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Abstract: C.S. Peirce begins his 1903 lectures on pragmatism from the premise that the starting point for pragmatic philosophy as he envisions it must not be a concept of Being but rather of Feeling. Pragmatism, he explains, will be 'an extreme realism'. Its first category will be 'immediate consciousness' conceived as a 'pure presentness' whose self-appearing is elemental to experience. Firstness cannot be couched in terms of recognition, cannot be contained in any first-person accounting of experience, and most of all can in no way be construed as being 'in the mind' of a subject, however the subject is conceived. This article follows some of the byways of Peirce's thinking on this constitutive field of experience prior to subject/object determinations, making links to James's 'pure experience', Whitehead's 'critique of pure feeling', and Deleuze/Guattari's 'being of sensation'.

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