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**SCHOOLS AS PLACES OF UNSELVING: AN EDUCATIONAL
PATHOLOGY ?**

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1) Introduction

There is a long tradition of seeing education as at least in part concerned with the development of the individual. For example, the enduring notion of liberal education initiated by Plato *inter alia* gives a central place to the good of the individual soul in its pursuit of knowledge and truth, the longstanding notion of Bildung orientates education around the idea of self-formation, and other influential overtly person-centred views of education such as child- and learner- centred clearly valorize the individual. Furthermore, in liberal democratic societies self-expression in the sense of freedom of individual thought and action is taken as a central value and it is a basic tenet of liberal democracy that within a framework of liberal moral values each individual is free to decide and pursue their own view of the good life and that education is in part a preparation for this. In addition, there is the view that the individual mind is – to put it no better at the moment – the place where knowledge, truth and understanding *occur* (as against the way that they may be *stored* in books, libraries, CD ROMS and websites, etc,). The basic point is that in the Western tradition education is centrally concerned with a range of ideas that are only intelligible in relation to some idea of a self. Understanding such ideas of the self is thus central to understanding the idea of education in that tradition.

Having said this, there is no doubt in my mind that education should be a risky business: that in effect it must involve a degree of ‘unselving’. The task of the educator is not to indulge and hence to stultify the pupil, but to help them to change, to grow as persons. But, in my view, such self-transformation does not truly occur when ordered according to some grand plan articulated in sets of detailed objectives pre-specified independently of the teacher-learner interplay. The teacher must intend change without knowing in advance precisely what that change should or will be. Essentially, the teacher’s task is to provide *occasions* for change by seeking opportunities to challenge pupils to take up the risk and responsibility of their own lives and to lend what support she may as pupils strive to do this.¹ To the extent that this occurs it will be in myriad ways and at many levels ranging from helping them to deepen or refine some specific aspect of their current engagement, to re-evaluating some core belief. Some element of disruption of what is currently taken for granted (by both pupil and teacher) is never far away and, depending on how one defines it, nor is some threat to their personal identity. So change and disruption are internal to education, but in my view these need to be conceived in organic rather than fragmented terms. It is with this in mind that presently I will address the question of the school as a site for education.

First, one more introductory point. Inherent in all the above is the idea that it is difficult to make sense of many educationally significant notions without reference at some point to the idea of a conscious self, implying by this the notion of an entity that is separable in some significant sense from other selves and the rest of the cosmos in

general. The idea of independence of some kind is implicit. However, the sense and degree to which this independence can be maintained has been problematized by many, including more recently those of a postmodernist turn of mind. Here, however, I wish to explore such issues as they are posed by certain elements of environmental concern, as I believe that these foreground some important considerations. It is a characteristic of many strands of environmental discourse that it either posits or assumes a notion of the self that is deeply relational, the very notion of ecology foregrounding ideas of interdependence. Indeed, in an essay that introduces a recent influential collection on environmental education research (Smyth, 2006), it is claimed that the individual organism and its environment should be regarded as an integral system that constitute a single ecological unit, the ‘fundamental particle’ of ecology. In a number of cases such an attitude has been framed in terms of an internal relationship between the idea of the individual and the idea of place. It is a strand of this line of thought that I wish to develop in what follows.

2) Unselving

O if we but knew what we do
When we delve or hew –
Hack and rack the growing green!
. . . .
After-comers cannot guess the beauty been.
Ten or twelve, only ten or twelve
Strokes of havoc unselve
The sweet especial scene . . .

These lines are taken from one of Gerard Manley Hopkins’ best known poems called *Binsey Poplars*. It is a lament for the felling of a stand of trees that were intimately known to its author. I have been interested in different approaches to understanding the natural world and felt the question of what it would be for a natural thing to be ‘unserved’ fascinating. In a previous article on this topic (Bonnett, 2009) I expressed my response to these lines in the following way. It seems to me that the notion of ‘unselving’ employed in the poem is seminal to giving an account of things in nature. Clearly Hopkins’ poplars can be thought of as unserved in the obvious sense of being chopped down, but such ‘physical’ destruction is only one aspect of the unselving of a thing. The capacity of natural things to stand forth as the things that they are in their unique integrity does not consist primarily in some individual isolated objective existence. They are what they are for us in the context of an environment that they both constitute and are constituted by. But by ‘environment’ here I do not intend what ecologists and natural scientists often mean by the term: some sort of causal network or system in which organisms are nested and upon which they are bio-physically dependent. This is an abstraction, essentially an environment composed of functionalities. The key point is not that to extract living things from their natural environment will often result in physical harm both to themselves and others in the causal network – as, say, when a tree is removed to make way for a new road. It is rather that the tree, so displaced has been withdrawn from the unique place – ‘especial scene’ – that facilitates it in its occurring as the particular thing that it is. It has been withdrawn from, say, the play of sunlight on its limbs and leaves, from its movement in the breezes that stir at that spot, from the fall of its extending and diminishing

shadow, from its posture in relation to its neighbours, from the sounds and sights of the birds that visit or inhabit it, from the dance of midges beneath its canopy as evening closes; that is to say from its unique and infinitely manifold contribution to the precise ambience of its neighbourhood. It upholds this neighbourhood – contributes to the unique and ever-changing qualities of its space – and is upheld by it. In other words it participates in a *place-making*, and is constituted as the thing that it is through this participation. Thus – to take one example – removed from its neighbours the posture of the tree might make little sense and we would have to ‘read them in’ to understand, say, both the precise shape and distribution of its foliage and the significance of this for the ambience of its neighbourhood.

This account foregrounds a number of overlapping features that I take to contribute to the individuality of a particular thing in nature: ideas of neighbourhood; inherence; relationality; dynamic, reciprocal participation; mutual sustaining. It also emphasises that nothing that we encounter is unplaced – and reminded me that for Heidegger ‘place is the locale of the truth of Being’ – by which I take him to mean that Being is unconcealed – i.e., things come to presence – not in some abstract uniform mathematical space-time framework, but in particular locally structured places. One never encounters such things as say a tree in blossom in uniform mathematical space, only neutered objects devoid of vigour and intrinsic significance.

It occurs to me that these features might be germane to understanding the individuality – the selfhood – of a person as a ‘thing’ both ‘in’ nature and ‘outside’ it. And if this is so, it might be instructive to explore the way in which conventional educational institutions such as schools impact upon such constitutive qualities of individuality bearing in mind that as a fundamental aspect of the strongly relational nature of the self foregrounded by the above account, there is that of *bodily* inherence in a place – that is to say, in a *particular* place. Amongst others, Merleau-Ponty (1962), has developed the idea of the body as a site of perception, learning and knowledge, and it seems clear that its movements express myriad sensitivities and accommodations to a proximate environment in terms of which that body, its movement and its environment, are initially rendered intelligible and from which the sense of its own being – self – continuously springs, and in which it is continuously anchored. Hence, the effects of change of place upon this aspect of selfhood (understood as sense of self) might be worth exploring in the context of education. Insofar as conventional educational institutions typically for many extract the individual from a home environment and place them in another that in many significant respects differs from – and perhaps is in tension or contradiction with – this, it would not be difficult to imagine a line of argument to the effect such disruption is threatening and unhelpful to the development of selfhood. To what extent, if at all, might unselfing occur, and would this be a good or a bad thing? Is a certain degree of unselfing a necessary part of the maturing of the self? Essentially, what is at stake here is the nature of our inherence in the world and the world’s inherence in us. In order to address such questions we need to pose the following question:

How is participation in ‘place’ and ‘neighbourhood’ to be understood in the case of a *conscious* embodied being?

For a conscious being place-making – the reciprocal participating in the constitution of a neighbourhood and being conditioned by that neighbourhood – occurs in the space of intelligibles, significances. Arguably such a space is not to be equated with – i.e., ‘tied’ to – the space of ‘purely physical’ geographical locations. Notwithstanding that such geographical locations can have certain personal or cultural significances, one can, as it were, to a significant – perhaps very high – degree take one’s personal significances with one as one moves from one geographical location to another. For example, what I might come to identify as certain core beliefs need not change – can be carried forward – as I move from one place to another. (Though this will depend on the quality of the new place and the manner of my travel.) Hence one need not be so radically ‘unselved’ by such a move as was claimed for the tree. But if one is removed from the milieu of those things/people in which one customarily has one’s being, enjoys relationships, does not a degree of unselving occur? To take an extreme case: suppose that someone is forcibly removed from the family, companions, computer, books, music, furniture, vistas and so forth that, as customarily experienced and located, (at least in part) constitute their home. They are no longer able to participate in its daily routines and associations, to enjoy, say – and taking one small aspect – the familiar and yet always surprising garden views across the seasons, the blossom and shade of its trees, the demands for weeding, its promptings as a historical site of personal events, aspirations and imaginings. Necessary as certain circumstances might seem to make it, a child or an old person’s being extracted from the milieu that this exemplifies and taken into ‘care’ might not be without its cost in terms of sense of self.²

Conversely, it might be argued that finding oneself in a strange environment might heighten one’s sense of self – one becomes more self-conscious in negotiating unfamiliar artefacts and expectations, one feels more sharply defined against the surrounding other that is now unfamiliar rather than familiar. For the moment I leave this as a possibility, for first I would like to explore further this notion of ‘promptings’ and to ask whether it might be significant in understanding the relationship between the individual and the environment. There is an obvious sense in which different places/ ‘neighbourhoods’/situations prompt – call for – different responses: whether we are in the presence of a friend or a stranger, are at a birth or a burial, encounter a valley or a mountain. This is true both in general cultural terms and at a personal level and on many occasions is taken to depend on what are referred to as ‘associations’ that the place or occasion might have. But this way of putting it is already misleading in some cases. Such talk of associations sets things up in a way that suggests that this place exists prior to them, had some independent existence to which the associations subsequently became attached. But this can be the reverse of experience. For Jane, say, this *is* the place where her husband is buried; the stone and the grass and the faded flowers speak of it through and through. This place *claims* her in this way – and it becomes part constitutive of who she is. She *is* the person who is so-claimed and to be other would require an act of severance on her part. It is true that this is an extreme case and has been simplified, but it is illustrative of a general phenomenon. We are *always* claimed by places. With a possible exception to be discussed presently, we are never unplaced – though our sense of this is often highly tacit and the claims that are made upon us vary greatly in quality and strength. But no action is possible in the absence of place, nor any thought, including that of sense of self. They all presuppose a milieu of prompts and claims.

Returning now to the example of the vulnerable person removed from their home: *precisely* what is it that is lost from the self through such extraction? Particular promptings and opportunities, certainly. But the self can ‘carry forward’ the understandings and sensitivities that they might have awoken. And there is memory. But memory, however vivid, is always at a remove. While it contributes to – indeed, is necessary to – being in a world, it is not immediate in the same sense, and is wont to pale. How one *is* is neither purely a function of memory, nor sensitivity as a capacity, nor constructive capacity, but must involve active reception. One *is* in ones dealings with a world – partly familiar, partly unfamiliar – that is taken as ‘not me’, ‘other’, in at least a minimal sense. But it must be other in a *self-assuring* sense of being a place that is to some degree receptive to the self, actively accepts it, provides as it were the questions to its replies as well as the replies to its questions. That is to say a *mutual anticipation* (and invitation) of self and world is in play in which each is called forth.

This returns us to the possible exception mentioned above: the case where a place has no self-assuring features, that is lacks any intelligibility whatsoever. Then we are truly adrift and ‘lost in space’. But such a radical state of affairs is unintelligible if we *are* understandingly. The notion of (and experience of) being lost is derivative on the notion of place. With the complete confounding of anticipation follows the complete dissolution of both place and self. An unknown or mysterious place may breed anxiety, but the fully no-place breeds no-thing and no-self.

3) Anticipation

The chair anticipates sitting, the table food, the moon . . . ? What does the moon anticipate? The upward stare? Yes: ‘Look at the moon!’

While perhaps few today would argue for the pre-existing fully autonomous, disengaged, self of classical rationalism (and perhaps liberalism?) even as a theoretical construct, it remains a useful contrasting idea for differentiating more relational notions of the self.

One such commonly experienced relational aspect is that of the importance of geographical and cultural origins to many people. While such an emphasis can bring dangers of a philosophy of ‘blood and soil’, ideas of a ‘rootedness’ in culture and/or place as constituents of self (identity) are frequently encountered. Environmental psychologists make the point that selfhood is seriously conditioned by sense of place and hence that human beings are fundamentally geographical beings. Not only, as some have it, can you not ‘take the country out of the boy’, if you take the boy out of the country, somehow his ability to *be* himself can be reduced. The necessary possibility of mutual anticipation of self and world is eroded. But might not the disruption of such anticipation be emancipatory through provoking new kinds of receptiveness, sensitivity? This raises the issue of what such anticipation invites. Perhaps if it were interpreted as highly routinized it would indeed seem to exclude or diminish the element of receptivity. And some uses of the term in everyday discourse suggest this as when, for example, a hotel recommends itself as anticipating the needs of its guests by providing a set of facilities and procedures that are on hand to support and reinforce a certain lifestyle. But the anticipation experienced on a fine spring

morning by the walker as she sets off, or of the fisherman as he approaches the riverbank at dawn, or that of the trysting lover, is of a very different calibre. Here anticipation is experienced as an openness to and embracing of the unknown that is to come – the challenges and the sights, the smells, the textures, the ambiances and surprises of, say, different spots and times of day. It speaks of a keen attentiveness. Such anticipation quickens life, gives a heightened sense of being. It is a form of futurity, and of ecstasis.

Also, there is a sense in which everything we do involves anticipation: the gardener that the soil will yield to her spade, the sitter that the chair will bear his weight, the walker that the earth will bear her up, the reader that the text has a meaning. These are not conscious expectations, but are thoroughly implicit in the very movements/behaviour of the limbs of the gardener and walker, in the very act of scanning the text by the reader – indeed, in the act of opening the book or envelope. Anticipation pervades our being at many levels and it lies at the heart of the constant delicate, intelligent, adjustments that we make within our environment – the above examples intended to indicate that the intelligence involved here is often bodily.

What is the point here of speaking of mutual anticipations rather than simply speaking of significances? There is a sense in which the latter are achievements (however fluctuating or ephemeral), whereas the former are processes of directedness – understandings, yes, but *understandings in motion*. They are arisings of fit, occurrences of fittingness, aspects of the flow of intentionality. It might be thought that the notion of ‘expectations’ comes closer and, indeed, it is a frequently used term, but it denotes perhaps something that is still too abstract and explicitly stutable, too cerebral. It seems to make more sense to say that the body anticipates, say, a fall rather than that it expects such. Figuratively, the dawn chorus anticipates rather than expects the new day.

Returning now to the liberating potential of removal from a familiar place: if this extraction is so radical as to stymie all anticipations it occludes a place for intelligibility to occur. And if too many anticipations are confounded or made redundant one’s ability to inhere in a place – to be rooted – which is a central part of one’s being in a world, is compromised: one is in danger of being pathologically unserved. This can become salient for educational institutions in at least two contexts: 1) that of transition; 2) that of an ongoing ‘mismatch’ between pupil and school environment – whether this be in terms of individual proclivities or more general cultural formations such as those emanating from religious belief, bodily self-image, local environment (such as rural, urban, maritime, etc), age, in addition to now rather worn notions of class, race, and gender. And it makes it clear that in both cases from the outset discussion needs to be framed in terms of the embodied self. Further to this, important questions are raised about the desirability and the undesirability of adapting to – embracing – ‘what at first wore a hideous mien’ (Dewey, 1971, p. 28).

At this point I would like to refer to some interesting discussion of what might be considered to be a counterbalancing, if not conflicting, idea: that of ‘departures’.

4) Departures

Drawing on New England Transcendentalists – and particularly Stanley Cavell’s commentary on their thinking – Paul Standish has developed an engaging perspective on the importance of this notion for self-development.³ Here space permits only that I give some flavour of his position through the following sample of points.

Standish notes that whereas for Heidegger relation to a particular place that is the ‘homeland’ of our thought is necessary for proper dwelling and that the essential character of this is first revealed by the measure-taking of the poet (p.115), for Emerson, the flow of poetic imagination is not to be understood in terms of home and settlement. Rather, it seeks new ways to actualize its energy, releasing and realizing new intensities of experience. (p.117) Approving this latter approach, Standish suggests that we ‘should regard our lives as an opportunity at every point, with neither established foundation nor final settlement, but with every occasion an occasion for new departure’ (pp. 129-130). Hence in his reading of Henry Thoreau’s *Walden* Standish detects that:

There is an increasing demand to take up the occasions of one’s experience in such a way that one departs from one’s settled and accustomed ways of understanding them, in order that one should seek possibilities of new departure – and *this not only at the level of one’s larger decisions in life but also in one’s daily engagement with language and life . . .* (p.132) [My emphases]

In sum, it requires being ready to leave what you think is yours (your possessions, *you*), and so a readiness for departure, *where readiness is not something for which you consciously prepare but more like a receptiveness to the new* and a release from the hold of the past. And so, with Thoreau’s celebrated pun, morning (the orientation towards the future) is close to mourning (loss, departure): mourning becomes morning. (p.133) [My emphases]

There is much here with which to agree if (as my emphases encourage) this is interpreted as recommending an openness to new facets and depths of significance in the familiar. But it should not be overlooked that this frequently requires a patient attendance upon, and growing feel for, aspects of a place, and should not necessarily invite a disparaging attitude towards habit, sense of belonging, and responsibility in the longer term. This is not to deny that on occasion departures in the bolder sense of quitting one place for another can be stimulating, but it does question privileging this in any general way over the satisfactions and enrichment to be obtained from settlement. (Perhaps a useful parallel can be drawn here with developing a long term relationship with a person.) Kant and Heidegger, both of whom travelled relatively little and enjoyed an enduring affection and respect for one place for much of their lives, were amongst the most creative of philosophers. There are those who claim never to tire of exploring and celebrating the same place – or indeed, sometimes the same underlying thought. Some devote themselves to their garden, local woodland, river, lake or region (as Thomas Hardy did to ‘Wessex’), arguably without nett loss to the meaningfulness of their lives.

Standish goes on to recommend rejection of fixed identities that are the result of custom or desire and observes that:

. . . contrary to popular readings of Thoreau, it is not this particular place [Walden Pond] that is the heart of the matter: what is more important is the possibility, or perhaps the principle, of this combination of particular attachments (the regimes of living attuned to them, the commitment appropriate to them) with a readiness for departure – before, as it were, they fossilize or perhaps came to be romanticized or to parody themselves. (p.134)

Thus far it seems possible to give a reading of these ideas that is not only consistent with the view that I have been developing, but that is positively sympathetic to it. But in what follows something more radical and less acceptable appears, and that seems to require that we revise such a reading and revisit our reservations concerning the way that custom is portrayed. Standish invites us to consider favourably Herman Hesse's assertion that when a circle of our life presents itself as 'home', we grow weary: 'only she who is ready to journey forth/ will escape habit's paralysis', and Emerson's claim that, around every circle another circle can be drawn. ([p.135] These are taken to illustrate what Cavell speaks of as 'The essential immigrancy of the human', a further formulation of the self's non-integrity'. (p.136)

Yet, how far is it defensible to align, even metaphorically, ideas of 'home' with weariness and 'habit' with paralysis? And in what sense, if any, is the privileging of 'immigrancy' and 'non-integrity' in characterizing the self appropriate? This whole anti-conservative mindset is brought into question by thinkers such as Michael Oakeshott. In his essay 'The tower of Babel' (and elsewhere) he makes the point that 'habits of affection and behaviour' are key to a civilised way of living, that custom is not inert, unreceptive, and that it is a mistake to equate stability with rigidity:

. . . custom, we have been taught, is blind. It is, however, an insidious piece of misobservation: custom is not blind, it is only 'blind as a bat'. And anyone who has studied a tradition of customary behaviour (or a tradition of any sort) knows that both rigidity and instability are foreign to its character. . . . Indeed, no traditional way of behaviour, no traditional skill ever remains fixed; its history is one of continuous change. It is true that the change that it admits is neither great nor sudden; but then, revolutionary change is usually the product of the eventual overthrow of an aversion from change, and is characteristic of something that has few internal resources of change. And the appearance of changelessness in a morality of traditional behaviour is an illusion that springs from the erroneous belief that the only significant change is either that which is induced by selfconscious activity or is, at least, observed on the occasion. The sort of change that belongs to this form of moral life is analogous to the change to which a living language is subject: nothing is more habitual or customary than our ways of speech, and nothing is more continuously invaded by change. . . . habits of moral conduct show no revolutionary changes because they are never at rest. (Oakeshott, 1991)

Here the metaphor of the 'blindness' of the bat brings out the fine tuned non-cerebral sensing that informs the ever occurring change that is rooted in and responsive to the subtle nuances of its environment. The point is made that language – that great vehicle of thought and receptivity – is grounded in habit and custom: would disintegrate without them, and that the (revolutionary) need to move on – 'depart' –

can be seen to reflect a situation where the ability to be sustained by internal resources has been lost through the lack or demise of sensitivity to the infinite possibilities and ever-changing countenances of, for example a natural place or certain forms of occupation. – Where, indeed, the person has lost or deserted its (and maybe his/her own) genius. Here, an ultimately enervating cosmopolitanism has become ascendant and breadth has subverted depth. And the overweening ambition of a Tower of Babel of self-gratification breeds confusion and results in an immigrancy that is a corrosive dispersion of meanings and behaviours. Integrity of self, of tradition and of place are finely interwoven and it might be thought that their loss is no small price to pay in the (deluded) pursuit of some essentially free-floating existence.

Let me make it clear here that I am not attempting to mount an argument that forbids the seeking of a ‘change of scene’, ‘fresh pastures’, nor one that denies the value of being open to the new in the old and the fresh in the familiar. And certainly in many contexts there can be good reason for seeking to disrupt settled ways of seeing and categorising perhaps, for the power relationships that they express, or their wrong headedness. In principle I have no quarrel with such arguments. What seems less defensible is any general assumption of the superiority of a life that valorizes change and departure in the strong sense, that seeks to be on the move, sojourning rather than rooted, universal rather than autochthonous; a life that is ‘experienced’ rather than dwelt. Some might chose to live thus, but for many such a life is neither a possible choice nor a desideratum and it is far from clear why it should be preferred to say – and to give an extreme counterpoint – a life more expressive of the conservationist outlook of an indigenous culture that some strands of environmental concern attempt to retrieve and reinstate. Attachment to and feeling of responsibility to a particular place, and patient initiation into the intimate, slowly accumulated, intergenerational knowledge of it are not available to the passer through, and yet for some constitute a deeply satisfying way of life. And for others part, at least, of the appeal of travel is the prospect of the return home. A central issue can be not the achievements of the endless journey, but the draw of the welcoming home – the quality of the engagements that it affords. To be ‘at home’ anywhere and everywhere is to be both homeless and self-less.

5) Conclusion: Schools as places of unselfing

The title of this paper asks whether as places of unselfing, there might be aspects of schools that are pathological in educational terms. This is framed as a question because it seems to me that the issue is not straightforward. It seems clear that at certain times and in varying degree schools as institutions are places of unselfing in the terms in which I have elaborated that idea. For example, at ‘transition points’ the reciprocal anticipation of student and place can be disturbed at many levels: from relations with the people to relations with the furniture and implements of work; from the ambiances in which different places in the new school invite participation to the aspects of posture and clothing that are both explicitly and implicitly sanctioned. Singly and combined these can contribute salient sets of prompts and claims that can confound those former anticipations that constitute the life-world of the entering pupil. Perhaps she is encouraged to write with her right rather than her left hand, the furniture shapes her body in an unaccustomed – perhaps for her, uncomfortable – way, her neighbour is someone she did not – and perhaps would not – choose, her

emotional gestures elicit puzzling and sometimes hostile responses, her humour is rebuffed, and so forth. In such ways she might feel 'out of place'. This, all in a superordinate situation that she did not choose and to which she is required to subscribe, indeed towards which she senses that she is required to show enthusiasm and commitment. The question is, then, what kinds and degree of self-assurance is being offered and what kinds and degree of self-disconcertion? And when is it edifying and when pathological?

Of course accommodation (of a kind) is often, but not always, possible. 'See how quickly she has settled in!' . . . 'has found her place' . . . 'now knows her place'. Such a happy outcome! Euphemisms for subjection and subjectivation abound. When, then, is such disturbance of anticipation a source of maturation and when a dislocation that leads to a diminution of the potential for selfhood and creative self-assertion? *Of course* one needs to learn to adapt to – and in some circumstances utilize – what one might term different registers of being, and to negotiate new and perhaps disconcerting places. But current levels of passivity, disaffection and truancy suggest that attention needs to be given to the ways in which students do and do not inhere in the places in which they are compelled to undertake their formal education. What milieu of anticipations does a school offer? How deep, extensive and engaging are the prompts and the calls that are both self-assuring and challenging? Part of the issue here can be the extent to which there is positive nurturing of inherence in their own place: local and regional, as well as universal and global. Another part can be the inherent mis-separation of cerebral and bodily satisfaction and the asymmetry of the relative importance placed on each.

The focus on place draws attention to dimensions of engagement, sensitivity and response that by far outstrip what formal education normally takes as its focus. Levels of pathological unselfing occur as a result of the often impoverished – if not downright antagonistic – environment provided for the sensuous, physically initiating and active embodied individual. Fuller acknowledgement of this than is often currently the case would be a first step towards addressing a significant educational pathology.

NOTES

- 1) I have argued for this in Bonnett (1994) Part Three.
- 2) This is not to deny that there can be circumstances in which the home itself can become a place of pathological unselfing.
- 3) In Smeyers, P., Smith, R., Standish, P. (2007) *The Therapy of Education*, Ch. 8.

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