Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication
https://ejournal.ukm.my/mjc
Volume 42(3) 2026: 489-503

Reassessing Chinese Ecocinema as an Ecological Medium: A Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

SHI YILIN
NURZIHAN HASSIM*
ZHOU YANG
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

ABSTRACTS

Since the 1990s, Chinese ecocinema has garnered significant attention from practitioners and researchers across various fields in China. It showcases traditional Eastern aesthetics alongside regional social and cultural characteristics, while injecting a core philosophy of green and sustainable development into Chinese cinema. However, scholarly discourse has long tended to view Chinese ecocinema merely as a carrier of ecological themes rather than as an ecological medium in its own right. This conceptual limitation resulted in dilemmas in the research paradigm, artistic practices, and film creation. To address this, this study utilizes a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to screen and organise literature from the past decade. The findings reveal that; 1) Research on Chinese ecocinema is transitioning from the textual analysis of ecological themes toward the study of films' ecological media attributes; 2) An ecological media perspective can more effectively explain the cross-media communication phenomenon surrounding Chinese ecocinema; and 3) The localisation of Chinese ecocinema must be coordinated with global ecology through the holistic framework of media ecology. Ultimately, the study aims to reposition Chinese ecocinema from the lens of media ecology. By examining its ontological dimension we regard ecocinema as a material and cultural apparatus capable of intervening in regulating, and altering the relationship between humans and nature.

Keywords: *Chinese ecocinema, media ecology, media philosophy, film ontology, systematic literature review.*

INTRODUCTION

In the late 20th century, with the intensification of the global ecological crisis and the gradual improvement of people's ecological awareness, the interdisciplinary research idea of ecology has been integrated and developed in literature and art research. After the 1990s, the film ecocriticism began to emerge and provide a unique perspective for future film practice and theoretical research (Cui, 2020). In 2004, MacDonald first put forward the concept of 'Ecocinema', he regards ecocinema as a kind of *slow film* creation thinking and mode in which human beings consciously listen to the natural sounds (Ingram, 2013). The text also appraised it as "an 'Edenic' respite from conventional consumerism" (2004, pp.109), which distinguishes ecocinema from commercial film. This suggests that MacDonald's perspective highlights how humans utilize media technology to experience and participate in the ecological environment. Therefore, the most original interpretation of ecocinema contains the core point of media ecology: the ontology of media technology and the ecological background of its birth and application.

However, MacDonald and his supporters' definition of ecocinema has aroused opposition from other scholars. They believe that limiting ecocinema to the category of *slow*

*Corresponding author: nurzihan@ukm.edu.my
E-ISSN: 2289-1528
https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2026-4203-26
Received: 20 May 2026 | Accepted: 15 August 2026 | Published: 30 September 2026

films such as experimental films, avant-garde films and documentaries is undoubtedly confining ecocinema to the awkward situation of boredom and unattractiveness (Rust et al., 2013). This will be detrimental to the ecocinema development, but also ignore the ecological status and effect. In particular, the emergence of films *The Day After Tomorrow (2004)* and *2012 (2009)* have made scholars realize that ecocinema should not be defined as genre films, but emphasize that films, as an ecological practice, can represent the real environment, spread a sustainable development idea, and even inspire people's green action (Rust et al., 2013; Wu, 2013; Sun, 2018a). These views consider ecocinema as an ecologically conscious medium that participates in shaping and influencing the sociocultural environment. Ecocinema highlights not only the interplay between film and ecology, but also film as a medium that allows people to better understand and touch the world in which we exist (Sinnerbrink, 2011). Similarly, the ultimate goal of media ecology is using media technology to understand ourselves and the world.

Scholarship suggests that developing countries often bear to the negative impact of the global ecological crisis (Wang, 2005). Since China's reform and opening up, particularly after 2000, accelerating modernization and urbanization have pushed environmental issues to the forefront of various academic disciplines. Within this context, Chinese film studies have integrated ecology and ecocriticism to initiate an interdisciplinary discussion on "Chinese ecocinema". This genre signifies that Chinese film has embarked on the path toward localization and sustainable development. On the one hand, it records the unique Chinese sociocultural environment; and on the other hand, it conveys east classic aesthetics. Given the representation of China's environment in ecocinema, it is important to explore its impact on China's natural and sociocultural environment as an 'ecological medium'. However, since the beginning of the study of Chinese ecocinema, the discussion of media ecology and film ontology have remained underexplored. Most studies focus on the ecological themes and format techniques presented within film texts, while few engage with media ecology. This has led to the lack of a holistic, original and developmental cognition in the study of Chinese ecocinema. Therefore, introducing media ecology to Chinese ecocinema can shift the focus from film textual analysis towards media communication, which better explains the creative background, content and reception of Chinese ecological films. This systematic review will focus on the following questions:

1. What are the hot topics of Chinese ecocinema study?
2. How is the theoretical relevance between Chinese ecocinema research and media ecology reflected?

To address these gaps, the remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 outlines the methodological design, data source and the process of SLR including data collection, analysis tools and bibliometric analysis. The third section discusses the hot topics of Chinese ecocinema research and their impact on the subsequent conclusions. The fourth section demonstrates the relationship between Chinese ecocinema studies and the key points of media ecology through the analyzed literature. The fifth section is the summary of this review. We hope that this research provides theoretical value for future research on Chinese ecocinema using media ecology thinking.

METHODOLOGY

Given the purpose of this paper, which is to systematically explore the development prospects of research on Chinese ecocinema and further investigate the theoretical relevance between

ecocinema and media ecology. Relying solely on selective reading of individual papers makes it difficult to comprehensively present the development context of this field. Therefore, this paper adopts the systematic literature review (SLR) as the main research method. SLR can systematically identify, screen and analyze relevant studies based on clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, and answer established research questions through transparent and repeatable procedures (Mengist et al, 2020; Huasasquiche-Carbajal et al, 2022). Although a certain scale of research findings has been formed in ecocinema, the current studies mainly focus on the direct dimensions of ecological subjects or projects, narrative expressions, cultural meanings, etc. Additionally, the focus of attention and theoretical approaches among related studies are relatively scattered. Thus, there is still room for further expansion in the systematic review of the overall development trend of Chinese ecocinema research and its connection with media ecology. Based on the conceptual diversity of the above mentioned research field, this research defines the associated concepts of Chinese ecocinema, and accordingly determines the keywords and their combination method for literature retrieval to ensure that the literature identification process aligns with the research questions. To enhance the transparency of the literature retrieval, screening and reporting processes, this paper follows the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework. PRISMA "reflects advances in methods to identify, select, appraise, and synthesize studies" (Page et al, 2021). Here is the workflow for this review:

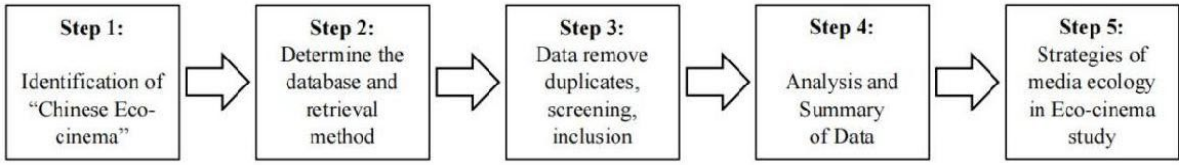


Figure 1: Search string for CNKI and Scopus

Data Sources and Research Procedure

First, this review collects data from 2 sources; 1) the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), China's largest and most authoritative scientific literature database platform, and; 2) Scopus database, a multilingual literature platform with strong global influence. The comprehensive use of the literature from these two databases can ensure that the research sources are representative and authoritative. Second, this research selects the subject words closely related to 'Chinese ecocinema' as the search criteria, as shown in Table 1. Notably, this review does not limit the publication period of the literature. Because the concept of 'ecocinema' and 'Chinese ecocinema' appeared relatively recently, the number of available studies is minimal. Additionally, this study aims to identify the relevant information on media ecology ('human', 'media', and 'ecology') in previous studies. To collect as much relevant data as possible we choose not to specify the publication timeframe.

According to PRISMA, the data collection and inclusion process for this systematic review is shown in Figure 2. PRISMA is divided into three parts: 1) Identification, 2) Screening and 3) Included. The following section will describe and interpret the data in detail.

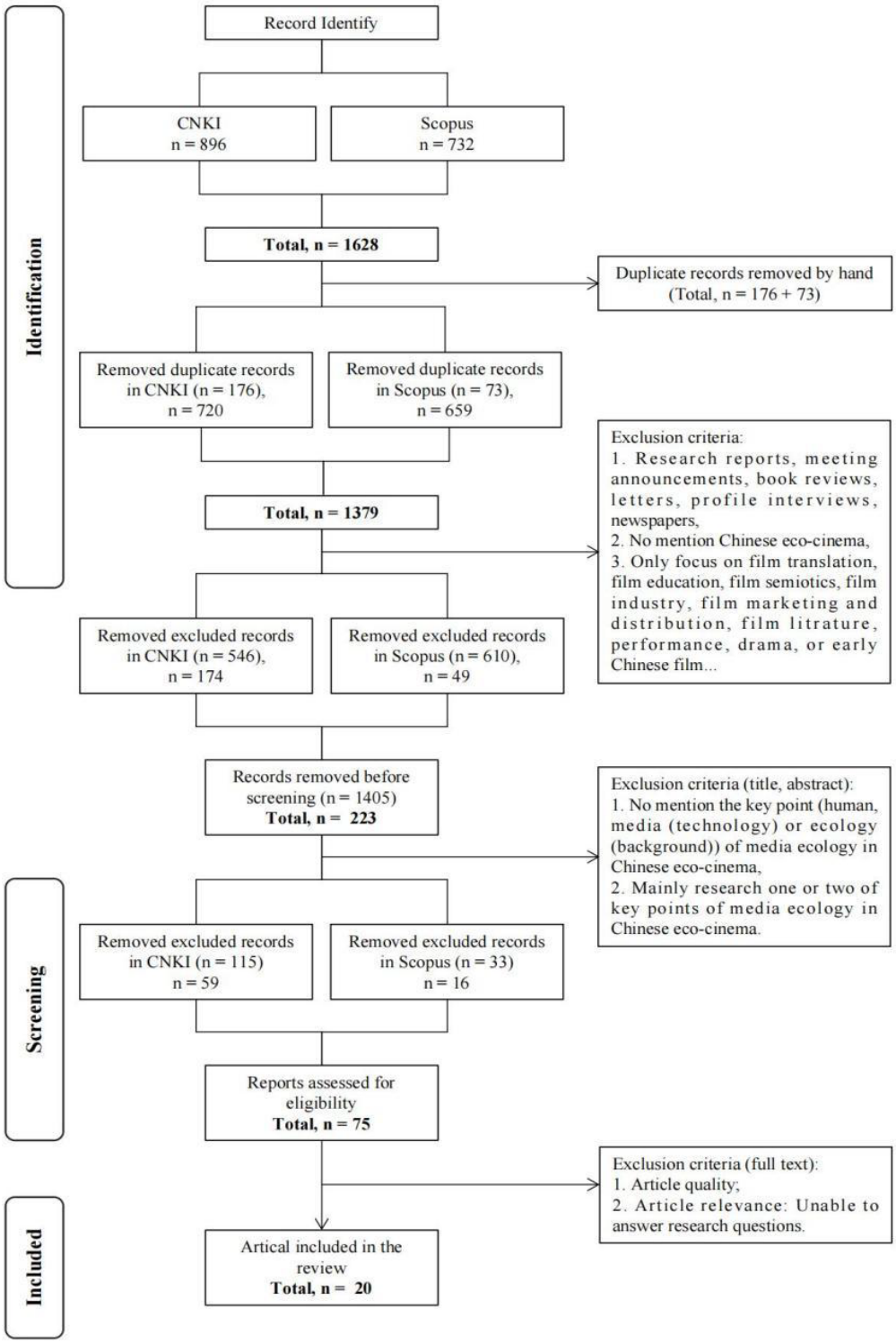


Figure 2: Data selection procedure

Identifying Relevant Studies

Through a preliminary search of CNKI and Scopus databases, we have identified the core concepts of 'Chinese ecocinema'. The search criteria used for 'Chinese ecocinema' across the two databases are specified in Table 1. From this, a total of 1628 studies were initially retrieved (CNKI, n=896 and Scopus, n=732).

Table 1: Search string for CNKI and Scopus

Database	Keyword	Number
The China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI)	Topic: “中国生态电影 (Chinese ecocinema)” OR “中国 (China) ” AND “生态电影 (ecocinema) ” OR “中国 (China) ” AND “绿色电影 (green film) ” OR “中国电影 (Chinese film) ” AND “生态 (ecology) ” OR “中国电影 (Chinese film) ” AND “生态批评 (ecocriticism) ” OR “ 中国电影 (Chinese film) ” AND “生态美学 (ecoaesthetics) ” OR “中国 (China) ” AND “慢电影 (slow film) ” OR “中国 (China) ” AND “环境电影 (environmental film) ” OR “环境保护电影 (environmental protection film)”	**Total, n=896**
Scopus	Title & Abstract & Key: “Chinese” AND “eco-cinema (ecocinema)” OR “Chinese” AND “eco-film (ecofilm)” OR “Chinese” AND “ecological” AND “film (movie)” OR “Chinese” AND “ecology” AND “film (movie)” OR “Chinese” AND “green” AND “film (movie)” OR “Chinese” AND “film (movie)” AND “ecocriticism” OR “Chinese” AND “film (movie)” AND “ecoaesthetics” OR “Chinese” AND “slow” AND “film (movie)” OR “Chinese” AND “environment” AND “film (movie)” OR “Chinese” AND “environmental” AND “film (movie)”	**Total, n=732**

Screening and Included Procedure

All studies from CNKI (n=896) and Scopus (n=732) databases were imported into EndNote X9 reference management software. After deleting duplicates (n=103), the remaining 1379 studies were screened by type, research field, and research object. After the screening, 1405 records that did not meet the criteria were excluded, and 223 studies were obtained. Then we proceed to the review stage, evaluating the title and abstract of these 223 studies, and excluding 148 irrelevant data items (as detailed in Table 2). Thus, a total of 75 articles were retained after the final review phase.

Table 2: Result of Screening Process

Database	CNKI (Total, n=174)	Scopus (Total, n=49)
Irrelevant	51	28
Human	11	2
Media	27	2
Ecology	24	1
Excluded	115	33
Included	**59**	**16**

Furthermore, we read the full text of these 75 studies in depth and manually imported them into the VOSviewer and CiteSpace platforms to conduct a bibliometric analysis. The literature confirms that the Chinese ecocinema research reflects the three core elements of media ecology: ‘human’, ‘media (technology)’, and ‘ecology’. In this way, the framework assisted us in selecting the studies most suitable for inclusion from these 75 studies.

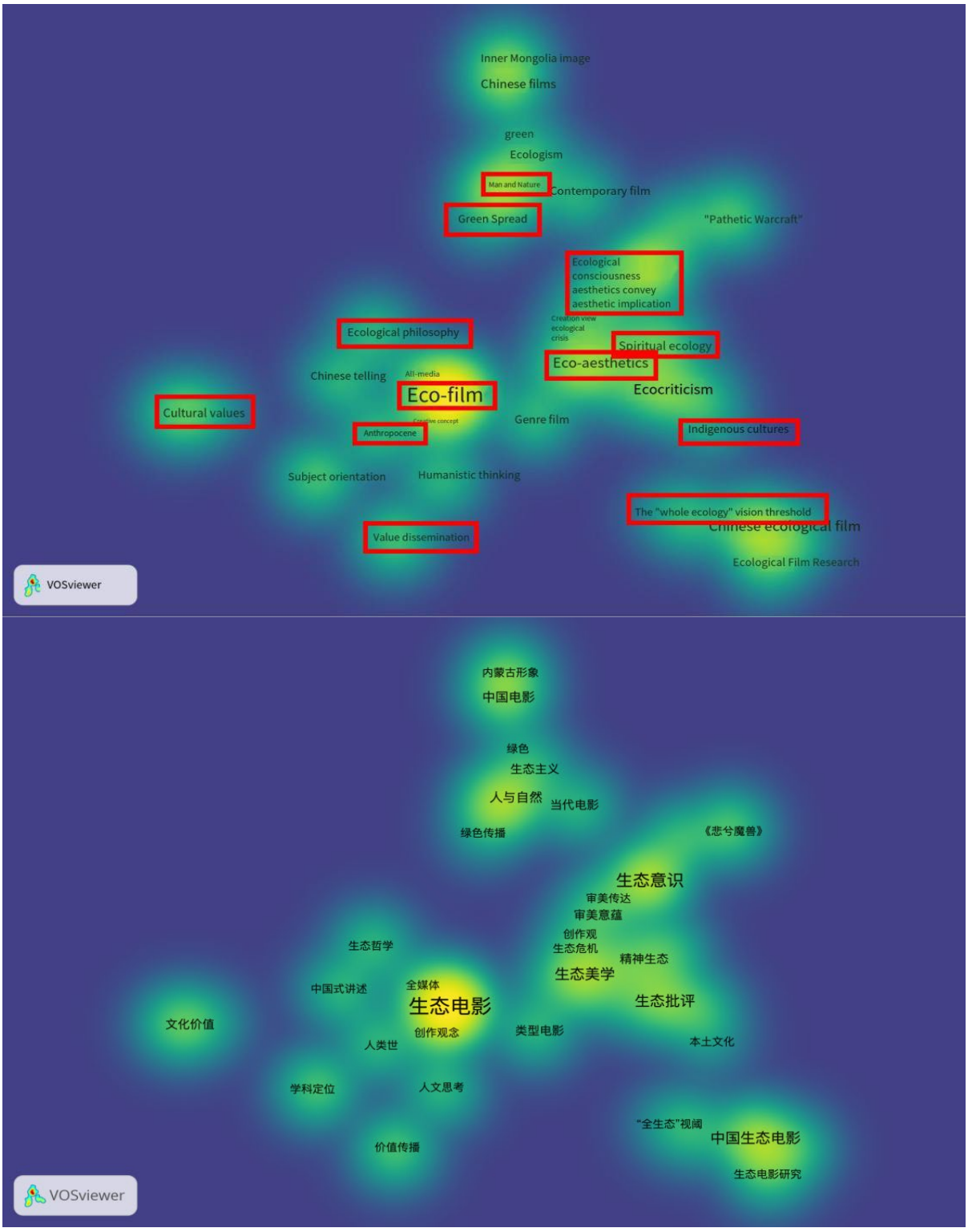


Figure 3: Keyword co-occurrence on the VOSviewer (Comparison version between Chinese and English)

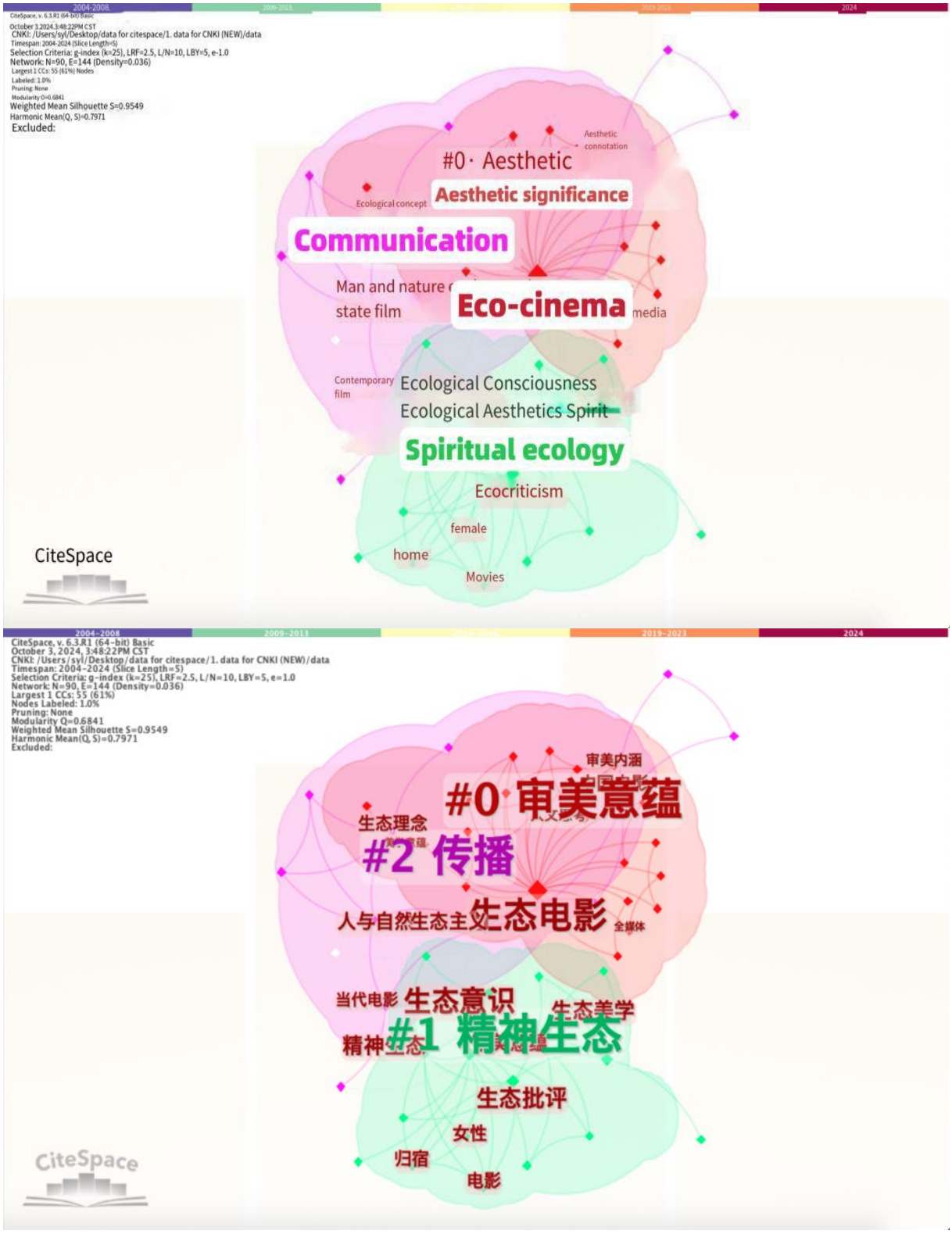


Figure 4: Keyword co-occurrence on the CiteSpace Software
(Comparison version between Chinese and English)

Finally, focusing on the important elements of individual, media (technology), and ecology in media ecology theory, a total of 20 articles meeting the inclusion criteria were selected for inclusion for this review, as shown in the following section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A reading and analysis of the full text of the 75 studies (CNKI, *n*=59; Scopus, *n*=16), selection was made based on literature quality and relevance to this study. Ultimately, we selected 20 studies for the final review (CNKI, *n*=14; Scopus, *n*=6), as shown in Table 3. These studies, covering the period from 2010 to 2024, demonstrate the relationship between Chinese ecocinema research and media ecology theory from different perspectives. Therefore, they can be used to answer the research questions concerned in this review and while also providing a pathway for interpreting the concept of Chinese ecocinema and the directions of future research.

Table 3: Result of screening process

N	Year	Author	Reference	Studies
1	2010	Sheldon Lu & Tang Hongfeng	The possibility of ecocinema criticism in China (中国生态电影批评之可能)	*Chinese ecocinema* was proposed and defined for the first time in China, causing Chinese scholars to pay attention to the background and reflection of its birth.
2	2011	Li Xiaowen	The thought of the ecological crisis and the Eco-film between China and the West (生态危机下的中西方生态电影思考)	Based on the comparison between Chinese and Western ecocinema, this paper discusses the ecological wisdom brought by Chinese ecocinema to cope with the deterioration of the human environment and the lack of a spiritual world.
3	2013	Shi Di	Ecocinema and film ecology in China from the perspective of omnimedia (全媒体视域下的中国生态电影与电影生态)	This paper discusses the relationship among film creators, film audiences, ecocinema and the ecological environment in the omnimedia era.
4	2017	Chu Kiuwai	**Scopus:** Screening environmental challenges in China: three modes of ecocinema	Re-evaluate Chinese ecocinema, divide it into three models to discuss and compare, and put forward the importance of the three models to China's collaborative environmental governance.
5	2018	Luo Ting	Changing landscapes: An important turn in contemporary ecocinema (更迭的风景：当代生态电影研究的重要转向)	This paper summarizes three major turns of Chinese ecocinema research: subject, media and ecological holism.
6	2018	Wang Kunyu	On the aesthetic dimension of ecocinema (论生态电影的审美之维)	To explore the ecoaesthetic elements of Chinese ecocinema.
7	2018	Zhu Pengjie	Localization: A new dimension of ecocinema criticism in China (在地性:中国生态电影批评的新维度)	Centring on the core point of view of 'location', this paper studies the relationship between 'body', 'film space', and 'natural culture' in Chinese ecocinema.
8	2018	Sun Wei	Reflections on the creation and aesthetic trend of Chinese ecocinema (中国生态电影的创作反思与审美走向)	From the two aspects of creation form and cultural concept, the existing problems of Chinese ecocinema are reconsidered, and the solution is put forward.
9	2021	Liu Kun	Into the habitation of nature:	Eco-documentary realizes the expression

			On Eco-documentary films (走向大自然的栖居——论生态纪录电影)	and transcendence of the ecological whole view from two aspects of art and technology.
10	2021	Carlos Rojas	**Scopus:** At Home in the World: *Wandering Earth*, Environmentalism, and Reimagined Homelands	To explore the ways of *Wandering Earth*'s films and novels to explore the relationship between human beings and the world.
11	2021	Lee Zoran, Pecic	**Scopus:** Haunting China: Eco-poetics of Zhao Liang's *Behemoth*	By connecting the slow aesthetic of ecocinema with the environmental destruction of the Inner Mongolia landscape and the exploitation of Chinese migrant workers, director Zhao Liang embodies an ecological vision of self-expression and self-criticism.
12	2022	Niu Guangxia	Value reconstruction and genre integration of Chinese ecocinema from the perspective of Anthropocene (人类世视域下中国生态电影的价值重建与类型融合)	This paper discusses how Chinese ecocinema realizes human's perception and grasp of the concept of 'Anthropocene'.
13	2022	Sun Zuxin	Study on the Domestic Genre Films in the New Era from the Dimension of Ecocriticism (生态批评维度下新时代国产类型电影研究)	Explore the ecological consciousness and environmental protection concept in Chinese genre films.
14	2023	Xu Qianwen	Concept generation and path exploration of *'Carbon Neutral Film'* in China (中国"碳中和电影"的概念生成和路径探索)	The concept of *Carbon Neutral Film* was proposed, combining Chinese ecocinema with the background of carbon neutral globalisation and advocating that the creation and dissemination of Chinese films should take the green road of reducing carbon emissions.
15	2023	Yue Fen	The aesthetic presentation of Chinese ecocinema: *'Denger and I'* from the perspective of aesthetics (中国生态电影的美学呈现——参与美学理论视阈中的《等儿的湿地》)	The participatory aesthetics of Chinese ecocinema dispels the 'subject' and 'object' relationship between film and audience.
16	2023	Liu Yi	How to view places ecologically? From Adrian Ivakhiv philosophy of ecocinema to Chinese ecocinema (如何生态地观看地方?——从阿德里安·伊瓦希夫的生态电影哲学思想到中国生态电影)	Based on Adrian Ivakhiv's theory, this paper proposes that Chinese ecocinema retrains the audience's perception from three dimensions.
17	2023	Guo Li	**Scopus:** Animating eco-	This paper discusses the cross-media

			aesthetics: Multiplanar images, interspecies government, and Eco-conscious gaming in the *Legend of Hei (2019)* and its *TV series (2011-Present)*	exploration of ecological consciousness in *The Legend of Hei (2019)* from different media platforms to media ecology and even the whole ecosystem.
18	2023	Tan Jia	**Scopus:** Materializing the digital landscape: the cinema–ecology complex and Chinese fantasy media	The establishment of a "cinema-ecology complex" for film shooting and film tourism development in China is proposed to provide ideas for the sustainable development between the digital landscape and the real landscape.
19	2024	Zhan Hao & Li Huanqin	On the narrative strategy and cultural value of ecological aesthetics film and television works (论生态美学影视作品的叙事策略与文化价值)	This paper discusses how the narrative strategy of Chinese ecocinema forms ecological aesthetics.
20	2024	Chiara Cigarini	**Scopus:** Cinematic Science Fiction, Indigenous Mythology, and Multispecies Entanglement: An Ecological Reading of *The Mermaid (2016)*	Rethinking *The Mermaid (2016)* of Chinese ecocinema forms its concern and concern for the real society with indigenous wisdom and sensibility.

The combination of media and ecology is inevitable, as both are closely intertwined with humans and non-humans (Peters, 2015). The theory of media ecology provides a basic framework for studying the relationship between media and the broader ecosystem—namely, "what media (technology) should be used" and "how to use media (technology)" to understand and engage with ourselves and the world. Through a systematic literature review (SLR) of 20 articles, we found that past studies regard ecocinema as an ecological medium. On the one hand, it demonstrates that filmmakers, social institutions, and state apparatuses consciously choose the forms of ecocinema to disseminate their own understanding of ecology to the audience. On the other hand, the media attributes of ecocinema record and express ecological phenomena, forming a bridge between the cinematic world and the real world. Based on this analysis of the 20 selected studies, we can identify the core triad of 'human–media–ecology' within media ecology theory, mapping out a path forward for Chinese ecocinema research

Ecological Ontology: The Establishment of the Ecological Relationship between Individual and Nature

In the study of Chinese ecocinema, the relationship between films and the 'human' element is mainly discussed through three aspects: 1) the analysis of film creators and communicators, 2) the classification of textual representation or the analysis of non-human characters, and 3) the analysis of film audiences.

First of all, Sheldon Lu (2010, pp. 93) explores the complex impact of China's social development on the ecological order. He points out that for a long time after the founding of New China, people put more emphasis on the opposition and struggle between humans and nature. It was not until the 21st century that the scientific concept of developing a 'harmonious society' in China was proposed to correct worsening social and environmental problems. This directly led to differences in the interpretation of the relationship between humans and nature in Chinese films, influencing the ecological themes presented by current 'Chinese new ecocinema'. Film artists use ecocinema to achieve the goal of bottom-up

governance of the ecological environment. The most basic level is the pursuit of self-expression and the alignment of film art with the ideals of ecological philosophy. The second is to promote a public environment of ecological improvement through film. Finally, they cultivate the audience's concept of ecocriticism through ecocinema (Chu, 2017). Xu (2023) and Tan (2023) combine the relationship between media and ecology, advocating that the creation, dissemination, and consumption of ecocinema in China should take a more "low-carbon" and environmentally friendly green road.

In terms of film texts, Chinese ecocinema attaches importance to reflecting people's living conditions in natural and social ecology, as well as people's critical thinking on building an ecological civilization (Shi, 2013). Especially with the advent of the Anthropocene era, humanity is faced with the double crisis of a worsening living environment and a lacking spiritual world (Li, 2011; Niu, 2022). However, ecocinema uses special effects to provide a vision of non-human beings and apocalyptic disasters, reinforcing the film's ecological consciousness through story settings such as 'multispecies entanglement' and 'Noah's Ark' (Cigarini, 2024).

Current ecocinema research in China is shifting from exploring the representation of nature, flora, and fauna to studying the reception and perception of the audience (Luo, 2018). Through the literature review, the following research viewpoints are found: 1) The audience's perception of space. Zhu (2018) and Yue (2023) explore the presentation of space in Chinese ecocinema from the perspectives of 'localization' and 'environment', respectively. Zhu focuses on the impact of film space on audience cognition from three aspects: 'local identity', 'historical and cultural identity', and 'ecological civilization values'. Yue demonstrates the three stages of audience perception and experience of film space: *cognition—participation—integration*. 2) The audience's perception of the film's story world. Zhan and Li (2024) analyze audiences' understanding and experience of characters, scenes, and stories in movies, demonstrating that films play an important role in generating ecological consciousness. 3) The audience's perception of different genres or ecological works produced across different media. Sun (2022) analyzes the transmission of ecological consciousness in high-grossing Chinese film genres, namely disaster films, comedies, and ethnic minority films. In addition, Rojas (2021) and Guo (2023) discuss the different media experiences brought by two commercial IPs through cross-media adaptation and dissemination. Thus, ecological artworks form a unique media ecological phenomenon, which can eventually realize an ethical and political approach to promoting the governance of ecosystems (Guo, 2023).

Furthermore, Liu (2023) discusses how audiences form ideas about themselves and the world through Adrian Ivakhiv's philosophy of ecocinema. Specifically, the first dimension—the changes in geographical environments presented by ecocinema—can reshape the audience's perception of the landscape. The second dimension focuses on the shaping of the human self by historical changes and East-West cultural differences. The third dimension reflects humanity's positioning in the world, as well as the positioning of Chinese ecocinema in the global film system, through the construction of worlds where humans and animals coexist.

Materiality of the Medium: The Influence of Media Technology on the Ecosystem

As a product of the combination of art and technology, Chinese ecocinema is an integral part of the social and cultural ecosystem. First of all, Chinese ecocinema can be divided into three types according to its film media characteristics and communication effects (Shi, 2013): 1)

deep ecocinema, which uses lyrical special effects and traditional Eastern aesthetics to disseminate ecological ideas; 2) environmentalist film, which uses documentary, data, and intuitive images to show eco-political ideas; and 3) perceptual training ecocinema, which applies artistic, experimental, and non-traditional film technologies centered on core ecological concepts. Secondly, from the perspective of film semiotics, Chinese ecocinema has the following characteristics: 1) it attaches importance to the description and dissemination of natural scenery and customs; 2) it focuses on capturing time, especially vanishing geographical and historical-cultural landscapes; 3) it records human experiences and environmental behaviors; 4) it prioritizes regional dialects and historically resonant music within its soundscapes; and 5) it emphasizes the formation of a rational space for communication (Zhu, 2018; Liu, 2023).

However, as an ecological medium, Chinese ecocinema faces certain challenges. For example, its narrative vision can be simplistic, its entertainment value low, and its tone often overly didactic (Sun, 2018b). Nevertheless, we also see that many scholars hold a positive attitude toward Chinese ecocinema. Pecic (2021), for instance, takes the eco-documentaries directed by Zhao Liang as an example, considering his films to 'push slow cinema and the eco-documentary genre into new territories that are simultaneously expressive and socially critical'. Similarly, Rojas (2021), Guo (2023), and Cigarini (2024) believe that Chinese ecocinema is successfully navigating the boundary between art and commerce, charting an innovative path toward cross-media development.

Ecological Epistemology: Individual's Cognitive and Emotional Reactions to the Ecosystem

At present, the study of Chinese ecocinema is shifting from criticism of film texts to media ontology. The shift from the traditional evaluation perspective of film to a holistic research perspective of media ecology that transcends duality (Chu, 2017). First of all, this framework returns to the 'Hegelian' media philosophy, based on the concept of means, *Vermittlung*, a meditation (Peters, 2015), viewing Chinese ecocinema as an ecological medium used by human beings to approach nature (Zhan & Li, 2024). On the one hand, it returns to natural experience in artistic creation, and on the other hand, it surpasses the aesthetic of reality and nature in technical application (Liu, 2021). Secondly, Chinese ecocinema is regarded as an 'environment'. In this environment, the creator and the audience exchange their emotional experience. Human and non-human material film worlds develop themselves with each other, forming an equal and interactive ecological whole state (Liu, 2023; Yue, 2023).

Moreover, Chinese ecocinema, like China's ecological environment, has attracted widespread attention and discussion on a global scale. How to make Chinese ecocinema convey effective ecological awareness of audiences from different cultural backgrounds is a major challenge currently facing the development of this genre. Li (2011) believes that Chinese ecocinema can utilize the global ecological and spiritual crisis as an opportunity to explore a developmental approach combining Chinese and Western perspectives. Similarly, Rojas (2021), Sun (2022), and Cigarini (2024) propose that the only way for Chinese ecocinema to expand its influence is by breaking the boundaries of film genres, media, and platforms, while adhering to local culture, indigenous wisdom, and the audience's aesthetic needs.

Therefore, researchers should follow a more holistic developmental framework in the practice and research of Chinese ecocinema. This requires creators and communicators to have the sensitivity to assess changing situations and the courage to explore and innovate, while calling on researchers to broaden their perspectives and adopt more effective interdisciplinary methods (Chu, 2017). As an ecological medium, Chinese ecocinema requires

more in-depth exploration and discussion by scholars across different fields regarding its ethical and political potential to influence real ecosystems.

CONCLUSION

The future communicative effectiveness of Chinese ecocinema hinges on the realization of its function as an ecological medium, rather than the ecological themes and content presented in the film texts. Ivakhiv (2008) believes that the key point of an eco-critical analysis of film representation is to analyze the narration of the film itself. This involves a recognition and grasp of the relationship between the film text and the larger world. At the same time, it emphasizes the representation and transformation of film as a media technology and cultural device within the actual background and effects of this world. The ultimate goal of Chinese ecocinema is to create a social atmosphere of ecological aesthetics (Wang, 2018). Based on research data from CNKI and Scopus, this systematic review combined the PRISMA method with relevant literature management and data processing software to screen a total of 1,628 collected studies. Finally, 20 key studies were selected to support this review. The purpose is to reveal the hot topics of Chinese ecocinema research, identify the two core viewpoints of 'media' and 'ecology' within the concept of Chinese ecocinema, and point out the significance of the genre as an ecological medium according to the analysis of media ecology. Ultimately, through this systematic literature review, we demonstrate the relationship between Chinese ecocinema and media ecology, proposing three key pillars—'human', 'media (technology)', and 'ecology'—to carry out subsequent research and provide theoretical support for the field.

BIODATA

Shi Yilin is a postgraduate student at the Centre for Research in Media & Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities, Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Her current research interests include media studies, film studies, and cultural studies. Email: p121169@siswa.ukm.edu.my

Nurzihan Hassim is a Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Research in Media & Communication (MENTION), Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Her research interests include social marketing, cultural and new media studies. Email: nurzihan@ukm.edu.my

Zhou Yang is a postgraduate student at the Centre for Research in Media & Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia His current research interests include media studies, film studies, and cultural studies. Email: p121166@siswa.ukm.edu.my

REFERENCES

Cigarini, C. (2024). Cinematic science fiction, indigenous mythology, and multispecies entanglement: An ecological reading of *The Mermaid* (2016). *Journal of Chinese Film Studies*, *4*(2), 349–367. https://doi.org/10.1515/jcfs-2023-0059

Chu, K. W. (2017). Screening environmental challenges in China: Three modes of ecocinema. *Journal of Chinese Governance*, *2*(4), 437–459. https://doi.org/rqkz

Cui, C. (2020). Sheng tai pi ping jie ru hou zhong guo dian ying de xin ge ju [The new pattern of Chinese films under the influence of ecocriticism]. *Film Review*, *Z1*, 59–64. https://doi.org/10.16583/j.cnki.52-1014/j.2020.z1.011

Guo, L. (2023). Animating eco-aesthetics: Multiplanar images, interspecies government, and eco-conscious gaming in *The Legend of Hei* (2019) and its TV series (2011–present). *Journal of Chinese Film Studies*, *3*(1), 159–184. https://doi.org/rqk2

Huasasquiche-Carbajal, R. Y., Quiroz-Villavicencio, R. A., & Turriate-Guzmán, A. M. (2022). *Adaptation of conventional movie consumers to streaming movie and series platforms during lockdown: A systematic literature review from 2019 to 2021*. Paper presented at the 2022 IEEE 5th International Conference on Electronics and Communication Engineering (ICECE). IEEE. https://doi.org/10.1109/ICECE56287.2022.10048625

Ingram, D. (2013). The aesthetics and ethics of eco-film criticism. In S. Rust, S. Monani, & S. Cubitt (Eds.), *Ecocinema theory and practice* (pp. 68–93). Routledge.

Ivakhiv, A. (2008). Green film criticism and its future. *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, *15*(2), 1–28. https://doi.org/10.1093/isle/15.2.1

Li, X. W. (2011). The thought of the ecological crisis and the eco-film between China and the West. *Contemporary Cinema*, *2*, 54–60.

Li, Y. (2023). Ru he sheng tai de guan kan di fang? Cong Adrian Ivakhiv de sheng tai dian ying zhe xue si xiang dao zhong guo sheng tai dian ying [How to view places ecologically? From Adrian Ivakhiv's philosophy of eco-cinema to Chinese eco-cinema]. *Studies of Regional Culture and Literature*, *2*, 350–364.

Liu, K. (2021). Into the habitation of nature: On eco-documentary films. *Contemporary Cinema*, *2*, 45–54.

Lu, S., & Tang, H. F. (2010). Zhong guo sheng tai dian ying pi ping zhi ke neng [The possibility of eco-cinema criticism in China]. *Literature & Art Studies*, *7*, 92–98.

Luo, T. (2018). Geng die de feng jing: Dang dai sheng tai dian ying yan jiu de zhong yao zhuan xiang [Changing landscapes: An important turn in contemporary eco-cinema]. *Nan Da Xi Ju Lun Cong*, *14*(2), 224–251.

MacDonald, S. (2004). Toward an eco-cinema. *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, *11*(2), 107–132. https://doi.org/10.1093/isle/11.2.107

Mengist, W., Soromessa, T., & Legese, G. (2020). Method for conducting systematic literature review and meta-analysis for environmental science research. *MethodsX*, *7*, Article 100777. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mex.2019.100777

Niu, G. X. (2022). Value reconstruction and genre integration of Chinese ecocinema from the perspective of Anthropocene. *Film Art*, *5*, 41–47.

Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., . . . Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *Systematic Reviews*, *10*, 89. https://doi.org/gjm5rn

Pecic, Z. L. (2021). Haunting China: Ecopoetics of Zhao Liang's *Behemoth*. *Asian Cinema*, *31*(2), 235–251. https://doi.org/10.1386/ac_00026_1

Peters, J. D. (2015). *The marvelous clouds: Toward a philosophy of elemental media*. The University of Chicago Press.

Rojas, C. (2021). At home in the world: *Wandering Earth*, environmentalism, and reimagined homelands. *Journal of Chinese Film Studies*, *1*(2), 223–236. https://doi.org/rqk3

Rust, S., Monani, S., & Cubitt, S. (2013). *Eco-cinema theory and practice*. Routledge.

Shi, D. (2013). Quan mei ti shi yu xia de zhong guo sheng tai dian ying yu dian ying sheng tai [Eco-cinema and film ecology in China from the perspective of omnimedia]. *New Films*, *4*, 22–26.

Sinnerbrink, R. (2011). *New philosophies of film: Thinking images*. Continuum International Publishing Group.

Sun, W. (2018a). *Creative ideas and aesthetic implications of Chinese ecological films* [Doctoral dissertation, Southwest University]. CNKI.

Sun, W. (2018b). Zhong guo sheng tai dian ying de chuang zuo fan si yu shen mei zou xiang [Reflections on the creation and aesthetic trend of Chinese ecocinema]. *Movie Literature*, *2*, 22–49.

Sun, Z. X. (2022). Study on the domestic genre films in the new era from the dimension of eco-criticism. *Ludong University Journal (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, *39*(6), 64–69. https://doi.org/10.20063/j.cnki.CN37-1452/C.2022.06.010

Tan, J. (2023). Materializing the digital landscape: The cinema–ecology complex and Chinese fantasy media. *International Journal of Asian Studies*, *20*(2), 367–383. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479591422000444

Wang, K. Y. (2018). Lun sheng tai dian ying de shen mei zhi wei [On the aesthetic dimension of eco-cinema]. *New Films*, *3*, 25–30.

Wang, L. L. (2005). Kekexili zhang xian sheng tai dian ying de chuan bo kong jian [*Kekexili: Mountain Patrol* highlights the communication space of eco-cinema]. *Journal of Beijing Film Academy*, *1*, 72–75.

Wu, P. J. (2013). Ying shi mei xue de jiu shu: Ji yu sheng tai wen hua xue de shi jiao [The artistic redemption of film and television aesthetics: A perspective from ecological cultural studies]. *Journal of Changchun University of Technology (Social Sciences Edition)*, *25*(2), 97–99.

Xu, Q. W. (2023). Zhong guo "tan zhong he dian ying" de gai nian sheng cheng he lu jing tan suo [Concept generation and path exploration of 'carbon neutral film' in China]. *Radio & TV Journal*, *5*, 51–54. https://doi.org/10.19395/j.cnki.1674-246x.2023.05.026

Yue, F. (2023). Zhong guo sheng tai dian ying de mei xue cheng xian: Can yu mei xue li lun shi yu zhong de *Denger and I* [The aesthetic presentation of Chinese ecocinema: *Denger and I* from the perspective of aesthetics]. *New Films*, *2*, 140–147.

Zhan, H., & Li, H. Q. (2024). Lun sheng tai mei xue ying shi zuo pin de xu shi ce lue yu wen hua jia zhi [On the narrative strategy and cultural value of ecological aesthetics film and television works]. *Film Review*, *6*, 21–26. https://doi.org/rqk4

Zhu, P. J. (2018). Zai di xing: Zhong guo sheng tai dian ying pi ping de xin wei du [Localization: A new dimension of ecocinema criticism in China]. *New Films*, *6*, 18–23.