



# The uncovered wagon



*Premier issue*

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Robert Jackson-Paton, editor

[www.beingunsettled.us](http://www.beingunsettled.us)

## *Vision(s)*

While working on a Ph.D. is of critical importance, I will put together irregular issues of *the uncovered wagon* in an effort to foster communication with allies in the world. My desire is to conduct my doctoral work (and beyond) in an unorthodox fashion, encouraging connection and relationship, rather than academic isolation and privilege.

This ‘newsletter’ is an interim step towards my ultimate goal of an actual “Uncovered Wagon.” That is, a mobile trailer of some sort, that will travel about the country engaged in public education and restor(y)ing the landscape. (If anyone knows of a dormant Airstream, let me know). Until then, this will serve to build networks of unsettlement.

## *Three main strands*

### *Post-traumatic settler disorder:*

My research—inspired by and collaborating with others—suggests that White people and society, at large, suffer from various psychosocial disorders. The primary areas of emphasis are White Christian missionization (thank you, George Tinker), narratives of terra nullius (so-called vacant land), and settler forgetting (thank you, Stephen Turner). These are manifestations of whiteness as an embodied state of moral crisis (thank you, Jennifer Harvey), and a permanent experience of simultaneously playing Indian (thank you, Philip Deloria) while hating Indians (thank you, Richard Drinnon).

### *White decolonization:*

Once venturing into the underworld of White settler identity development, I detail the necessity for finding practices that interrupt ongoing settlement in order to decolonize Whites. This includes Kremer’s “recovery of indigenous mind,” imagining transitional identities and constructing healing ceremonies amongst the descendants/inheritors of settler colonialism.

### *Vulnerable ecology:*

In the spirit of restor(y)ing the landscape, a vulnerable ecology interrupts conquest inadvertently carried out by even the most well-intentioned environmentalists, who attempt to separate nature and culture. Restor(y)ing means reconnecting with a sense of place, but is critically inclusive of *all* the stories of those places, including the legacies of conquest and settlement. A vulnerable ecology advocates a decolonized sense of place among White settlers.

*Mindful of Indigenous survivance*

The work before me/us is woven on the warp of Indigenous survivance, the simple and unsettling act by Indigenous peoples of not disappearing as the settler colonist had hoped, tried, and mostly failed. Below is a short (and incomplete) list of *current* issues facing Indigenous peoples, related organizational resources, and miscellaneous connections (please feel free to offer suggestions for future issues).

*Arts & letters:* John Trudell  
<http://www.johntrudell.com/>

*Boarding schools:*  
American Indian Law Clinic hosted Boarding School Healing Symposium, May 12, 2011  
<http://lawweb.colorado.edu/news/showArticle.jsp?id=657>

*Healing historical trauma:*  
The Maine Tribal-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission, May 2011  
<http://mainetribaltrc.org/media.html>

*Land restoration:* Indian Land Tenure Foundation  
<http://www.iltf.org/>

*"Mascots":* US Senate Indian Affairs hearing, May 5, 2011  
"Stolen Identities: The Impact of Racist Stereotypes on Indigenous People"  
<http://indian.senate.gov/hearings/hearing.cfm?hearingID=e655f9e2809e5476862f735da16ba74a>

*Media:* National Native News  
<http://www.nativenews.net>

*Sacred sites:* Sacred Land Film Project  
<http://www.sacredland.org/>

*Treaty rights:* Native American Rights Fund  
[www.narf.org](http://www.narf.org)

*Work in the world*

White Privilege Conference 12 (Minneapolis, MN) session: "Setting the table: Decolonizing White settler identity." Hopefully, I will be posting the slides from this talk very soon to my website!

ALERT! ALERT! Coming up in August 2011:  
I'm talking with Daryl Miller and Eddie Moore, Jr. on WPC radio. Visit [www.whiteprivilegeconference.com/](http://www.whiteprivilegeconference.com/) for more info about WPC radio, and the White Privilege Conference. Next year, WPC13 is in Albuquerque, NM! Stay tuned...

*Book projects (most likely post-dissertation!)*

(Not) being white:

A workbook on decolonization for Whites

This will be a collection of inspirational writings by authors who are seeking to interrupt settlement through what I consider White decolonization. This workbook will also include various activities I use to address issues of settlement and decolonization.

Ethnoautobiography

In collaboration with Jürgen W. Kremer (doctoral committee chair)

As Kremer describes it, ethnoautobiography “is, if we use an indigenous sense of presence for the interpretation of ‘ethno’, an umbrella for issues of culture, place (ecology), gender, history, and time.”

*Ruins of settlement*

These are images that evoke the grief, pain and ruin associated with settlement, both among the survivors of conquest, as well as the descendants of settlers. Submit your photos and artwork of old buildings, fences, and other ruins.



In southeastern Colorado, on the way to Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site  
May 2011

*Books of note*

Four Arrows. [Jacobs, D. T.]. (2006). *Unlearning the language of conquest: Scholars expose anti-Indianism in America: deceptions that influence war and peace, civil liberties, public education, religion and spirituality, democratic ideals, the environment, law, literature, film, and happiness*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

The entire volume is highly recommended, with chapters from Vine Deloria, Waziyatawin, and others. But given my work on White decolonization, I especially acknowledge chapter 14 (pp. 219-231), by David Gabbard: "Before predator came: A plea for expanding First Nations scholarship as European shadow work."

Freeman, V. (2000). *Distant relations: How my ancestors colonized North America*. Toronto: M & S.

This intricately woven and detailed portrait of a settler's inheritance is inspiring. Akin to Kremer's ethnoautobiography, I encourage similar narratives to humanize and contextualize the experience of learning about settlement in order to unsettle North America and ourselves.

Kremer, J. W. (2011) Totem body and the recovery of indigenous mind. Totem body art show online catalogue. <http://alexisrago.com/Resources/online%20catalogue.pdf>

I realize Jürgen is my long-time mentor and dissertation chair, but you have to check out this great summary of recovery of indigenous mind. Also, it is worth mentioning the amazing art show this is a part of: [www.earth-awareness.com/totembodethecryp.html](http://www.earth-awareness.com/totembodethecryp.html)

My short list of (either mentioned above, or otherwise) vital reading (do let me know what's on your lists!):

Deloria, P. J. (1998). *Playing Indian*. New Haven, CN: Yale University Press.

Drinnon, R. (1990). *Facing west: The metaphysics of Indian-hating and empire-building*. New York: Schocken Books. [His other books are tremendous, too!]

Harvey, J. (2007). *Whiteness and morality: Pursuing racial justice through reparations and sovereignty*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kremer, J. W. (2003a). Ethnoautobiography as practice of radical presence. *ReVision*, 26(2), 5-14.

McMurtry, L. (2005). *Oh what a slaughter: Massacres in the American West, 1846-1890*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Tinker, G. E. (2008). *American Indian liberation: A theology of sovereignty*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Turner, S. (1999). Settlement as forgetting. In K. Neuman, N. Thomas & H. Erickson (Eds.), *Quicksands: Foundational Histories in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand* (pp. 20-38). Sydney, Australia: University of New South Wales Press.

Waziyatawin. (2008). *What does justice look like?: The struggle for liberation in Dakota homeland*. St. Paul, MN: Living Justice Press.