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The Antithesis of Virtue: Sallust's *Synkrisis* and the Crisis of the Late Republic

SALLUST's *synkrisis* in the *Bellum Catilinae* has been much discussed. Some think Caesar is praised; others, Cato. It has even been argued that Cato is the more praised in order to emphasize praise of Caesar.¹ Such responses to the *synkrisis* result from an effort to read it as a tendentious comparison of characteristics which are by implication antagonistic and mutually exclusive. Syme, however, suggests a different analysis that sees the virtues as mutually responsive² and so revealing the complementary but fragmented parts of a greater whole: the

1. Vretska, comm., *De Catilinae Coniuratione* (Heidelberg 1976) [= Vretska] vol. 2, 618–22, offers a fine historical survey of the bibliography. A brief but adequate review can be found in Appendix 7 to P. McGushin's *Bellum Catilinae: A Commentary* (Leiden 1976) [= McGushin] 309–11. Syme, *Sallust* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1964) [= Syme], may be taken to represent the cautious pro-Cato interpretation; Schwartz's interpretation ("Die Berichte über die catilinarische Verschwörung," *Hermes* 32 [1897] 554ff. = *GesSchr* 2 [1956] 275ff.) was, of course, the most extreme of the pro-Caesar interpretations; more reasonable pro-Caesarian interpretations are found in Schur (*Sallust als Historiker* [Stuttgart 1934] 191ff.) and Löfstedt (*Roman Literary Portraits* [Oxford 1958] 98); Wirtz ("Beiträge zur catilinarischen Verschwörung", diss. Bonn 1910, 40) argued that a pro-Cato presentation disguises a pro-Caesarian attitude. A careful study of the *urrömische* character of the virtues is to be found in the discussion of Vretska, vol. 2, 622ff.

2. The terminology here is derived from S. L. Utchenko, "Dve shkaly rimskoi sistemy tsennostei," *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii* 122 (1972) 19–33; a summary in English, "Two Scales in the Roman System of Values," is provided on p. 33. Utchenko distinguishes paradigmatic or mutually exclusive, antagonistic oppositions and syntagmatic or mutually responsive (challenge-reply) oppositions. In both cases there are oppositions and competing systems of value; in the second form of opposition there are often hierarchical relationships, like that of individual/citizen, which can be called upon to negotiate the conflict. Utchenko argues that Sallust represents the most significant system of mutually exclusive oppositions in his account of Roman decline, pp. 24–26. His observations and comments can be taken in support of McGushin's claim that *antithesis* characterizes Sallust's style. On McGushin, see further below. I am grateful to Eve Levin for her translation of the Russian.

two together represent the *virtus* necessary for a *libera res publica*, while separately each has only a fragmented *virtus*.³ This interpretation is appealing because it is consistent with what Sallust says about the two men (that they both had *ingens virtus*) and about his history (that it is free from partisan motives). Both types of interpretation attempt to fit the *synkrisis* to a single pattern and to comprehend the relationship between the virtues of Caesar and the virtues of Cato according to a single principle of negotiation or resolution. I do not think, however, that any single pattern or principle can finally resolve the comparisons Sallust gives us.

In this article I would like to discuss the *synkrisis* from a literary and rhetorical viewpoint⁴ and to consider what Sallust has accomplished in this rhetorical *exaedificatio*.⁵ In general my position is a modification of Syme's suggestion that the virtues presented are fragmented, but I argue that Sallust's presentation does not suggest that some alliance could save the republic. Rather, he reveals in his antitheses a fragmentation of varying dimensions which is the result of virtues themselves in conflict with each other and an underlying conceptual failure which produces an opposition between the traditional Roman virtues of action and the traditional intellectual categories by which those virtues are known, named, and understood. A major literary strength of the *synkrisis* is that Sallust

3. Syme (120), although he prefers the view that "the author intends him [Cato] to have the advantage, if only because the episode concludes with Cato and Cato's glory" (116). The reasoning here is a trap: if the last figure mentioned has the advantage, it becomes impossible for Sallust or any other writer ever to mean *prope aequalia fuere, magnitudo animi par, item gloria* (54.1). Seel, *Sallust von den Briefen ad Caesarem zur Coniuratio Catilinae* (Leipzig 1930) [= Seel] 43ff., prefers the view that Caesar is the egotistical politician while Cato is narrow and doctrinaire; in other words, he emphasizes the personal failures implied in the comparisons. McGushin, Appendix 7, 311, repeats Syme 120 verbatim: "there qualities are complementary no less than antithetic." A. D. Leeman, "Formen sallustianischer Geschichtsschreibung," *Gym.* 74 (1967) 113 comes closest to my position when he refers to "diese tragische Spaltung innerhalb der *virtus*."

4. My interpretation at times emphasizes the reader's response to the text. This is today a well recognized way of discussing literature. While this is not the place to offer a theoretical justification of the affective method, it is appropriate to say that my discussion combines thematic and formal analysis with reader-response approaches. In practice, of course, these approaches are never divorced, despite the posture of a critic who seems to pursue one or the other. A reader-response approach seems particularly apt to a text which, like this one, shifts the terms of discussion and prompts the reader to anticipate and suspect. But texts live several lives simultaneously, and part of any reader's response is to remember, store up, and construct relatively static and synchronic structures or patterns or responses. On the value of pluralism, see Wayne C. Booth, *Critical Understanding: The Powers and Limits of Pluralism* (Chicago 1979); on reader-response criticism in general, see Jane P. Tompkins, ed., *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (Baltimore 1980), esp. the reprint of Stanley E. Fish's original justification of his method, "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics," 70–100; on the merely rhetorical conflict between affective and intentionalist approaches, see Stanley E. Fish, "Biography and Intention," unpublished. The work of such men as W. Iser, G. Poulet, and M. Riffaterre, while important as theoretical statements and investigations of the reading process, is beyond the immediate concerns of this exercise in practical criticism. Theoretical issues are taken up *infra*, nn.6, 7, 14, 34, 38, 59, and 76.

5. The term comes from Cicero's discussion of the *fundamenta* and *exaedificatio* of *historia*, *De or.* 2.62–63. On Sallust, see my "On Sallust's Use of *Ingenium* in *Bellum Catilinae* 53.6," forthcoming in *CJ*.

makes his readers experience both this conflict and its lack of resolution. The shifting conceptual ground, the difficulties and suspicions readers feel as they read, and the formal and logical problems of the *synkrisis* itself become an image or emblem⁶ of this crisis in the late Republic. A satisfactory exposition of this position requires attention both to the details of Sallust's presentation and to the underlying logic of his context and the temporal processes in which it appears.⁷

Synkrisis before Sallust is a traditional device, with traditional orientations and methods. Essentially agonistic, it is used for competitive comparison and to praise or blame.⁸ It is said to reveal or illustrate δεικνύναι, a judgment, and consequently it makes explicit the terms of that judgment.⁹ When the comparison illustrates relatively equal excellence in different areas, different spheres of activity, contrary but responsive, are explicit in the introductory comparison which forms the basis of the elaboration which follows.¹⁰ Sallust's comparison is

6. I have fudged on the term here because I want to avoid contemporary problems which derive from semiotics. The text as a static structure may constitute "meaning" and "signification" or present logical problems; as the origin of a temporal process it creates expectations and revisions; as a re-read or remembered experience it becomes the objectification of its logical, formal, and experiential dimensions. Thus it both says something translatable and provides an untranslatable experience in both formal and affective ways. Semiotics is interested in "what it signifies" and takes as the signal characteristic of a sign its translatability. I am interested in what is created, and that is both an image which signifies and an experience which may itself be contemplated. Ultimately the theoretical grounding for this approach derives from Peirce's "icons" and Langer's "expressive form." For an introduction to Langer, see Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form* (New York 1953), esp. "The Great Literary Forms" 280–305; a patchwork introduction to Charles Peirce is readily accessible in "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs" in *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology*, ed. Robert E. Innis (Bloomington 1985) 1–23.

7. This kind of intricate interaction of elements produces what Gombrich has called "systems of orders within orders" (E. H. Gombrich, *Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance*, vol. 1 [London 1966] "Raphael's 'Madonna della Sedia,'" 78). While it may be tedious to tease out even some of these orders of meaning, it is this close interrelationship which makes of the artifact (visual as well as verbal) not only an object which produces pleasure and the feel of lived experience but an object which rewards contemplation. Like a good scientific theory, it reveals levels of meaning and relationships beyond those sufficient for its creation. On the value and applicability of linguistic and generic "formula," see Mikhail M. Bakhtin, "The Problem of Speech Genres," in his *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (Austin 1986) 60–102.

8. The tradition is discussed in detail by Friedrich Focke in "Synkrisis" *H.* 58 (1923) 327–68 [= Focke]. Vretska, vol. 2, 621–22 offers a handy summary. On the "Agonmotiv," see Focke 328f. and passim. For the ancient rhetorical tradition, see Nikolaos, *Synkrisis* (Spengel vol. 3, 486) and Hermogenes *Progymnasmata* 8 (Spengel vol. 2, 14).

9. See Cic. *Off.* 1.90: *superatum, superiorem, itaque alter semper magnus, alter saepe turpissimus*. In the encomiastic tradition, the occasion as well as the language makes clear the judgment: the *laudandus* meets or excels the standards set by a traditional exemplar; see Cic. *Brut.* 41–43: *uterque civis egregius, paria, plane alter Themistocles*. Themistocles sets the standard which Coriolanus meets. See also Polybios 10.2.8–13: the comparison illustrates that παραλληλίσαν ἐσχηκέναι φύσιν καὶ προαίρεσιν, the standard of comparison is set by Lykurgus, and Scipio meets it.

10. As the example whose "Prägnanz" reminds him of Sallust, Vretska, vol. 2, 621, cites Aristotle *Ath. Pol.* 23.3–4. Aristides and Themistokles are compared; the comparison begins with a traditional opposition, ὁ μὲν τὰ πολέμια . . . ὁ δὲ τὰ πολιτικά. This division sets the terms of the comparison made (see τῷ μὲν στρατηγῷ, τῷ δὲ συμβούλῳ) and defines the competition, διαφέρειν . . . καίπερ διαφερόμενοι πρὸς ἀλλήλους. After Sallust, comparisons which illustrate "ὁμοιότητες hindurch die διαφοραί" become a motive force in Plutarch; see Focke 358ff.

on the one hand longer and more pointed than his predecessors' in this tradition and on the other hand less clearly focused and more provocative. His judgment obscures the putative equality of Caesar and Cato, and his method undermines the superiority of one over the other. In fact, he may be seen as toying with signals familiar from other *synkrisis*.¹¹ The terms of equality give way to difference: *prope aequalia fuere, magnitudo animi par, item gloria, sed alia alii* (54.1). The statement of difference, *sed alia alii*, subdivides no general activity in terms of which the differences are evaluated or equated.¹² The only explicit statement of the relationship between his actors contains the provocative word *divorsis*: *ingenti virtute, divorsis moribus* (53.6).¹³

The failure to provide terms of negotiation or a perspective that organizes the differences and subordinates them to a whole is an essential aspect of Sallust's provocativeness. He insists that his readers read between the lines, but offers no clues (*alia alii*) as to what to find there.¹⁴ "Face value" in this composition, then, is the erasure of the traditional intellectual bearings provided by other *synkrisis*. Sallust presents only diverse versions of *ingens virtus*, divided and set against each other in the direct comparisons of an agonistic device.

The sense of conflict or competition inherent in the device is in Sallust heightened by the narrative context. Cato and Caesar have just opposed each other in debate. That debate has asked the reader, as well as the Senators, for some judgment regarding the proposals and the men, and, since the proposals rely to some extent upon the characteristics here set in opposition to each other, some judgment regarding the systems of value.¹⁵ This narrative conflict within the text gains further emphasis and further ramifications by the fact that, from

11. It is not until Tacitus that we find Sallust's kind of suggestive silence and complexity. But even here the tendentiousness is only thinly disguised: *Ann.* 3.75.2–4 compares Ateius and Labeo, *virii inlustres*, as *duo pacis decora*; but Labeo was the more famous for *incorrupta libertate*, while Ateius won approval for *obsequium dominantibus*.

12. Cf. Aristotle's προστάται τοῦ δήμου above. See below on the initial opposition of *beneficia ac munificentia* with *integritas*. The manner of opposition is signal for the *synkrisis*: the content is neither mutually exclusive nor mutually responsive; the form is antithetical.

13. Shimron, "Caesar's Place in Sallust's Political Theory," *Ath.* 45 (1967) 340–41, presses the potential of *divorsi mores* into an ethical antagonism between Cato and Caesar. That *divorsus* may easily mean "essentially opposed", see Sallust's description of Catiline: *mores quos pessuma ac divorsa inter se mala . . . vexabant* (5.8). The resonance is disturbing and may mirror the paradox of *ingens virtus* in conflict. That the *virtutes* could be ambiguous, see D. C. Earl, *The Political Thought of Sallust* (Cambridge, England 1961) 28. I am not convinced that the singular can entirely erase the ambiguity, or that Sallust was more interested in avoiding than in exploiting ambiguity.

14. I do not mean to imply by this statement that it is ever possible for readers to avoid reading between the lines. All reading requires, as modern theorists so vigorously insist, reading between the lines. I mean only to insist that Sallust forces his reader to be aware of the gap which Sallust's rhetoric has created. This gap will have to be filled with various *argumenta ex silentio*, unless one concludes, as I do, that Sallust does *not* create a conclusion; rather, he creates the very lack of resolution, the intellectual failure, which has motivated others to find conclusions between the lines.

15. Most explicitly, see Cato's attack on *mansuetudo*, *miseriordia*, and *largiri* at 52.7–12; but a reference back to both men's deliberative proposals is also perceptible here in the description of Cato as *malis pernicies* and of Caesar as *miseris perfugium*. Cf. Crassus at 48.8.

the point of view of Sallust's publication of the *Bellum Catilinae*,¹⁶ the two men had come into explicit conflict, and that conflict had become symbolic of the changes taking place in the late Republic. The *synkrisis* of the *Bellum Catilinae*, then, follows a debate which puts the two actors at risk, refers to a historical context where the actual decision did not resolve the deeper problems, and is published in another context of *Catos*, *Anti-Catos*, and tendentious memoirs.¹⁷ The opposition of the two actors and the values they represent, or the inability of those values to work together for the good of the republic, is central to every context in which the *synkrisis* appears.

This conflict, both immediate and symbolic, Sallust exploits and heightens in his rhetoric, a rhetoric which does not, or does not only compare two systems of value but divides the systems into individual virtues and sets those virtues in explicit and formal contrast through five pointed rhetorical antitheses and a sixth, longer general comparison. The problem that the reader faces, and which scholarship has again and again addressed, is to reconcile the divisions and oppositions of the specific content with a traditionally agonistic device used in an adversarial context, heightened by historical consequences and by an insistently antithetical form. This antithetical form, relying upon and reflecting the other conflicts, becomes the focus of my discussion because it disposes the content into divisions, separations, and oppositions, and so provokes the reader to ask: what is the nature of these antitheses, their separations and oppositions?

Antithesis is a common feature of Sallust's method.¹⁸ In fact, logical and formal antitheses¹⁹ form an essential part of the general Sallustian experience. From its opening sentences, the *Bellum Catilinae* imposes on the reader antitheses and conflicts which seek or proclaim some principle of negotiation.²⁰ A simple example occurs early in the *BC*: *pro pudore, pro abstinentia, pro virtute audacia largitio avaritia vigeant* (3.3).²¹ The form is relatively closed and complete, and the opposition is intellectually satisfying; it has all the strength of a coincidence of logical and formal opposition. One might say that Sallust's read-

16. Regardless of the precise date, *fuere* at 53.6 shows that Caesar and Cato were dead at the time of writing.

17. Rudolf Fehrle reviews the evidence and history in *Cato Uticensis* (Darmstadt 1983) 279–302.

18. See McGushin's comments on "the importance of antithesis in Sallust's mode of expression" (17).

19. There is a distinction between a formal, or rhetorical, antithesis and a logical antithesis. For rhetorical antitheses, see Arist. *Rhet.* 1410a22. Only a discussion of content can determine the real nature of the formal opposition.

20. See *nostra omnis vis in animo et corpore sita est: animi imperio, corporis servitio magis utimur; alterum nobis cum dis, alterum cum beluis commune est. . . . Sed diu magnum inter mortalis certamen fuit, vine corporis an virtute animi. . . . L. Catilina, nobili genere natus, fuit magna vi et animi et corporis, sed ingenio malo pravoque* (1.2–3, 5; 5.1); cf. *in altero miseris perfugium erat, in altero malis perniciēs* (54.3).

21. On the importance of this antithesis, see McGushin 51. As an antithesis itself, however, while truer and more satisfying than the *synkrisis*, it is still not a rigorous pairing of opposites: the opposite of *abstinentia* should be both *largitio* and *avaritia* (see 5.8), while the opposite of *virtus* is not merely *avaritia* but all *malae artes*: see Earl, (*supra* n.13) 100.

ers are trained to view action and ethics in such an antithetical light. It is, however, just this closed and satisfying opposition which Sallust does not offer in the content of his *synkrisis* and which readers have attempted to create.

McGushin provides an example of this common response: the antithetical structure “enables S., by the explicit attribution of certain characteristics to a person, to hint at the lack of others. Thus the qualities of *pudor* and *abstinentia*, ascribed to Cato in sec. 6 and elsewhere contrasted with *audacia* and *largitio*, might suggest that the latter *malae artes* (3.3) are not wholly unknown to Caesar.”²² Thus we get the mutual exclusions the form seems to promise. But McGushin’s description is exemplary in an unexpected way: its own inconsistency reveals something of the difficulties Sallust has created. The analysis does not fit the example. An exact application of McGushin’s analytic description would be the following: possession of *abstinentia* by Cato hints at the lack of *liberalitas*. This is no doubt true. The possession of any quality usually implies the lack of its opposite;²³ and this analysis can apply to many of the qualities Sallust enumerates. That is not, however, the example McGushin offers. The correct analysis of McGushin’s example is: the possession of some virtues by one (Cato’s *abstinentia*) “hints at” the *possession* of the related *malae artes* by the other (Caesar’s putative *largitio*). This response to the *synkrisis* is fully in keeping with the agonistic tradition of *synkrisis* and Sallust’s formal oppositions. But it is also more complex and more deeply cynical than McGushin’s analytic description.

If we are to pursue the implications of Sallust’s antitheses as McGushin tries to do, we must note that Sallust offers no mutually exclusive antitheses or comparisons. They are present only to the extent that negatives imply a positive that is denied. Thus the description of Cato at 54.3, *nihil largiundo gloriam adeptus est*, refers to some *largitio* which it opposes, a *largitio* by implication or inference associated with Caesar. This opposition, however, must be created by the reader; of Caesar Sallust only says *Caesar dando sublevando ignoscundo [gloriam adeptus est]*. We must also note that Sallust offers few mutually responsive oppositions. The best example, *severitas* opposing *miser cordia* at 54.2, divides the virtues into true contraries,²⁴ since one cannot act simultaneously in accordance with both, as well as into truly responsive virtues, since both virtues together are necessary to the proper functioning of the state.²⁵ If all the antithe-

22. McGushin 272.

23. Similarly, Themistokles’ excellence in τὰ πολέμια suggests some lack of excellence in τὰ πολιτικά, and that is the point of his being chosen στρατηγός, while Aristides was σύμβουλος.

24. But even in this antithesis, Sallust is not just antithetical. Not only does he oppose *mansuetudo et misericordia* to *severitas*, thereby heightening the contrast, but the one made Caesar *clarus* and the other added to Cato’s *dignitas*. This is not mere variation. I will discuss further below the implications of these new elements in opposition; here it is sufficient to say that Sallust has heightened the opposition and conflict by pressing Caesar’s *mansuetudo et misericordia* and has given the reader something to figure out in the apparent tendentiousness of Cato’s *dignitas* seeking additions.

25. This is, for instance, the situation Cicero so elegantly addresses at *Pro Archia* 2.3: judges, who from one point of view are and must be *severissimi iudices*, from another must not forget that they also are and must be characterized by *haec vestra humanitas*.

ses were like this, McGushin's analysis and his example would come to the same conclusion (albeit without the *bona/mala* contrast). But this kind of comparison is the exception. Sallust's *synkrisis*, which avoids making the general orientation of its antitheses clear, also in general avoids the kind of divisions that create intellectually secure boundaries.

The first comparison in the *synkrisis* sets the stage for what follows. Caesar's *beneficia ac munificentia* is formally opposed to Cato's *integritas vitae*. Not only is there no logical opposition between these virtues, because they are of different orders, but *integritas* is the quality of intention and sincerity which allows *beneficia* to be properly termed *bona* and so to remain *beneficia*.²⁶ Similarly, without *facta*, *integritas* would not be known; and it is only in a polemical and tendentious sense that one could refuse to do *bona* and *munera* and still claim *integritas*.²⁷ These virtues, then, are not contrary at all, but inhabit and reveal each other. Thus, by opposing virtues which are not of the same order—one being a virtue of action, the other of intention—Sallust prompts the attempt, of which McGushin's is an example, to create a true antithesis, like that of 3.3, by assigning the lack of each man's virtue to the other: Caesar is accused of duplicity and Cato of *illiberalitas*.²⁸

This response to Sallust's text satisfies the desire for a true antithesis, but only at the cost of creating further problems: it is both deeply cynical and in direct contradiction to Sallust's own remarks about two men of *ingens virtus* and his description of their virtues. And it provokes new questions: is Cato's *integritas* a mean-spirited inaction? can there be duplicitous *munificentia*? The problem of content, then, is not that Cato and Caesar are virtuous in different and contrary spheres of action, but that in the political domain their virtues cannot be logically separated. Yet, they have been formally separated. It is this separation which sets the names given and the "real virtues" at odds: something is amiss *within* the opposition.²⁹

26. We may refer to Sallust's own words: if duplicity is involved in *munificentia*, it becomes *largitio*: *nam etiam tum largitio multis ignota erat; munificus nemo putabatur nisi pariter volens; dona omnia in benignitate habebantur* (BJ 103.6).

27. It is, of course, philosophically possible that one could be poor or in prison and so have *integritas* without the ability to act. Such a consideration is irrelevant to Cato and Caesar; and, in any event, Sallust is not engaged in a philosophical discussion of individual virtues. He is concerned with action, the good of the republic, and how the traditional Roman virtues appear in the public forum.

28. McGushin (272) refers to "the factor of bribery . . . that marked Caesar's generosity." It is in the preemptive strength of Cato's radical shift to ethical absolutism that Cato usually does not suffer from the implications of being compared to a man great in *beneficia ac munificentia*. In fact, McGushin, who accepts the position of Seel and Syme, nonetheless applies his method of inference only to the disadvantage of Caesar. I say more about the preemptive strength, and weakness, of the Catonian virtue below. One must note, however, that the focus of suspicions upon Caesar in Sallust's text is itself apt to the history.

29. BJ 41.1–5 offers a similar kind of opposition between ideals which are not necessarily in conflict: *dignitas* vs. *libertas*; note *ante Carthaginem deletam populus et senatus Romanus placide modesteque inter se rem publicam tractabat* (BJ 41.2). There, however, Sallust offers the general terms of negotiation, expressed both positively (*modeste*) and negatively (*in lubidinem*), as well as an

Behind the difficulty of separating *munificentia* and *beneficia* from *integritas* lies a deeper problem: *vera vocabula*.³⁰ When Sallust provokes the reader³¹ to create the closed antithesis of content which his form³² only suggests, he also provokes readers to important questions: what constitutes the meaning of *bona*, *munera*, or *integer*? What are “real” *beneficia*? Can there be *beneficia* without *ambitio*? The text raises these questions but offers no answers. His readers, then, become suspicious of the characters *and* of the text, for they must either accept *ingens virtus* and ignore the antithetical form, or work out the antitheses and read between the lines of *ingens virtus*. Cynical mistrust of characters, actions, and words without secure conclusions is what the first antithesis creates for and within the reader.³³

The skepticism prompted by Sallust’s first false antithesis is easily, and frequently, carried over into comparisons like the second, between Caesar’s *mansuetudo et misericordia* and Cato’s *severitas*. If Cato’s *integritas* suggests something hiding behind Caesar’s *beneficia*, it is natural to ask what hides behind Caesar’s *mansuetudo*³⁴ or Cato’s *severitas*. Similarly, unjustified though it is to

explicit causal principle (*dominationis certamen inter cives* and the absence of *metus hostilis*). The similarity between this passage and the *synkrisis* is further limited by the fact that, while it is possible to say of both *dignitas* and *libertas* that *in lubidinem [Romanos] vortere*, it is more difficult to imagine *integritatem vitae in lubidinem [Catonem] vortere*. *Integritas vitae* should be just that, pure. This reflection, however, ultimately uncovers a second similarity between the passages: neither *dignitas* nor *integritas* is necessarily *dignitas ipsa* or *integritas ipsa*; they are in part the claim “*dignitas!*” and “*integritas!*”

30. See *BC* 52.11: *iam pridem equidem nos vera vocabula rerum amisimus*. The problem of vocabulary, which is essentially a problem with how things appear and how they are understood, underlies much of the *Bellum Catilinae*; see Knoche, *Philol.* Suppl. 27, no. 3 (1935) 26ff.; and McGushin’s comments at 12.1, 38.3, 52.11, and in general on Catiline’s manipulation of traditional concepts throughout Chapter 20.

31. It should be noted that I have changed the terms of McGushin’s discussion in an important way: McGushin says that the antithetical form “enables S. . . to hint”; I describe the operations of the antithetical form as prompting the reader to create. Behind the difference in terms lies an important difference in approach. While I believe that Sallust intended the reader to create the antitheses McGushin creates, or at least something like them, I do not believe that Sallust is thereby hinting at an unwritten truth. He is using words to create a suggestive surface because the very process of trying to make the text’s form and content cohere is a process imitative of the larger situation which concerns Sallust.

32. The false antitheses Sallust creates derive, in all probability, from a common Thucydidean figure, which was in turn derived from Gorgias. See W. Kendrick Pritchett, *Dionysius of Halicarnassus: On Thucydides* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1965) 99. Such a figure is a form of *variatio*, but its effect is more intellectual than aesthetic.

33. Suspicion is, of course, of the essence of a conspiracy, and the narrative from 48.3 to 49.4 is a tissue of rumor and suspicion; Sallust claims that he was himself unfairly undermined by suspicion (3.5) and therefore left the world of political action (one cost of this suspicion is that it destroys virtue); Catiline is often the subject of suspicion (see 14.7, 22.4, etc.). Absolutism is implicitly criticized in Sallust’s account of the *boni mores* of former Romans (9.1–5) and in Caesar’s reservations (see esp. 51.35–36). The problems of action and speech are the addressed throughout: 12.1, 51.36, 52.11, etc.

34. To affirm, as some might, that Caesar’s *mansuetudo et misericordia* or *beneficia ac munificentia* are, because of Caesar himself, already suspicious does not change or modify my point.

infer maliciousness from a comparison like *miseris perfugium/malis perniciēs*, Sallust has prompted just this kind of inference. At its extreme the formula becomes: each man has the vice that is the real antithesis of the other's virtue, as well as the vice that is the excess of his own virtue. This possibility, *qua* possibility, suggests a substantial crisis; but the clarity of this formula is exactly what Sallust does not offer, since it is derived entirely from suspicions and *argumenta ex silentio*.³⁵ Sallust's separation of *integritas* from *beneficia* and their formal opposition only provoke skepticism; in place of true antitheses they create uncertainty about what *bona* or *beneficia* really are, how *beneficia* and *integritas* relate, or how *integritas* translates into action; and they offer no solution. This lack of intellectual bearings, this skeptical *aporia*, is the crisis Sallust reveals.

Ultimately, its dimensions are large: if the absolutist ethics of *integritas* can undermine or call into question the virtues *beneficia ac munificentia*, what active and political virtue is not thereby called into question,³⁶ especially in a society whose keen sense of the exchange value of action refers to services done to another as *merita*, debts due the actor? Behind Sallust's juxtaposition lies a basic problem in virtuous action and the judgment of virtue in the late Republic. If Cato's *integritas* undermines the essential element, *bene-*, in Caesar's *beneficia*, then the element of action, *-ficia*, in both *beneficia* and *munificentia* finds no corollary of action in Cato's *integritas*.³⁷

In what follows I attempt to give a greater sense of the complexity of Sallust's creation and the consequences of the failures to correlate action and judg-

Sallust's text both reminds the reader of that context, and, as we shall see, focuses the suspicion about Caesar in a way that creates a commentary on the general problem of which Caesar is only a part. Similarly, the fact that Sallust's style may already have created a suspicious reader or that any "second reading" will involve cynicism is only to point to a common thematic and stylistic concern. In the many lives any text lives it may both provide an experience of revised assumptions and thereafter be an emblem or image of the loss of innocence, or the locus which prompts an imagining of the loss of innocence (on the text as a remembered experience, see *supra* n.6). For our immediate purposes the important point is that the experience from all perspectives undermines the meaning of words and baffles judgment.

35. That this is a common feature of Sallust's creation in the *Bellum Catilinae*, see my "Incerta pro Certis: An Interpretation of Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae* 48.4–49.4," forthcoming in *Ramus*. Its roots lie in the very subject: conspiracy, if successful, requires *silentium*; the successful opposition to conspiracy requires *argumenta ex silentio*. The political intrigues and conspiracies, including perhaps the triumvirate, of the late Republic created much suspicion and *silentium*. The specific problems of the conspiracy are only reflections of problems at large in Roman society as Sallust sees it.

36. This is, of course, related to Cicero's complaint about Cato to Atticus: *Att.* 2.1.8. Cato's *integritas* is the very quality which should cause his "remoteness from participation in the *res publica*," McGushin 311; and yet he is anything but remote: in addition to the debate, see *cum strenuo . . . certabat*, *BC* 54.6, and *dicit enim tamquam in Platonis politeia*, *Cic. Att.* 2.1.8.

37. It is, of course, a wonderful irony that the man often characterized as inactive has just proposed taking the final action, while the man generally associated with action has advised doing nothing.

ment. Not the least part of Sallust's complexity lies in the formal gestures with which he imitates the virtues and attitudes of the two men being compared. This, as we shall see, further complicates a theoretical problem concerning both the abuses of rhetoric and the historical context which involves Caesar and Cato.³⁸ I will treat the first sentence in some detail because in this regard, as well as in the logic of its false antithesis, it sets in motion most of the expectations and responses that the *synkrisis* relies on and uses.

Caesar beneficiis ac munificentia magnus habebatur, integritate vitae Cato. Formally, the antithesis is chiasmic. That chiasmus brings forward, and so emphasizes,³⁹ an abstract ethical principle, *integritas vitae*. It also postpones the explicit statement of the name Cato. This formal structure may be said to imitate Cato's own emphasis on ethical principles and his subordination of self (and others and public policy) to the abstractions of ethics.⁴⁰

The disposition of words is further expressive and imitative in their number: in comparison with Caesar's six words, which include the doublet *beneficiis ac munificentia*, simplicity appears in the three words assigned to Cato. Thus, the description of Caesar is generous, while that of Cato is severe. In its placement the predicate adjective *magnus* is also expressive. Not only does its attachment to Caesar allow Cato's description to attain a greater spareness, but the refusal to write *Cato magnus habebatur* imitates a Catonian quality to which Sallust will later refer: *esse quam videri bonus malebat* (54.6). These formal gestures cohere in an imitation of the virtues being compared and of the men themselves. Caesar appears putting himself first, pointing to and lingering upon his *beneficia* and *munificentia*,⁴¹ concerned with political action, with engagement with others,

38. This subjective/dramatic style is an essentially Roman tendency to reveal events from the perspective of the actors. It is the basis of Brooks Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford 1963), see esp. 40, 97–105. See also W. R. Johnson's analysis of the end of *Aeneid* Book 4, *Darkness Visible: A Study of Vergil's Aeneid* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1976) 66–69. Thucydides' concern with politics and ethics, as analyzed by Jacqueline de Romilly, *Thucydides and Athenian Imperialism*, trans. Philip Thody (New York 1963), is related, as would be expected, to Sallust's concerns, but the extent to which Thucydides' text is "subjective" cannot be considered here. With regard to the *synkrisis*, Walter Bloch, *Bedeutungszusammenhänge und Bedeutungsverschiebungen als inhaltliche Stilmittel bei Sallust* (Frankfurt 1971) 74, comes close to recognizing and naming Sallust's style as "subjective," but he emphasizes instead reality, not rhetoric and voice: "Die Stilgesetzlichkeit ist wieder ein Abbild der Wirklichkeit."

39. Emphasis in Latin is the result of abnormal position. See Murgia, "Analyzing Cicero's Style," *CPh* 76 (1981) 304–5. In a chiasmus there are several considerations. If we use the symbolism A B B A to suggest a chiasmus, we must ask the following questions: 1. Does B come forward and so receive some preemptive emphasis? 2. Is A postponed and receive the emphasis of suspense? 3. Are both A and B emphatic and does the figure itself emphasize a reversal? Here, with Cato expected, *integritate* seems to me to attain the preemptive emphasis.

40. It was a fairly common complaint about the man; see Cic. *Att.* 1.18.7 and *supra* on 2.1.8; see also Cic. *Pro Mur.* 29.60ff., discussed *infra*.

41. The form is climactic. Not only does the near-synonym *munificentia* linger in the same semantic field as *beneficia*, it extends the reference to even grander actions. See Lewis & Short s.v. *munus* 2a.

and with being held *magnus*.⁴² Cato puts *integritas vitae* in opposition—the voice of Catonian *severitas*.

If, however, we are going to take analysis like this seriously, we cannot stop here. There are consequences to both the order and the expressive force of Sallust's disposition. Above we argued that the false antithesis made both virtues problematic. In the order of disposition, however, it is important to note that Caesar's description by itself and in the immediately preceding context, *ingenti virtute, divorsis moribus . . . magnitudo animi par, item gloria* (53.6–54.1), is not essentially problematic. Alone he appears as doing well for others, performing *bona* and *munera*, engaged in the life of *officia* and duty. It is the appearance of Cato's virtue that undermines these virtues. The text first offers virtue, then takes it away, thus creating an image, not of isolated virtues, but of virtue undermining and subverting virtue. Furthermore, in its temporal order it creates a process, or the image of a process, in which the reader “loses his innocence”: when *integritas* questions the sincerity of *beneficia*, the reader can no longer accept *beneficia* at face value. This process—the disintegration of virtue, the deception of appearances and the appearance of deception—is a central issue in Sallust's personal history as well as in his *Bellum Catilinae*.⁴³ This interaction of separated and competing virtues is essential to Sallust's presentation and the problem he sees in regulating and understanding the various *artes*.⁴⁴

The temporal order is expressive in yet another and more subtle way. Before the context Cato provides, the terms of praise that attach to Caesar are not excessive and by themselves are hardly even generous. In isolation, *Caesar* coming first is only normal Latin and *magnus habebatur* an unexceptional closure. It is only in contrast to Cato that the form of Sallust's description of Caesar becomes expressive and that suspicions arise. The prose does two things simultaneously: the same formal gesture which allows generosity to be expressed also undermines that generosity. This is a complex and sophisticated reflection of the

42. This, too, is a commonplace; see Suetonius *Divus Iulius* 10 ff., 26–28; Vell. Pat. 2.56; Appian *BC* 2.8; Cassius Dio 37.8.2. See also Vretska's commentary on the later “Caesar-Portrait,” vol. 2, 628.

43. In Sallust's own terms, the comparisons insist that Sallust's reader not be one of the *multi* referred to at *BJ* 103.5: *nam etiam tum largitio multis ignota erat; munificus nemo putabatur nisi pariter volens; dona omnia in benigne habebantur*. For Sallust's own deception and loss of innocence see 3.3; on Catiline's deceptive appeal to the youths of Rome see 5.4 and 14.1–4, and cf. Cic. *Cael.* 4.10–6.14.

44. It is, in part, the reason for Sallust's initial concern with *ingenium*, or *virtus animi*: *Sed diu magnum inter mortalis certamen fuit, vine corporis an virtute animi res militaris magis procederet* (1.5). *Ingenium* (*animi imperio, corporis servitio*, 1.2), when good, is the principle of control in the use of the right *artes* (= *virtutes*) for the right goals; see Earl 13, 28ff. It is this nexus of action and judgment which falls apart here, and, by my argument, left Sallust no alternative but to set his own *ingenium* at work in *facta dictis exaequanda*, for political action had become impossible (see 3.1–4.2). See further *infra*, pp. 19–20, and my forthcoming article “Intellectual Conflict and Mimesis in Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae*,” delivered at the colloquium on Conflict: The Perspective of the Ancient Historians, at The Ohio State University, Spring 1987.

nature of generosity. It can, in fact, only be known in contrast to that which is less generous; and when the ungenerous defends itself, the generous becomes a problem. Sallust's text, both in its discursive statements and in its rhetorical juxtapositions and movements, keeps recalling and creating the deceptions, the perversion and the disappearance of *virtus*,⁴⁵ and it does so here *through the appearance of other virtues*. Hence our contention that essential elements of *ingens virtus* are in conflict.

A brief digression on *munificentia* is in order, since it may raise questions for some commentators. It is a difficult word to be sure of, for much depends upon its connotations, and in Sallust's corpus those connotations are elusive.⁴⁶ Sallust apparently invented the term, and linguistic innovations are slippery: their exact connotations are impossible to specify until they have become part of the common vocabulary (and one may argue that even then their exact connotations cannot be specified outside of a context). Consequently, Sallust has intentionally blurred the connotational force of his description, and, while he has certainly allowed for the suggestion of exhibitionism,⁴⁷ he has ultimately only raised the problem of munificent action. *Integritas*, too, is a near-innovation, found first in Cicero and read only here in Sallust: it raises the problem of knowing a quality (*integer*) of things and actions only as an abstract principle of life.

Cynicism and suspicion of others' motives do not, however, end with Caesar. If the form is expressive of the man, we must ask of the absolutist why *integritas vitae* comes forward as it does and why Cato would rely upon a rhetorical ploy—the radical shift from specific actions to a general ethical principle which can only inform action.⁴⁸ Unless we accept a reasoning which makes all

45. *Ambitio* is a *vitium proprius virtutem* (11.1) which *dolis atque fallaciis contendit* (11.3); *hebescere virtus, paupertas probro haberi, innocentia pro malevolentia duci coepit* (12.1); see *supra* on *vera vocabula* (52.11); note, *infra*, that *munificentia* and *largitio* (*BJ* 103.6) can become barely distinguishable.

46. One should note that *munificentia* elsewhere in Sallust is not a term of veiled criticism. In fact, at *BJ* 110.5 it is a virtue greater than military success. Nonetheless, when used to gain advantage, it has an affinity to *largitio*, as is clear from *BJ* 103.5–6. After a careful review of the literature and the relevant passages in Sallust, Vretska concludes: "Vielmehr erscheinen in der ersten Gegenüberstellung jene Eigenschaften, die die beiden Männer am stärksten absolut und gegenüber kennzeichnen: die Großzügigkeit des Grandseigneurs und die Unantastbarkeit des Altrömers" (627–28). While my interpretation reveals a more cynical dynamic in Sallust's presentation, we must agree, I think, that, taken out of the rhetorical context, the terms Sallust chooses here do not necessarily reveal any veiled criticism and are in the mainstream of traditional Roman values. "The tendentious element which undoubtedly lies behind these portraits" (McGushin 272) is the result of Sallust's disposition of *res et verba*, not the result of the terms he chooses. This is further evidence that the problem Sallust engages is for him not simply a problem caused by Caesar and Cato, but one that arises from the Roman context and the opposition of the virtues themselves. Put another way, the traditional virtues in juxtaposition reveal an inherent tendentiousness. McGushin's reference to the framework of *virtus* in the *BC* is an important contextual reminder of the forces at work.

47. "Raffinesse und Egoismus," Seel 45.

48. This argument depends upon the apprehension of an imitation of Cato's voice in the severe absolutism of *integritate vitae Cato*. Further evidence that Sallust means for this imitation to be heard may be found in another antithesis, *Caesar dando, sublevando, ignoscundo, Cato nihil largiundo gloriam adeptus est*, 54.3. This passage is discussed more fully below. Here we may say that if this is

beneficia an ethical impossibility, *beneficia* and *munificentia* should not necessarily exclude *integritas*. The antithetical structure harbors both a false antithesis and a rhetorical ploy which is anything but simple: the statement, the claim, *integritate vitae Cato* is an attempt to preempt Caesarian virtues, and the very emphasis it displays is itself exhibitionistic.⁴⁹ This preemptive change in the ground of comparison imitates the preemptive voice of a censorial ethics which is eager to accuse another and show itself off; when that voice is heard, all the simplicity and integrity of this apparent *integritas vitae* come into question. Can a rhetorically preemptive maneuver be a display of *integritas* itself? If *beneficia* are not merely *bona ipsa*, is this announcement of *integritas* merely *integritas ipsa*, and does it, too, seek to win favor?⁵⁰ I do not mean to be uncovering here a covert attack on Cato, though there are admittedly grounds for that attack. Rather, I am trying to demonstrate that, just as *beneficia* become a problem from the censorial perspective of an absolute *integritas*, so the claim of *integritas* is a problem when it is publicly or competitively made.⁵¹ The public world, with its exchanges and rhetorical maneuverings, eludes ethical absolutism: this is the problem raised by *integritate vitae Cato*, both with regard to Caesar and with regard to the Censor's grandson. Cynicism cuts both ways.

The logic of Sallust's presentation can and should be pushed yet further. If the chiasmus allows *integritas vitae* to come forward in order to imitate the Catonian subordination of self to ethics, the name Cato is nonetheless spoken, and much will depend upon how one chooses to enunciate the name.⁵² Similarly,

merely Sallust's list of compared virtues, he must be accused of manipulation and innuendo, as well as poor argument in that he overlooks two elements in his own list of Caesarian virtues: what has *nihil largiri* to do with *sublevare* or *ignoscere*? If, however, we hear the voice of a Catonian response, we have a challenge to Caesar's *gloria* at the point where he is most vulnerable, and the representation of men as well as virtues in competition. Furthermore, as a response in which *sublevare* and *ignoscere* are metaphorically subsumed under *largiri*, the metaphor is Cato's: see 52.12. We may summarize our evidence for an underlying representation of the two men as follows: (1) expressive chiasmus in the position of *integritate vitae*; (2) expressive brevity in Cato's first three descriptions, and a complementary generosity given to Caesar; (3) general form which imitates a debate or competition; (4) frequent appearance of negatives and accusations in Cato's description; (5) use of a Catonian metaphor; (6) descriptions which have no function in a direct comparison of virtues (see below on *non divitiis cum divite neque factione cum factioso*), but do function polemically.

49. The historical Cato seemed prone to such exhibitionism. Of his failure in 52, Erich S. Gruen, *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1974) [= Gruen] 156, summarizes, "He ostentatiously scorned stratagems. . . . The campaign seems to have been designed to win admiration rather than votes." That, of course, is an ostentatious stratagem. See also n.61.

50. *Integritas* can, of course, be *gratissima* (Cic. *Lig.* 1.2); political action always produces exchange value.

51. Cf. *quo minus [Cato] petebat gloriam* (54.6).

52. The topos of *praedicare et nominari*, essentially one of reward for virtue, was a commonplace; see, for example, Cic. *Arch.* 11.26. I am not saying that it is vicious to seek *gloria*; such a position would contradict one of Sallust's most consistently held positions. I am saying that Cato's ethical absolutism cannot enter the public sphere, in *Romuli faece* Cicero had said (*Att.* 2.1.8), and keep its claim to *integritas*. On the one hand, it becomes a ploy; on the other, it does damage: *nocet interdum rei publicae* (ibid.).

magnus habebatur is attached to Caesar, but only arbitrarily so. It must be said, silently and therefore deceptively, of Cato, too. Just as in the world of action Cato's *integritas* needs at least *officia* to be known, so in Sallust's presentation the meaning of Cato's virtue requires what is said of Caesar: his severe brevity is known only by comparison and can only be understood by filling an ellipsis. Syntactically, Cato's putative virtue relies as much on Caesar as *integritas* should on deeds and *beneficia* on that *integritas* which allows *beneficia* to be *bona*.

I have discussed the ethical difficulties of displaying *integritas*, of disguising the desire to be named, and of the deceptive *magnus habebatur*. With the recognition that the phrase *integritate vitae* is not only preemptive but exhibitionistic we come full circle in our comparison. There was, as was already noted, the potential for display and excess in the Caesarian virtue *munificentia*. The description of Caesar's means to glory, *beneficiis ac munificentia*, not only redoubles Caesarian beneficence (an essentially generous gesture), but is climactic in that *munificentia* are grander than mere *beneficia*. It is that climactic gesture, together with Cato's *integritas*, that allows the reader to suspect ulterior motives and exhibition in the Caesarian virtues themselves. But whatever criticism is directed against the exhibition or *Egoismus* of *munificentia* must also apply to the preemptive self-assertion (*Egoismus*) of the chiasmic claim, *integritate vitae Cato*: Cato's censure criticizes both men. However, if we allow both Caesar and Cato their respective displays, we assert a Caesarian principle of *mansuetudo* and *ignoscere*.⁵³ Caesar's terms excuse both men. We uncover, then, another problem in the judgment and appearance of virtue, one that the *synkrisis* creates but cannot solve.

This analysis of the first sentence has attempted to show, first, that in its formal structure Sallust presents a standoff of virtues which should be mutually dependent and an opposition within *ingens virtus* in which one virtue undermines the other; second, that in imitating both the virtues and the actors, the structure complicates this standoff of virtues with the abuses of rhetoric; third, that in the temporal (or diachronic) movement of the sentence Sallust creates the duplicity of apparent virtue, an emblem of the "loss of innocence," and the need for revision both of Caesar's *beneficia* and of Cato's eager *integritas*; and, fourth, that in the logical consequences of these synchronic and diachronic effects Sallust not only questions the individuals in regard to their virtues but makes problematic the possibility of these virtues acting in concert and the possibility of simple virtue or virtuous action in the context of this opposition. The virtues here are at once inextricably joined and at war between themselves. The need for revision bespeaks a failure of language and understanding. A new way of sorting out society's needs for action and judgment is required.

It has taken several pages to trace out the various lines of argument which follow from the "logic of the text." However, I do not mean to suggest that any reader actually lingers over this comparison or even attempts to work out the

53. On Sallust's estimation of these terms see *BC* 9.5.

logic of what is clearly a false antithesis. It is, I think, a tribute to Sallust's *ingenium* and his disposition of *res et verba* that the reader of this short sentence knows almost immediately that something important is askew: that Caesar's *beneficia* have become problematic with the appearance of Cato's *integritas*, that Cato's *integritas* is problematic in terms of political action and a bit too impatient and absolute, and that there is here an essential and disturbing conflict between traditional Roman virtues as well as between individuals. That conflict must have to do with how we name and judge and act, precisely because there is no essential or necessary conflict.

The second comparison changes the mode of antithesis. If *beneficia et munificentia* and *integritas vitae* are incomparable, *mansuetudo et misericordia* and *severitas* are mutually responsive contraries; they are essentially opposed both in theory and in the preceding speeches. This change in the class of compared virtues is a move which, as we shall see, is characteristic of the *synkrisis*. Sallust offers no constant or single standpoint from which to assimilate the elements of his comparison and opposition: *beneficia* and *integritas* must be seen as deriving from the different classes of action and intention, while *mansuetudo* and *severitas* belong to the same class.⁵⁴ In general, Sallust's shift imitates in itself and creates for the reader an equal uncertainty with regard to the proper standpoint from which to evaluate the apparent conflict of virtues.

An outline of the characteristics (excluding the last comparison, which I will discuss at length later) will indicate that there is in the *synkrisis* lack of resolution, failure of discrete analysis, and change in perspective at every level and in every combination:

CAESAR	CATO
1. <i>beneficia ac munificentia</i>	<i>integritas vitae</i>
2. <i>mansuetudo et misericordia</i>	<i>severitas</i>
3. <i>dare, sublevare, ignoscere</i>	<i>nihil largiri</i>
4. <i>miseris perfugium</i>	<i>malis pernicies</i>
5. <i>facilitas</i>	<i>constantia</i>

Listed like this, the characteristics seem to cohere to the central governing ideological nexus of each individual. *Mansuetudo et misericordia* are in the same field of activity as *beneficia ac munificentia*. They fall under the general category of *iustitia*, which itself relies upon *fides*: "C'est elle qui inspire le *patronus* lorsqu'il exerce sa *fides* et distribue ses *beneficia*."⁵⁵ Even at this systemic level,

54. See, for instance, Cic. *Sulla* 33.92–93. While opposed as qualities of action, the fact that they are from the same class of things means that their opposition often points, as in the *Pro Sulla*, to a need for compromise or mitigation. In fact, the very notion of judgment depends at least in part upon the legitimacy of the claims of both.

55. J. Hellegouarc'h, *Le Vocabulaire Latin des relations et des partis politiques sous la République* (Paris 1963) [= Hellegouarc'h] 266; the whole discussion of "L'Homme politique," 202–424, is relevant but cannot be discussed in detail here. I would like to thank the anonymous reader who provoked both refinement and disagreement on these points.

however, problems arise: the very *fides* that supports *beneficia* is, as we have seen, coopted or challenged by Cato's *integritas* and *constantia*. Similarly, *integritas*, *fides*, *pietas*, *gravitas*, *severitas*, and so on cohere as virtues which in action lead to *beneficia*.⁵⁶ Thus, while the men represent specific systems of value, the *artes* themselves are not sufficient to those systems. Furthermore, the outline above reveals that neither the individual *artes* nor the oppositions are analytically discrete. *Ignoscere*, the ideological contrary of *malis perniciis*, in Sallust opposes *nihil largiri*, which itself also opposes both *dare*, a category of *beneficia*, and *sublevare*, a subcategory of *miseris perfugium*. Thus analysis is confounded by the ulterior motives of an elusive rhetoric that is best assigned to an imitation of the men and their interaction.

Complementing the inadequate systems and oppositions are frequent shifts in the ground of comparison and changes in form of presentation. In the first comparison, Cato's description/voice preemptively changes ground from the specific Caesarian virtues to a generalized ethical stance, apt to the historical character and extravagantly broad. In the third, Cato again changes ground preemptively, but with a negative reduction of all aid to *largiri*, and while the term is not particularly apt to Cato, the manner is. In the second there is no change of ground: the virtues are matched and opposed, though the form is still expressive (generous description for Caesar; brevity for Cato) and the terms are apt to the men.⁵⁷ In the fourth, the virtues are again matched, but only in part (*perfugium/perniciis*); the opposition Cato affords is not nearly as preemptive as in earlier comparisons, although it does change ground in its reference to the objects of the actions (*miseri/mali*); the terms suit the men, but the form is expressive of antithesis rather than of the peculiar voices or manners of the characters. The fifth is perhaps the hardest to judge, and rather raises a question of whether *constantia* changes ground and preempts *facilitas* or not. While in general either the terms or the manner is associated with the actors, when Sallust says of Cato *huic severitas dignitatem addiderat*, the echo of Caesarian *dignitas*, as well as the potential reference to "the nexus of family relationships on which Cato's influence largely rested"⁵⁸ and Cato's failure at the polis in 52, gives the characterization a hollow ring. Similarly, in *nihil largiri* only *nihil* can be said to suit Cato,

56. See Hellegouarc'h, "Les Vertutes du Patronus," 275–90.

57. Earl (101–2) argues that Sallust tried to avoid the nonrepublican connotations of *clementia*; however, it must be noted that when in the *Bellum Catilinae* Sallust has Q. Marcius speak of the *clementia populi Romani*, he does not call it *clementia*: *ea mansuetudine atque misericordia senatum populi Romani semper fuisse, ut nemo umquam ab eo frustra auxilium petiverit* (34.1). It is perhaps not the term but the very posture which implies "a superior to an inferior." Cicero uses both *clementia* and *misericordia*, and pairs them tellingly at *Sen.* 7.17; see also *In Cat.* 4.6.12. I suspect that Sallust's avoidance of the term does two things simultaneously: it keeps the conflict of virtues from being entirely localized to the men and their rhetoric, while it still raises questions about the *artes* and their relation to *dignitas*. That is, it allows the essence of Caesar's *clementia* to be a problem without the weight of too many contextual and historical associations; *dignitas* is the term which ostentatiously brings in the Roman and individual context.

58. McGushin 272. On the problems of Cato's *dignitas*, see further infra.

while *largiri* appears only as an attempt to undermine Caesar; *integritas* in 1, on the other hand, both undermines Caesar *and* is a term well suited to Cato. In sum, there is no discrete relationship between the *artes* and the men—no fulfilled systems, only broken values; no coherent opposition—in fact, the separations themselves are often incoherent; no consistent formal or affective presentation of the virtues.

How, then, can we maintain that the *synkrisis* consistently reveals an opposition between action and judgment? It is an underlying opposition, and one that confounds the other oppositions as it creates and supports the variety of forms in which the oppositions appear. The Catonian virtues, as we shall see, generally undermine Caesarian virtues by reference to absolute ethics (*integritas*, *malis*), or by reference to intention (*nihil largiri*, *constantia*), which is essentially ethical. The second antithesis, *misericordia* and *severitas*, is especially important because it does not do this. At the most basic level, it stands as a reminder that the crisis of virtue involves traditional oppositions, that is, it involves the debate which Sallust has just recounted, as well as the ethical basis of traditional action. At a more sophisticated level, when the issue becomes *dignitas*, it becomes a reminder of how the conflict between action and judgment (what is *dignum*?) comes to inhabit and undermine the traditional oppositions of mutually responsive contraries.

Sallust was a sophisticated user of rhetoric who wrote a provocative text. His verbal juxtapositions call for and can sustain both subtle and sophisticated examination of the logic that underlies them. The facts that the virtues do not and cannot work in concert and that the individuals themselves, abusing conceptual failures, thwart any “complete” virtue as well as each other’s strengths have provoked the desire to take sides or to show that Sallust took a side. But the problem was larger than Cato and Caesar, and Sallust knew that: you cannot choose between *integritas* and *beneficia*. Sallust’s text subverts judgment, sets the reader’s ability to accommodate against his desire for consistency and fixed definitions and standards, recreates and reveals problems within *ingens virtus*. Both what the text does (praise, shift, and undermine) and what it cannot do (eliminate the aura of *ambitio* or create a coherent judgment about *bonae artes*) become part of its meaning.⁵⁹

59. The language of deconstruction articulates well what is going on in Sallust’s text: antitheses create, or seem to create, the differences which allow the virtues to appear and be evaluated: their difference from each other within an adversarial structure reveals their significance. In the false antitheses, however, the mutually dependent virtues deconstruct: *beneficium* is different from itself (either its *bene-* is not good, or its *-ficia* makes action problematic) and *integritas* begins to disappear. The social, political, ethical complex deconstructs from within and the readers cooperate with their revisions and cynicism. For the broader Sallustian context, see *ac me, quom ab relicuorum malis moribus dissentirem, nihilo minus honoris cupido eadem quae ceteros fama atque invidia vexabat* (BC 3.5). It is a societal problem which Sallust offers his reader. Ultimately, this kind of interpretation is little more than the logical extension of New Critical questions and premises. If there is an immediate analogy for my discussion, it would be Barbara Johnson, *The Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading* (Baltimore 1980); especially accessible is her essay on Billy Budd,

In justification of this, we may now review the rest of the *synkrisis*. Our discussion will uncover a rich interplay of voices and the creation of a conflict which is the result of a disturbing meditation on the late Republic.

ille mansuetudine et misericordia clarus factus, huic severitas dignitatem addiderat (54.2). Caesar's description is generous again (*mansuetudo et misericordia*) while Cato's is severe (*severitas*). This antithesis of mutually responsive contraries is traditional: as abstracts they are opposed; in action their legitimate claims are complementary and must be negotiated.⁶⁰ According to Cicero, their proper interaction was difficult but necessary, and it characterized, not coincidentally, Cato the Elder.⁶¹ The failure in this antithesis, then, is at first what Syme has suggested for the whole *synkrisis*: "In alliance the two had what was needed to save the Republic." But was it "Fate or chance" that determined otherwise?⁶²

There is a second conflict. Sallust specifies Cato's *gloria* as *dignitas* and Caesar's as *clarus*. The opposition, like that which it previews between *enitescere* and *esse quam videri*, opposes external recognition to internal worth and in so doing raises questions about the moral orientation of *clarus* and *misericordia*. It also separates from Caesar that *dignitas* which he so consistently claimed as his own. The traditional and complementary opposition is thus made personal, and the need for *misericordia* and *severitas* to mitigate and qualify each other founders upon the elusive motives of men and rhetorical maneuvering. *Misericordia* itself is no longer an issue. Arguments for equity dissolve into *ad hominem* accusations and implications. The complementary "virtues" have become truly antithetical as Caesarian fame is only the cheap reward for an insincere and vicious *misericordia*.

The stakes are high when the terms change, but the change itself raises other problems. By assigning *dignitas* to Cato, it has been thought that Sallust denies it to Caesar. This can be harsh criticism; for, as Caesar destroyed the Republic, *dignitas* was his special claim and justification.⁶³ But if Sallust, or Cato,⁶⁴ tries to

"Melville's Fist: The Execution of *Billy Budd*," 79–110. For further discussion of the intellectual conflicts Sallust creates, see my forthcoming "Intellectual Conflict" (supra n.44).

60. This is essentially the problem of "the antithesis of virtues." Responsive contraries will be complementary; mutual exclusions will not both be virtues; illegitimate pairings create gaps.

61. *Quemquamne existimas Catone, proavo tuo, commodiorem, communiorem, moderatiorem fuisse ad omnem rationem humanitatis? De cuius praestanti virtute cum vere graviterque diceret, domesticum te habere dixisti exemplum ad imitandum* (Mur. 31.66). See also Cic. *Leg.* 3.1; *Att.* 15.1; the references in Hellegouarc'h 288n.10, and his discussion of *gravitas*, 279–90, esp. 290. Vretska, vol. 2, 629, gives further examples of Romans who combine in themselves both *facilitas/liberalitas* and *severitas/integritas*.

62. Syme 120.

63. *Ut eius existimationem dignitatemque ab inimicis defendant* is the exhortation Caesar urges on his troops before he enters Italy in 49: Caes. *Bellum Civile* 7.8. *Atque haec ait omnia facere se dignitatis causa. Ubi est autem dignitas nisi ubi honestas?* was Cicero's cry, Feb. 49, concerning Caesar's invasion of Italy (*Att.* 7.11.1). See Syme 117–18.

64. There is no reason not to continue to hear the voices and postures of the men in this competition of virtue—but when the context is healthy the competition is *beneficiis cum beneficentibus* or *cum integris integritate*.

deny “true” *dignitas* to Caesar, the assignation of *dignitas* to Cato is no less problematic. In the realm of political effectiveness, it bespoke *ambitio*, if not *avaritia*, and the *factio paucorum*, all those aspects of public action which make Catonian *integritas* so difficult. It was the special preserve of *nobilitas*: it could be inherited from one’s ancestors; it supported one’s claim for *honores*, and itself rested upon tenure of office.⁶⁵ As applied to Cato, it was not office that added *dignitas*, but *severitas*, as if *severitas* was Cato’s censorial office exercised and practiced for the purpose of accumulating *dignitas*.

Whether one feels an underlying criticism of Cato or of Caesar or of both, the central problems here are the meaning and application of *dignitas* and its relationship to *gloria*. As a quality denied to Caesar, *dignitas* cheapens *clarus*, just as *integritas* undermined *beneficia*. But as applied to Cato, it raises questions about *dignitas* itself and how it can appear. Its traditional basis in ancestral prerogatives should recall the example of the elder and gentler Cato and his attitude toward the Rhodians. But that is the very example Cato failed to imitate.⁶⁶ If, however, the ancestral basis of *dignitas* is only “the nexus of family relationships on which Cato’s influence largely rested,” it is the efficacy of that nexus which Cato’s *severitas* threatened when he failed because of *severitas* in his attempt to gain the consulship.⁶⁷

Sallust, by giving the word *dignitas* to Cato, or Cato, by trying to coopt the Caesarian claim, has revealed or uncovered another conflict in the traditional values of Roman society.⁶⁸ If Caesar lacked *severitas* and cheapened his fame with no regard for “true” *dignitas*, Cato misunderstood *res publica*⁶⁹ and betrayed “actual” *dignitas* in that he neither advanced beyond the praetorship nor could imitate the example of his gentler and kinder grandfather. The appearance of Cato’s *dignitas*⁷⁰ may criticize Cato, Caesar, or both, and it is that very capacity of “*dignitas*” to subvert both Caesar and Cato that reveals a problem in the meaning and application of *dignitas*. That problem is both a theoretical one

65. See the discussion of Earl, esp. 53–57. McGushin makes no comment on *dignitatem* here.

66. See Cic. *Mur.* 31.66, cited supra n.61. Criticism is also implicit in Caesar’s reference to the Rhodians in his speech at 51.5.

67. See Plutarch *Cato* 49.104 and Dio 40.58.1–3. This does not mean that Cato achieved no political success; the opposition and the terms point to limited success and problematic *dignitas*, not failure. Thus, Cato himself eludes absolutism.

68. It is, again, one that concerns Sallust elsewhere in the *BC*. See the use of *dignitas* elsewhere: Cato uses it ironically at 52.32; it belongs to Catiline at 60.7; and it is the basis of Catiline’s appeal to Catulus at 35.1 and 3. Syme (118) comments that “Insistence on ‘dignitas’ to the limit came close to ‘superbia’; and the arrogance of a Roman noble often issued in anger and inhumanity.” Syme is not explicit about what this means for Cato or for Caesar.

69. See Cicero *Att.* 2.1.8: *sed tamen ille optimo animo utens et summa fide nocet interdum rei publicae; dicit enim tamquam in Platonis politeia, non tamquam in Romuli faece sententiam*; see also *Att.* 1.18.7.

70. Earl (100) concludes that “Cato’s ambitions lay rather in civil life”; McGushin is more accurate when he speaks of Cato’s “remoteness from participation in the *res publica*” (311), although *dignitas* is anything but remote from Roman politics, as is *severitas*. See further Vretska on the traditional and political parameters of the virtues. Cicero comes, I think, closest when he refers to Cato’s lack of *ut mihi videtur, consilio aut ingenio*: *Att.* 1.18.7.

about “real” *dignitas* and a practical one in that Cato’s claim to *dignitas* (*addiderat*) undermines the basically complementary virtues of the second comparison⁷¹ and so destroys an essential negotiation of individuals and states. The same “true” *dignitas* that drives a wedge between *miser cordia* and *severitas* becomes itself a problem by belonging to Cato, that is, by recalling the actual Roman context in which it must appear. A basic disruption is created here in action and negotiation, in virtue, and even in what we will agree to call (or allow Cato or Caesar to call) “real” *dignitas*.⁷² The only solution is to take a perspective outside the text and reconstruct what “should be” the “true” relationship between dynamic elements. This is the reader’s problem, and it is an analogue to Sallust’s own position, outside the active workings of the political sphere, pondering the true relationship of *ingenium*, *animus*, *magna vis animi et corporis*, and so on.

Caesar dando sublevando ignoscundo, Cato nihil largiundo gloriam adeptus est. Once again, in themselves “giving, aiding, and forgiving” are virtues,⁷³ and in the contrast with Cato are generously laid out. But it is in the comparison with Cato that the problems arise. Cato gave no largesse; does that mean that Caesar did? And was Cato ever generous, helpful, forgiving? The reader is prompted to entertain accusations *ex silentio*. But Sallust or Cato has again shifted ground: one can attain *gloria* by *dare*, *sublevare*, *ignoscere* and still be innocent of *largitio*. To some extent at least, the real problem is one of perception. At times any gift may appear as an effort to buy something. All aid may appear to add, and in fact does add, to the credit column: *merita*. There are times when *factiones* becomes so dense and pervasive that simple action becomes impossible. This context of action, where *dare* may be *largiri*, concerns Sallust. But when

71. *Hic mihi quisquam mansuetudinem et misericordiam nominat? iam pridem equidem nos vera vocabula rerum amisimus* (52.11); see also 52.27.

72. The problem of what things really are is one that troubled Cicero frequently, and it often appeared in verbal distinctions. Most appropriate to our discussion is his comment on Caesar, *Atque haec ait omnia facere se dignitatis causa. Ubi est autem dignitas nisi ubi honestas?* (Att. 7.11.1). He is also wrestling with what virtues entail when he says of Cato *unus est qui curet constantia magis et integritate quam, ut mihi videtur, consilio aut ingenio, Cato* (Att. 1.18.7). Much of the argument of the *Pro Caec.* 65–78, the eulogy of *ius civile*, is an attempt to define *ius* and *vis*. I do not ignore the obvious fact that much rhetorical argumentation will involve definition; it is, after all, an important subject in Cicero’s *Topica* 8–9, 27–32. But Cicero’s concern with definition of *dignitas* cannot be completely separated from his concern with legal or judicial definition. Bruce W. Frier, *The Rise of the Roman Jurists: Studies in Cicero’s Pro Caecina* (Princeton 1985), as he attempts to describe the rise of “autonomous law” in the late Republic, begins to sound as though he is addressing Sallust’s own concerns: “the new citizens were not the only cause. A huge surge of commerce had followed in the wake of Rome’s expanding empire; the upper classes of Italy had enjoyed a general rise in their personal wealth. . . . it is perhaps more accurate to say that commerce and wealth helped break down the stifling mechanical solidarity of Rome, by encouraging segmented, instrumental social relationships and more individualistic social values” (280); the entire concluding chapter, 269–87, is relevant.

73. Vretska finds some potential ambivalence in *sublevando*. He overlooks, however, Cato’s polemical rhetoric in the preceding speech: *ne illi sanguinem nostrum largiantur* (52.12). See further infra.

ignoscere begins to look like *largiri*, the context is out of control. Is there any action, political or otherwise, that can escape such a drastic transvaluation? In this preemptive opposition, active virtue itself disappears: *nihil* . . .

The logical problems of opposing *nihil largiri* to *dare*, *sublevare*, *ignoscere* are compounded by the rhetorical problems of hearing Cato's voice. In addition to the relative severity of the phrase *nihil largiundo* and its negative posture, the metaphor is Cato's. In the senatorial debate he attacked *mansuetudo et misericordia*; he tried to halt those who *paucis sceleratis parcunt* with the injunction *ne illi sanguinem nostrum largiantur* (52.12). For Cato *misericordia* is a form of bribery in which the gift given to the wicked is the blood of those innocent men who may be threatened if the *mali* are not destroyed. Here in the *synkrisis* aid and pardon again appear associated with *largitio*. In this dubious and gaudy perversion of vocabulary, not only is there a substantial question of what actions are and mean, but there is a disturbing sense in which the comparison of virtue is continually and ineluctably confounded by the competition of men. Either the absolute ethics of Cato has turned aid and pardon into forms of *largitio*, or there is an enormous silence when Cato is called upon to respond to Caesar's propensity to help fellow citizens and to forgive the errant—or, in a more disturbing sense, the two are one in the cheat which makes *ignoscere* = *largiri*. There is only the silent accusation.

This has been the underlying problem raised by Sallust's propensity to echo the actors and imitate their postures in his words. Their self-presentation—the suggestion, for instance, that *integritas* appears as Cato's claim⁷⁴—bespeaks a situation in which *integritas* has no absolute or essential bearings of its own. The problem is actually larger than the individuals. *Largitio*, if it is to involve *ignoscere*, requires the connivance of the audience and a breakdown in traditional definitions. It is not just a concept taken up by Sallust to elucidate *virtus*; it is a ploy in a competition of virtues. And the ploy requires an audience whose cynicism can entertain an equation like *sublevare* = *largitio*. Another way of putting this is to say that if Cato's *integritas vitae* has only essential meaning, and if it is a legitimate response to *beneficia*, it should be the legitimate response to every exercise of Caesarian virtues (and such a response would be a true *constantia*). Cato disguises his own maneuvering,⁷⁵ and the appearance of all these virtues betrays and creates an underlying uncertainty about simple virtue. How can we know what things are and how to judge them when the ethical absolutist can call *misericordia* a form of *largitio*? This is the problem that Sallust offered his own readers. The traditional categories had lost their bearings: one version

74. Cicero has a revealing comment on Cato's propensity to change the terms of discussion and request: *Cato quid agat, qui quidem in me turpiter fuit malevolus: dedit integritatis iustitiae clementiae fidei mihi testimonium, quod non quaerebam; quod postulabam negavit* (Att. 7.2.7).

75. Once again the historical Cato comes to mind. See, for instance, Gruen's comments on Cato's reaction to the first Triumvirate: "Cato could always call them into question on the grounds of the character and aims of their proposers. Cato deftly played the role of the martyr" (91–92). Gruen could be analyzing the underlying rhetoric of Sallust's *synkrisis*.

was *innocentia pro malevolentia duci* (12.1); here it is as if Sallust had written *misericordia pro largitione duci*.

As a final note in the affective vein, the Catonian response (and refusal to meet a Caesarian virtue directly) is a radical attempt to undermine a virtue which had already appeared. If that attempt succeeds for a particular (or imaginary)⁷⁶ reader, it has created an experience suggesting the impossibility of virtues as simple and direct as *dare*. If Cato's gesture is suspicious in itself and a failure, it is another variation on deception: simple absolutism, like the simple *dare*, is deceptive. The text actually offers both possibilities, because Sallust did not take a side. He saw the conflict as irresolvable and presented it in a form where resolution is merely arbitrary. At this point there was no chance of alliance.

in altero miseris perfugium erat, in altero malis perniciēs. Again we have a comparison of terms which are not mutually exclusive. It is significant that this comparison seems most clearly to elaborate the second comparison: *miseris perfugium* = *mansuetudo et misericordia*; *malis perniciēs* = *severitas*.⁷⁷ The two halves, both as *mansuetudo/severitas* and as *perfugium/perniciēs*, belong together as respectable capacities of both individuals and states. This is, of course, emphasized in our present comparison by the phonetic resonance. When, however, we make this explicit, we discover that what appeared to be relatively clearly opposed virtues are not at all so. *Misericordia* applies to the *miseri*; *severitas* to the *mali*. Complementary virtues are again undermined by a problem of judgment and name, and this neat division only raises all the difficulties of knowing when the *mali* have become *miseri*, or who are which. It was a problem which continued to concern Romans: Anchises' famous line at *Aen.* 6.853, *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*, overlooks just this difficulty of knowing when the *superbi* have become *subiecti*—to the despair of Aeneas and Turnus.⁷⁸ The fact that in Sallust the problem appears in two different forms is not fortuitous. For the reader, a problem in *misericordia/severitas* is now confounded by a problem in judgment, *miseri/mali*. The experience is one of uncovering still deeper and more difficult problems in a complex already confounded by intention and verbal shifts.

illius facilitas, huius constantia laudabatur. The terms are used nowhere else in Sallust. Cicero gives us the best context: *si illius comitatem et facilitatem tuae gravitati severatitque asperseris, non ista quidem erunt meliora, quae nunc sunt optima, sed certe condita iucundius* (*Mur.* 31.66). In this passage, *illius* is Cato's *proavus*, *tu* is Cato. Once again, the elder, greater, and easier Cato lurks in the background of the comparison. And the perspective is the same, I think: Cato's

76. The imagined reader for whom the appearance of *nihil largiundo* undermines the Caesarian virtues expressed in *dando*, *sublevando*, *ignoscendo* or for whom the preemptive appearance of *integritate vitae* undermines any assumed ethical orientation in *Caesar beneficiis ac munificentia magnus habebatur* becomes a locus for contemplating or imagining the experience of such a disintegration in apparent virtues.

77. This is especially true in the deliberative context of the speeches just delivered.

78. The problem is exactly the same one Cicero addresses in *In Cat.* 4.6.11–12.

constantia here, *severitas* above, are not bad (*quae nunc sunt optima*), nor is Caesar's *facilitas* (in all its senses) a *mala ars*; it is just that by themselves and in the comparison with Cato the Elder they are not enough.

Cicero's conjunction of *comitas et facilitas* and *gravitas severitasque* reveals the nature of the antithesis. The ground of comparison has changed ever so slightly. In this context, where Cato seems to challenge Caesar's intentions (*integritas, nihil largiri*) and to undermine Caesar's terms (*largiri, mali*, and perhaps *dignitas*—it cuts both ways), *constantia* raises questions about the intentions and purpose and the meaning of Caesar's *facilitas*. *Facilitas* acts on behalf of another and is a virtue of *amicitia*; *constantia* acts in accord with *gravitas* and sets ethics before the associations of men. If *facilitas* is an affable manner and ability (*facere*, cf. *beneficia*, etc.), if it is only a social virtue, how can *constantia* oppose it? *Facilitas* can only make *constantia iucundior*. Was Cato merely obstinate, standing still and doing nothing (*stare*, cf. *nihil*, etc.)?⁷⁹ But if *facilitas* is other than social affability, if it is some sort of slipperiness and willingness to be manipulated, then it is not a virtue at all and *constantia* opposes its moral turpitude. What is at stake here is the boundary between those daily exchanges in which men make friends and show friendship and ethical rigor; both involve *fides*, which is what this opposition makes problematic.⁸⁰ The antithesis is ultimately false (because there is no necessary opposition) and deceptive (in part because it is not clear how the two virtues relate as virtues); yet, it is formally the simplest of all the antitheses.

This formal discrepancy is significant in the context of Sallust's disposition. In the opening set of five comparisons in the *synkrisis*, Sallust began with an overt and varied false antithesis, which in its formal imbalance paralleled the shift of ground from *beneficia ac munificentia* to *integritas vitae*. The last antithesis, simple and formally parallel, is nonetheless another example of the deception of appearances—both when *facilitas* is confronted by *constantia* and when the squaring off of virtues actually refuses to allow the competitors to meet on common (*publica*) ground. It is, furthermore, this very loss of boundaries in *res publica* that this antithesis reveals as its orientation applies now to the private world of friendship, now to political *amicitia*, and now to the state.

The opening five comparisons of the *synkrisis* create a rich and complex literary artifact. In the logic of their separations and oppositions, they keep uncovering something askew in *ingens virtus*, something at odds within *beneficia* and *integritas*—a conceptual as well as an active failure that has come to involve the world of social exchange, politics, judicial judgment, and personal ethics. This disintegration of virtue is paralleled by the readers' experience, which requires continual revision of terms: *miseris perfugium* begins to look different when opposed to *malis pernicies*, and vice versa. And the problem of finding

79. Cicero's remark applies to this context as well: *in me turpiter fuit malevolus. . . . quod postulabam negavit* (*Att.* 7.2.7). See also *Att.* 1.17.7 although there the context is specifically political.

80. See Hellegouarc'h 216–17 and 283–90.

one's bearings in this opposition of *artes* is compounded by the readers' feeling that they are engaged not just in a comparison of virtue, but in a competition between men about what to call their own virtues and what to call the other's. Something of the depth of Sallust's creation can be suggested by noting that the problems of rhetorical abuse which appear to compound the problems of judgment and action actually rely upon those problems for their own particular maneuvers. The *synkrisis* as a whole folds back upon itself as the image it creates becomes as interactive as is the disintegration of virtue in any society.

The *synkrisis* is capped by a longer exposition of the *virtus* of Caesar and the *gloria* of Cato. The longer sentences with their many traits allow Sallust to compose a fuller picture of Caesarian virtue, and then to do the same for Cato. *postremo Caesar in animum induxerat laborare, vigilare; negotiis amicorum intentus sua neglegere, nihil denegare quod dono dignum esset; sibi magnum imperium, exercitum, bellum novom exoptabat, ubi virtus enitescere posset* (54.4). Sallust introduces Caesar in terms which indicate self-conscious intention: *in animum induxerat*.⁸¹ It is, of course, exactly the question of intention that the Catonian virtues have so consistently questioned. The final goal is left unsaid, or assumed, but the form cannot help but suggest that Caesar's strengths, *laborare, vigilare*, were physical virtues practiced for some other end. That other goal is not necessarily a problem, and the government of *corpus* by *animus* is certainly a Sallustian virtue, but Catiline, too, was noted for his ability *laborare, vigilare*.⁸² In the context, and because of the silence, the expression is unsettling, and the readers feel Caesarian *Egoismus* in the background and the dangers of a hidden plan. This is, of course, an emblem of much that men thought and suspected of Caesar.⁸³

Suspensions aside, Caesar's first virtues, *laborare, vigilare*, are personal and physical. The next, *negotiis amicorum intentus sua neglegere*, is a social virtue (like *beneficia*). The last, *imperium, exercitum, bellum*, are traditional military/political virtues. In this way, Caesar's *bonae artes* appear as a universalized triplet which illustrates and reflects the breadth of his abilities. The specifics, too, serve more as extensions and additions to the other virtues of the *synkrisis* than as repetitions of those virtues. This is especially clear in the verbal repetitions in Cato's description: *modestiae, severitatis, modesto, non . . . neque*. Caesar even seems to adopt Cato's negative formula, only to deny the Catonian posture of denial: *nihil denegare*, and he steals a term from Cato's claim to *dignitas*, which rhetorically returns *dignum* to the world of exchange value and

81. See commentary by Vretska, vol. 2, 632.

82. *Magna vis animi et corporis* (5.1); *corpus patiens inediae, alioris, vigiliae supra quam cuiquam credibile est* (5.3).

83. We need to go no further than the suspicions and accusations which surrounded Caesar regarding the so-called First Conspiracy; see the references and discussion of Syme 92–102. The edifice may be “ramshackle”; but, if “for one reason or another, he took the ‘first conspiracy’ seriously” (Syme 101), there were suspicions.

action: *quod dono dignum esset*. If we continue to hear the voice of the actors, or if we hear only Sallust's stylus, the resonance challenges again both the Catonian and the Caesarian posture and raises again the problem of the meaning and application of the root *dign-*.

Cato's challenge at the level of intention is also heard, however, not just in the phrase *in animum induxerat laborare*, but more disturbingly in the construction *sua neglegere*: is it, too, dependent upon Caesar's plan? If it is, Caesar only appears to neglect his own affairs, for this neglect is part of the plan and is not neglect at all.⁸⁴ We are back to the challenge issued against *beneficia* by *integritas vitae*. Or does Sallust mean for readers to take *neglegere* (innocently?) as an historical infinitive? Since both interpretations remain possible, we must note that the text creates in its ambiguous syntax the very problem of interpreting Caesar's actions that runs throughout the *synkrisis* and the late Republic.⁸⁵

The seeds of doubt having been planted, Sallust ends the catalogue by asserting an essential bond, from Caesar's point of view, between himself, *sibi*, and the continuing and expanding efforts of empire, *magnum imperium, exercitum, bellum novom*. In the final clause, *ubi virtus enitescere posset*, Sallust/Caesar reverses the earlier opposition between external fame (*clarus*) and internal worth (*dignitas*). He is confident of his *virtus* (there is, here, no need to add to *dignitas* or even to be concerned about "being" *bonus*). He is only looking for the appropriate field of action in which his *virtus* will necessarily shine.⁸⁶

Despite the doubts which can and should be raised concerning Caesar's virtues, this is an impressive array of personal, social, and political strengths: *virtus enitescere, ingens virtus*. In fact, in its very extent and universality it almost challenges the antithetical structure we have become familiar with to make Cato an equal. This is, in part, the purpose of the change of form here: after the preceding oppositions, after the power of the Catonian absolutism has been shown, Caesar is allowed to develop his *virtus* uninterrupted. This final gesture, in which Caesar holds center stage so impressively for as long as the preceding five comparisons together, raises the stakes enormously. For, if doubts remain,

84. Consider the reductive possibility: *negotia* are only "one's financial affairs" which are neglected to further one's friends' financial affairs. When such *amicitia* enters the political space, which both requires financial resources and confers financial rewards, *sua negotia* reappear and the term *neglegere* is again deceptive.

85. See BC 49.4; the success of Piso and Catulus points to the extent that Caesar was held in suspicion.

86. Suspicions are, of course, possible. Syme says, "But there is no hint from Sallust that Caesar in his aspirations for war and conquest was moved by any thought for the Commonwealth" (117). True, but it is typical of Sallust's text to prompt the reader to ask for something the text will not offer. Thus, the reader, as described above, becomes suspicious and cynical, but most argue *ex silentio*. For a harsher view of Caesar, see B. R. Katz, "Dolor, Invidia and Misericordia in Sallust," AC 24 (1981) 75, and Gruen 75–76. McGushin, however, speaks of Sallust's return "to the full concept of *virtus*." The important point is that the text presents traditional active political and military strengths and even calls them *virtus*, but recognizes and suggests no means to control them. Vretska, vol. 2, 632–33, offers a summary of the diverse opinions here.

and they do, if the reader's cynicism can undermine and chip away at this catalogue, and it can, there is an enormous problem within the traditional Roman virtues themselves, for Caesar has covered almost all the ground.

Cato's description turns again to an ethical orientation. *at Catoni studium modestiae, decoris, sed maxume severitatis erat; non divitiis cum divite neque factione cum factioso, sed cum strenuo virtute, cum modesto pudore, cum innocente abstinentia certabat; esse quam videri bonus malebat: ita, quo minus petebat gloriam, eo magis illum adsequebatur.* As was mentioned above, this description is repetitive. Not only does Sallust reiterate *severitas* from the second comparison above, but within the sentence itself he echoes *modestiae* in *modesto*, uses synonyms, *pudor* and *abstinentia*, and finds general and abstract names for goodness, *virtus* and *innocens*, that repeat the strength of an abstract and absolutist ethic. He also repeats the primary form of Cato's *virtus* in the preceding: the negative, *non . . . neque, abstinentia, and innocens*,⁸⁷ and tellingly enough the negatives appear here in the overt refusal to compete with others straightforwardly in their own terms: *non divitiis cum divite neque factione cum factioso*. But, just as Caesar's intentions above could be questioned, so here the praise can be undermined by asking the man who failed to succeed in normal Roman electoral politics what constituted *factio* and how *factiones* were distinguished from *strenui*. The problem of what things are and how they are named appears again in terms which Cato's description takes from the realm of active engagement: *strenuo* and *certabat*. The metaphor challenges the political struggle with a "truer" struggle,⁸⁸ at the same time as what it writes, *cum strenuo virtute . . . certabat*, could be literally true of Caesar. But as soon as the reader is given the notion of struggle and contest, action itself disappears into being, *esse*. There are substantial questions of judgment and action here,⁸⁹ but the terms that raise those questions are inadequate to them.

In the final sentence, then, Cato stands unmoved and unmovable. He coopts the terms of active engagement and repeats the terms of abstract ethics; his description creates a monolithic ethical absolutism, but one whose specific and positive actions are a problem. The opposition here is not between public and private, or between domestic and military politics;⁹⁰ if it were that we would have those fragmented parts of a whole which Syme and Seel detect. The problem is, rather,

87. The same argumentative gesture lies behind *esse quam videri malebat* and *minus*.

88. On the meaning of *strenuus*, see Vretska, vol. 2, 535, and Hellegouarc'h 250; the latter discusses it under *labor*; cf. Caesar's *laborare*. If we continue to hear the voice of Cato, and I think we do, we must note that the one who complains of perversion of vocabulary seems quite familiar with *katakhresis*.

89. While it may be questionable whether wealth is inherently bad (see 7.6, *divitias honestas*), it is surely no praise merely to avoid *factiones*. Thus, two problems arise. In whose eyes is Cato refusing to strive *factione cum factioso*? Was it possible both to act politically and to avoid the charge of factiousness?

90. These are the common attempts to distinguish the strengths of Cato and Caesar. See, for instance, Vretska, vol. 2, 625.

much deeper: it is an opposition between the traditional virtues of action—personal, social, and political—and the traditional intellectual categories by which those actions are known and judged.⁹¹ And that is one of the reasons Sallust uses the intellectually provocative form of false antithesis: it engages the reader in the same kind of intellectual failure. *O rem miseram! si quidem id ipsum deterrimum est quod recusari non potest et quod ille si faciat, iam iam bonis omnibus summam ineat gratiam.*⁹² What was missing in the late Republic was not so much *virtus* and *bonae artes*—even Catiline was endowed with *magna vis et animi et corporis*—but the proper negotiation of action and judgment.⁹³

Sallust ends with Cato because the Catonian perspective makes problematic the understanding of these *bonae artes*, and offers, in the terms of this comparison, no solutions to the questions it raises, the separations it creates, and the absolutism it avers. In Sallust's narrative, then, the vote of the Senate that follows becomes an effort on the part of the Senators to find their bearings in the terms offered by Cato. To have had the vote immediately follow Caesar's extensive virtues would have set up an implied opposition between the Senate and Caesar and have created a victory for Cato which the whole *synkrisis* actually works against: Cato's terms do not find their strength in political action, because those are the very terms that have come to make action problematic (which does not mean that they do not advocate actions: *malis pernicies*). In Sallust's disposition, when the vote follows Cato's virtues, as before when it followed his speech, its relationship to those virtues seems to be determined more by chance, because Cato spoke last, than because the procedure has arrived at a sound and consistent judgment. Such an interpretation may, in fact, represent the truth.⁹⁴ In any event, if the Senators' vote had followed the summary of Caesarian virtues, that vote would have appeared to turn against Caesar and back to Cato in a more substantial way than it does.

The final irony is that action was taken under the very terms which in the *synkrisis* continually undermine action and it was a man of action, Caesar, who essentially counseled inaction. Not only is this ironic but, like much else in

91. Is this finally my version of secure intellectual bearings? Only if it is understood that Sallust's consistently antithetical form with its shifting and varied comparisons reveals a consistent problem at whose center is inconsistency and uncertainty. We must note that even Cato must maintain his *constantia* by ever shifting the ground, even to the point of raising the question of *dignitas* in a comparison of pity and severity.

92. Cic. *Att.* 7.9.3; the quote, of course, refers to the events preceding January 49. It is an important part of the interpretation offered here that the events from 63 to 42 are in the background.

93. If we agree that the proper negotiation can be and was specified, *bene facere rei publicae* (3.3), we only return to the problems of the *synkrisis*: how do you keep the *bene-* in *beneficia*? Knowing you should "do good" is not the same as knowing either what to do or how to do it. It is not surprising that this is a development of a traditional tension. Earl (28) comments on *virtutes* that "the normal meaning was *domi duellique bene facta*. This basic notion was extended in two ways, stressing either the verb or the adverb." *Res publica* should include struggle, *beneficia*, *integritas*, and *amicitia*.

94. See the response of the Senators to Caesar's speech at 52.1; cf. Suetonius *Divus Iulius* 14.2; Plutarch *Caesar* 8.1.

Sallust, it is suspicious, and it is the final disturbing element of the proceedings. Those proceedings had to and did come to a decision. Rome, however, remained uncertain about what came to be Cicero's action, and so followed the year of exile. But Sallust is here not only interested in preserving that sense of chance which could suggest that events would reverse the Senators' vote and then reverse that reversal. He tries to represent the difficulties of action and understanding, of virtue and the names for virtue, which were undermining the late Republic. He reveals for the reader, in part through the reader's own suspicions, the cynicism and the conflict of forces which thwarted both virtue itself and the understanding and evaluation of apparent virtue.

I have maintained that what lies behind this conflict is a substantial failure on the part of Roman society to come to terms with *virtus*. It is not just the failure of Cato or of Caesar, but a societal failure which appears in separations, in words and in judgment. Thus, the failure of virtue in the *synkrisis* reflects Sallust's other concerns with the disintegration of virtue and the deception of appearances. His deceptive text is an analogue of how he was himself deceived, so he says, by politics, and his own loss of innocence.⁹⁵ It appears in the description of Catiline (Chapter 5) and in the problems raised by his substantial virtues. It is intimately a part of Sallust's concern with *animus* and *ingenium* and the earlier success of Rome. It reoccurs in the problems of *vera vocabula* at 38.3. And this problem of virtue and vocabulary lies at the center of Catiline's manipulation of traditional concepts in Chapter 20, and of the frequent resonance between Cato's words and Sallust's, or Caesar's and Sallust's, or Catiline's virtues and Caesar's, or even Catiline's words and Sallust's.

The difficulty, Sallust says, extended beyond his personal experience and even beyond Catiline's history to Roman politics in general.⁹⁶ Cicero at times addresses the same problem, which one might call the difficulty of a *concordia virtutum*. The issue reappears around January of 49, when Cicero struggles with vocabulary and eventually falls back on paranomasia, the most pathetic example, perhaps, being his dialogue with Caesar: "*Habe meam rationem.*" *Habe tu nostram* (Att. 7.9.4). That the *synkrisis* is "anachronistic and coloured by intervening events"⁹⁷ is well known, and this justifies reference to later struggles in Rome. But the same problems were on Cicero's mind as early as 63: his distinction between *civis* and *hostis* is a result of wrestling with the meaning and application of his own actions, as is his careful redefinition of *humanitas*, *miser cordia*, and *crudelitas* at Cat. 4.6.11–12.

95. *Sed ego adolescentulus initio, sicuti plerique, studio ad rem publicam latus sum, ibique mihi multa advorsa fuere. nam pro pudore, pro abstinencia, pro virtute audacia largitio avaritia vigeabant* (3.3).

96. *Sed primo magis ambitio quam avaritia animos hominum exercebat, quod tamen vitium propius virtutem erat* (11.1); *postquam divitiae honori esse coepere et eas gloria imperium potentia sequebatur, hebescere virtus, paupertas probro haberi, innocentia pro malevolentia duci coepit* (12.1).

97. McGushin 310.

It is in regard to these issues that the *synkrisis* does what it should do here in the *Bellum Catilinae*.⁹⁸ A decision with regard to the conspirators had to be made: *postquam, ut dixi, senatus in Catonis sententiam discessit, consul optimum factu ratus* (55.1); but it was not a matter of simple right or wrong. In fact, it involved a division in Roman society, at the level of concepts and words and actions, so deep that it was intellectually insoluble, even in leisure afterward, by either the historian or the reader.⁹⁹ Qualities became separate that should not be separated and so oppositions appeared that not only were unnecessary, but impossible, and traditional negotiations of other oppositions disintegrated. This is the source of Sallust's false antitheses, their intellectual provocativeness, and a text that keeps shifting ground and undermining the terms of its own comparison, confounding ethical abstracts with rhetorical manipulation, creating suspicious and uncertain readers. But there is a second purpose. Coming where it does, with its echo of Catiline's appeals to *dignitas* in Cato's dubious *dignitas*, and the parallels of Caesarian virtues with Catiline's *magna vis animi et corporis*, the *synkrisis* creates a premonition of conflicts to come: what was solved, when the Senate moved to Cato's side, was only the immediate problem caused by something even deeper, indeed, something intimately a part of the very proceedings which attempted to solve the problem of the conspirators. What is *dignitas* and the value of being considered *clarus* or *magnus*? What adds to *dignitas*? Who are the *miseri* and the *mali*? And what has happened to a society that cannot negotiate an answer to those questions? What keeps the martial virtues political and prevents them from becoming tyrannical or criminal? What can realize the absolute claims of simple *integritas*? Sallust had no answer for himself, and, by my interpretation, no answer for his readers. He did what seemed to him, and to me, both difficult and sufficient: *facta dictis exaequare*. In doing so he revealed a greater and more impersonal truth about his subject than mere partisanship could ever discover.

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98. See H. M. Last, "Sallust and Caesar in the 'Bellum Catilinae,'" *Mélanges Marouzeau* (1948) 365: "This is indeed so surprising that the *Bellum Catilinae* must remain something of a mystery until it is explained."

99. It is the same kind of impossibility which confronted Livy, *ad haec tempora quibus nec vitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus perventum est*, *Praef.* 9; and the same kind of conflict which concerned Vergil in his opposition of *humanitas* and empire. It is not surprising that Anchises' *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos* (*Aen.* 6.853) both echoes Sallust's *synkrisis* and cannot be lived out in the *Aeneid*.