

A second dimension of the natural environment is an organism's biotic environment. This consists of members of other species. For Hunter, Charlotte and I along with our children are elements of his biotic environment and rank only below tuna fish and birds in importance. Hunter in turn is part of the biotic environment of the Andersons together with the micro-organisms that alternately keep us alive and make us ill, the carrots and radishes and pigs and birds that we eat, the plants that we use to decorate our living room, and the trees from which come the paper on which I am writing.

The physical environment is a third dimension of an organism's environment. This consists of inorganic systems of matter and energy. The ground on which we move, the water and air around us, and the sun in the sky are parts of the physical environment the Anderson family shares with the plants and animals that cluster around our household.

With minor exceptions, in nature-minus-man the interaction between an

organism and its social, biotic, and physical environments is direct and unmediated by anything that the organism itself or its species in general has created. In contrast, the way you and I relate to other human beings, to other species of life, and to inanimate matter and energy is always mediated. I can illustrate the difference by a simple comparative map of Hunter and his natural environment and me and my natural environment.

Hunter's interactions with his natural environments occur through doors that directly link organism and environment. In my case, there are no points of direct entry and exit. All traffic between me as an organism and my natural environments passes through a zone of culture.

Three brief caveats are in order at this point. One: as I have stated the matter here, I have undoubtedly stereotyped and inadvertently exaggerated human/ non-human differences. For one thing, social institutions, languages, beliefs, and technology—the major components of culture—have roots in the planet's biogram that are much older than *homo sapiens*.

Two: I should not imply, as I have done, a uniformity in the depth of the crust of culture either among different groups or between different settings. For example, my interaction with the atmosphere is less mediated when I am standing on top of Pike's Peak than when I am flying over Pike's Peak in an airplane. Similarly, the crust of culture between an Eskimo and the organisms he or she consumes as food is "less thick" than the crust between me and the organisms I normally eat, at least in respect to the number and complexity of social institutions and technologies involved.

Three: I do not mean to imply that culture does not affect other species' ways of living. Obviously it does. Hunter's way of living as a domesticated cat in the midst of human culture is different from that of his counterpart in an environment free of human culture. But the important thing here is not that cats and all other living things are affected by culture, but rather that cats do not create culture while humans do.

I will try to summarize what I am suggesting. I began with the question: What is culture? Culture, I have said, is

a human-made environment. Where do you find culture?

Culture is found at points of interaction between people and people, people and other living things, and people and their physical environment. What do you see when you see culture?

You see:

- technologies (i.e., tools and skills to use tools)
- social institutions (i.e., regularized, learned patterns of action)

