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POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP AWARD FINAL REPORT, October 28, 2021**

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**Legacy Work of Indigenous Elder William Commanda, OC, Hon PhD**

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**Facebook Pages**

**<https://www.facebook.com/romola.thumbadoo...>**

**<https://www.facebook.com/circleofallnations/>**

**<https://www.facebook.com/William-Commanda-124359520927182/>**

**<https://www.facebook.com/William-Commanda-Legacy-Asinabka-701369829887220/>**

**<https://www.facebook.com/Romolas-Nature-CAN-TEACH-PhotoArt-Page-937319673008841/>**

**Supervisor – Dr. D. R. Fraser Taylor, Director, Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre**

**SSHRC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am deeply grateful to SSHRC for its support of this unconventional grassroots-based research which has given voice directly to its protagonists, late Indigenous Elder William Commanda, and myself; there is no third party lens distancing from the Circle of All Nations discourse and its analysis. Its aspirations are transparent in this age of information technology, and its fundamental and foundational priorities of integrating environment and diversity are both vetted, animated and scrutinized simultaneously and publicly, and evident in a vast, fully accessible body of textual and visual data. The SSHRC award enables us to extend the global reach of our work. Further, the award and the visibility it provides has enabled us to also reposition the significance and implications of two important conceptual words of the age of technology – *Cybernetics* and *Animation* – and to reposition them for praxis and agency in the ever-evolving Circle of All Nations *Digital Global Village*.

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## I. GENERAL

### a) Note re Challenges:

1. A series of road trips across the American North East, including across the St. Lawrence Watershed, was planned but not executed physically because of the COVID Crisis and travel restrictions. However, a program of global online conferences was executed as comparable spatial outreach.
2. Since July 2021, I have had serious challenges with my Macbook Pro laptop, and that has curtailed execution of my digital visualization plans and presentation of Nvivo supported research and analysis. That will only be addressed with the release of the new laptop model in November, 2021. Thereafter I intend to produce a more comprehensive graphic report and book on this special postdoctoral research project.

### b) Statement of Appreciation

I wish to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Professor D. R. Fraser Taylor, for his tremendous patience, support and guidance with this challenging research. He has taken Late Elder Commanda, who jokingly referred to himself as a Kindergarten Dropout, and me, an adult scholar and social activist, through both our doctoral and postdoctoral work, and thus facilitated our leaving a record of

- i) some of the knowledge and thinking of an exemplary Indigenous global leader who did not have the usual supports of organization, staff or funds to make his mark on time and space and
- ii) our joint creation of the Circle of All Nations, its discourse and its evolving presence as a *Digital Global Village*.

William Commanda, Indigenous Wampum Belts Carrier and renowned Algonquin canoe builder, already acknowledged as an Honorary PhD (twice) and Officer of the Order of Canada, now has his place in both the fast paced and influential online Cybernetic world of social media, and also in the innovative locational archival mapping Cybercartographic platform and academic world, where the digital atlas model and associated leading edge research led by Professor Taylor permits the articulation and animation of many aspects of his work.

These knowledge generative practices will be further accessible with the planned launch of the new Circle of All Nations website, and the Cybercartographic atlas by November 11, 2021, the occasion of William Commanda's 108<sup>th</sup> birth date. Both remain works in progress, and will be further solidified in the upcoming months. A 2022 Circle of All Nations calendar is also being created; it will highlight William Commanda's academic journey and be freely accessible online.

Again, a big thank you and salute to Professor Taylor for his support, as well as his tireless work, inspiration and ceaseless pursuit of innovation.

I also wish to acknowledge with gratitude the decade of institutional support from the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Carleton University.

## II. PHD THESIS AND POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL DETAILS

### a. PdH THESIS – Defended January 15, 2021; Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

Thumbadoo, R.V. (2018). *Ginawaydaganuc and the Circle of All Nations: The Remarkable Environmental Legacy of Elder William Commanda* PhD Thesis. Ottawa. Carleton University. <https://curve.carleton.ca/aa4e3cbb-5b83-464d-8286-a901fcd77b06>

### b. KEY DETAILS OF POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSED IN 2018

- a two-year retrospective **geo-narrative study** on the travels, related environmental and peace work and storytelling of Elder Commanda, examining his Indigenous earth-based intelligence and wisdom in contemporary technology in times of global interconnection, profound climate change and environmental crises
- consistent with Elder Commanda's **bridge building** mandate, the study is not entrenched in decolonial accountability or critical Indigenous scholarship, but instead in exploring new approaches to advance access to his singular approach to co-creative, transformative and collaborative **inter-cultural work** in contemporary times of volatile crises
- **develop and adopt new modes of inquiry**, to probe challenges between his Indigenous approach to **knowledge generation** and that of science and academia, to identify zones of interface, permeability, and opportunities for some level of **integration or complementarity**
- locate and **surface discursive elements** that can contribute to academic scholarship
- explore some of William Commanda's primary **teaching tools** as the lens to negotiate different webs of knowledge not easily assessed in academic research and to provide a platform for approaching the critical issues of incommensurability of different knowledge systems: i) **wampum** shell artifacts (ancient Indigenous mnemonic devices of spiritual significance and historical record keeping importance) in which his spiritual and oral **narrative** is embedded; ii) the *Circle of All Nations* **medicine wheel** processual planning model, which is grounded in **sequential concepts of ontology (being), animation (action), ontogenesis (becoming) and epistemology (teaching)** in perpetuating spiralling motion and dynamism consistent patterns in nature; and iii) the iconic birch bark **canoe as epistemology** integrating creativity, form, art, motion, nature as well as experientially grounded, reflexive practice.

Using this background as a starting point, my post-doctoral study will examine the following questions:

1. How does **nature, land-based language, and orality contribute to storytelling**? The academic world is entrenched in the written word; orality is the *modus operandi* for many or most Indigenous peoples. Does this present unsurmountable challenges for cross cultural dialogue and reconciliation? What discursive elements contributed to the apparent effectiveness of William Commanda's storytelling discourse?
2. William Commanda identified himself as Mamiwinini; he translated that as "We travel every day; we always move". Some cognitive research suggests that the brain is hardwired to

movement. While *cyber* is a word associated with the relatively new phenomena of the internet, it is actually derived of the ancient Greek roots of *I steer, drive, guide*, rearticulated in the 1830s with the French cybernetique, the *art of governing*; his *steering* emerged from the lessons of Nature, articulated in water, current, wind, rock, earth, and the *canoe* navigated from ancestral times. Here I wish to investigate **the relevance of movement to his being, becoming, thinking, storytelling outreach and influence** over the course of his ninety-eight years.

3. William Commanda was known as the dot.com elder. He embraced **communication technology** from its earliest presence as typewriter, radio, television, camera, video camera, computer, websites, blogs and facebook. When he was exposed to the concept of cybercartography and digital atlas creation work of Dr. Taylor in 2007, he immediately came to the conclusion that it would be a very effective way to tell his story on-line: he was struck by its motional land-based dynamism for the registration and analysis of his history, records, thinking and life experiences.

**Do Cybernetics (motion) and Cybercartography (spatial) offer opportunity to create a living archive of a singular life during a century of tremendous global change and mobility?**

William Commanda is already an acknowledged Social Media (temporal) presence on the web and Facebook, where reflections on or by him (via video) can draw hundreds of hits in hours. This is a zone of motional fast shifting information sharing and individual and collective reflexivity and joint-journaling. Cybercartographic storytelling atlases are much more complex and can serve as repositories for libraries of locational digitized information; they hold dynamism and movement, inclusive of text, photos, videos, semiotic elements and graphics reflecting journey and movement. Multiple players can contribute to critical reflexivity and joint-storytelling in this contemporary modality. Can the presentation of his thinking and history in a live on-line format contribute to **new manifestations in digital storytelling**? Can this innovative technology advance understanding and integration of William Commanda's approach to knowledge mobilization and knowledge generation within the academy?

I propose to retrace his travels, both in a retrospective study of his archival materials, and in some journeys on the land, to explore the contribution travel and **motion make to knowledge mobilization**. I theorize that further in-depth empirical study, combined with his spiritual teachings and legacy about the interrelationship of motion to oral storytelling, will lead to new **Indigenous-based knowledge and theory, and facilitate bridging historical and contemporary divides**. This is relevant because many today believe that Indigenous knowledge is of critical importance in these times of accelerating climate change and unprecedented environmental devastation and loss of species.

### III. A FEW INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AND ORIENTATION

Some quantum physics thinking suggest that the brain perceives what the mind knows, not what the eye sees, and further, that knowledge systems comprise paradigms, beliefs and algorithms – algorithms being the multiple elements constantly in motion, combination and recombination, that impact the mind and thinking. These simple ideas present a lens to examine the incommensurability and challenge juxtaposed in the relationship between Western and Indigenous ways of knowing as revealed in the exemplar of William Commanda.

Professor D. R. Fraser Taylor has posited mapping and storytelling as fundamental human instincts and both are critical to Cartography, Geography and the William Commanda cognitive framework.

This musical clip (*Miskojonia Flying Down Thunder and Rise Ashen One Nation 2011* YouTube:Commanda, W. (2011). In Chief, K. Audio Recording/Song *Miskojonia Red Gold* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9SQvtFA3kM>) set around his view of history is the lens we take to understand his legacy, a refraction of which throws light on his roles as the carrier of the Seven Fires Prophecy and Circle of All Nations bridge builder. As we leapfrog across the epochs of time, I scan Western academic traditions reaching back across the centuries to articulate philosophies that sprouted from religion. Creation stories incorporated multiple dichotomized elements as presented through Abrahamic roots emmeshed in ancient cartographical and linguistic expression. Emerging from beyond the Dark Ages, 1492 provoked a renaissance that re-presented the story of location and land (as per Copernicus, Galileo), that prioritized story of origins, classification and survival of the fittest (Linnaeus, Darwin), and that positioned the story of identity (Vatican, Henry viii, Freud). The foundational thinking revealed itself in Cartesian duality and either/or choice points, made visible in segregation, war and violence; the toxicity was mollified first by the gold Columbus collected in the Americas, and later, after the global wars, by the exploitation of the grand natural resources of North America and elsewhere in the colonized world. Today this “wealth” has proven to be a temporary appeasement and we now exist in a world of pandemic, isolation, physical and mental health crisis, war, violence, unprecedented extinction of species, environmental crisis, climate change – a world literally and figuratively on fire, mediated by drugs and alcohol: a paradise lost.

The way to knowing for William Commanda and his ancestors was informed by the dominant experienced paradigm of cosmic motion, animated in the motional cybernetic directional symbols of canoe and *Mamiwiniwi*/nomad identity. The belief system was grounded in the observed and experienced cosmic temporal and spatial cycles informing life on earth, and consistent with the observable *Laws of Nature*, was entrenched in an inter-relatedness articulated as *Ginawaydaganuc*, tangible in an ever-evolving biodiverse eco system comprised of an infinite number of algorithmic elements. Dynamic maintenance of equilibrium and *trickster* syntropic spin were critical to the health and balance of the multiple numbers of intersecting systemic constellations of energy, and embedded in oral storytelling, mapping and web of knowledge ideology. In the face of the aberrant presence of the newcomers, osmotic motion articulated as forgiveness and reconciliation restored harmony; abrasion contributed to new forms of life force. Maintenance of a creative dynamism was accepted as crucial to evolution. This was the ideological foundation that informed William Commanda’s way of knowing, and was embedded in his semiotic *wampum* spirit text; cognizance of the critical realities of the times, evidenced in global warfare from the time of his birth, and

accelerating environmental crisis throughout his adult years lent tremendous urgency to his work as carrier of the Seven Fires Prophecy – he was passionately concerned about the evolution of his Mother Earth because he himself was embedded in her; he worked hard to awaken others to this understanding of relationship with this life source.

Today, Corona Virus and Climate Change present as the great equalizers on Mother Earth – money offers only the few an artificial space in the heavens beyond her boundaries. William Commanda foresaw the looming need for bridging boundaries and apprising diverse knowledge streams of the reality of the *intelligence* of nature and the cosmic world.

Long known as the dot.com elder, he was born into this age of the digital renaissance. Some thinkers say if English is one kind of language, then mathematics is another language – the concepts embedded in each create meaning; today we also talk about computer languages; what then is the Indigenous language? Beyond the spoken, beyond the physical, emotional and mental, it incorporates the spirit, and it is the integration of time and space with tremendous precision. This is evident in the geocosmic earth mapping in pyramids, rock calendars, Chaco Canyon architecture oriented to the solar and lunar and the Mayan calendar. I have discussed evidence of this digital precision in the context of William Commanda's father, Alonzo Commanda, and his environmental knowledge and predictive capacity. It was also apparent in William Commanda's numerical accuracy and linguistic ability. The age of information is informed by digital technology and communications.

This brings us then to the central postdoctoral research question – is the *cyber* world William Commanda's Circle of All Nations campfire campus? We examine his work in the context of fast paced time driven Cybernetic online world of digital communications, technology and social media, and the locational groundedness of Cybercartography in the digital atlas and Nunaliit framework as we query his relevance in the age of information technology. We postulate that Circle of All Nations serves as William Commanda's bridge building platform, and note that ten years after his death, it integrates praxis, agency, animation, branding, Deleuzian radical alterity, transrationality, reflexivity and syntropy in permeable pentimento layers; it reveals a discursive resonance and integrity emergent from a random dynamism, I have explored these ideas in the PhD thesis research.

I recall an interesting statement William Commanda made to me when I was splitting spruce roots for our canoe building project (documented in our documentary *Good Enough for Two*): *you have to control it*. Our ongoing *Circle of All Nations* discourse is a fascinating integration of the intentional and the unexpected, today further strengthened by Facebook algorithms; in time, the unexpected can be seen to hold a certain predictability; this is comparable to the early warning signals Zulu shaman and writer Credo Mutwa discussed with respect to prophecy.

Following a brief look at key activities of the past few years, this report will discuss the accomplishments and outputs of the SSHRC postdoctoral research project.

Despite pandemic, isolation and technological challenges, the research project remained focussed on addressing its central question - Do Cybernetics (motion) and Cybercartography (spatial) offer

opportunity to create a living archive of a singular life lived during a century of tremendous global change and mobility?

Four key accomplishments are noted:

1. The animation of the legacy of someone born over a hundred years ago through the execution of contemporary and evolving leading edge online digital communications technology; and further, the engagement of academics at the graduate and post graduate level with Indigenous, grass roots, non-government agencies and government players affirms the ongoing interest in and potential of the research project.
2. It is highly likely that Circle of All Nations hosted the first free, globally accessible and time spanning public online gathering/conference in May 2020, focused on its key priorities of Indigenous wisdom, environment, social justice and peace, and reflecting on its Millennium International Peace Gathering, drawing former and new colleagues into dialogue and joint digital storytelling, this on Facebook; further, this was undertaken well in advance of the current reach of Zoom or Microsoft Teams etc., at the onslaught of the COVID pandemic, global isolation and acceleration in the environmental crisis and climate change.
3. Several academic papers and presentations were completed, and they present an Indigenous thinker in his own name, not as a shadowed or invisible 'underling'.
4. Finally, the research exposed a range of young students, who knew nothing about William Commanda or Indigenous issues, to his knowledge generation stream and supported them in their own contemporary research and digital technology development. Their work was acknowledged by name and is now highlighted and prioritized in the IEEE science and technology world.



## IV. LISTING OF KEY ACADEMIC PAPERS, ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS

### 1. Research Papers

#### **a. Book Chapters:**

- i) In *Further Developments in the Theory and Practice of Cybercartography: International Dimensions and Language Mapping* (2019) Elsevier: (Thumbadoo, R. V., Taylor, D. R. F. *Storytelling with Cybercartography: The William Commanda Story*
- ii) In *Mapping with Indigenous Peoples in Canada*. Hess, J. (Ed.) Routledge. 2021: (Thumbadoo R. V., Taylor D. R. F. *William Commanda, Oral Wampum Storytelling, Digital Technology and Remapping Indigenous Presence Across North America*

#### **b. Journal Articles:**

- iii) *Cybercartography, cybernetics and the cognitive mapping practice of late North American Indigenous Elder William Commanda* for Volume 1: Issue 2 International Journal of Arts, Humanities & Social Science (IAHSS). 2020 (Thumbadoo R. V., Taylor D. R. F.
- iv) *Indigenous Elder William Commanda and the Circle of All Nations Discourse*. Volume 01: Issue 04 International Journal of Arts, Humanities & Social Science (IAHSS). 2020. Thumbadoo R. V., Taylor, D. R. F.

#### **c. Conference Paper and Presentations:**

- v) *Circle of All Nations Digital Global Village – William Commanda's Indigenous Cybernetic Navigation into the Age of Information Technology* 21CW2020: IEEE SSIT 3rd Conference on Norbert Wiener in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century 2021 Thumbadoo, R. V., Taylor, D. R. F.
  - v-1) Keynote Students Workshop IEEE SSIT Norbert Wiener in the 21st Century conference. Lecture video recording is now hosted by IEEE TV at: <https://ieeetv.ieee.org/video/circle-of-nations-romola-vasantha-thumbadoo-ieee-ssit-21cw2021>
  - v-2) Conference Paper Powerpoint Presentation. Lecture video recording is now hosted by IEEE TV
- vi) 2021-12-14 ICA 2021 *Integrating Cybercartography and Cybernetics in the Circle of All Nations Indigenous Mapping Exemplar of William Commanda* Thumbadoo, R. V., Taylor, D. R. F. Forthcoming.
- vii) 2021-12-14 ICA 2021 *Cartography in the Social Media Era: A New Balance and Synthesis*, Taylor, D. R. F. (Ottawa, Canada), Thumbadoo, R. V. (Ottawa, Canada), Wolodtschenko, A. (Dresden, Germany) and Zaslavsky. I. (San Diego, USA). Forthcoming.

#### **d. Other Academic Publication Outputs**

*Illustrative Atlas on Indigenous Cybercartography*, Dresden, Germany (Taylor, D. R. F., Wolodtschenko, A. and Thumbadoo, R. V., Co-Editors)  
MDPI/ISPRS International Journal Geo Information Special Issue on *“Mapping Indigenous Knowledge in the Digital Era”*, In Press 2021 (Taylor, D. R. F., Thumbadoo, R.V. Co-Editor)

### 2. Cybernetic/Cybercartographic Digital Research and Animation

- i) Development of a William Commanda/*Circle of All Nations* Cybercartographic Atlas live archive and repository
- ii) Creation of a new *Circle of All Nations* website and centralizing landing page
- iii) A series of road trips along the Ottawa River Watershed 2019-21, to support research
- iv) Mentoring 9 undergraduate students to prepare historical/archival materials for atlas and website
- v) Initiation and animation of free, globally accessible live video conferences hosted on Facebook (See further detail in Section 3)
- vi) Production of 6 teaching videos in addition to thirty recorded live video events.

### **3. Cybernetic Animation of Circle of All Nations Work, including Initiation of Innovative On-Line Live Facebook Conferences since the onslaught of the COVID Pandemic**

- a) I developed and supported several *Circle of All Nations* events and activities, on a range of Indigenous and social justice themes, including one formal conference with postgraduate academic, Indigenous and grassroots presentations
- b) May 22, 2020: In view of the COVID 19 Crisis, I used social media in the form of an all day live on-line global public gathering, likely the only one of its kind to date; it served to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the *Circle of All Nations* Millennium Peace gathering hosted by Elder Commanda, and it incorporated the temporal and spatial dimensions of the *Circle of All Nations* use of digital and telecommunications technology, connecting people over time and space:

**Pre-event** presentation from Taiwan by Dr. Scott Simon, (University of Ottawa) and participants in a SSHRC project with Indigenous Peoples in Taiwan on Decolonizing History;

**Part I.** Opening Prayer and Introductions, Mother Earth and Environmental (Special Presentation by Steven McFadden, Nebraska, writer, on the Sunbow Five Walk across N. America, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Odyssey of the 8<sup>th</sup> Fire; Deep Agroecology: Farms, Food and our Future

**Part II.** Child and Youth Care and Social Justice (with special interview with Zeni Thumbadoo, Deputy Director, National Association of Child and Youth Care Workers, South Africa – [www.naccw.org.za](http://www.naccw.org.za));

**Part III.** Criminal Justice and Indigenous Justice (Special presentation on *Horizon to Horizon – The Wet’suwet’en Title Disputed and Associated Conflicts* - by Andrew Costa, Carleton University PhD Legal Studies)

**Part IV.** Racial Harmony and Peace Building (Special presentations on Donald Marshall Junior and the Wolf Project Award)

**Part V.** Canoe, Art, Creativity and the Journey On (Special guest, musician Wayquay, who sang about the Sunbow Five Walk at the Millennium Gathering)

**Post Event.** Interview with Adrian Esposito, Circle of All Nations Asperger Syndrome colleague, Documentary Producer [espocinema@rochester.rr.com](mailto:espocinema@rochester.rr.com)

The event has reached over 5,000 people. The 6 live videos are online under Videos on the Circle of All Nations Facebook Page. A special report is being prepared on the event.

A special musical video, [Circle of All Nations Commemorative Video](#), was co-created pro bono with Karen Bisson, President Turtle Lodge Trading Post and volunteer designer and administrator of the Circle of All Nations project website [www.asinabka.com](http://www.asinabka.com).

c) On June 21, 2020, I hosted a second online Circle of All Nations Solstice Bridge Building event.  
d) This was followed by an ongoing series of live video events on topics of relevance to the Circle of All Nations priorities, were edited and organized into categories and remain accessible on the Circle of All Nations Facebook page

([https://www.facebook.com/circleofallnations/videos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/circleofallnations/videos/?ref=page_internal))

as well as in the Circle of All Nations YouTube Channel

([https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdMJRExRTpr4zhNWH\\_YBedQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdMJRExRTpr4zhNWH_YBedQ))

36 digital storytelling videos of varying lengths are available to date, under the four categories of William Commanda and Circle of All Nations Teachings; Social Justice, Criminal Justice and Child and Youth Care; Racial Harmony, Peace Building and the Asinabka Legacy; and Mother Earth, Creativity and Environmental Stewardship.

This work is complemented by regular postings on several Facebook pages to facilitate awareness and discussion on critical topical issues as well as to create a safe and respectful space for such knowledge generation and bridgebuilding efforts. Facebook's algorithmic memories affirm the benefits of the dedication to this work over the past 12 years and present a unique opportunity to advance research into the themes explored in the 2021 IEEE – SSIT conference and paper on technology and communications.

#### **Facebook Pages**

<https://www.facebook.com/romola.thumbadoo...>

<https://www.facebook.com/circleofallnations/>

<https://www.facebook.com/William-Commanda-124359520927182/>

<https://www.facebook.com/William-Commanda-Legacy-Asinabka-701369829887220/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Romolas-Nature-CAN-TEACH-PhotoArt-Page-937319673008841/>

Circle of All Nations animative information is also shared online via Constant Contact E-Newsletters and the website [www.asinabka.com](http://www.asinabka.com).

#### **4. Videos**

In addition to the Circle of All Nations live video events, the following videos were produced as part of the work to support and advance environmental stewardship and peace building, some specifically created for or with local and global partners, during the research period.

a. CACOR (Canadian Association for the Club of Rome)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lh6tJZm2DpI&feature=youtu.be>

b. CAN 2020 Commemorative Video <https://youtu.be/qVLKwKa-oi4>

c. CAN Ottawa Peace Festival Presentation to National Capital Peace Council on the Asinabka Centre at the Sacred Chaudiere Site

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c\\_Gav\\_y23Kg&list=PL2MfFD9VMJOurFOjLJrP0pSRk1XjZ3m0e&index=4&t=26s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_Gav_y23Kg&list=PL2MfFD9VMJOurFOjLJrP0pSRk1XjZ3m0e&index=4&t=26s)

d. Climate Coaching Alliance and Circle of All Nations: A Collaborative Workshop

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlj5Si3GGe4&list=PL2MfFD9VMJOtLg9cEgujuEbk6yz9iQY3N&index=3&t=98s>

e. Circle of All Nations Presentation to Wind Voices 2021 (Wind Voices/Grandmother Circle the Earth/River Sidon project)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6INMVjZysVE>

f. A Circle of All Nations Video: Acknowledgement of the Work of Philanthropist Farhan Wilayat Butt (created with Carleton University student Jonathan-Wandrille Bwirukiro)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJxFBzx1U60&t=147s>

## 5. Support of Students:

- I have mentored and profiled the research of a Carleton University PhD Legal Studies student at Circle of All Nations events since 2016
- I mentored a student who prepared a paper on our work in French at St. Paul's University
- I have given interviews to several PhD students researching William Commanda's Vision for the Asinabka Sacred Chaudiere Site Project
- I supervise four students working on the GCRC/Dr. Fraser Taylor Archives Project
- I supervised and mentored 9 students doing Archival Research work on the William Commanda/Circle of All Nations websites

These students were supported by the Work Studies, ACT to Employ and COOP Covid Emergency programs at Carleton University.

Personal financial support and on-going mentoring of 3 students continues for the Circle of All Nations research – I personally subsidized two coop students (in the amount of \$4000, summer 2021) and one graduate (in the amount of \$3,600 April – Dec, 2021) to support the completion of the atlas and website. \$1500 was invested in the compilation of the resource list for the *Learning from a Kindergarten Dropout* course.

The work of the named students is profiled in the 2021 IEEE – SSIT 3<sup>rd</sup> Norbert Wiener Conference and are part of its official records; formal reflections on the work were completed by all students and will constitute a future paper on the impact of William Commanda's work and legacy on young academics.

## 6. Informal Course Development and Delivery

I developed a course to transcribe into academic conceptualization the “teachings” of William Commanda, as articulated in our 2005 book entitled *Learning from a Kindergarten Dropout – Cultural Sharings and Reflections* [../Documents/CAN COURSE 2019/CAN Course 2020 Infographic 1.pdf](#). Unfortunately, there was no room on the roster for such a course, in Geography, Indigenous and Canadian Studies and Social Work at Carleton University; nor was there any interest from the Lifelong Learning Program. Perhaps this is because I myself am not Algonquin or Indigenous. However, (also in view of the COVID 19 crisis), I offered it as a non-credit informal course on Skype to a small group of students (inclusive of Indigenous, PhD student, former public servant, teachers and activists) and have begun to analyse findings and written and semiotic/sensory reflections; I also contracted a Masters in Divinity graduate to develop a complementary resource guide of written, video and art materials to extend access to the knowledge and thinking of William Commanda and Circle of All Nations to facilitate bridge building beyond incommensurability. I plan to offer a further refined informal non-credit course

online in 2022 (where William Commanda remains person of great interest). I expect that this work will eventually inform and strengthen my ongoing postdoctoral research, and, hopefully, support finding some place in academia for this singular teacher. At any rate, it will be made available to the public at large.

## **7. Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre (GCRC) - Research and Administration**

As Personal Assistant to Dr. D. R. Fraser Taylor, Director, Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre at Carleton University, I have undertaken research, communications, administration and archives student supervision; note that the work with students also supports the University's Work Studies and ACT to Employ programs. This role exposed me the academic world in a singular manner, given Professor Taylor's lengthy research career, academic stature and global reach and influence.

I also serve with Professor Taylor as co-editor for a MDPI ISPRS publication: MDPI/ISPRS International Journal Geo Information Special Issue on "*Mapping Indigenous Knowledge in the Digital Era*", In Press 2021 (Taylor, D. R. F., Thumbadoo, R.V. Co-Editor).

## **8. OceansCanada Partnership Conference Planning Committee**

I support the GCRC/Arctic Group participation in the SSHRC OceansCanada Partnership Project Final Conference planning as an HQP (Highly Qualified Person) (facilitated planning of a grassroots storytelling presentation on the American Eel, to foster community/academic interaction; this was stalled by COVID).

I contributed to a group letter to science.org prepare by over three hundred scientists entitled *WTO must ban harmful fisheries subsidies*, to be released October 29, 2021, via open access and contributed to impact the UN Conference of Partners (COP 26 in Scotland). I contributed the following comments for inclusion:

1. Include mention of non-govt subsidization, not only of fuel but also of vessels and engines, and fishing gear/equipment, especially with deep sea fishing;
2. Support local fisheries and communities, consistent with UN SDGs, not just help them comply with proposed regulations;
3. Strengthen inspections, monitoring and enforcement;
4. Endorse public understanding of biodiversity principles to build support

(I mention this specifically because William Commanda participated in the Pre Rio COP deliberations in Paris in 1991, and contributed to some shift in thinking on the global stage from the management of natural resources to a relational interface with Earth; and I/Circle of All Nations continued the advocacy during COP 17 and COP 21. I also recirculated a music video created for COP 17 in South Africa, during the Circle of All Nations May 2020 live video event - [Trichy Vila - Save Us!](#) and it is also featured in the Circle of All Nations 2020 Commemorative video).

## **9. Online Justice Learning Network SSHRC Application**

In Sept 2018, an unsuccessful SSHRC Connections Grant application was filed for the Special Call on Indigenous Justice. In view of the escalating contemporary policing and justice crisis, consideration is underway to revisit the proposal and explore options for the development and possible inclusion of a dedicated “Online Learning Network” virtual reality meeting space component in the Circle of All Nations/William Commanda Cybercartographic Atlas or on other virtual platforms like Masterclass. Discussion is also underway to engage in a BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) youth justice project in Toronto, Canada.

## **10. National and International Educational Outreach**

### a) Presentation at NACCW Conference in South Africa

I made a presentation on a *Circle of All Nations* Indigenous approach to Child and Youth Care work at the 44 th International Biennial Conference of the National Association of Child and Youth Care Workers in South Africa (2019); Note: this child and youth care work was referenced as a sub theme in the original doctoral research plan; I sponsored and made a presentation with Indigenous colleagues at a conference of the Ontario Child and Youth Care Network in Thunder Bay Ontario in 2016; and created a special report on this challenging work; I advanced the work further by presentations on the Donald Marshall Junior Youth ‘Safe Park’ Cultural Camp, grounded in the *Badge of Courage* aspirations, in 2020 Circle of All Nations work. The themes developed here may be incorporated in the Toronto youth justice project.

### b) Climate Coaching Alliance 24 Hour Global Webinar

In collaboration with colleagues from Canada, England and Italy, I made a presentation on the William Commanda/Circle of All Nations Medicine Wheel approach to addressing the accelerating global environmental and climate change crisis. A short video was produced.

c) I am a member of the global Wind Voices/Grandmothers Circle the Earth/River Sidon project, and have made a presentation on the William Commanda/Circle of All Nations teachings to this group of internationally acknowledged elders which meets weekly.

d) I serve as a member of the Ashoka Community of Practice in Education hosted from Nigeria – here work is underway to develop a viable aspirational policy and principles paper to support the education and empowerment of youth across Africa, recognizing also the tremendous challenges of the times.

e) I serve as a director of the Wolf Project, which honours people who promote racial harmony. A recent recipient is from Pakistan. My Carleton University coop student created a documentary profiling his intercultural work and the project to build water wells for villagers in the desert in Tharkarpar, highlighting our environmental and diversity priorities, and developing his own technological skills and understanding of Indigeneity and global issues in the process.

f) SSHRC Visiting Researchers Program - I supported a SSHRC Visiting Researchers Program Application with Dr. Scott Simon, University of Ottawa ([ssimon@uottawa.ca](mailto:ssimon@uottawa.ca)) and Jolan Hsieh College of Indigenous Studies, National Dong Hwa University, Hualien, Taiwan, ([jolan@gms.ndhu.edu.tw](mailto:jolan@gms.ndhu.edu.tw)).

Note, Dr. Simon, University of Ottawa École d'études sociologiques et anthropologiques, has supported my SSHRC research as informal advisor.

g) St Andrew's Prize: an unsuccessful application was made to the St. Andrew's Prize, in the context of the animation of the Circle of All Nations Digital Global Village.

h) A sampling of the ongoing animation of Circle of All Nations work is outlined below; this continues its outreach and supports contemporary multimedia digital and online social media telecommunications amongst former and new colleagues, thereby contributing to the discursive reach as Global Digital Village; Circle of All Nations colleagues engage in reflexivity, relationship and community development prioritizing environment and diversity:

Coop Des Forêts et des Gens Jardin indigène en milieu montagneux, together with First Nations across Quebec, environmental organizations, community activists and youth just concluded a 6 week walk across Quebec for La Grande Marche pour la Protection des Forêts, to garner support for the creation of 100 protected forest areas across the province; William Commanda's environmental work inspired this initiative (he launched the Species At Risk Act), and I presented at public events in Ripon and Val David Quebec. A student is completing a multimedia report on this walk to support ongoing dispersion of the ideas.

I participate in the Healing Hearts televised sharing circles hosted by *I Like Hue*, developed by my long time Indigenous justice colleague in Winnipeg, with the Immigrant Centre Manitoba Inc; and I participated in a special sharing circle with the Japanese Cultural Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba, organized by this partnership group, to honour the Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement (which created the Canadian Race Relations Foundation) 1997 – incidentally, Elder Commanda offered the blessing at its inaugural conference in Ottawa.

Circle of All Nations has continued with Elder Commanda's support of the African Musical Festival; originally hosted at the Sacred Chaudiere Site, this year COVID isolation took the festival online, as inspired by the Circle of All Nations live video events, expanding its reach and unifying the diversity of African diaspora, including troubled youth, and strengthening immigrant/Indigenous relationship – incidentally, this and the Winnipeg and Toronto BIPOC examples are indicative of systemic change; in the past decades, Indigenous Peoples objected to the alignment with visible minority communities. It is speculated that accessibility to the web, Wikipedia, and social media, representation of colonial histories replete with photographs and audio/visual materials, has served as the Gutenberg Press of the fifteen hundreds, making history and news directly accessible to the masses, contributing to new thinking, recognition of commonalities, empowerment and relationship building; William Commanda's seed planting is evident in this.

The planned November 11 2021 Circle of All Nations online Facebook event, honouring Elder Commanda's 108 birth date, will launch the new Circle of All Nations Website and Cartographic Atlas, and profile the following key emergent initiatives (amongst others) led by Circle of All Nations colleagues, and connected under its *parapluie*:

\*The environmental priorities of La Grande Marche pour la Protection des Forêts in Quebec

\*A documentary in Spanish produced by a Circle of All Nations colleague in France, Julia Blagny, entitled La Sangra de Bolivia [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pr8u4lrOW\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pr8u4lrOW_M) – this preview indicates its cartographic dimension.

\*It will feature an interview with Quebecois writer Huguette Lucas which discusses her 40 year relationship with First Nations and highlights the influence of William Commanda and the ongoing importance and relevance of our *Learning from a Kindergarten Dropout* book.

\*It will feature a conversation with Steven McFadden about his book [Deep Agroecology: Farms, Food, and Our Future](#) which won the 2020 National Indie Excellence Award in the environmental category. His article in Mother Earth News acknowledges our work: *Ginawaydaganuc: An Algonquin Worldview to Guide Us Through Troubled Times*.

These and other such examples of praxis and agency are mentioned to affirm with much gratitude the ongoing reach of this SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship Research Award and its legitimization of the work of late Indigenous Elder William Commanda and the Circle of All Nations in the academic world.



## V. FUTURE WORK AND RESEARCH

In addition to the ongoing animation of the Circle of All Nations online, three books are planned for research and writing during the upcoming years:

- i) Academic: Title: William Commanda: An Indigenous Lens into Knowledge Generation, Cybercartography and Cybernetics; Subtitle: Integrating Ancient Mnemonic Storytelling Heritage in Contemporary Cybercartography and Cybernetics. By Romola V. Thumbadoo and D. R. Fraser Taylor (proposal submitted)
- ii) Historical: *Asinabka – Place of Glare Rock!* Understanding the William Commanda Story and his Legacy Vision for Asinabka Sacred Chaudiere Site. By Romola V. Thumbadoo. Note that this contested land based challenge is presently the subject of graduate level research projects; a vast body of archival materials is lodged in the *Circle of All Nation* sister website, [www.Asinabka.com](http://www.Asinabka.com). (proposal submitted)
- iii) Historical Narrative: The Life, Work and Legacy of William Commanda

An academic paper entitled *Indigenous Mapping, Cybercartography and Cybernetics: William Commanda and the Circle of All Nations* is being finalized.

Further research will access Grounded Theory and Actor Network Theory to advance a deeper understanding of the Circle of All Nations discourse of Elder William Commanda.

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