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A Tentative Plan to Distinguish Socrates from Plato from a Standpoint of Educational History

Minoru Murai

1) Preliminaries:

1. Among Plato's Dialogues "Apology" belongs to the first group, "Republic" to the middle, and "Laws" to the last, both chronologically and theoretically.

2. There is a theoretical development from "Apology" to "Laws".

3. Accordingly, some dialogues are theoretically near to "Apology", and others are nearer to "Laws". And this fact means a theoretical change from Socratic to Platonic character.

4. "Republic" is a mixture of both characters.

5. So, we might be able to select out Socratic characters in "Republic" by assorting those elements which are near to "Apology" and those elements which are nearer to "Laws".

2) The study of distinctions:

We can find out remarkable distinctions between Socratic theory and Platonic one concerning following points;

1. Concept of "philosophia"

2. Teaching and learning of "dialectics"

3. The part allotted to "philosophia" in the educational process

4. Concepts of "eros" and "philia"

5. The meaning of "paideia"

6. The idea of immortality of "psyche"

7. Concept of "idea of good"

3) Conclusions: Plato and Socrates are common in that they had a deep interest in education, but they differ each other in 1) that Socrates' theoretical interest in education was chiefly in philosophical analysis of educational concepts, while Plato's was in metaphysical reconstruction of educational ideas, and 2) that Socrates' practical interest in education was chiefly in ethical enlightenment of democratic citizens while Plato's was in political building of ideal character of a nation.

Thus, as a conclusion, I call here Socratic character an "ethical educationalism", against "political educationalism" of Platonic one.