

By **Professor Richard Dawking**, our *Evolutionary Correspondent*



In the beginning was the primordial soup. Much, much later, there appeared the Lump of Slime.

**It is difficult, perhaps even pointless, to look for a more descriptive name than that. Nothing else seems to catch its essence quite so comrehensively.**

For the longest time, the Lump of Slime simply was. It was periodically ingested by some unfortunate higher animal, and promptly excreted back into the ocean again. Each time this happened, the Lump of Slime ingested a portion of its temporary host, getting a little bigger and absorbing some of that host's DNA.

In this way, the Lump of Slime not only survived, but slowly, very very slowly, began to evolve. Each new trip along an alimentary canal added just a little of the characteristics of the latest host.

Over the aeons, the Lump of Slime began to develop some rudimentary function. Pseudopods of slime allowed it to crawl out of the ocean onto land, where it could slowly learn to mimic the many creatures which lived there.

Eventually, the Lump of Slime was ingested and defecated by a series of hominids, allowing it to gain some simple humanoid characteristics. Over time, it could more and more convincingly pass as human, even aping some simple human skills.

As the Lump of Slime became more self aware, it began to take notice of its surroundings and of its fellows, even to experiment in communicating with them. The following is an example of one of its recent attempts to engage with humankind.



Despite its developing self consciousness, however, the lump of Slime did not realise it was just a lump of Slime. It imagined itself a real boy. It became upset, perhaps bewildered, when its early and crude attempts at communication were rejected by humankind as crass and objectionable.

It tried again to communicate, this time repeating its initial utterances, and even attempting to justify them, but to no avail.

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