

# Chapter 3

## The Contribution of Eugene Hargrove to Environmental Ethics and Aesthetics: A Biocultural Tribute



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**Abstract** Biocultural co-inhabitation implies a triple ethical duty: to foster the well-being of the co-inhabitants, to respect their lifestyles, and to care for the habitats shared with them. To address this imperative of the biocultural ethic, I examine the work of American environmental philosopher Eugene C. Hargrove, who founded the journal *Environmental Ethics* (EE) and established a solid academic platform for the new transdisciplinary field of environmental philosophy at the end of the twentieth century. I argue that for twenty-first century environmental ethics, his pioneering work is relevant due to two fundamental attributes: his philosophical analysis of the history of ideas and his transdisciplinary approach. These attributes are vital to address the ultimate causes of the global socio-environmental crisis, which constitutes one of the greatest threats to the sustainability of life and the conservation of its biological and cultural diversity. The ultimate causes of this crisis are cultural, educational, and value based. I highlight how Hargrove uses his transdisciplinary approach rooted in the history of ideas to focus on aesthetic values. In this way, he expands the spectrum of the values of nature that should be considered in environmental policy and education. Toward this aim, he documents a broad diversity of thinkers, artists, and other citizens who have treasured nature since the dawn of Western civilization. Importantly, Hargrove emphasizes that members of different societies and ethnic groups should cultivate forms of environmental ethics rooted in the values of their own culture. In summary, he proposes that environmental ethics should be transdisciplinary, international, and intercultural in order to be effective and just. For these reasons, I argue that Hargrove's contribution to environmental ethics and aesthetics takes on special relevance in countering pervasive processes of biocultural homogenization that are amplified by global society, and in inspiring, instead, contemporary forms of biocultural conservation.

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## 3.1 Introduction

Are we willing to co-inhabit the planet by valuing, respecting, and caring for biological and cultural diversity? This is the fundamental question we ask ourselves from the perspective of biocultural ethics (Rozzi 2012a). To answer affirmatively, I offer this chapter inspired by the work of American environmental philosopher Eugene C. Hargrove, better known to his students and friends as “Gene.” In 1979, Hargrove created a platform for the new transdisciplinary field of environmental ethics by establishing the eponymous journal *Environmental Ethics* (EE), and by publishing the book *Foundations of Environmental Ethics* a decade later. More than 30 years after its publication, this pioneering work of environmental ethics takes on special relevance due to two attributes: (1) its philosophical analysis of historical ideas (Hargrove 1979a, 1980, 1989) and (2) its transdisciplinary approach (Hargrove 1992a, 2008).

These two core attributes of Hargrove’s work are vital for understanding (and hopefully resolving) the ultimate causes of climate change and the global socio-environmental crisis. Today, this crisis is one of the greatest threats to the sustainability of life, and its ultimate causes are cultural, educational, and value based. In my discussion of Hargrove’s lasting contribution to the field of environmental ethics, I highlight how, based on the two former attributes, he focuses on aesthetics to broaden the spectrum of nature values as well as the diversity of thinkers, artists, and other citizens who have treasured the natural world throughout the history of Western civilization. Finally, by underscoring that members of different societies and ethnic groups cultivate environmental ethics rooted in the values of their own culture, Hargrove’s proposal takes on special relevance to counteract processes of biocultural homogenization that are pervasive in the twenty-first century. In summary, for environmental ethics to be effective and just, Hargrove identifies three essential characteristics: transdisciplinary, international, and intercultural.

### 3.1.1 History of Ideas

The first attribute of Hargrove’s foundational book (1989) is its philosophical approach based on the history of ideas. This approach is especially relevant because throughout history, diverse cultures around the world have marveled at and developed relations of care for nature. In ancient China, more than 2500 years ago, the garden symbolized the best place for rest, meditation, and reconnection with nature. More than 2000 years ago, Epicurus taught his ethics in a garden on the outskirts of Athens. Metaphorically, I imagine that for Epicurus, the ethical life would be analogous to that of gardeners who take care of themselves as much as they do for

plants. This ethic emanates from cultivating relationships of reciprocity between human and other-than-human beings (see Box 3.1). For the twenty-first century, we can draw from Epicurus and many other schools of thought on seminal values and life habits to foster a biocultural ethic that guides global society toward more just and sustainable ways of co-inhabiting the planet.

### **Box 3.1 The Concept of “Other-Than-Humans”**

I have used the term “other-than-humans” (Rozzi 2018) instead of the more common term “non-humans” for five main reasons.

First, to avoid dichotomous thinking between “humans” and “non-humans,” since the latter term creates a fracture or abysmal separation between humans and other beings. This dichotomy is not innocent because it establishes a dualistic distinction that separates one species (humans) from myriad species that are grouped together as the “rest” (“non-humans”).

Second, the term “non-humans” is hierarchical and oppressive, since it defines these beings by negation; by the lack of “exceptional qualities” that only humans possess. This definition of imperfection, of lack, represents them in a situation of deprivation that provides a justification (actual or potential) for the exploitation of “non-humans” by humans.

Third, the expression “other-than-human” helps us understand that these beings inhabit not only biophysical nature but also the images, symbols, and values of our cultures. Therefore, they are co-inhabitants of our biocultural communities that encompass biophysical and symbolic-linguistic dimensions of reality. Both dimensions exist in both our waking and dream phases of life. Consequently, we regain attention to the importance of the dream world.

Fourth, the expression “other-than-human” helps us avoid dualism between “biotic” and “abiotic” beings, which were even included in Arthur Tansley’s definition of ecosystem (Johnson 2020). In contrast, it invites us to understand that individuals are intertwined in webs of existence in which matter and energy flow between different levels of organization and interactions of beings that make up both small ecosystems (for example, a lagoon located in a city square or on a mountaintop) and the entire biosphere, where human beings co-inhabit with the entirety of beings (who live “inside” and “outside” the illusory limits of our bodies defined by the outer layer of epidermal cells).

Fifth, political dimensions of reality are also incorporated, since these concepts are understood not only from a Western perspective (philosophical or scientific), but also from ecological worldviews that belong to multiple cultures. For many Indigenous peoples, such as the Aymara and Quechua in South America, the sun, the moon, lightning, frost, hail, mountains, lakes, springs, plants, fungi, animals, and humans are subjects that can be understood as other-than-human co-inhabitants. Through worldviews, rituals, and care practices, the interconnections between humans and the set of beings with

(continued)

**Box 3.1** (continued)

whom we co-inhabit the lakes, oceans, land, air, and skies are recognized. This understanding has been incorporated into recent legislative documents that aim to overcome the dichotomies between humans and nature introduced by colonialist concepts and practices responsible for some of the most negative anthropogenic impacts driving the Anthropocene today (Álvarez et al. 2023).

Hargrove focuses on the historical drift of environmental ideas and practices in Western civilization and uncovers a specially inspiring precedent for supporting an environmental ethic that springs from the collaborative work of naturalists and artists. In particular, he carefully examines how the Hudson River School of painters in New York motivated a cultural and political shift toward the appreciation of nature. Throughout his work, Hargrove documents facts, values, and practices that can inspire cultural and political transformations today, but which, however, have remained latent because they are little known. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, naturalist expeditions as well as landscape gardening acquired special relevance for the scientific and aesthetic appreciation of nature. In *Foundations of Environmental Ethics*, he states that:

In the nonformal garden ..., the natural qualities and characteristics of the plants became matters of great interest, and the plants were elevated to the status of self-contained and self-organizing entities worthy of admiration and study for their own sake. This transformation was paralleled by a similar development then taking place in botany and in the other natural history sciences... Not surprisingly, these scientists came to focus some of their attention on the aesthetic aspects of the natural objects and other phenomena they studied. When writing in their field notebooks, most of them ... jotted down their aesthetic judgments alongside their factual descriptions. In this way, they began to attend to values as well as to facts... both botany and gardening provided the foundations for a broader association of science and art. (Hargrove 1989, pp. 84–85)

### 3.1.2 A Transdisciplinary Approach

The second attribute of Hargrove's work is his stubborn transdisciplinary approach, which marks a turning point in the history of environmental philosophy. He has always encouraged his students and colleagues to incorporate ethical, aesthetic, ecological, ontological, epistemological, political, and educational perspectives into their philosophical analyses (Hargrove 2008, 2015). In this way, he encouraged a new generation of environmental philosophers to integrate theory and practice. Thanks to this approach, since the 1990s, philosophers and other thinkers have become interested in multiple ways of knowing and have become involved in environmental decision-making and policymaking, in educational reforms, and in actions promoting biodiversity conservation and socio-environmental justice. In his approach to education, he writes that:

A good noncontroversial starting point [to teach environmental ethics] may be to begin with the values that are often listed in the purpose statements of environmental laws. Teachers could teach the history of ideas behind those values and their relationship to environmental concern... Comparative value discussion can be used to clarify traditional values and in countries with indigenous populations with values originating in different histories of ideas, such as the values of the First Nation peoples in Canada and the Mapuche in Chile, which can be used to promote better understanding between major social groups. (Hargrove 2008, p. 263)

In this way, his transdisciplinary approach is contextual and multicultural. And he also incorporates methodological guidelines. For example, he writes that,

In deciding which values to teach, I recommend that educators work backward from what is needed to facilitate environmental decisions by the citizen and the environmental professional to what is needed to prepare them educationally for these adult decisions. Look first at your environmental laws and your environmental policies to see what specific values might be most appropriate for environmental decision making. (Hargrove 2008, p. 264)

Finally, Hargrove points out that

Environmental education should not be an imposition of new values, but a strengthening of existing values. In most Western countries, for example, there is a three-century-old nature tradition in landscape painting, in nature poetry, in landscape gardening, and in natural history science... However, because of their educational experiences, in which they have been taught that their sense of beauty is an arbitrary, subjective, irrational expression of emotion, rather than an evolved social ideal. (Hargrove 2008, pp. 266–267)

In summary, Hargrove combines his two essential approaches, the history of ideas and transdisciplinary practices, to forge his proposal for environmental ethics. Both approaches acquire a quadruple relevance today.

- First, Hargrove's approach contributes to correcting the lack of philosophical memory in global society. This loss of memory is driven by the hegemonic notion of progress that has severed the historical roots of the ethical and aesthetic that have been essential to the development of Western civilization.
- Second, Hargrove provides an inter- and trans-disciplinary approach to environmental thought and action. His approach overcomes the ultra-specialization and atomization into discrete disciplines that were forged by twentieth-century academia.
- Third, to confront the complex socio-environmental scenarios of the twenty-first century, Hargrove introduces examples of real, historical cases that serve as models for integrating concepts (theory) and actions (practice).
- Fourth, Hargrove proposes a transdisciplinary approach that draws on multiple disciplines and cultures with their traditions of environmental thought.

Along with this quadruple relevance of Hargrove's work, four of the editors (Danqiong Zhu, Rika Tsuji, Benn Johnson, and I) of our book entitled *Linking Arts with Biocultural Conservation, Restoration, and Communication* have been his students and later colleagues. His friendship and wisdom have encouraged and guided us along a path of environmental ethics that considers aesthetics as a central dimension of the field. Furthermore, Hargrove established fruitful and long-standing

collaborations with thinkers from around the globe. We have sought to incorporate all these attributes into our own book, including ethical and aesthetic perspectives from different disciplines and heterogeneous regions of the world. We offer this chapter as a tribute to our mentor, Gene Hargrove.

## **3.2 Hargrove: A Creative and Generous Philosopher**

In 1992, amid the expectations generated by the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, I learned that the Department of Philosophy at the University of North Texas (UNT) was creating a master's program in environmental ethics, a new field of philosophy that had been incorporated into academia in the 1970s. This was going to become the first graduate program in environmental ethics worldwide. And Hargrove created it with an approach that challenged the disciplinary specialization that characterized most philosophy departments. Excited by this news, which opened a horizon for investigating the values of nature beyond utilitarian approaches based on economic cost-benefit analysis for society (which were widely prevalent in 1992, exalting only the instrumental value of biodiversity), I wrote to the creator of this new graduate program, "Professor and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at UNT, Dr. Eugene Carroll Hargrove."

### ***3.2.1 My Meeting with Gene Hargrove Upon Arriving from Chile***

Hargrove's response to my letter was immediate. He kindly invited me to visit his Center for Environmental Philosophy (CEP) and to attend some courses in the new master's program. This welcome encouraged me to apply from Chile for a Fulbright scholarship that would allow me to pursue graduate studies in the U.S. The scholarship required me to apply to a doctoral program, which also excited me because it would allow me to achieve my idea of integrating philosophy and ecology into conservation biology. For a couple of years, I corresponded with Gene, in conjunction with ecologist John Silander at the University of Connecticut (UConn), which offered a doctoral program in biological conservation with an interdisciplinary approach. I began my graduate studies in ecology at UConn in 1996, and in 1997, I was able to travel to Texas to visit CEP and take master's courses in environmental ethics.

Hargrove himself met me at the airport. It was unexpected for me that the head of the Philosophy Department would personally pick up a young Chilean graduate student who was coming to Texas for the first time. On the way, he told me that he had never liked his given names and preferred to be called "Gene." He then invited me to lunch to learn about Tex-Mex cuisine. His kindness went hand-in-hand with a

genuine interest in promoting the field of environmental ethics in Latin America (in addition to his genuine enjoyment of the culinary arts of the Mexican-American population residing in Texas).

Since that time, I have continuously collaborated with Gene on projects that seek to incorporate environmental ethics into environmental policy design, educational programs, and work on the conservation of biological and cultural diversity (Rozzi et al. 1998; Hargrove et al. 2008). So much so that in 2000, I applied for an assistant professor position in the Philosophy Department at UNT. When I was selected for this position, with my heart torn by my desire to continue living and working in biological conservation in Chile, in the final interview I said, “Gene, you know that I have a desire and commitment to continue working in conservation in Chile.” His laconic response was, “We will help you.” And so, it has been to this day.

In 2000, with the University of Magallanes (UMAG) and the Omora Foundation in Chile, I led the creation of Omora Park, conceived as a space for research, education, and biocultural conservation in the Cape Horn Biosphere Reserve at the southernmost tip of South America (Rozzi et al. 2006). With Gene’s help, in 2004 we consolidated this initiative through the creation of the International Subantarctic Biocultural Conservation Program, co-managed by UMAG and the Omora Foundation in Chile and by UNT and CEP in the U.S. (Hargrove et al. 2008). With this program, we strengthened a series of international courses in field environmental philosophy, which have been annually offered by UMAG and UNT since 2005 (Rozzi et al. 2006, 2008). With the support of Gene and other collaborators, we have run these courses conducted at Omora Park, Cape Horn, Chile, for over 20 years. Moreover, in 2010, we established at Omora Park a network of “climate change sentinels,” investigating value-based and educational dimensions in conjunction with biophysical dimensions of global change (Rozzi et al. 2012). In collaboration with CEP and UNT, we also inaugurated two bilingual publication series in Spanish and English. The first included special issues of the EE journal on Latin American environmental ethics. The second included books on subantarctic biocultural conservation published by UNT Press in collaboration with UMAG Press.

The initial encounter with Hargrove linked to the range of workshops, research, publications, and courses far exceed a purely academic sphere. Together with colleagues and collaborators, Gene broke the academic “ivory tower” in which philosophy programs are typically developed. Instead, he established at UNT a school of transdisciplinary thought and action committed to the sustainability of life. Before continuing, it is important to briefly recount some events that marked Gene’s life, which I consider inseparable from the ideas that permeate his work.

### ***3.2.2 Hargrove: Philosopher, Caver, and Conservationist***

Gene was born on October 22, 1944, in Detroit, Michigan, in the Great Lakes region located on the US-Canadian border where his mother’s mother was working in a munitions factory during World War II. His father, Oren Keith Hargrove, was an

Army Air Force mechanical engineer working in Laredo, Texas, and his mother, Eleanor Mae Lade, worked in commerce. After Gene was born, Gene and his mother went back to Laredo, Texas. Much to his parents' surprise, the first word Gene ever spoke was "agua," water in Spanish, causing the babysitter to be fired.

Then, at the age of two, his family settled in Saint Louis, Missouri, where Gene spent his childhood and youth. During his later school years, Gene planned to become a journalist and worked for a newspaper for almost a year before going to college. The newspaper editors and reporters recommended that he study English at the University of Missouri. Gene welcomed the suggestion, but during his first years of college, he took several required philosophy courses and discovered he enjoyed the subject much more, so he switched majors.

In 1966, he graduated with a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Missouri. He then received his master's degree from the same university in 1967. After a brilliant academic career, he became an army officer having finished the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program in college, and served two years in Germany during the Vietnam War. He stayed in Germany for another one and half years there as an English teacher. Upon his return to the U.S., he resumed his philosophy studies at the University of Missouri, and in December 1974, he completed his doctorate with the defense of his thesis, "Wittgenstein and Ethics." He was able to continue his research on the relationship between Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy and ethics through a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Vienna, Austria, during 1976 and 1977. He proposed that Wittgenstein's examination of logical necessity and rule-governed justification in science bears similarities to ethical reasoning. To this end, he analogized the distinction between the stages of discovery and justification in science with the stages of decision and judgment in ethics. His research on ethical decision-making processes had, from the outset, a practical application in the field of conservation.

Gene never limited his life to academic activity. In 1966, in his student days, he became involved in cave exploration. Throughout his life, speleology has held a lifelong attraction for him, fueled by the fascinating nature of its geological labyrinths and the varied life forms that sustain these natural caves. While working on his PhD, he undertook a lead role in exploring a large cave near the university campus, located in Rock Bridge Memorial State Park in Columbia, Missouri, which was established in 1967 (Hargrove 1968). This cave is called the Devil's Icebox because cool air gushes out of it year-round, maintaining a stable ambience temperature of 13 °C, even in midsummer. Residents of the county were amazed to hear that the cave was the largest object in the county when Gene lectured on it at the county library, and its complex network of galleries, cracks, fissures, and underground passages (some of which are flooded) are home to animals adapted to the unique conditions of light, silence, relative humidity, pressure, and temperature. In fact, this cave is home to several threatened cave species in Missouri, including the endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the pink planarian (*Kenkia glandulosa*, a species endemic to the cave).

Upon returning from Germany in 1970, Gene was shocked to learn that the cave was likely to be seriously threatened by the influx of contaminated sewage from a

proposed housing development. He immediately committed himself to action and devoted much of his time to protecting the cave while developing his doctorate. He wrote extensively about conservation issues in caving journals and his activities were covered daily in two local newspapers (Hargrove 1973a, b). He examined problems associated with land use (and abuse) and proposed solutions at multiple scales, from the community to the national level (Hargrove et al. 1973). The governor followed his efforts closely. Gene warned authorities that inappropriate land use by landowners or managers would lead to the destruction of cave life, and even the cave itself, if the problems of water pollution and quarrying were not remedied. He proposed four types of solutions: (a) actions led by the National Speleological Society, (b) legal action through state laws to regulate water pollution and land use, (c) zoning and territorial planning in each commune or county, and (d) a large-scale educational program aimed at changing public attitudes toward the preservation of natural phenomena, both living and nonliving (Hargrove 1973c). The cave was saved in part by becoming part of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park. As a result of these actions and proposals, Gene was identified in the early 1970s as an “activist environmentalist specializing in professional ethics.” This is how he became involved in environmental ethics or environmental philosophy.

To incorporate ethical values into political arguments, Hargrove chose to focus on historical research into the origins of philosophical ideas. In a Wittgensteinian sense, his research helps elucidate philosophical confusion, because it brings to light assumptions that are often not explicitly stated at a conscious level (Hargrove 1985). For example, those responsible for trying to damage the cave by creating a residential development on the sinkhole plain over the cave argued from the point of view of private land ownership as if they could freely destroy their property, without considering the consequences of such actions for society as a whole or for the environment.

To elucidate the philosophical confusion underlying this assumption, Hargrove traced the historical origin of the concept of private property (Hargrove 1980). He identified ancient Germanic land-use practices that existed as early as 100 B.C. Such practices later spread throughout Northern Europe due to the Germanic conquest and were brought to North America by the English in the seventeenth century, where they were enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, a document inspired by John Locke’s property theory and the writings of Thomas Jefferson. A key problem with this view is that it fails to consider the consequences of micro-scale practices, defined at the individual level by the owners of private lands, on the macro-scale, which includes the entire set of private and public lands contained within a single watershed or other ecosystem.

During the value and political debate over the Devil's Icebox, Hargrove offered an alternative vision to individualism and private property. As Aristotle put it, ethics is understood from the perspective of the individual, and politics from the perspective of the group. Similarly, Aldo Leopold (considered the father of twentieth-century American environmental ethics) concluded, in his famous essay “The Land Ethic” (Leopold 1949), that the moral characteristics that make people moral individuals are the same characteristics that make them good citizens (Hargrove 2015). Leopold

(1949) also believed there were shortcomings to what the government could and should do, and that an ethic on the part of individuals was required to fill the gap between their individual behavior and government regulations.

Hargrove has made a decisive contribution to understanding the communitarian meaning of environmental ethics and to incorporating the “intrinsic value” of other-than-human beings into political and cultural debates. He has thus broadened the conceptual and value spectrum of discourses focused solely on the “instrumental” or economic value of nature, popularized in the 1980s and 1990s with concepts such as “natural capital” and “ecosystem services,” which, while necessary, are not sufficient for a genuine cultural transformation toward the sustainability of life.

For our book, *Linking Arts with Biocultural Conservation, Restoration, and Communication*, it is highly relevant that Hargrove has identified a plurality of values and has always been categorical in affirming that living beings, ecosystems, and the entire biosphere have intrinsic value. It is increasingly clear that one of the main indirect drivers of climate change and, more broadly, rapid global socio-environmental change is the fact that political decisions focus almost exclusively on the instrumental value of nature, excluding other values from its spectrum (Pascual et al. 2023). Biodiversity has both instrumental and intrinsic values, which are not mutually exclusive (Rozzi 1999). Furthermore, instrumental values are not necessarily anthropocentric. For example, a wide variety of insects are instrumentally valuable to birds, but not to humans. We can therefore affirm that these insects are instrumentally valuable, even when they are not directly useful to humans, but rather are valuable to other types of organisms. Therefore, these insects have an instrumental value that is not anthropocentric; that is, they have eco- or bio-centric values (Osorio-García and Roberto-Alban 2023). Furthermore, the fact that they have instrumental value does not deny that insects (the most diverse group of organisms on a global scale) have intrinsic, aesthetic, and other values.

### 3.2.3 *The Importance of Aesthetics in Conservation*

In identifying multiple values of nature, Hargrove captured the cultural relevance of the beauty of a landscape as a value that appeals to government officials and environmental decision-makers. This perspective converges with the vision of Leopold, who in his Land Ethic concluded that “a thing is right because it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community.” The three attributes (integrity, stability, and beauty) are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Hargrove became interested in how beauty acquired great relevance for nature preservation in the United States since the mid-nineteenth century. Most of those places painted by a sensitive and influential artist or recorded by a prominent photographer in the nineteenth century, went on to become national parks or national monuments, beginning with Yosemite and Yellowstone. Hargrove promptly realized that the aesthetic appreciation of nature is by no means limited to its expression in

painting or photography, since scientific information about nature can also stimulate an aesthetic experience that promotes its preservation. As we learn more about nature in terms of its natural beauty and its scientific interest, we will come to value it more holistically and become more determinedly involved in its protection.

Gene addressed these issues during his student years. Later, in 1978, he obtained a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship in Environmental Affairs to investigate the history of the ideas behind the arguments involved in nature conservation. He conducted part of his research at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., where he met administrators of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). At the time, NEH was initiating programs to fund institutes in engineering and ethics, technology, and the humanities. Hargrove suggested to one of the NEH administrators that an institute on ethics and the environment would be a good idea. After admitting that there was almost nothing on ethics and environmental issues, these administrators encouraged Gene to write an interdisciplinary book.

### ***3.2.4 The World's First Environmental Ethics Journal***

Hargrove transformed the idea presented to the NEH; he created instead the journal *Environmental Ethics*. He published his first issue when he joined as an assistant professor of philosophy the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque (Hargrove 1979b). Gene was not only the journal's founder and editor, but he was its editor-in-chief from 1979 to 2020 (for over four decades!). The journal initially focused on topics related to the history of ideas in environmental thought, the aesthetic appreciation of nature and the landscape, and the relevance of art to the appreciation and care of wildlife.

Worldwide, *Environmental Ethics* (EE) was the first journal entirely dedicated to environmental philosophy, and it contributed to the consolidation of this field as a new subdiscipline of philosophy. For the long-term sustainability of the journal, Hargrove created a Center for Environmental Philosophy (CEP), administered by a nonprofit organization, Environmental Philosophy, Inc. The CEP assumed responsibility for the quarterly publication of the journal EE as Gene, and his nonprofit organization, moved to the Institute of Ecology at the University of Georgia in 1981. Finally, in 1989, Hargrove, and with him the CEP and the journal, relocated to UNT, where he served as chair of the philosophy department. As noted earlier, at UNT, he created the world's first graduate program in environmental philosophy and did so in close collaboration with ecology and other environmental programs. As part of his work at the CEP, in the 1990s, Hargrove also created the Environmental Ethics Books series to reprint foundational works in environmental ethics that were out of print.

Along with his concern for higher education, Gene has shown a special interest in teaching environmental ethics to children. He has made innovative proposals for introducing it across the board in public primary and secondary schools and in graduate programs that train environmental educators and other professionals (Hargrove 2008; Poole et al. 2013).

Throughout his career, Gene Hargrove has also played a fundamental role in graduate education. He not only founded the first master's program in environmental ethics in 1994, but also the first doctorate in this field in 2005. I was fortunate as a student to meet Gene in the first of these programs, and later, as a colleague, to collaborate on the development of this doctorate at UNT. The CEP has strengthened these programs because, in addition to publishing the journal *EE*, it has organized numerous conferences and provided a space for visiting scholars from around the world to conduct research on environmental ethics in partnership with the UNT Philosophy Department. Thus, visitors can attend classes free of charge and interact with colleagues and graduate students. It is noteworthy that to be a CEP visitor, it is not necessary to be a philosopher; they can be scientists or scholars in the humanities and social sciences relevant to environmental ethics.

In short, between 1978 and 2024, Gene conducted remarkably multifaceted activities. Along with being editor of *EE*, he was president of the CEP, a scholar at the University of Georgia, and later director of the Department of Philosophy and Religion at UNT, while also being an amateur speleologist and manager of multiple nature conservation initiatives. He has even made proposals to protect the moon and all the planets in the solar system! Since childhood, Hargrove has had a strong attraction to science fiction literature and space exploration. During the 1980s, he became interested in protecting natural satellites such as the Moon (from the threats of its appropriation as private property and, therefore, its unregulated exploitation) and planets such as Mars (from the threats of its terraforming and, therefore, its degradation for human use and abuse) (Hargrove 1986). In the twenty-first century, as we note with growing concern these possibilities of extraterrestrial environmental degradation, Hargrove's perspective on environmental ethics takes on increasing relevance and validity.

In conclusion, based on multiple complementary disciplines and practices, Hargrove has played a crucial role in the development of environmental ethics as a new branch of philosophy imbued with inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches to solving complex socio-environmental problems, which acquired global dimensions during the second half of the twentieth century and continue into the twenty-first century.

### **3.3 Ethics and Aesthetics in Theory and Practice**

Hargrove has the virtue of combining theory and practice. Philosophy and philosophers are often characterized as abstract and opaque. The attraction to purely theoretical knowledge, generated by the mere curiosity to know, carries two risks. The first risk is that theoretical knowledge driven by pure curiosity has no limits. Consequently, it can consume one's entire academic life in a constant "snooping," without addressing the urgent needs of society, much less of the broader community of living beings with whom we share the biosphere. The second risk is that even if it assumes social action, it does not pay attention to the historical, cultural, political, economic, and biophysical context. As criticized by Argentine thinkers Juan Carlos

Scannone (1973) and Rodolfo Kusch (2010), modern science and philosophy have maintained an epistemic hegemony linked to a colonialist agenda that dismisses the wisdom of the people and the rooting of thought in everyday praxis that takes place in particular social, cultural, and ecological contexts (Rozzi 2012b).

Hargrove has overcome both risks. He has avoided the first because he has made both theoretical and practical contributions. On the one hand, he has formulated a solid theoretical proposal from the history of ideas in philosophy, and on the other, he has made fundamental practical contributions. Through the creation of a journal and a study center, he masterfully convened and orchestrated an epistemic community that fostered the development and discussion of ideas on environmental philosophy. In his work as editor, he has been scrupulously disciplined in avoiding the primacy of one theoretical approach at the expense of another. The journal *EE* has published dozens of articles with theoretical and methodological approaches on topics as diverse as animal liberation, biocentrism, biocultural ethics, deep ecology, ecocentrism, ecofeminism, environmental pragmatism, liberation philosophy, political ecology, process philosophy, sustainability under strong and weak anthropocentrism paradigms, non-anthropocentric holism, and the intersections of environmental ethics with various religions, including Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and Taoism.

Regarding the second risk (philosophical approaches that ignore social, cultural, historical, and biogeographical contexts), Gene has consistently asserted that environmental ethics must be adapted to each culture and region (Hargrove 2008). In his publications and teaching, he has integrated this contextualist approach with particular attention to the fields of education and aesthetics. Regarding education, for example, he recommends teaching and examining the values included in the environmental laws of each region, since values are understood not as purely subjective inclinations, but as social expressions recorded in the governance, culture, and history of each society.

Hargrove's work has great didactic value because it offers guidance and encouragement to investigate our own histories and cultures, identifying within them values and ideas that guide our ways of living and relating to our natural environment. This flexibilization of the structures of our social models and forms of education can be key to appropriately resolving complex problems of the current global socio-environmental crisis.

In his integration of environmental education and environmental ethics, as noted earlier, Hargrove has emphasized that this integration should not occur through the imposition of new values, but rather through the reinforcement of existing ones. Among these values, some come from naturalist traditions that, since the dawn of humanity, have been captured in petroglyphs, drawings, and paintings through the representation of plants, animals, fungi, mountains, seas, and other landscapes that took on heterogeneous forms among indigenous peoples of Africa, America, Asia, Oceania, and Europe (Hargrove 1989, 1992b). In the final section of this chapter, I will examine how Hargrove pays attention to the collaborative work of artists and scientists in modern natural history who forged conservationist attitudes toward nature for aesthetic reasons.

### 3.4 Aesthetics and Naturalists: A Biocultural Analysis of Hargrove's Approach

Eugene Hargrove has investigated how landscape painting has inspired naturalists and the public to conserve landscapes and beautiful entities of nature. This inspiration sprang from a virtuoso collaboration between scientists and artists. Scientists studied the properties of nature and generated discoveries that were of particular interest to painters in their appreciation of landscapes and human and other-than-human co-inhabitants with their varied biocultural interactions. Reciprocally, artists focused on the qualitative properties of nature and inspired the habits of aesthetic appreciation in scientists. With this feedback loop, both naturalist accounts and artistic works combine qualitative and quantitative properties of nature. In Hargrove's words,

In landscape painting in the nineteenth century, there is ... [a] close working relationship between science and art ... The need for visual documentation in the natural history sciences encouraged and speeded the transition from a purely scientific point of view to a more aesthetic one in the sciences, and vice versa in art. Lacking cameras, scientists had either to develop artistic abilities themselves or to bring artists with them into the field. The resulting interplay between naturalists, geologists, and artists led to a common perception of the natural world, shared by both groups, that placed emphasis on both fact and value. (Hargrove 1989, p. 84)

#### 3.4.1 *The Hudson River School*

From a biocultural perspective, we can expand Hargrove's analysis. As he has pointed out, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, European and American painters combined scientific and aesthetic values in their appreciation of diverse, beautiful, and ecologically essential beings. We can affirm that these painters, among them who founded the Hudson River School in the United States, also contributed to making visible the delicate and complex webs of biocultural interactions that occur in landscapes.

The founder of the Hudson River School, the painter Thomas Cole, held a particular fascination for Hargrove. Cole was born in England in 1801 and immigrated to the United States as a youth. At the age of 22, he embarked on a steamboat along the Hudson River, landing in the town of Catskill. He soon headed west, entering the eastern Catskill Mountains of New York, where he began to paint his first landscapes. Cole died prematurely in 1848, but on his painting expeditions he was accompanied by other painters, such as Asher Brown Durand, and poets, such as William Cullen Bryant. Durand was born in 1796 in New England, where he painted one of his most famous paintings, *Kindred Spirits*, in 1849. In it, he portrays Thomas Cole and William Bryant, thus illustrating the close relationship that existed between writers and painters in the genesis of the Hudson River School. This posthumous tribute to Cole has left us a visual memory of the great importance that the arts had in the appreciation of nature in the United States in the nineteenth century.

In the twentieth century, Cole's painting deeply moved Hargrove (Box 3.2). The title *Kindred Spirits* refers to the last line of the poem "O Solitude," written in 1816 by the English Romantic poet John Keats:

Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be  
 Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,  
 When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

Keats begins his poem by proclaiming that:

O Solitude! if I must with thee dwell,  
 Let it not be among the jumbled heap  
 Of murky buildings: climb with me the steep,—  
 Nature's observatory—whence the dell,  
 In flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell

Just as the twentieth-century philosopher and speleologist Hargrove was fascinated by the beauty of nature and committed to defending it, in the nineteenth century poets like Keats and Bryant were appalled by the indolent expansion of industrial society and cities. Alongside poets and thinkers, painters like Cole and Durand delved into nature, where they found a more spiritual experience and discovered a profound sense of the sublime in life in its astonishing diversity.

### **Box 3.2 Hargrove's Kindred Spirits**

Eugene Hargrove was fascinated by the Hudson River School, and was particularly moved by Asher Brown Durand's 1849 painting, *Kindred Spirit*, in homage to his mentor and friend Thomas Cole (Fig. 3.1). Cole was one of the first and most important mentors in the formation of the Hudson River School. By portraying him alongside his friend, the poet William Cullen Bryant, Durand expresses the close friendship and collaboration that existed between painters and writers in capturing the sublime in nature.

Given the profound influence the Hudson River School had on Hargrove, with him and Alexandria Poole, who was a research assistant in the Sub-Antarctic Biocultural Conservation Program at UNT and later Associate Director for CEP, I co-organized a trip to the Catskills Mountains in May 2011 (Fig. 3.2). We made the trip with a group of philosophers and ecologists participating in the 14th Cary Conference held at the Cary Institute for Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, New York. This conference motivated me to create the Springer Ecology and Ethics book series, of which our current volume, *Linking Arts with Biocultural Conservation, Restoration, and Communication*, is a part.

On this trip, we visited Olana, the historic village that was the home of Thomas Cole's greatest disciple, Frederic Edwin Church. This landscape painter was well known for his travels to South America, where he created oil paintings of the Andes and other environments. His paintings spread the beauty and exuberant diversity of the Neotropics in the United States. Church expanded the Hudson River School's conception beyond his country, and his art was a primary inspiration for Hargrove's argument for appreciating biodiversity with scientific meticulousness, emotions, and aesthetic and ethical values.

(continued)

**Box 3.2** (continued)

**Fig. 3.1** A split image showing a painting and a photograph. (Left) *Kindred Spirits*, a painting by Asher Brown Durand in the Catskill Mountains, in the Hudson River Valley, in the state of New York (United States). Durand portrays the painter Thomas Cole (right) and his friend the poet William Cullen Bryant (left) standing on an immense rock covered in moss at its edges, overlooking a ravine where the vegetation and ecosystems stand out for their realism. The play of light in the painting expresses the grandiose and sublime in nature, a value that fascinated the painters of the Hudson River School. (Image licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Asher\\_Durand\\_Kindred\\_Spirits.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Asher_Durand_Kindred_Spirits.jpg)). (Right) Eugene Hargrove (right) and Alexandria Poole (left) pose on a large rock covered in moss at a location near where the painter Thomas Cole and his friend the poet William Cullen Bryant were depicted by Asher Brown Durand in his painting *Kindred Spirits*. Poole is an environmental philosopher who studied with Ricardo Rozzi and has collaborated with Hargrove since 2007. This photograph expresses both the deep friendship and appreciation that Hargrove has generated in other thinkers and the impact of his thought on the twenty-first century. (Photograph taken by ecologist Eric Keeling on May 17, 2011)



**Fig. 3.2** (Left) Photograph of Olana, the historic home designed by Frederic Edwin Church with a view of the Hudson River Valley and the Catskill Mountains. (Photograph by Peter Aaron Otto; licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:OlanaExterior.jpg>). (Right) Photograph of Ricardo Rozzi (left) and Eugene Hargrove (right) walking through the Olana Village grounds. (Photographs taken by Alexandria Poole on May 17, 2011)

Under Cole's leadership, the Hudson River School was formed in the 1820s by a group of artists who forged an aesthetic vision influenced by Romanticism. Hudson River School landscapes are characterized by their realistic, detailed, but often idealized depiction of nature. They criticized the historical process of conquest of American territories, which was driven by a development model insensitive to the beauty of natural landscapes. In their paintings, the Hudson River School painters illustrate how peaceful agricultural landscapes, and their villages, were rapidly disappearing, along with remnants of wild nature. They lamented that this was happening just as these landscapes were beginning to be appreciated for their qualities of sublime beauty.

Looking back at the history of European art that preceded and inspired the Hudson River School, Hargrove affirms that the tradition of aesthetic appreciation of nature

began in Europe in the late 1600s, first with an appreciation of the sublime in the Alps and then more generally an appreciation of nature as picturesque, "pretty enough to be a picture" (or more specifically a picture by Claude Lorrain). This picturesque travel tradition is now called tourism. Because of this tradition, natural beauty is one of the most important reasons given at public hearing for the protection of natural places. (Hargrove 2008, p. 268)

He concludes that his central thesis is that

For the environment to be properly protected, value perspectives other than economic value perspectives must play a leading role. By promoting understanding among all the voices speaking for the environment politically from so-called non-economic perspectives, the chance that the management of a society's environment will eventually be in terms of a balanced value system reflecting the views of society as a whole, and not just the business and industrial communities, will be greatly improved. The alternative is simply an environment managed for private economic gain. (Hargrove 2008, p. 271)

### 3.4.2 *A Decolonial Critique of the Naturalist Tradition*

Regarding the naturalist tradition narrated by Hargrove, a biocultural analysis cannot avoid a historical and political critique: the colonialist nature of European expeditions between the fifteenth and twentieth centuries. So-called "natural history" has generated narratives dominated by a Eurocentric, hegemonic, and homogenizing vision of the biological and cultural diversity of the colonies (Pratt 1992). The language of these naturalist texts is seemingly neutral and innocent, "as if" their accounts did not seek to transform this natural environment or establish any apparatus of domination. However, their accounts have served as a means of intellectual appropriation of these colonized worlds, forging a discourse that has catalyzed processes of biocultural homogenization (Rozzi 2018).

Linguist Mary Louise Pratt has investigated "contact zones," geographical and social spaces where two or more cultures meet, clash, and struggle with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical power relations, such as colonialism. Pratt (1992) critically analyzes European colonialism built on and in contact with the "rest

of the world” through the accounts of naturalists and commanders of expeditionary forces to Africa and the Americas between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries.

The homogenization of biotas and cultures has caused profound suffering and violent oppression among the original inhabitants (human and other-than-human) and the destruction of their unique lifestyles that were deployed in different habitats. These were later replaced by urban and rural lifestyles and re-created habitats according to European origin concepts (Paredes-Castellanos and Rozzi 2018). These Europeanized naturalist narratives, presented as avant-garde, were used as aesthetic tools by Spanish but American born “Creole” intellectual elites to “re-invent America” during the nineteenth century (Pratt and Pratt 2007). These elites, which included statesmen such as Andrés Bello (Venezuela) and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (Argentina), drew on writings such as those of Alexander von Humboldt and Charles Darwin to legitimize their ideological projects that founded new social orders in Latin America.

Humboldt espoused an “anti-conquest” stance but also claimed to have “reinvented nature” with his travel accounts of South America. The concept of “the invention of nature” has acquired a new presence with the eponymous book written by German historian and writer Andrea Wulf (2016), who recounts the expeditions and discoveries of Alexander von Humboldt, exalting the German naturalist’s vision. From a critical perspective, it cannot be ignored that his travels through the Americas and his writings coincided with European capitalist expansion. Humboldt was undoubtedly an intrepid explorer and scientist who understood ecological interconnections and distinguished climatic patterns that influence science to this day. As is well known, in his life and work, Humboldt chose to dedicate himself to scientific observation and poetic narrative. He resided in Europe between 1807 and 1834, publishing about his travels and ideas, which played a key role in the discursive and ideological reinvention of Latin America. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the colonies were gaining independence and Spanish hegemony was crumbling. Consequently, both the European commercial classes and the Creole elites grasped the need for a “reinvention” that would legitimize their aspirations for economic and political expansion. For the post-independence Spanish colonies, Humboldt’s writings represented an influential voice in this transatlantic dialogue.

Less known are the life choices made by naturalists who prioritized biodiversity conservation and solidarity with Indigenous communities oppressed by colonialism. An exemplary case is Humboldt’s traveling companion, the French physician and botanist Aimé Jacques Alexandre Goujaud. He was better known as Bonpland (Bon-Plant = Good Plant), due to the nickname his paternal grandfather gave to Aimé’s father, having been born in the vineyards of Saint-Maurice, France. In Latin America, Aimé permanently adopted the pseudonym Aimé Bonpland. He even signed the names of new plant species he discovered in the “New World” with the botanical abbreviation Bonpl.

In 1799, Humboldt and Bonpland obtained permission from the Spanish court to travel freely within the Spanish colonies. Their voyage extended from 1799 to 1804, extensively exploring South and North America. In contrast to Humboldt, Bonpland returned to South America in 1814 and remained in the La Plata River basin until his

death. He dedicated most of his life to community work in health, agriculture, ethnopharmacology, and environmental conservation in Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay (Nye 2019). In fact, in recognition of his work, he obtained Paraguayan nationality. Bonpland is one of many naturalists who chose to co-inhabit with the human and other-than-human communities he initially came to study, but later became part of, adopting lifestyle habits and vital commitments, along with writing stories, that today can inspire genuine biocultural conservation actions.

### 3.4.3 *From Naturalists to Biocultural Conservationists*

From my perspective of biocultural conservation, it is essential to appreciate the diversity of stories and life stories left by naturalists like Bonpland, who, abandoning their Eurocentrism, empathized and stood in solidarity with “otherness.” Not with an abstract otherness, but with concrete beings with their autonomous intentions. These beings (human and other-than-human) have moved many artists, naturalists, and scientists who have embarked on explorations through remote territories. I want to emphasize that these cases are not isolated; on the contrary, they are abundant and continue to occur on all continents. For example, recently in the Argentine-Paraguayan Chaco, the English anthropologist John Palmer established a relationship of co-inhabitation and defense with the Wichí ethnic group; he considered solidarity with “otherness” to be the noblest moral virtue (Box 3.3). At the beginning of his testimonial book, *Wichí Good Will: An Indigenous Spirituality* (Palmer 2005), he alludes to the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and quotes its preamble:

It is the duty of man [*sic*] to serve the spirit with all his powers and resources, because the spirit is the supreme purpose of human existence and its highest category.

It is the duty of man to exercise, maintain, and stimulate culture by all means at his disposal, because culture is the highest social and historical expression of the spirit.

And since morality and good manners constitute the noblest flowering of culture, it is the duty of every man to always respect them. (OEA 1948)

The life stories of naturalists like Bonpland, ethnographers like John Palmer, missionaries like Bartolomé de las Casas (Mignolo 2011; Restrepo 2018), and environmentalists like Berta Cáceres (May 2018) help us understand the diversity of values and habits in violent processes such as the conquest of territories and their communities of life. In this diversity, among those committed to the defense of indigenous peoples and their habitats, we find options and inspiration to undertake participatory and co-creative actions of biocultural conservation amidst the complex scenarios of the Anthropocene.

### **Box 3.3 John Palmer: Towards Biocultural Conservation**

With the aim of completing his doctoral thesis for Oxford University, the English anthropologist and ethnographer John Palmer (1953–2023) arrived in the city of Salta, northern Argentina, in the mid-1970s. This motivated him to contact the indigenous Wichi Lapacho Mocho (*Hoktek t'oi*) community, which lives 18 kilometers from the remote village of Tartagal, located 365 km north of Salta. After several trips to Europe and nearly three decades of living with the Wichi community, Palmer settled in this community in 1999. He had been accepted as part of the community and married the young woman Tojueia, with whom he formed a family of six children, leaving an indelible mark on the Chaco region of Salta.

From the moment he arrived, Palmer witnessed the violent contradictions between the Wichí community's way of life and institutional education (which boys and girls are legally required to attend). This conflict between this Indigenous people's communal relationship with nature and private property ownership was linked to constant abuses by Salta society for the exploitation of natural resources. These abuses even occurred in territories that the Province of Salta had ceded to the Wichí community as a form of historical restitution.

Noticing these contradictions, Palmer put his academic interests aside and chose to become part of the Wichí community. He shared their ways of life, in their ancestral habitats, with co-inhabitants not only human but also arboreal and many other species of the Chaco savannah. He married a young Wichí woman and took on the defense of their territories as the community's legal representative against the constant abuses suffered by them, their habitats, and their co-inhabitants. He expressed his empathy and solidarity with the "otherness." This otherness is not abstract, but it is made up of real and distinct living beings in his Wichí community, including palm trees, quebracho trees, and other trees, native honeybees and other invertebrates, capybaras and other mammals, tinamous and other birds, *tariras* and other freshwater fish, as well as the streams, rivers, and savannas of their territories (Martínez 2013). Palmer's story was captured in the documentary *El Etnógrafo* (The Ethnographer), directed by Argentine artist Ulises Rosell (2012), which conveys cultural contrasts as well as intercultural encounters and fusions.

In an era marked by multiculturalism, Palmer's family seems to emerge as a harmonious reconciliation of everything that sometimes seems like a distant or impossible romanticism. Palmer's life established genuine contact with an Indigenous community. The Lapacho Mocho community continues to resist encroachment on their lands and culture. Palmer passed away at the end of May 2023, but his children, educated in the Wichi languages, Spanish, and English, possess Indigenous wisdom and are familiar with Western culture and society. Perhaps Palmer and his family show us a path toward more sustainable and just biocultural futures in the twenty-first century.

I have discussed at length naturalist, ethnographic, artistic, and political testimonies embedded in encounters with communities of living beings (human and other-than-human) for two fundamental reasons.

First, these intercultural encounters in ancestral habitats transform values, life habits, and commitments to the defense of life in its biological and cultural diversity. Hargrove (1989) presents numerous examples of naturalists and painters such as Frederick Edwin Church, who furthered the Hudson River School of painting by revealing astonishing mountain, jungle, and river formations in North and South America, paying special attention to realistic details and dramatic luminosity in landscapes that should be admired and cared for. In this way, Hargrove helps us recover the memory of environmental and biocultural values with testimonies of life and values that have been abolished in global culture.

In this sense, Hargrove's work subverts the *damnatio memoriae* or "damnation of memory" erected by the governance of global society with new strategies oriented by a notion of "progress" and "uniformity" that erases cultural traditions (Quesada-García 2004; Georgiadou et al. 2020). In this regard, Hargrove had a special interest in the novel *1984*, published by George Orwell in 1949 in its original English version as *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This novel describes a fictional society where the enemy is subjected to "vaporization," which consists of physically and symbolically eliminating them, erasing all records of them in monuments, books, newspapers, or other documents. The concept of an Orwellian society is currently used to describe a type of society where historical memory—especially the memory of Indigenous people and of non-economic values that since the dawn of Western civilization have been considered essential for justice and the good life—has been condemned to oblivion.

From a biocultural ethics perspective, I propose adopting and adapting Gene's approach to activate the recovery of memory about cultural traditions and socio-environmental values that have existed and/or continue to exist in our own communities. For example, John Palmer and Berta Cáceres offer current accounts of enduring commitments to defending values and the life of communities of co-inhabitants among the Wichí indigenous peoples in South America and the Lenca in Central America, respectively (Roselo 2012; May 2018).

Secondly, Hargrove draws attention to the abundant personal and collective initiatives committed to defending life, examining biocultural diversity in different eras and regions of the world. We thus understand a courageous and creative ethical commitment among artists, naturalists, and leaders that transcends their "technical specialties" and brings them closer to philosophical lives committed to a genuine sense of socio-environmental justice. These life stories have been largely underrepresented by the media, formal education, and the prevailing culture of global society (Rozzi 2019; Tauro et al. 2021; Tauro and Rozzi 2025).

Gene's didactic description of the multifaceted work of artists and naturalists (with their life commitments embedded in ethical and aesthetic values) could motivate readers to seek inspiring testimonies in the histories, biogeographies, and cultures of diverse regions of the world. In this way, Hargrove's work inspires and exhorts us to transform a uniform Anthropocene into a multifaceted one that nurtures

multiple aspects of environmental ethics. Indeed, Hargrove's appreciation for the work of naturalists and their aesthetic approach endure in initiatives such as the collaborative work developed by UNT and CEP at Omora Park (Contador et al. 2023; Crego et al. 2023; Ojeda et al. 2023; Thompson 2026; Vezzani 2026) and other regions of the world (Schüttler et al. 2023; Tauro 2023; Zhu 2023), which utilizes the pedagogy of Field Environmental Philosophy (FEP). This educational and research methodology merges the works of artists (such as Chilean visual artist Paola Vezzani), scientists, philosophers, and local people.

This type of collaboration, like the one that inspires our book *Linking Arts with Biocultural Conservation, Restoration, and Communication*, generates a triple complementarity: interdisciplinary, intergeneric, and interhemispheric. The result is a biocultural metamorphosis: from the individual work in environmental ethics initiated by Hargrove toward a collective work for biocultural conservation, in dialogue and collaboration with multiple cultural traditions that co-inhabit the heterogeneous regions of the planet.

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