Virtue Ethics and the Practice of History:
Native Americans and Archaeologists along the San Pedro Valley of Arizona

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ABSTRACT
For nearly a century archaeologists have endeavored to illuminate 12,000 years of Native American history in the San Pedro Valley of southeastern Arizona. Although this scholarship has provided an essential foundation for our understanding of the region, it is limited by the construction of history through the singular interpretive framework of western scientific practice. The Tohono O'odham, Hopi, Zuni, and Western Apache peoples all maintain distinct oral traditions that provide alternative voices about the lives of their ancestors. This paper examines the ethical environment and implications of a collaborative ethnohistory project initiated in 2001, which sought to document Native American histories of the San Pedro Valley and adjoin humanistic understandings of the past with earlier scientific findings. We argue that a Virtue Ethics approach to the social context of this research offers sound moral guidance to a flourishing ethic of collaboration. Using this work as a case study, we aim to extend the available research models for future anthropological inquiry and broaden the ethical framework of historical research.

ON THE ORIGINS OF COLLABORATION: AN INTRODUCTION

One of the major impacts on the practice of American archaeology over the last two decades has been the professions’ shifting relationship with indigenous peoples. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s archaeologists were forced to confront the ethics of their research, the overt and veiled politics of their discipline, and the institutional (and historical) erasure of Native American voices. Repatriation and reburial have proven to be paramount issues, and have captivated the attention of the media and broader public (Downey, 2000; Thomas, 2000). These
issues have reconfigured museum collections, altered field and laboratory procedures, and have forced Native Americans, archaeologists, and government officials—however reluctantly—to increase communication with one another. Yet if repatriation and reburial were the only concerns that had alienated Native Americans and archaeologists from one another, perhaps the fracas would have subsided long ago. Deeply seeded conflicts over who controls the tangible artifacts and intangible memories of the past are also at play (Biolsi and Zimmerman, 1997; McGuire, 1992; Trigger, 1980; Watkins, 2000). For centuries Native Americans have struggled to maintain their sovereignty, and have power over their land, history, and identity (Cornell, 1988). Since its beginnings in North America, archaeology has been intertwined in this struggle—equally as recreant and supporter.

Numerous archaeologists now recognize that their discipline depends on the ability to include the many publics connected to the archaeological past (McManamon, 1991). And as archaeologists have discovered, among the most important publics are those whose ancestors form the object and subject of historical research. Collaborative research—that is, where groups jointly work together on a project—is one way for archaeologists to become engaged with Native Americans in a way that benefits all participants (see Ferguson, 1996; Swidler et al., 1997). For Native American participants, collaborative projects provide documentation and inventories of ancestral sites, employment opportunities, source material for educational programs, and a voice in writing their own past. For archaeologists, collaborative research provides the opportunity to strengthen interpretations of the past through incorporating new epistemological angles, foster coalitions with stakeholders who share similar concerns, and practice ethical research in a way that both responds to and reflects the values of Native peoples.
Even as these ideals of collaboration are becoming ever more established in archaeological research, the reality of its practice remains a different matter. This paper is devoted to two central questions: What is the environment in which collaborative research is practiced today, and what does an ethic of collaboration entail? In response to the first question, we provide our insights gleaned at the halfway point of a two-year research project sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. This section does not deal with the products of this research so much as explore the collaborative process as it is perceived by the authors. Addressing the second question, we place our personal viewpoints into a broader philosophical perspective by explicitly incorporating a framework of Virtue Ethics. From this we show how collaboration and the ethical system that drives the collaborative process can be used to expand the available research models for future anthropological inquiry.

**THE SAN PEDRO ETHNOHISTORY PROJECT**

The San Pedro Valley begins in northern Mexico and stretches 140 miles into southeastern Arizona—a lush riparian oasis in the midst of the harsh Sonoran desert (Hanson, 2001). For nearly 12,000 years humans have lived along the San Pedro (Antevs, 1959; Haury, 1959; Haynes, 1987), leaving behind them the traces of their persistence. Archaeologists have identified hundreds of archaeological sites in the San Pedro, and they describe the inhabitants of this place in terms of the Hohokam, O’odham, Salado, Western Pueblo, and Apache peoples, all of whom have living descendents among the contemporary tribes in the Southwest. Historians write about the Sobaipuri and Apache who lived in this valley during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the trading that was conducted with Hopi and Zuni. The San Pedro
Valley thus has multiple histories each maintained by the descendents of people who formerly resided in the area.

The authors—with Jeanette Cassa, Roger Anyon, Patrick Lyons, and other researchers—are in the midst of a multi-year project, which entails collaborative research with the Native American groups whose ancestors lived in the San Pedro Valley (Figure 1). Exploring themes of migrations, violence, social identity, subsistence ecology, and population dynamics, this project aims to add Native American voices to the mosaic of archaeology and documentary history. To supplement archival and literature analyses, the core of the project involves interviews and fieldwork with representatives of the Tohono O'odham Nation, White Mountain and San Carlos Apache Tribes, Hopi Tribe, and the Pueblo of Zuni. Each nation contributes a research assistant and cultural advisors, and establishes the research framework that best suits its own cultural practices.

Ultimately, this project seeks to document Native American histories of the San Pedro Valley, adjoin Native American perspectives to archaeological culture history, and expand the humanistic understanding of scientific findings of San Pedro history. Using a methodology that recombines Native American oral traditions and archaeological interpretations, we have sought to overcome the false dichotomy raised between “history” and “science” (Schmidt and Patterson, 1995; Whiteley, 2002). In this approach, the project attempts to redress the legitimacy of a historically informed archaeology by documenting alternative Native American histories that explicitly recognize past and present use of land and resources in the construction of social identity (Wylie, 1995). By inviting Native Americans into the research process, and merging Native American memories of the past with archaeological inquiry, we are attempting to go
beyond confrontations of the “contested past” (Hill, 1992; Layton, 1989) to develop new perspectives on critical issues of mutual concern and interest.

WHAT IS THE ENVIRONMENT OF COLLABORATION TODAY?

The socio-political and historical context in which collaboration takes place today is necessary to understand because it impacts the process of collaboration in myriad ways. In our experience, ethical behavior is not independent from the larger context that surrounds a single project. What follows is a discussion of some important aspects of the cultural and intellectual environment in which the San Pedro Ethnohistory Project is situated.

The Tentacles of NAGPRA

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990 has indelibly impacted the communities of archaeologists and Native Americans. Since its inception NAGPRA has fundamentally changed how archaeologists and museum professionals carry out research, and the way in which Native Americans have a say in that practice. The San Pedro Ethnohistory Project does not explicitly address NAGPRA issues. Our project does not involve excavation, explicit investigation of “cultural affiliation,” or use any collection under active NAGPRA review. Indeed, in many ways, one of our goals was to use this project to move beyond the political tensions inherent in NAGPRA. Yet as the project has progressed, we have realized that the tentacles of NAGPRA are not so easy to break free of.
Even before the project began, as meetings were held with various tribal representatives during development of the grant proposal, it was difficult to explain how a project combining archaeologists and Native Americans was not NAGPRA related. With so much work over the last decade involving Native Americans undertaken solely to satisfy NAGPRA, it was a challenge to describe a project originating from other motivations. When our research began, we found that NAGPRA tacitly structures how all the participants conceive of and discuss the past. That is, the very language of NAGPRA now structures discourses between archaeologists and Native Americans. Expressions like “cultural affiliation” have become central to the way we talk about connections between modern people and past groups (Figure 2). And in a meeting with a museum official, we kept talking about our “research,” while he repeatedly referred to the project as “consultation,” a term with bureaucratic overtones. NAGPRA has also structured how we can carry out research. A museum participating in our project asked that we not invite one group of cultural advisors because their tribe was involved in a dispute about the implementation of NAGPRA. Finally, we realize that although our research does not explicitly deal with NAGPRA issues such as determining cultural affiliation, it has implications for future claims of repatriation. If, for instance, we record and publish Hopi and Zuni connections to their ancestors in southeastern Arizona, those claims could later be used in repatriation cases involving collections from southeastern Arizona. From our view, the participating tribes are aware of this potential use, and indeed it is one of their motivations in participating—it is one of the benefits of this research for them. Hence, even as we have tried to move beyond the questions and repercussions of NAGPRA, we find that we cannot move too far, because then our project would become less relevant to its participants.
Structuring Collaboration

Another aspect of the environment of collaboration today is the degree to which we must interface with formal committees of tribal governments. We are a part of the Center for Desert Archaeology, and our research team works with the Hopi Cultural Resource Advisory Task Team, the Zuni Cultural Resource Advisory Team, the San Carlos Apache Elder’s Council, and the Tohono O'odham Cultural Preservation Committee (a legislative branch of the Tohono O'odham Tribal Council). Working with these official committees of their respective tribal governments is positive because it gives the project some degree of authority, fosters communication, and helps ensure accountability. These committees explicitly serve to mediate between research participants from their tribes and project archaeologists. As a consequence of interacting with multiple committees throughout the research process, it is our experience that we have to give much more attention to the way we communicate about the project. Before these committees existed, it was easier for the anthropologist to set the research agenda—to pursue fieldwork only as a means of data collection. Because we have to interact with these individuals and they have the power to impact the overall project, we are endeavoring to define how all the involved parties will benefit from the study. Through these structured relationships, we are developing a methodology whereby all the participants have approximately equal power, where even if we have different interests, we all find a way to value the work enough to make it successful. Although it is not possible to achieve perfect parity and equal power, by merely making these our goals, it becomes possible for power to become more fluid throughout the research process.

Of course, in the past, Native American hosts have not been simply mired in nescience, the passive participants of self-serving anthropologists. For instance, the early American
ethnographer Frank Cushing’s presence at Zuni began tumultuously, but he became an advocate for the pueblo, as well as an observer. By eventually accepting his presence, the Zuni were able to use Cushing as a link to outside authorities to protect and promote their own interests (e.g., Green, 1979: 407-425). In contrast, Stewart Culin—the first curator of ethnology at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences—arrived in Zuni with the goal of amassing collections for a distant eastern institution; he was greeted with the town crier warning Zuni citizens not to have anything to do with him (Culin, 1903, 1904, 1907). But Culin had arrived during a horrific drought, and in the cover of night, Zunis would abscond sacred artifacts and trade the objects to him for money to purchase food. This example demonstrates a moment of asymmetrical power, where interaction involved only extraction of information and objects for the use of the ethnographer and desperate actions for the starving Zunis. Although admittedly an extreme case, we hold it up as the antithesis to activities of collaboration today. Culin exemplifies a long history of anthropological research practices that have led Native American communities to create formalized committees to negotiate how scholarly research should be conducted. And it is through these committees, that researchers must demonstrate how their work will be beneficial to scholarship and relevant to Native Americans. As Bentz (1997: 130) has forcefully argued, Native Americans everywhere now “require that anthropological research in their communities serve humanity, as it should have all along, and will no longer allow humanity to serve science, as it often has in the past.”

The Blurring Line of the Observers andObserved
Traditional ethnographic research has depended on “participant-observation” as a focal point of its methodological canon. Since at least Malinowski, anthropologists have actively sought out the role of observer (Dewalt et al., 1998). Even in the second part of the methodological equation, during “participation,” anthropologists have tended to retain that abiding sense of observation: participating does not provide an experience in itself so much as an alternative way of observing.

In our work, however, there is no clear dichotomy of the “observers” and the “observed” (if indeed it has ever existed). The Native American collaborators are not passive informants, mere one-way conduits of anthropological information. As active participants in research, they have expected to learn as well—about our own behaviors and perspectives on the past (Figure 3). They then build these alternative non-Indian views into their own understanding of the past and present. As Leigh J. Kuwanwisiwma (2002a: 47) has written, the Hopi and many Native Americans more generally “want to be a viable part of the whole dimension of cultural resource management. No longer do the Hopi desire to be treated merely as informants.” The sense of not just observing but being observed could not be missed with the Hopi cultural advisors—two advisors videotaped all of the fieldwork, one took copious notes, and another snapped several rolls of photographs (Figure 4). And with the Zuni cultural advisors, all five regularly took notes during our work. The blurring line of the observer and observed is also a part of the interaction with the tribal committees and other tribal members engaged in research. With each committee, we have to present our work, our strategies and ideas, and have these critiqued by committee members. And when we prepare publications, each committee will review the work and be empowered to revise it—just as any co-author would have the opportunity to clarify her or his
own ideas in a given manuscript (see Bentz, 1997: 123-124). In all these ways the archaeologists on our project are not simply observing, they are also being closely observed.

**Language and Social Identity**

The language used in interactions between Native Americans and archaeologists is important because it has the ability to confuse or enlighten and because it structures the relations of power within collaborative work—*who gets to define what terms* (Warren, 1999: 14-16). During much of our fieldwork, cultural advisors often spoke to one another in their native language, and then provided us with a summary of their conversation or what they wanted us to know. In this way, the archaeologists in the project became by-standers as the advisors examined an artifact or considered an architectural element at a site. Native language provides an alternative view of the material world for archaeologists because Native American terms are not just descriptive but have specific cultural meanings that imbue objects with additional layers of meaning. In practice these perspectives are difficult to incorporate into our research in any expansive way because we—and it is safe to assume the readers of this work—do not fluently speak or read Hopi, Zuni, O’odham, and Apache. And, in fact, because few, if any, people speak all four of these languages, the use of English as a lingua franca structures how we collectively talk and think about the past.

Indeed, much of the vocabulary archaeologists use to talk about history and historical groups is a source of confusion that ultimately undermines Native American perspectives of the past. One term that archaeologists often use without much compunction is “abandonment” (see Ferguson et al., 2001: 10-11), which can be defined as the “complete and final giving up of
property or rights with no intention of reclaiming them and to no particular person” (Oran, 1983: 3). This conception of abandonment is not lost on our collaborators, and they have protested its use by archaeologists (Ferguson, 1998). One objection is grounded on the belief that archaeological sites, that is ancestral villages, are not empty because spirits continue to inhabit a place even after people’s corporeal bodies have expired. Ancestral villages are thus likened to cemeteries, to liminal spaces where there is the opportunity for spiritual connections between the living and deceased. A second objection is that contemporary people have not given up their claims to or interest in their ancestral villages. Tohono O’odham, Zuni, and Hopi advisors have left prayers and offerings at sites, and the Hopi directly incorporate ancestral villages into their conception of the religious landscape. Hence, to speak in terms of “abandoned” sites simultaneously rejects Native American beliefs out of hand and denies the continuing claims contemporary Native Americans make to ancestral sites.

In a similar way, archaeologists’ use of terms that frame archaeological cultures—“Hohokam,” “Salado,” “Anasazi,” “Mogollon”—are a source of confusion. Among many archaeologists, there is an implicit assumption that archaeological cultures have real meanings in terms of past social organization. However, our collaborators do not all approach past people in this way. The Hopi, for instance, understand their ancestors through unique clan and religious groups, collectively referred to as Hisatsinom (Kuwanwisiwma, 2002b). Dongoske and others have written,

The Hopi believe these clans ranged far and wide in their migrations and were components of many different archaeological cultures, including the Anasazi, Mogollon, Hohokam, Salado, Cohonina, Fremont, and Mimbres. None of these
archaeological cultures by themselves are thus adequate to incorporate all of the Hopi and their ancestors. (Dongoske et al., 1997: 603)

The Hopi advisors we spoke with tend to take a much broader view of ancient peoples than archaeologists; one suggested to us that all the Southwestern archaeological cultures, “were all Hopi—it is the archaeologists that give them another name. It’s been Hopi all along. Our culture was cast in stone by the creator.” The Zuni similarly connect themselves to ancestral villages through historic accounts of their ancestors’—the Atlashinawke—migrations across the land. The pottery styles and architectural details archaeologists employ to define archaeological cultures are not meaningless to Zunis today (Figure 5); however, archaeological approaches are often seen as missing the dynamic interaction of ancestral pueblo people when they focus solely on material culture to overlook language abilities and religious affiliations, the essential sources of identity for Pueblo people today (Dongoske et al., 1997). Thus, the continued use of terms referring to archaeological cultures while discounting alternative terminologies leads to miscommunication between archaeologists and Native Americans and serves to implicitly contest Native American connections to their ancestral landscape.

WHAT DOES AN ETHIC OF COLLABORATION ENTAIL?

The previous section has illustrated some of the more poignant aspects of the environment in which collaboration takes place today. Given this context we now consider the moral criteria we use to guide behavior in collaborative research. As Winter (1984: 43) has contended, it is imperative that archaeologists’ ethical system guide scientific inquiries, and not let science drive ethics. And yet the majority of anthropologists consider themselves principally
scientists, not ethicists. Indeed, even the various Codes of Ethics of professional societies, which aim to provide moral routes for archaeologists, are essentially silent on issues of collaboration. For example, the Society for American Archaeology’s Principles of Archaeological Ethics only makes the broad normative argument in “Principle No. 2” that:

Responsible archaeological research, including all levels of professional activity, requires an acknowledgment of public accountability and a commitment to make every reasonable effort, in good faith, to consult actively with affected group(s), with the goal of establishing a working relationship that can be beneficial to all parties involved. (Watkins et al., 1995: 33 emphasis added)

Although this principle may point the way and generally support an ethic of collaboration, it hardly provides a strong guidepost for practicing archaeologists. The Register of Professional Archaeologists’ Code of Conduct (Section I, 1.1c) only states that an archaeologist shall “Be sensitive to, and respect the legitimate concerns of, groups whose culture histories are the subject of archaeological investigations.” The American Institute of Archaeology Code of Ethics makes no reference at all to either collaboration or consultation.

Even as some archaeologists advocate various rule-based approaches, we argue that a virtue-based approach offers sound moral guidance to a flourishing ethic of collaboration. It is interesting to observe that while very few discussions of archaeological ethics explicitly has drawn from the corpus of writings on Virtue Ethics, many have supported the application of the virtues throughout the process of archaeological research. For instance, the virtue of “trust” often arises, such as in Burley’s (1994:93) argument that, “archaeologists must begin to address the concerns of aboriginal groups regarding uses of their past and create a trust that will allow for
future alliance.” Similarly, nearly two decades ago, E. Charles Adams (1984: 241) observed that in his cooperation with the Hopi Tribe, “of great value is the trust relationship that exists between the museum and the archaeological community, and the Hopi.” More recently, Joe Watkins’ (1999) work has veins of Virtue Ethics running through it, as the philosopher Merilee Salomon has observed that,

Although Watkins does not refer explicitly to any ethical theory… his proposal exemplifies the views of [Annette] Baier and other contemporary metaethicists in its emphasis on trust rather than formal codes or principles of utility or justice, as the fundamental basis of ethical behavior. (Salomon, 1999: 308)

Indeed, our own experiences and those of archaeologists cited above are contrary to scholars such as Kent Greenawalt (1998: 20), who despite his instructive study on the relationship between law and morality claimed that, “‘virtue ethics’… seems of peripheral significance for issues about cultural property.” In our discussion we aim to add to these previous studies, and substantially build on them by more explicitly framing archaeological ethics with the work of moral philosophers.

Virtue Theory, unlike other moral schemes, does not begin with questions of right and wrong, duties and laws, but rather, questions of character—*what traits of character make a person good?* As Roger Crisp and Michael Slote write, Virtue Ethics presents,

an account of ultimate moral reasons which not only is neither utilitarianism nor Kantian, but makes essential reference to the rationality of virtue itself. Thus, for example, the real reason why I should not lie to you is not that it is against the moral law, nor that it is likely not to maximize well-being, but because it is
dishonest. The notions of virtue, then, are more basic than the notions at the heart of utilitarian and Kantian theory. (Crisp and Slote, 1997: 2-3)

Whereas Kantian and Consequentialist theories rely on deontic (Greek for doing) concepts of being “bounded” and “required” to act, Virtue Ethics turns on aretaic (Greek for excellence) notions, meaning virtue, character, and excellence (Anscombe, 1958). Virtue Theory provides archaeologists with a way to examine ethics in light of what constitutes a moral agent before jumping to what constitutes a moral action (McDowell, 1997). This issue is particularly relevant for an ethic of collaboration, which seems heavily dependent on the moral motivations and character—as much as the behavior—of the participants.

Suppose, for instance, that an archaeologist depended on an Utilitarian ethic to determine moral action during a collaborative research project. Imagine that a project begins and it goes quite well; everyone gets along and the research phase goes smoothly. Real friendships develop between the participating archaeologists and the Indian advisors, and one archaeologist even invites an advisor home for dinner to meet her family. Eventually the project draws to a close, and there resulted not only goodwill, but also some real friendships among the participants. But then, a year later, the befriended advisor picks up the new issue of the Journal of Social Archaeology and reads an article by his friend, the archaeologist, where she says that the Indians were befriended only because it was her “moral duty and obligation” to do so; that this project was merely the “right thing to do” after balancing the principles of pleasure and pain. What is wrong with this tale? Most people do not simply desire others to initiate relationships because of moral obligation, but because of genuine commitments to such virtues as trust and friendship. At issue then is not solely the archaeologist’s action, which may be said to be moral in this case, but rather motivation. This is not to say that obligation has no role in ethics, but that taken
unconditionally it is problematic. As Annette Baier (1997) has suggested, even obligation involves virtues, such as trust, because someone must ensure that obligations are met. Someone must judge other people’s actions, decide if obligations are fulfilled, and if not, perhaps even punish those persons in some way. And this judgment of others, the power of manipulation and coercion, requires trust—trust that these individuals will be honest and fair.

Virtue, suggests the philosopher James Rachels (1993: 163) is, “a trait of character, manifested in habitual action, that is good for a person to have.” For Aristotle, the superlative life revolves around the concept of *eudaimonia*—often translated as happiness, living well, or human flourishing—which can be attained through the practice of the virtues. Hence, for some philosophers, the virtues that contribute towards attaining *eudaimonia* are those that should be pursued. But for many, the source and definition of which virtues ought to be sought after depend on specific arguments. One can see, for instance, that verbal honesty is necessary for positive and effective communication, and because all humans are social animals dependent on others, the virtue of dependability is valued. As a beginning point, Rachels (1993: 163) has provided a list of some of the traits humans ought to foster:

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<tr>
<th>Benevolence</th>
<th>Fairness</th>
<th>Reasonableness</th>
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<tr>
<td>Civility</td>
<td>Friendliness</td>
<td>Self-Confidence</td>
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<td>Compassion</td>
<td>Generosity</td>
<td>Self-Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Self-discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperativeness</td>
<td>Industriousness</td>
<td>Self-reliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courage</td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>Tactfulness</td>
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<td>Courteousness</td>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>Thoughtfulness</td>
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<td>Dependability</td>
<td>Moderation</td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
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To explore how this inventory compiled by a non-Indian philosopher might relate to other worldviews, we asked some of the Native Americans advisors in this project what virtues they like and do not like in archaeologists. Their list includes:

Cooperativeness    Honesty    Patience
Although certain overlap can be found between the lists of Rachels and the Native American advisors, such as cooperativeness, friendliness, generosity, honesty, more importantly these accounts do not contradict one another in any fundamental way. For instance, Rachels list does not advocate arrogance as a virtue while the advisors encourage humility. Hence, these lists offer a gateway—not an absolute and final catalogue—to consider which virtues might guide archaeologists’ responses to the environment in which collaborative research takes place today.

NAGPRA is a contentious issue, and will continue to be so for some time to come. In our project, it has been a challenge to move beyond issues of NAGPRA because we do not see our work as directly related to it. Nevertheless NAGPRA has impacted our fieldwork and vocabulary and it is one way our project may ultimately benefit our collaborators. And if our project benefits our advisors in this way then the seeming intrusion of NAGPRA is not necessarily negative. However, in order to understand this motivation and how this project might be used in the future, the virtues of awareness, openness, and respect are vital.

The structured process of collaboration today is an important issue because it involves more than personal relationships. Collaboration is dependent on professional ties, as well as the political infrastructure of each participating institution. For example, in the early fall of 2001 we met with a tribal Committee. The meeting went well and plans were made for the upcoming year. However, the Committee members were generally overburdened with other work and could not commit time to our project. Then in the spring of 2002, the Committee Chairman, an elected official, resigned. We then had to wait several more months following for an election, and even
then, we had to meet the committee and introduce the project again to jump-start the fieldwork and interview phase of the project. As our project is structured through institutional organizations, which often fluctuate, the researchers need a heightened sense of civility, cooperativeness, self-control and tactfulness. This work can be a long process and it requires patience and courteousness.

As the line blurs between the observers and the observed, the former observers have become the object of attention in new ways. Whether it is in the field having your observations observed with a video recorder or discussing research results with a tribal committee, the slippery dichotomy compels collaborators to enter into a real dialogue—even about differences—rather than a silence or simple monologue. A reticence to genuine conversation will only foster narrow-mindedness and exclusiveness. Responding to these conditions, researchers need a strong sense of trust, honesty, and thoughtfulness. Trust can be a challenge to begin building, for in our experience, it is based on past performance, which requires time spent together over a long period. It is an evaluation of past and present work and interactions. So to initiate the process of building trust, the virtues of willingness to learn and dependability are central.

The power of language and the way in which it pervades issues of social identity are key considerations in collaboration between archaeologists and Native Americans. The use of specific terms defines relations of power among collaborators and it can disempower the way in which some groups connect to the archaeological past. In dealing with the issue of the power of language, archaeologists ought to be motivated by the virtues of tolerance, humility, and reasonableness. It also means a willingness to be critical of one’s own vocabulary and way of communicating. Weaving together the perspectives of archaeologists and Native peoples will
mean incorporating multiple (and sometimes conflicting) worldviews. This above all requires the virtue of *respect*.

With this discussion, our intent has not been to lionize our own ethical outlook or roseate our efforts. In practice, moral perfection is only a goal as we have (admittedly) made errors and misjudgments in the process of this evolving work. But our approach has not been one of constant moral evaluation of specific acts, but rather an attempt to cultivate habitual action grounded within the framework of the virtues. One proponent of Virtue Ethics, has observed that humans do not naturally possess the virtues, and one cannot act on them mechanically or thoughtlessly:

> Virtues… we acquire just as we acquire crafts, by having previously activated them. For we learn a craft by producing the same product that we must produce when we have learned it, becoming builders, e.g., by building and harpists by playing the harp; so also then, we become just by doing just actions, temperate by doing temperate actions, brave by doing brave actions. (Aristotle, 1985: 34)

And so we shape our moral character from our behavior, and we behave from our moral character. Practicing the virtues requires a quotidian commitment that we keep working to do the right thing for the right reasons. Rosalind Hursthouse (1997: 224) has observed that, “Acting rightly *is* difficult, and *does* call for much moral wisdom… moral knowledge—unlike mathematical knowledge—cannot be acquired merely by attending lectures… there are youthful mathematical geniuses, but rarely, if ever, youthful moral geniuses.” Thus, ethical practice for us does not so much demand incessant self-evaluation of moral action, as a general embrace of the virtues, enacted through habituation.
CONCLUSIONS

Beginning in the 1970s, the discipline of American archaeology was confronted with the discord between its professional practice and living Native American communities. What started out as a protest and rejection of the colonialist aspects of the field was transformed into a radical shift in archaeological method and theory. Although in the past several decades we have seen an increase in professional archaeologists’ self-reflection, the conflicts that spurred these changes have been a part of the profession since its very beginnings in North America. Even more, as Thomas (2000) has persuasively argued, the strain today between archaeologists and Native peoples is profoundly based on 500 years of struggle and the endemic problems of power and control that characterize White-Indian interactions. Collaboration between archaeologists and Native Americans provides new opportunities for each community to learn from (and with) one another. It also entails designing projects that allows each participant to benefit, respects different ways of knowing the past, and challenges historical arrangements of power, whether it is reconsidering language, working with tribal committees, or reviewing manuscripts before publication (Fluehr-Lobban, 1991: 232). In this way collaboration is about working together concordantly, as well as recognizing the relations of power that have structured interactions in the past and continue to do so today (Figure 6).

Because there is a gap between the ideals of collaborative research and the reality of its practice, a robust ethical framework is needed. We have argued that Virtue Ethics provides a compelling approach to the many challenges that arise in conducting collaborative research. In particular, we have recommended firstly that although we may not do entirely without deontic
notions of morality, *aretaic* notions need increased attention from archaeologists; and secondly that archaeologists need a greater appreciation for the character of moral agents over prescriptions for specific behaviors. Thus we agree with Michael Stocker (1976)—and to a degree Louden (1984)—who argue for attention on sustained action instead of single acts. An ethic of collaboration involves no simple rule or moral equation, but it entails the cultivation of sincere relationships guided by virtuous ideals—civility, cooperativeness, tactfulness, patience, trust, honesty, thoughtfulness, tolerance, and respect. In many ways this ethical approach begins with questions of what constitutes a moral person before it addresses what makes a moral archaeologist. This outlook allows for a better appreciation not merely of what contributes to a flourishing of archaeological practice, but more to a flourishing of human life.

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References


Figure 1. San Pedro Ethnohistory Project Study Area.

Figure 2. Hopi cultural advisors discuss human remains and NAGPRA at Flieger Ruin. Photograph by T. J. Ferguson, May 1, 2002.
Figure 3. Apache researchers Jeanette Cassa and Vernelda Grant show Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh Apache pictographs. Photograph by T. J. Ferguson, February 19, 2002.
Figure 4. Hopi advisors Dalton Taylor and Leroy Lewis conduct research with Patrick Lyons at the Amerind Foundation Museum. Photograph by Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh, May 2, 2002.

Figure 5. Zuni advisors and archaeologists conducting research at the Amerind Foundation Museum. Photograph by T. J. Ferguson, April 25, 2002.
Figure 6. Tohono O’odham researcher Bernard Siquieros and T. J. Ferguson discuss tribal history at Gaybanipitea. Photograph by Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh, January 7, 2002.