**Philosophies of nature**

Identify and analyse an object or artwork, process or event on the basis of Lukács' idea of "second nature"

In this essay I will point out the philosophical ideas of Lukacs in relation to his metaphor of ‘second nature’, where ‘second nature’ is seen as a form of alienation of mankind in relation to nature. As a concrete example, I will use the *Manifesto Antropofágico* published by the Brazilian writer Oswaldo de Andrade in 1928, an extremely important event that marked the start of modernism in Brazilian culture.

Lukacs tries to capture the abnormalities of the human being by using a metaphor called ‘second nature’, in which it is said by Lukacs that, second nature consists ‘of man-made structures’; ‘structures made by man for man’. True, their ‘complex of meanings has become rigid and alien’ and may even appear as a ghostly ‘charnel-house of long-dead interiorities’. But it was nonetheless *created* by those interiorities— those ‘souls’ — and in this, it is incompatible with what Novalis had in mind.[[1]](#footnote-1) In Lukacs’s *Theory of the novel*, ‘[e]very art form’ is defined by the metaphysical dissonance of life...every form is the resolution of a fundamental dissonance of existence.’[[2]](#footnote-2) With this Lukacs shows how every artist, creative thinker, musician or writer is trying to come up with his or her perspective of life and is in constant battle with life’s true meaning. Thus, the artist is constantly questioning the norms of living in society and life itself. This is why the artist produces works not simply for themselves but for others as a consequence of expressing their own points of view. By producing art mankind proves its alienation from nature due to its ability to depict nature and modify it through the process of creating art.

Lukacs places the artwork created by man as part of his metaphor of ‘second nature’, by therefore alienating the creative product of mankind from its own nature. Mankind is in a constant mode of creation and is dependent upon ‘second nature’ (his own creations) to survive in society. This is why artists are constantly making art which comments on social issues.

When applying Lukacs idea of second nature in relation to a cultural and artistic event that helped to shape Brazil’s history, we can see how Brazil can be seen as a country which managed to be culturally independent from western society. For a long period of time in Brazilian culture, Brazilians were seeking to find their own personal cultural identity and not be dependent on other cultures to define their own. They wanted to distinct themselves from western culture. The modernist art movement in Brazil, which was established by the *Manifesto Antropofágico* by Oswaldo de Andrade, marked a very important point in time for Brazil’s culture. The *manifesto* was the moment in which Brazil managed to finally alienate itself from western culture. The word antropofagia in portugues means antro for man and fagia for eating. When placed in context it can be seen as the cannibalism of culture. This movement defined an effort to re-evaluate and re-constitute the role of intellectualism and replaced it with the objective observations of the self within the Brazilian context. [[3]](#footnote-3) “Antropofagia” is an example of one such important later conceptual current that dealt with the process of Brazilian identity construction through metaphoric cannibalization within a rapidly transforming and essentially urbanizing industrialized economy.

The *Movimento Antropofagico was a* moment in which Brazil managed to culturally isolate itself from western culture, and consequently western culture itself begun to draw inspiration from Brazilian culture, creating a cycle of constant impact. This *Manifesto Antropofagico* can be seen as a man-made structure of cultural definition for society. The purpose of the Brazilian *Antropofago* movement was to assimilate ideas from other culutres. The *Antropofagico* *movement* marked was the painting *Abaporu* made by the artist Tarsila do Amaral in 1928, who interestingly was Oswaldo de Andrade’s wife. In the manifesto, Oswaldo de Andrade says “só me interessa o que não é meu. Lei do homem. Lei do antropofago” which translates as “I only care about what is not mine. Law of man. Man Eating Law” This shows how mankind is able to alienate himself from nature and integrate himself into his own social needs in order for survival. In the manifesto’s context the man is seen as a cannibal and it feeds himself from culture in order to produce their own culture and their own views of society. The Brazilian man/women is then positioned as alien to western culture.

1. https://newleftreview.org/issues/II91/articles/franco-moretti-lukacs-s-theory-of-the-novel [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://newleftreview.org/issues/II91/articles/franco-moretti-lukacs-s-theory-of-the-novel [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://lljournal.commons.gc.cuny.edu/2007-2-pendse-texto/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)