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**Abstract:** This article focuses on the intimate relationship between German aesthetic theory, particularly the philosophies of Kant and Schiller, and the pragmatic tradition of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I argue that many aspects of Kantian aesthetic theory – his development of reflective judgement, genius, and common sense – are reflected in the thinking of C. S. Peirce. I conclude, however, that such a comparison risks selling short the way that German idealism influenced American thinkers and instead suggest that it is more fruitful to concentrate on ‘aesthetic experience’. I argue that attending to the aesthetic dimensions of experience might re-orient contemporary approaches to pragmatism that continue to focus on the way that pragmatism might intervene in debates in epistemology and philosophy of language.

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