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**Abstract:** This essay is an attempt to explain why Charles Sanders Peirce's evolutionary metaphysics would not have seemed strange to its original 1890s audience. Building on the pioneering work of Andrew Reynolds, I will excavate the scientific context of Peirce's Monist articles—in particular "The Law of Mind" and "Man's Glassy Essence," both published in 1892—focusing on the relationship between protoplasm, evolution, and consciousness. I argue that Peirce's discussions should be understood in the context of contemporary evolutionary and physiological speculations, many of which were featured in late- 1880s issues of *Open Court*, sister journal to the *Monist*.

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