HE/AG: If we understand you correctly, the idea would be to stop acting as if there were a fixed aim for humanity towards which we are moving, since this would be the technocratic narrative of how a unified humanity should move forward. In a sense, then, pluralization happens over a spectral form of a unitary humanity. Right? This is a diagnosis we could agree on. The technocratic form of conceiving normativity is, in a way, quite compatible with the form of Kant’s regulative principle, of which, as you know, he talks about in the Critique of Judgment in relation to the question of how we know about nature. There, he brings this concept in order to think of nature as a coherent unity because, according to Kant, we otherwise couldn’t make any judgment about nature. Hence, the necessity of thinking of it as a closed homogeneity. But this idea of the regulative principle is based on an understanding of possibility as yet another form of actuality. As if the regulative principle - the unity - must always already be realized for it to have an effect. And even further, it must be realized by a transcendental subject. But if we are thinking of possibility as that which brings forward what is yet not the case, that can’t be the whole story. In that sense, when thinking of pluralization, it seems it is a project not of the plurality of situations given by a closed system that brings about certain options, but of possibilities. That would be a reason to pluralize imagination. So, if we think of normativity as that which would guide our actions and bring us together, we could instead rely on Bloch’s Utopia and his idea of real possibilities. Do you think it is still time to think of utopias, or is that an incompatible thought with your understanding of how to imagine plural futures?

YH: Maybe we can return to the difference between what Kant calls regulative principles and constitutive principles, which could be understood as two forms of normalization. The determinative judgment follows the constitutive principle, by projecting the universal to the particular, via schematization, to generate [erzeugen] concepts of the objects of experience; in this sense the universal is already given prior to experience in the form of transcendental categories. We can say that the determinative judgment functions mechanically, like logical inference. The regulative principle functions neither according to immediate evidence as constitutive principle does, nor does it offer guarantee of the object of investigation; it is regulative because its dynamic is a goal seeking process. Reflective judgment
follows the regulative principle. In Critique of Pure Reason we encounter often examples of determining judgment, and in Critique of Judgement, reflective judgment, which starts from the particular in search of the universal which is not given a priori, therefore, the heuristic is not mechanical, but recursive. In the reflective judgment, the telos is not given, therefore, it is always unknown; however, the subject can still speculate on this unknown “as if” it is knowable, and knows it “as if” it is such. This “as if” is not real but not actual, and therefore remains always “not yet.” This “as if” in Kant’s thought is also universal, for example, the universal of beauty, the universal of the telos of nature. I am not sure to what extent we can associate Kant’s regulative principle with the question of plurality because we will need to dive into Kant’s texts again. Maybe we can say that in so far as the whole is already assumed but remains unknown, therefore to the human subject this end can only be conceived as “as if”. We could also read this together with what Jacques Derrida called the incalculable and the unconditional, and how the unconditionality of the incalculable is the condition of all possibilities. However, this argument risks remaining too metaphysical.

If we stick with Kant and understand it from an epistemological perspective, in this organic whole, one can speculate on a plurality, for example, the plurality of parts, the plurality which nevertheless gives rise to the whole and at the same time is conditioned by the whole. This plurality is the Kantian Ideal, and the reciprocity between different members of the whole is a transcendental condition of a perpetual peace between different nations. In Hanna Arendt’s reading of Kant’s political philosophy, she also observed that nature is the great artist who guarantees perpetual peace precisely because Kant built his political analysis on his studies on the organism. This way of thinking about plurality is the legacy of the 18th century though today many people still regard it as an ideal case. However, as you know, Recursivity and Contingency was dedicated to analyzing the organic condition of philosophizing after Kant and its actuality today. Therefore, the plurality that I would like to explore is no longer the one that is conditioned by the understanding of nature, but rather it is a new language of co-existence that I hope to address. This is the agenda of technodiversity.

HE/AG: Maybe the pluralization of imaginaries is also what Bolivar Echeverría was trying to point at when he saw potential in the Latinamerican baroque. Instead of judging the baroque as an art based on its decoration and not its form, as was the tradition, he saw, in the structure, the chance for the unfolding of possibilities not given by the canon, by western ideas of what the structure is supposed to be. Echeverría seems to be very aware that a decomposition of colonial thought happens via our imagination of what constitutes a form, a shape, and what the role of those shapes are in the composition of new imaginaries.

In questioning the role of shapes or forms and its decoration-structure relation in art, we also want to refrain from suggesting that the deliberate insertion of other imaginaries as motifs to an already given tool economy solves
the homogenizing stagnation of critique guided by technological standardization. An intersection, where we are today faced with the forced insertion of emancipatory discourses as pseudo-epistemic currency for inclusion in different circuits. Circuits in which regardless of their “diversity”; the modes of presentation and particularly the infrastructural scaffolding, which foments the accumulative exhibit of the so-called marginalized, remains silently intact. Probably the most tragic aspect of such pluralist ornamentality could be equated to a revivalist narrativization of ancient cosmologies, displaced ethnicsities and overall: difference, uniquely for the purpose of zoological showcasing. Thus, displaying a mechanism that in the guise of (façade) diversity and instead of decomposing the current modes of re-presentation (whether of the human, culture or nature), rather reaffirms the subordination of imaginaries, sensibilities and ways of life by means of endlessly reproducing the display window mechanisms of multiculturalist hoarding and the ubiquitous fetishization of tools devoid of techno-aesthetics (as exacerbated by the NFT), something Simondon observed as an intercategorical axiology expressively manifested as matter transformed through work, and the need to hyper contextualize artistic practice instead of engaging with art that fractures, bifurcates, cracks open or deterritorializes the necessity to pre-impose a context? Could you relate to these thoughts in your own approach to art?

YH: I am not sure if I could fully follow your line of questioning. I think we might want to distinguish plurality as representation and plurality as thinking. Today plurality or diversity is a word that is employed by many people to counter the homogeneity of representation, especially what was brought about by modern science and technology. And indeed, this is symptomatic in the past century when a particular cultural form was prioritized in various domains through the violent imposition of scientific rationality and enforcement of military intervention. The West has been, as we know, the centre of emanation since the Enlightenment. The relation between reason and universality is a profound one, but it is more often the case that in the name of universality, certain values and not reason, are imposed as truth. This seems clear to many people today and the task is to find another beginning after the End of the Enlightenment (I have dealt with this question in an essay titled “What Begins after the End of the Enlightenment” an engagement with a polemic text of Henry Kissinger). I am not rejecting the universal or reason, instead, I am only rejecting a certain misunderstanding (though rather popular) of the universal and reason. Today we could find a lot of effort to pluralize the cultural representations especially in the art, as you have mentioned. However, I am neither an artist, an art historian nor a curator, it is not my practice; I don’t feel competent to comment on these artistic practices. If I really have to say something, I would consider the relevance of these alter-knowledges to the present crisis. It doesn’t mean that we value everything according to its utility. I am more interested in how they could help us open new approaches to knowledge and the future of knowledge after the failure of the current form of globalization. I would think that art itself has to be firstly questioned, because today when we talk about contemporary art, it is actually about Western art—a movement that smoothly succeeded modern art; and that which enlarges the art market and scope of investment. This is an obstacle that
we have to overcome, like the question of technology, because a true pluralism is a thinking, it is not merely representation.

I started the project on technodiversity in *The Question Concerning Technology in China. An Essay in Cosmotechnics* (2016) and I come back to it in *Art and Cosmotechnics*, where I suggested exploring the varieties of experience of art—paraphrasing William James’s *On the Varieties of Religious Experience*, to understand the spirit of art in the West and the East. I would like to return to the different experiences of art and their philosophical significance which are no longer present in those critics that promote the commercial value of a work of art by referring to philosophers such as Goodman, Deleuze, Merleau-Ponty, etc. The question that I raised is, what might be the relevance of these experiences of art to our technological condition today? I set myself a rather difficult and polemic task. I compared Greek tragedy with Chinese landscape painting, two summits of poetic experiences we found in the West and the East, in order to unfold their distinctive recursive forms. I attempt to formulate these two experiences of art in terms of recursivity, a term that I have already explored in *Recursivity and Contingency* (2019, which will appear in Spanish in October 2022 with Caja Negra). The goal of this strategic exploration doesn’t belong to comparative philosophy, because I wanted to juxtapose tragedy and landscape painting with the recursive form in cybernetics, to open a breach towards a new task of art, namely the transformation of technology through art. This is also why in the book, I went back to Walter Benjamin’s “Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility (1935)” and argued that instead of being a good materialist, that is to say, conceptualizing how technology transformed the concept of art, it might be also worthwhile to ask how art could transform the very existence of technology.