

第一距离——王宁德的《大洪水》

王宁德用“物影成像”来定义他的《大洪水》系列作品。观者面对的是来自他采集的植物制成标本后直接在纸上留下的痕迹。植物从生长状态经过艺术家的工作，在水的作用下留下形态的视觉信息，成为被观赏的作品。这是一种全新的生成图像的方法。虽然作为结果的作品依旧对应着人们在日常生活和文化教育中形成的视觉观念：静态的植物图像有压缩的空间和背景，镶嵌形态的造型处于随机产生的意趣和有意的构图意识之间，墨水逐渐干涸的过程产生了意料之中和意料之外的丰富的色彩层次，等等。观者不自觉地调用各自的视觉经验加以解读。然而令人惊叹的是，所有这些符合常规意义上的造型和色彩观念的画面是不经画笔或照相机，而是由对象的直接印痕所形成的。这正是作品的引人入胜之处：人们总是看到自己愿意看到的东西，在那些变化万千、密切如织的细节变化中浮现对象的三维形体，在丰富典雅的色调中落实对象所处的背景和时空关系，然而获悉作品的制作过程后，观者有了审视自己如何构建对象，以及审美经验如何无意间产生作用的机会，对自身的反思由此而生。

以此为基础，《大洪水》使世界展现了它的无限丰富，而这种展现可以是那样的生动和简洁。虽然是生命体留下的印痕，但作品呈现的细致程度已经达到极致。“大洪水”在这里显现了微观的力量，在最细微处都展现出令人惊叹的细节。水的浸没和流动表明了这个世界不是空的，空间可以被无限地占据，而在终了之时，在所有的一切都逝去之后，世界并非毫无意义。在此意义上，它构成了一个令人信服的自足的世界，成为宇宙间作为一个整体的演化场的隐喻。

在这一构架中，植物作为一种物质，只有留下印记并且具身消失后才具有作品表达出的力量，而这一留下印记的直接方式令人震撼。它不依靠光在距离中的传播，而是在原本

的空间和尺度上以对躯体的接触而达成。人们惊叹于琥珀中昆虫对时间完美的体现，也痴迷于生物化石展现的远古时代，它们都是自然形成的影像，有一种生命的壮丽感和悲剧感。它们不是关于生命形态的观念，而是生命本身。《大洪水》是在浸润、渗透、覆盖、凝聚、干涸、结晶等等水与生命的互动中形成的，用自动染色和拓印的简单方式完成于纸面，虽然往往经过数星期时间的等待过程。植物经过了在栖息地的生长周期，被采集成为标本，经过构图固定，墨水的浸润和淹没，最后只留下纸张和痕迹。在选择对象和搭配色调的过程中，艺术家在随机性和观念意图的把握中自由地游走，显现了高超的驾驭能力。我们无法真正得知伟大的作曲家如何完成一部传世的杰作，也无法真正得知《大洪水》如何成为可能，能够提出的只是，材料因其单纯而简洁，图像因其直接而有力。

在《大洪水》及之前的系列中，王宁德的作品都将摄影传统中形成系统的构成机制作为一个反思对象，从表达语言以及材料技术等多重角度，他对摄影作品的生成和接受机制进行了质疑和拓展。从《宁德年间》到《要有光》，王宁德对摄影概念的僵化发出了自己的声音。在《有形之光》和《无名》中，王宁德对影像的呈现和对象的意义进行了拆解和重新组合。从《负光》到《大洪水》，他对形象“再现”的本质问题做出了另辟蹊径的回答。王宁德所针对的这一系统性的摄影机制，处于其核心地位的是单点透视图像，也就是力求“客观”地对设定场景和对象的“再现”。从古希腊的雕塑到文艺复兴时期发扬的透视学，是将人的眼睛设定为测量仪器，以几何学为观念基础和实践工具来建构对象，在认知的层面上制造一个识别的通道，这一系列的努力最后以借助光、化学的摄影术为结果，成就了图像的“再现”——“图像与我的所见相一致，是我的所见和所思的记录”。的确，这一思考和实践产生的结果可以被视为一种建构和表达的跃迁，进而因为其产品具有一般性的物质属性，似乎可以成为“正确”认知的证据和强化物。不可否认这是人们认知的伟大成就，历史可以分为摄影之前以及摄影之后。然而现代认知理论认为，我们对世界的观念一方面被认为来自对象的信息，另一方面实际上是在经过大脑

难以想象的加工之后才形成的。其过程首先经过了急剧的信号压缩，然后在以适者生存为第一要务的要求下，经过大量的信息删除之后，快速地进行选择判断并在瞬间做出生死攸关的决定。它是一种即刻的建构，绝大部分运作是在无意识中进行的。心智要让这些无意识的建构发挥演化意义上的作用，就需要大量的“脑补”材料来完成它的“意义”，以来自本能的模型和由互动产生的已知经验为动力和工具。这种建构只有在无意识中进行才能让大脑认为眼前的事物是“真实”和无需证明的。这一观点揭示了“再现”这一观念受制于演化和生理局限的隐秘。如果认为“真实的再现”是一种不顾一切的建构，那么作为“真实”的物理证明的图像当然是可以被反思和质疑的了。

从印象主义艺术及现代艺术的发展来看，单点透视类图像的有效性和统治力是可以被反思的。在科学领域的视觉认知中有一个案例，一个大脑特定区域受损的患者，眼睛丝毫没有损坏，一开始自认为和被认为已经“失明”，但是他能够自如地上下陌生的楼梯，准确地抓住门把手开门，踏着石头过河而没有浸湿鞋子。他只是无法识别形状，失去了“识读”人脸、文字和物品“名字”的能力。他的视觉中“信息”的输入受阻或无效，无法“正确”看到眼前的物体，但在需要手及其他身体部分做出本能性的反应时从不出错。另一个案例是他的反面，患者虽然能正确地识别物品、人和环境，但不能将自己的身体与这个世界建立正确的联系，比如无法抓到门把手，无法把水倒进杯子，无法自己穿衣服等等。

这两个极端的例子表明，世界可以并不是人们看起来的那个样子，或者即使就是那个样子，更本质和关键的东西可以完全不在其中。呈现在眼前的场景会被触觉和运动印证和强化，形成一个三维透视空间的概念。虽然单点透视的场景实际上是在其他辅助性的认知才建立起有效的空间感知的，但由于可以被“记录”而产生记忆并有效“回放”，同时那些在空间中进行平衡和运动所依赖的感知和处理是即时进行的，处于“无意识”层

面，无形中使单点透视场景这一“有意识”的感知几乎成为这个世界的表征的唯一寄托。与此同时，演化场中的生存压力驱使了控制欲以及对安全感的渴望，这是人们对单点透视的场景片面地依赖和迷信的深层原因。这一观点揭示了人类心理的有限性，而绘画和摄影就是在这一心理基础上建立起来的。

在此意义上，《大洪水》明确地建构了一个脱离单点透视场景的视觉传达系统。对于“再现”的图像，创作者通过绘制或者拍摄构成了一个“第三人称”视点的空间，在画面或影像中使观者充当这个再造空间的观察者。在观者亲身面对作品时，他与作品之间的空间形成了第一个距离，而在再现图像的虚拟空间中，假定的视点到再现对象的距离成为第二个距离。“第二距离”使观者想象自己存在于虚拟的空间之中，将第三人称视点想象成自己的视点，以本能性的识别意图为工具，使得“再现”成为可能。所有的“再现”图像都将观者纳入到虚拟的再造空间当中，而对这个虚拟空间的建构形成了习惯，使人们认为世界本来如此。从对“再现”艺术进行反叛的历程来看，实际上抽象绘画的本质并不在于摒弃了形象，它们是在生成形象，关键在于它们不再设定那个“第二距离”，而让观者直接面对艺术家的身体产生的现实。在《负光》系列的反射和覆盖之中，在《大洪水》系列的“物影成像”中，王宁德的作品只存在“第一距离”，即观者的目光对作品的接触。虽然由于观者的视觉经验，使得《大洪水》中的植物好像处于一个再造的空间之中，由于交错摆放形成了前后的关系，亦或背景的色度“提示出”了天空或者土地，但基于它的构成要素，它们并不构成一个虚拟的空间，而是依其本来面目的自动显现。所以，它不是对象的模拟，而是对象的痕迹。在此关系中，影像不再成为对象的指代，而是影像本身。

以此观察，《大洪水》系列作品仍然符合摄影的三个要素：自动获得影像、关联于某一特定的时间、稳定的可供反复观看和复制传播的状态。而它的特殊性在于，它不是意图生

成复制性的“再现”母本或数据，而是对象仅此一次的印记。它与艺术世界的连接仍然建立在审美观念当中，但因为独特的形式而具有非凡的意义。

王宁德在对家乡风物的回望和身体力行的工作中自然地关注了植物，这是连接儿时记忆的一种强有力的纽带。从他早期的《某一天》以来，记忆以及记忆所产生的作用时常缠绕在王宁德的作品中。在创作《大洪水》系列的同时，王宁德有意穿插了一个“转印”的作品集合，是他多年以来在各地拍摄的树木、丛林、草丛等植物，用转印的方式将影像固定在钛金属板上。虽然他在拍摄时可能意图并不明确，但从中可以看出，植物不只是遥远的故乡的记忆，而是艺术家随时随地在潜意识中一直关注的对象，也是他持续不断在记忆中进行搜寻的线索和脚步。

植物并不需要存在的理由，而作为观者的人则需要。植物是生产者，而动物是消费者。对于识别和认知来说，植物是完美的对象。王宁德在东北亚的日本韩国发现的当地食材“刺嫩芽”、蕨菜等山野菜与小时自己的印象别无二致，都是“春天要吃的菜”。这种对幼年和儿童时期的味觉体验的找回甚至延伸到了王宁德在欧洲的经历。身体的回忆与家乡在潜意识层面产生了更深的连接，也改变了旅行者对异域的态度。这些体验更加促使王宁德以一种更深入的关切来面对家乡的植物。虽然《大洪水》具备在北京完成的条件，并且进行必不可少的反复的试验也更方便，但他还是在家乡的山村中建立了工作室，让那里山川河流的空气、温度、四季的变化融入作品之中。这个时期正是全球新冠危机引起的对生态和文化反思的开始和发展的阶段，行动起来的人们鉴于“人类因被迫禁足而不得不与植物站在一起”，而试图发现“植物思维”带来的启示，进而探讨“盖亚理论”，“植物心灵”，“自由意志的反思”等等议题。随着对身边触手可及的野生植物的了解，王宁德也了解到它们具体的形态样貌和与人的关系如何出现在文学和艺术作品之中。由于相同的维度和气候，以及山川地貌的相近，王宁德了解中的产于家乡一带的

一些特定植物，在日本和朝鲜的古代文人和艺术家的作品也有涉及，如日本的长谷川等伯，朝鲜的女画家申师任堂，都给王宁德的作品带来一定的影响。与此同时，王宁德也注意到，在欧洲浪漫主义时期的文学和艺术中，对山川风物以及花草树木的关注进入到了一个追求大自然的超越的、理想的境界，其自觉层面引导了人与环境、土地、生态的重新思考。这一精神与对民族歌谣、民间传说、民族服饰、童话的整理发掘相伴随，反映了法国大革命引起的欧洲以至世界各民族独立意识的觉醒。而中国传统艺术中的风景和花鸟题材虽然成熟得很早并高度发达，并且在一定程度上起着“民族符号”的作用，但因其承载的精英意识和道德化的指向而无法导致“植物本体论”。在思考宇宙的秩序以及人在世界中的位置这类议题时，文明的教养、宗教和道德方面的规训仍然无法代替切身的经验，人在世界上的位置必然归因于他所出生和成长的所在，人与世界的关系甚至可以归结为味蕾上的一丝欣喜。

《大洪水》也包括类似星空或宇宙星云样貌的一些类型，它们是无数的植物种子形成的海洋，使这一系列开拓出更深远的类比空间。生命是存在的汪洋大海中的偶然事件，还是使宇宙间充满意识和精神的动力？认知学家霍夫曼 (Donald Hoffman) 认为，感官只选取了对生存适应有效的信息并进行了大量加工，远远不是“真实”世界的正确反映。他进而提出，意识可以作为世界的基础，物质和时空是一种数据压缩格式，构成了意识的感知界面，以图标的形式对适应“有用”。这一观点继承了说出“存在即被感知”的贝克莱 (George Berkeley) 的哲学，直接面对了如何以物理解释意识这一难题。霍夫曼以演化适应的理论重新解释了认知，并强调，在普朗克尺度之下的时空和物质无法作为基础而存在，世界遵循另外的法则。由此可以推论，无论生命的有无，对象都可以被看作意识的指针，它将指向一个无限丰富和复杂的世界。植物的种子是无形的宇宙中有形的根源，就像那位不能识别形状但行动自如的患者一样，形状，或者存在，不应阻碍对世界的洞见，意识取得胜利并不意味着物质的失败。以此观之，王宁德的《大洪水》

是一个指向感官框架之外的发现，他用水这种介质描述了生命的神奇和普遍，以及世界在维度上的浩瀚和多样。

张离

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The First Distance: Wang Ningde's "The Deluge"

In "The Deluge", Wang Ningde's compositions are formed of collected plant materials and viewers see traces of plant specimens left behind on paper. Once alive, the plants are manipulated by the artist, leaving behind visual information about their former shapes; baptized by water, they transform into art to be admired. This novel method of image generation results in works that correspond to conventional visual concepts embedded in everyday life and culture, reminiscent of impressionist paintings. The series includes static images of plants within a compressed space, against colorful backgrounds, their embedded forms inhabit a space between randomness and intentionality, and the dried ink creates rich layers of expected and unexpected colors. Based on these concepts, viewers may unconsciously interpret "The Deluge" through the lens of their visual experiences. However, despite the way in which these images fall in line with conventional notions of form and color, "The Deluge" is imminently surprising because its pieces were not created by the artist's brush or camera: they are the direct imprints of objects. That is the captivating aspect of these works. Initially, viewers see what they expect to see—three dimensional forms emerging from myriad closely woven details, situated against vibrant backgrounds. However, when they learn more about the works in this series, they encounter an opportunity to self-reflect and scrutinize how they construct images, and how their previous aesthetic experiences inadvertently come into play when confronted with a new image.

With vivid and concise presentation, "The Deluge" reveals the richness of the natural world. Although the works are created from imprints left behind by living organisms, the level of detail presented in each piece has reached a zenith. "The Deluge" harnesses the power of microcosms, presenting astonishing details in the most minute aspects. Through the flow of water, the artist shows us a world that is anything but empty. Space can be infinitely occupied, and in the end, after everything has passed, the world that is left behind is not meaningless. In this sense, "The Deluge" constitutes a convincing argument for a self-sufficient world, alluding to the evolutionary future of the universe as a whole.

Within this framework, plants become a substance, which must leave an imprint and disappear in order to imbue the artwork with power. This direct imprinting method is astonishing. It does not rely on the manipulation of light and shadow to convey distance or depth, rather, it places objects in direct contact with paper, resulting in traces that reflect the objects' original dimensions and scale. These traces hold the same fascinating embodiment of time as insects trapped in amber and fossils from geologic eras long past because they are naturally formed images that hold the grandeur and tragedy of life. They are not concepts about life, but life itself. "The Deluge" series has come into being through the interaction between water and plant life. The water covers, soaks and permeates the plants, which condense, dry,

and crystalize. Using simple staining and printing methods, Wang has created imprints of the plants on paper. Of course, there is also an element of time, as often, the imprints required weeks to form. The artist has collected plants from their native habitats, created compositions by affixing the specimens onto paper, and immersed and submerged them in ink. Eventually, only the paper, ink, and imprints are left behind. The artist moves freely between randomness and intention, demonstrating exceptional mastery in how he selects samples and coordinates tones. There is a magic in mastery that eludes analysis, but it is undeniable that the images resulting from these simple and concise methods and materials are direct and powerful.

In “The Deluge” and its preceding works, Wang questions and expands on the mechanisms of producing and viewing photography, reflecting on multiple dimensions of photography’s compositional mechanisms, including the language of expression and material technology. In his works spanning “In the Years of Ningde” and “Let There Be Light,” the artist critiques the rigidity of photographic concepts. In “Form of Light” and “No Name,” Wang deconstructs and recombines how images are presented and the significance of objects. And, as he moves from “Negative Light” to “The Deluge, the artist offers a unique approach to image “reproduction.”

Here, Wang addresses the photography convention of the single-point perspective, which strives for an “objective” representation of scenes and objects. From ancient Greek sculpture to the Renaissance perspective studies, measuring has been done with the human eye. With geometry as a conceptual basis, practical tools have been used to construct recognizable objects. Ultimately, these efforts resulted in photography—image “reproduction” through the use of light and chemicals. In other words, “the image corresponds to what I see, and records what I see and perceive.” Indeed, the outcome of this contemplation and practice is regarded as a great step forward for constructing and representing the visible world, and because the resulting products possess typical material attributes, they can seem to testify to and reinforce some version of what is “real.”

Undoubtedly, photography is a great achievement for human consciousness, and history can be divided into periods that predate and follow the invention of photography. However, contemporary theory and research into human cognition suggests that our concept of the world is only partly derived from information about objects, and is in fact, heavily influenced by processes occurring within the brain. This perception and cognition process involves rapid signal compression, extensive and necessary information deletion, and swift decision-making that can mean the difference between life and death. All of these processes take place immediately, and mostly unconsciously. The brain engages in these unconscious processes in order to survive, and “meaning” is only derived when the human brain “fills in” the missing information by drawing on instinct and past experiences. This unconscious process of reconstruction is what enables our brains to perceive the things we see as “real,” requiring no further proof of authenticity. In fact, the concept of “reproduction” is

constrained by evolution and biological limitations. If “true reproduction” is a construct that disregards all conditions, then images that serve as physical evidence of “the real” should certainly be subject to reflection and question.

Impressionist and Modern art perspectives reconsider the effectiveness and dominance of the single-point perspective. There is a medical phenomenon where brain damaged patients with intact eyes have a specific form of visual impairment known as “visual agnosia.” These individuals can effortlessly navigate unfamiliar obstacles such as stairways, grasp handles to open doors, and use stepping stones to cross streams. However, their ability to process shapes has been impaired, which means they have difficulty “processing” faces, reading text, or recognizing objects. Information received through their vision is obstructed, which prevents them from seeing objects “correctly,” but they are still able to interact with their environment using tactile and motor feedback. There are other medical cases which are the exact opposite, where patients can identify objects and people, but cannot accurately place themselves within the context of their environment, rendering them unable to grasp door handles, pour water into a cup, or put on clothing.

As these two extreme examples demonstrate, the world may not be as we perceive. But even if the world is as it appears, some essential and crucial elements may be entirely absent. What we see is confirmed and reinforced by touch and movement, and all of these come together to form a three-dimensional perception of space. Although the spatial perception of scenes created through the single-point perspective is established through supplementary cognition, these scenes can be “recorded” and “replayed” by the brain to create memories. Meanwhile, the processing we rely on to move through our environments happens instantaneously at an unconscious level, as a result, single point perspective, which requires “conscious” processing, becomes almost the sole representation of our world. At the same time, our evolutionary drive for survival demands a sense of control and security. This deep-seated survival instinct encourages our bias towards the single-point perspective, which reveals the limitations of human psychology while forming the basis for painting and photography.

In this sense, "The Deluge" is an explicit departure from the single-point perspective. In images that “reproduce” the world around us, creators establish a third person spatial perspective through drawing or photography. The viewer becomes the observer of the space reconstructed within the image or photo. When the viewer confronts the artwork, the space between them and the piece forms the first distance, while, within the virtual space of the reproduced image, the second distance is the distance from the assumed viewpoint from which the scene is observed to the reproduced object. This “second distance” is what allows the viewer to imagine themselves within the virtual space. They take on the third-person perspective as their own and employ their instinctive capacity for object recognition, which is what makes “reproduction” possible. All reproduced images draw the viewer into this

reconstructed virtual space, and the habit of constructing this virtual space is what convinces people that the world around them is as it appears. In art history, as we retrace the rebellion against art that “reproduces,” we see that abstract art does not reject imagery; rather, it generates images. The key lies in doing away with the “second distance,” so that viewers must directly confront the reality created by the artist. In the reflection and obfuscation seen in the “Negative Light” series, and in the way objects are directly imprinted on paper in “The Deluge” series, Wang’s work only exists in the “first distance,” which is formed when the viewer sees the artwork. The composition, depth, color tones, and background do “suggest” the sky or land, and this may encourage the viewer to place the plants in “The Deluge” within a constructed place. However, this still does not constitute a virtual space because the plants are manifested in their original forms. Therefore, the viewers are not looking at simulated objects, instead, they see traces left behind by the object. In this relationship, the image is no longer a reference to the object, but the object itself.

From this perspective, “The Deluge” does conform to the three photographic elements of automatic image acquisition, a snapshot capturing a specific point in time, and a stable product that can be viewed and reproduced repeatedly. However, it is unique because its original forms are not intended to be “reproduced,” rather, the object is imprinted only once. Though the aesthetic concepts on show are rooted in the artistic traditions, the series’ unique form gives it extraordinary significance. Wang’s work has always had a natural focus on plants, which serve as a powerful link to his childhood memories, and the scenery of his hometown influences his practice. Since his early series “Some Day,” memory and its effects have been intertwined in the artist’s creations. While he was working on “The Deluge,” Wang also created a collection of titanium plate transfers of images of trees, forests, and vegetation he photographed over the years. Though Wang may not have had a clear understanding of his intentions when taking these photos, these images of plants have become more significant than nostalgic memories of home—they have sunk into the artist’s subconscious awareness, and he continues to seek out and pore over their traces in his memory.

Plants do not need a reason to exist, but humans, as observers, do. Plants are the producers, while animals are the consumers. Plants are ideal objects for identification and understanding. When Wang was in Japan and South Korea, he realized that many of the foraged plants he encountered were indistinguishable from the vegetables he ate as a child, they were all, “vegetables that could be found in springtime.” These reactivated childhood flavor memories extended to the artist’s experiences in Europe. In other words, Wang’s body carries deep subconscious connections with his hometown, informing and changing his attitudes towards foreign lands. When he began working on “The Deluge,” these experiences led Wang to approach the native flora of his hometown with a deeper, more intense focus. The series could have been completed in Beijing. In fact, in the city, it would have been more convenient to perform some of the necessary, repetitive experimentation on

technique, but Wang still chose to establish a studio in the mountains near his hometown because he wanted to integrate the environment—the quality of air, temperature, and seasonal changes—into his work.

While he worked on “The Deluge,” the world was beginning to see some of the ecological and cultural impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the pandemic played out, people confined to their homes began to say that they had become “humans forced to stand with plants.” The concept of “plant thinking,” “Gaia theory,” “plant consciousness,” and “reflecting on free will” became popular. As Wang came to understand more about the plants growing in the wilderness all around him, he studied how their forms and relationships with humans were presented in literary and art work. Due to similarities in climate and topography, some plants from Wang’s hometown can be found in the works of ancient Korean and Japanese literary and art figures, such as Hasegawa Tōhaku, a Japanese painter, and Shin Sŭngnyŏng, a Korean woman painter. While these discoveries came to influence his work, Wang also noted that the Romantic pursuit of nature—as seen in European paintings of plants, animals and landscapes—was a means of pursuing transcendence and idealism, which then led to a reconsideration of the relationship between people, land, environment, and ecology. This romanticization of nature was also accompanied by the cataloging and exploration of ballads, costumes, folk tales, and fairy tales, which reflected an awakening in Europe and the world, where ethnic groups began to seek out and form nationalist identities in the wake of the French Revolution. However, despite the maturity of landscape and flower-and-bird themes in traditional Chinese art, these did not constitute a “plant ontology,” or deep philosophical understanding of plants as integral to identity. Though they played a role as “ethnic symbols” to a certain extent, the elitist values and moral directives these plants and animals already carried in Chinese art prevented them from taking on a broader sense of “plant ontology.” When humans contemplate the universe and our place in it, civilization, religion, and morality are still unable to replace firsthand experience. Each person’s place in the world is inevitably attributed to the place where they were born and raised, and even a brief moment of pleasure on our taste buds can serve to remind us of our place in the world.

Some pieces from “The Deluge” resemble the night sky or nebulae, but are actually formed of water, ink, and countless seeds. These variations allowed the artist to explore deeper analogical spaces, begging the question: Did life begin as a random event in the vast sea of existence, or is there a consciousness or spirit that fills the universe with life force? Cognitive scientist Donald Hoffman puts forth the theory that the senses only perceive and process information needed for survival and do not constitute a true reflection of the “real” world. He further proposes that consciousness is fundamental to the fabric of reality, and what we perceive as the external world—matter and space-time—is a highly compressed representation that presents only the “useful” information we need to effectively adapt to and navigate the world around us. Hoffman’s views build on the philosophy of George Berkeley, who famously said, “to

be is to be perceived,” to explain the concept of consciousness in physics. Hoffman reinterprets consciousness through evolutionary theory, and emphasizes that at scales below the Planck scale, space-time and matter cannot be considered the basis of reality. At such extreme scales, other theoretical frameworks are necessary. From this, it can be inferred that whether or not life is present, objects can be pointers of consciousness, and that the world is infinitely rich and complex.

Plant seeds are the tangible roots of an intangible universe, and much like the patient who could not recognize shapes but moved freely in his environment, shape or existence should not hinder insight, and the triumph of consciousness does not diminish the material world. In this regard, Wang Ningde’s “The Deluge” points to discoveries which transcend sensory frameworks. Through the medium of water, the series describes the wonder and universality of life, as well as the vastness and diversity of our world in its many dimensions.

Zhang Li

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