence. But humans elaborate these affiliative manifestations in dynamic rhythmic and modal sequences that sustain each partner's interest. This brings us to the distinctly human quality of emotional communion, a quality of relationship that outstrips the merely affiliative or sociable. Human infants are born with brain pathways that seek out and respond to such emphatic and elaborated rhythmic signals incorporated into a variety of sensory modes coming from other humans. It is these most precociously developed aspects of the child's brain that lead others to respond to the child in very precisely attuned ways (Dissanayake, 2000, p. 16).

From Mutuality to Art-Making

This mutuality between caregiver and infant embeds four other essential capacities according to Dissanayake. These capacities develop into living skills in three realms: *belonging to a social group*, finding and *making meaning*, and gaining *a sense of competence* by using the hands to do and to make. These inherent biological abilities create shared emotional experience in very early life that underlies the human ability to create intimacy with others and to *belong to a social group*. Throughout the evolutionary history of the human species the rhythms and modes of mutuality are fundamental to the

creation of human culture. Rhythms and modes are used to find a sense of life *meaning* and are used in developing *hands-on competence* for life. They are the basic technical elements of the arts, coming from matching movements, dancing or singing first in unison and then in alternation or harmony.

The fourth capacity she posits, *elaborating*, or embellishing, or “making special,” is for the development and amplification of belonging, meaning, and competencies into more formal expressions that call attention to their significance for the culture in which they arise. These artful elaborations govern the design of shelters and living spaces, the ornamentation of human bodies, clothing and all the tools and bricabrac of daily life, the cadences of our speech, song and poetry, the choreography of our dances, and the protocols of funeral and wedding processions and every significant celebratory group event. In the activity and products of elaborating, people use their hands and whole bodies competently to emphasize the importance of their belonging with each other and the meaning this confers on their way of life.

A lovely example she gives us is from the women of Karelia, formerly in eastern Finland, now part of Russia, who perform *itkuvirsi*, a ritualized lament suitable for both funerals and weddings, lamenting in the latter case the family’s sorrow at the bride’s leaving home (Dissanayake, 2000, p. 61). It would even be used when people who had long been separated reunited, to help them to share complaints about the hardships of life. The improvised singing employed vocal textures and timbres not used in everyday communication, and incorporated a sighing, descending tonal motif uttered with stylized crying. These performances freed the mourners to weep more easily and to be enfolded in

the sympathy of their friends and family, reinforcing all parties' belonging in a ceremonial way.

Elaboration, or *making special*, as she has also termed it (Dissanayake, 2000, p. 134), puts flesh on the bones of features of cultural life deemed important, enabling the participants and observers to experience that particular feature or value in a way that validates and inspires that special importance. The opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games in the summer of 2008 offer an example of an emphasis on a significant characteristic of Chinese culture. The massed dancers' patterns evoked a primary quality of their collectivist society. No individual star stood out. Visual and sonic rhythms emerged in precisely coordinated movements of hundreds of individual dancers enacting a grand overarching choreography. Art functions to strengthen the connections between group members and to highlight what is important to them as a society. In this case the display was designed to demonstrate China's entrance on to the world stage as a powerful player.

My family experienced a surprising aftereffect of the Olympic Games in our own backyard, one which I believe was tied to the aesthetic and athletic rituals of the games. We have lived in the same house next door to a Chinese family for over 25 years. The couple emigrated from China and bore and raised two children here. Our children are about the same ages, and we all went through the great Oakland Fire of 1991 together. Unfortunately, our early neighborliness was disturbed when there was a disagreement over a way of caring for the hedge that separates our two properties. After that the wife felt so afraid of us she even thought we had tried to burn down their house in the big fire; she said their plum tree had burned from our side! Our neighbors continued unhappy with

us for many years, acknowledging our comings and goings with only the bare minimum of civility. We tried to make amends for the hurt feelings about the hedge, and we showed them photos of my husband and his brothers hosing down the both back yards and houses during the fire. One time we hauled a huge new computer over there to them that had been mistakenly delivered to our address. But nothing we tried seemed to thaw the relationship.

Then came the Olympics. During and after, out of nowhere, it seemed, our neighbors started to wave and smile at us, initiating conversation. We have had healthy exchanges ever since, and the awkwardness of being shunned has melted away. Something has allowed them to feel entitled to complain directly to us when we upset them, and comfortable sharing vulnerability as well. The husband initiated a conversation in which we shared concerns about how our children will manage in the world. Although there are many ways we could interpret this, I believe the pride of country and culture that was expressed in the Chinese stewardship of the quadrennial international athletic ritual strengthened our neighbors' sense of their value and importance. It's no longer important that we are part of the dominant culture in the U.S whereas they are not. Their cultural values have been highlighted and elaborated in an amazing artistic display for all the world to see and admire, and their belonging to that group is a source of pride and self-esteem.

Yet in modern Western culture artists somehow neither provide this kind of prideful display for our society, nor do they enjoy the support of the community in developing their skill. Their work often does not bring people together, at least not in the way that has been described here. Rock groups, often emphasizing one star performer,

give concerts in stadia for 75,000, and on television for audiences of millions. But this is not the small inter-related kind of community we have been discussing. Artists in the modern Western world are regarded as very different from other members of society. A few are individual stars earning millions of dollars, but most struggle to make their art support their life. A large majority split their lives into a day job and a moonlight devotion, a lifestyle that is frequently has to be modified to the detriment of the art-making when the artist has children who need to be reared and educated. Their working habits are not seen in the course of everyday life. Robert Motherwell, a superstar abstract expressionist painter, discusses the modern problem of the relationship of art to society:

My emphasis is the absence of direct social relations between the modern painter and his audience. . . . Art like love is an active process of growth and development, not a God-given talent; and since in modern society the audience rarely sees the actual process of art, the audience's remoteness from the act of painting has become so great that practically all writing about modern art has become explaining to the audience what the art is that the audience has got so far away from. And those whose profession is to do the explaining are more often than not mistaken (O'Hara, 1965, p. 47).

Interdisciplinary Studies Explore the Purpose of Art

By now the reader may be curious what fields of study Ms. Dissanayake examines to draw her material. She has investigated an extraordinarily large range of them: evolutionary psychology, ethology, sociobiology, evolutionary theory, infant psychology, developmental psychology, neuroscience, cognitive science, cognitive archeology, physical and cultural anthropology, art history and theory, aesthetics, and cultural history.

By her own self-description a “congenital interdisciplinarian,” she asserts the necessity of a broad view. She uses images and stories from other cultures that illustrate the material that could otherwise be contained in one discipline and retained. The benefit of her broad reach is the ability to see connections as well as areas obscured by a narrow focus on one discipline.

In the earlier of two books, *What is Art For?* (Dissanayake, 1988) wrestles head-on with the never more than now exasperating question of what art is, exploring the existence and function of the arts in a variety of cultures, age groups, times and even species: Paleolithic remains; contemporary “primitive;” modern; children’s; chimpanzees’. By examining the farthest-flung examples of what might conceivably be thought of as art, she tries to find a common denominator, some irreducible essence that contains the kernel of “artness,” But Dissanayake (1988, p. 58) instead finds a bewildering variety and number, and even contradictory examples that defy organization into one concept. Any definition of the class of “art” will either exclude qualities that importantly belong or include an unwieldy and bulky collection.

She cites the conclusions of cognitive scientists and others who analyze the way concepts and categories are constructed. The results demonstrate that categories about what things *are* do not have the clear-cut edges we hope for; they point the way rather to an examination of how categories *work* as a path to greater clarity (Dissanayake, 1988, pp. 58-59). When this yields no irreducible essence, no definition of what art *is*, she decides it may be easier and more fruitful to examine what art *does* instead. How does art function?

In this endeavor as in the first she finds many human habits that overlap with or are confused with art but do not contrast with art enough to clarify what makes art art. Play, ritual, dreaming, fantasy, communication and symbolization can all be thought of in describing what art does. Artists play very much the way children do, with the same seriousness. Ritual uses artistic elements. Dreaming, like art activity, produces images not controlled by the conscious mind. Yet art itself still has not been defined. The comparative method has yielded neither an understanding of what art is nor what it shares or does not share with those similar human habits.

Yet she is reluctant to give up on a conceptual description of art because she is dedicated to exploring her thesis that art is selective for the evolution of the human species. Therefore, “. . .it is necessary as ethologists to describe a specific human ability or tendency that genes could transmit and environments could act upon” (Dissanayake, 1988, p. 60).

In another attempt to understand the evolutionary function of art she selects play and ritual for deeper examination, looking this time at ethological studies of play as well as at centuries of musical and pictorial art devoted to Christian worship in the West. Ethologists and anthropologists, having compiled a large body of research on both play and ritual, may have light to throw on her topic. She introduces her personal idea of art, a behavior that she calls “making special” (Dissanayake, 1988, pp. 92-95). Making special, (or elaborating, as she calls it in her 2000 book,) is the human habit of adding much more to workaday objects, when making them, than would seem necessary to the fulfillment of their functions. Why are Greek vases decorated with those detailed paintings of people doing things? Wouldn't the pot hold water without the pictures? Why does the bus driver

in India have pictures of the gods on his windshield and incense burning in a special holder all during a journey of a thousand miles? Wouldn't it be easier to see the road without the pictures and the incense? What is the value of these participations (sic) in art when they do not add pragmatic value?

With *Art and Intimacy: How the Arts Began* (Dissanayake, 2000) she develops the idea that human love and art, both originating in nonverbal bodily experiences in infancy, are more than mere embellishments of, or afterthoughts to, the serious business of survival, as evolutionary psychologists heretofore have assumed. Love and art, she claims, provide vitally necessary emotional elements in the healthy development of a human infant from birth through adulthood into old age. Mutuality, and the rhythms and sensory modes that are expressed in mother/infant love, permeate human relationships and human art behavior throughout the life cycle, satisfying basic human needs that are often neglected in the modern world.

Rhythms and Modes

The word rhythm derives from the Greek, *rhein*, “to flow” connotes a recurrent pattern of strong and weak elements including both sound and silence in speech or music, dance or the static visual arts. Sonic rhythm unfolds in time; static visual arts use rhythm in plastic malleable materials and “empty” space. The word mode comes from the Latin “measure” Her meaning includes not only rhythm and an arrangement of something, but also connotes manner or mode-of-being, a particular form (modality) of sensation, and its style, manifestation, and emotional state. Mode is associated with mood and with sensation. Modes are qualities of that experience of unfolding in time or through two- or

three-dimensional space. Rhythms are like verbs, whereas modes are like adjectives, except they interpenetrate.

How are these rhythms and modes expressed in infancy? If the word infant means “unable to speak,” from the Latin, does this mean that infants do not communicate, or have nothing to say? As Alan Schore, a neuroscientist, puts it, “. . . since infants have no verbal abilities, are they mindless or do they possess a communicating, developing consciousness” (Schore, 2003, p. xvi)? It is exactly the infant’s speechlessness, if you will, that makes all of us word-dependent people so curious about early infant experience. John Bowlby’s study of ethology and the attachment theory initiated one of the biggest upsets in the development of modern psychoanalytic thinking when he suggested that human babies have a positive need for attachment to the caregiver that satisfies the ? need for protection. Babies need a psychological and emotional connection to the caregiver that goes beyond a simple need for nourishment (Dissanayake, 1988, p. 141).

Baby-talk and Evolutionary Value

Referring to more recent research on even earlier mother-infant interactions, Dissanayake shows how this connection also goes beyond survival needs into the emotional sphere to a far greater extent than is found in animal social relations. She highlights the human infant’s inborn readiness to affect the mother’s emotional disposition toward her infant, introducing Trevarthen’s term *innate intersubjectivity* (Dissanayake, 2000, p. 29). Maintaining that this is what we commonly call baby-talk, she describes the myriad ways that babies and caregivers communicate much earlier than the time period of 6 to 12 months that Bowlby designates in which attachment occurs, in fact immediately at birth or perhaps even before (Dissanayake, 1988, p. 148; , 2000, p.

29). One of her provocative speculations is that the human rounded maternal breast could have evolved to allow mothers and infants to share blissful extended mutual gazing during nursing.

Once an infant smiles predictably in response to adult antics, the baby-mother interaction becomes more exciting and varied. Now the baby wriggles with delight, and the pair spontaneously improvise with gestures, sounds and facial expressions. Nonverbal communication between mothers (and other adults) and babies is found in every society and in every time that is known. This is the early bond that Dissanayake sees as flowering during development into a sturdy social function that first binds mother and child, keeping the child close and safe, and then child and group, acquiring more and more modes of expression, linking more and more people to their communities and the communities' most significant values. For Dissanayake, what matters about mother-infant mutuality is that it is selectively advantageous to the survival of the species.

Art: Only for Artists?

In our modern Western world art is thought of as the purview of artists, not of human beings in general. In the West artists are viewed in a strangely dichotomized way. They are regarded either as giants and geniuses, almost superhuman, or they are thought of as immature "wannabes," people who shirk the "real" challenges of mature participation in society. In neither case are they mainstream members of society; they stand apart. Many artists themselves embrace the identity of the outsider, feeling that this affords them a vantage point for seeing the world differently. Think of Bob Dylan. Yet the point that Dissanayake is making is about the way ordinary people regard art, artists,

and most importantly, their own artistic impulses. Ordinary members of modern societies do not feel that they themselves are connected to what is called Art.

Picasso's 1935 statement that an artist works above all of necessity could mean that making art, using the hands to produce things that signify something important to me and to my group, is not regarded as a necessity anymore. O'Hara, writing about Motherwell, cites Picasso as having said:

Everyone wants to understand art. Why not try to understand the song of a bird?
One loves the night flowers, everything around one, without trying to understand them. While the painting everyone must understand. If only they would realize that an artist works above all of necessity. . . . (O'Hara, 1965, p. 47)

Research has been conducted since 1935 on the songs of birds and the night flowers, research that explains the necessity of their songs and scents to regional and global environments. This is a necessity more explicit than the one to which Picasso refers. Yet I believe it is the same necessity. Art, artists, and society in general are endangered by a culture that doesn't think they are fundamentally necessary.

Dissanayake tells of the Yekuana who live in Venezuela and the upper Orinoco of Brazil, a rainforest habitat, subsisting on what they can grow, gather and hunt. Their primary source of nourishment is *tapa*, or cassava, also called manioc. This plant is extremely toxic in its natural form and must be treated in special ways to make it healthful. The Yekuana also use other poisons in hunting and fishing. Their metaphysical world-view is based on a dualistic premise that stems from the danger and promise in their environment. It celebrates their ability to make food out of poison, and to use poison in securing other forms of nourishment. The dualistic world-view is manifested in every

aspect of their lives, from the configuration of their shelters to the content their stories, the way they paint their bodies and structure their ceremonies. In all these expressions the interior is sacred, and the outer area is dangerous. Anything from the outer area must pass through a transformative region to be allowed into the center. They differentiate sharply between what is sacred and transformed, and what is alien. Their word referring to anything made by hand is *tidi'uma*. All other things are called *mesoma*, which means stuff, things that come from outside, that are alien.

This is a culture that values its *tidi'uma* because they must in order to eat and survive, in contrast to Western culture that is overrun with *mesoma* because it has denigrated and outsourced its *tidi'uma* in the arrogant assumption that it is no longer necessary for survival. "We don't need locally raised chickens or cattle or produce; we can either get it from one industrial producer or fly it in from countries who are still so primitive they continue to make and grow things," this attitude might say. This attitude of modern Western culture is dangerously destructive to its own ability to eat and survive, and it doesn't even suspect there is a problem.

Artists in the modern world, like local farmers, are pressured to prove the validity of their path by demonstrating they can make a living at it. The single most frequent question many artists have been asked is whether they sell their work. Put in a challenging tone, the question seems to dispute the artist's right to live from the inside out rather than from the outside in. It seems to insist that a person should find a place in society first and choose a kind of work second. The questions can easily engender a feeling of shame or even defensive explanations that in turn often stimulate intense curiosity. What are all these unusually strong feelings about, shame even, both for the

artist and for the curious observer? Are artists simply the people who happen to remember that art behavior is necessary for life, or who, sensing this truth, take it seriously instead of suppressing it? Why must we pay such a high price socially and economically for choosing to follow this path? What does society lose by placing either such a low or such an inflated value, on art and artists?

Artists “Not”

What of the people who are “not artists”? They, the vast majority, feel embarrassed about their “inability to draw a straight line”, as if that were some kind of measure. These are almost all of us who, needing to quote the song we wish to reference, begin by saying, “I can’t sing at all, this is so embarrassing.” They are the many who, afraid to experience directly the emotion in an abstract expressionist painting, remark that their two-year-old could as easily produce that Jackson Pollock. What kind of society is it that creates such fearfulness of using these innate, love-nourished human sounds and gestures and instills such an inability to respond to art, and on such a massive scale? How unfortunate that the rhythms learned in infancy are shamed out of people’s expressive repertoire!

Dissanayake refers to research showing that the mother’s utterances, and indeed those of any adult who comes in close contact with an infant, are highly rhythmic, repetitive and segmented in distinct phrases of three and a half to five seconds in length. This temporal segment corresponds to the common length of a musical or conversational phrase. All this pre-art and pre-language communication occurs in the first four weeks of life! How can modern society have taken such a dangerous detour from a biologically instilled predisposition to interact in multitudinous modes and rhythmic patterns? Why is

verbalization so often regarded as by far the best and most intelligent form of communication, and nonverbal sensory modes of communication are so often regarded as childish or primitive?

This paper has introduced some ideas that highlight the ways in which modern Western cultures fail to nourish themselves, the splitting and poverty of the cultural life that results, and has indicated a supporting body of research. In conclusion it confronts the roadblock of whether the human species can survive on this path, a barrier that this author cannot get around at this time.

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