

Business Ethics
Prof. L Bibard

“It looks to me as though the investigation we are undertaking is no ordinary thing, but one for a man who sees sharply. Since we’re not clever men,” I said, “in my opinion we should make this kind of investigation of it : if someone had, for example, ordered men who don’t see very sharply to read little letters from afar and then someone had the thought that the same letters are somewhere else also, but bigger and in a bigger place, I suppose it would look like a godsend to be able to consider the littler ones after having read these first, if, of course, they do happen to be the same.”

“Most certainly,” said Adeimantus, ‘But, Socrates, what do you notice in the investigation of the just that’s like this?’

“I’ll tell you,” I said. “There is, we say, justice of one man; and there is, surely, justice of a whole city too?”

“Certainly,” he said

“Is a city bigger than one man?”

“Yes, it is bigger,” he said.

“So then, perhaps- there would be more justice in the bigger and it would be easier to observe closely. If you want, first we’ll investigate what justice is like in the cities. Then, we’ll also go on to consider it in individuals, considering the likeness of the bigger in the *idea* of the littler?”

“What you say seems fine to me,” he said.

“If we should watch a city coming into being in speech,” I said, “would we also see its justice coming into being, and its injustice?”

“Probably,” he said.

“When this has been done, can we hope to see what we’re looking for more easily?”

“Far more easily.”

“Is it resolved that we must try to carry this out? I suppose it’s no small job, so consider it.”

“It’s been considered,” said Adeimantus. “Don’t do anything else.”

Plato, *Republic*, 368b – 369b.