

Natural Beauty and Distance from Nature: Notes on Ethics and Aesthetics / *Beleza natural e afastamento da natureza: apontamentos sobre ética e estética*

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ABSTRACT

The present article approaches the problem of natural beauty in relation to the spheres of ethics and aesthetics. We develop a theoretical-bibliographic study based on the immanent reading of Chapter 15 of *Aesthetics: The Specificity of the Aesthetic* by Georg Lukács, in which the division of labor is taken as basis to the development of individuals and society. This issue brings forth the question: Do natural experiences have an aesthetic character, that is, how is the relationship between natural beauty and artistic beauty established? In conclusion, the experiences between humanity and natural environment are indeed near the realm of pleasure; moreover, although they are not aesthetic in nature and do not become a guide of ethical behavior, they are important for the development of the private personality of the social being.

KEYWORDS: Natural beauty; Ethics; Aesthetics; Art; Lukács

RESUMO

O artigo tematiza a problemática da beleza natural em relação às esferas da ética e da estética. Opta-se por um estudo de caráter teórico-bibliográfico que se baseia na leitura imanente do capítulo 15 do livro Estética: a peculiaridade de lo estético, de Georg Lukács, que trata a divisão social do trabalho como base para o desenvolvimento dos indivíduos e da sociedade. A problemática analisada aborda a seguinte questão: as vivências naturais têm ou não um caráter estético, ou seja, como se dá a relação entre a beleza natural e o belo artístico? Infere-se que a base das experiências entre a humanidade e o meio natural, com efeito, estão aproximadas no âmbito do agradável e mesmo não sendo de natureza estética nem se transformando em guia do comportamento ético, são importantes para o desenvolvimento da personalidade privada do ser social.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Beleza natural; Ética; Estética; Arte; Lukács*

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1 Labor and Distance of the Social Being from Natural Barriers: An Introduction

The present theoretical-bibliographical exposition approaches the issue of natural beauty in relation to the aesthetic sphere based on the immanent reading of Chapter 15 of *Estética: la peculiaridad de lo estético* [*Aesthetics: The Specificity of the Aesthetic*] by Georg Lukács (1967). The issue is centered on the way idealism, on the one hand, and mechanical philosophy, on the other, see the relation between natural beauty and artistic beauty. In spite of their opposite paths and case-by-case changes, in Lukács' perspective, both philosophical idealism and mechanical materialism oppose natural and artistic beauty by assuming the former as superior to the latter.

Generally speaking, the matter of natural experiences is, effectively, aesthetic in nature and is positively answered in advance. This false hierarchy in Lukács' understanding means that there is an inherent natural beauty in nature, which is equivalent to attributing aesthetic existence to nature or to claiming that nature has its own teleology. Taking these assumptions as foundation for our understanding, insurmountable obstacles rise before the proper treatment of this issue.

The proper decision regarding the issue needs to overcome these seemingly antinomies. The correct path must begin in the relation between human subjects and nature without metaphysical prejudice, because the social being is a biological being that constantly needs to modify the natural environment to live as human-social subject. Therefore, they cannot live independently from nature. As pointed by Lukács, these false paradoxes can only be overcome when the character of the experience between human subject and natural environment is rationally determined, that is, when the concretely objective fundament for the relation society-nature is clarified.

Once it is clear that the starting point for the adequate treatment of the issue is the relation between human subject and natural matter, it is evident that the treatment of this seeming paradox requires the theoretical-methodological support from Marxist findings on the distance between the social being and the natural barriers. This is to say that explaining the present issue needs to consider that the living being only becomes a social being through labor. Despite the many explanations to the phenomena directly linked to what is conventionally called culture are given without its ontological

dependence, it is impossible to propose the current debate without approaching the point in which the social being is founded: labor.

According to Lukács, a return to labor is important as it is responsible for simultaneously separating and joining the human subject to nature. The bond and the distance from the natural matter allow the social being to rise in relation to the environment and establish themselves as conveyers of a significant force: the capacity of transforming the natural environment and themselves at the same time. Human subjects employ that energy in a way that necessities are not derived exclusively from natural laws. As the natural barriers become ever more distant, the relation between laborer and nature is realized by the (theoretical and practical) unfolding of knowledge use and the increasingly sophisticated improvement of tools and their application in the operationalization of labor.

As Marx (2005) observed, labor generates through use value what is useful for social life, humanizing it. It is worthy following the German thinker in his explanation of how labor becomes a condition for the humanization of the social being.

Anyhow, whether the coat be worn by the tailor or by his customer, in either case it operates as a use value. Nor is the relation between the coat and the labour that produced it altered by the circumstance that tailoring may have become a special trade, an independent branch of the social division of labour. Wherever they want of clothing forced them to it, the human race made clothes for thousands of years, without a single man becoming a tailor. But coats and linen, like every other element of material wealth that is not the spontaneous produce of Nature, must invariably owe their existence to a special productive activity, exercised with a definite aim, an activity that appropriates particular nature-given materials to particular human wants. So far therefore as labour is a creator of use value, is useful labour, it is a necessary condition, independent of all forms of society, for the existence of the human race; it is an eternal nature-imposed necessity, without which there can be no material exchanges between man and Nature, and therefore no life (MARX, 2005, p.31).¹

The interchange between the social being and nature, that is described by Marx as the metabolism upon which is based every theoretical, practical and natural relation between the human subject and natural impositions, implicates a double objectivity. As

¹ MARX, K. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. Volume I: The Process of Production of Capital. Edited by Frederick Engels. Translated by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling. 1999 [1867]. Available at: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/>. Access on: 13 Jan. 2020.

Lukács indicates, the natural aspect and the social and subjective elements are in opposite sides. First, nature in its concrete objectivity is unpurgeable, thus demanding from the laborer the knowledge to control natural laws. Even if such laws are linked to cattle raising, harvesting and the characteristics of raw materials as well as the specificities of tools and instruments that operationalize labor, the laborer needs to acknowledge their properties to intentionally transform nature. Even if that knowledge is not absolute, just the closest possible, it is indispensable for laborers to serve their purpose.

The second link in the chain is precisely the subjective social aspect of production, that is, the economic needs and the possibilities derived from production, such as the conditions and the means to satisfy those needs. This is also an objective unfolding as it determines the discovery, the selection and the elaboration, among other stages, of the production process.

After consulting Nicolai Hartmann's ideas, Lukács (1980) deepens his inferences on the objective duplicity in *The Ontology of Social Being*. In these volumes, the Hungarian author points that investigating nature, concentrated above all on the elaboration of the means to achieve a certain goal, is inevitable in the undertaking of labor. Such means in the process of labor act as the principal vehicle for the social fixation of results; they provide the social guarantee "that the results of the labour processes are established, the experience of labour continued and particularly further developed"; hence "this more adequate knowledge that is the basis of the means (tools, etc.) is often more important for social being itself than is the present satisfaction of the need (the posited end) (LUKÁCS, 1980, pp.15-16).² As the author concludes, the metabolic interchange between social being and nature is the foundation for each and every social development. In other words, the ontological element and "This property of the goal, the object, and the means also determines the nature of the subject's behavior" (LUKÁCS, 1980, p.72).³

For the present debate, the following element is extracted: the human subject, in spite of the enormous effort to live autonomously, cannot part from the actual realm of tension, play and ludicrousness that is enabled historically and socially by the concrete

² LUKÁCS, G. *The Ontology of Social Being: Labour*. Translated by David Fernbach. London: The Merlin Press, 1980.

³ See footnote 2 for reference.

objectivity of each given case. It must be noted that the desantropomorphizing knowledge about nature, acquired after great dispute and many fallbacks and setbacks, does not mean any inhumanity; rather, it is an important and necessary intellectual instrument that allows the development of the human subject to superior levels of objectification. This is true, for example, for the conquest of leisure. The desantropomorphic development – even if incipient compared to other aspects – allowed the primitive social being to conquer, even if for a single class alone, the possibility of leisure. Therefore, the due establishment of the relation between the human subject and the natural matter, without falling into subjective and/or mechanical traps, requires repeating, along with Marx and Engels (1968), that circumstances make men as well as men make the circumstances.

When the methodologic option concerning the object is demystified, the issue can also be exposed without mysticism. The adequate understanding of such objective duplicity, free of idealist turns and mechanical closings, means that the second objectivity does not affect the former. This objectivity that is social and subjective, as remarked, is limited to taking from the first subjectivity (nature) what in some cases is necessary for human production and reproduction. From such dialectically objective interaction, the social being immersed in their daily lives produces the concept of nature. The structure of such concept, even in the daily *praxis*, conveys the understanding (yet deprived of systematicity) of the correct scientific acknowledgment that nature exists independently from the consciousness of the social-subjective; that is, it exists desantropomorphically. It is only upon a materialistic dialectic basis that develops from historical contradictions that nature is, inevitably, referred to the metabolic interchange between subject-society-nature.

This last understanding – the only one that allows the proper interaction between the human subject, society and nature – enables the true recognition, on the one hand, of the scientific Being-in-itself, and, on the other, of the socially mediated essence of nature, which constitutes the near surrounding world of the living being in their own objective truth. Deprived of this relation's dialectics, the laborer subjected to daily life would not be capable of capturing the desantropomorphizing reflex. Deprived of the desantropomorphizing reflex, the human agent would be prevented from becoming a subject in the relation between social being and nature: he would not reflect objectively

the nature in relation to himself. As exemplified by Lukács (1967, p.317), “the objective structure of the human skin, properly reflected by the microscope, cannot have for a lover, even in the case of a doctor, any truth concerning their beloved one; and for the common men, even if an astronomer, the Sun will rise every morning, etc., etc.”⁴ Evidently, the configuration of double objectivity must be analyzed in the gradual, uneven, irregular and contradictory development of society. That is, the doubled objectivity of objects does not lose its validity in the aesthetic experience nor in the pseudo-aesthetic ones – the ones that only have the intention of the artistic.

This background allows the debate to move forward onto the human behavior in the face of natural beauty. The examples given by Lukács to demonstrate how the social development determines the taking of emotional position regarding nature come from Marx and Lenin. Lukács borrows from the German thinker that the natural characteristics of gold and silver, for example, have emotional effects upon living beings; such emotions however do not detach immanent properties of metals from social contradictions. Lukács defends that the emotional origin of the nature that caused such emotion was well summarized by Lenin when the Russian revolutionary exposed his views on the use of gold as material to build public lavatories in big cities.

When we are victorious on a world scale, I think we shall use gold for the purpose of building public lavatories in the streets of some of the largest cities of the world. This would be the most “just” and most educational way of utilising gold for the benefit of these generations which have not forgotten how, for the sake of gold, ten million men were killed and thirty million maimed in the “great war for freedom”, the war of 1914-18, the war that was waged to decide the great question of which peace was the worst, that of Brest or that of Versailles; and how, for the sake of this same gold, they certainly intend to kill twenty million men and to maim sixty million in a war, say, in 1925, or 1928, between, say, Japan and the U.S.A., or between Britain and the U.S.A., or something like that (LENIN, 1965).⁵

⁴ From the Spanish translation: “La estructura objetiva de la piel humana, adecuadamente reflejada por el microscopio, no puede tener para el amante, aunque sea médico, ninguna verdad respecto de la amada; y para el hombre de la cotidianidad, aunque sea un competente astrónomo, el Sol saldrá cada mañana, etc., etc.”

⁵ LENIN, V. I. The Importance of Gold Now and After the Complete Victory of Socialism. In: *Collected Works*, translated by David Skvirsky and George Hanna. 2nd English Edition, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965. pp.109-116. Available at: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1921/nov/05.htm> . Access on: 13 Jan. 2020.

It is clear that the gold used in these lavatories would not lose its physical properties as carriers of natural immanence, that is capable of being elevated to the condition of currency, symbol of luxury and wealth which, consequently, grant it the dignity of the “beautiful”; its emotional effects in regard to the “natural beauty,” however, “would be determined by the new interchange between society and nature according to the new historic time” (LUKÁCS, 1967, p.319).⁶

What matters, then, is to register that the social development, the distance from natural barriers and the consequent possibility of leisure, even if for one single class, gradually dote the social being with conditions to appreciate nature. That is proved, following Lukács rationale, by the concept of nature in the Antiquity, which was used as evaluative metaphor for human behavior. In Roman society there is no reliable document that assures a Roman interest in the contemplation of natural beauty, either related to parts of nature or nature as a whole. In this case, myth not nature concentrated the attraction to the beautiful.

Rousseau (2004) in his own time proposed a rupture between nature and society. His educational thesis that influences educators until today argues that nature makes human beings naturally good; they become corrupted and lean toward evil as they come into contact with society. It is noteworthy that for a long time and also influencing contemporaneous views, the city has been considered noisy, impure and hectic while the countryside is considered a quiet, tranquil, and pure place. Such rupture assumes ideological tones when the countryside is seen as a natural creation and the urban environment is seen as a human creation.

The uneven social development creates tension and interplay so that nature is considered beautiful. This development creates the possibility for the human feeling toward nature to surpass the harmonious and merely gracious. Therefore, on the one hand, there is the admiration for mountains, solitary landscapes, bird-singing, sun-rises and, on the other, the enjoyment (even if through fear) of torments, storms, dreadful winter, glaciers, among other natural aspects that become central in human life. Aesthetics, then, is introduced to the articulation of sublime and beauty. This debate indicates how the landscape is contemplated and points out to how the predominance of ideas and feelings generated by that contemplation is not an isolated or even casual

⁶ From the Spanish translation: “[...] habría quedado determinada por el nuevo intercambio de la sociedad con la naturaleza, de acuerdo con la nueva época histórica [...]”

phenomenon. According to Lukács, this phenomenon is a register of the passing human experiences whose interest in nature is directed toward the maintenance of life exclusively, toward the level of really profound experiences. That is only possible because the human subject feels safer in relation to their surroundings, that is, through the increasing distance from the barriers imposed by nature. Moreover, through the greater desantropomorphic knowledge on immanent natural laws, the living being fosters greater physical safety in relation to nature; in short, they become more humanized!⁷

2 Human Subjects and Natural Experience: Immersion and Distance

The situation described earlier supports the description that is presently of interest: the character of the feeling produced historically by the social being in relation to nature. The specificity of such feeling – the state of mind awakened in the human subject – is necessary because through this characterization, its reach and decisive qualities, positive or negative ones, it is possible to question whether the state of mind awakened in the living being is aesthetic or not. If it is confirmed that these experiences are not aesthetic, then the following question is asked: What, then, is the particularization of its real character?

In raising these issues, Lukács resorts to the way in which the state of mind awakened by nature is manifested in artistic refiguring such as lyric, epic and drama, music and painting. Due to the limitations of this article, let us focus on the case of poetry, as for Lukács, generally speaking, from the perspective of form and content, there is a polarization that unifies very distinct poems. On the one hand, poetry, when authentic in quality, is dominated by supreme subjectivity; on the other hand, it cannot

⁷ On this matter, Lukács (1967, p.235) warns that the “[...] capitalist development breaches men’s safety in regard to their social existence from which several ideological crises emerge and which we cannot describe here. In respect to our topic, these crises have some effects: the subjectivist pressure of the state of mind increases constantly, as well as the possibility of achieving natural experiences through effects of contrast, which expands in its turn the objective dimension of the world that can be captured by these experiences.” From the Spanish translation: “[...] desarrollo capitalista resquebraja la seguridad del hombre respecto de su existencia social, de lo que resultan las más diversas crisis ideológica, en cuya descripción no podemos entrar aquí. Estas crisis tienen por lo que hace a nuestro tema algunos efectos: la presión subjetivista del estado de ánimo aumenta constantemente, y crece también la posibilidad de conseguir vivencias naturales por efectos de contraste, lo cual amplía también por este lado el ámbito objetivo del mundo captable por esas vivencias.”

come from a desantropomorphically objective description. It is possible to infer, without abandoning the general character of such considerations, that the soil in which poetry sets its roots is formed from this double determination. As Lukács (1967, p.328) understands it, for poets with “attention to material sensitivity, the natural phenomena that trigger the state of mind frequently appear merely named deprived of any further intentions of giving form to their specific being-that.”⁸ To illustrate his arguments, the esthete cites excerpts from Goethe’s, Hermann Hesse’s and Theodor Storn’s poetry.

The example of choice for this article was the poem *Song of exile*⁹ as it is in close proximity to the polemics concerning Brazilian literature. Written in July 1843 in Coimbra, by Gonçalves Dias (1969), when the poet was away from his family, friends and homeland to dedicate himself to higher education, the poem gives poetic form to what the author considered an exile:

My homeland has many palm-trees
and the thrush-song fills its air;
no bird here can sing as well
as the birds sing over there.

We have fields more full of flowers
and a starrier sky above,
we have woods more full of life
and a life more full of love.

Lonely night-time meditations
please me more when I am there;
my homeland has many palm-trees
and the thrush-song fills its air.

Such delights as my land offers
Are not found here nor elsewhere;
lonely night-time meditations
please me more when I am there;

My homeland has many palm-trees
and the thrush-song fills its air.
Don’t allow me, God, to die
without getting back to where

⁸ From the Spanish translation: “[...] atenidos a la sensibilidad material, los fenómenos naturales que han de desencadenar el estado de ánimo aparecen frecuentemente sólo nombrados, sin el menor intento de dar forma a su ser-así específico.”

⁹ ASCHER, N. Seleta de poemas luso-brasileiros vertidos para o inglês. *Cadernos de Literatura em Tradução*, n. 11, pp.353-372, 2010. Available at: <http://www.revistas.usp.br/clt/article/view/49504>. Access on: 13 Jan. 2020.

I belong, without enjoying
the delights found only there,
without seeing all those palm-trees,
hearing thrush-songs fill the air.

Although *Song of Exile* was composed in a context that favored the rise of Brazilian Romanticism and amidst the conflicts of nationalism – thus the emphasis in distancing from Portuguese values to highlight Brazilian nature –, it does not exempt the poem from what is discussed by the Hungarian. In other words, the poetic creation thus conformed is neither the concrete natural environment nor the experience of nature as such. The subject in the poem actually is “a human individual that is found in a certain life situation from which it is not possible to make perceptible but the most decisive components of interiority” (LUKÁCS, 1967, pp.328-9).¹⁰ It is through the particularity of each situation and each given time that the incapacity of nature of elevating the subject to the aesthetic experience is demonstrated, which can only be done by the human spirit of the poet. The poem shows the indissoluble bond between internal and external, a fusion through which the creating subjectivity calls the determining role upon itself. In the poem by Gonçalves Dias, the longing (*saudade*) – a difficult word to translate into other languages – receives the highest tone in spite of comparisons between here, the physical place where the poet is, and there, the homeland where he wishes to be and to return.

Giving lyric form to a given content requires poetry to reflect the synthetic interaction between the human subject of daily experience and the vital matter of each moment. In order for this process to carry the stamp of poetry it must, at the same time, synthesize and reach an aesthetic generalization. How does that happen, then? According to Lukács, through the action of particularity: “even if a great number of good poems preserve the concrete *hic et nunc* of the triggering situation, that and the experience rise, in their correspondence, to the level of particularity, of the typical” (LUKÁCS, 1967, p.331).¹¹ It is not in excess to remember that, for the Hungarian Marxist, the typical refers to the subjective behavior of the human subject “not to the

¹⁰ From the Spanish translation: “[...] un individuo humano que se encuentra en una determinada situación vital, a partir de la cual no pueden hacerse perceptibles sino las componentes más decisivas de la interioridad.”

¹¹ From the Spanish translation: “[...] aunque en gran número de buenos poemas se preserve el concreto *hic et nunc* de la ocasión desencadenadora, ésta y la vivencia se levantan en su correspondencia a la altura de la particularidad, de lo típico.”

sector of nature expressed by that behavior” (LUKÁCS, 1967, p.331).¹² The Brazilian poem, it is worth repeating, keeps the longing (*saudade*) as a spiritual reference while nature allows the comparison to that which awakens in the poet such state of mind.

The categories Before and After regarding the aesthetic effect allow the transition from life to art and vice-versa as they direct the regulation of effects of life on art as well as the retroactive effects of the finished work over daily life. This allows the observation of the absence of antinomy in the fact that poetry conformed under artistic authenticity, which has as its theme, for example, spring, winter, heavy sun, trees, bird-singing, etc., indicates the taking of position by the poet in relation to social struggles of his own time. As demonstrated, the lines by Gonçalves Dias show that the poet positions himself in regard to the polemics of his own time without “quitting” the authentically poetic conformation.

The example provided by the poetry by Gonçalves Dias illustrates that most experiences in nature are reflexes of reality; therefore, they are not predominantly practical interactions as most experiences of daily life are. This is important because, in the exchange experienced by living beings in their daily lives, the separation of subjects and their objects is not processed – as daily practicality shuffles theory and practice. As for the relation between human subject and nature, some distance is necessary between subject and object of experience, the natural environment. In short, the relation between human subjects and nature is different from the way the living being forms relationships in daily life, for there is the need to distinguish the agent and the object of the action in natural experiences. Also, this relation cannot be considered an artistic refiguring because the individual’s contemplative behavior toward nature does not exceed what is vitally necessary to the experience; that is, it is trapped in the natural in-itself. Consequently, it does not achieve the suspension of the immediate practical purposes posed by daily life.

After dialoguing with Tolstoy’s biography, Plato’s *Phaedrus* and Christian Morgenstern’s poetry, Lukács claims that the essential in human relations and the natural environment is the existence of certain detachments from the human subject concerning daily practices. These are practices in which the living being must face objects, the relations among them and the interactions between subjects, in a way that

¹² From the Spanish translation: “[...] no al sector de la naturaleza expresado por ese comportamiento.”

they can, through investigation, reflection and tenacity as well as other mechanisms (mostly labor), overcome the resistances presented to their purposes. At the same time, they need such relative detachment to connect to experiences posed by nature. The living being does not need to rise above life and daily thought – something necessary to superior objectivations as ethical and aesthetical reflections.

Labor is the main element on which the daily agent relies to face daily life. It is also, as previously explained, one element among many that enables the social being to conquer leisure. It is known that such conquest is not universal: it is relatively enjoyed by one class only, which does not extinguish, however, the importance of leisure for human life. Therefore, it is impossible to enjoy leisure without disconnecting from the immediate production of the useful. Detachment, even if relative to the immediate production of the utility of material life, guarantees the contact with the majority of experiences originated in nature to the social being. Although only the irregular and contradictory detachment of society might enable the human subject to enjoy leisure, the experiences between human subject and natural environment, in which the former disconnects to contemplate the latter, depend on the social development, which is the factor most responsible for enabling leisure.

As demonstrated, in the dialectics that enables leisure, doors are opened so that contemplation of the natural environment interferes with the living being's state of mind. Nonetheless, the sort of feeling prompted by the experience of nature is not properly aesthetic, nor is it connected to the materiality of daily life. Hence, it is only left for us to point out, according to Lukács, that it leans toward the realm of pleasure. As specified by the author, the realm of the pleasant comprehends a series of phenomena that go beyond the aesthetic sphere and correspond to decisive manifestations to promote human life, such as diet, sexuality, and several social spheres. Concerning diet specifically, the means of capitalist production, due to their specific needs, requires excess and waste – concentrated on the hands of one class – to maintain leisure while another class remains in the production of materiality, the scarcity, and the imminent possibility of starvation. Although this fundamental contradiction in the means of capitalist production cannot be discussed in detail here, Marx's acute reflection clarifies:

But the object is not the only thing which production creates for consumption. Production also gives consumption its specificity, its character, its finish. Just as consumption gave the product its finish as product, so does production give finish to consumption. Firstly, the object is not an object in general, but a specific object which must be consumed in a specific manner, to be mediated in its turn by production itself. Hunger is hunger, but the hunger gratified by cooked meat eaten with a knife and fork is a 'different hunger from that which bolts down raw meat with the aid of hand, nail and tooth. Production thus produces not only the object but also the manner of consumption, not only objectively but also subjectively. Production thus creates the consumer (MARX, 1993, p.92).¹³

Lukács, even if not explicitly referring to Marx's citation, claims that the pleasure from eating presents two types of satisfaction. The state of mind induced by food consumed under the appeal of hunger, also ontologically pleasant, serves a biological purpose and is distinct from the feeling generated by food and drink consumed in excess, which, on their turn, are placed beyond physical gratification; it can only occur when production exceeds consumption.¹⁴ The first type of satisfaction imposes on the satiating subject the immersion in nature as they need to meet a natural demand: eating to survive. This type of satisfaction comes naturally as the human-biological organism itself feels pleased after satiating hunger. The second type of satisfaction can only happen when the feeding subject turns feeding into an activity that satisfies social needs. Here, the human subject who eats and drinks seeks to improve their state of mind through a satisfaction that is peripheral to food itself: a conversation at a dinner table with friends, for example. This type of feeding assumes that some excess is provided by human labor. The act of feeding allowed by the productive excess requires, in its realization, that the subjects are available for leisure and distant from nature to some extent. The satisfaction taken in the distance from nature might also be triggered, for example, by adequate furniture indoors where the individual shelters from the weather or even a friendly conversation between relatives, in addition to a number of other possibilities that create a pleasant state of mind by an immediate distance from nature in spite of being a part of it and being in it.

¹³ MARX, K. Production, Consumption, Distribution, Exchange (Circulation). In: MARX, K. *Grundrisse: A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Translated by Martin Nicolaus. London: Penguin Books, 1993 [1859], pp.83-111.

¹⁴ Felipe Guilherme de Souza (2018) developed a historical research on the association between food and the capitalist means of production.

That debate shows that, from a social perspective, a relation is established between pleasure and excess as well as between the latter and leisure. Hunger, feeding, comfort, safety and other states of mind experienced in the social day-to-day life are linked to the inseparable articulation between distance and immersion of the living being in relation to nature. Nature's whole validity actually holds a relation of otherness to the social totality, which carries socially conditioned components regardless of their being conscious or unconscious ones.

The most important aspect of this issue is that the fluctuation between distance and immersion of the human subject in the natural environment constitutes the subjective pole of a double objectivity thus specified: on one side, the other-being of nature in relation to the living being, and on the other side, the absolute inseparability of the latter given that the human subject will never be humanized without the natural environment. Therefore, from a perspective of social objectivity, safety, easiness of execution, feeding or sexual satisfaction, etc. as well as the positioning toward these issues are premises for living with the natural environment. Consequently, the purely contemplative or the simply receptive behavior toward nature is just a relatively small (and significant) part of the relations between the living being and the natural environment (of a being-referred to nature).

Nonetheless, from a subjective perspective, leisure is a premise for the experience (contemplative interaction) of the social being with nature. It is necessary to point that leisure activities practiced directly in nature might constitute the arch of a game for human actions. When ludicrousness disappears, this relation to nature can be ruptured or extinguished. As an example of such ludicrousness, think of a path amidst orchards, woods, sparks, arboreous areas for purposes of health, habit, routine, fashion or, even, as added by Lukács (1967, p.341) to collect fruits, hunt, and pick

[...] mushrooms, beetles, butterflies, interesting rocks, activities that might become such exclusive purposes that, subjectively, nature disappears as a whole, and its existence is reduced for the subject to either favorable or unfavorable ground for those ends; this is also the case of outdoor sports that move between two extremes of the being, the means for a closer relationship to nature and a total or almost total cover for it.¹⁵

¹⁵ From the Spanish translation: “[...]escarabajos, mariposas, guijarros interesantes, actividades que pueden llegar a ser finalidades tan exclusivas que desaparezca subjetivamente la naturaleza como un todo,

Both the immersion and the distance of the living being to its natural environment, therefore, must be understood as interrelated to the human senses as the subject is physically in the natural environment – which is a complex that comprehends the natural being, interacts with all human senses. The individual, then, in their daily life, reacts to the multiple natural phenomena with all their senses. Even though objectivity is responsible for the living being’s state of mind, it must be added that when it does not impose onto subjectivity an adaptation to a given condition of a daily activity, it is the most immediate subjectivity the ultimate instance on which the human subject relies to make their own decisions. Therefore, as Lukács (1967, p.343) concludes, the subjectivity of the individual who lives daily life “is here immediately – as is the whole realm of the pleasant – the ultimate decisive principle of the resolution on if and how to affirm or to deny the being, who acts upon it, from a given natural complex.”¹⁶

Generally, because the decision is, ultimately and according to the conditions above, subjective, the effects of every phenomenon in each specific social being have variations that cannot be disregarded. A natural phenomenon in its entirety or in its parts can be attractive to a certain living being and repulsive to another. There are cases that one “same” subject, depending on the circumstance, accepts an event as pleasant only to deny its pleasure under different circumstances. An example is the fact that certain subjects can deem ugly a person’s particular physical feature while the same feature is considered beautiful by another subject. Similarly, as reminded by the Hungarian esthete, the physical tiredness caused by a particular sport practice might be pleasant to one athlete and unpleasant to another. This shows that a given fragment of nature can cause very distinct experiences in different subjects of the same social class. According

y su existencia se reduzca para el individuo a la de un terreno favorable o desfavorable para la consecución de tales objetivos; también es ése el caso de la actividad deportiva en la naturaleza, la cual se mueve también entre los dos extremos de ser un medio para una relación más íntima con la naturaleza y ser un recubrimiento total o casi total de la misma.”

¹⁶ From the Spanish translation: “[...] es aquí inmediatamente —como en todo el ámbito de lo agradable— el principio decisivo último de la resolución acerca de si y cómo va a afirmarse o a negarse el ser, que actúa sobre ella, de un determinado complejo natural.”

to Lukács (1967, p.345), this is so “because most natural experiences are generated in ways that situate them, both through content and form, in the realm of pleasure.”¹⁷

The decisive element to illuminate definitely the difference between the natural experience and the aesthetic one is that the former means facing the relation with the totality as an entire-being, that is, with the totality of one’s subjectivity turned to the immediacy of daily life, in which theory and practice are not systematically distinguished. The aesthetic experience, in its turn, means that both creator and receptor face artistic manifestations with their subjectivity taken by the being-entirely that was raised to access the superior objectivations.¹⁸

That distinction does not allow the conclusion that aesthetic refiguring cannot synthesize natural phenomena. From the perspective of artistic conformation, the issue of the human agent’s natural experience needs to be refigured to capture the divergences and the convergences between social subjects and their relations with nature; that is, the typical in the singular experiences of particular individuals. The artistic refiguration can only effectively manage both the immersion and the distance of the living being in the nature – and conform the different subjective ways with which distinct human subjects contemplate nature – it has to appear artistically articulated to the destiny of human kind, that is, to nature in its interrelation to the human-social world.

3 Human-Natural Experience: Nature from Above

Based on the assumption that living beings can only contemplate nature when distant from it, or, in better words, when, under the social division of labor that enables leisure, they are subjected to the dialectics of immersion-distance from the natural environment, one fact is unveiled: most experiences in nature fall into the social-human experience of pleasant/ unpleasant. After defining these elements, it is possible to point to the structure of form and content of certain natural experiences that, albeit not

¹⁷ From the Spanish translation: “[...] porque la mayoría de las vivencias naturales se producen de un modo que las sitúa, por el contenido y por la forma, en la esfera de lo agradable.”

¹⁸ The relation between the entire-being (lived daily) and the being-entirely (enjoyer of superior objectivations) is dialectical. The movement from one moment to the other, from the condition of entire-being to being-entirely is the moment when the social being immersed in their daily life (entire-being) access albeit momentarily a qualitatively diverse world, different from the daily, a world properly human. Art is the vehicle that condenses and conveys the transition through catharsis from one moment to the other.

aesthetic, lean toward superior objectivations, surpassing the realm of the purely pleasant.

The starting point, thus, is the demonstration that even if some nature experiences incline toward superior objectivations, they are not aesthetic. These are anthropomorphic and subjective, such as the natural experiences; however, not all experiences that concentrate these two features are artistic. For them to be aesthetic it is necessary to overcome the private singularity, and natural experiences do not achieve that accomplishment. Nonetheless, aesthetics does not disdain the private subjectivity. This category of reflection is purely dialectic. Lukács' words on the mission of philosophy synthesizes the core of the present issue. The author claims that the task consists in "showing which forms demand the protective overcoming of privacy in the various fields of human relations to reality: science, art, ethics, etc." (LUKÁCS, 1967, p.348).¹⁹ The present matter, however, is restricted to finding the specificity of certain natural experiences that, in their essential depth, intensity and range shifts from the numerous impressions that are placed into the sphere of the pleasant and which lean to superior objectivations.

It is unfeasible to advance on this matter without presenting a better approach to such experiences. They are, nonetheless, natural experiences that, due to their vital content, trigger explosive collisions, affecting intensely internal contradictions of the human being. Therefore, they ground their past by fostering the present with violent eruptions. In such cases, the natural experience is placed under circumstances to release a certain cathartic commotion. If natural experiences, as debated, are not ethic, what, then, is the nature of that class of experiences whose peculiarity approaches superior objectivations?

In order to situate the debate, the Hungarian esthete resorts to three literary works,²⁰ warning, however, that he does not intend to judge their artistic value. In using literary narratives, Lukács merely wants to demonstrate the relation of some natural experiences to superior objectivations. This article does not allow full analysis of all three texts; therefore, following Lukács, the illustration from *The Idiot* by Dostoyevsky

¹⁹ From the Spanish translation: "[...] en mostrar qué formas cobra la superación preservadora de la privacidad en los diversos campos de las relaciones humanas con la realidad: en la ciencia, el arte, la ética, etc."

²⁰ They are: *The Magic Mountain* by Thomas Mann, *War and Peace* by Tolstoy, and *The Idiot* by Dostoyevsky.

(2001)²¹ will be used for exemplification. Lukács describes Prince Mishkin's narrative on the feelings and the thoughts of an individual sentenced to death. Minutes before his execution, however, the convicted person is granted pardon.²² According to Lukács (1967, p.352), the character:

Not far from the place where they were to shoot them, there was a church, and the golden dome shone under the bright sun. He only knew that he had been looking fixedly, almost convulsively, at that golden dome, and that he saw the rays emanating from it; he couldn't part from those rays: they seemed to be his new nature and that within three minutes he would merge into them one way or another...²³

Prince Mishkin questions the witnesses whether the feelings of a man sentenced to death, moments before his execution, were restoration of life itself, which in the possibility of restoring his own life, each minute would last infinitely, because he would not miss anything, he would hold on to each second as unique and final. Mishkin's interlocutors ask, then, how the former convict behaved after being granted the right to live. They were interested in knowing if that man, on the brink of death, after bypassing execution, started living his life according to the principle of not wasting a single moment. Also following Lukács (1967, p.352), Prince Mishkin gives his interlocutors the same answer the former convict had given him: "[...] he did not live much as he thought, and he missed and wasted many, many moments."²⁴

The Budapest philosopher defends that ideas rising from that context clearly aim to guide the regulation of the individual's future moral conduct. Therefore, Lukács defends that this movement is not aesthetic but ethics: the intention is to find a place for that particular class of natural experiences in the totality of vital human manifestations. Lukács (1967, p.350) assures that "we can say with the greatest propriety: these

²¹ DOSTOYEVSKY, F. *The Idiot*. Translated by Richard Pevear. New York: Vintage, 2001.

²² It is likely that Lukács considers it an autobiographic episode.

²³ From the Spanish translation: "No lejos del lugar en el que iban a fusilarlos había una iglesia, y el tejado dorado de la cúpula brillaba bajo el sol claro. Sólo supo que había estado mirando fijamente, casi convulsivamente, aquella cúpula dorada, y que había visto los rayos que partían de ella; no conseguía separarse de aquellos rayos: le parecía que eran su nueva naturaleza, y que dentro de tres minutos iba a fundirse con ellos de un modo u otro..."

²⁴ From the Spanish translation: "[...] que no ha vivido luego como pensó, y que ha perdido y desperdiciado muchos, muchos instantes."

impressions belong to the living ‘Before’ of ethical decisions and resolutions.”²⁵ The author justifies this by claiming that in a situation of extreme violence, such as the predictable killing in a battle field, or even an execution, as narrated by Dostoyevsky’s character, the subject relies on the contemplation of nature because the successions and changes in the natural environment (day and night, seasons and others) hints at the existence of the power of the law of eternity in which the upcoming merges with the expired, and life with death. Specifically, in the case of the man who averted execution, narrated by Dostoyevsky (2001),²⁶ when that convict faces the sunlight upon the dome of the church, in that terminal moment, he counterposes his troubled and frivolous past to an experience that could have been truly authentic. The subject, then, assumes from a Before the intention of an After human in experience.

Undoubtedly, as argued by Lukács, in any type of cathartic commotion, the actual need is always found on the personality of the subject in question. The living being, in their turn, forms their personality in the course of life and under circumstances in which the internal forces come into conflict which, due to their specificity, is exaggerated by external determinations. Despite the fact that this way can lead to a single generalization, it is not one dislocated from the object, deprived of content and hierarchically arbitrary, because this specific class of natural experience is confused with other types of human experiences. Nonetheless, it has powerful constellations that are objectively diverse and which, due to that very diversity, are close to the accidents of daily life and to the images sensibly refigured by the artistic reflex. This justifies the difficulty in specifying the peculiarities of certain experiences with the natural environment.

Based on how the living being reacts to the After in this class of catharsis, Lukács believes the treatment of the issue can enable a better approach. Hence, he resorts to the characterization of the After in the aesthetic sphere in relation to the ethical behavior of the human subject. According to the author, it is inherent to the essence of the aesthetic After: reconducting the being-entirely enriched by the artistic catharsis to the level of the entire-being that lives daily. The aesthetic After holds the

²⁵ From the Spanish translation: “[...] podemos decir con el mayor fundamento: esas impresiones pertenecen al vivo ‘Antes’ de las decisiones y las resoluciones éticas”. Quotation marks are used in “Before” because it is not possible to farther the issue of ethics, just present a few points.

²⁶ See footnote 21 for reference.

possibility, albeit potential, of transforming itself into an ethic “Before.” The issue of the ethical conduct, according to Lukács (1967, p.354) approximates aesthetic catharsis to the one that takes place in natural experiences because both in the artistic commotion and in the commotion realized in certain experiences with nature, the “way how the man in question enjoys that commotion later in his life to achieve a transformation and a superior development of his life”²⁷ is decisive.

It must be pointed out that when experiences are prompted directly by the relations between human subjects that act in daily life, the issue becomes more complex. Generally, in these cases, the distance between the ethical “After” of the decision the subject must make in his actual life is inferior in relation to the cathartic commotions in some types of manifestations with nature as well as to aesthetic catharsis. As the relations between those who live daily are in their essence of practical and immediate nature, they impose upon these daily beings the inevitability of an immediate solution, particularly, with content-rich experiences.

Such a state of mind, for Lukács, is typical of these special moments and, independently from the triggering situation, it emerges immediately from the private personality of the subject in question. Lukács claims that when such a fact is extended beyond the superficiality of the daily life, it is noted that its abrupt and vehement separation (regarding past acts in the daily normalcy) refers to the important and decisive fact – in all spheres of life – that the private singularity of the human subject, for better or worse, is not as unitary and homogenous as indicated by the seeming surface of daily life.

Refraining from the characters’ ethical issues, Lukács illustrates his argument with Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*. The esthete uses the passage in which a convalescent Anna is disillusioned by the doctors due to complications during the delivery of her daughter, Annie. In her death bed, Anna is visited by her husband, Alexey Karenin. Although Karenin is not the child’s father, he is moved by his wife’s imminent death so much so he is willing to forgive her extramarital affair with Count Alexei Kirillovich Vronsky and raise and look after Annie. This is a moment of moral tension, according to Lukács, because Anna and Vronsky are affected by the betrayed husband’s sensitivity. Tolstoy’s great realism nonetheless shows that although one’s state of mind

²⁷ From the Spanish translation: “[...] modo como el hombre en cuestión aproveche en su vida posterior aquella conmoción para conseguir una transformación y un desarrollo superior de su vida.”

is affected by such an intense moment as near-death, the fact built by the characters in their daily lives cannot be eliminated. This fact means that Karenin is an aseptic bureaucrat; Anna is beautiful, rich, popular and mother of a beloved son but nothing more than a socialite; Vronsky is a heartthrob with seducer's ambitions. The characters' inner lives, even in the face of a cathartic commotion triggered by the intensity of the moment, do not allow the "After" to approximate the ethical "Before" and pose a solution to the conflict of each character's private personality. Eventually, Anna does not die and the daily inferno between the three characters is renewed in full effect.

That argument allows the present article to expose the interesting distinction between aesthetic catharsis, on the one hand, and daily and natural cathartic commotion on the other. The goal of such a distinction is to expand on the peculiarity of certain natural manifestations in relation to the experiences that lean toward superior objectivations. While aesthetic catharsis needs to overcome the private personality, even if by not preserving it, daily commotion in Lukács' understanding presents two opposite sides: "if the stimulus is a human event born from concrete cathartic effects generated by life itself, catharsis holds a referentiality" (LUKÁCS, 1967, p.356),²⁸ one that is objective and determined. This process guides catharsis toward concrete ethical decisions regardless of the real ethical meaning. Nonetheless, when catharsis derives from a natural phenomenon, it generally results in a passing effect, that is, "in spite of all violence, emotional load, ideological tone, etc., the referentiality to an object is extremely undetermined, more tonal in character" (LUKÁCS, 1967, p.356),²⁹ thus assuming a character that is eminently related to the atmosphere in question. Therefore, both the irruption relative to certain experiences with nature and the daily commotion are different, each in its own specific way, from aesthetic catharsis.

This additional specificity regarding natural experience, according to Lukács, allows the claim that "the important experiences in nature under consideration are general and vague because, in them, the relation between the individual and the human

²⁸ From the Spanish translation: "si el estímulo es un acaecimiento humano, nacido de concretos efectos catárticos desencadenados por la vida misma, la catarsis tiene una referencialidad [...]."

²⁹ From the Spanish translation: "pese a toda la violencia, la carga emocional, la tonalidad ideológica, etc., la referencialidad al objeto es sumamente indeterminada, de carácter más bien tonal."

occurs directly, without visible social mediation” (LUKÁCS, 1967, p.360).³⁰ In these natural experiences – in order to definitely clarify their distance from art – a purely general object is faced with a totally private matter, thus lacking, to that sort of manifestation, “the concretion of the general, in particular with the ascension of privacy (simplicity) to particularity” (LUKÁCS, 1967, p.360).³¹

It is noteworthy that this does not characterize a deficiency for that class of natural experiences. Such peculiarity grants it with the capacity of providing the living subject with certain experiences that he cannot access by other means. In other words, the absence of purification of privacy through particularity does not constitute a mere deficiency of certain human experiences with nature. Specifically, the peculiarity of such experiences begins to unfold. According to Lukács, that peculiarity awakens in the human subject the capacity of accessing a feeling that could hardly be felt outside that characteristic typical of their own experiences in the natural environment. The author claims this refers to the essence of the living as the relation between species and the exemplar is, in the realm of the natural, much simpler than in society. In the social-human sphere, the human subject needs to constantly modify the natural environment, which causes the complexification of the essence of the social fabric regarding the continuity of what is naturally produced. As men and women produce society in their interchange with nature, they complicate human individuality and social historicity. In nature, as Lukács explains (1967, p.360) “the species is presented as a principle of permanence, including eternity, concerning life and death of its exemplars.”³²

Doubtlessly, there is history in nature; the species are constantly transformed: they appear and disappear. This is an immanent truth of the world; it is part of the desantropomorphism that influences the vision of the given human subject. In the immediacy of the daily, however, when the living being with their concrete conflicts faces a natural phenomenon, that image is hardly supported in the subject who reflects. In these situations, the invariant survival of each species and the changes of each specific exemplar represent that unit, which, in its turn, expresses such simplicity. It is

³⁰ From the Spanish translation: “las importantes vivencias de la naturaleza que estamos considerando son generales y vagas porque en ellas la puesta en relación del individuo con el género humano procede directamente, sin mediaciones sociales que se hagan visibles.”

³¹ From the Spanish translation: “[...] la concreción de lo general en particular junto con el ascenso de la privacidad (simplicidad) a la particularidad.”

³² From the Spanish translation: “[...] la especie se presenta como un principio de la permanencia, incluso de la eternidad, frente a la vida y la muerte de sus ejemplares.”

that simple unity that is abandoned by the living being when they become human through the creation of society, social history, culture, etc., by embracing the complexity of what is produced socially. Human beings' lost link emerges from this contradictory social development. As Lukács explains (1967, p.361), the human subject aspires to overcome their accidental private singularity: they seek passionately for a link "to the very general specificity, to the rules that could guide them on their path to the inseparable unit between the exemplar and the species in nature."³³ Therefore, the incorporation, free of residues, of specificity in the normal movements of the singular "remind them of a lost paradise that needs to save them from their misery" (LUKÁCS, 1967, p.361).³⁴ Thus, nature in its acute dialectics of permanence and transformation and in its wide and multivocal generality can generate subjectively matured feelings that give the individual the condition of finding certain natural experiences to answer questions asked in the sphere of human materiality. The example of the dome under the shining sun is noteworthy, typified by Dostoyevsky's character in the brink of death.

Final Considerations: Superior Objectivations as Fair Median

The immanent reading of Chapter 15 from *Aesthetics* by Lukács, titled The natural beauty as element of life,³⁵ approaches the following question: is there beauty in nature and if so, is this an aesthetic beauty? This bibliographical-theoretical article deviated simultaneously from idealism and mechanical philosophy by relying on the Marxist thesis of labor as founding moment of the social being. Guided by the social division of labor, which enables leisure as well as other elements, the present discussion, then, reaffirms that nature, in spite of having history, cannot have teleology.

The adequate approach to the issue, grounded on classical Marxist assumptions, allowed the article to unravel the notion of conception of the world, generally associated to philosophical thought and is deeply connected to the development of the daily life. In the reality experienced in the concrete daily life, a series of "final questions," strictly related to the experiences of daily life, is left to the abstractions of philosophy. As daily

³³ From the Spanish translation: "[...] con la propia especificidad general, con las normas que pudieran guiarle en su camino, la unidad inseparable del ejemplar y la especie en la naturaleza [...]."

³⁴ From the Spanish translation: "[...] le parecen el paraíso perdido que ha de salvarle de su miseria."

³⁵ From the Spanish translation: "*La belleza natural como elemento de la vida.*"

life unfolds, daily experiences and their spontaneous vital sensations grant the subjects with the capability of reaching those notions without necessarily systematizing conceptual generalizations.

Nature in its general appearance is, from an intellectual perspective, very diffuse and clouded; from the plastic-sensorial perspective, the experienceable content of nature is, however, what allows their experiences to interfere in human-social life. As discussed, even if these experiences fail to go beyond the constitution of a “Before” of the ethical behavior, such fact is decisive for the path to be followed in the “After” of experience: a true ethical point of inflexion or a gradual element that fades as a transient state of mind.

The accurate study of possibilities that manifestations of nature impose upon daily life gives rise to another important moment for the knowledge of the singularity of human life: that certain experiences, even if they do not overcome the individual’s private personality, do them with conditions which superior objectivations are not capable of doing. This discovery associated to the investigation of the realm of the pleasant exposes the scale of unlimited possibilities in both content and form. That scale of possibilities, however, would not exist if there were not, in the entire-being trapped in the private person of the daily life, a range that would correspond to that living experience. Such dialectics means, for Lukács, that every human being is, in their private singularity, incomparably richer and more complex than they appear to themselves and to other human subjects. The evolution of human personality, as constructed by Lukács (1967, p.363) “consists, among other things, in the way in which these possibilities are promoted or repressed.”³⁶ This means that there are several possibilities dormant in living beings that, due to the strength of that dialects, are equally capable of full development or of never coming into effect at all.

The Hungarian esthete defends that it is typical of the dialectics of life that such possibilities are constantly emerging and just as frequently crashing into obstacles for their renewal. Lukács explains that such dialectics is much more complicated than it seems, for the actual evolution of a certain human subject even if constituting an overcoming, “contains at the same time or it implicates the atrophy of a series of possibilities. In addition, the actual development of a certain possibility can close

³⁶ From the Spanish translation: “[...] consiste entre otras cosas en el modo como se promuevan o repriman esas posibilidades.”

definitely, for that subject, other fertile paths of development” (LUKÁCS, 1967, p.364).³⁷ The completion of that dialects requires considering as essential that the progress of an individual is always achieved due to certain concessions and fallbacks.

The current debate, anchored in Lukács’ ideas, allows the indication that the experiences activated in human subjects concerning their relations with nature do not constitute a stage prior to artistic reflection. Human experiences with the natural environment are close to the realm of pleasure. In spite of not revealing a “beauty” in themselves that compete against art, they can somehow be appreciated by human reflection. Nature, as every human experience accessed from daily life, actually feeds the artistic reflex. As summarized by Lukács, all experiences that cause immediate reactions to the objective reality, promoters of life and directly related to the human subject, comprehend the entire-being of daily life in their totality and psycho-physical singularity. This, however, leads such experiences to constitute the starting point for the entire-being of daily life to access superior objectivations – possible for the being-entirely who enjoys through momentary catharsis the experiences of extra-daily life. Therefore, the human-social effects lived along with the reflexes of daily life potentialize the social being so they can elevate to the extra-daily sphere.

The issue lies in the fact that such singularity develops constantly in every culture accumulated by society.

As the human attitude tends to respect its own singular privacy, the private subject’s singularity as one of the most important aspects of individual life, presents sacred features.³⁸ The problematic context of this sacramental nature needs to consider the fact that private singularity develops constantly in the whole culture of a society. Facing that issue requires looking at the social dialectics as follows: the private personality needs to be continuously preserved and overcome equally. It is vital for any individual as well for every social culture to find in this contradictory dialectics the fair median. Aristotle’s *tertium datur* cannot allow the mere mutual wearing out of opposed links nor allow an undignified commitment to humanity. Naturally, this is an ethical debate. As Lukács (1967, p.366) argues, “that men are content with privaticity is as

³⁷ From the Spanish translation: “[...] contiene al mismo tiempo o implica la atrofia de una serie de posibilidades. Y, además, el despliegue actual de una determinada posibilidad puede cerrar definitivamente para el sujeto otros fecundos caminos de desarrollo.”

³⁸ Lukács uses the expression *character indelebilis* to register the features of the private personality.

dangerous for them and for the society in which they live as self-destruction, the wish to renounce privacy at any cost.”³⁹ In such a context, instead of men and women who are products of themselves, a sterile culture is created deprived of aspiration to make singular life more harmonious and richer whose movement in relation to the fair median grows the contradictions present in the subject and in society. Superior objectifications are, actually, closer to that fair median.

Taking art as an example, the universality of aesthetic reflection manifests precisely in the fact that to reach the status of art, it must take as material of conformation everything that refers somehow to human drama. That must be elaborated considering the ontological dependence of the artistic purposes of each case to the deeper issues of the human. This dialectics sponsors what is most important in the development of art: if healthy or sickly. Therefore, the emotional behavior of men and women to nature, its content and orientation, decisive influences, among other factors, influence the destiny of art as much as any other complex that is related to human life.

Based on the particularity of daily and aesthetic catharsis, as well as in the way how these cathartic eruptions relate to ethics, the analyses of essential phenomena that are conventionally called – imprecisely and obscurely – “natural beauty” are conducted. The following conclusion is in accordance with Lukács: the basis for experiences between social subjects and natural environment is not nature in-itself; rather, it is the interchange between nature and natural resources. This is justified since, in this class of experiences, the concrete nature is not revealed: what is actually manifested is the social-historical essence of the human subject. The experience with the natural environment can only exist with the complicated and contradictory mediation of the human-social domain over nature – which, naturally occurs in ontological dependence of the social division of labor. Therefore, any experience shared by the living with “natural beauty” represents a certain stage of nature’s submission to the human-social domain. Finally, taken as an aesthetic category or metaphysically hypostasized, the so-called natural beauty generates intellectual confusions in aesthetics as well as in ethics, jeopardizing the adequate understanding of true human life.

³⁹ From the Spanish translation: “Que el hombre se contente con la privacidad es tan peligroso, para él y para la sociedad en la que vive, como la autodestrucción, el querer desprenderse a cualquier precio de la privacidad.”

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