



A CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS
A CULTURE OF PEACE

MY THESIS IN TWO PAGES

GINAWAYDAGANUC AND A CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS **AN EXAMINATION OF THE DISCOURSE OF INDIGENOUS ELDER WILLIAM** **COMMANDA**

I am conducting an “embedded in time and space” geo-narrative/storytelling case study researching any contemporary relevance to the western academy of the discourse of late Indigenous Elder William Commanda, on environment and related matters. I am exploring the following themes:

1. the interplay of his land based language, culture and heritage, ideological articulation through rock art, wampum belt artifacts and ceremonial and ritual practices, his *law of nature - way of life* indoctrination, his absolute adherence to a central principle of interrelatedness and oneness manifested in an infinitude of diversity, conceptualized around the “reminding” word *Ginawadaganuc* (that the *all is related*, and therefore *one*);
2. his contemporary *locatedness* in a colonized Europeanized world rendered both global and divided, with ideologies of duality rendered manifest with the *World War One*, one so *apparently* different from his ideological foundational embeddedness in interconnection, yet over the course of his own lifetime, one also grappling with *globalization*;
3. his Indigenous understanding and animation of syntrophy, consistent with the cosmic principles of energy, life, movement, emergence and evolution, and his conscious and deliberate animation of his own theoretical platform in the creation of his *Circle of All Nations* global eco-community as a bridging device to reconstitute and reconstruct relationships consistent with the *laws and intelligence of nature*;
4. the positioning of his *approach to environment and related matters* and knowledge creation on multiple platforms, local and global, and its possible integration into the western academy.

I am utilizing multiple logics of inquiry to explore whether such integration is possible.

I propose to use the foundational idea of *Ginawadaganuc*, *All is Related*, as the central cog around which to assess each of the respective logics of inquiry and associated methods and tools of the *Circle of All Nations* conceptual Medicine Wheel to structure my research, and to critically examine and justify its potential use as a scholarly exemplar. Its potential for bridging with the western academy will be explored by exercising meticulous rigour in examining the assemblages of elements in the empirically grounded discourse, via two key methodological tools, Nvivo for data analysis of the core themes, frequency and coherence of the discourse, and the cybercartographical Atlas to track themes of relationality, fragmentation and emergence across space and time.

I employ four proposed logics of inquiry as entry points into the research, and associate select methodologies to facilitate analysis of the materials, as follows:

- performance mapping and *geo-narrative*
- historical/dialectical approach and *narrative*
- phenomenological, and *critical reflexivity and auto-ethnography*
- cybercartography and *cybercartographical digital atlas*

In a cyclical fashion, I approach the logics of inquiry, moving from the first frame of performance mapping indicative of the grounding ideological worldview and Indigenous Cartography; then to the second, a historical/dialectical approach in the examination of the Indigenous and textual narrative of the totality of a single case over time (William Commanda's life and narrative), with the inseparability of related conjunctures, contingencies and contradictions from historical times of contact into the present; the third frame positions my interpretive focalization in a phenomenological logic of inquiry, of discourse, text, symbol, semiotics, based on field and participant observation, nominalization, critical reflexivity, positionality and auto-ethnographic and cultural interpretation; and finally the fourth frame accesses cybercartography, reflecting the interplay of time and space, grounded in the land, physical and sensual data, and multiple perspectives (of a range of key participants), accessed in textual and photo/video/audio and social media material over time, and emergent in contemporary discourse.

The associated methods follow the same cyclical flow: firstly, the geo-narrative addresses the "law of nature" ideological framework, emergent from land, language and associated ways of knowing, as re-constituted in wampum law; secondly, the narrative explores specific components of the William Commanda discourse and travels from the historical/dialectical lens: his long life, library and archives of a century of tremendous change (1913 – 2011) provide a rich record for research and analysis; thirdly, adherence to the parameters of critical reflexivity and auto-ethnography under the phenomenological lens contributes to my interpretative analysis of the discourse, (given my intensive engagement in Indigenous issues for over thirty years, in William Commanda's work over twenty years, my academic background in literature and study of language, and my unique insider/outsider status in his work); and fourthly, the creation of a cybercartographic atlas draw on digital mapping perspectives to examine the multiple voices/player/actants, engagement and emergence evident over space and time in the William Commanda/*Circle of All Nations* discourse; this contemporary expression of performance mapping will draw the cyclical research project to the emergent spiral in the conceptual *Circle of All Nations* medicine-wheel-in-motion. For the purposes of the thesis research, only one segment of the Commanda discourse, that pertaining to the intangible relationship to sacred land, will be examined in a digital atlas format, and with reference to social media. Contemporary reference to his work/legacy will lead to conclusions about the possible integration of the William Commanda approach to knowledge generation on environment and related matters within the academy.

Romola V. Thumbadoo – Romolavt@gmail.com

