



Universität des Saarlandes

Angewandte Sprachwissenschaft sowie  
Übersetzen und Dolmetschen

Geography, Climate,  
Initial Human  
Settlement

Robert Spence

CS

Geography is the  
outcome of geological  
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Factors determinant of  
history

Out of Africa

Two untestable  
hypotheses

## Unit 2

# Geography, Climate, Initial Human Settlement

How (and why) the genus Homo got to Britain

Introduction to Culture Studies (UK & Ireland)

4 May 2017 / 57506 days post-'Origin'

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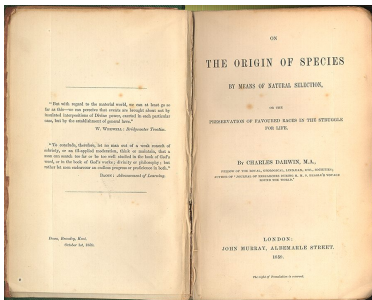
**Figure:** On your left is *Pan troglodytes*, on your right *Homo sapiens*. The common ancestor of both species lived between 5 and 7 million years ago.

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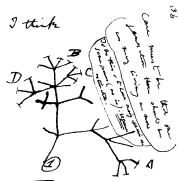
**Figure:** Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* was published on 24.11.1859

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then between A & B. various  
size of selection. C & B. The  
first predation, B & D  
rather greater distinction  
then former would be  
formed. - many selection

**Figure:** Page 36 of Charles Darwin's "B" notebook on *Transmutation of Species*, begun in mid-July 1837

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- Scotland on west, England on east of lapetus Ocean (Cambrian)

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- Scotland collided with England ca. 410 million years ago
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- Altogether: a very *complicated* geological history!

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- Here is a topographic map of Britain (and N. Ireland):  
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<http://tinyurl.com/6foh6sv>

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- ... but brief remarks will be made about some regions of Britain and Ireland in the course of examining the historical development of British and Irish society.

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- From 'matter' to 'meaning':  
physical → biological → social → semiotic  
(matter) (+ function) (+ value) (+ meaning)

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- From 'matter' to 'meaning':  
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- Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution. – palaeontologist/theologian Th. Dobzhansky

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- (Evolution) is a general postulate to which all theories, all hypotheses, all systems must henceforward bow and which they must satisfy in order to be thinkable and true. Evolution is a light which illuminates all facts, a trajectory which all lines of thought must follow — this is what evolution is.  
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- Evolution as *fact*: common descent with modification;  
Evolution as *theory*: cause of modification is natural selection;  
Evolution as *path*: the history and shape of the tree of life on this planet

# Why is the study of evolution so disturbing?

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- Differences between species are **gradual**, not **categori(c)al**.

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- The human species is **contingent**, not **necessary** (!)
- ‘Human nature’ is a **product** of evolution.
- “What is man?” — all attempts to answer that question before 1859 are worthless and we will be better off if we ignore them completely. – palaeontologist George Gaylord Simpson
- The human species is **contingent**, not **necessary** (!)

# Geography and climate

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*At the root of all history lie terrain and climate. In Britain, there is a considerable difference between the north and the south, and between the east and the west. In the south the average summer temperature is nearly ten degrees Fahrenheit warmer than the north. In the dry east, the average yearly rainfall is under 25 inches; in many places in the wet west, it exceeds 60, or even 80, inches. (...)*



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*(...) The south-east is relatively flat, the north-west is hilly. In the south, the harvest is usually reaped at the beginning of August, only a few weeks later than on the continent of Europe; in the north, it is sometimes not collected until October or even later. Throughout the whole of British history, the majority of the population has been concentrated in the south-east, which has always been in advance of the north in political and social, and usually in economic, development. (...)*

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*(...) Except for one strange interlude of 150 years between AD 450 and 600, the south has always been in close contact with Europe and has been politically and culturally a part of Europe. The north, for long periods, has been virtually isolated from all of Europe except Scandinavia.*

*Jasper Ridley [1981: 10-11]*

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- What would have been the consequences for the history of human settlement and population development in Great Britain if

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- What would have been the consequences for the history of human settlement and population development in Great Britain if
  - ① the entire island had been flat?

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- What would have been the consequences for the history of human settlement and population development in Great Britain if
  - ① the entire island had been flat?
  - ② the mountainous parts had been in the southeast rather than the northwest?

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**Previous species of humans**

The genetic trail of Homo  
sapiens

Jared Diamond

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## Previous species of humans

- The genus Homo evolved in Africa ca. 2.3 to 2.4 MYA:  
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<http://tinyurl.com/69q8dyx>
- The last brief Ice Age (the Younger Dryas) occurred between about 12,800 and 11,500 years BP (BP = Before Present) ...

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Out of Africa

Previous species of humans

The genetic trail of *Homo*  
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Jared Diamond

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hypotheses

## Previous species of humans

- The genus *Homo* evolved in Africa ca. 2.3 to 2.4 MYA:  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homo>
- Previous species of human spread beyond Africa:  
<http://tinyurl.com/6f3eazt>
- For a thrilling account of the history of pre-sapiens humans in Britain, and how they were beaten back by climate change:  
Chris Stringer: *Homo britannicus*. London: Penguin, 2006.  
<http://tinyurl.com/69q8dyx>
- The last brief Ice Age (the Younger Dryas) occurred between about 12,800 and 11,500 years BP (BP = Before Present) ...  
... i.e.: *Homo sapiens* has only been in Britain since 9,500 B.C. (!)

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- See your handout.
- And remember that you are a direct descendant of Hammurabi, Confucius, and Julius Caesar.

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- Boston-born professor attempting to provide an answer to the question once put to him by a New Guinean:

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- “Why do societies collapse?”

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**Figure:** Stonehenge before reconstruction began

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Remember that neolithic people lived in settled societies and had almost global trading networks; but we do not know what their subjective experience was like.

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- **Kai Helge Wirth**

Kai Helge Wirth: *Der Ursprung der Sternzeichen. Eine prähistorische Karte des Nordatlantik am Sternenhimmel*

<http://tinyurl.com/wirthsearch>

and here are some illustrations from his book:

<http://tinyurl.com/5ub8o3e>