Analyzing Your Life History: Developing a Global Personality
(some things to think about when writing your Autobiography)

Think about the features of your "global personality." How do you feel about being “an American” or “a Korean” or “a …….”; about
your place and the place of your country in the rest of the world? How do you view people from other countries and other countries
themselves? What activities, interactions, and events helped you to shape your personality? Who "mediated" them, helped you to understand
(or misunderstand) them — parents, friends, teachers, the media? What were the messages you received about global and national events
that have occurred in your lifetime? Have you heard about other events that influence your view of the world, your place in it, and your
country’s? At what life stages did these forces affect you?

There is a trite but true saying that each of us is “a product of our time." It means that we have been shaped not only by our genetic
heritage, not only by our interactions with particular people, but also by the local, national, and international events that occur in our lifetimes,
even if we were not direct participants. As we move through stages of development, the social world that influences our personality grows
larger. We move from understanding and influence of “significant others” such as our family and friends to the “generalized other,” people
who we may never meet. We move from being influenced by only our direct experience of the world, like touching a hot stove, to being
influenced by the experiences, real or potential, of others. In the following exercise, we will examine an aspect of our personalities that we
might not consider very often, our "global" personality. To get yourself thinking along these lines, consider these questions: "What comes to
mind when you think of your country, when you think of yourself as a member of that country? " When you think of people in other countries,
what images come to mind? " How do you think of yourself and your country in relation to these others? " What macro- and microlevel events
have helped shape your image of the world and of your place in it? For most baby boomers, the Vietnam War was an international event of
dramatic consequence. This event was “mediated” for us in many ways. Newspapers carried coverage of the events. Television captured the
horror of war and delivered it to us nightly. Our parents might have discussed it at dinner. (Parents and children had dinner together more
often in the 1960s than they do now.) Rallies at campuses and “teach-ins” gave us other perspectives. We talked to our friends about it. If
you were in the military or in the war itself, you had a very different perspective. The civil rights movement and Watergate, as national events,
had significant impact. As with the war, these events filled the newspapers and news waves, consuming much of our personal and public
conversations and dialogues. Many things at the microlevel influence our image of the world. I, personally, was taught, over twelve years of
religious education, that the word catholic meant universal. The Second Vatican Council in the 1960s taught all Roman Catholics to be more
ecumenical. We went “trick or treating” for UNICEF and collected money for children at missions in far-away lands. Consider events and
issues that have occurred in your lifetime or have shaped your personality heritage. What were they? How did you learn of them? Who
"mediated" them for you? How were they mediated? What messages were you given about them? What did you learn of them? How do they
influence your image of the world around you and your place in it? No single event makes us who we are, but some events do stand out
for their impact. The Sociological Prism: Some Influential Global and National Events and Topics:  1989/1991 Fall of Berlin Wall and
presidential election “decided by” Supreme Court  2001 World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks  2003 War in Iraq  2003 Genocide in
Sudan  2004 Tsunami in Southeast Asia  2006 Hurricane Katrina  2008 Global financial crisis  Continuing wars in the Middle East  Global
climate change  HIV-AIDS  Nuclear weapons  Biodiversity  Energy dependence/ independence  Human Rights  Globalization  Education
Hunger and poverty  Homelessness  Pollution  Recycling  Jobs  The Economy and job loss/foreclosures