

PLATO'S EDUCATIONAL SCHEME - *Republic*, BK. VI

1. All children are to enter a task-oriented educational system, which is intermediate between the basic educational system & dialectical training.
2. Guardians observe which children show a desire & ability for learning, & they select those who are to be trained as guardians.
 - a. So, children are allowed to try what they desire. Such a system allows children to manifest their 'natural dispositions' (what they would desire, if left to their own devices).
 - b. Each psychic channel has a range of activities connected with it: philosophical nature tends toward calculation, mathematics, elenchus; spirited nature tends toward fighting in armor, gymnastics; appetitive nature is drawn to cobbling, armament making, money-making.
 - c. Children are allowed to pick up & drop activities for a long while -- up to 20 years -- until they show preferences for certain tasks.
3. Plato allows for interchange of functions within a class: cobblers & carpenters can readily change places; it is only the categories of reason, spirit, & appetite that are firmly fixed.
4. The arts use a rational method & aim at the good of their subject matter. Artisan produces a complete product. Craftsmen are interested in perfecting their products; thus, they try to develop a better eidos (form, plan, structure, blueprint), & to test the matter that receives that form. Craftsman recognizes the product as his or hers, i.e. because it is an extension of his or her skills.
5. Thus, a lifetime can be happily spent at a single task.

The static tripartite analysis of the soul (BK. IV) doesn't explain how reason's rule produces happiness. In Bk. VI, Plato tries a more dynamic metaphor, that of the psychic stream of desire. Psychic energy (eros) flows through the stream & out ~~one~~ or more channels. The stream has a constant flow, so that when desires incline strongly in one direction, they will be weakened in others.

Everybody has 3 major channels as outlets of psychic energy. Philosophical nature has its greater potential discharge through reason channel, while appetitive nature's greatest potential discharge is through appetite. One channel predominates in everybody: we are lovers of wisdom, honor, or wealth.

When a philosopher's reason approaches the path of learning, erotic energy flows through the reason channel, & other channels are weakened. This explains why:

 - a. the philosopher has no desire to rule, but must be compelled to do so;
 - b. he/she voluntarily reduces appetites to those minimally necessary for maintenance of the body; and,
 - c. ~~She~~ she accepts the community of women & children.

All of this is because the philosopher's dominant desire is for intellectual activity.

(Henry Teloh, "Human Nature, Psychic Energy, and Self-Actualization in Plato's *Republic*", in Southern Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 14 [Fall, 1976])