

Lecture Eight: Culture as an Evolutionary Arena

Lectures three through seven are about the kinds of psycho-cultural mechanisms and institutions that have arisen in the course of cultural evolution. You can think of them as being roughly like comparative anatomy and physiology. Mechanisms are examined, described, and analyzed, but the process driving the long-term process is left unexplained. This last lecture considers two articles in which I speculate about how culture could evolve through a mechanism of blind variation and selective retention that parallels biological evolution. There is where I begin thinking about the cultural parallels to the phenotypes and genes of evolutionary biology. Note that while I adopt Richard Dawkins's term, meme, I think about these cultural parallels to genes in a somewhat different way than Dawkins does. Aspects of these ideas are further fleshed out in my book on music, *Beethoven's Anvil: Music in Mind and Culture*.

Culture as an Evolutionary Arena

<http://asweknowit.ca/evcult/Arena/Arena00.shtml>

Culture's Evolutionary Landscape

<http://asweknowit.ca/evcult/landscape.shtml>