

## Introduction

The profession of film archiving is an uneven blend of largely routine, detailed work necessary to preserve moving image cultural heritage and the occasional, dramatic rescue of a film that might have been lost forever. Restoration and preservation of such films, while exciting, are also complicated and subjective processes that require the efforts of a variety of professionals as well as the necessary resources of institutional infrastructure and financial means. How then does a smaller archive with limited resources, both human and financial, approach a film restoration project? The recent restoration of *The Daughter of Dawn*, an American silent film made in 1920, by OHS is a significant example of film preservation performed by a regional film archive as well as of its implications for preserving diverse cultural heritage within rural communities. What is the significance of this restoration for the larger field of moving image archiving? What larger implications or lessons for the archival profession can be gleaned from the restoration of *The Daughter of Dawn*? Do these implications speak to the preservation of diverse cultural heritage of rural communities?

Similar to the creators of the film - Anglo-European settlers who wrote and directed the film and Native American actors and actresses who performed - the area surrounding the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge is a mix of one urban and several rural communities. The closest towns, Medicine Park and Indianola, are rural and home to approximately 300-400 people, and the adjacent city of Cache, with a population of just under 3,000, is the former home of Comanche chief Quanah Parker. Because of Oklahoma's unique origin as Indian Territory before the controversial land runs/invasions of Anglo-European settlers and subsequent statehood, the lines between Native communities and non-Native communities can be sharp, blurred or non-existent. Analyzing the film restoration through the framework of rural communities reminds us of the simultaneous fluidity and tension between separate and historically distinct communities who coexisted and intermingled then and now, on the same land. This same tension is part of the cultural heritage of *The Daughter of Dawn*, in which a Native cast portrays a very familiar Anglo-European melodrama.

By examining the restoration and re-distribution of *The Daughter of Dawn*, I argue that regional film archives perform a critical function when they restore films within their communities of origin. Moving image archivists often speak of the privilege of preserving cultural heritage on film. In order to achieve that ideal, the cultural expertise and geographical positioning of the regional film archive combined with the participation of the local community are key. The priority should be to return the film, or the cultural and historical essence of the film rather than the actual film object, to its community of origin. Initial

exhibitions of *The Daughter of Dawn* involved varying levels of participation of both Native and non-Native communities, which created powerful affective experiences for its audiences. Expanding access via Netflix pushes at the boundaries of that experience by presenting it to a wider audience generating more awareness, albeit without the cultural and historical context encouraging shallow understanding.

## **Theoretical Frameworks**

Although an incredible piece of film history as well as moving image archiving history, the restoration of *The Daughter of Dawn* has not been thoroughly discussed in academic scholarship. Similarly, there is an absence of scholarship addressing the responsibility of archives based in rural communities to represent the diverse cultural heritage of their surrounding communities. In order to ground the compelling story of this restoration in theoretical research, I draw from a variety of sources. Precise definitions and purposes of “preservation” and “restoration” are discussed to establish transparency about the subjective nature of moving image archiving. Cinema and media studies theory, such as Joanna Hearne’s work on Native recognition and M. Elise Marubbio and Eric L. Buffalohead’s work on Indigenous image-making in American cinema frames the analysis of Native resistance and authenticity present in *The Daughter of Dawn*. Recent framings regarding participatory archives, including work by Anne J. Gilliland, Michelle Caswell, and Sue McKemmish, are described in order to position my discussion of the regional film archive’s responsibility to involve communities represented in the film with the restoration project. My argument to ultimately restore the film to its community of origin is established within the context of theories of community-based and regional film archives as set forth by Andrew Flinn, Karan Sheldon, and Caroline Frick.

## **A Tale of Restoration**

*The Daughter of Dawn* was directed by Norbert Myles and produced by Richard Banks’s Texas Film Company. On the cover of his script, Myles wrote, “This story has been made possible by R.E. Banks, whose knowledge of the Indian, and of his traditions, was gained during the twenty-five years that he lived with them.”<sup>3</sup> With an Anglo-European melodrama at the core of its narrative, the film still offers moments of authentic Native identity and history that are truly unique (Kelley, 1999, 299). *The Daughter of Dawn* was filmed in the Wichita Mountain Wildlife Refuge during the summer of 1920 in Lawton, Oklahoma, and the cast is composed of 300 members of the Kiowa Tribe and the Comanche Nation. The story includes a love quartet, buffalo hunts, intertribal battles, and the

capture/rescue of the main character Dawn. Evidence has been found of at least two previous screenings – one at The College Theatre in Los Angeles, California in October 1920 and another in Joplin, Missouri in 1921 – yet there is no evidence of a wide release.

The film was thought to be lost and has appeared in name only in discussions of films made in Oklahoma and the history of Native Americans in film. In Joanna Hearne's exhaustive list of the presence of Native Americans in film, *The Daughter of Dawn* is one of 54 films made prior to and including 1920. (2012). Few of these early films include an all Native cast, which contributes to the historical significance of *The Daughter of Dawn* (Hearne, 2012). One dedicated historian and Oklahoman, Leo Kelley, compared 36 production photos at the Museum of the Western Prairie with the original script at the Library of Congress to carefully reconstruct the story of the film for a 1999 article published in *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*. Kelley explicitly lays out what is most unique about the film – it is one of the earliest silent pictures filmed entirely in Oklahoma and the entire cast is Native American (1999). Kelley also states, "Unfortunately, very little knowledge of the actual shoot has been preserved, and even more heartbreaking, the film itself has probably been lost forever" (1999, 291). This tragic narrative of early 20th century films being lost forever is all too common within the field of moving image archiving and is a driving force behind restoration projects.

Before continuing this specific tale of restoration, it is important to pause and discuss the meanings of the terms "restoration" and "preservation" within the moving image archiving field. Moving image archivist Dino Everett argues that the terms "restoration" and "preservation" obfuscate the subjective nature of a film archivist's work. A restoration of a film ultimately becomes the creation of a new work due to decisions made by the archivist (2008). Although the archivist's intent is to restore the film to its original condition, the film object will undergo alterations in the forms of repairs, splices and perhaps insertion of frames from a copy that are in better condition. Technically, restoring the film object to its original condition is impossible as is perfectly recreating each historical viewing experience. *The Daughter of Dawn* that audiences currently view on Netflix is not the same work as the print that debuted in The College Theater in 1920. According to Everett's framework, the restoration of *The Daughter of Dawn* is more aptly described as performance-manipulative bio-fiction work because the re-created film "takes in consideration the playability of the completed work for a contemporary audience as a major factor in its alterations. This can be because of aesthetic choices or perhaps because of technological ones, such as introducing a permanent musical score to a print of a silent film" (2008, 31). It is critical to be transparent about the aesthetic and technical choices made during the creation and re-formatting of *The Daughter of Dawn* into various editions. For the purposes of

this study, since it focuses more on the theoretical implications of the restoration project, the term “restoration” more aptly refers to restoring the film and its unique and subversive representation of history to its community of origin, rather than restoring the film to its original, and ultimately unattainable, physical condition.

Similarly, the term “preservation” in the moving image archival field typically refers to repairing the original film print in preparation for projection or reprinting. In the case of *The Daughter of Dawn*, there is a deeper meaning beyond the preservation of the film object that can be signified by this terminology. Caroline Frick, in *Saving Cinema: The Politics of Preservation*, explains the archival view shared by many Native American tribes that the preservation of a way of life should be valued more than preserving physical objects:

For some tribes, the word “object” creates discomfort as it distances an item from its functional role in daily life: “Proper care is seen as a way of preserving the lifeways of a people, not of preserving objects.” For over a century, media has played an important role in the daily lives of humans around the globe via particular modes of distribution (or “access”). Film preservation practitioners *must* participate actively in this conversation or, as Rick Prelinger eloquently notes, they “risk irrelevancy and increased marginalization” (2010, 174).<sup>4</sup>

The restoration and preservation of *The Daughter of Dawn* offers both evidence of Native identity and ways of life as well as the layers of complexity involved with access to film heritage. Thus, the restoration of *The Daughter of Dawn* is more a story of restoring access to the historical way of life of a specific group of people than restoring a film to a new 35mm print or a digital file.

### **From Nitrate to Netflix**

In 2004, five years after Leo Kelley reconstructed the narrative of the film, Brian Hearn, the Film Curator at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art received a phone call from a private investigator in North Carolina who claimed to have received a print of the film as payment from a client, whose ancestor owned a silent movie theater. Hearn contacted Bill Moore, the film archivist at the Oklahoma Historical Society (OHS), who began the negotiations with the private investigator. The asking price was too steep for the Historical Society, so Moore contacted the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) to seek funding to save the film. Michelle Svenson with the NMAI was able to negotiate the detective down to an acceptable price by 2006. Meanwhile, the print stayed in the detective’s garage “exposed to heat, humidity, and dirt” (Zahos,

2014, 4). After the price was settled, local foundations based in Lawton contributed funds that would go toward the film's restoration.

Hearn was present on the day when the five reels of 35mm nitrate film returned to Oklahoma in January 2007, and he remembers it vividly as a very special and dramatic moment and likened it to opening presents on Christmas morning.<sup>5</sup> Upon detailed inspection, film archivists Bill Moore and LaNita Austin at OHS determined that there was a surprisingly minimal amount of damage in the five reels (4).<sup>6</sup> Overall, the film was in incredible condition and ready to be restored. While the film was at Hollywood's Film Technology Company being appraised for printing costs, the National Film Preservation Foundation awarded OHS with a matching grant to complete the project (4). As a final piece of the project, Dr. Bob Blackburn, the Executive Director of the Oklahoma Historical Society, contracted David Yeagley (a classical composer who is also a Comanche and an Oklahoman) to compose the score, which was ultimately performed by the Oklahoma City University orchestra. The recording had to be put on hold due to the economic recession in 2008 but was eventually completed in the spring of 2012 (5). *The Daughter of Dawn* had its world premiere at the deadCENTER Film Festival in Oklahoma City in June of 2012 (Wright, 2012, 4).

Since that release, the OHS licensed the work to Milestone Films for worldwide distribution. Milestone funded a 2K digital scan, the re-tinting of the film to match the original colors, and the cleanup at Metropolis Post which produced the DPX files, the DCPs and the digital master for the Blu-ray and DVD release.<sup>7</sup> A Netflix executive contacted Milestone after seeing a write-up of the film in a Dallas newspaper; the resulting contract with Netflix has almost covered the entire cost expended by Milestone to create the digital version. OHS retains copyright ownership of the film object, while Milestone owns the rights to the digital versions. The film is currently streaming on Netflix, and a DVD version is set to be released July 2016.<sup>8</sup>

### **Cultural Authenticity and the Survival of Native Identity**

From the OHS's initial press release, the language used to describe *The Daughter of Dawn* emphasized its unique and special role in representing cultural heritage of two distinct tribes: "This film is an American treasure both as an early art form in the history of cinema and as a window in the material culture of our Kiowa and Comanche tribes" (Zahos, 2014, 4). The uniqueness of *The Daughter of Dawn* stems from more than the fact it may be the only all-Native American cast silent film ever made and also documents authentic elements of pre-preservation tribal life captured within the narrative (Wright, 2012). Director Norbert Myles used "the tribe's [sic] tipis, horses, personal regalia and other artifacts, and shot scenes of the Comanches using cross-tribal Plains Indian sign

language. He also shot scenes of tribal dancing while the women prepared buffalo for a celebratory meal” (2). Whether these decisions were made out of the necessities of low budget filmmaking or out of respect for the cultural heritage of the Kiowa Tribe and Comanche Nation may not ever be transparent. What is clear is that this film captures a precise moment in history that is significant for both contemporary tribal identities as well as modern Oklahoma’s representation of its colonial history.<sup>9</sup>

To recreate tribal dances, buffalo hunts, and battles during filming involved performing acts of cultural subversion to ensure the survival of the tribal way of life. These subversive performances were met with colonial resistance and government interference during the shooting of the film. An Assistant Field Matron, assigned by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to spy on the tribes, filed a weekly report on July 31, 1920, complaining of the activities related to filming:

Went to a camp close to headquarters where their [sic] are about 300 Kiowas and Comanches gathered dancing and having pictures taken to be used in the movies...I talked to the manager to have the camp broken up and dances stopped. These dances and large gatherings week after week are ruining our Indian boys and girls as they have been going on for about three months and different places. No work done during these days (Wright, 2012, 2).

Myles described the cast as “very shrewd,” and apparently they continued dancing and ignoring the warnings of the Bureau representative (Zahos, 2014, 5). This documentation of Native resistance is a critical piece of history that is just as necessary to preserve as the film itself. Now that the film has been restored and re-distributed, the opportunities to share these often obscured pieces of the survival of tribal identity within the context of colonial oppression, a significant aspect of Oklahoma’s history, increase.

The use of location throughout *The Daughter of Dawn* underscores the authentic representations of tribal life found in the film and connect with the importance of the geographical positioning of the film restoration (Zahos, 2014). The Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge is “the oldest managed facility in the United States Fish and Wildlife Service system. It includes 59,020 acres, of which 22,400 are open to the public” (8). After the well-documented near-extinction of the American bison in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the American Bison Society, starting in 1907 (the same year in which Oklahoma was officially granted statehood) transplanted 15 bison from New York City’s Bronx Zoo to Oklahoma. Those efforts produced the “wild” herd in the buffalo chase scenes of *The Daughter of Dawn* and the population existing now at the Wichita Mountains numbers about 650 (6). The presence of the repopulated herd in the film provides a momentary glimpse into the lives of pre-reservation Plains tribes whose ways of living often revolved around the existence and movements of this particular animal.

## **Does Geography Matter? Or, The Role of the Regional Film Archive**

While sometimes dependent upon larger institutions outside of its geographical area, the regional film archive performs a central and specialized role. As the Director of the National Film Television and Sound Archives of Canada, Sam Kula gave the keynote address in 1986 to the International Federation of Film Archives' (FIAF) executive committee meeting. He stated his view of the national film archive as "economic manager or 'resource base' for subnational collections, 'more specialized in their functions.'" He added that "he did not intend to 'cast the role of the regional archive as somehow secondary,' but that he felt subnational film archives were best positioned and prepared to serve *local* communities" (Frick, 2010, 130). OHS was best positioned to restore *The Daughter of Dawn* because of its years of service and mission dedicated to the needs of the local community of Southwest Oklahoma. As stated on its website: "The Oklahoma Historical Society has been collecting, preserving, and sharing the history of Oklahoma and its people since 1893."<sup>10</sup>

The recent re-distribution of *The Daughter of Dawn* offers a complex case of preserving cultural heritage through a film restoration performed by a small, regional archive. The work of the restoration originated with the Oklahoma Historical Society, although several different organizations eventually became involved in the completion of the project – the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, the Library of Congress, the National Film Preservation Foundation, Film Technology, Milestone Film & Video, and Metropolis Post. OHS employs 2-3 film archivists and exemplifies the fact that regional film archives often thrive because of the work of a few individuals. "The United Kingdom's regional film archive network was largely the result of individual human agency." As Frick notes, David Cleveland, the founder of the East Anglia Film Archive "focused upon the media product created in his native region, acquiring newsreels, home movies, and industrial training films and commercials that reflected a geographically specific location and perspective" (2010, 132).

Karan Sheldon, the co-founder of Northeast Historic Film in Bucksport, Maine, similarly defines the purpose of locally situated archives. "Regional audiovisual archives collect, preserve, and provide access to film and video selected on the basis of geography" (2007, 119). According to this functional mission, the restoration and re-release of *The Daughter of Dawn* should logically extend from the mission of the Oklahoma Historical Society. However, there is a higher purpose beyond geography. Sheldon clarifies the particular mission above and beyond the daily function of a regional film archive. "If we are successful in forcing attention to a film or video – by emphasizing its value as a work of art, as primary source material, as a cultural artifact – we help ensure its survival" (121).

Thus, the preservation or even survival of geographically specific film becomes interwoven with the preservation of cultural heritage.

Similarly, Dr. Blackburn at the OHS situates the appeal of the film in its specifically Oklahoman context. “*The Daughter of Dawn* is all Oklahoma. Acted by Oklahoma Indians, filmed entirely in Oklahoma, in a story of Oklahoma’s Kiowa and Comanche nations, scored by a Comanche and played by the Oklahoma City University Philharmonic students, even the film was restored by an Oklahoman working in Hollywood for the Film Technology Lab” (Wright, 2012, 4). While this emphasis on the identity of the State of Oklahoma is problematic if it eclipses the role of Native American identity in the restoration, it is helpful to pinpoint the aims of the OHS, which was structuring its film archive at the same time as it was processing *The Daughter of Dawn* restoration.

Although the local preservation of cultural heritage is clearly beneficial to a community, the reality of the lack of resources faced by regional film archives makes reaching this goal incredibly challenging.

Any work’s renown is constructed of public relations, context, luck, timing, connections, the assiduous work of one or more scholars, and adequate resources to pull off that magic. For many regional archives, the culture of scarcity in which they operate – never enough time, money, or staff – means it is nearly impossible to make known the broad value of their collections (Sheldon, 2007, 121).

The ability to distribute and publicize the historical significance of *The Daughter of Dawn* required a metaphorical village, as museums and nonprofits from coast to coast pitched in to support the restoration and continuation of screening the film. Even the original nitrate print now resides at The Academy Film Archive in Los Angeles, California with ownership retained by the OHS (Zahos, 2014, 4).

### **A Tale of Missed Opportunities for Reconciliation and Participation**

The staff of the OHS did work with the Kiowa Tribe and the Comanche Nation to include them in the re-release of *The Daughter of Dawn*. Dr. Blackburn arranged for screenings for members of the Kiowa Tribe and the Comanche Nation in the Oklahoma towns of Anadarko, Carnegie, and Lawton. These screenings were deeply affective experiences for the viewers and reflect the first step toward prioritizing participation of those reflected in archival records. “‘There were tears,’ he recalls. ‘They recognized an aunt or a grandparent...It was very powerful for them to see family members who were pre-reservation wearing their own clothing and using family heirlooms that had been brought out of trunks’” (Wright, 2012, 4). In fact, the screenings for Native audiences led to identifying unknown cast members and identification of the tipi, which was then

recovered in the storage facility of the OHS and is now on permanent display. It is important to note, and certainly worth further exploration, that the OHS's website credits a curator with re-discovering the tipi, while multiple articles credit Native audiences at private screenings of *The Daughter of Dawn* with initiating the process of recognition, re-discovery, and restoration.<sup>11</sup> Another description of a restoration screening was recalled by one elderly viewer, Sammy Tone kei White, who recognized his mother, Em koy e tie, on screen. "My mother was walking right at me, she was so beautiful. I'm glad the room we were watching it in was dark, because it was emotional seeing her so young." Hearne argues that, "Thus the film represents an important site of intergenerational Native recognition as it circulates back to its community of origin" (2013, 113). These private screenings provided a critical connection between the institutional archive and the community members it serves.

By involving the communities represented in the film in its exhibition, the OHS employed a level of participation that could be further expanded to all stages of the restoration project. Anne Gilliland and Sue McKemmish envision a suite of rights in records to be promoted through archival practice. They suggest that everyone who plays a role in the existence of a record, who is present in the record, or who is affected by the creation of a record should be considered in the development of access policies (2015). "Access policies and processes should be designed to meet the needs of victims and oppressed and marginalized communities for access to current as well as archival records, and to protect the most vulnerable individuals, groups, and communities from disclosure of harmful information" (106). While Gilliland and McKemmish specifically reference bureaucratic archives that maintain records essential for victims of human rights abuses or citizens in a post-conflict society to verify their identity, validate their experiences, and perhaps participate in reconciliation and recovery, these principles of access can be applied to archives based in rural communities with diverse populations. Unfortunately, there is no evidence found to date that elders of the Comanche Nation and the Kiowa Tribe were involved in decisions surrounding the restoration project, including the licensing of rights to Milestone films and the resulting sale and expansion of access to Netflix.

Additional potential opportunities for reconciliation that would continue the spirit of preserving the Kiowa and Comanche ways of life would be afforded by continued programming in participation with the Kiowa Tribe and the Comanche Nation. Intentional collaborations with indigenous populations are a significant responsibility of archivists, especially those working within the context of a regional film archive whose stated mission is to serve the communities surrounding its location. Regional film archivists carry a great responsibility for the preservation of cultural history and must balance this with the recognition of the contemporary existence and identity of Native people. As Frick elaborates:

Media archivists, understandably wrapped up in, and rewarded for, the Western paradigm of *saving* the world's audiovisual heritage, benefit from noting that, in B. R. Sharma's words, although "rescuing may become the only means of helping a given community record their endangered and disintegrating cultural history...[they should also pay heed to the living culture surrounding those artifacts as] the maintenance of traditional practices in many communities is in part an assertion of cultural identity" (Frick, 2010, 160).

The private screenings of *The Daughter of Dawn* for family members of the cast are an example of culturally sensitive programming, yet the work should not end there. Archives that maintain ownership of objects and assets of indigenous populations are in a precarious position. "Still in an era of postcolonialism, but not yet postcustodial, the 'archive,' with its imbued sense of cultural (and legal) power, suffers a similar fate to the 'museum,' rightfully questioned on issues related to repatriation and curatorial practices of collecting, preservation, and access" (159). Perhaps co-curating a travelling exhibit of *The Daughter of Dawn* and related artifacts in collaboration with tribal museums (both the Kiowa Tribe and the Comanche Nation own and operate their own museums) could begin to address the realities of repatriation and historical transparency.

### **Implications for Archives and Rural Communities**

The restoration of *The Daughter of Dawn* reinforces the critical role that regional film archives play in preserving and restoring cultural heritage on film within communities of origin. The modern iterations of the film remain a significant record of Oklahoma's film heritage as well as a critical artifact of two specific cultures in one location at a precise moment in history. The national significance of this regionally based film has also been recognized. In 2013, the Library of Congress selected *The Daughter of Dawn* as one of three silent films in a total of 25 films to add to the National Film Registry. More than just a national treasure, what is truly fascinating about *The Daughter of Dawn* lies in its communities of origin.

Two of the lead actors are White and Wanada Parker, children of the "last" Comanche Chief Quanah Parker. Kiowa elder Hunting Horse plays another main character. Also, there are cast members who were alive before the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache tribes were removed from their lands and relocated to the same reservation. Because of the strong connection between some of the depictions on screen and the reality of the actors' very recent past, Hearne argues that the film takes on elements of a home movie (2012). Although Leo Kelley argues that the film was produced by whites for white audiences, it also includes moments of authentic Kiowa and Comanche history, such as the dances, use of

sign language, and scenes of chasing buffalo on the Great Plains in the Wichita Mountains (1999).

Because of the dual nature of the film - an Anglo-European silent melodrama from 1920 and a unique record of Native American identity, resistance, and survival in the context of colonial oppression - the regional film archive bears a significant responsibility to promote authentic participation and reconciliation. In some ways through this restoration, the Oklahoma Historical Society has fulfilled the higher purpose of the regional film archive and returned *The Daughter of Dawn* to its community of origin, creating an experience where contemporary tribal people can experience their history in a unique and especially moving way. The emotional experiences of Native audiences during screenings of the restoration reflect the very real presence of Native authenticity and identity in this production of a movie made by white people: "Its Native cast and material culture do not simply authenticate a Hollywood story...Through performance, setting, and elements of the *mise en scène*, the film - produced by non-Natives and performed by sophisticated tribal community leaders - renews the visual record of generational continuity and aesthetic representations of Kiowa history" (Hearne, 2012, 114). By restoring access to the film for Native and non-Native audiences through the production of multiple formats, the Oklahoma Historical Society preserves a complex piece of Oklahoman and Native American history. Implications can be gathered from this particular project for the larger archival profession and the imperative to collect, preserve, and provide access to the diverse cultural heritage of rural communities. Caroline Frick in *Saving Cinema* discusses the ways in which community-based sharing, copying, and distribution of digitized materials can be a critical way to preserve the moving image records of a community, specifically a community whose population may be dwindling (2010). Frick offers this point as a contrast to a dramatic tale of nitrate discovery, and it is interesting to note that the story of *The Daughter of Dawn* contains elements of both - discovering a 35mm nitrate print wasting away in someone's garage and the current manifestation of the film in new 35mm prints, 2K scans, DCPs for theater screenings, and masters for a potential Blu-Ray and DVD release. By re-formatting the film into various media, both the OHS and Milestone Films ensure its continued access and the preservation of the complicated history embedded in the film.

Because of this complicated history, it is critical for archivists to maintain transparency about the ways in which *The Daughter of Dawn* and other representations of diverse communities in rural areas both preserve Native identity as well as obscure it. Preserving content without context is not enough. The Hollywood romance of the narrative, the interchangeability of Comanches playing Kiowas (White and Wanada Parker are famous Comanches who both play members of the Kiowa tribe in the film), and the recognition that this film is made

by white people for white audiences should remain present in any presentation and/or discussion of the film. Even the world premiere perpetuated this element of Native interchangeability as it featured Wes Studi as the special guest of honor to present the film. While Studi may be the most famous Native American actor from Oklahoma, he is also a Cherokee and not a representative of either the Kiowa Tribe or Comanche Nation. This idea that all Native Americans are the same, regardless of their distinct tribes and unique histories, recalls the colonizing perspective of the U.S. government who placed warring tribes, such as Kiowas and Comanches, on the same reservations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Similarly, Marubbio and Buffalohead powerfully name the role of stereotypes in historic filmic representations of Native Americans and their perpetuation of “the problematic tradition of using Indians as a backdrop for the telling of a white person’s story.” Through their perpetuation of racist constructions, the narrative structure of these films “is equally powerful as a damaging stereotype because it denies Native Americans agency to tell their own histories” (2013, 5).

An appropriate level of transparency, critical reflexivity and sharing of agency can only be achieved through the embrace of community-based, participatory archival methods. While regional film archives may have a geographically mandated collection policy, they often share the political and cultural motivations of a participatory archive. As Gilliland and Flinn contend:

...even in the most nostalgic and leisure-oriented community archive projects there is something inherently political in individuals and communities taking an active role in the re-telling of their own history. In common with other more explicitly political archives, these groups are frequently motivated to tell histories and save archives that they believe would not otherwise be saved and would not be heard (2013, 5).

This common sense of purpose to share the stories of a region or community that are often excluded from the dominant narrative is a similarity. However, archivists advocating for participatory archives have done a much better job of explaining and justifying the importance of archival activism. An archive applying participatory archival methods in order to represent the multiple histories of a specific region would need to adopt this activist framework in order to honor the human rights of the individuals within their records. Michele Caswell explains the decision-making process in human rights archiving. “In a survivor-centered approach, the decision-making process is placed in the hands of survivors and victims’ family members rather than done solely behind closed doors by a team of ‘experts,’ professionally trained archivists, and administrators” (2014, 315). Sharing decision-making in archival processes, including accessioning, cataloging, description, and exhibition will ensure that multiple narratives will co-exist within the archive.

What does this mean for rural communities? Despite common stereotypes, rural communities are home to diverse populations and multiple cultures. *The Daughter of Dawn* provides a significant example of the complicated tensions between two such cultures - white colonizers' romantic representations of Native Americans and specific tribal experiences of cultural resistance and survival in the face of genocide. Participatory and community-based archival methods offer a way for archives to represent the dominant narratives of history side-by-side with counter-narratives and conflicting perspectives. Through an embrace of these activist archival theories and practices, the diverse cultural heritage of rural communities can be better represented within the archive.

Even with these sensitive and difficult issues, it is critical to recognize the work of the regional film archive in the preservation of this significant cultural artifact. The Oklahoma Historical Society indeed discovered a lost treasure, and its role as the only regional film archive in Oklahoma perfectly positioned the organization to restore *The Daughter of Dawn*. Although the film has officially been transferred from its original, deteriorating nitrate print, the work of restoring the film to its communities of origin is ongoing. *The Daughter of Dawn* is certainly a national treasure, yet it is also a regionally specific cultural artifact that demands continued educational, historic, and community engagement.

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