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Paul Natorp's reformulation of the Kantian distinction between intuition and concept

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Chapter 3. The Method Required to Overcome the Heterogeneity between Intuition and Concepts.

According to Natorp, the only way to guarantee a genuine foundation of knowledge is by taking a minimal definition of thinking as a starting point. The investigation must begin by taking the concept of thinking as correlation. This is the only way in which a legitimate foundation of knowledge can be guaranteed. Taking this starting point will be the way in which the Kantian dualism between intuition and concept - which has the problems we exhibited in Chapter I- can be overcome. Overcoming the dualism between intuitions and concepts requires a new model in philosophical argumentation that is consistent with the task of philosophy. The problem must be posited from a new standpoint. This model should take the concept of thinking as a starting point.

The objective of this section is to analyze the definition of thinking as correlation and to show that this is the starting point of philosophical research in the pursuit of an internal foundation of knowledge. We will show that this immanent foundation is a necessary methodological prescription required by the very concept of philosophy. More specifically, it will be shown that taking this definition of thinking as the starting point of the investigation leads to a possibility of overcoming the distinction between intuitions and concepts. We will show that the deduction of concepts must be carried out departing from a minimal notion of thinking. This new starting point will be the clue to solve the problems raised by the Kantian distinction between intuitions and concepts. More specifically, it will be exhibited how the understanding is the source of its objects in a progression in different stages. Natorp will show how thought builds its cases from a minimal notion of thinking. This new standpoint will ultimately overcome the heterogeneity between intuitions and concepts.

In this section, we will analyze the definition of thinking as correlation. It will be exhibited that this conception is present all along Natorp's intellectual development. We will show that from his early works up to his mature presentation, Natorp claims that the principle of correlation is the starting point of the deduction of concepts. This starting point will be the first step to guarantee to overcome the heterogeneity between intuitions and concepts. Natorp will prove that the universality of the concept and the singularity of the object in its concreteness have the same root. They are both rooted in the principle of correlation. From this new standpoint, it could be explained how thinking can grasp the

object in its concreteness. The relation between the universality of the concept and the individuality of the object will be clarified. Therefore, it will be offered the grounding for a proper account of the relation between intuition and concepts. We will study how Natorp sees in Plato's theory the historical foundation of his proposal. Kant started his investigation from the Transcendental Aesthetic. He isolated sensibility and proved that intuition and concepts were two different sources of knowledge. In this part of the *Critique*, Kant proved that sensibility has its own sort of representations: intuitions. Only later, in the Transcendental Logic, Kant shows that the understanding is a source of representations: concepts. Kant takes the table of judgements as the leading thread to discover the concepts of the understanding. In this chapter, it will be exhibited that for Natorp, the Transcendental Aesthetic is not a proper beginning. The philosophical investigation must start from the Transcendental Logic. Natorp considers that Kant was wrong to take the table of judgments as a starting point of the deduction of concepts. We will show how Natorp corrects the Kantian proposal. We will focus on Natorp's conception of the relation between concepts and judgments. We will observe the reasons why it can be stated that thinking must be conceived as a process that involves synthesis and that, only in a derivative way, it can be considered as a mode of analysis.

3.1. The Task of Philosophy.

According to Natorp, the object of investigation determines the method that should be employed in every specific field of knowledge. It is not possible to carry out the study on a certain scope of objects without considering that each scope of objects demands a peculiar method of study. The investigation is based on a minimum of assumptions, and these assumptions determine the method that will be used in the investigation. This is the way to ensure that the method that we employ is consistent with the purpose of the investigation.²⁸¹ For this reason, the first step of the philosophical investigation is to determine the object of philosophical research. Natorp defines the task of philosophy following the delineations of the classical tradition²⁸². For him, philosophy is the science that has the task of unfolding the fundamental principles of thinking.

²⁸¹ For Natorp: „Durch die Eigenthümlichkeit des zu untersuchenden Gegenstandes muss die Eigenthümlichkeit der Untersuchungsmethode zum Theil bedingt sein; es lässt daher über die letztere sich nicht eher etwas feststellen, als das Gebiet der zu erforschenden Gegenstände mit Sicherheit bestimmt ist.“ Natorp, P., EP, p. 2.

²⁸² Natorp, P., PILb, p. 460.

Philosophy is the first science on which all others depend. This science is the fundamental science of thinking and knowledge²⁸³. As we shall see, this definition of philosophy as a science will be present in the entire work of the philosopher, from his early writings up to his later elaborations. His redefinition of the distinction between intuition and concepts assumes as an initial premise this peculiar conception of philosophy and philosophical method.

Sciences relate to each other and to philosophy in a specific way. Natorp uses an analogy to explain such a relationship. Natorp claims that if we consider knowledge as a circle, the particular sciences go from the centre to the periphery while philosophy goes from the periphery to the centre²⁸⁴. The multiplicity in which knowledge is branched is the field of particular sciences, which study the peculiarity of each region of knowledge. On the contrary, the task of philosophy is to find the centre that originates the periphery. Centre and periphery are two directions of the same path. However, as a centre of origin, philosophy guarantees the unity of knowledge. The logical procedure of thinking, as we will see in detail later, is expressed in a circle. Centre and periphery are co-involved. However, it is the centre that guides and determines the periphery. This centre, observes Natorp, should not be conceived as a mere empty midpoint but rather is the origin of the periphery, its law of formation²⁸⁵.

In this sense, philosophy is the most abstract and general science²⁸⁶. Special sciences study a particular domain of objects. Philosophy studies the conditions of all objectivity. It is the science of the principles of the conformation of the object in general²⁸⁷. Therefore, this general science cannot be identified with any particular field of objects, but it is the foundation of any position of objects. The general form of knowledge determines the form of each particular cognition. A particular cognition can

²⁸³ „Philosophie ist nach ihrem historischen Begriff die Grundwissenschaft, d. h. diejenige Wissenschaft, welche die Einheit der menschlichen Erkenntnisse durch den Nachweis des gemeinsamen letzten Fundaments, auf dem sie alle ruhen, sicherstellen soll.“ Natorp, P., PP, p. 3. As we will see later, there is no qualitative difference between thinking and knowing. The most concise development of this issue is found in the summary of its logic lessons. Natorp, P., L, §2.

²⁸⁴ Natorp, P., PIP, p. 3. Hans Schneider explains this analogy. Cf. Schneider, H., 1936, p.13.

²⁸⁵ „Dabei hat man sich aber das „Zentrum“ nicht als leeren Mittelpunkt, sondern als zentrale Kraft, ganz im Ganzen und ganz in jedem Teil, lebendig schöpferisch das All durchwaltend und eben zum Ganzen zusammenschließend zu denken.“ Natorp, P., PILb, p. 512.

²⁸⁶ Natorp, P., TDM, pp., 49, 54.

²⁸⁷ Natorp, P., TDM, p.48. Aristotle would have recognized in his *Metaphysics* this fundamental task of philosophy. However, Aristotle identified the science of being in general with the science of substance. Plato's approach was superior in this regard. Natorp, P., TDM, p.40. This would be one of the reasons to consider Aristotle's book K of *Metaphysics* to be inauthentic. Natorp thinks that there is a contradiction in considering philosophy as a science of being in general and then identification of this science as the science of God, a particular being. Natorp, P., TDM, esp. pp.49ss. Natorp, P., AM, esp.180ss.

properly be knowledge because it obeys the rules of what in general can be legitimately called knowledge. The philosopher's task is to find this general legality that determines all particular cognitions.²⁸⁸ The task of the philosopher is not to find *a* specific "logos" (τις λόγος) - the legality of a certain domain of knowledge - but *the* logos itself (αυτός ο λόγος) - the general legality of knowledge. The study of logos is the task of philosophy. This was Plato's great discovery, and this method is called transcendental philosophy. In this sense, Plato did not ground a particular philosophy but rather laid the foundations of the philosophy itself²⁸⁹. In contrast to the fundamental laws of philosophical thinking, the legality of sciences is derived because it is based on relative determinations of thinking. The particular cognitions expressed in the laws of specific sciences are conditioned positions of thinking. On the contrary, philosophy aspires to find the original legality. Philosophy does not seek *a* law but *the* law, not actual laws but the lawlikeness. This search, as we will see later in detail, is an infinite task that can never be fully accomplished. The search for the unconditioned is the ideal goal towards which the philosophical efforts must tend even when it never reaches it²⁹⁰. However, philosophical thinking seeks to find this general legality, the grounding unit of thinking²⁹¹.

Consequently, philosophy guarantees the systematicity of knowledge in general, making sciences a coherent whole, and not a mere aggregate of specific cognitions²⁹². The particular cognitions are not merely juxtaposed but coordinated as a whole. Philosophy is the articulating unit that enables this unification²⁹³. In this sense, philosophy

²⁸⁸ The fundamental task of the philosopher is the "knowledge (*Wissen*) of the form of knowledge (*Erkenntnisform*)" since we generally call knowledge to a certain cognition only because it conforms to the general form of knowledge. „Aber das Wissen von der Erkenntnisform darf nicht getrennt bleiben von dem Wissen um das bestimmte Objekt, es muß in diesem zugleich liegen und zwar als es bestimmend, denn nur dem Formgesetz des Erkennens gemäß ist es überhaupt Wissen.“ Natorp, P., PILb, p. 28. Natorp, P., PILa, p. 26.

²⁸⁹ „Philosophie“ besagt, nach der klassischen Bedeutung dieses Wortes, die eben Plato ihm erteilt: das Streben zu jenem „Einen, allein Weisen“ (έν το σοφόν μόνον), von dem schon Heraklit zu sagen weiß; zur Einheit aber des Vielen, damit auch Vielheit des Einen. (...) Auf diese Einheit muß somit alle Philosophie, die diesen Titel rechtmäßig tragen soll, hinstreben und strebt die heutige Transzendentalphilosophie entschlossen hin.“ Natorp, P., PILb, p. 460.

²⁹⁰ Natorp, P., PILa, p. 191. Natorp, P., PILb, p. 196.

²⁹¹ „Hier ist endlich mit einer jede Zweideutigkeit ausschließenden Bestimmtheit beantwortet, wieso die letzte Denkgrundlage nicht τις λόγος, eine (besondere) Denksetzung sein soll. Es ist nicht τις λόγος, weil es αυτός ο λόγος, nicht eine Setzung, weil es die reine Setzung, das letzte Gesetz der Denksetzung selbst ist, aus welchem alle besonderen Setzungen des Denkens sich müssen herleiten und kraft dieser Herleitung verstehen lassen.“ Natorp, P., PILa, p. 189. Natorp, P., PILb, p. 194.

²⁹² Geer Edel considers that the Neo-Kantians are the last philosophers who defend the idea of systematic philosophy. He holds: „Wie der Neukantianismus insgesamt, so ist in den Zwanziger Jahren des nun endenden Jahrhunderts bekanntlich auch der Systemgedanke in Mißkredit geraten.“ Edel, G., 2001, p. 110.

²⁹³ „...die Begründung aller besonderen Wissenschaften in einem Systemzusammenhang, in welchem sie in bestimmter Ordnung, nach ihrer wechselseitigen Abhängigkeit und Verwandtschaft, sich zuletzt

is a fundamental science because it determines the place that all particular cognitions occupy and the relations among them. Thus, philosophy guarantees the systematic unity of science. Thanks to this systematic unity of thought, science is “one and indivisible”²⁹⁴. Knowledge is, in general, systematic knowledge²⁹⁵. Philosophy must find a system of concepts in which the analysis of one concept refers to the rest of concepts so that the elucidation of one of them leads to the understanding of others. This analysis will be executed by logic. Logic is another name for philosophy because it is the discipline that carries out its task. Philosophy is logic because it is the science of *logos*.²⁹⁶

In this sense, philosophy can be defined also as method, as it marks the path that thinking takes to become knowledge, and “the method is precisely what makes science a science”²⁹⁷. Philosophy is a grounding science as a science of the method. Therefore, philosophy should not be defined by its content but by its method. It was Plato who discovered the “unconditional sovereignty of the laws of the method.”²⁹⁸ Thus, the method becomes the fundamental principle of critical idealism. Methodical idealism is a synonym for critical idealism²⁹⁹.

According to this conception, philosophy is the first science. Philosophy, as the ultimate basis of all knowledge, cannot depend on any other science. In this sense,

zurückführen auf eine gemeinsame Grundwissenschaft, die Wissenschaft von der Methode...“ Natorp, P., PILa, p. 75. Natorp, P., PILb, p. 76.

²⁹⁴ For Dufour, this is one of the ruptures of Natorp’s thinking with that of Cohen, for whom the science division is a *factum* found a posteriori. Cohen takes the science division as a given fact. Natorp believes that this division is exhibited *a priori* in the foundation of science in the logical law. Dufour, É., 2003, p.104.

²⁹⁵ „Es wird also im Begriff einer (besonderen) Wissenschaft ein erschöpfender systematischer Zusammenhang aller möglichen Besonderheiten, je innerhalb eines durch einen generellen Begriff abgegrenzten Problemgebietes, und zwar mitsamt ihren wechselseitigen Beziehungen und Verknüpfungsweisen (wie oben die „Systeme“ von Intervallen), gedacht.“ Natorp, P., PILa, p. 303. Natorp, P., PILb, p. 319.

²⁹⁶ Christian Krijnen highlights that this aspect has not always been sufficiently emphasized: „Philosophie wird also keineswegs auf Erkenntnistheorie reduziert, sondern die Erkenntnistheorie fungiert im Neukantianismus als philosophia prima. Als solche hat sie nicht nur eine spezifische Thematik, sondern zugleich eine darüber hinausgehende Bedeutung für das System der Philosophie, dessen Methode und Grundbegrifflichkeit sie vorzeichnet. Entsprechend ausführlich und umfassend haben die Neukantianer sich mit der Erkenntnistheorie auseinandergesetzt. Erkenntnistheorie ist für sie allerdings weder bloss ‚Epistemologie‘ anderer, nicht-philosophischer Erkenntnisse, sondern bezieht ihre eigene Erkenntnis mit ein, noch ist sie bloss Wissenschaftstheorie handelt es sich bei der wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnis doch um einen spezifischen Erkenntnisinn.“ Krijnen, C., 2014, p. 12.

²⁹⁷ „Es bedarf allgemein der Betonung, daß für Plato wie nur je für Descartes oder Kant der Gesichtspunkt der „Methode“ der oberste Gesichtspunkt der Philosophie und Wissenschaft überhaupt ist.“ Natorp, P., PILa, p. 62. Natorp, P., PILb, p. 63.

²⁹⁸ Natorp, P., PILa, p. 82. Natorp, P., PILb, p. 84.

²⁹⁹ „Man darf dies Prinzip, in dem der methodische Sinn der Idee rein und radikal zum Ausdruck kommt, von sonstigem, abweichendem Sprachgebrauch unbeirrt, das Prinzip des Idealismus nennen; wofern diese Vorsicht nötig ist: des kritischen oder, wie wir noch lieber sagen, des methodischen Idealismus.“ Natorp, 1928, p. 154. Natorp, P., PILa, p. 150. Natorp, P., PILb, p. 154.

philosophy is independent. As an independent science, philosophy must be autonomous. Autonomy is the first general methodological prescription of philosophy. This first science must be grounded on itself and provide the foundation to the other sciences³⁰⁰. Philosophy must be grounded on itself to then ground the remaining areas of knowledge. This is what Natorp calls in the *Philosophical Propaedeutics* the "formal criterion" that philosophy must satisfy to become the first science. To this formal criterion of autonomy, and consequently of self-grounding, a "material criterion" is added. This discipline, as the centre of knowledge, must delimit the regions of the remaining objects of knowledge. However, it cannot contribute to the content of the particular sciences, but philosophy can only provide the ultimate principles of thought in general and, consequently, the elementary normativity in which the other areas of human knowledge unfold. That is, philosophy will not determine the material content of science but, rather, it will give the fundamental logical principles of its procedure. To accomplish this goal, philosophy must be able to have an internal foundation. Philosophy requires immanent legitimation. The circularity of foundation is introduced from the beginning as a primary methodical prescription because it is demanded by the purpose pursued. Therefore, there is a virtuous circularity internal to the method; philosophy, as a general science of knowledge, must have immanent legitimation. This requirement arises as an initial prescription in order to guarantee the epistemic status of a first science. This is the only way to guarantee that knowledge is raised upon secure foundations.

From this analysis, we can demarcate the following fundamental features of the conception of the philosophy of Natorp. First, philosophy is the science of the first principles. Philosophy must search for the most fundamental principles of knowledge, its fundamental concepts. Its goal is not to know a particular object but the unity of knowledge in general. Secondly, and as a consequence of its peculiar goal, philosophy cannot depend on any other science. It must ground itself and thus establish the unity of the multiple fields of knowledge. Thirdly, as philosophy is the general science of knowledge, it must provide the general principles of all objective knowledge. In this sense, it is normative with respect to all regional knowledge expressed in the particular sciences, even when it only determines the general principles and not the particular laws

³⁰⁰ „Denn Philosophie will allerdings Wissenschaft sein, nicht aber besondere eines besonderen Gegenstandes: vielmehr eben, was allen Sonderungen der vielen Wissenschaften gegenüber der Einheit der Wissenschaft ausmacht und begründet: das ist ihre eigentümlich Frage und Ausgabe.“ Natorp, P., PIP, 1911, p. 3. Also: UOSB, p. 257.

of each particular science. Then, a primary task is to explain the relation of thinking in general with its concretions: particular sciences. Thus defined, the problem of knowledge deals with the relation of thinking to its objects. The problem is to establish how the mind can refer to what is real, departing from thinking itself, i.e., from what is purely conceptual. The problem is the relation between universality and particularity. Philosophy needs to establish how those general principles of knowledge relate to particular laws and, ultimately, to the concreteness of the object. The question is how the universality of the concept refers to the concreteness of the intuitive content.

Every particular determination of thinking is grounded on the determination of thinking in general. Philosophy must seek that unity in which the multiplicity of knowledge originates. Philosophy consists in pursuing the unity of multiplicity and concomitantly to the discovery of multiplicity in the one, while the units reached may become multiplicities that can be brought together under a new higher unit. Philosophy tends to the ultimate unity of thinking and discovers in each unit the multiple contained in it. In this search for the general laws of knowledge, it must be guaranteed the relation of thought with objects. The centre cannot be separated from the periphery. The goal of philosophy demands that philosophy has an immanent foundation that does not take as its starting point anything outside the process of thinking itself. The determination of the general laws of thinking must show its realization in what is *real*. Philosophy will reveal the path that thinking follows in the construction of knowledge³⁰¹. Therefore, the central issue of philosophical thinking is the problem of the method, because the knowledge of the method is the source of every other knowledge.

³⁰¹ We disagree with Éric Dufour in this regard. According to Dufour, Natorp begins to consider the starting point of research in the unity of the system from 1914. Cf. Dufour, É., 2010, p.154.

3.2. The Necessary Starting Point of the Deduction of Categories.

As we observed, Natorp argues that the task of philosophy is to provide the general foundations of knowledge. However, this task cannot be carried out without assumptions. A justification devoid of any assumption is, in general, nonsense. A minimum of necessary assumptions must be accepted, that make possible the pursuit of what is proposed as the task of the investigation. All legitimation requires a minimum of initial premises that are accepted as valid. This starting point is essential for all foundational research. To provide a foundation for knowledge, it must already be available a general concept of knowledge to enable the task to be undertaken. A minimum concept of thinking is essential to allow the investigation to begin. The definition of thinking as correlation will be this basic assumption necessary to provide the conditions of possibility of knowledge³⁰².

By taking the concept of thinking as a starting point, Natorp follows the guidelines introduced by Hermann Cohen. According to Cohen, the logic of pure knowledge must have the concept of thinking as a starting point. Natorp also maintains that thinking is the origin. For both Cohen and Natorp *Denken* is the *Anfang*. Thinking is the beginning and the origin, and the fundamental forms of knowledge are obtained from the analysis of the ways in which thinking operates. One of the weaknesses of Kant's thinking consists in making thinking depend on something external to itself: on intuition. This is a weakness in Kantian proposal that must be remedied. Thinking must be the starting point. Natorp fully agrees with Cohen on this point. Cohen argues:

Wir fangen mit dem Denken an. Das Denken darf keinen Ursprung haben außerhalb seiner selbst, wenn anders seine Reinheit uneingeschränkt und ungetrübt sein muß. Das reine Denken in sich selbst und ausschließlich muß ausschließlich die reinen Erkenntnisse zur Erzeugung bringen. Mithin muß die Lehre vom Denken die Lehre von der Erkenntnis werden. Als solche Lehre vom Denken, welche an

³⁰² „Dass eine Deduction ohne alle Voraussetzungen beginne, wäre ein widersinniges Verlangen. Vorausgesetzt wird in jedem Falle, ausser dem, was zum Verständniss der Aufgabe gehört, irgend ein Letztes, woraus deducirt wird. Voraussetzungsglogigkeit kann nur in dem Sinne gefordert werden, dass nicht mehr als das Unerlässliche vorausgesetzt, nichts, was schon zur Lösung gehört, vorweggenommen werde. Es ist daher unser Erstes, dasjenige Minimum von Voraussetzungen festzustellen, welches zur verlagten Deduction nothwendig und hinreichend ist.“ [...] „Die allgemeine Aufgabe, der die unsrige such als besondere Problem unterordnet, ist: die letzten im vorher erklärten Sinne objectiven Grundlagen der Erkenntniss überhaupt festzustellen. Vorausgesetzt wird also jedenfalls ein allgemeiner Begriff von Erkenntnis.“ Natorp, P., QQ, p. 2.

sich Lehre von der Erkenntnis ist, suchen wir hier die Logik aufzubauen.³⁰³

A doctrine of knowledge is obtained from a doctrine of thinking. Thinking cannot start from anything other than itself. The construction of the system must begin with thinking. It cannot introduce any doctrine of sensibility because thinking cannot take as a starting point anything alien to itself. The Kantian project of starting the system with a Transcendental Aesthetics is rejected. Kant's mistake was to start with a theory of sensibility. The research must begin with thinking and not with anything external to it³⁰⁴. The sovereignty of thinking is also expressed in the methodological aspect, thinking is the starting point of deduction. Regarding the general perspective, as we will exhibit, Natorp will follow the Cohenian prescription at this point.

Historical background: the genesis of Natorp's conception in his early writings

In his first published writing, Natorp defines thinking as correlation. The concept of correlation is one of the most important within Neo-Kantian terminology. It is interesting to note that this way of conceiving thinking, which accompanies Natorp throughout his philosophical trajectory, appears for the first time in his first published writing, *Ueber das Verhältniß des theoretischen und praktischen Erkennens zur Begründung einer nichtempirischen Realität* (1881). On the occasion of discussing the work of Wilhelm Herrmann, Natorp introduces the principle of correlation. This principle holds that the unity of the object is supported by the unity of consciousness and that, vice versa, the unity of consciousness is made explicit by establishing the unity of the object. The unity of the object only makes sense on the basis of the unity of consciousness. Natorp holds:

Die Wahrheit oder Realität dieser Art Erkenntnisse beruht darauf, daß die Objecte derselben Objecte unsrer Erkenntniß nur sind auf Grund eben der Einheit des Bewußtseyns, von deren Standpunkt allein wir über ihre Realität als Objecte urtheilen können. Die nothwendige Geltung einer so begründeten Einsicht beruht darauf, daß Object und Bewußtseyn nur in unauflöslicher Correlation zu einander bestehen, das Bewußtseyn seine Einheit nur behauptet in der Einheit des Objects und das Object nur in der Einheit des Bewußtseyns,

³⁰³ Cohen, H., 1922, p.11.

³⁰⁴ Cf. Cohen, H., 1922, p.11.

dem es Object ist. Die auf diese nothwendige Correlation gegründete Erkenntniß hat allein Anspruch auf gegenständliche Wahrheit. Wofern man also mir diese im Auge hat, wird der Realitätscharakter unsrer Erkenntniß richtig bestimmt durch diejenigen Bedingungen, von denen die Einheit des Bewußtseyns in der Vorstellung seiner Objecte in unsrer Erkenntniß abhängt.³⁰⁵

The unity of consciousness is the highest principle on which the reality of the object is grounded. The unity of the concrete object is only possible on the basis of the unity of the consciousness, and the unity of the consciousness is only possible in the unity of the object. This way of understanding the essence of thinking, the preeminence of the correlation, is maintained throughout his writings. In his inaugural lecture “Leibniz und der Materialismus” (October of 1881), published in 1985 by Helmut Holzhey, Natorp argues that the truth of the object is grounded in the peculiar form of unity constituted by consciousness. The unity of the concept, given by the unity of consciousness, is the truth of the object. Natorp maintains:

Schon Parmenides und Platon hatten erkannt, dass die Materie nichts völlig Reales sein könne, weil ihr diejenige Einheit mangle, welche zum Begriff der ousia, als des wahrhaften Seins, erfordert wird. Was diese verlangte Einheit sei, lässt sich durch nichts Sinnliches deutlich machen, hingegen versteht es sich sofort durch die Reflexion auf die Grundbeschaffenheit unsres Denkens, welches, wiewohl eine Vielheit von Objecten umfassend, doch diese stets in einer Einheit darstellt, in einer Concentration gleichsam, welche eben das ausmacht, was wir Denken oder Bewusstsein nennen. Leibniz sah ein, dass auf solcher formalen, ideellen, begrifflichen Einheit das beruht, was die Wahrheit der Phänomene, die Substanz oder das Wesen der Dinge im Unterschied von der blossen Erscheinung ausmacht.³⁰⁶

The conceptual unity and the concreteness of the object are just two sides of the same problem. This idea that appears in his early writings is developed and deepened in subsequent years. The methodological starting point in the research is pure thinking understood as unity and correlation.

In his Habilitation Thesis, *Descartes' Erkenntnistheorie*, the unity of apperception, as the starting point of deduction, is identified with the unity of the ‘I think’

³⁰⁵ Natorp, P., UV, p. 245.

³⁰⁶ Natorp, P., LM, p. 9.

of Descartes. Descartes recognized that objects depend on the form of conception of the understanding and, since the understanding is a perfectly articulated unity, it is possible to start a deduction of concepts from the unity of the understanding, taken as the leading thread of the knowledge of objects. For this reason, knowledge can be defined as a form of self-knowledge³⁰⁷. For Natorp, an element that brings the philosophy of Descartes closer to that of Kant, and that can lead to thinking of Descartes as a precursor of critical philosophy is precisely the definition of thinking as an original synthetic unit. In *Descartes' Erkenntnistheorie*, Natorp shows that Descartes would have originally introduced into the unity of the 'I think' what would later be called by Kant the unity of apperception. The cartesian unity of the Cogito is the Kantian unity of the transcendental apperception. In the Cartesian system, it can be seen the recognition of the fundamental synthesis as a condition of possibility of any specific synthesis expressed in each concept. The intuited object is the product of this conceptual synthesis, and the deduction of concepts must show how this construction is produced. The author of the *Meditations on First Philosophy* exhibited that each particular synthesis supposes the articulation in the central unity of the apperception. According to Natorp, Descartes saw that the unity of reason was the foundation of the possibility of knowing the multiplicity of objects. The very concept of reason is the name of this unity³⁰⁸. In this sense, Descartes was very close to critical idealism, more than Kant himself was willing to accept. Descartes anticipated Kantian ideas. However, the interference of metaphysical and theological prejudices prevented Descartes from taking his thinking to the last consequences³⁰⁹. Descartes saw that it is by virtue of this immanent foundation of knowledge that knowledge of objects can be achieved. Therefore, the foundation of knowledge is obtained by an analysis of the

³⁰⁷ „Bis ins Einzelne stimmt die Vorstellung Descartes' zu dem kantischen Begriff einer Grenzbestimmung der Vernunft durch ihre Selbsterkenntnis (Kr. d. r. V., Kehrbach, S. 5), welche mit absoluter Gewissheit und Vollständigkeit muss erreicht werden können, weil die Vernunft eine vollkommene Einheit ist (6), und weil es sich hier nicht um die Natur der Dinge, welche unerschöpflich ist, sondern um den Verstand handelt, der über die Natur der Dinge urtheilt;“ Natorp, P., DE, p.4.

³⁰⁸ „Die Vernunft ist der Ausdruck der Einheit in unsrer Erkenntniss gegenüber der Mannigfaltigkeit ihrer Objecte; von ihr hängt alle Erkenntniss der Gegenstände ab, nicht sie von der Kenntniss der letzteren; und durch sie, nach dem Gesetze ihrer Einheit, giebt es allein Beziehung der Vorstellungen auf ein Object, Wahrheit und Falschheit;“ Natorp, P., DE, p. 19.

³⁰⁹ „Es fragt sich: hat Kant wohl ein Bewusstsein davon gehabt, dass das Ich, dessen Existenz Descartes begründen will, nothwendig nur das Ich sein kann, welches er selbst das Ich der reinen, transscendentalen Apperception nennt, nämlich jene rein intellectuelle Vorstellung, die Kant, mit Anlehnung an Descartes' Cogito, doch, wie gezeigt worden, nicht ganz in seinem Sinne, als den »Actus Ich denke« bezeichnet? — Es scheint nicht, dass Kant es so aufgefasst hat; es hätte ihm sonst nicht entgehen können, dass Descartes' Fundamentalsatz mit den tiefsten Grundlagen seiner Transscendentalphilosophie in genauer Beziehung steht, und den Grundgedanken seines „transscendentalen Idealismus“ — wiewohl ohne das Bewusstsein seiner entscheidenden Bedeutung — anticipirt.“ Natorp, P., DE, p.37. See also: Natorp, P., DE, p. 83. Cf. Tamb. pp. 34, 42ss, 83. Natorp, P., DDE, p.24.

principles of reason, starting from this conception of thinking. Only a study of the nature and legality of reason itself can provide knowledge of objects³¹⁰. We can only have an integrated knowledge of objects taking as a starting point the path that thinking follows in the construction of its objects. According to Natorp, when Descartes claimed that the method of mathematics should serve as a model of cognition, this statement must be understood under the light of how Descartes defined mathematics: as a universal method of construction of objectivity. For this reason, the Cartesian method is the method of universal mathematics. Only starting from this highest point of view, the unity of knowledge can be guaranteed; that is, it can be ensured that a multiplicity of cognitions is brought together in a unified whole. Since the operation of thinking consists primarily in correlating, the principle of correlation is the starting point of deduction also for Descartes. For this reason, it can be argued that “the universal science of human understanding is the basis of knowledge.”³¹¹ Descartes warned that the beginning of the investigation can only take place starting from this unity. Only taking as a starting point the principle of correlation, can true knowledge be achieved. Natorp holds:

Die Einheit des Fundaments alles wahren Wissens setzt Descartes durchaus voraus. Alles wirkliche Wissen muss aus Einem Geist concipirt werden können, sowie Alles, was aus Einem Geist und Plan entspringt, vollkommner ist, als woran Viele zusammengearbeitet haben. Denn das Wissen, von dem hier allein die Rede ist, das Wissen aus Principien, *a priori*, hängt von der Vernunft ab, nicht von Lehre und Ueberlieferung, vom Urtheil, nicht von blosser Erfahrung, von der selbsteignen Einsicht der Verstandes, nicht von der Autorität der Schul- und Bücherweisheit. Vernunft aber verlangt völlig unzweifelhafte Gewissheit; Alles, was dieser Forderung nicht entspricht, muss sie als falsch verwerfen³¹².

Descartes presupposes the unity of the foundation of all true knowledge. He considers that all true knowledge has its origin in the unity of the understanding. This unity is the

³¹⁰ „Der Ausgang von der Forderung einer Wissenschaft der menschlichen Intelligenz, d. h. einer unabhängig und für sich selbst feststehenden Gewissheit über den Begriff und das Fundament aller Wahrheit der Erkenntniss, welche deswegen erreichbar sein muss, weil sie nicht ausser uns in den Objecten, sondern in der Natur und Gesetzlichkeit der Erkenntniss selbst ihren Ursprung hat...“ Natorp, P., DE, p. 21.

³¹¹ „Die universelle Wissenschaft des menschlichen Verstandes liegt allem Wissen, die universelle Mathematik näher aller Erkenntniss von Maass und Ordnung, endlich die besonderen Wissenschaften des Quantitativen aller Erkenntniss der Qualitäten zu Grunde.“ Natorp, P., DE, p. 23.

³¹² Natorp, P., DE, p. 27.

unity of the foundation (*Die Einheit des Fundaments*). Without this unity, there would be a mere dispersion of separate groundless cognitions and not true knowledge. True knowledge can only be achieved from a certain form of self-knowledge, on the self-own insight of the understanding (*von der selbsteignen Einsicht der Verstandes*). The point of departure of the investigation must be the unity of the understanding on which all knowledge depends. According to Natorp:

Es braucht kaum noch darauf hingewiesen zu werden, dass diese Anschauungen mit denen der »Regeln« genau zusammenhängen und im Einklang sind. Auch dort ging Descartes aus von dem Gedanken der Einheit alles Wissens im menschlichen Verstande, als von dem alle Erkenntniss abhängt und in dem sie ihre letzte gemeinsame Wurzel hat. Auf dieser Grundlage wurde auch dort eine völlig zweifellose Gewissheit gefordert für alle Erkenntniss, die diesen Namen in Wahrheit verdient; und behauptet, es müsse erreichbar sein, sich einmal für allemal wenigstens darüber Gewissheit zu verschaffen, was von jedem Gegenstande zu erkennen möglich ist und was nicht. Auch dort wurde aus diesem Grunde alles irgend zweifelhafte, bloss wahrscheinliche Wissen für nicht viel mehr als Täuschung, alle bloss historische, auf die Autorität der Ueberlieferung gegründete Kenntniss für werthlos vor dem Anspruch der Vernunft erklärt³¹³.

The process of thinking cannot start from anything external to itself. All knowledge always depends on the unity of the understanding, and it is from that unity that it finds its foundation. The unity of the foundation guarantees the objectivity of its concretions. The study of the understanding and its principles underlies all knowledge. Therefore, the starting point of research is not the Transcendental Aesthetics with its study of the forms of sensibility -as it was for Kant- but the Transcendental Logic. The starting point of the investigation is not the point of view of the intuition in its concreteness. On the contrary, the departing point is the very operation of the concept which has its origin in the transcendental unity of the apperception. The beginning is the Logic and not the Aesthetics because the origin is the conceptual process rooted in the unity of the synthesis.

³¹³ Natorp. P., DE, p. 27.

In the *Objective and Subjective Foundation of Knowledge* (1887), one of his first systematic works, Natorp argues that the task of philosophy is to show how thinking can build objectivity. The formation of the objective takes place in the relationship between the multiple that makes up the object and the unity that determines it as an object as such. This unity is provided by the activity of thinking and can be defined in terms of synthetic unity. This unity of the understanding guarantees that each of these expressions is always in an interconnection. The unity of thinking guarantees the unity of the principles that govern each particular field³¹⁴. The multiplicity of appearances must be subjected to the unity provided by a law that establishes how the parts are articulated. The law regulates the way in which the various appearances are brought together in unity. The fundamental law of thinking is the search for this unity. For this reason, thinking can be defined as a synthetic unity, as a principle of unity of diversity³¹⁵. This synthetic unity is the law of legality. Synthetic unity is the highest principle³¹⁶.

These peculiarities of the definition of thinking will find a mature expression around 1890. *Quantity and Quality* (1891) is one of the first works in which Natorp presents its deduction of concepts and, thus also, a definition of the concept of thinking that begins to acquire its own characteristics, different from the notion of synthetic unity that is properly Kantian. Indeed, Kant defined thinking as synthesis as well. However, as we shall see later, Natorp's definition of the notion of synthesis is quite different from the Kantian definition. For Natorp, thinking is the starting point of the deduction of concepts. The deduction of the categories is established from the minimum assumption of thinking defined as synthetic unity or as correlation. Synthetic unity is the original form of thinking. This original form is only possible as a correlation of two moments: unity and multiplicity³¹⁷. However, Natorp highlights that these moments are not to be understood as part of a process of any faculty of the mind. This work of 1891 shows that Natorp is willing to distinguish his concept of thinking from a psychological interpretation. The synthetic unity is the origin of the deduction of categories. The categories are deduced from this original act of thinking defined as the unification of multiplicity. Natorp warns that this origin can be confused with a psychological

³¹⁴ Natorp, P., USOB, p. 257.

³¹⁵ „Alle wissenschaftliche Erkenntnis nun zielt auf's Gesetz. Die Beziehung der Erscheinung zum Gesetze (die Beziehung des „Mannigfaltigen“ der Erscheinung auf die „Einheit“ des Gesetzes) muss daher die in aller Erkenntnis ursprüngliche Beziehung auf den Gegenstand erklären. Die gesetzmässige Auffassung des Erscheinenden gilt als die gegenständlich wahre.“ Natorp, P., USOB, p. 259.

³¹⁶ Natorp, P., USOB, p. 285.

³¹⁷ Natorp, P., QQ, p.130.

beginning. In particular, because having defined thinking as an action, one could raise the question of the subject who performs the act. That is, if we define thinking as the act of linking, the question of the agent responsible for this action arises. Natorp is aware that the use of notions such as consciousness or subjectivity can lead to a psychological interpretation of his position³¹⁸. For this reason, he develops several arguments to justify that the use of notions such as consciousness or thinking does not necessarily involve a reference to the mental processes of the formation of representations. The unification of multiplicity does not require a subject to perform the action. Indeed, Natorp affirms, a minimal concept of consciousness is necessary. The content of this concept of consciousness will be an indispensable minimum assumption for the deduction of the concepts of thinking. Consciousness is the unifying point of view of multiplicity. It is the unit of the correlation that allows the connection of the multiple. The deduction of concepts departing from thinking is not an analysis of the formation of representations in the mind. Thinking should not be understood in this context as mind. Rather, the definition of thinking as correlation lies in the need to think of an articulating unity that expresses the “relation of a multiplicity to the central unity”³¹⁹.

Natorp’s conception progresses in identifying the concept of thinking with the concept of law³²⁰. In the *Social Pedagogy* (1899), Natorp maintains that this articulating unity is the law itself. Therefore, the fundamental way of thinking is legality. The law is the articulating unity of multiplicity. It is the central point of view that articulates multiplicity. Thinking is the unity of those laws. The fundamental law of thinking is the demand of giving unity to the multiplicity. The general form of the law is the unity of the multiplicity. The task of thinking is to form concepts, i.e., to join a multiplicity in a unity. The total conjunction is its goal. For this reason, it can be considered that the requirement of this total unity “is a consequence of the fundamental law of unity, which is the law of thinking itself.”³²¹

In *Number, Time and Space*, the concept of thinking acquires the definition of the union of multiplicity³²². Again, Natorp claims that the unity of thinking must be the starting point for the deduction of concepts. The general concept of law is contained in

³¹⁸ Natorp, P., QQ, p.4.

³¹⁹ Natorp, P., QQ, p.7.

³²⁰ In chapter 4, we will study the relationship between the notions of law and concept.

³²¹ „Diese Einzigkeit ist aber selbst eine Folge des Grundgesetzes der Einheit, welches das Gesetz des Denkens selbst ist.“ Natorp, P., SP, p. 29.

³²² «Penser, c’est saisir le multiple dans l’unité». Natorp, P., NTE, p. 344.

the concept of thinking and, it must be shown how the concepts generate objectivity. The investigation must find the peculiar ways in which the object is constructed *in* and *by* thinking. That is to say, the intuited object is nothing but the object of thinking because it is the result of the conceptual construction, which is an operation of thinking itself.

As it is well known, the definition of thinking as a synthetic unity is proper of Kantian philosophy. However, Natorp sees in Plato the germ of this idea. The comparison of the 1903 edition of his *Plato's Theory of Ideas* with that of 1921 makes it possible to highlight that throughout its philosophical development, Natorp maintains its definition of the concept of thinking as the origin of all objectivity. The conception of thinking as synthesis is an idea that Natorp supports from his early writings up to his late writings³²³. A clear moment in which this is noticed is the comparison between the first (1903) and the second edition (1921) of his study on the theory of ideas in Plato.

Natorp claims that Plato was the first to see that the task of thinking is the search for unity and that this search for unity is carried out through concepts. The concept, as a position of thinking, is “the unity of the multiplicity of the cases that take place”³²⁴. This discovery makes Plato the precursor of critical idealism by noting that every being is a position of thinking that determines multiplicity through concepts. The concepts contain the multiplicity of instances, giving them a peculiar unity according to each type of relationship. The concept determines specific forms of unity of multiplicity. The task of thinking is to establish these relationships through concepts. In the generation of concepts, thinking determines special types of relationships between the unity and the multiplicity. Insofar as these relations are the necessary forms with which thinking relates multiplicity, the concept is also a law. The law determines the peculiar way in which multiplicity is put together. The law is the point of view that establishes the specific way in which the thinking relates to the multiplicity.

From the horizon of Socratic philosophy, Plato understands the object of philosophy as a form of self-knowledge. This Socratic idea that knowledge is self-knowledge should not be understood as if Plato were refereeing to the process of the individual consciousness, as if the subject involved were the specific individual. Rather, the concept of consciousness which Plato referred to herein is consciousness in general,

³²³ We disagree in this regard with Éric Dufour. For Dufour, Natorp began to consider the starting point of the investigation in the totality of the system only after 1914. Cf. Dufour, É., 2010, p.154.

³²⁴ „Der Begriff ist, wie seit dem Meno feststeht, die Einheit der Mannigfaltigkeit vorkommender Fälle.“ Natorp, P., PILa, p139 . Natorp, P., PILb, p. 143.

not *one* particular thinking but *the* thinking. However, this knowledge is not only the expression of the general consciousness but of the legality of the consciousness. This knowledge of oneself is the knowledge of the legality of consciousness³²⁵. Thinking seeks to know its own legality, and for this reason, it can be conceived as well as self-knowledge. The study of how thinking builds these relationships is the theory of concepts, and it is a form of self-knowledge too. The deduction of concepts that Natorp will undertake can be considered self-knowledge since it is knowledge of the forms of knowledge. Thinking aims to know its own legality. In this sense, the deduction of concepts is an analysis of the ways in which thinking generates its contents in the formation of concepts. For this reason, the deduction of concepts can be considered as the knowledge of the legality of thinking and, as well, as a form of self-knowledge. The search for unity is the central task of thinking. Thinking is a function of unity. This is what Plato also expressed, and the Greeks in general, with the term soul. The task of thinking is to put the unity in the diversity of multiple instances. The ways in which thinking can put these units are diverse. The deduction of concepts is the exhibition of the various ways in which the multiplicity can be reunited following certain laws. The deduction of concepts consists in the exhibition of these fundamental modes of connection³²⁶. This is the meaning of the Platonic idea. Ideas should not be construed as metaphysical entities. The concept of idea in Plato must be understood as the ways in which thinking operates to achieve unity. Ideas are the expression of the legality of thinking because they provide a determined order to the determinable. The ideas are the foundations of the unity of diversity³²⁷. Ideas are, therefore, also "methods" because they indicate the path of knowledge in the pursuit of this unity. Ideas are the relationships that thinking puts - and, in this sense, they are positions - to generate the unity of the determinable. Determinations are these specific relationships established by thinking. For this reason, it can be affirmed that all determination is a product of the concept operation

³²⁵ „Daß man „aus sich selbst“ die Erkenntnis hervorhole, hätte keinen Sinn, wenn nicht in dem „Selbst“ etwas mehr gedacht wäre als Bewußtsein überhaupt; wenn nicht darin mitgedacht wäre die Gesetzlichkeit des Bewußtseins, gemäß welcher es das Objekt, nämlich das reine Objekt des Begriffs, selber gestaltet. Die Form der Erkenntnis überhaupt ist Gesetzlichkeit; diese Form aber ist es, welche den Inhalt, den reinen Inhalt der Erkenntnis konstituieret; denn es ist allgemein das Gesetz, welches in der Erkenntnis und für sie den Gegenstand schafft.“ Natorp, P., PILa, p. 28. Natorp, P., PILb, p. 29.

³²⁶ Natorp, P., PILa, p. 150. Natorp, P., PILb, p. 154.

³²⁷ „Das Gesetz als der wahre Inhalt der Wissenschaft, der Grund aller Richtigkeit und damit Güte, als das was jedem, dem Einzelnen und dem Ganzen, seine „Gestalt“, sein Eidos gibt, dies und nichts andres ist das Zentrum, in dem diese ganze bei aller Knappheit der Andeutung so tiefgründige wie weit ausgreifende Betrachtung zusammenhängt. Wir stehen hier schon unmittelbar an der Schwelle der „Idee“. Denn die Idee bedeutet das Gesetz, nichts andres.“ Natorp, P., PILa, p. 48. Natorp, P., PILb, p. 49.

(i.e., of thinking), and the sensible can be defined by opposition as that which the mind must determine, as the determinable. The determination of thinking is a determination by means of concepts and the determination of the concept is a task of thinking. To emphasize this point Natorp makes a slight modification in the second edition of his work on Plato:

Alle Bestimmung also ist vielmehr Leistung des Begriffs. Sogar nur im Hinblick auf die bestimmende Funktion des Begriffs vermochte das Sinnliche charakterisiert zu werden als das noch nicht bestimmte, erst zu bestimmende.“ (PILa, 107).

Alle Bestimmung also ist vielmehr Leistung des Denkens. Sogar nur im Hinblick auf die bestimmende Funktion des Denkens vermochte das Sinnliche charakterisiert zu werden als das noch nicht Bestimmte, erst zu Bestimmende. (PILb, 110).

The determination of thinking is equivalent to the determination of the concept. Natorp emphasizes that the task of thinking is to carry out the forms of connection through concepts. This discovery makes Plato the precursor of critical idealism. He established that thinking creates its own object by creating certain forms of relationships. This conception of thinking makes Platonic philosophy the origin of critical philosophy. Every being is the position of unity of a determination of thinking. Plato warns that thinking cannot go beyond thinking itself. The work of thinking consists in the analysis of its own productions. Every knowable being consists of the positions of thinking³²⁸.

Natorp finds in Plato the germ of his own philosophical proposal. The deduction of categories must be undertaken from the concept of thinking because the concept of thinking is the expression of the form of legality that underlies all particular legality. The deduction will allow showing how each particular position of thinking is carried out on

³²⁸ „Oder will man etwa sagen, Plato sei im Phaedrus von der Überschwänglichkeit der Erhebung des letzten Wissensobjekts über Sein und Erkenntnis wieder zurückgekommen, indem er sich auf die in der Tat von keiner Philosophie ungestraft zu überschreitende letzte Grundrelation von Sein und Erkennen wieder zurückbesonnen habe? Aber der Sinn jener viel getadelten Überschwänglichkeit ist kein anderer als der reine Idealismus Platos; die unbedingte Souveränität des Gesetzes der Methode. Auch nicht ein Logos τῆς λογῆς, Gastm. 211 A) ist die letzte Instanz der Erkenntnis, wohl aber der Logos „selbst“ αὐτὸς ὁ λογῆς, Staat 511B), das Grundgesetz des Logischen, welches alle besonderen Denksetzungen (λογῶν) und in diesen alles besondere Sein erst begründet. Möchte das im Phaedrus vorschweben, so stände er ja damit auf dem Boden des reinen platonischen Idealismus.“ Natorp, P., PILa, p. 82. Natorp, P., PILb, p. 84.

the basis of the legality of thinking in general. All foundation is found in the law and thinking is the general expression of legality. Therefore, thinking is the foundation and beginning of deduction. It was Plato who evidenced this general law of deduction:

Der „voraussetzungsfreie Anfang“, den die Idee des Guten besagt, soll erreicht werden einzig im logischen Rückgang von den relativen Grundsätzen der besonderen konkreten Wissenschaften zu den letzten, völlig reinen Denkgrundlagen, d. i. solchen ursprünglichen, ersten Setzungen des Denkens, aus denen jene, sofern sie gelten sollen, rein deduzierbar sein müssen. Für diesen Rückgang gilt schlechterdings kein andres Gesetz als das des deduktiven Zusammenhangs, desselben, der innerhalb der Wissenschaften herrscht. Hier ist endlich mit einer jede Zweideutigkeit ausschließenden Bestimmtheit beantwortet, wieso die letzte Denkgrundlage nicht $\pi\varsigma$ $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, eine (besondere) Denksetzung sein soll. Es ist nicht $\pi\varsigma$ $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, weil es $\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$ δ $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, nicht eine Setzung, weil es die reine Setzung, das letzte Gesetz der Denksetzung selbst ist, aus welchem alle besonderen Setzungen des Denkens sich müssen herleiten und kraft dieser Herleitung verstehen lassen³²⁹.

For Plato, the idea of the good represents the beginning, since it is the idea that contains the form of legality that supports all particular legality. The legitimacy of particular laws is guaranteed in their adjustment to the general form of the law. The analysis allows discovering in each particular legal system, i.e, the sciences, the principle of this general legality, which in Plato appears represented with the idea of the good. The idea of good is the form of the legality of thinking in general. All being is being for thinking. Therefore, this idea is also the foundation of all being in general. The idea of good represents the principle that governs all legality. Every law (*Gesetz*) is also a positing (*setzen*) but the form of legality itself is the total order required, which is never completely accomplished. This general guiding principle of every particular position of thinking is a regulative idea. This general form of legality does not end in any particular position of thinking. The complete order in a legal system is a task that is required but

³²⁹ Natorp, P., PILa, p. 189. Natorp, P., PILb, p. 194.

never achieved. This form of the law is the ultimate foundation of all laws³³⁰. The starting point of the deduction is the law itself³³¹. Natorp sees in Plato the germ of his conception of thinking. The unity of consciousness grounds how the multiplicity must be brought together. Concepts are these fundamental modes of relationships. A complete exposition of the development of these relationships cannot be achieved, since there is not a closed system of concepts but an eternal development of the operation of thinking in the search for unity. However, it is possible to find the fundamental structure of this operation. The analysis of this development of consciousness makes it possible to find the particular forms of relationships, according to which each specific object of thinking is constituted. These particular functions “are just the different expressions³³² of the pure functions of thinking, each emphasizing a particular aspect of this function”³³².

Starting from this guiding idea, Natorp undertakes the deduction of categories from a conception of thinking conceived as a unity of synthesis. The categories are the expression of the general principle of legality represented in the concept of thinking. They express the structure of being in general as a correlate of the positions of thinking. As we exhibited, this idea is presented *in extenso* for the first time in his study of Platonic philosophy. In the light of these considerations, one must understand Natorp’s assertion in the *Philosophical Propaedeutic*, that the fundamental law of knowledge is the law of synthetic unity. The law of synthetic unity is the foundation of objectivity³³³. The development of thinking occurs in accordance with this form of legality. This starting point guarantees to overcome the heterogeneity between intuition and concepts, as it shows that universal and the particular have the same origin, as they are rooted in the principle of correlation. In what follows, we shall analyze the elements of the process. In the next chapter, we will explain in detail how this construction of objectivity takes place.

³³⁰ Natorp, P., PILa, p. 189. Natorp, P., PILb, p. 196.

³³¹ „Nichts anderes ist man demnach unter der Idee des Guten zu denken berechtigt, als: nicht ein letztes logisches Prinzip, sondern das Prinzip des Logischen selbst und überhaupt, in welchem alle besondere Denksetzung und damit alles besondere Sein — Sein besagt ja nur Setzung des Denkens — zuletzt zu begründen ist; zu begründen nicht als in einem letzten, dem Denken vorausliegenden, vorgedanklichen Sein — nichts ist bündiger abgelehnt als dies —, sondern einzig als in seinem eigenen letzten Gesetz. Denn den „Anfang“ einer Deduktion nennt man ein Gesetz. Das Gesetz ist es allgemein, welches den Gegenstand konstituiert; dieses Gesetz selbst, daß im Gesetz der Gegenstand zu begründen, ist somit übergegenständlich, aucti über allem besonderen Gesetz (λόγος), nicht ein, sondern das Gesetz; woraus zugleich klar wird, inwiefern dies letzte Prinzip sogar über die Erkenntnis der Wissenschaft hinaus ist.“ Natorp, P., PILa, p. 184. Natorp, P., PILb, p. 194.

³³² „Die reinen Denkfunktionen sind sämtlich nur verschiedene Ausdrücke der reinen Denkfunktion, welche je eine besondere Seite an dieser herausheben.“ Natorp, P., PILa, p. 238. Natorp, P., PILb, p. 245.

³³³ Natorp, P., PP, p.24.

3.3. The Elements of the Definition of Thought as Correlation.

3.3.1. The Point of View of the Unity.

As we explained, thinking can be defined as the search for the interconnection. Thinking consists in the search for unity in diversity. Thinking is the activity of “uniting multiplicity in a unity”³³⁴. The main task of thinking is to achieve total unity. In the search for unification, thinking generates partial units from multiplicity. Concepts are these functions of unifying. The task of thinking is the total unity, and the fundamental functions of thinking are the ways in which thinking generates partial units in the search for this complete unity. Thinking determines all the different ways in which multiplicity can come together as it is the general form of gathering. The form of the unifying is the union between unity and multiplicity; that is, the synthesis. Thinking is synthesis and the levels of thinking are the expressions in which synthesis takes place. Thinking is this central point of view of articulation. This unifying pole is the perspective of the reunion. The point of view of the reunion determines the way in which the multiplicity is reunited. Each particular function is only an expression of the general function of thinking. The foundation of knowledge in this unity allows each of the particular expressions of thinking to come together in an articulated whole. The sciences, the factual expressions of thinking, can form a unity thanks to the foundation in this central unity. Scientific thinking can form an articulated whole because it is grounded on the articulating unity of thinking. Each particular science is a specific expression of this central unity. For this reason, each science looks for the specific unity in a determined region, establishing partial units. Total unity is a task for thinking. This task is partially accomplished by each particular science that constitutes the specific concretions of this procedure. The central unity of thinking allows the sciences not to be disintegrated as isolated units but to be articulated in a coherent whole. The laws of each particular area are linked together thanks to thinking as a principle of total unity, as a form of legality. The factual division of the sciences must find its foundation in their common logical origin³³⁵.

³³⁴ «Penser, c’est saisir le multiple dans l’unité». Natorp, P., NTE, p. 344.

³³⁵ Éric Dufour finds in this aspect a difference with respect to Cohen’s approach, for whom the division of the sciences into its different branches would be a fact only accessible a posteriori. Cf. Dufour, E., 2003, p.104.

The law is the concept that gives expression to this unity. In the relationship between unity and multiplicity, the law is the concept that represents the form of articulation. The law is the expression of each specific form of unity. The mode of unity determines the necessary connections between the parts of the multiplicity. The conceptual articulation in the law allows the multiplicity to be organized in certain ways. The determinations of thinking are the ways in which a multiplicity comes together in a peculiar way. The concepts unify the multiplicity of appearances in a unity. For this reason, the concept is the form of both the universal and the particular, since it represents the form of the universal and determines the mode of construction of the particular³³⁶. The concept constructs the universal and the particular, as it is the function for the construction of the individuality. The law is the form that articulates the multiple in each creation of thinking. Synthesis is the general form of legality and each specific knowledge expressed in science seeks the law that governs a particular field; that is, the specific synthesis with which the object of the field in question is constructed³³⁷. For this reason, the understanding is the law of laws, insofar as it is the general form of articulation. An exhibition of the ways in which legality is constructed exhibits both the general form of thinking and the ways in which objectivity is constructed. As a general form of legality, thinking represents the unifying point of laws, and each particular law is the specific articulation between a unity and its multiplicity. Although the law represents the perspective of the union, it also contains multiplicity. In the concept of law, both the unity and the multiplicity are included.

The concepts - the rules of the unifying - determine the way in which the multiplicity is ordered. The concepts represent these laws of unifying that make each of the moments of multiplicity to be united in a certain way. Concepts are the specific modes of the order of the multiplicity that, from the perspective of the unity, is given to thinking. Thinking is generating concepts that, by establishing a peculiar form of unity, also generate the multiplicity that this unity contains. As we shall explain later in detail, the multiplicity of the cases that the concept contains is established at the same time of the generation of the unity. The multiplicity can only be conceived as the multiplicity of certain unity. The concept itself contains the form of the reunion and the cases it

³³⁶ Natorp, P., PILa, p.48; Natorp, P., PILb, p.49.

³³⁷ Natorp, P., USOB, p. 257, 259.

includes. The multiplicity of cases and their unity are joined in the unity of the concept. The concept is the unity of the multiplicity of cases³³⁸.

The assumption of the search for unity is the starting point of the deduction of the concepts of thinking, since it is the necessary presupposition for any conception of thinking in general. The search for a total unity is the minimum concept of thinking, and it is the starting point of the investigation. For this reason, although the synthesis consists of both the unity and the multiplicity, the most paradigmatic expression of thinking is the central unity. The task of philosophical inquiry is to exhibit the ways in which this unity is generated. The path of investigation should show the different fundamental forms of connection with which thinking builds objectivity. The particular sciences will be in charge of showing the specific modes of articulation in units. Philosophy will investigate the fundamental operations with which thinking seeks unity in multiplicity. The total whole will always be the searched unity. However, the central unity of thinking must be assumed as the minimum necessary assumption to think the modes of articulation. As a general form of unification, thinking is the foundation of all unity. In this sense, thinking is the general form of an articulation: the correlation between unity and multiplicity. This ultimate unity from which research must start is not a substrate but an act, the activity of gathering. The understanding is the unity of all unity because it is the form of all forms. The deduction of the levels of thinking will take the form of the unity as a starting point with the aim to exhibit the general laws of unifying, the form of the unity³³⁹.

3.3.2. The Point of View of the Multiplicity.

In contrast to this central unity, multiplicity is the expression of the diversity that must be unified. This multiplicity has a negative and a positive meaning. Positively, multiplicity is what must be brought together to form an objective unity. In this sense, the multiplicity can be considered as given. The multiplicity is given as it is what thinking must unify. Thinking also requires the parts that make up the whole. The multiplicity will be the point of view of these parts that must be related in a unity. Multiplicity is a necessary moment for the operation of thinking. However, multiplicity cannot be thought as merely given. One should explain how it is constructed. The diversity given is actually originally

³³⁸ „Der Begriff ist, wie seit dem Meno feststeht, die Einheit der Mannigfaltigkeit vorkommender Fälle.“ Natorp, P., PILa, p. 139 . Natorp, P., PILb, p. 143.

³³⁹ Natorp, P., PILa, p. 150. Natorp, P., PILb, p. 154.

produced by thinking. This multiplicity is also a product of thinking. At a certain stage, it is considered as an element ready to be reunited in a superior unity. The new units can be taken as elements that together with other units make up new multiplicities that must be brought together. To consider multiplicity as given means to take it as a relative moment in the process of thinking. This is the positive sense of the multiplicity. However, the multiplicity can be negatively considered. Negatively, multiplicity represents the limitation of thinking. For this reason, the sensible is defined as the ultimate multiplicity, since it represents 'the other' with respect to the unity required by thinking. Multiplicity is the negation of the absolute character of thinking. As long as multiplicity is the negative moment with respect to the unity required by thinking, it can be said that thinking has an alterity. Regarding the unity demanded by thinking, multiplicity is presented as that which must be brought together. In this sense, multiplicity is constituted in the negation of the absolute character of thinking. Multiplicity is the expression that this unity is always sought but never actually achieved. This point represents a manifest distance from absolute idealism. For critical idealism, the multiplicity requires a form of reunion that only thinking can provide. In this context, the parts of multiplicity are not isolated elements that are brought together by a subsequent action. Moments of multiplicity arise from a creative act of thinking and concomitantly with their peculiar modes of connection. There is not a juxtaposition but a legal concatenation that unites each of these moments in certain forms. Therefore, the relationship between each of the elements of the multiplicity is always determined by the concept, which is the determined form of the unifying.

Multiplicity is that which must be determined by thinking, which is still indeterminate, and which thinking demands to determine in the search for unity. In this sense, multiplicity can be defined as the determinable. From the point of view of the 'periphery', the multiplicity must be brought together in a common unity. The moment of conception of multiplicity as given will be overcome when this instance is proved to be a result of the process of thinking. Multiplicity turns out to be another determination of the concept, whose constitution is also the result of a task of thinking. The moment of externalization of thinking in multiplicity can be taken separately in a conceptual analysis. However, it should be noted that this moment of diversity is also a product of thinking. The multiplicity considered as given is a relative moment that must be overcome. It must be shown the origin of this multiplicity in thinking itself. Multiplicity has its origin in thinking. Although Kant was able to identify in this synthetic unity the

most fundamental mark of thinking, he did not take this characterization of thinking radically enough because he presupposed a multiplicity that thinking only had to gather but could never produce. For Kant, the multiplicity is given in intuition. For this reason, in the Kantian conception, the last elements seem to be given in advance, before knowledge. According to the Kantian conception, thinking can produce the forms of the connection, but the multiplicity must be provided by a faculty independent from thinking. The understanding is capable of creating concepts, but it depends on intuition because the intuition provides the multiplicity to be united. For thinking to be able to refer to objects, it requires a capacity that it does not have: to provide the terms of the connection. In the Kantian proposal, the terms are given independently of the relation.

Kant argues that to refer to objects, thinking must have a multiplicity that must be given by intuition. The multiplicity is the element provided by the sensibility. In contrast, the concept is the function of connection. The concept can never be given but is always spontaneously produced. The multiplicity is given in intuition, the function of unity is a product of the understanding. Unity is the contribution of understanding, the multiplicity of sensibility. As we observed in Chapter I, according to the Kantian conception, thinking cannot by itself produce the multiplicity that must unify. Intuition must provide the multiplicity. The multiplicity is always given to the understanding. For Natorp, there can be no extrinsic starting point to thinking. Multiplicity requires a determination to become a set of elements that must be brought together, and its production cannot occur independently of the act of thinking³⁴⁰. The production of the multiplicity requires a conceptual determination and cannot take place without it. Natorp argues:

Allerdings stumpft Kant selbst die Schärfe dieser radikal idealistischen Einsicht wieder ab, wenn er den Urakt der Synthesis beschreibt als die „Handlung, verschiedene Vorstellungen zueinander hinzuzutun“ und „ihr Mannigfaltiges“ zu einer Erkenntnis zu begreifen. Danach scheinen die letzten Elemente, in der fragwürdigen Gestalt von „Vorstellungen“, doch wieder vor der Erkenntnis, selbst vor dem Urakt des Erkennens, dem Akte der Synthesis, voraus gegeben sein zu sollen. Aber hier ist nun Kant sehr leicht aus seinen eigenen Voraussetzungen zu korrigieren. Man braucht nur

³⁴⁰ „Allzu unbefangen sprach Kant von einem Mannigfaltigen der Sinnlichkeit a priori, welches die transzendente Logik als Stoff „vor sich liegen“ habe, das aber noch vom Denken „auf gewisse Weise durchgegangen, aufgenommen und verbunden zu werden“ nötig habe, wenn daraus Erkenntnis werden solle“ Natorp, P., LGEW, p. 40.

zu fragen: sollen diese Elemente vor dem Grundakt der Synthesis voraus einen „gewissen Inhalt“ schon haben oder nicht? Aber die Synthesis soll ja vielmehr das sein, was sie „zu einem gewissen Inhalte erst vereinigt“. Also waren sie vordem — Vorstellungen zwar, aber ohne gewissen Inhalt? Vorstellungen, in denen — nichts Bestimmtes vorgestellt war? In der Tat darin liegt: nichts Bestimmtes. Die Bestimmtheit des „Was“, das ist genau, was der Urakt der Erkenntnis als Akt des Bestimmens erst zu erbringen hat³⁴¹.

The risk of the Kantian proposal consists in assuming that there is certain multiplicity that is there ready to be gathered into a unity. It could seem as if there were representations preexisting the action of synthesis. On the contrary, neither the unity of the concept preexists the multiplicity, nor the multiplicity exists before the generated unity of the concept. The unity of the concept and the multiplicity arise at the same time.

3.3.3. The Point of View of the Relationship between Unity and Multiplicity.

The process of thinking includes both moments, unity and multiplicity. Therefore, although thinking consists in the search for unity, it must be defined as synthesis or correlation. The synthesis involves both the articulating unit and the multiplicity that is articulated. Unity and multiplicity are two moments of the same act.

To express the relationship between unity and multiplicity, Natorp uses the analogy of a circle. Unity is the point of view of the center, while multiplicity is the periphery. Just as the circle is composed of both moments, thinking also requires for its formation a central unity that determines the shape of the periphery, and the periphery that gives expression to the unity. The origin and the originated arise concomitantly. As in the circle, the center cannot exist without the periphery, and the periphery cannot exist without the center. However, the particular shape that the circle takes is determined by the primitive force of the central unity³⁴². Multiplicity is the expression of the

³⁴¹ Natorp, P., LGEW, p. 46.

³⁴² „Fragt man auch, ob im Kreis das Zentrum für die Peripherie oder die Peripherie für das Zentrum sei? Für Plato ist das Letzte gewiß nicht das „All“, in seiner Zerstreuung in die „Andersheit“, sondern die Einheit der vom Zentrum her lenkenden und bestimmenden Urkraft. Dabei hat man sich aber das „Zentrum“ nicht als leeren Mittelpunkt, sondern als zentrale Kraft, ganz im Ganzen und ganz in jedem Teil, lebendig schöpferisch das All durchwaltend und eben zum Ganzen zusammenschließend zu denken.“ Natorp, P., PILb, p.512.

disgregation of thinking in the process of concept formation. Thinking is instantiated in particular ways. Understanding the origin of this multiplicity implies a task of redirecting it to the origin that created it. This mode of relationship between the center and the periphery determines the path of philosophical inquiry. Returning to the analogy of the circle, Natorp observes that if we consider the whole of knowledge as a circle, the particular sciences go from the center to the periphery while philosophy goes from the periphery to the center³⁴³. The multiplicity in which knowledge branches out is the proper field of particular sciences, which studies the peculiarity of each region of knowledge. On the contrary, philosophy takes as its starting point the clarification of knowledge, but its objective is to find the center that originates the periphery. Natorp observes, center and periphery, even when expressed as opposite directions, culminate corresponding, since they are only two directions of the same path. However, as a center of origin, philosophy guarantees the unity of knowledge. Thus, philosophy expands as much as the region of scientific knowledge expands. The logical procedure of thinking is expressed in a circle in which the center and the periphery are co-implicated. However, it is the center that guides and determines the periphery. This center should not be conceived as a mere empty midpoint but rather is the origin of the periphery, its law of formation³⁴⁴. Certainly, the center cannot exist as an independent part. On the contrary, in the connection between unity and multiplicity, there is no pre-eminence of one moment over the other. The relationship is original, while thinking about the moment of unity and the moment of diversity is ulterior, and only a result of a process of abstraction. What unites and what is reunited are only two poles of the correlation that is the origin. Neither the multiplicity can be conceived if it is not from the perspective of the unity nor the unity can be thought without the multiplicity that it brings together, since to be a unity is to be the reunion of a multiplicity, and to be a multiplicity is to be the plurality that is reunited in a unity. There are no independent parts that can subsist one without the other but a whole whose parts can be isolated to analyze them separately. In fact, Natorp claims that the whole-part relationship is derived from correlation. Thinking includes both moments: multiplicity and unity since thinking in general is the method of uniting a multiplicity³⁴⁵. Thinking is the path of reunion and separation that contains both the part and the whole.

³⁴³ Natorp, P., PIP, p.3.

³⁴⁴ „Dabei hat man sich aber das „Zentrum“ nicht als leeren Mittelpunkt, sondern als zentrale Kraft, ganz im Ganzen und ganz in jedem Teil, lebendig schöpferisch das All durchwaltend und eben zum Ganzen zusammenschließend zu denken.“ Natorp, P., PILb, p. 512.

³⁴⁵ Natorp, PILb, p. 238.

The moments of correlation are relative. A multiplicity can be considered as a unity in a later instance of thinking, and a unity can be considered as a component of a multiplicity. The unity brings together the multiplicity, but the units can be considered from a higher point of view as new multiplicities that must be reunited in a unity. Multiplicity and unity are relative moments in the process of thinking. Kant's mistake was to take these relative moments as absolute moments³⁴⁶. Kant considered this instance of thinking as an isolated part and not as what it is: a point of view of the operation of thinking. However, it is also a mistake to make the moment of unity an absolute instance. Unity is also a perspective on which it is possible to pause to consider and analyze each moment separately. This unity is possible only as a unity of multiplicity and this unity itself may also be considered as part of a multiplicity later in the development of thinking. For this reason, the thesis of the Transcendental Aesthetic must be abandoned. In a genuine idealism there is no place for a given matter³⁴⁷. If Kant's mistake in the Aesthetic was to absolutize the moment of multiplicity, Cohen's mistake was to make unity an absolute moment³⁴⁸. Neither Kant nor Cohen realized that the only absolute moment is the process, each moment of rest is relative. The elements of the correlation arise simultaneously. They are two necessary moments. There is no priority of one over the other. Neither the multiplicity can be thought without unity, nor the unity without multiplicity. Against Kant, Natorp argues that multiplicity is not an independent part of unity. The multiplicity arises concomitantly with the unity. Conversely, against Cohen, Natorp argues that multiplicity cannot be completely reduced to unity of thinking, Multiplicity is a necessary moment in the operation of thinking. As reflected in the analogy of the circle, the center and the periphery arise concomitantly.

In this relationship between unity and multiplicity, the object is created. The modes of unity of the multiplicity determine the possible objects of experience. The object is the particularity that thinking achieves in the process of concept formation by combining multiplicity. Therefore, thinking, as a general form of the connection, is also

³⁴⁶ Natorp, P., LGEW, p. 46.

³⁴⁷ Natorp considers that Kant recognized this problem, so he reformulated the theory of the sensibility of the Transcendental Aesthetic in the Transcendental Logic. In the Transcendental Logic, Kant corrected the results of the Aesthetic. For this reason, this required correction of the Kantian system is at certain point self-correction. Natorp states: „Das allein ist reiner Idealismus. Es hieße gerade das Tiefste der Vernunftkritik preisgeben, wenn man diese radikale Berichtigung, die im Kern nach als Selbstberichtigung in KANT bereits vorliegt, nicht aufnehmen und rein durchführen würde, bloß um die längst unhaltbar gewordenen, aus der Inaugural-Dissertation von 1770 (d. h. einer noch halb, ja mehr als halb dogmatischen Position) stehen gebliebenen Bestimmungen der transzendentalen Ästhetik um jeden Preis zu retten“. Natorp, P., KMS, pp. 204 ss.

³⁴⁸ Cf. Natorp, LGEW, pp. 28ss.

the foundation of the object as the foundation of all objectivity. The object is formed in the connection between the unity and the multiplicity. The object is the concretion of this relation. For this reason, thinking, defined as synthesis or as correlation, involves both moments: unity and multiplicity. Thinking expresses the general relationship of multiplicity with a unity, it is the form of the connection between the unity and the multiplicity. The definition of thinking as correlation emphasizes the necessity to think of an articulating unity that expresses the relation of multiplicity to the central unity³⁴⁹. In this relationship, thinking builds objectivity in peculiar ways of connection. The concept determines the form of the unification and thus generates a peculiar mode of order. Multiplicity is determined by the concept, but it also allows the concept to have expression. Thinking is primarily oriented towards concepts because it seeks to discover the peculiar modes of connections. Therefore, the moment of the concept formation and the moment of intuition are just relative instances in the process of thinking.

3.3.4. The Preeminence of Correlation.

Natorp called this principle of correlation the principle of synthetic unity to show the connection of this definition of thinking with Kant's concept of synthetic unity. Similarly, Natorp relates his correlation principle to Cohen's principle of origin³⁵⁰. Against Cohen, Natorp argues that the structural elements of the judgment of origin must be revealed by analyzing each of the logical moments in which the judgment unfolds. These structural elements are the functions of judgment, the specificity of each particular function. The correlation is the origin. The origin is the foundation of every relationship and, also, the total reunion of all the logical moments of thinking. The origin structures the relation of the moments of the totality, but this origin can only be exhibited once these logical moments have been revealed. This process of revelation of thinking in its expressions is an infinite task. As a structuring unity, the judgment of origin determines the general structure of all judgment, therefore it is the *judgment of the judgment*. To argue in this direction, Natorp once again takes the analogy of the center and the periphery. The origin would be the center of the circle, which determines the order of the periphery. However, the periphery, the originated, must not be separated from the origin, but it arises

³⁴⁹ Natorp, P., QQ, p.7.

³⁵⁰ Natorp, P., LGEW, p. 28ss.

concomitantly. The origin cannot be separated from what it originates. The originated refers to and points to the origin. In this sense, it also constitutes a point of reference for thinking. The thinking process is an infinite progress that surpasses every partial stop. The order of the fundamental elements of thinking must be understood in a 'concentric' way, in such a way that the starting position of the original judgment becomes a center position. This relationship between center and periphery, which allows expressing the correlation of orientations, contains the totality of the principles of judgment, which represent the whole of logic. In this way, Natorp corrects Cohen's proposal in the same way that he corrected the Kantian. Both Kant's principle of synthetic unity and Cohen's judgment of origin are replaced by the definition of thinking as correlation. It is not convenient, Natorp observes, to introduce the notion of judgment together with the definition of the concept of thinking, as it could lead to the confusion that judgment can be understood independently of the act of thinking. On the contrary, the judgment of origin is already a judgment. The construction of the judgment can only take place through the act of thinking, that enables the connection between union and separation. This original action of thinking is the condition of possibility for all judgment. This conception of thinking as correlation is the 'presupposition free of presuppositions' which, under the established restrictions, can take the name of 'synthetic unit' or 'origin'.

The act of thinking must provide both the mode of unification and the unified terms. It contains both the law of the connection and the multiplicity. Natorp will show, as we shall see, that thinking produces the unity and the multiplicity by its own means. It generates both: the cases and the law that produces them. The act of correlation contains the original unity of the laws that, each one in its specificity, unifies multiplicity. For this reason, thinking is defined as a correlation of those two moments required by all determination: separation and union. Every particular rule of the connection will be regulated by this highest form of union. Thinking is both separation and union. The essence of thinking is determined by the relation between these two moments. Nothing can be separated if it was not united. Conversely, the possibility of all reunion requires some sort of separation. Therefore, correlation is required as the highest form of connection. Natorp argues:

Darum hat es jedoch mit der „Einheit eines Mannigfaltigen“ als der Urform der Bestimmung übrigens seine volle Richtigkeit; Denken ist

Vereinigung, sagten wir; dann aber zugleich Sonderung; denn wo nicht ein Mehreres, also die Möglichkeit einer Sonderung, da bestände auch nicht die Möglichkeit einer Vereinigung. Aber dies darf nun nicht so verstanden werden, daß das Mannigfaltige als solches gegeben und nur die Einheit dieses Mannigfaltigen durchs Denken erst hineinzubringen wäre; sondern vielmehr so, daß in jedem Urakte des Denkens, als Akt der Bestimmung, ein X sich bestimmt als Eines und doch Mannigfaltiges, Einheit eines Mannigfaltigen, Mannigfaltiges einer Einheit. Denn diese, wie überhaupt alle — unter diesen noch sehr unbestimmten, unsicheren, allem Folgenden eigentlich vorgreifen- den Hauptbenennungen des Einen und Mannigfaltigen sich ergenden — Grundmomente des Denkens werden sich in gleicher Weise zueinander streng korrelativ erweisen³⁵¹.

The analysis of this fundamental correlation of separation and unification will show that the multiplicity that thinking faces is not given in the Kantian sense. Multiplicity is not provided by an independent faculty. It is not given to the understanding. The moment of multiplicity is not indebted to a principle other than thinking itself. In a single act, both the unity and the separation are originated. This act is the correlation. The course of the investigation must show that multiplicity and unity are different aspects of a single act. Natorp says:

Damit aber entfällt nun ganz die Frage nach einem dem Denken und zu denken „Gegebenen“. Es kann überhaupt nicht mit Sinn gefragt werden, was das Nichtgedachte, Nichterkannte vor seinem Gedacht- oder Erkenntwerden sei. Es gibt für das Denken kein Sein, das nicht im Denken selbst gesetzt würde. Denken heißt nichts anders als: setzen, daß etwas sei; und was außerdem und vordem dies Sein — sei, ist eine Frage, die überhaupt keinen angebaren Sinn hat³⁵².

³⁵¹ Natorp, P., LGEW, p. 47.

³⁵² Natorp, P., LGEW, p. 48.

Thus, the definition of thinking as correlation results in the clarified sense of Kant's synthetic unity. This definition of thinking as correlation is the most appropriate definition of Kant's concept of synthetic unity. It is the exhibition that thinking can produce the multiplicity and the unity at the same time. The conceptual unity does not depend on a multiplicity externally given. On the contrary, the exhibition of the operation of the correlation shows that the conceptual unity is produced with the multiplicity. We will analyze the specificity of this process in chapter 4.

The process of knowledge can be originally conceived as this development of the correlation. Analysis can only take place once the synthesis has been accomplished. The objective is to analyze each moment in particular without losing sight of the systematic interconnection. The analysis abstracts the synthetical process to take each creation of thinking as if it were a separate element, as a product. This is not a problem for pragmatical purposes, if we are to study a particular field of knowledge. However, it must be taken into account that each field of knowledge is the product of the spontaneity of thinking. The analysis reveals the process involved in the creation of the field of knowledge that is under consideration. Only in this sense the analysis is amplifying. The moments of synthesis can only be understood and revealed through analysis. The analysis is possible by an abstraction in which each element is taken in isolation. Abstraction is a detachment from correlation. In the analytical instance, each moment is conceived in isolation through a process of abstraction. However, it must be borne in mind that the analysis of a stage of knowledge is only possible because this stage is founded on an original act of synthesis. The analytical moment is possible by virtue of an abstraction of thinking that allows each logical moment to be considered separately. Abstraction is a process of reflection in which each moment is considered in isolation with the aim of exposing new interconnections. In this sense, the analysis also represents progression. Natorp uses an analogy introduced by Moses Mendelssohn to explain this point. The analysis operates like the microscope. The microscope enlarges the images allowing the observer a closer view. The microscope does not introduce anything new. In this sense, the analysis reveals something, but it does not incorporate new features. Natorp explains:

Analyse, Abstraktion wird dann Herauslösung aus dem korrelativen Zusammenhang, der damit aber nicht etwa zunichte gemacht, sondern nur zum Zweck der Schritt um Schritt vorgehenden Betrachtung der

Einzelmomente beiseite gesetzt wird, schließlich nur, damit immer neue Zusammenhänge auch innerhalb jedes Einzelgliedes des für diesmal außer Betracht gelassenen zutage treten. So erklärt sich die Meinung, daß gerade die Analyse erweiternd sei. Mendelssohns Gleichnis ließe sich auch so deuten: das Mikroskop gerade erweitert und gibt Neues zu erkennen. So ist also wirklich alles Zusammenhang, also Synthese, und verbleibt doch und eben damit der Analyse ihr nicht minder umfassendes Recht, aber nur als einem Momente der Synthese selbst, die in Wahrheit die Analyse vollständig mitumfaßt³⁵³.

The analysis is a moment dependent on the synthesis. The analysis reveals elements that are already synthetically constructed. In this sense, the synthesis is the *ratio essendi* and the analysis the *ratio cognoscendi*. The synthesis is the *ratio essendi* because it is the process that creates the objectivity. The analysis is the *ratio cognoscendi* because one should take the objectivity as a point of departure to reveal the synthesis involved in the creation of the considered field of knowledge. For this reason, the correlation involves both moments: synthesis and analysis. However, it must be taken into account that the division is always based on the unity of origin, the unit of the correlation. The function of analysis is to discover the synthesis that serves as its foundation. Each of the logical moments must be revealed in order to discover the process of synthesis that created them. The exposition of each logical constituent in isolation aims to discover the grounding unity.

3.4. Concept and Judgment.

According to Natorp, concepts and judgments emerge concomitantly as expressions of the synthetic unity. Correlation implies the necessity to think the unity and multiplicity contained in a single moment. The general expression of this requirement is the concept. The concept is the point of view from which it is possible to consider a multiplicity in a unitary way. The concept is the point of view of the unity. Natorp states:

³⁵³ Natorp, P., LGEW, p. 27.

Begriff bedeutet eine Einheit der Betrachtung, welche besteht für eine Vielheit zu betrachtender Objekte, mithin eine Einheit des Mannigfaltigen, eine Identität des zugleich zu unterscheidenden, d. i. synthetische Einheit.³⁵⁴.

The concept is the expression of the synthetic unity of thinking. Each particular specification of thinking has a conceptual form. Thinking is ‘conceptualizing’. The concept is not only the perspective of unity, but it contains both the one and the multiplicity. The extension of the concept is the perspective of multiplicity while its intention is the perspective of unity. The concept can be defined as unity of multiplicity. The concept is a synonym for synthetic unity. The general form of the concept is: $x_1, x_2, x_3, \dots = a$. The same point of view (a) contains the multiplicity of moments (x_1, x_2, x_3). The multiplicity is distinguished -distinction expressed with the subscripts- while being at the same time identified by a common element, the identification under the mark ‘ a ’. Multiplicity is only determined in view of the identity established in the concept that determines it. The concept limits the perspective from which to consider multiplicity. Multiplicity is not considered arbitrarily, but from a perspective that restricts the point of view of consideration. Each element of the multiplicity is differentiated since each of them is identified with each other only by this unity of perspective. This multiplicity is identified as a multiplicity thanks to the unity established by the concept. The components of multiplicity are identical by virtue of their belonging to a common perspective, and they are at the same time distinguished as differentiated components of this point of view, which is the concept.

The concepts are connected through judgments. In the judgment “ x is A ”, an element of the multiplicity is the subject of the judgment, and the unity of the multiplicity its predicate. The predicate determines the common elements of certain multiplicity. The copula establishes the relationship between the multiplicity and a certain concept that makes multiplicity a multiplicity. Through the copula, the indeterminate multiplicity turns into a determined multiplicity. Therefore, the relationship expressed in the judgment is a determination of the indeterminate. The copula is the expression of the connection between the unity of the point of view delimited by the concept and the multiplicity that the concept contains by virtue of this delimitation. The ‘is’ expresses the relationship

³⁵⁴ Natorp, P., PP., p. 13.

between the unity of the concept and the multiplicity conceived under it. This relationship established through the copula is not an identifying relationship. The judgment “a is P” does not generate an identification between the subject (a) and its predicate (P). The copula expresses the relationship between the unity of the concept and the multiplicity contained in it. The copula indicates the generation of a determination. The copula does not establish an identification between the components of the multiplicity with the unity that articulates it, but rather affirms the effectuation of a determination. The judgment connects the terms of a relationship with an articulating unity. In this relationship, the terms are united and distinguished at the same time. Identification and separation are the conditions of possibility for thinking to generate the link ‘s is P’. This connection implies the possibility of distinguishing one term from the other and unifying them in a unity. The judgment ‘s is P’ is only possible through this correlation between unity and separation. The terms are distinguished because stating that s is P means stating that s is different from P. At the same time, the copula unites one element with the other in a peculiar way. Unification takes place through the copula (‘is’), through the specific reunion between the subject and the predicate. The fundamental correlation is this action of separating and unifying. The moments in the concept and in the judgment are the particularization of this general characterization.

The concept and the judgment have the same form since both are expressions of the synthetic unit. The concept is not a primitive element with respect to the judgment. The judgment is not a unification of concepts given before the connection. The concept is not the simple element of the judgment; that is to say, “the concept cannot be put as a foundation, as the last element, which precedes the judgment”³⁵⁵. Judgment and concept arise concomitantly. Through the judgment the relationship between the unity of the concept and the multiplicity that the concept determines is affirmed. The analysis of the judgment exhibits the form of connection of the concept. The judgment cannot be characterized as a connection of two concepts that are prior to it. Natorp insists on the preeminence of the relationship over the *relata*. Thinking is the articulating unity and the terms that it puts together are nothing outside this relationship. This mode of relationship also applies to judgment. In the judgment, both the form of the relationship and the concepts that the relationship contains take place together; that is, the concept arises in the judgment. The act of correlating produces both the concept and the judgment

³⁵⁵ Natorp, P, L., p. 12.

simultaneously. This action of thinking allows concepts and judgments to emerge simultaneously. Natorp will show that the table of concepts and the table of judgments arise simultaneously from a single principle. As we observed previously, this moment is methodologically different from Kant's proposal, since in the Kantian system, the discovery of the categories is carried out from the analysis of the logical functions of the judgment. On the contrary, Natorp showed that judgment and concept arise at the same time. The forms of concepts and judgments arise from an analysis of the essence of thinking as a correlation. This operation will be the only way to satisfy the demand for systematicity. Natorp argues against Kant:

Aber indem nun Kant sich dieser Wegleitung anvertraute, erwies sich, daß er die überlieferten Einteilungen sich erst mannigfach zurechtrücken mußte, um das System der Grundleistungen der synthetischen Einheit (denn das sollten seine Kategorien und Grundsätze sein) daraus zu erhalten. Damit wird aber dieser ganze Weg schlüpfrig und ungewiß. Wir können daher selbst einem Kant auf diesen Weg nicht folgen, zumal das Vertrauen zur logischen Überlieferung der Jahrtausende, das in Kants Zeit noch leidlich feststand, seitdem mehr und mehr erschüttert ist, und vor allem das jetzt offen zutage liegt, daß die wirkliche, schöpferische Logik, nämlich die der Wissenschaften, eine weit andere ist und in die überlieferten Formen sich schon längst nicht mehr pressen läßt³⁵⁶.

In Natorp's deduction, the starting point is this definition of thinking as correlation. Unlike the Kantian conception in which the table of concepts results from the table of judgments, here the leading thread is the study of the structure of thinking itself, which will be revealed as the foundation of the table of concepts and of the

³⁵⁶ Natorp, P., LGEW, p. 43. And Natorp argues in the same line two years later: „Nach dem allen aber bleibt eine gewichtige Forderung noch zu stellen, ohne deren Erfüllung die transzendente Methode noch immer nicht zu ihrer vollen Konsequenz gelangen würde. Bei Kant scheinen neben den Anschauungsformen auch die reinen Denkfunktionen» in Gestalt der, mindestens starkem Anschein nach, nur historisch aufgenommenen Urteils- und Kategorieentafel, als starre Gegebenheiten, obgleich des Denkens, stehen zu bleiben. Zwar hat Kant das „System“ der Kategorien „nach einem Prinzip“, ausdrücklich mit dem Anspruch der Vollständigkeit, zu bestimmen geglaubt; aber er verläßt sich dabei, wie heute wohl von keiner Seite mehr bestritten wird, allzu unbedenklich auf die „fertige Arbeit“ der Logiker, an der er nur einzelne Mängel auszubessern nötig findet; während schon die gänzlich neue Rolle, die er den Kategorien zuweist, eine radikale Neubegründung, statt solcher blossen Flickarbeit, gefordert hätte.“ Natorp, P., KMS, p. 209.

judgments. The table of judgments and the table of concepts arise simultaneously. The starting point in the concept of thinking as correlation is the only way to guarantee the systematic construction of the deduction. As we previously exhibited, Kant and Natorp share this methodological prescription. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant defines the concept of system as follows:

Unter der Regierung der Vernunft dürfen unsere Erkenntnisse überhaupt keine Rhapsodie, sondern sie müssen ein System ausmachen, in welchem sie allein die wesentlichen Zwecke derselben unterstützen und befördern können. Ich verstehe aber unter einem Systeme die Einheit der mannigfaltigen Erkenntnisse unter einer Idee. Diese ist der Vernunftbegriff von der Form eines Ganzen, so fern durch denselben der Umfang des Mannigfaltigen sowohl, als die Stelle der Theile untereinander a priori bestimmt wird. Der scientifiche Vernunftbegriff enthält also den Zweck und die Form des Ganzen, das mit demselben congruirt. Die Einheit des Zwecks, worauf sich alle Theile und in der Idee desselben auch unter einander beziehen, macht, daß ein jeder Theil bei der Kenntniß der übrigen vermißt werden kann, und keine zufällige Hinzusetzung, oder unbestimmte Größe der Vollkommenheit, die nicht ihre a priori bestimmte Grenzen habe, stattfindet³⁵⁷.

Our knowledge constitutes a system. To discover its fundamental laws, one must depart from the fact that knowledge operates as an articulated whole. The fundamental laws of knowledge must be discovered from a guiding principle, which reflects the fundamental operation of thinking. Kant aimed to develop such a task when he investigated the definition of thinking as synthesis. However, Natorp considers that Kant was not consistent enough in this direction. In the Kantian system, the table of concepts is discovered by reference to the table of judgments. Kant presupposes this table of judgments to obtain from there the table of concepts. According to Natorp, Kant would have recognized the idea of totality as the starting point of the metaphysical deduction. In particular, in the development of the concept of apperception, Kant saw the necessity to take the concept of thinking as a starting point to unfold the forms of the

³⁵⁷ Kant, I., *KrV*, B 860.

connection. However, he used as a leading thread the table of judgments. For Natorp, the study of the basic notion of the correlation is the foundation of both tables, the table of concepts and the table of judgments. Natorp rejects that thinking can take a moment extrinsic to itself to analyze its rationality. The table of the judgments of the logic of the time is an unsatisfactory starting point. Thinking cannot start from anything other than itself to ground knowledge. The place of Kant's table of judgments is occupied by the analysis of the fundamental form of thinking. This analysis will reveal the functions of both the table of concepts and the table of judgments. As we have seen, Kant started from given 'data' from which he deduced the table of categories. On the contrary, for Natorp, the only way to guarantee the systematic nature of the deduction is to start from the definition of thinking as correlation. Starting from an extrinsic element limits the possibility of building thinking as a system. Even considered the same Kantian definition of system, an extrinsic starting point prevents thinking from reaching this peculiar mode of integration. According to Natorp, the Kantian table of categories is not a proper system because it is not a whole ordered according to an idea. The synthetic unity would be the idea that orders the whole of the categories in a system. The synthetic unity determines *a priori* both the extension of the multiple -in this case, it is an infinite extension- and the respective place of the parts. The only way in which thinking can maintain its systematic character is not by starting from anything extrinsic to itself but by analyzing its essence. As we exhibited, Natorp takes Kant's own concept of system. Kant uncritically takes the table of judgments accepted at the time. Therefore, he cannot satisfy the requirement of a system that allows to determine *a priori* the way in which each moment of thinking is connected to all others. These forms will determine the path that thinking follows to pass from one determination to another determination in a systematic way. That is to say, the foundation of the forms of thinking in the concept of synthetic unity allows satisfying the Kantian system requirement. This foundation will not be properly a deduction, since a specific form of thinking is not determined but rather an operation that indicates the way in which thinking develops and thus builds the path of knowledge.

Conclusion

As we studied in Chapter 2, Natorp highlighted the inadequacy of the conception of psychologism and logicism to ground knowledge. He showed that in these currents, there

underlies a dogmatic approach, as they accept an element that thought cannot produce but that must be given to it. None of the philosophical systems of the time were capable of solving the problem raised by Kant: how can thought legitimately represent the object? This problem, as we exhibited in Chapter 1, can be translated in terms of the relation between intuitive and conceptual representations. Psychologism and logicism misunderstood the relationship between intuitions and concepts based on methodological errors. After showing that the philosophical systems were incapable of explaining the relation between intuition and concepts, Natorp has to present his own proposal. He must exhibit the way in which affirmatively knowledge can be grounded. More specifically, he must expose how thought is capable of creating its object by its own means. In other words, Natorp argues that the conceptual representation and the intuitive do not oppose but they are different aspects of the same process.

As we studied in this chapter, for Natorp, the only way to answer the central question of knowledge - on what foundation rests the relationship of our representations with the objects - is to study the structural elements of thinking. So as to argue in this direction, we exhibited, Natorp starts with a reconsideration of the task of philosophy. According to him, an analysis of the essence of thinking allows: a) to ensure the systematic nature of thought and, then, b) to overcome the dualism between intuition and concepts. The deduction of categories will be the exhibition of the systematic character of thought in the construction of objectivity. Natorp considers that the first germ of the idea of a systematic deduction of the categories can be found in the philosophy of Rene Descartes. The author of the *Meditations* was the first to notice that a system of the fundamental functions of thinking should be developed. These functions will be the different expressions of the unity of thought. The unity of thought is manifested in a coherent system. As we exhibited, the requirement to find such a system is rooted in the essence of philosophy. The task of philosophy demands seeking this system.

In Chapter 2, we showed that psychologism and logicism misunderstood the method that philosophy should employ. Due to these methodological mistakes, these currents could not give a satisfactory answer to the problem raised by Kant. In this chapter, we exhibited that Natorp's proposal is grounded on his definition of the method of philosophy. Natorp argues that the task of philosophy demands a peculiar method. Following this method will guarantee to overcome the separation between intuition and conceptual representations. We exhibited that Natorp proceeds from an unclear definition of thinking to the understanding of the structural elements of objectivity. We analyzed

the arguments that lead Natorp to conclude that thought defined as correlation must be the starting point of philosophical research. The internal coherence of the system can only be guaranteed by the deductive method. The starting point in the definition of thought as correlation is the way to ensure the overcoming of the dualism between intuition and concepts. We exhibited that thought is able to build its cases as instantiations of its own acts. This will be the first step to prove that the universality of the concept does not oppose to the concreteness of the object. On the contrary, the universality of the concept and the concreteness of the intuition are two aspects of the same process. In the following chapter, we expect to reconstruct the specific nature of this process. In chapter 4, we will analyse the Natorpian deduction of the categories, which constitutes the specific way this construction of the thinking takes place.