

Lecture Seven: Politics, Cognition, and Personality

In this piece – which is a chapter from an online book on the history of technology – David Hays considers forms of governance, from the hunter-gatherer band up through the modern nation-state, and including some remarks on the possibility of world governance. He presents data indicating that the rate of death through war has dropped in the long term, indicating that more sophisticated modes of governance are also more effective in keeping the peace. He concludes by arguing that the need to reduce anxiety is the driving force behind cultural evolution. This argument is brief, highly speculative, but important. For it opens up a way of understanding cultural evolution, and human history, that does not reduce it to *mere* biology. Just why that is so is something that we can discuss in the course.

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<http://asweknowit.ca/evcult/Tech/CHAPTER5.shtml>