Characters and Methods in the Republic

A. The Characters (in order of speaking appearance)

1. Socrates – the narrator, Plato's spokesperson and Father of Philosophy

2. Glaucon – Plato's brother and a primary respondent throughout

3. Polemarchus – the setting is his house

   [The setting date just before 420 B.C. Socrates would be approx. 50 years old, twenty years before his execution]

4. Adeimantus – Plato's other brother and other primary respondent

5. Cephalus – Polemarchus' “very old” father, who first introduces the topic of justice [dikaiosune].

   a. Thrasymachus – a sophist and Socrates' chief antagonist

B. The method

1. Elenchus – a process of asking and answering the rights sorts of questions to show that one doesn't actually know the truth of the matter.

2. Dialectic – a process of asking and answering the right sorts of questions so that one can eventually grasp fundamental truths and give a rational account of their truth.