

Davidson and Classical Pragmatism

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Abstract: In this paper I wish to trace some connections between Donald Davidson's work (1917-2003) and two major representatives of the classical pragmatist movement: Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914) and William James (1842-1910). I will start with a basic characterization of classical pragmatism; then, I shall examine certain conceptions in Peirce's and James' pragmatism, in order to establish affinities with Davidson's thought. Finally, and bearing in mind the previous connections, I will reflect briefly on the relevance –often unrecognized– of classical pragmatist ideas in the context of contemporary philosophical discussions.

Key words: Davidson, classical pragmatism, contemporary philosophy, belief, world

I. The Classical Pragmatist Tradition

Classical Northamerican pragmatism never intended to be a mere doctrine or school of thought. What is true is that there was no set of theses or basic points on which all the pragmatists agreed. More than a firm nucleus, what kept the classical pragmatists in mutual relation was –in wittgensteinian jargon– a certain "family resemblance"¹. Among the ideas that they all shared, it is worth underlining the following: (1) a non-dichotomic conception of experience, (2) the link between knowledge and action, (3) the defense of the public character of knowledge, (4) the privilege given to future experience, and (5) the rejection of the classical conception of truth. Let us briefly see what each of them meant.

The rejection of dichotomic thinking implies, according to the pragmatists, that there is no beginning in philosophical reflection. One does not start any more, therefore, either from the subject faced with the object, or

¹ It is for that reason that one can speak of Northamerican pragmatism as a tradition and not as a doctrine or school. That tradition extended approximately between 1880 and 1930. Its more renowned representatives were Ch.S. Peirce, W. James, J. Dewey, G.H. Mead and C.I. Lewis.

from the world of the spirit before the world of nature, for the simple reason that there exists no ordinary source that serves as ultimate reference of all reflection. In fact, for the pragmatists, to search for an absolute beginning (as the great rational systems pretend to search for and find) is to present a false image of philosophy and its relation to the world. Thus instead of the strong metaphysical dualism of an "I" that thinks and an inert "matter", they propose to assign a privileged place to the category of action and, only together with that category, to re-establish the relation subject-object (although no longer in antagonistic terms but as two poles of a single process: the one active, selective, spontaneous; the other, passive, indifferent, resistant). In this sense, the chosen starting point is neither the subject nor the object, but the imbrication subject-object. In Dewey's terminology, the starting point is the *situation*, that is, the experience, on the part of the subject, of objects that are never isolated but are rather immersed in a contextual whole that is a forced reference. The subject finds himself then, from the beginning, already related to objects.

Now then, in holding that all cognition is determined by previous cognitions. The pragmatists conceive knowledge as something neither static nor given, but as a continuous process that is both temporally and fundamentally revisable. The kind of knowledge that they pursue opposes, therefore, all thinking that arises with the pretension of discovering (once and for all) the intrinsic nature of objects or the ultimate truth that functions as a stable and absolute foundation of reality. The famous *pragmatist maxim*² accounts for that in giving a privileged place to future experience. Such experience is special since it ends up always as the only sure source to judge our beliefs. Belief and reality go hand in hand: not because we find in experience the causes of our beliefs but because we find in it its consequences. And the insistence on the consequent (no longer the antecedent) phenomena is the fundamental point in order to understand pragmatist philosophy as a philosophy of action.

We can see, then, that the pragmatists reject the classical conception of truth. Truth will pass from being "a fit between thing and intellect" (as the rationalists held) to acquiring an instrumental, functional value. However, that does not imply in any way that the pragmatists commit themselves to a sceptical subjectivism or an individualist conception of truth. On the contrary, even if the justification of truth lies in properly performing a function, the pragmatists will set forth different criteria of truth and will defend, above all, a public access to it.

² The maxim will be enunciated later on.

This set of features introduces us to the heart of classical pragmatist thought and offers us a broad panorama of the reasons for which philosophers like Charles Peirce and William James have been called pragmatists. Keeping this panorama in mind, in what follows we will stop to examine some central aspects of the philosophies of each of these thinkers, that find support and continuity in Davidson's thought.

II. Peirce and Davidson: Beliefs, Actions and the Abductive Method

Charles Peirce³, apart from having been the founder of pragmatism and modern semiotics, was a great scientist concerned with the construction of a methodical and normative logic of scientific research. His love of science and, fundamentally, of experimental research allows us to account for his conception of pragmatism as a *theory of meaning*. That theory was materialized in his well known *pragmatic maxim*. It reads: "Consider what effects, that could conceivable have practical repercussions, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then our conception of those effects is the totality of our conception of the object"⁴. Peirce proposes that maxim as a good method by which we can determine the meaning of the concepts used as much by ourselves as by any other speaker. As one can observe, according to him, the meaning of a term does not depend on a mental representation or on any kind of ideal entity. The meaning of a term depends, on the contrary, entirely on its practical consequences.

On this point, we can already establish a first connection between Peirce's and Davidson's thought: both authors link the meaning of an expression with a determinate context of practical interaction with reality. According to Peirce, there can be nothing in the mind that is significant and at the same time lacks sensible effects. Our conception of the object is the conception of its sensible effects. And, certainly, our conception of the sensible effects of a certain object must be consistent with our conception of the sensible effects of other objects and reality in general. When he takes on the problematic of how to construct a theory of meaning, Davidson does not ask himself either what meaning is, but directly relates the problem of meaning with the problem of interpretation and the communication be-

³ Charles Peirce's (1839-1914) intellectual production is usually divided in four stages, the fundamental characteristics of which are: 1. Platonism (1859-1861), 2. Theory of signs (1866-1870), 3. Pragmatism (1870-1884) and 4. Synechism (1885-1914). Our interest lies in elaborating on the third stage.

⁴ Peirce, Charles S., "Como hacer nuestras ideas claras", in: *Mi alegato a favor del pragmatismo*, Argentina: Aguilar, 1971, p. 69.

tween speakers⁵. In this sense, he will hold that a theory of meaning leads us to *interpret* how the emissions of a speaker are related to the world in a specific situation⁶. According to what we have seen, then, it seems clear that Peirce as much as Davidson share a verificationist, holistic and social vision of meaning: the meaning of our terms depends on the role they play in a determinate context. Outside of that context, we can say nothing about the meaning of certain emissions. Words do not have a meaning on their own.

In order to continue to inquire about the similarities between the treatment of some fundamental ideas in Peirce and Davidson, it is important to delve in Peirce's famous article "The fixation of belief" (1877). There Peirce comments that the objective of all enquiry and all thought is none other than to liberate us from the state of dissatisfaction that doubt causes in us⁷ and to guarantee the state of satisfaction that is reached with belief. The truth is that the acquisition of a belief suppresses the state of doubt and produces a state of peace we are not disposed to renounce in order to acquire different beliefs. And why is it important to suppress the state of doubt? Because once belief is acquired, we find the grounds for action. In other words, belief leads to the fixation of a habit of action and behavior, that is, it disposes us to act in a concrete way, in a definite time and place. Now then, keeping in mind the importance of generating beliefs, in that same article Peirce evaluates various existing methods (by which men have attempted throughout history to combat doubt and fix beliefs) to determine which of them is the most convenient. After analyzing the method of tenacity, of authority and the *a priori* method Peirce analyzes the so-called "scientific method". According to him, this last one is the only one that –evaluated

⁵ Certainly at the heart of his proposal, Davidson holds that a theory of meaning for a natural language must be at the same time a theory of truth. And he finds that the theory of truth *à la* Tarski works as a theory of meaning (on the condition that its non-logical axioms be finite in number). In this way, Davidson links truth and meaning and commits himself to a conception of meaning in which it is necessary to specify the conditions of truth of a sentence to know its meaning. Now then, having in mind the strict purposes of this work, we will analyze Davidson's proposal without elaborating on his specific reflections on the tarskian theory of truth.

⁶ This is what the difference between translation and interpretation consists in according to Davidson: while in translation what we look for is to relate the words of the object-language (translated language) with the words of the subject-language (the language to which we translate), the key to the interpretation consists in relating the words of the object language to the world.

⁷ It is worth noting that Peircian doubt differs from the classical Cartesian doubt in that it is not possible to provoke it. To state a proposition in interrogative form is not to have any doubt. True and real doubt is independent of what we wish, it simply appears or does not appear.

with criteria similar to that of the other methods— assembles the necessary and sufficient conditions to effectively do away with uncertainty. The scientific method liberates thought from all doubt and allows us to obtain more and more stable and credible guidelines for action, since it determines beliefs from "something permanently external", that is, from a reality independent of our opinions⁸.

Nevertheless, even though the uncertainties diminish once the scientific method is adopted, we can keep finding certain inconveniences to fix beliefs. The cause for that is that experience can confront us, every now and then, with unexpected facts. In such cases, Peirce emphasizes the function—within scientific method— of a form of reasoning called *abduction*. Abductive reasonings are those that allow us to adopt hypotheses when confronted with surprising facts of experience. The logical form of such reasonings is the following: "A surprising fact is observed, C; but if A were true, C would be a normal fact; therefore, there is reason to suspect that A is true". As one can see, from the above it does not follow that A is true but only that there are reasons to consider it true. Now then, if we guide ourselves by such reasons and we adopt A to explain the surprising fact C, the next step will be to outline the probable experimental consequences of A (that step is known as *deduction*) and, if the predictions deduced from A are verified, the fact C loses its surprise factor and is incorporated to our beliefs as a normal fact. Otherwise, we must appeal to a new abductive reasoning.

Let us now move on to examine certain aspects of Davidson's explanation of interpretation and understanding that can account for its resemblance with elements of Peirce's process of inquiry. To this effect, in the first place it is worth mentioning that Davidson shares with Peirce a double starting point: there does not exist, for either, an intimate connection between beliefs and actions⁹, but also both share the opinion that there exists

⁸ The fundamental hypothesis of the scientific method is the following: "There are real things, the features of which are entirely independent of our opinions about them; those real things affect our senses ... and though our sensations are as different as our relations with objects, nevertheless ... we can find out through reasoning how things are really and truly" (Peirce, Charles S., "The fixation of belief", in: *ibid.*, p. 48).

⁹ Davidson holds that the source of our beliefs and desires is none other than certain features of the real environment, that is, physical objective events; and it is on the basis of such events that we generate beliefs, which constitute reasons for acting. Furthermore, in his first model of intentional action, Davidson will hold that the speaker's beliefs operate not just as reasons (that facilitate a rational explanation or justification of the utterances and individual actions of the individual in question), but also as causes that occasion the appearance of a definite event. In other words, the reasons that explain an action rationally function likewise as causes of the same.

an external, permanent and objective reality, thanks to which we can contrast beliefs and justify, likewise, the assumption that there is a certain coincidence between the basic beliefs of different speakers. In the second place, it is important to point out that Davidson –as well as Peirce– conceives words as tools for action and communication. The latter implies that for Davidson there are no strict rules or conventions on the basis of which we can explain the functioning of language. On the contrary, the thesis that Davidson defends is that that which an utterance means is understood only within a communicational situation. That is, our words don't signify anything outside our everyday communicative practices. And it is in the successful communication between two speakers that resides the origin of meaning¹⁰.

It is under these suppositions, and as strong proof of the previous thesis, that Davidson, in “A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs”, shows the way in which an interpreter is completely capable of understanding the meaning of the words of a speaker who uses language in a deviant way (for ignorance, negligence or a purpose). The example he describes there is the one that gives the title to the same article: Mrs. Malaprop uses the expression “a nice derangement of epitaphs” when what she really wants to say is “a nice arrangement of epitaphs”. As is evident, what Mrs. Malaprop is doing is to use certain words but without their conventional meaning. And, even thus, Davidson claims that we can understand her and communicate. How do we do it? In the following way: the notice of the malapropism on the part of the interpreter arises from the failure of the implementation of the interpreter's *prior theory*, that is, it arises from the failure of the implementation of the standard interpretation of the words of the speaker. Faced with such a failure. The interpreter is forced to abandon the *prior theory* and substitute it with what Davidson calls *a passing theory*. We thus arrive at another of the points where Davidson's interpretation resembles Peirce's thought. The fact is that Davidson's description of the interpreter's *passing theories* contains similar notes to the peircean description of abductive reasonings. Let us see why. In the first place, in both cases the individual is faced with an unexpected situation that results from an obstacle that needs to be overcome. In the second place, such a situation, also in both cases, forces the individual

Cf. Davidson, Donald, “Actions, Reasons and Causes”, in: *Essays on Actions and Events*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

¹⁰ Cf. Davidson, Donald, “Communication and Convention”, in: *Truth and Interpretation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984; cf. Davidson, Donald, “A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs”, in: Grandy, Richard E. y Richard Warner (eds.), *Philosophical Grounds of Rationality*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

that faces it to abandon his habitual form of understanding and to adopt a new strategy. In the third place, the abduction as much as the passing theories are characterized for being creative modes but at the same time economic modes of resolving the surprising situation¹¹. Finally, the new hypothesis (about the possible significance of the expression used by the speaker or about the surprising fact in reality) has success if its consequences in practice show satisfaction. In synthesis, as one can see, the davidsonian explanation of interpretation and understanding turns out to resemble the description of the process of peircean inquiry in various aspects.

With the preceding analyses in mind, we can conclude that the treatment of some of the themes in Davidson's thought reveal certain affinity to basic conceptions of Peirce's pragmatism. Basically, we can sum up the points where the thought of both authors converge, in the following: (1) defense of a verificationist, holistic and social conception of meaning; (2) the importance given to external reality as a principal source of our beliefs; (3) interdependence between thought, language and action, and (4) use of the abductive method.

III. James and Davidson: mind, world and the critique of the third dogma of empiricism

In this section I will show that there are certain meeting points between James' pragmatism and Davidsonian thought. For this purpose, we will delve into the jamesian reflection on the relation between knowing/known. As we will see, it is in the treatment of that question and in the analysis of the consequences that are derived from it that the thought of James and Davidson converge.

Although in an act of generosity William James¹² attributed his central ideas to the influence of Peirce, the fact is that –immersed in moral, religious and philosophical problems– he redefined the pragmatic method as a method for experimentation and action. Thus, for instance, James applied the method not only to redefine concepts, but also to resolve contro-

¹¹ Abductive reasonings, just as *passing theories*, require the ingenuity and the creative capacity of the interpreter. Nevertheless, it is not good that such creativity be extreme, since, in general, the hypotheses that best respond and resolve surprise situations are those that are easier to think and verify.

¹² William James (1842-1910), apart from having been a recognized philosopher, was a medical doctor and a psychologist. Even though he did not practice medicine, he dedicated himself to psychological investigations. In his first great work, *Principles of Psychology* (1890), we find a compilation of his various contributions to the field of psychology. As a philosopher, his *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), *Pragmatism* (1907) and *Essays on radical empiricism* (1913) stand out.

versies and evaluate the meaning of our ideas and beliefs in general¹³. In this context, it is understandable why one of his deepest concerns consisted in elucidating the relation knower/known. But before considering the treatment of that relation, it is necessary to examine briefly the following two Jamesian contributions in the field of the mental: (1) the importance of habit as a second nature that influences as much our physical as our mental life, and (2) the characterization of consciousness as a "flow". Such contributions are, to my mind, crucial to fully understand his reflections on the relation mind/world.

In relation to the importance of habit, James will hold that habit "simplifies the movements required to produce a certain result, makes them more perfect and diminishes fatigue"¹⁴. Habit allows us to perform satisfactorily in a medium, without without making a conscious attention necessary in realizing our actions. And in a permanently growing and changing world, habit becomes therefore a crucial tool for man to accompany and guide such a growth and change. On the other hand, with regard to the treatment James gives of the nature of consciousness, the novelty of his proposal lies in that it describes mental life as a mutable flow or current. And according to this posture, he holds that there are no mental objects and, moreover, he concludes that the most adequate metaphors to talk of the mental are not words like "chain" or "series", but "river" and "spring". Undoubtedly, the preceding contributions make evident James' concern in characterizing consciousness as "anchored" in the world. And it is intimately connected to this characterization that James commits himself to the *doctrine of radical empiricism*, which offers some more punctual details about the relation mind/world.

The *doctrine of radical empiricism* consists, according to James himself, of a postulate, the enunciation of a fact and, lastly, of a generalized conclusion, that says exactly the following: "The postulate states that the only things that will be debated amongst philosophers will be things definable in terms obtained from experience ... The enunciation of a fact consists in that the relations between things ... are a matter of such particular and direct experience, neither more nor less, as the things themselves. The generalized conclusion refers to the fact, therefore, that parts of experience are

¹³ When James broadens the range of the pragmatic method, Peirce writes an exposition on the origin of pragmatism ("What Pragmatism Is") so that his position is not confused with the "simplified" and "deformed" version presented by James. Furthermore, he decides to rebaptize his own theory with the name "pragmaticism", a term that, as he himself says, "is so unpleasant that it is safe from plagiarists".

¹⁴ James, William, *Principios de psicología*, Buenos Aires: Glem, 1945, p. 113.

kept joined to one another by relations that are in themselves parts of experience. In sum, the universe directly apprehended does not need any strange metaempirical support, because it possesses in itself a concatenated or continuous structure”¹⁵.

As one can see, this doctrine holds that experience offers us directly all the elements and connections of the real. But not only that. The underlying idea behind the doctrine is that there is only one weave or prime matter out of which the universe is formed. In other words, James thinks that experience is one and pure and that, therefore, "thought" and "matter" don't constitute different realities. There is no duality subject-object. On the contrary, what we understand by "thought" and "matter" is, in each case, just a functional attribute of a reality that is itself not self-divided. In brief, what experience represents (the subjective) and the represented (the objective) is numerically the same but receives different names insofar as it performs different functions in different contexts. To better understand this idea, James gives us the following example: “the seen paper and the seeing of it are just two names for one indivisible fact that, properly so-called, is the datum, or the phenomenon or the experience. The paper is in the mind and the mind is around the paper, because the paper and the mind are only two names that are given after the experience, when, considered in a broader world of which they form part, their connections are drawn in different directions”.¹⁶

This is the nucleus of James' non reductionist epistemological monism. And the key point here is to realize how James is flatly opposed to the Cartesian position that holds the substantial character of consciousness that passively reflects the external thing; that is, the idea of an "I that thinks" in front of an "inert matter". Moreover, we must consider that James rejects the idea of epistemological intermediaries: consciousness is basically an inner “mutable flow or current” constituted by the same weave or prime matter as the external world. There are no thoughts and things, only "experiences". And the engine behind all experiences is human intentionality. On the basis of particular interests and ends man is connected to the world. But insofar as man is related in an active and selective manner with the world that surrounds him, James concludes that his beliefs about the real are never final. On the contrary, every belief is for James susceptible of changes and revisions. Nevertheless, James asserts that our thought

¹⁵ James, William, *The Meaning of Truth*, New York: Longman Green and Co, 1911, pp. xvi-xvii (my translation).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

and language has originated historically and gradually and that is how he explains that we share with other subjects a set of common beliefs that we could hardly doubt or abandon¹⁷. It is also in that way that, in general, we forge our habits, manage to establish a fruitful link with the real and our behaviors (verbal and non-verbal) become accessible to our acquaintances and strangers¹⁸.

Now then, as I will attempt to show in what follows, these jamesian ideas about the relation mind/world find a certain support in davidsonian thought insofar as they clearly anticipate the davidsonian critique of the dualisms objective-subjective and uninterpreted content-conceptual scheme.

The affinities between James and Davidson start to show themselves at the moment when Davidson rejects the conception of the mind as endowed with objective private states and, in contraposition, affirms that it is only possible to talk of "mental states"¹⁹. Thus, Davidson opposes, as James does, the Cartesian tradition and, therewith, the subjective-objective dualism and the conception of sensations as epistemic intermediaries. Following his own argumentation, Davidson will hold that if we start from the idea that it is our sensations that justify our beliefs, then an insuperable breach is produced between the subjective (our sensations and beliefs) and the objective (the physical events). And Davidson, the same as James, is convinced that the best is to abandon the dichotomy subjective-objective. In its place he postulates, therefore, that our beliefs (and thus the meaning of our utterances) are derived from a situation in which the speaker finds himself –together with another person that possesses language– faced with a shared world (triangulated situation). In such a situation it is possible to find relations of resemblance between the observed objects and the linguistic behaviors of both persons, since it is in the process of tirangulation itself that all thought and language emerge.

¹⁷ James says: "in matters of beliefs we are all extremely conservative ... The most violent revolutions in the beliefs of an individual leave the greater part of the old order untouched" (James, W., *Pragmatismo. Un nuevo nombre para antiguos modos de pensar*, España: Sarpe, 1984, p. 70).

¹⁸ From what we have seen, even when James defends an instrumentalist interpretation of belief, he does not for that reason leave room for any type of fantasy proposed as a belief. In fact, James refuses to fall into subjectivism of relativism. That is why he notes explicitly that the acquisition of beliefs does not take place insofar as these are satisfactory to us in the sense of being psychologically pleasant, but rather insofar as its consequences are confirmed by experience. Furthermore, a belief, for it to be accepted, must be coherent with the rest of our beliefs.

¹⁹ Mental states are nothing other than "propositional attitudes", that is, intentional states or attitudes about something in the world. This is why there is an intimate link between such attitudes and the linguistic emissions (utterances) of a speaker.

On the basis of the latter, Davidson concludes that the content of our beliefs is given by the objective objects and events of the world. And it then follows from that, in his opinion, that the utterances that express our beliefs and the beliefs themselves, when “correctly understood as beliefs about things and events that cause those beliefs and sentences ... must be fundamentally veridical”²⁰. In other words, Davidson holds that there cannot exist a (coherent) system of beliefs that could turn out to be massively false in what makes its relation to the world. Hence, for example, at the moment that we interpret the utterances of a speaker, whose meaning we ignore, it is fundamental that we apply the *principle of charity*, that is, suppose not only that we share beliefs about the world, but also suppose that the speaker holds his own utterances as true. All of the above leads Davidson to explain the situation of interpretation without the need to postulate an epistemic nexus between mind and world. The sensations, then, do not function for him as epistemic intermediaries, but as mere causal intermediaries. In other words, sensations cause beliefs but do not justify them²¹. We justify our beliefs on the basis of our beliefs (coherentism). But from this we do not infer that we are locked in the circle of our beliefs. On the contrary, in eliminating the dualism subjective-objective, it is meaningless for Davidson that we isolate the beliefs from the world. Moreover, if Davidsonian coherentism implied remaining closed in the circle of our private beliefs, then the existence of incommensurable conceptual schemes or systems of belief would be acceptable for his philosophy. But certainly Davidson denies conceptual relativism. In fact, there are for Davidson no conceptual schemes that are distinct from one another because there are no untranslatable languages. All language is translatable because all language is about the world and the world that surrounds us is shared. For this reasons even if there can be differences between our beliefs there will never be complete incommensurability. In the most serious of cases, we will face an indeterminacy of translation.

In sum, it is in this critique to *the third dogma of empiricism* where the nexus between Davidson's and James' thought is patent: both philoso-

²⁰ Davidson, D., “Empirical Content”, in: *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001, p. 174.

²¹ “The relation between a sensation and a belief cannot be logical in nature, for sensations are neither beliefs nor any other propositional attitudes. What is, therefore, the relation?... the relation has to be causal. Sensations cause some beliefs and, in this sense, constitute the ground or sustenance of those beliefs. But a causal explanation of a belief does not show how or why the belief is justified” (Davidson, D., “A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge”, in: Malachowski, A. (ed.), *Reading Rorty*, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, 1990, p. 125).

phers are opposed to conceiving the relation mind/world in a Cartesian way and, in contraposition, they affirm a direct relation between world and belief. There is no subject confronted with an object insofar as both form part of a single matrix. And that matrix, far from subjective is intersubjective.

According to what we have seen in this section, we can conclude that the treatment of the themes in Davidson's thought reveals a certain affinity with basic conceptions in James' pragmatism. Basically, we can summarize the points of convergence between the thought of both authors in the following: (1) mind is not a substance, (2) there are no mental objects, (3) there is no subjective/objective dualism, (4) there are no epistemic intermediaries between mind and world, and (5) arguments against relativism and scepticism.

Some final observations

The historical influence of classical pragmatism in contemporary philosophers should not be exaggerated. Nevertheless, what is true is that the way in which classical pragmatists approached certain topics have a present day relevance and actuality that definitely permeates contemporary anglo-saxon philosophy. In drawing the links between the work of Davidson and the thought of Peirce and James, I have attempted to show that davidsonian ideas, far from being a product of an exclusively neopositivist and analytic matrix, sink their deepest roots in the classical pragmatist tradition.

(Translated from Spanish by Victor J. Krebs)