

- languages (i.e., symbols and signs)
- beliefs (i.e., images of what is true, good, beautiful, and right)

And of course you see these basic elements of culture combine in different ways in different settings to form the various systems of culture observable at picnics, on battlefields, on freeways, in schools, on farms, at construction sites, at births, marriages, and funerals—in a word, at all points where one finds human beings relating to one another, to other life, and to inorganic matter and energy. Culture is a human-invented cocoon that envelops each of us and from which we cannot escape. As I learned in Sunday school, in Adam, all mankind sinned.

If it is true that we cannot escape from culture, it is also true that we cannot escape from the world of nature. God, you recall, banned us from the Garden, but he did not banish us from the planetary home we humans share with the rest of God's creation. This gives to the human condition a fundamental and profound duality. We are simultaneously and irrevocably both in nature and apart from nature. As Barbara Ward and Rene Dubos (1972) put it:

Man inhabits two worlds. One is the natural world of plants and animals, of soil and airs and waters which preceded him by billions of years and of which he is a part. The other is the world of social institutions and artifacts he builds for himself, using his tools and engines, his science and his dreams to fashion an environment obedient to human purpose and direction.

At this point I shall shift gears and try to answer a question that should be, if it is not, on your mind: What in God's creation does all of this have to do with the globalization of the human condition? The answer is twofold.

First, this formulation of the ABCs of the human condition points to what the globalization of the human condition consists of when it is seen in microscop-

ic perspective. This is the perspective of you and me as we experience this phenomenon as individuals. Second, the formulation points to a macroscopic explanation of why we experience what we do.

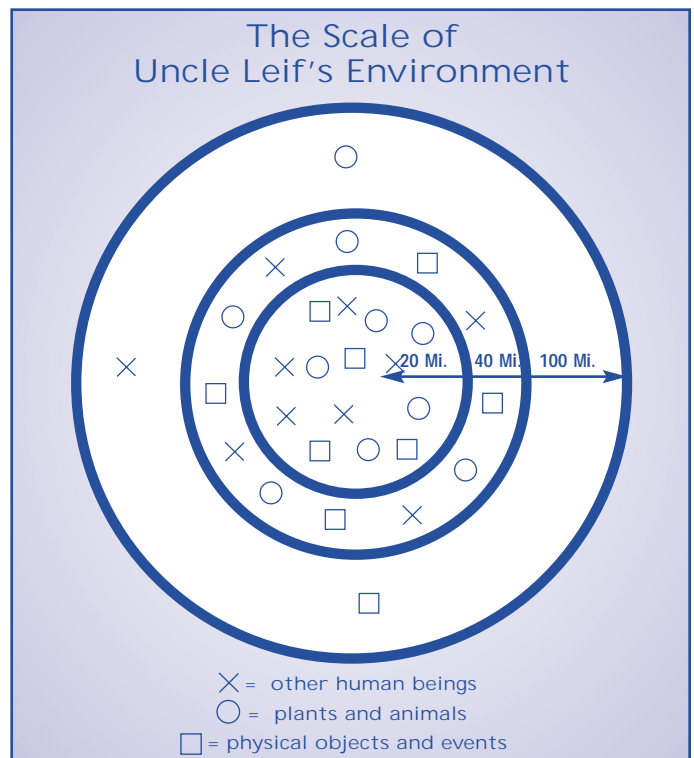
THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GLOBALIZATION OF THE HUMAN CONDITION

From the perspective of the individual as a unit of analysis, to assert that the human condition is becoming more globalized is to assert that the scale of the social, the biotic, and the physical environments surrounding most individuals are becoming increasingly global or worldwide. While simple, this assertion reflects a very profound change in the life space of human beings. Let us imagine we had the necessary data and could map the spacial size of the social, the biotic, and the physical environments surrounding an "average" human being in different centuries of human history. What might such maps look like? I have pretended that I have the pertinent information for one of my ancestors who lived 100 generations ago in the area we now call Scandinavia. I call him Uncle Leif.

As the diagram indicates, the geographical scale of Uncle Leif's environment was small. Most of the people, most of the animals and plants, and most of the physical events and processes that impacted upon his life were within a twenty-mile radius of his home. The next band—the world within a forty-mile radius—was populated by a few people, other things and events that influenced him, but they

were far fewer in number and were generally of only peripheral import. The next band—a hundred-mile radius—contained still fewer relevant people, plants, animals, and physical events. For all practical purposes Uncle Leif's social, biotic, and physical environment ended at this point. (This, of course, ignores the fact that the air he breathed, the water he drank, and the land on which he walked were then, as they still are, part of the planet's global atmosphere, hydrosphere, and lithosphere. But this is not terribly important. Even if Uncle Leif had known this he could have afforded to ignore these facts.)

Now mentally contrast Uncle Leif's social, biotic, and physical environments to the world that surrounds you and me. Our environments, in contrast with his, are global or worldwide in scale. This makes a big difference in what we do, what we think, and what we feel.



Let me illustrate this by taking a few events that have occurred in my lifetime and comparing my reactions to them with Uncle Leif's reactions to comparable events that might have happened in his lifetime.