MILTON'S REVISIONS TO LYCIDAS AND COMUS IN THE MANUSCRIPTS AND THE EDITIONS

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Stillwater, Oklahoma

1952

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
July, 1952

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PREFACE

In September, 1951, the writer was assigned to work with Dr. David S. Berkeley and to choose a topic for investigation. Dr. Berkeley mentioned that perhaps a study of Milton's revisions to his poems would be a rewarding subject for study. Little work has been done on this subject, and it promised to be a rich field. The limits of the study were set at Lycidas and Comus, and the study as far as Milton's revisions go, is exhaustive, though the reasons for the revisions may not be.

The writer wishes to express his appreciation for the aid and encouragement given him by Dr. Berkeley, by the staff of the English Department, by his friends and relatives, and last but not least by his wife.

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INTRODUCTION

The eighteenth century regarded John Milton as a spontaneous artist whose poetry was unpremeditated, understanding him literally when he spoke of a

> . . . Celestial Patroness, who deignes
> Her nightly visitation unimplor'd
> And dictates to me slumbring, or inspires
> Easie my unpremeditated Verse:[1]

They were possibly misled, too, by Jonathan Richardson's statement that Milton would sometimes dictate as many as forty lines to his daughter at once.[2] But the eighteenth century does not carry alone the burden of being mistaken. Charles Lamb regretted the hour in which he had been shown the Trinity Manuscript at Cambridge. He said, "How it staggered me to see the fine things in their ore! interlined, corrected! as if their words were mortal, alterable, displaceable at pleasure! as if they might have been otherwise and just as good! as if inspiration were made up of parts, and these fluctuating, successive, indifferent! I will never go into the workshop of any great artist again."[3]

To regard Milton's poetry as "unpremeditated" or "inspired" in the sense that each word is a hieroglyph, sacred and untouchable, a divine effluence of God through Milton, is to regard it mistakenly. Milton himself, when he spoke of the inspired composition of Paradise Lost,

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[1] Paradise Lost, IX, ed. of 1667, 21-24.

[2] The Early Lives of Milton, ed. Helen Darbishire (London, 1932), p. 291.

[3] "Oxford in the Vacation," Selected Essays of Charles Lamb, ed. G. A. Wauchope (Boston, 1904), p. 19, n.

could not have meant "unpremeditated" in this way -- unless he was practicing deliberate deceit, something of which I should be cautious to accuse him. We must realize, rather, that Milton had more specific definitions for the vague words "unpremeditated" and "unspired" that we generally admit. Too, we must not apply Milton's specific reference to the composition of Paradise Lost to all his poetry without more evidence. And even if we could apply this reference to all his work, we would still have only Milton's word that it was inspired. We must, therefore, test his"inspiration," if possible, and one way of doing so is to study the revisions Milton made in his poems. This study will be limited to Comus and Lycidas in so doing, and from a study of the revisions in these two poems, we may decide whether we agree with Bradley that "Verse may be easy and premeditated, as Milton says his was, and yet many a word in it may be changed many a time, and the last change be more 'inspired' that the original."[4]

That Milton was meticulous and fastidious in the criticism of his poetry must be taken as fact. No point, it seems, was too small for his consideration. He continually sought improvements in sound, in sense, in syntax, in suggestiveness, in color; and spelling and punctuation were not below his notice. The Trinity Manuscript and the editions of his poetry that Milton saw through the press attest this.

The question as to whether the Trinity Manuscript is the original draft of the poems or a transcription of the original will not be debated here since it has been done by others, one of whom presents good evidence in favor of the transcription.[5]

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[4]A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy, (London, 1929), 2nd ed., p. 68.

[5]John S. Diekhoff, "The Text of Comus, 1634 to 1645)," PMLA, LII (1937), 705-727.

The texts of Comus and Lycidas to be examined here are the ones contained in the Trinity Manuscript, the Bridgewater Manuscript of Comus, and the editions of both poems, separate or together. Of these texts the manuscripts are probably most important, though the editions must not, and will not, be neglected. The most important of these editions are the 1637 edition of Comus, the 1638 edition of Lycidas (the Edward King memorial volume), and the 1645 edition of the Minor Poems; the 1673 edition of the Minor Poems being less important because it was set up from the 1645 edition (which Milton had scrupulously seen through the press) and because Milton was blind in 1673 and could not, therefore, have been so careful of the text of this edition.

The revisions in Lycidas and Comus to be considered here are those of words, phrases, and passages; the revisions in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and the seeming changes due to printers' errors being untouched except when it seems necessary to consider them as related to the changes of words, phrases, or passages.

The revisions will be considered as belonging to three major groups:[6] (1) vividness and clarity, (2) poetic suggestiveness, and (3) tone-color, though it must be remembered that these groups may overlap at times, and one word, phrase, or passage may fall under two or all groups at once. Too, some revisions may not belong to any of these classifications, and will necessarily be considered as classes by themselves.

The group, vividness and clarity, will consist of revisions made in the interest of expressing a more coherent and convincing thought, of ridding a line of a technical phrase or of too much bombast.[7] The

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[6] John S. Diekhoff, "Critical Activity of the Poetic Mind: John Milton," PMLA, LV (1940), 748-772.

[7] Ibid., p. 749.

second group, poetic suggestiveness, will consist of two types, (a) lines which have been revised to replace line-filling words with material of weight and substance, and (b) lines in which the poetic effect is heightened by inversion.[8] The third group, tone-color, will include lines which have been changed for the sake of alliteration, assonance, or any device by which the sound may intensify the significance.[9]

Though these groups will be referred to constantly, the changes in Lycidas and Comus will be taken up line by line so that the major groupings do not represent the form to be followed in this study. The revisions will be considered as they succeed one another in the poems, the numberical order of the lines being the real organization. In this way we can, perhaps, obtain a somewhat clearer idea of the changes in relation to the poems as a whole, the mind being occupied with only one poem at a time with its changes rather than cluttered with both many poems and many changes. The coherence thus obtained will, it is hoped, counterbalance any awkwardness of reference made inevitable by this form to the major groups aforementioned.

The problem at hand, therefore, is to examine the texts of Lycidas and Comus, note the revisions and account for them to the best of our ability; and thereby come to a more complete understanding of the creative activity of Milton's mind and the relation of the critical activity to it -- to discover how we may apply to Milton's revisions the words of T. S. Eliot that ". . . the larger part of the labour of an author in composing his work is critical labour, . . . and that because

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[8] Ibid., p. 762.

[9] Ibid., p. 764.

works have been composed without apparent critical labour, no critical labour has been done"[10]; and to see if we can reconcile our definitions of "unpremeditation" and "inspiration" with the "sifting, combining, constructing, expunging, correcting, testing"[11] we see in the manuscripts and the editions Milton saw through the press.

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[10] T. S. Eliot, "The Function of Criticism," Selected Essays (New York, 1932), p. 19.

[11] Ibid., p. 18.

LYCIDAS

Perhaps most students and critics of Milton have taken Lamb's attitude toward Milton's corrections to his poems and have, therefore, ignored these revisions on the grounds that they are unbecoming either the poems or Milton. It would seem that this has been the attitude among them, for only a handful have even noticed the revisions, and even fewer of them have made any attempt at a study of the revisions in order to gain some insight into the "unpremeditation" so long thought to be characteristic of Milton. The facsimiles of the poems contain, for the most part, collations of the poems in the different editions and in the manuscript. Such was the work of the Columbia Milton and the University of Illinois Facsimile. They give little or no aid in accounting for the revisions, however.

Other studies of Milton give only passing notice to the revisions; others accidentally give reasons for revisions while studying something else. Part of the work of this study has been, therefore, gathering as many of these glancing allusions as possible and fitting them into the work.

While many critics, commentators, and students have hovered near the revisions, few of them have seen them as important in themselves. Miss Lockwood saw their importance and attempted to give some general reasons for the changes. She says: "Milton's purpose in revising the poems, if intention may be judged by result, was to render the thought clear, logical, and vivid."[12] She proceeds to explain this statement

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[12]Laura E. Lockwood, "Milton's Corrections to the Minor Poems," MLN, XXV (1910), 203.

by giving examples, but her paper is incomplete. She hinted at the general headings which are used by Mr. Diekhoff in his paper on the revisions in Comus.[13] Mr. Diekhoff has given the most detailed study of the revisions in Comus, partly taking in Lycidas and Arcades in the course of the study. He enlarged the number of revisions considered and set up as definite headings those divisions Miss Lockwood implied. His study is a very good one, though incomplete, and his tools of criticism may be used in studying the revisions in all Milton's poems. They will be used here in the study of Lycidas; Comus will be taken up in the next chapter.

The headnote, "In this monodie the author bewails a lerned freind unfortunatly drownd in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas 1637," is lacking in the 1638 edition of the memorial volume in which Lycidas appeared. The headnote would have been superfluous in such a context. The manuscript has the headnote, but it was obviously inserted as an afterthought since it is written in the crowded space between the title Lycidas and the first line of the text. This note was, no doubt, preparations for the 1645 editions of the Minor Poems in which Lycidas was freed of the unhappy, but somewhat explanatory, context in which it had formerly been placed. In the 1645 edition, the headnote was not superfluous but was necessary. The addition of the headnote to the manuscript rendered the date, "Novemb:1637," which had been written in the upper right corner, unnecessary.

The second sentence of the headnote of the 1645 edition, "And by occasion foretels the ruine of our corrupted Clergy then in their height," was another, and somewhat later, afterthought. This sentence

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[13]John S. Diekhoff, "Critical Activity of the Poetic Mind: John Milton," PMLA, LV (1940), 748-772.

was not included in the manuscript nor, naturally, in the 1638 edition. It had been bold enough in 1638 to let the St. Peter passage stand without calling attention to it in the title. Too, in 1638, the sentence would not have meant what it did in 1645. In 1638 it would have been enigmatic; in 1645 it was Milton's way of saying, "Over seven years ago I foretold what now has gloriously taken place."[14]

The Trinity Manuscript shows two beginnings to Lycidas. The first beginning is on a page which was originally the blank verse of the last sheet of A Mask in the manuscript. The first of these drafts is of the first fourteen lines, the second and third are drafts of the flower passage, and the fourth is a draft of the Orpheus image. Miss Lockwood says of these drafts: "He writes the first fourteen lines, and then tries the flower passage, which was evidently haunting his thought. He sets it down once, crosses it all out and begins over again."[15]

The first fourteen lines in this draft were evidently written rather easily, lines 4, 5, 8, and 10 being the only ones corrected. The corrections to lines 4 and 5 must be considered together. They first read:

3 I come to pluck yo^{r} berries harsh and crude
4 before the mellowing yeare
5 and crop yo^{r} young

line 5 becoming a restatement of line 3. But Milton preferred to extend the image he had created in line 3 rather than merely to reiterate it. The extension of the image obtained by "shatter yo^{r} leaves"

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[14] The Student's Milton, ed. F. A. Patterson, rev. ed. (New York,) 1946), p. 58 (textual notes).

[15] Lockwood, p. 205.

occurred to him, and he saw that "before the mellowing yeare" would be a suitable ending for the image. He, therefore, marked out line 4 and wrote in its stead, "and wth forc't fingers rude," which expressed the compulsion he was under, anticipating the same thought more fully developed in line 8. He then deleted "and crop yo^{r} young," and wrote "shatter yo^{r} leaves" with the salvaged phrase, "before the mellowing yeare," in line 5. Thus the seven line image was made more vivid and much more poetic in its effect. The revision of line 5, "and crop yo^{r} young," left the word "young" to be applied as an epithet to Lycidas in lines 8 and 9:

8 young Lycidas is dead, dead are his prime
9 young Lycidas and hath not left his peere

but "young" in line 8 was deleted in favor of "for," possibly because Milton felt that "dead, dead" was more effective than was "young . . . young"[16] and that two repetends in two lines was too much. Too, Milton may have changed line 8 to get rid of the unconscious reminiscence of Spenser's lines,

Young Astrophel, the pride of shepheards praise,
Young Astrophel, the rustick lasses love.[17]

The 1638 edition of Lycidas read, line 9, "(Young Lycidas!) and hath not left his peere." Perhaps Milton felt that the parenthesis and the exclamation mark would more adequately emphasize the youth of Lycidas, but he evidently felt by 1645 that they had failed of their purpose, or, more likely, that they were simply unnecessary.

Line 10 in the manuscript read, "who would not sing for Lycidas

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[16] Milton's Minor Poems, ed. Edward S. Parsons (Boston, 1900), p. 127, n.

[17] "Astrophel," ll, 7-8.

he well knew." The word "not" was inserted either to rid the line of a question which was rather rhetorical in view of the context in which Lycidas first appeared, or it was inserted as a conscious and intentional reminiscence of Vergil's Eclogue X, 3:

> Neget quis carmina Gallo?
> (Who would refuse a song to Gallus?)[18]

The change from the manuscript version "he well knew" to the "he knew" of all the editions must not be looked upon as Milton's revision, but it is the printer's omission. Milton corrected the line to read "he well knew" in the margins of the presentation copy of 1638 (Cambridge University Library) and in the British Museum copy C.21.c.42.[19] Mr. Patterson comments: "Milton undoubtedly meant the line to read 'he well knew,' but perhaps the printer's consistent blunders finally reconciled him to the omission. The editor, though convinced homself that Milton wanted 'well' inserted, has not cared, even on such good authority, to alter a line that is familiar to every reader of poetry."[20]

Line 22 in the manuscript originally read, "to bid faire peace be to my sable shrowd," but Milton substituted "and" for the first "to." He evidently wished to rid the line of two "to"'s, preferring to have this line and the next begin with "and" than to overload one line with a repeated word when no emphasis was intended on either of the two words.

Line 26 in the manuscript read originally, "under the glimmering eyelids of the morne," and the 1638 edition follows this reading. But before the 1645 edition was printed, Milton changed this reading from "glimmering" to "opening," and the 1645 and 1673 editions read

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[18] The Poems of John Milton, ed. J. H. Hanford (New York, 1936), p. 116.

[19] Milton's Complete Poetical Works Reproduced in Photographic Facsimile, ed. H. F. Fletcher (University of Illinois, 1943), I, 347, n.

[20] The Student's Milton, p. 2 (textual notes).

"opening." Milton thus obtained a more suitable descriptive term for "eyelids," and a term which gave the time of morning more exactly.

Line 30 originally read, "oft till the ev'n starre bright." The 1638 edition reads thus, but for the 1645 edition Milton changed the manuscript reading to "oft till the starre that rose in Evning bright," then deleted "in" and substituted "at." The 1645 and 1673 editions follow the completely corrected reading. The change was made to heighten the poetic effect. The inversion of the line made the image more effective than the rather flat first reading. "In" was changed to "at" to give the time of day, or evening, when the star "rose," more exactly. Circumstantial evidence here shows probably what star Milton was thinking of in the second version: the "ev'n starre" of the first version, Hesperus. If so, "rose" must then be interpreted as meaning "appeared."

The next line, 31, reads in the manuscript, "burnisht weele," and so reads the 1638 text. But for the 1645 edition, Milton changed it to "westring weele." Mr. Diekhoff says: " 'Westring,' of course, besides being the more meaningful in the context since Milton is telling us the time , is much the fresher word, as is 'clowdie' where it is substituted for 'polisht' in Comus 134, and 'close' where it replaces 'sad' and 'lone' in Comus 349. Milton avoids the danger inherent in his fondness for the 'classical' epithet by keeping constant guard against the trite and commonplace, so that, as here, his second or third thought is often more spontaneous, in its strict sense, than his first."[21] The change also makes the phrase alliterative, and though this was not Milton's primary purpose in changing the line, it must not be overlooked.

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[21] Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 769,n. 26.

The alliteration serves to end the period more effectively than did the original reading.[22]

Milton could not find a really suitable word in line 37, "But O the heavie change now thou art gone." He deleted "gone" and then rewrote it. He then repeated, in the next line, "now thou art gon,"[23] thus emphasizing a weak and somewhat euphemistic expression.

Line 47 is a line of many changes. Milton first wrote "or frost to flowrs that thire gay buttons weare," then crossed out "weare" in favor of "beare," which alliterated with "buttons." But deciding that "buttons" had connotations too homely for flowers and could not, therefore, suggest the varied dress of the flowers, he marked it out and wrote "wardrope," a word of more suitable connotations; and immediately after "wardrope," wrote "weare." He then crossed out "beare" and underscored the "weare" which had been first deleted, thus marking its reinstatement in the text. The final version has two obvious alliterative patterns, "frost . . . flowrs" and "wardrope weare," plus the less obvious internal r-alliteration.

Line 51 contains a revision by Milton and an interesting error by the printer, the first in the manuscript, the second in the 1638 edition.

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[22] Ibid., p. 769.

[23] Milton's variant spelling, as here (gone, gon), and even his corrections in his spelling are not here discussed. Neither are those changes which I consider printers' errors considered (e g., "where" for "when," l. 73) except when they are unusual or when they give some insight into Milton's mind. The manuscript is full of spelling variants and corrections, and the texts are full of variant readings due to errors in printing, faulty punctuation, etc.

One change in spelling which should be noticed occurs in line 41. Milton first wrote "Eccho," deleted it and wrote "Echo's," the apostrophe standing for an absent "e." The 1638, 1645, and 1673 editions read "echoes." Whether this was Milton's change or the printers' would be hard to say.

The manuscript reading shows Milton's choice between two alliterative patterns and his choice of the most pertinent epithet. It goes, "clos'd ore the head of yo^{r} ~~youn~~ Lov'd Lycidas," in which Milton cancelled "young" before he had completely written it, and substituted "Lov'd." This changes the alliterative pattern from "yo^{r} youn[g]" to "Lov'd Lycidas," and exchanges the already used epithet (l.9) for a fresher one. The printer of the 1638 edition misread "Lov'd" and printed "lord" instead. In the Cambridge University copy of the memorial volume and in the British Museum copy C.21.c.42., in the margin, is written "Lov'd" for "lord" in, probably, Milton's hand.[24] In 1645 and 1673, "lov'd" is substituted.

Line 57 was changed by Milton, but no new word was added. In fact, no word of the first version was omitted, though three words were deleted. The manuscript version read, "had yee bin there, for what could that have don?" Milton crossed out "had yee" and "for," but substituted nothing. The contrast he was working for would not come; the aposiopesis was so weak as to be almost absent. The contrast was made satisfactory when Milton, in the 1638, 1645, and 1673 editions, inserted a dash after "there" and reinstated the deleted words. "For" depends upon "fondly" in the preceding line, ". . . I fondly dreame." The contrast is more abrupt since the thought comes to a sudden halt, breaks off violently, and a new thought begins in another direction.

The Orpheus passage gave Milton a good bit of trouble. The first version is contained in the full-length manuscript. Additions and corrections are written in at the side, but the final version is contained in the trial sheet. The first version reads:

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[24] Facsimile, I, 348,n.

58 what could the golden hayrd Calliope
59 for her inchaunting son
59a when shee beheld (the gods farre sighted bee)
59b his goarie scalpe rowle downe the Thracian lee

Lines 59a and 59b are crossed out, and to one side, with a line drawn to the place of insertion (after "son"), are the lines

whome universal nature
might lament
and heaven and hel deplore
when his divine head downe
the streame was sent
downe the swift Hebrus to the
Lesbian shore.

These lines replaced lines 59a and 59b. Diekhoff says of this change, "Line 59a of Lycidas is so bad, so obviously half mere filler, that Milton can only throw it away and rewrite the passage in which it occurs."[25]

Milton was not yet satisfied with the passage, however, so he turned to the trial sheet and wrote:

for her inchanting son
whome universal nature might lament
when by the rout that made the hideous roare
his divine visage downe the streame was sent
downe the swift Hebrus to y^e^ Lesbian shoare.

He then went back to the insertion and deleted "and heaven and hel deplore/when his divine head downe," and then revised the trial sheet version by deleting "might" and substituting "did," and deleting "divine" and substituting "goarie." Being satisfied with all the passage except the first line, since it no longer rhymed with the new version, he deleted it in the long manuscript and turning to the trial sheet, wrote above that version, "what could the muse her selfe that Orpheus bore/ the muse her selfe for her enchanting son." He deleted the first line of the trial sheet version, "for her inchanting son,"

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[25]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 764.

since it had now been incorporated into another line. The final manuscript version was thus contained in the trial sheet and looked like this:

58 what could the muse her selfe that Orpheus bore
59 the muse her selfe for her inchanting son
~~for her inchanting son~~ (deleted)
60 whomme universal nature ~~might~~ did lament
61 when by the rout that made the hideous roare
62 goarie his ~~divine~~ gorie visage downe the streame was sent
63 downe the swift Hebrus to y^e^ Lesbian shoare.

In line 58, Milton deleted the first version "what could the golden hayrd Calliope" because it no longer rhymed with anything, and because he saw the chance to use the repetend, "the muse her selfe." The repetition here is probably the most effective of all the ones he used in this poem. Line 59a was, as said before, deleted to get rid of the purely line-filling phrase, "(the gods farre sighted bee)." The line "and heaven and hel deplore" was not so suggestive as "when by the rout that made the hideous roare," nor was it so onomotopoetic. Too, "and heaven and hel deplore" was superfluous in view of the preceding line, "whome universal nature might lament." To have allowed the phrase to stand might have implied that Milton did not consider "heaven and hel" parts of universal nature, a wrong implication. The change in line 60, from "might" to "did," was obviously made to give the statement a positive and forceful quality. Milton had no doubt that universal nature lamented the death of Orpheus, and he was too careful to allow such a thought to be implied. In line 62, "divine" was blotted in favor of "goarie," thus obtaining a more poetically suggestive image, and saving the idea of a divine head for the description of Lycidas in line 103, ". . . That sacred head of thine."[26] Also in line 62, "visage"

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[26]Caroline W. Mayersen, "Orpheus Image in Lycidas," PMLA, LXIV (1949), 203.

was substituted for "head," thereby making the meter somewhat better; "head" had been, in the marginal version, substituted for "scalpe." The first draft, "goarie scalpe," was somewhat melodramatic and had been substituted by "divine head" which was replaced by "goarie visage," the final and best reading. The final version was printed in the 1638 edition, and is the same as we know it today.

In line 64, Milton changed the spelling of a word, not because it was spelled wrong, but because he disliked the three short "i" sounds ". . .it with incessant. . ." which is, I think, a fairly plausible dislike. The remedy was "uncessant" for "incessant."

Line 67 in the 1638 edition is an example not of the printer's error but of the printer's license. The printer changed the line to read "Were it not better done as others do" rather than printing "use" as Milton had written in the manuscript. In the Cambridge University copy of the memorial volume and in the British Museum copy C.21.c.42., in the handwriting that is probably Milton's, "use" is written in the margin to replace "do."[27]

Line 69 is confusing as it was first written:

68 to sport wth Amaryllis in the shade
69 hid in the tangles of Neaera's hair?

The 1638 edition reads thus, but for the 1645 edition Milton blotted "hid in" and substituted "or with" which made much better sense. Mr. Maas suggests that this "extraordinary image" ("hid in, etc.") is probably "an allusion to some piece of Cavalier poetry which may or may not be preserved."[28] He also suggests that Lovelace's "When I

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[27] Facsimile, I, 349,n.

[28] P. Maas, " 'Hid In' 'Lycidas,' l. 69," RES, XIX (1943), 397.

lie tangled in her hair"[29] has the same source. Mr. Maas states that Milton did not make the change to improve the style since, he says, " 'Or with' produces an anti-climax, a zeugma and a slackness of rhythm."[30] Mr. Maas proposes that Milton made the change because of the sensuousness of the original image or because the allusion was not actual enough any longer. The latter reason is probably the better, and were we to admit all the defects Mr. Maas attributes to "or with," we would still be forced to say that these defects are overbalanced by the clarity obtained by the change.

Lines 85 and 86 were corrected together.

85 Oh Fountain Arethuse and thou smooth flood
86 soft sliding Mincius. . .

was the first reading. Milton liked the alliteration in line 86, and to point up the tonal effect there, he deleted "smooth" in line 85 and substituted "fam'd," thus giving an f-alliteration in 85 and an s-alliteration in 85. But "fam'd" brought to Milton's mind the honor Virgil paid to the Mincius, so "honour'd" was substituted for "fam'd" (regardless of the fact that the meter was not so good), thus making the reminiscence more exact, Milton preferring the reminiscence to the alliteration. The revision of 85 left free the word "smooth" which Milton thought a better descriptive term than "soft." He therefore deleted "soft" and wrote "smooth" which gave him the desired image and yet kept the alliterative pattern in 86.

In his description of Camus's attire Milton wrote:

104 his mantle hairie and his bonnet sedge
105 scraul'd ore wth figures dim, and on the edge
106 like to that sanguine flowre inscrib'd wth woe.

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[29] "To Althea, From Prison," l. 5.

[30] Maas, p. 397.

He discarded, but did not delete, "scraul'd ore" and substituted "inwraught." Milton made the change, perhaps to suggest that the "figures dim" were a natural consequence of Camus' mourning rather than the suggestion that Camus had "scraul'd" them onto his bonnet for the occasion much as a paid mourner would don mourning clothes. The more probable reason for the change is that Milton felt that "inwraught" was a more poetic word than was "scraul'd ore."

In 107, the parenthesis is used to inclose "quoth he" in the 1638, 1645, and 1673 editions. This change from the manuscript may be taken as Milton's own. He had set off "quoth he" by commas in the manuscript, but decided evidently that commas were insufficient for the purpose — to subdue the words which tend to break the effect of Camus's single ejaculation, or, perhaps, to afford a contrast to the wail they interrupt.

Milton wrote, in line 114, "anough of such," but in 1645, "anough" was changed to "Anow."[31] He had ample precedent for changing the reading to "Anow" and the word is definitely more effective poetically and more reminiscent of earlier writers. Of course, we must not overlook the possibility that Milton did not like the succession of an f-sound and a v-sound in "anough of." These minute matters were not beneath his notice, and this is probably the better reason for the change.

In line 129, in the passage on the false clergy (which passage seems to have given Milton little trouble in composition), we see Milton trying to decide between exact statement and strong statement.[32] He

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[31] 1638 read "Enough of such," the spelling "anough" being changed, undoubtedly by the printer.

[32] Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 756.

wrote in the manuscript, "dayly devours space and nothing sed," then deleted "nothing" and substituted "little." 1638 reads "little," but 1645 and 1673 revert to the original "nothing." "Little" is the more exact statement, but "nothing" was the more forceful and more expressive of Milton's feelings toward the practices of the corrupt clergy. Too, in 1645, Milton felt a little more justified in treating the now fallen clergy more harshly. This treatment is in keeping with the second sentence of the headnote. In line 138, Milton was concerned with the alliteration. Mr. Diekhoff says: ". . .'sparely' is Milton's first choice and final reading but it was once cancelled for 'stintly'."[33] Then in a footnote he says: "Or 'faintly.' Wright and Columbia Milton read the cancelled word as 'faintly'. . . It is not clearly legible in Wright's facsimile, but I read it 'stintly,' which takes the revision out of the group resulting in changed alliteration except in the 'subsidiary consonant'."[34]

Saintsbury's comment on this line is: ". . . Alliteration is, sometimes has been held, a childish thing -- perhaps worse — a foolish and tawdry bedizenment. Is it? Try, for instance, such a phrase as 'The swart star sparely looks.' Try it with the adverb Milton himself once thought of substituting -- 'stintly'; try it with anything but this cunning varieties of the same s-alliteration with a different subsidiary consonant and the almost more cunning selection of the different values of the same vowel. Your ear, if you happen to have one, will tell you of the heavy change."[35] Mr. Saintsbury and Mr. Diekhoff seem to have

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[33] Ibid., p. 769

[34] Ibid., p. 769,n.

[35] George Santsbury, "Milton and the Grand Style," Milton Memorial Lectures, ed. P. W. Ames (1908), pp. 95-96.

read incorrectly the word Milton thought of substituting. The word resembles "faintly" much more than it does "stintly." In this case, the change is one involving a changed alliteration. We must agree with Saintsbury, however, that whatever the reading of the word, Milton's ear told him that it was deficient in the tonal qualities "sparely" supplied in the alliteration.

Line 139 in the manuscript read, "bring hither all yo^{r} quaint enamell'd eyes," with "bring" cancelled and "throw" substituted. This change was made so that the action of this line would agree with that of line 134,

> 134 . . . bid them hither <u>cast</u>
> 135 thire bells, and flowrets of a thousand hues.

Milton, as we have noted before,[36] experimented with the flower passage on the trial sheet until he perfected it. He then drew a line to the point in the text where the passage was to be inserted and wrote "Bring the rathe &c.," in the margin. The first draft read:

> Bring the rathe primrose that unwedded dies
> ~~oellu~~[37] colouring the pale cheek of uninjoyd love
> and that sad floure that strove
> to write his owne woes on the vermeil graine
> next add Narcissus y^{t} still weeps in vaine
> the woodbine and y^{e} pancie freak't wth jet
> the glowing violet
> the cowslip wan that hangs his pensive head
> and every bud that sorrows liverie weares
> let Daffadillies fill thire cups with ^ teares
> bid Amaranthus all his beautie shed
> to strew the laureat herse &c.

Milton then deleted this draft by a large "X" running completely through it, and wrote the second draft:

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[36] p. 9.

[37] An example of Milton's correction of his spelling.

Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies
the tufted crowtoe and pale Gessamin
the white pinke, and y^e^ pansie freakt w^th^ jet
the glowing violet
the muske rose and ~~the garish columbine~~ the well-attir'd woodbine
w^th^ cowslips wan that hang the pensive head
and every flower that sad escutcheon ~~beares~~ weare * imbroiderie ~~beares~~
2^&^ ~~1st~~ daffadillies fill thire cups w^th^ teares
1 bid Amaranthus all his beauties shed
to strew &c.

Mr. Adams's study of the development of the flower passage[38] contends, rightly I believe, that the antecedent of the flower passage is a dialogue between Perdita and Florizel in The Winter's Tale (IV, iv, 113-133), which runs thus:

(Per.) I would I had some flowers o' the spring that might
Become your time of day, and yours, and yours,
That wear upon your virgin branches yet
Your maidenheads growing. O Proserpina
For the flowers now, that frighted thou let'st fall
From Dis's wagon!--daffodils
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
Or Cytherea's breaths; pale primroses
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phoebus in his strength, a malady
Most incident to maids; bold oxlips and
The crown imperial; lilies of all kinds,
The flower-de-luce being one!--oh, these I lack
To make you garlands of, and my sweet friend,
To strew him o'er and o'er!

Flo. What, like a corse?
Per. No, like a bank for love to lie and play on,
Not like a corse; or if, not to be buried,
But quick and in mine arms.

Milton, in the first draft, had followed Shakespeare's pattern closely; the second draft has only a remote connection with Shakespeare's lines. The reason for the change, Mr. Adams believes, is this: the lines from The Winter's Tale indicate the two traditions of symbolism

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[38]Henry H. Adams, "The Development of the Flower Passage in Lycidas," MLN (1950), 468-472.

of such a collection of spring flowers. Perdita thinks of them as adjuncts to love in the spring, while Florizel thinks of them as funeral accessories, the meaning which brought them to Milton's mind. It is probable that Milton's reminiscence of Shakespeare's lines was unconscious, but haunted by the thought that he had read lines similar to the ones he wrote, he searched for them. When he found them, he must have recognized that Perdita's meaning was romantic love. The primrose had long been associated with the idea of love, sometimes even sensual love; thus Milton's first figure, "the rathe primrose that unwedded dies," is not funereal, but is romantic, or even erotic. Milton realized that this meaning was inappropriate in a funeral poem, and he therefore substituted the less meaningful, but less sensual, "forsaken" for "unwedded" and deleted the next line completely.

In the lines

> and that sad floure that strove
> to write his owne woes on the vermeil graine

the reference is to the hyacinth from the legend of Hyacinthus. Thus, the word "floure" in the first line becomes elliptical, meaning both the flower and the youth. The lines were therefore deleted, and "the tufted crowtoe and pale Gessamin" written instead, crowtoe being another name for hyacinth.

The next line, " next add Narcissus y^{t} still weeps in vaine," was deleted because it too is one of the ambiguous flowers, and the image of sensuality might have come to the reader's mind. The rest of the lines of the flower passage were unaffected by this change from love symbolism to funeral symbolism and will therefore be studied according to their individual revisions.

Lines 6 and 7 were corrected together. The first draft's

the woodbine and y^{e} pancie freak't wth jet
the glowing violet

becomes, in the second draft,

the white pinke, and y^{e} pansie freakt wth jet
the glowing violet
the muske rose and the garish columbine

then "the garish columbine" was deleted for "the well-attir'd woodbine," the flower mentioned in the first draft but now dressed. Miss Lockwood says that this line ". . was nearer inspiration as first written, . . . but perhaps it did not express his feeling for the columbine , or it did not sound appropriate to have so gaudy a flower about the dead."[39] In these lines we see that Milton has added to the catalogue of flowers and has a descriptive epithet for each, even indulging in an oxymoron in "white pinke."

The eighth line was changed from singular to plural, from masculine to common gender: "the cowslip wan that hangs his pensive head" gives way to "wth cowslips wan that hang the pensive head." The only reason for this change seems to be that Milton wished to break up the h-alliteration of the first version. The "the" of the first version was deleted for "wth" perhaps so that this line would not begin as had the four preceding it.

The next line, the ninth in the flower passage, "and every bud that sorrows liverie weares," becomes in the second draft, " and every flower that sad escutcheon beares"; then "sad escutcheon weares"; then "sad imbroiderie beares"; then "sad imbroiderie weares," the final reading. The words "beare" and "weare" gave Milton a good bit of trouble, as we have seen in line 47. But in this case Milton is not working for

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[39]Lockwood, p. 205.

alliteration. He seems to be working for a good image, and evidently reverted to the one of line 47, "or frost to flowrs that thire gay wardrope weare." He decided that "imbroiderie" was more suitable to describe the "wardrope" than was "escutcheon," and that "weares" was also more suitable for the image than "beares!" "Buds" was changed to "flowers," we may guess, in reminiscence of line 47, also.

Finally, the last two lines of the passage are reversed, and "and" replaces "let" so that, as the last sentence, it will be a conclusion rather than an anticipation of a continued catalogue of flowers. The reversal was made because "bid Amaranthus, etc.," if last, would allow no addition of a syllable such as "and" for the meter would be terribly ruined; but if "let daffadillies, etc.," were last, "let" could be replaced by "and" which would then make the last line a zeugma, and effectively end the passage.

The first draft of line 153 was: "let our sad thoughts dally wth false surmise." "Sad" was deleted and "fraile" written both above it and in the margin. Hanford, in an editor's comment on the line, gives a very good reason for the change: "Milton has been letting his fancy play with the notion that King's body is actually present for burial -- a'false surmise'. Now by acknowledging that the supposition is a 'frail' one (for the body is ultimately of no consequence), he prepares the way for the loftier thought to be developed in the next paragraph."[40]

Line 157 has a revision which was made to give the image more meaning and to do away with the unsatisfactory onomatepoetic effect. The line in the manuscript reads "humming tide" and 1638 reads so. But in

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[40]Hanford, p. 125.

the presentation copy in the Cambridge University Library and in the British Museum copy C.21.c.42., in the same handwriting as before, "whelming" is written in the margin and "humming" is starred.[41] By this change the incorrect sound is done away and the idea that Lycidas was overwhelmed by the sea is suggested by the more poetic "whelming."

In line 160 Milton wrote, "sleepst by the fable of Corineus old," but marked out "Corineus" for "Bellerus," a word of his own coining which is more musical than is "Corineus." By coining "Bellerus" he told the exact place of which he was thinking -- Bellerium. He probably meant the same Bellerus to mean a mythical king of the region, as Corineus was.

Milton could not find a better word than "high" in line 172. He wrote, "so Lycidas sunk low but mounted high," then deleted "high," probably thinking it a commonplace image. But he found no other word that would fit and mean the same thing, and since he had allowed "sunk low" to stand, an image surely as trite as the other, he could only restore "high." As it turned out, the line isn't trite at all.

In line 175 Milton wrote "nectar pure," deleted "pure," and then restored it. He was probably trying to be as accurate as possible in his mythology. Nectar with ambrosia was used as an ablution to preserve immortality as well as being the food and drink of the gods, and Milton wanted to mention ambrosia as one ingredient. He could not, however, do this without ruining the line, so he restored the original reading as being sufficient to express the idea. Or, perhaps, he merely wanted a more poetic word than "pure." If so, he did not find it, as was the

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[41] Facsimile, I, p. 351,n.

case with "high" in line 172.

Line 176, "& heares the unexpressive nuptiall song," first read, "listening the unexpressive nuptiall song." This change was made so as not to suggest that Lycidas heard the nuptial song while laving his "oozie locks." The corrected reading gives a more likely chronology to these two actions, though it must be admitted that Lycidas could possibly do both at once.

Line 177, "in the blest kingdoms meek of joy & love," was omitted in the 1638 volume. In the Cambridge University copy and the British Museum copy C.al.c.42., in the margin and in the same hand as the earlier marginalia, is written "in the blest kingdoms /of Joy and Love" to be inserted after line 176. The word "meek" may have followed "kingdoms," but the margins are too worn to show the word.[42]

In line 191 Milton wrote "and now was dropt into ~~westren~~ the wester'n bay." "Westren" was deleted in favor of "the wester'n" possibly because Milton changed his mind about the thought to be expressed, but more likely the wording was changed to get rid of the accent which fell on the first syllable of "into" if "westren" had been used. "Wester'n" was spelled with an apostrophe to denote an absent "e," showing that Milton probably pronounced the word as a trisyllable.

Little attention has been paid here to the differing punctuation, spelling, and capitalization, due either to Milton or to the printers, in the manuscript, the 1638, 1645, and 1673 texts. These may easily be checked in the Columbia Milton or the University of Illinois' Facsimile, but they have little significance in showing how Milton's creative and critical faculties functioned.

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[42] Facsimile, I, 352,n.

COMUS

Comus was subjected to many more revisions than was Lycidas, and this is understandable since Comus is more than five times as long. The mere length does not, however, seem to be the main cause of the greater number of changes, but the length stands rather as a determent to a sustained tone. This difficulty is, I believe, one of the main causes for some of the more important revisions.

We may follow the chronology of the revisions in Comus with a great deal more accuracy than with those in Lycidas because Comus has come down to us in an intermediate step from the Trinity Manuscript to the first edition. This intermediate step is the Bridgewater Manuscript, an acting version of the mask. This manuscript was not copied by Milton, and does not, therefore, always indicate true revisions in the text. That is, fifteen of the variant readings in Bridgewater are purely blunders on the part of the copyist. Some of these blunders show a misunderstanding of the text,[43] while others are the product of carelessness on the part of the copyist. Some of these blunders will be noted as we study the revisions though they are not important in this study. The Bridgewater version will be used, mostly, rather to indicate the progress of revision as it was carried on in the Trinity MS. This, of course, is the first purpose, too, in studying the variant readings of the 1637, 1645, and 1673 editions.

Variants in the Bridgewater Manuscript which are due to blunders by the copyist will sometimes be noted; but mistakes which the copyist himself discovered and corrected, and variations in spelling,

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[43] C. S. Lewis, "A Note on Comus," RES, VIII (1932), 170.

capitalization, and punctuation will be ignored. This work has been done by others and would be superfluous here. The line numbering used here is that of 1645.

The familiar opening lines of Comus of the present text, lines which C. S. Lewis characterizes as "six of the most impressive verses in English poetry,"[44] stood not thus from the beginning. The Trinity MS. has fifteen lines deleted which stand between lines 4 and what is now line 6. These lines were deleted because — let us allow Mr. Lewis to explain it:

> " . . . a sensitive reader can find ample justification for that excision without looking beyond the prologue itself. In the present text we begin with six of the most impressive verses in English poetry; impressive because we pass in a single verse from the cold, tingling, almost unbreathable, region of the aerial spirits to the 'smoak and stir of this dim spot.' Each level, by itself, is a masterly representation: in their juxtapositions ('Either other sweetly gracing') they are irrestible. The intrusion of an intermediate realm, as serene as the air and as warmly inviting as the earth, ruins this effect and therefore justly perished."[45]

Before we go further let us look at these deleted lines.

(a) amidst the ~~gardens~~ Hespian gardens, ~~on whose banks~~ where the banks
(b) ~~aeternall roses grow & hyacinth~~
(c) bedew'd w^th^ nectar & celestiall songs
(d) aeternall roses ~~grow~~, & hyacinth ~~blow~~ *grow ~~bloome~~
(e) & fruits of golden rind, on whose faire tree
(f) the scalie-harnest ~~watchful~~ dragon ever keeps
(g) his ~~never charmed~~ unenchanted eye, & round the verge
(h) & sacred limits of this *~~happie~~ Isle ~~blissful~~ *blisfull
(i) the jealous ocean that old river winds
(j) his farre-extended armes till w^th^ steepe fall
(k) halfe his wast flood y^e^ wide Atlantique fills
(l) & halfe the slow unfadom'd ~~poole of Styx~~ Stygian poole
(m) but soft I was not sent to court yor wonder ~~I doubt me gentle mortalls those may seeme~~
(n) with distant worlds, & strange removed clim ~~strange distances to heare unknown climes~~
(o) yet thence I come and oft frō thence behold

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[44]Lewis, p. 175.

[45]Ibid., p. 175. Abbreviations used in this chapter are: MS. = Trinity Manuscript; Br. = Bridgewater version of Comus; 1637, 1645, and 1673 - the editions of Comus which were published in those years.

Line (a) shows that Milton changed his thought before he wrote the first half of it. The phrase "amidst the gardens" was probably to be followed by "of Hesperus;" but this was a somewhat prosy line and was changed before it was half written. The latter half, "on whose bancks," was then written and line (b) followed, with "roses" and "hyacinth" to be reversed so that "aeternall" would modify "hyacinth," which meant "eternal." But Milton decided to make the whole sense of the latter half of (a) and all of (b) different. He deleted "on whose bancks" and wrote "where the banks," thus making the sense "where the banks grow aeternall roses & hyacinth." Satisfied with this Milton wrote (c), but found that a suspension of thought for a line would make the whole passage so far written more effective. He therefore deleted (b) and rewrote it at (d) without the reversal of "roses" and "hyacinth" (since the roses, too, must be made eternal). But when this line was placed in position at (d), the whole sense of the "grow," as the verb for "banks" was lost. So Milton wrote "yield" in place of "grow," thereby hoping to clear this matter up. The attempt was unsuccessful — the sense still did not come out. He therefore deleted "where the banks" and restored the original reading; deleted "yeeld" and wrote "blow," deleted "blow" and wrote "blosme"; and finally deleted "blosme" and wrote "grow," returning to the original reading of (b), and returning to the original sense of the lines. The result was a clear thought and a very effective suspension.

In lines (e) and (f) Milton wrote

(e) the scalie-harnest ~~watchfull~~ dragon ever ∧ keeps
(f) his ~~ever charmed~~ unenchanted eye

In (e) "watchfull," rendered tautologous by "unenchanted" in the next line and becoming therefore a line filler, was deleted and "ever" was

inserted.[46] "Uninchanted" is also a great improvement over "never charmed," a prosy phrase (in this context) which was strained in becoming poetry.

In (h) "happie" was deleted for "blissfull" and that was deleted for a different spelling -- "blisfull." Perhaps Milton thought the word "happie" overworked or, more likely, not elegant enough for this context. He probably did not like the double "s" in "blissful" because he realized that it might be printed "blifffull" and would not only be hard to read, but would look odd enough, probably, to excite humour.

In line (l) "Stygian poole" replaced "poole of Styx," and though it is easy to see the improvement, it is not so easy to explain it. Perhaps one explanation is that in the original reading the "p" of "poole" falls in the arsis after the "d" of "unfadom'd," a fault remedied by the replacement.

In lines (m) and (n), Milton first wrote

> I doubt me gentle mortals these may seeme
> strange distances to heare & unknown climes

but deleted them for

> but soft I was not sent to court yo^{r} wonder
> wth distant worlds, & strange removed clim es

The first version was rather condescending in attitude for a spirit so concerned with the welfare of "gentle mortals." The substituted version avoided any condenscension (or perhaps irony) and also achieved what was intended: to bring the passage to an end and make way for the introduction of the lines which contrasted with that region of aerial spirits. The next line introduces earth:

> (o) yet thence I come and oft fro thence behold
> 5 the smoake & stirre of this dim narrow spot

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[46] Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 763.

But when Milton got to earth, he found that the contrast was blurred by all the material about the Hesperian gardens and this "blisful Isle." He deleted all the passage over which he had laboured so hard, and wrote before line 5, "above" to connect it with line 4, and deleted "narrow" in 5 so that the line would be of the right length. He deleted "narrow" rather than "dim" because "dim" affords a word-for-word contrast to "bright" in line 3 " . . . bright . . . aereall spirits," while the passages about earth and the "regions mild" afford an image-for-image contrast.

Lines 7 and 8 are transposed after the cancellation of an intervening line. The original reading

> w^{ch} men call earth, & wth low-thoughted care
> 2 strive to keepe up a fraile & feavorish beeing
> ~~beyond the written date of mortall change~~
> 1 confin'd & pester'd in this pinfold heere

becomes, in the final version, as Milton indicated,

> 6 w^{ch} men call earth & wth low-thoughted
> 7 confin'd & pester'd in this pinfold heere
> 8 strive to keepe up a fraile & feavorish beeing

This transposition results in the separation of "strive" from its questionable subject "men" by the line length modifier in line 7. The suspension of thought obscures the questionable syntax.[47] The deleted line would have followed line 8 in this arrangement, but if it had it would have suspended unnecessarily (since the syntax by now has been accepted) the connection with the next line, thus:

> 7 confin'd & pester'd in this pinfold heere
> 8 strive to keepe up a fraile & feavorish beeing
> 8a beyond the written date of mortal change
> 9 unmindfull of the crowne that vertue gives

Line 9 logically should follow line 8, and Milton was willing to sacrifice

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[47]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," pp. 760-761.

a good line here for that purpose. Line 9 originally read "unmindfull of that crowne that vertue gives," but "that" was changed to "the" to rid the line of two "that"'s.

It is time that we note that the Bridgewater manuscript begins with a song of twenty lines transferred from the original epilogue. This transfer was done probably at the instigation of Henry Lawes, who decided that it was better to begin a mask with a song. The prologue to the Br. manuscript will be studied with the epilogues of the Trinity MS. where they may be more easily compared.

Line 12 is one which shows a misunderstanding of the text by the person who transcribed the Br. manuscript. The line as Milton wrote it read: "Yet some there be that by due steps aspire," evidently having in mind the degrees of a stair or rungs of a ladder. The copyist, however, wrote "yet some there be that with due steppes aspire," taking the word "steps" to mean "paces" or "strides."

Line 14 was changed to read: "that ope's the palace of aeternity." The original line read "shews" instead of "ope's," and the change was made so that the line would be consistent with that preceding which speaks of a "golden key." Since a key, generally, opens rather than shows, the change was a logical one.

Line 18 was revised at first by replacing "beside the sway" for "whose sway," and since this revision made the line hexameter, "buisnesse now" was replaced by "taske"; "but to my taske ~~buisnesse now~~. Neptune ~~whose sway~~ besids the sway;" thus, the line was made pentameter again. "Whose sway" was deleted for "beside the sway" to add a plus sign to Neptune's realm. The original version meant: "Neptune's sway took in every salt flood, every ebbing stream, and all the islands of the ocean;" the second

version means: "Neptune's sway not only takes in every salt flood and ebbing stream, but also all the islands of the ocean." This does not actually enlarge Neptune's realm, but it certainly makes it seem more important.

Line 20 of the 1637 edition contains a printer's error. It reads: "Tooke in my lot 'twixt high, and neather Love:" the MS., Br., 1645 & 1673 read "by lot." This cannot be taken as Milton's revision, nor can many others which seem to me to be printers' errors. Hereafter, they will either not be noted at all, or, if they fall in such a way that they cannot be avoided (e.g. in the consideration of other and important variations in a line), they will be relegated to a note.

Miss Lockwood says that line 21 was changed from "the rule & title of each sea-girt Isle" to "impiall rule of all the sea-girt Isles" in order to avoid the technical phrase "rule and title."[48] Mr. Diekhoff does not agree that this is the only reason, and he believes that the change produced a more musical line, avoided a stress on "of", and gained a richer suggestiveness by use of "imperiall."[49]

The next line was changed from "that like to rich gemms inlay" to "that like to rich and various gemms inlay." This change produced a pentameter line with perfect accent in place of a tetrameter line which made jerky by two accents together -- "rich gemms."

The rich suggestiveness of the word "maine" improved line 28 when "the maine" was substituted for "his empire." Too, "the greatest & the best of all the maine" is a smoother line than is "the greatest & the best of all his empire," a line which contains too many harsh sounds for

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[48] Laura E. Lockwood, "Milton's Corrections to the Minor Poems," p. 203.

[49] Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," pp. 749-750.

smoothness.[50]

In line 45

> 43 and listen why, for I will tell you now
> 44 what never yet was heard in tale or song
> 45 by old or moderate Bard in hall, or bowre

"by" was replaced by "from," thus properly making the bard the narrator rather than the listener.[51]

Both lines 46 and 48 show variations in Br. Line 46 reads "Bacchus that first from out the purple grapes" but the MS. reads "grape." Milton used the singular as representing all grapes; the copyist misunderstood the sense and wrote "grapes." In 48, Milton wrote "after the Tuscaine mariners transformed," but the copyist wrote "manners," showing that he misunderstood, or rather did not know, the allusion Milton had made.

In line 54 "this nymph that gaz'd upon his clustring locks," "this" was written over "the." The change made the antecedent less questionable than it had been. The syntax of the lines would seem to make "Bacchus" the antecedent of "the nymph;" but since "Circe" is the antecedent, "this" replaced "the" to make the reference clear.

Line 58 first read, "which therfore she brought up, and nam'd him Comus" but the reading was changed to "whome therfore she brought up, and Comus nam'd." "wch" gave way to "whome" since Comus was a living being, and "nam'd him Comus" gave way to "and Comus nam'd." -- "the 'plain prose' of the original is made poetry by inversion."[52] The Br.

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[50] In the line preceding, (27), the copyist wrote "and weild." There seems to be no reason for the mistake except that the copyist got mixed up.

[51] The word "you" in line 43 gave a good bit of trouble. In Br. and 1673 it is "you" as in the MS., but in 1637 it is "yee" and in 1645 it is "ye." The change to "ye" is probably Milton's, making the speech more formal, but it was never noted in the MS.

[52] Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 764.

reading shows the order of revision of this line. It reads, "wch therefore she brought up and Comus nam'd." The revision involving the inversion had been made, but the substitution of "whome" for "wch" had not. This latter revision was made sometime before the 1637 edition which has "Whom."

In 62, the alliterative effect is important. The first reading, "& in thick covert of black shade imbour'd," had no alliteration, but the revised reading "& in thick shelter of black shade imbour'd" has an sh-alliteration. The effect is that of helping the stress of "shade" which is obscured by the heavy (though unaccented) "black."[53] In the next line, 63, "mightie" replaces "potent" to alliterate with "mother" — "excels his mother at her mightie art," and, incidentally, "potent" is saved for another line (253) having to do with Circe's "potent hearbs."

Line 65 of the MS. has "like" deleted before "liquor." This may be the beginning of a variant spelling of "liquor" — "liker," for in line 700 Milton writes "lickerish" for "liquor-ish." It may be no more, however, than "like" and was deleted justly, for the sound of the line is absurd with "like" included: "his orient like liquor in a crystall glass."

In the parenthetical line 67, Milton replaced "weake intemperate thirst" with "fond intemperate thirst," thus expressing his own view of intemperance: that it is due more to foolishness than to weakness, or at least that foolish intemperance is worse than weak intemperance.

In line 69 Milton deleted "of the gods" for "o'the gods," wishing to keep the meter as regular as possible. This revision was ignored by

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[53] Ibid., 767-768.

the copyist of Br. and by the printers of all the editions, for all readings have "of."

The original reading of line 72, "all other pts remaining as before they were" was changed by deleting "before" which was completely unnecessary. The revised line is made better by getting rid of the awkward and unsound inversion.

The Br. manuscript gives a reading of line 83 different from any other text. It goes, "these my skye webs, spun out of Iris wooffe." The Trinity MS. and the editions read "robes" rather than "webs." This is probably a misreading of Milton's writing, and the copyist thought "webs" suitable to the material out of which they were made.

The manuscript readings of lines 90, 91, and 92 are thus:

nearest & likliest to ~~give~~ the praesent ~~aide chance~~ aide
f y^s occasion ~~of this occasion~~, but I heere the tread
of ~~virgin~~ hateful steps I must be viewlesse now

In line 90, "aide" was deleted for "chance" and "give" deleted for "the," probably in that order. Then "of this occasion" was deleted because it became unnecessary after "chance" had been substituted in line 90. When Milton deleted "virgin" in 92 (since he decided not to have the Lady enter at this point) and wrote "hateful," he decided to restore "aide" in 90, since the situation had now changed from "chance" to one likely to require some sort of "aide." "Give" was left in the deleted state, and rightly since it would have required an accent, which "the" does not, in a line already full of accents. When "chance" was deleted for "aide," Milton restored "of this occasion" by underlining it and writing it in the left margin. In Br. and the editions, line 90 reads "Likliest and nearest to the present ayde,"[54] an improvement only in that the more

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[54]This is the Br. spelling; the editions do not follow it.

important word, "likliest" is given first place in the sentence.

Milton broke up the hiss of the alliteration in lines 97, 98, 99, "in the steepe Tartessian streame/& the slope sun his upward beams/ shoots against the etc.," by deleting "Tartessian" in 97 and substituting "Antlantick." In line 99, Milton traded an undescriptive term for an image-maker: The line originally read "shoots against the northren pole" but "northren" was replaced by "dusky." The line adds something to the whole image of the sun in this version, but had added nothing as first written. The word "northren" was not deleted in the MS., which may be the reason for Br. reading "Northerne Pole." But most likely the Br. reading merely shows that the line had not yet been corrected. The editions follow the revised version.

The manuscript is defective in line 108 so that one can only conjecture what the original reading was. This is the line we know as "And Advice with scrupulous head." In the MS. "Advice" is written in the left margin to replace the defective (and deleted) words. Fletcher quotes Wright on the reading: "Birch and other [s] who follow him read the first words of this line 'And quick Law,' taking the tail of the 'g' in the line above for a part of 'Q.' As I read them the words are '& nice' followed by something which ends in 'tom,' perhaps 'custom'"[55] The reading Wright gives is much more sensible in the context than in Birch's reading. If we accept Wright's reading, the line looks like this:

Advice & ~~nice~~ ~~tom~~ w^th ~~her~~ scrupulous head

"Her" was deleted also, probably to improve the meter. "Advice" is a more expressive word for the idea than is "nice custom," and infinitely better than "quick Law" which does not suit the context.

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[55] Facsimile, ed. H. F. Fletcher, p. 400,n.

In line 144, "lead in swift round the months & yeares," "in" replaces "wth," possibly to make the "watchfull Spheares" of the preceding line as bound by the laws of nature as are the months and years, rather than to make them the cause of the "swift round." "With" may imply the latter case; "in" assures us of the former.

The reason for the change in line 117 was probably two-fold. In the line "and on the yellow sands & shelves," "yellow" was replaced by "tawnie," the more suggestive word,[56] and the line was freed of a good bit of the reminiscence of "Come unto these yellow sands," of The Tempest (I, ii, 376).[57] Though "tawnie" and "yellow" are synonymous, the connotations of the one gives it precedence over the other.

Lines 129 and 130 as read in the Bridgewater version turn out rather humorously — "Darke-vayld Cotitto, whome the secret flame/ of midnight torches burne . . . " This shows a definite, but funny, misunderstanding of the text, for the lines were supposed to be: "Dark-vaild Cotytto, to whome the secret flame/ of midnight torches burn . . . " The editions follow the MS. reading.

Milton had trouble producing an image in line 133. He first wrote "and makes a blot of nature," deleted it and wrote "and throws a blot on all y^{e} aire," deleted "and throws a blot" and wrote "and makes one blot;" he then changed "on" to "of" and the line was to his liking — "and make one blot of all y^{e} aire." The last image is much the best, for it makes the Stygian darkness of the preceding line a real gloom, a unified and continuous blot. The next line, 134, as it was revised, fitted this image perfectly: "stay thy clowdie ebon chaire." But

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[56]Lockwood, p. 203.

[57]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 754

"clowdie" was a replacement for "polisht," a term more properly applied to "Phoebus' wain." "Clowdie" makes the image harmonious and vivid in the context.[58]

Lines 135 and 136 were written into the MS. as an afterthought, thus:

134 stay thy ~~polisht~~ clowdie ebon chaire
135 wherin thou ~~ridst~~ ridst w^th^ Hecat'e and befreind
136 us they vow'd priests till utmost end
137 of till all thy dues be done & ~~nought~~ none left out

In line 135, Milton was doubtful of "ridst" but let it stand the second time. Line 136 was deleted because it was a line filler, and its successor was not: the second version is more appropriate as an invocation to a supernatural being by one of her priests. We might note in passing that Milton preferred "jocondrie" to "revelrie." Whether the former had worse connotations to Milton, or whether he thought it a fresher word would not be easy to say, but I should prefer the freshness of "jocondrie" to the triteness of "revelrie." When 135 and 136 were completed, "till" in 137 was struck out since it was used in 136, and "of" was substituted. "Nought" was replaced by "none" with "distinct improvement in sound as well as in sense."[59]

Line 144 was revised thus:

in ~~w^th^~~ a light & ~~frolick~~ fantastick round

It would seem that Milton was reminded of his own line in L'Allegro "on the light fantastic toe." The revision of "w^th^" to "in" made it more explicit that the round was a dance, not a rod, and the ground was to be beaten by the feet in dancing, not by rods weilded by the revelers.

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[58] Ibid., p. 755.

[59] Ibid., p. 770.

The substitution of "fantastick" for "frolick" is much better: "fantastick" expresses the unconfined fancy and revelry of Comus' rout while at the same time preserving the lightness of "frolick."

In line 145, "heare" was replaced by "feele": "Breake off, breake off, I ~~heare~~ feele the different pace." Mr. Diekhoff says that it is ". . . possible . . . that Milton preferred 'feele' to 'heare' . . . because of the 'f' sounds in 'off, off,' and 'different,' although it seems to me more likely that 'heare' denies the light step of the lady and the silence of 'pace' and because Comus is in this passage announcing a magic divination ('for so I can distinguish by myne art') of 'chast footing.'"[60]

After line 146, the divination Mr. Diekhoff mentioned is written and deleted:

146 of some chast footing neere about this ground
146a some virgin sure benighted in these woods
146b for so I can distinguish by myne art.

The deletion was made in order that Comus might get his followers off stage ("run to yo^r^ shrouds") and then speak to the audience rather than to the rout. When the rout is gone, Milton rewrites the two deleted lines in 148, 149, and 150:

. . . . . Some virgin sure
(for so I can distinguish by myne art)
benighted in these woods; . . .

The divination's being inserted in the middle of the sentence creates a suspension and the parenthesis marks the aside to the audience, the two combining to produce a very impressive effect.[61] In the last half of 150 and all of 151, the MS. reads " . . . now to my ~~traines~~ charmes/

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[60] Ibid., p. 771

[61] Br. read in 150, "benighted ~~sure~~ in these woods. . . " The copyist was engrossed in the sureness of Comus' statement.

and to my ~~mother's charmes~~ wilie trains . . . " We may guess that 151 was revised first. There was no need to bring Comus' mother in at this point to send the audience's minds wandering back to remember who she was and thereby miss the action. Besides, the guardian spirit had already stated that Comus was better than Circe at charmes (l. 63). So "mothers charmes" was deleted and "wilie trains" written in. "Charmes" was not used because it did not suit with "wilie". "Trains" meant to seduce, and must needs therefore be very "wilie" with such an obstinate virgin as this lady proved to be. When line 151 was revised, "traines" in line 150 was replaced by "charmes."

In line 154, Milton cancelled "powder'd" in favor of "dazling:" "my ~~powder'd~~ dazling spells into the spungie aire." Mr. Diekhoff disposes of Masson's statement that the change was made to conceal the stage trick of throwing a powder, by showing the absurdity of such a view:[62] the preceding line ends, "thus I hurle," and 166 mentions the "magic dust" thrown into the air. Mr. Diekhoff presents the idea that Milton made the change to avoid a "technical" phrase.[63] But what is "technical" about "powder'd?" No, the change was made because "dazling" conveys the sense Milton intended: the spell "dazzled" the eyes of the victim. This interpretation is enhanced, I believe, by the correction to the next line:

"of power to cheat the eye w^th ~~sleight~~ blind illusion ~~bleare~~"

"Sleight" is insufficient; "blind" is over-sufficient; "bleare" describes that condition which "dazling" suggests in the preceding line.

In line 156 Milton deleted "else" and replaced it with "lest:"". . .

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[62] Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 750,n.

[63] Ibid., p. 750,n.

lest
~~else~~ the place/ and my quaint habits breed astonishment." The change, Mr. Diekhoff says, substitutes an "adverbial clause (purposive) for an independent predication."[64] A simpler statement would be that "else" makes the statement an explicit certainty; "lest" does not.

The copyist of the Br. version again misunderstood the text when he came to line 161. He wrote "and well plac't words of gloweinge Curtsie," but the MS. and the editions read "glozing." The mistake is too absurd to elaborate upon.

Mr. Diekhoff makes short work of the substitution of "snares" for "nets" in line 164, "& hugge him into snares ~~nets~~." He says that it is a case of "the preference of one synonym for another for the sake of differing connotations."[65]

In line 167, "whome thrift keeps up about his countrie geare," "thrift" is underlined and in the margin to the right, in what looks like another hand,is written "thirst" underlined with a vertical mark before it. The Br., 1637, and 1645 editions print "thrift," and 1673, as if the printer were uncertain as to what to do, omitted the line and reversed the order of the next two lines, thus:

166 I shall appeare some harmles Villager
167 (omits)
168 And hearken, if I may, her busines here.[66]
169 But here she comes, I fairly step aside

The reversal was probably made because of the omission of 167. Perhaps the printer (or whoever was responsible) thought the sense of the lines was not impaired by the omission if the reversal were made, or perhaps

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[64] Ibid., p. 758.

[65] Ibid., p. 755.

[66] The errata sheet for 1673 calls for "hear" rather than "here."

that the rhyme of "heare" and "geare" of 166 and 167 would be kept if "heare" were placed in conjunction with "villager," provided "ger" in "Villager" were somewhat distorted in projunciation.

In 170 and 171 the MS. reads " . . . if my eare be true/ my best guide now . . ." Br. reads the same, but the editions substitute "mine ear" for "my eare," obviously to get rid of the hiatus. "Best" was obviously an afterthought in 171. The halting meter was thus corrected.

Line 175 was written in the margin, perhaps as an afterthought, but immediate succession of line 176 after 174 hardly makes sense:

173 such as the jocund flute or gamesome pipe
174 stirrs up amoungst the loose unletter'd kinds
176 in wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan

Rather it seems that line 175 was left out in copying, if the Trinity MS. is a copy. The MS. shows it:

174 stirrs up amoungst the loose[67] unletter'd hinds
175 ~~when~~ ~~that~~ ~~when~~ for thire teeming flocks (granges & ~~garners~~ full
176 in wanton dance ~~they~~ ~~praise~~ adore the bounteous Pan

In 175 "when" was deleted for "that," which as a relative pronoun refers to "hinds," and "they" in 176 was unnecessary. Milton also struck out "praise" and wrote "adore," perhaps to make the meter (which became imperfect without "they praise." "When" was restored because Milton is telling us the time of year — spring, teeming time for the ewes: and autumn — harvest time. "Granges" replaced "garners" because the time when the garners are full is in winter, when the corn is threshed; the granges are full at harvest.

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[67]Br. reads, "stirrs up amonge the ~~rude~~ loose unlettered hindes." Two mistakes were made by the copyist: "rude" was written and deleted; and "unlettered" was given an extra syllable by the "ed" ending. The editions read "among" as does Br. rather than "amoungst" of the MS. Perhaps this is Milton's revision but no note of it appears in the MS.

Line 180 was written in the margin to come before 181 rather than after it as Milton had originally intended.

179 Yet O~~h~~ where else
180 shall I inform my unacquainted feete
181 in the blind mazes ~~alleys~~ of ~~these~~ this tangled ~~arched~~ wood

Milton preferred to omit a suspension here which would not be so effective as the normal structure he decided upon. The "h" was deleted from "Oh" in 179, perhaps to make the sentence more ejaculative. In 181, "this" replaced "these," which was probably to be followed by "trees" or "rows."[68] "Mazes" and "tangled" replaced "alleys" and "arched," respectively, and as Mr. Diekhoff says, "certainly the substitution . . . is a great improvement in the direction of more consistent, more pertinent, more expressive, more logical imagery, for the thickness of the wood is necessary first for the separation of the Lady from her brothers and second for her danger. The revision changes a well-kept, well-ordered Schwarzwald into a genuine forest, underbrush and all."[69]

The Br. version omits lines 188-190:

188 they left me then, when the gray-hooded ev'n
189 like a sad votarist in palmers weeds[70]
190 rose from the hindmost wheeles of Phoebus waine

Perhaps they were omitted at Milton's request, since possibly when these lines were spoken the connection between 187 and 191 would be lost to the audience:

186 to bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
187 as the kind hospitable woods provide
191 but where they are and why they come not back, & c.[71]

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[68] Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 753.

[69] Ibid., p. 753.

[70] 1637 reads "weed," probably a printing error.

[71] The editions read "came not back." Again if this is Milton's change, the MS. does not note it. To substitute "came" for "come" would imply that the Lady had given over all hope of their return.

In 190, Milton first wrote "Phoebus chaire," but deleted "chaire" for "waine," possibly for the w-alliteration thus obtained. Too, Cotitto's vehicle was an "ebon chaire" and Milton did not wish to use the term twice, especially in describing the antithetical elements of darkness and light.

In line 193, Milton deleted "youthly" for "wandring" in reference to the brothers' steps. Miss Lockwood says " . . . 'youthly' comes less fittingly from the mouth of a young girl than 'wandering'"[72] Mr. Diekhoff says, "We must add that it is not only more fitting to the girl, but also to the context, since it is not the youth of the brothers but their wandering which has caused their separation from their sister . . . "[73]

Line 194 in the MS. reads

~~to the scene parting light~~ and envious darknesse ere they could returne

The change got rid of an image which brings light to the hearer's or reader's mind, and emphasized the evil of the darkness surrounding the Lady and causing all her trouble.

Br. omits the apostrophe to night, the first effects of Comus' "dazling spells," and the invocation of Faith, Hope, and Chastity (lines 195-225). Perhaps Milton, or Lawes, or the copyist, decided that this long passage would strain the young lady's acting capacity or that she could not memorize all of it. Perhaps, too, it was omitted because the speech of seventy-three lines made the scene less dramatic than it could be.

Mr. Diekhoff says that "due" replaced "here" in line 199, "With everlasting oyle to give *~~thire~~ light *due," because the whole line,

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[72]Lockwood, p. 203.

[73]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 752.

as it first stood was a filler, but the substitution of one word gave the line substance and meaning.[74]

Miss Lockwood says, "That fine line, 208, stands as first written down, 'and ayrie toungs that lure night wanderers;' where of course the whole harmony of the passage is lost by intruding a definite statement amid the delicate suggestiveness of the lines immediately preceding and following."[75] True, it stands in the MS., but qualified thus

and ayrie toungs *that lure night wanderers *that syllable mens nams

("wanderers" had originally been "wandering" -- what was to follow no one knows). Though Milton did not delete the original version, he underscored it, put an asterisk at the beginning of it and another at the beginning of the replacement, and had the new version printed in 1637, 1645, and 1673. This, I believe, proof that Milton preferred the revised reading, and Miss Lockwood's little case falls apart. The revised reading gives us an image that the first one falls far short of, and the s-alliteration thus obtained is very effective:

207 of calling shaps, & beckning shadows dire
208 and ayrie toungs that syllable mens nams
209 on sands, & shoars, & desert wildernesses.
210 these thoughts may startle well, but not astound
211 the vertuous mind, that ever walks attended
212 by a strong siding champion conscience

Line 214 was revised after the 1637 edition of Comus appeared, for that edition reads the same as the MS. original, "thou flittering angell girt wth golden wings." In the MS., however, "flittering" is starred and "hov'ring" is written in the margin and starred, indicating that it is to replace "flittering." "Hov'ring" is not, however, in Milton's

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[74] Ibid., p. 763.

[75] Lockwood, p. 203.

hand, but rather in what seems to be the same that wrote "thirst" in 167, "wild" in 312, and "pallat" in 318. Diekhoff says " . . . the questionable although to modern ears extremely inviting substitution of 'hov'ring' for 'flittering' substitutes an h-alliteration with 'Hope' for an f-alliteration with 'Faith.' Both are pointed by the g's of 'girt with golden.'"[76] The 1645 and 1673 editions follow the revised reading.

In line 215, "and thou unblemish't forme of chastity," "unblemish't" replaces "unspotted," because "'unspotted,' in spite of its negative prefix, raises the image of 'spots.' The more general term, 'unblemish't,' does not, and leaves the 'forme of chastity' unspotted for the reader, requiring him to make no mental erasure of a falsely conjured image."[77]

The MS. shows these revisions to 216 and following:

216 I see yee visibly, & ~~while I see yee~~
216a ~~this dusky hollow is a paradise~~
216b ~~& heaven gates are my head~~ ^& now ~~I~~ beleeve
217 that ^he the supreme good to' whome all things ill
218 are but as slavish officers of vengeance
219 would send a glistring ~~cherub~~ *guardian if need were

Miss lockwood says of 216, 216a, and 216b, " . . . he seeks a simpler expression, one savoring less of bombast; . . . the lady rapturously exclaims . . . 'While I see yee/this dusky hollow is a paradise/and heaven gates ore my head.' The poet has certainly felt the incongruity of such sentiments, and finally allows her to say only, 'I see yee visibly.'"[78] The deletion of the passage requires a change in syntax in the undeleted portion of 216b from "now I beleeve" to "and now beleeve." In 217, "he"

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[76] Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 768,n.

[77] Ibid., p. 754.

[78] Lockwood, p. 203.

was inserted as an afterthought to provide an accent in the line which otherwise starts with three unaccented syllables -- "that the supreme." "To" was then marked with an apostrophe to indicate that "t'whome" was to replace "to whome" to get rid of an extra syllable. The editions make the change. In 219, "guardian" replaces "cherub" to alliterate with "glistring."

The song to Echo has two spelling corrections, "E~~c~~cho," (l. 230), and "~~mast~~ maist" (l. 242). In line 231 of the song, "within thy ayrie shell," "shell" is starred and "cell" is written in the margin and starred. Nothing ever came of this modification, however, as Br. and the editions all read "shell." Perhaps Milton wrote "cell" in the margin for further consideration and so that he would not forget it. In line 232 "slow" is inserted above the line between "by" and "Meanders" and written in the margin with an asterisk before it, a corresponding asterisk being placed before "Meanders." "Slow" was inserted before "Meanders" to define it just as in Paradise Lost, III, 353, "Immortal" is written before "Amarant" -- neither "Meanders"nor "Amarant" needs the modifier, but the repetition is very effective in its poetic suggestion.

Line 243 read originally, and so read Br.: "And hold a counterpoint to all heavns harmonies," but Milton substituted "and give resounding grace" for "And hold a counterpoint." Mr. Diekhoff[79] and Miss Lockwood[80] agree that the change was made to avoid the technical musical term "counterpoint" which might be obscure to the general reader. Mr. C. S.

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[79]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 743.

[80]Lockwood, p. 203.

Lewis says, "Whether the change here is, or is not, from worse to better, it is certainly from the more striking and remarkable to the more ordinary. The rejected reading is more 'unexpected': it has that species of 'originality,' that power of drawing attention to itself, which would attract a 'metaphysical,' or a modern, poet. For the moment I will confine myself to reminding the reader that this is almost the one rejected reading in Trinity which Milton took the trouble to scratch out illegible -- one might almost say vindictively."[81]

In line 251, Milton wrote "of darknesse till she smil'd," and so read Br. and 1637. But 1645 and 1673 replace "she" by "it." Such change was unusual for Milton who preferred either the masculine or feminine nominatives to the neuter nominative, just as he preferred the masculine or feminine genitives "his" and "her" to the neuter "its." This change, then, is probably what Mr. Lewis calls one of the "novelties" introduced into the editions,[82] probably by the printers.

Lines 254 and 255 are written in the right margin as late insertions to go between

253 my mother Circe with the Sirens three
256 who as they sung would take the prison'd soule

The insertions add much to the bare image of 253 and 256. Milton had trouble perfecting the insertions, however, and wrote:

254 ~~sitting~~ ^ amidst the flowrie-kirtl~~e~~'d Naiad~~e~~s
255 culling thire (potent ~~potent~~ ~~(powerful)~~ ~~mrghty~~) hearbs, & balefull druggs

When in 254, "sitting" was inserted above the line, the extra syllable in "kirtled" was deleted and the "e" in "Naiads." But when Milton

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[81] Lewis, pp. 171-172.

[82] Lewis, p. 171.

decided "sitting" was unnecessary and deleted it, the "e" was restored in "Naiades," but not in "kirtl'd." Perhaps Milton deleted "sitting" because he didn't like "Naiads," and upon restoration of the "e" the extra syllables of "sitting" had to go or the line would have been hexameter. In 255, no question of alliteration enters into the choice of the correct word as it does in line 63 "excels his mother at her mightie art" where "potent" first stood before "art." "Potent" is much the stronger word, and Milton's first "inspiration" served him best.

Br. deviates from the MS. reading in line 256 by reading "whoe when they sung . . . " rather than "who as they sung." The mistake is entirely the copyist's. The sense is not too much distorted, "when" only making the clause less restrictive than "as" made it.

In line 257, "Scylla" was first spelled "Scilla," the Br. reading, but was corrected in the MS., and "would weepe" was cancelled for "wept," probably to get rid of an extra syllable in the line.[83] The next line was revised twice -- first before 257 was revised, and second after 257 was revised. The first time it read,

257 . . . . Scylla would weepe
258 and chiding her barking waves into attention

then "and" was deleted, making it unnecessary to carry the action into further detail. Next "chiding" was changed to "chide" and written in the left margin. When "would weepe" of 257 was changed to "wept," the syntax of 258 had to be changed to suit the change in 257; this was done by merely deleting the "e" on "chide" making "chid." The MS. shows it "and ~~and~~ chid~~ing~~e her barking waves."

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[83]Lockwood, p. 204.

In line 266, "whome certain these rough shades did never breed," "certain" is an insertion, made, it seems, to make the line pentameter which was otherwise tetrameter. In 268, "liv'st" is deleted in favor of "dwell'st," a more euphemistic term which did not suggest cohabitation without marriage as "liv'st" did. In line 270, "prosperous" replaces "prospering," because the latter implies that the forest described is not full grown. "Prosperous" makes it full grown and therefore more likely to be called "tall wood." The Br. version reads"prosperinge" showing that the change was made after Br. was copied and before the 1637 edition was published, for 1637 (and 1645 and 1673) reads "prosperous."

Line 276 contains good evidence that the Trinity MS. is probably a copy of an older MS. The line goes in the MS.,

to give me answere ~~to give me~~ from her mossie couᵗch

Of course, Milton possibly meant to write "to give me answere to give me aide" or "helpe," but this is improbable. It seems to me no more than a copying error.

In line 279, the MS. read at first "Co. Could that divide you from thire ushering hands," then "thire" was cancelled for "neere," and "hands" was cancelled for "guids." This change was necessary else Comus had given away the secret that he was eavesdropping. The Lady had not yet told him that she was separated from her brothers. Too, by the change, Comus prepares the Lady for the suggestion that he, as being near, would serve as her guide. In line 280, the Lady gives her reply "they left me wearie/ on a grassie terfe," the "d" being marked out so that we would not believe that the Lady had recovered by now from her weariness.

In 282, "coole" was inserted to make the line decasyllabic: "to seeke i'th valley some coole freindly spring."

In 288, "then" is written twice in succession. Miss Lockwood believes that "Milton seldom slipped into the mechanical fault of writing a word twice, of repeating words, but his absent mindedness is sometimes clearly in evidence. He writes in Comus 288. 'No less then then if I should my brothers loose'."[84] This seems to me, however, to be more evidence that the Trinity MS. is a copy, and this is a copying error. That Miss Lockwood is completely wrong cannot be said since her statement holds true elsewhere, as in one other example she gives (Comus 329).

In 291, the MS. begins "such tow I saw . . ." but Br. and the editions all read "Two such . . ." The change is probably Milton's, and was made to give the words their natural order, to the great improvement of the line.

In line 300, the Br. copyist misunderstood the context and wrote, "that in the coolenesse of the raynebow live." The MS. and editions agree that it should read not "coolenesse" but "colours."

Line 304 was revised, it seems, for the sake of meter only. It read "to helpe you find them out.$\overset{\text{Le}}{\wedge}$ Gentle villager," in which "out" was deleted because there were eleven syllables, six of which were accented; "out" was accented, but expendable to the sense.

Miss Lockwood states that line 310 was revised to rid it of the "technical" word "steerage,"[85] but Mr. Diekhoff thinks, more correctly, that "land-pilots" is a "near and logical anticipation for . . 'steerage'

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[84]Lockwood, p. 203.

[85]Lockwood, p. 203.

and since the context so clearly defines its terms as to leave no danger of obscurity, it is necessary surely to look for some other reason for the changes than the desire on Milton's part for less technical language. We find it, I think, in the very phrase, 'sure guesse' -- in Milton's fondness . . . for oxymoron and for paradoxical expressions verging upon it."[86]

The revision to line 312 is not in Milton's hand, but it stands as a revision. Milton wrote "wide wood" but the revision reads "wild," with "wide" underscored and starred; "wild," written in the margin has neither of these marks to indicate its insertion in the line. The Br. version reads "wide," but the editions read "wilde." This may be a liberty of the printer, but it is more likely that it is Milton's revision in the printer's hand. "Wild" is much better for the purpose than is "wide," since the "tangled wood," not its scope, is one of the main causes of the Lady's danger.

In 313, Milton wrote "bosky," deleted it, wrote "bosky," deleted it, and wrote "bosky," this time letting it stand. What word was he searching for? Either he did not find it, or he decided that the b-alliteration was a good reason for keeping it: "bosky bourne." In 314, "nighbour" was written and deleted, followed by the correct spelling, "neighbourhood."

Lines 316, 317 and 318, gave Milton a good bit of trouble:

or shroud^ed within
~~w^th in~~ these * limits ~~I shall know~~ I shall know *~~shroudie~~
~~ere the larke rowse rowse~~ ere morrow wake or the low roosted Lark
from her thatch't ~~rowse~~ palate rowse pallat

It is impossible to unravel the order of revision here, so I shall not attempt it. The effect in 316 of adding "or shroud" is to add to

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[86]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 750.

line 315, "be yet lodg'd." In 317 and 318, the effect is that of a slight suspension achieved by separating the subject "Larke" from the verb "rowse." The writing of "rowse" in line 318 is surely a slip. The word "pallat" after 318 is in a different hand, and was probably placed there before the 1645 edition was published, for 1637 reads "palate," Br. reads "palat," but 1645 and 1673 read "pallat." The Br. reading of 317 is "lowe rooster larke," an obvious misunderstanding of the text.

In 321, "be made" was cancelled to make the line pentameter rather than hexameter: "till furder quest ~~be made~~ La. Shepheard I take thy word"

In line 324, when the Lady speaks of "courtesie"

323 w^ch oft is sooner found in lowly shed
324 with smoakie rafters . . .

"with" replaces "and," to the great improvement of syntax and sense. Mr. Diekhoff says, "'And' here is so bad that I suspect it may possibly be a copying error, each of the next two lines also beginning with 'and.'"[87] This is plausible if we accept the theory that the MS. is a transcript.

In 325 - 326 the MS. reads,

325 & courts of princes ~~were~~ h where it first was nam'd
326 & ~~is praetended yet~~ yet is most praetended

The change in 325 is nothing more than a spelling error. In 326, the change of word order adds considerable force to the meaning of the line. In the first version, "yet" is a "merely temporal modifier with an implied rebuke (not altogether in keeping with the occasion) to the great nobles of the generation. In its new position it may still be construed as temporal, but it also marks and points the anomaly that 'courtesie' should be pretended instead of real in the very places from which it

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[87] Ibid., p. 759.

takes its name, indicating two logical contrasts instead of only one."[88]

Line 327 was revised, perhaps, to gain a more noticeable s-alliteration -- from "lesse warrante'd then this I cannot be/ or lesse secure" to "lesse warrante'd than this or lesse secure/ I cannot be." The first version is not an unusual construction with Milton, the suspension being sometimes very effective. In this instance, however, the suspension, "I cannot be/ or lesse secure, that I should feare to change it," while not unreasonable or incoherent, is exchanged for the direct structure.

In 329 Milton wrote "eye me blest providence, & square this tryall," deleted "eye" and then rewrote it, and replaced "this" with "my." Milton deleted "eye," but we cannot know what he intended to substitute since he left no hint. He decided, however, that the new word was unsuitable and reinstated "eye." He replaced "this tryall" with "my tryall" to go with "eye me," and "my . . . strength."[89]

In 331 - 332, the beginning of the first brother's apostrophe to the moon and stars, Milton started to capitalize "moone," but deleted the "M" before any other letters of the word were written. Perhaps Milton didn't wish to personify the moon since, if he had done so, the reader would probably have expected help from Diana, a Greek goddess, when Milton intended that any aid the Lady received should be as British as possible. In 332, he deleted "would'st" for "wont'st" ("faire moone/ that wont'st to love the traivailer's benizon"), thereby making the moon's light customary rather than willingly helpful.

In 340, "wth thy long levell'd rule of streaming light," "thy" replaces "a." The construction of the passage made "thy" necessary if

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[88] Ibid., p. 756

[89] Br. reads, "Eye my blest providence," showing another misunderstanding of the sense by the copyist.

the passage is to be understood as an apostrophe to "some gentle taper." Thus:

337 . . . . . some gentle taper
338 through a rush candle from the wicker hole
339 of some clay habitation visit us
340 wth thy long-levell'd rule of streaming light
341 and thou shalt be our starre of Arcadie
342 or Tyrian Cynosure . . . .

If "a" had stood, "thou" in 341 should have been "it." The apostrophe comes clear only if "thy" is inserted to go with "thou."

In line 344, we find Milton inserting a filler to make the line decasyllabic. The line "the folded flocks pin'd in thire watled cotes" has in the MS. "thire" written above the line with a mark of insertion between "in" and "watled." Fortunately, the filler is harmless. Milton deleted "cotes" but evidently found no other word to replace it, so he rewrote "cotes." In 346 he deleted "wistle" for the correct spelling "whistle."

Line 349 "in this close dungeon of innumerable bowes," the MS. has "this" inserted above the line, evidently because it was forgotten in the haste of composition, or, if we accept Mr. Diekhoff's view, was missed in copying. "Lone" was the original descriptive term for "dungeon," but "lone" gave way to "sad," and "sad" gave way to "close," the most suitable of the three since it suggests the "tangled wood" of line 181. Br. reads "lone" and 1637 reads "close" showing that this revision was made sometime before the MS. went to the printer in 1637.

Lines 351 to 356 are much corrected. In 351, "wander" is inserted above the line to go between "she" and "now," obviously because is was forgotten when the line was first written, or copied. 352 read "from the chill dew in this dead solitude," then "dead solitude" was deleted in favor of "surrounding wilde." Then the whole half line from "in" to

"wilde" was deleted and replaced by "phapps some cold hard banke," which gave way in turn to "amoungst rude burrs & thistles." This correction was made to add more to the concept of the Lady's inconvenience than "dead solitude" or "surrounding wilde" could do. The next line utilized one of the deleted phrases of 352: "phapps some cold bancke is her boulster now," then "phapps . . . is" was deleted, then rewritten above. Again we have no evidence as to the phrase Milton though of substituting, but the deletion was due, probably, to an intended change in thought. When the change was not made, the phrase was reinstated. Lines 354-356c read:

354 or gainst the rugged barke of some broad elme
355 ~~she~~ leans her ~~thoughtfull-head-musing-at-our-unkindnesse~~ fraught wth sad feares unpillow'd (head frau
356 or else in wild amazement, and affright
356a so fares as did forsaken Proserpine
356b when the big ~~wallowing~~ rowling flakes of pitchie clowds
356c & darknesse wond her in l Bro. Peace brother peace

355 in the new reading gives the opposite impression of the original and hence is more effective in producing a foreboding view of the Lady's plight. "She" was deleted in this line, too, because there were eleven syllables in the new version, and "she" was least necessary for the sense of the line. "Or else" in 356 gave way to "what if" to make the line connect with the lines which are not included in the MS., the sheet on which they were written being lost. Br. follows the original MS. reading. The editions all follow line 356 with

357 Or while we speak within the direful grasp
358 of Savage hunger, or of Savage heat?
359 Eld. Bro. Peace brother, be not over exquisite
360 To cast the fashion of uncertain evils;
361 For grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
362 What need a man forestall his date of grief,
363 And run to meet what he would most avoid?
364 Or if they be but false alarms of Fear,
365 How bitter is such self-delusion?[90]

[90]The spelling, captilization, and punctuation are that of 1645.

Miss Lockwood says of 356a - 356c, "The Brothers are on occasion bombastic enough, but the case against them would be worse if the . . . lines had been allowed to remain."[91] Mr. Diekhoff says, "Everyone will agree, surely, that the poem is better for the absence of these lines, and because of their extravagance."[92] But Mr. Lewis, it seems, will not agree: "Here there can be no question that the alteration is undramatic. The passage on the self-sufficiency of virtue which follows is, in any case, a long and improbable suspension of action; but in Trinity and Br. at least we hasten to it, and if the main action is delayed, the temperamental conflict between the brothers is given some liveliness by the impatient repetition 'peace brother peace.' In 1637 even this semblance of drama has disappeared; the Elder Brother lectures rather than argues. Milton is altering his poem so as to make it even less dramatic and more gnomic than it was before."[93] While Mr. Lewis's criticism is true, it must be remembered that Milton had written this mask for a special occasion, and since it was acted on that occasion, it is doubtful that he thought it would be acted again. Rather, he anticipated that it would be read more than acted: and this change (and others which Mr. Lewis says are changed from the dramatic to the undramatic) was made in order to unify the tone of the whole poem. The lecture and didactic purpose were hardly foreign to the mask.

Line 370 is written on the same space as is line 369, but it was obviously intended to be a marginal insertion between

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[91]Lockwood, p. 203.

[92]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 751.

[93]Lewis, p. 172.

369 as that the single ^(want) of light & noise
371 could stirre the ~~steadie~~ constant mood of her calme thoughts

370 was then made parenthetical: "(not beaing in danger, as I trust she is n [ot])." This addition marks the elder brother's assumption that his sister is in no danger and prepares for the lecture which follows. Br. in 370 reads "hope" instead of "trust," a misunderstanding on the part of the copyist which allows the brother none of the assurance he is supposed to have. "Want" in 369 was merely left out in composition, or in copying. "Constant" replaces "steadie" in 370 to change the alliterative pattern from "stirre . . . steadie" to "could . . . constant . . . calme." I cannot agree with Mr. Diekhoff when he says, "'Could' and 'calme,' since each is in an arsis, are at most very weakly alliterative with 'constant.'"[94] It seems to me that, arsis or no arsis, the alliteration is quite noticeable, strong, and effective in that it draws attention to the idea expressed.

Milton changed his mind about the thought in line 373: "Vertue could ~~ad all her~~ see to doe what vertue would." Perhaps the original was to finish up with something like "ad all her brightness and see" which would make it connect with the next line, "by her owne radiant light . . . " The change Milton made is obviously for the better. "Vertue" repeated emphasizes the thought, and the progression from "Vertue could" to "vertue would" is especially emphatic. Here, I believe, we can truly say that the second thought is much more "spontaneous" or "inspired" than the first.

Miss Lockwood says of line 376, " . . . the chief reason for the

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[94]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 768.

change is, as seems, to avoid too much alliteration."[95] But the change from "oft seeks to solitairie sweet retire" to "oft seeks to sweet retired solitude" involves no change in the alliteration but only a change in the disposition of the alliterative consonants; nor is the stress changed. The sound of the line is improved, it is true, but this is due as much, or perhaps more, to the change in tempo as to the rearrangement of the alliterating words. The new line proceeds at a more leisurely pace than the hastening syllables of "solitarie" would allow.[96] The addition of the extra syllable "ed" to "retire," and the change from "solitarie" to "solitude," both changes involving an addition of the "d" sound, slow the tempo and give the line a "contemplative air."

In line 380, "were all to ruffl'd, and sometymes impair'd," "were" was originally "are," the change being made, evidently, to place the time of the action of the ruffling and impairment in the past while the pluming of the two preceding lines hovers between the past and present. In 381, "owne" was inserted above the line between "his" and "cleere" to make the line decasyllabic and to afford a well-placed accent in an otherwise very imperfect meter.

Miss Lockwood cites lines 384 - 385 as an example of a change from the bombastic to the more moderate: " . . . the Elder Brother first closed his speech . . . with this mouth-filling phrase; 'walks in black vapours, though the noontyde brand blaze in the summer solstice.'"[97] The revised version reads, "benighted walks under y^e^ midday sun/ himselfe is his owne

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[95]Lockwood, p. 204.

[96]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 765.

[97]Lockwood, p. 203.

dungeon." Mr. Lewis's comment here is sharper:

> Both readings appear to me excellent, but with different kinds of excellence. Neither, of course, is a close copy of the speech of real men; but the earlier, with its natural syntax, and its more highly-coloured pictorial quality -- which could be made to seem as if it grew while the brother spoke -- might well be thrown off by a good actor with an appearance of realism. The second reading is, from the actor's point of view, vastly inferior. The Latin syntax of "benighted walks" removes it at once to a different plane. "Himself is his own dungeon" is imaginative, but with moral imagination; there is no picture in it to compare with the blaze of the solstice. Again, the contrast, which the earlier reading makes audible in a "though-" clause, is purely intellectual in the later. Milton is moving further from naturalism; exchanging a sweeter for a drier flavour; becoming (in one sense of that word) more classical.[98]

The Br. version follows the original reading for these two lines, and perhaps the elder brother got a chance to "throw off" the lines "with an appearance of realism." But once acted, and that on the occasion for which the mask was intended, the lines were revised and subdued, another bit of evidence that Milton probably never thought of Comus' being acted a second time. The change may be accounted for by the same reason as that in 356 et seq. The change was made for the 1637 edition and was followed in both 1645 and 1673.

In 388 Milton deleted "or" and substituted "and": "farre from the cheerfull haunt of men and heards." The implication of "or heards" is that their haunts would be cheerful without the presence of men -- an expression hardly in keeping with the younger brother's ideas. The substitution of "and" makes "men" and "heards" cohabiters of the "cheerfull haunt" as opposed to the "pensive secrecie" of the hermit's cell -- the state for which the younger brother has only sarcasm. The implication was unnoticed by Milton until he was preparing the MS. for the printer in 1637, for 1637 reads, "and heards" and Br. reads, "or heards."

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[98]Lewis, pp. 172-173.

In 390 and 391 Milton first wrote,

390 for who would rob a Hermit of his beads
391 his books, his hairie gown, or maple dish

but deleted "beads" for "gowne," then deleted "gowne" for "beads," and finally deleted "beads" and wrote, above the cancelled "gowne," "weeds," the exact word for which he was striving. He then deleted "hairie gowne" in 391, since it was now superfluous, and substituted "beads," his second choice word in the previous line. Since 391 had now become deficient in syllables ("his books, his beads, or maple dish"), "few" was inserted between "his" and "books," and "or" was inserted before "his beads." The finished versions of the two lines was thus,

390 for who could rob a Hermit of his weeds
391 his few books, or his beads, or maple dish[99]

The passage from 398 - 404 was somewhat mutilated by the copyist of the Br. version. In 398, "unsun'd heapes/ of misers treasure" becomes in Br. "unsumm'd heapes," a substitution showing that either through misreading or misinterpretation the copyist missed the excellent image Milton had conceived. In 401, the copyist wrote "at opportunitie" instead of the MS. "on opportunitie." This error was no doubt due to the copyist's misunderstanding of the next line, for instead of "and let a single helplesse mayden passe," he wrote "and she a single . . . " The Br. reading for 401 - 403 makes sense, but it is not the sense of the MS. reading:

Br. 401 dainger will winke at opportunitie
402 and she a single helples mayden passe
403 uninjur'd . . .

MS. 401 danger will winke on opportunity
402 and let a single helplesse mayden passe
403 uninjur'd . . .

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[99]1637 reads, "an Hermit," but 1645, 1673, and Br. read "a." The 1637 reading was probably due to the printer, and Milton saw that it was not done in the later editions.

Milton's corrections in the MS. in this passage are few and the lines in which the copyist erred are those which are unchanged in the MS. The excuse that the copyist may have become confused by Milton's revisions may not, therefore, be allowed. Milton revised lines 400, 403, and 404. In line 400, he deleted "thinke" for "hope," of which change Mr. Diekhoff says, "the single substitution of 'hope,' for 'thinke' emphasizes the personal application of the brother's words and in so doing identifies the 'single helplesse mayden' as the sister, changing a speech in its original form like too many of the brother's speeches a mere philosophical speculation into a genuine expression of fear. It also gets rid of the the rhyme with 'winke' in the middle of the next line.[100]

In 403 Milton started to write, "uninjur'd through this vast, &c," but deleted the "th" of "through" before the rest of the word was written. "In" was written immediately after the deleted "th," and "this vast, & hideous wild" followed. But "vast, & hideous wild" was replaced by "wide surrounding wast." The change was made so that the line would apply to the next: "of night, or lonlinesse . . . " Whereas "vast, & hideous wild" could apply logically only to the forest, "wide surrounding wast" is an excellent description of the night which encompassed both the brothers and their sister. Too, the alliterative qualities of "wide surrounding wast" must not be overlooked in the appraisal of this substitution. In 404, "of night, or lonlinesse it recks not me," the last two words are to be reversed as indicated by the numbers 1 and 2 written respectively under "me" and "not." Br. and the editions acknowledge the change and read "it recks me not." The more natural construction places the emphasis on "not" where it belongs rather than on "me."

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[100]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 753.

Line 409 was changed before Comus was printed in 1637 from "secure wthout all doubt or question, no," to "secure, wthout all doubt or controversie." The change thus gives the elder brother the purely didactic tone. Instead of the dramatic break we have the metrical break of a feminine ending.[101] After this line, the MS. has five lines which are included in the Br. version but are omitted in the editions. In only two of the five are there MS. revisions. In 409a, Milton deleted "beshrew me but I would" and wrote "I could be willing though now i'th darke to trie." The next line was changed from "a tough passado wth the shaggiest ruffian" to "a tough encounter, &c." Mr. Lewis says of these two changes in the MS., "The two most racy and least Miltonic, expressions had . . . gone the way of 'counter-pointe' in 242 . . . something of energy and facile 'point' [was] sacrificed to Milton's style. What remained, however, was still good theatre; the boyish and noble actor, waving his little sword, with his colloquial 'i'th darke' and his picturesque shaggy ruffians and dead circuits, all to be faced in defense of his sister, would to this day be snatched at by any producer anxious to 'brighten up' the dialogue at this point."[102] The whole passage had become to Milton too "racy" for the unity of tone, and regardless of the "good theatre" Mr. Lewis speaks of, the little scene was not consistent with the assuring attitude of the elder brother. If he had been allowed to make this speech (if we ignore the fact that he did in the performance), the logical outcome would be that the less assured younger brother should

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[101] Lewis, p. 173.

[102] Lewis, p. 173.

be thrown into an immediate panic by the falling away of the elder brother from the didacticism of his earlier speeches. Also, the assurance of the elder brother's following speeches could not logically and consistently follow such an outburst of passion.

In line 410 the MS. read . . . "equal poise of hopes and feares" but the "s"'s were deleted. The change from plural to singular is another device whereby the tone is elevated from the personal to the abstract -- the argument continues to become conceptual rather than practical; but more probably the change was made in anticipation of 412 where the same words appear and in which the singular is essential because "hope," "feare," and "suspicion" are all established as personification in 413.[103] The Br. follows the revised MS. reading, but the editions change from "but where and equal poise . . . " to "Yet where . . . " The deletion of the five lines and the resulting juxtaposition of 409, "Secure without all doubt, or controversie," and 410, makes the change from "but" to "Yet" better, though not absolutely necessary. The change is better because it too aids in making the controversy academic.

In 413, the line in which the personification is established, Milton wrote "and gladly banish squint ~~suspition~~ suspicion," and the numerals 1 and 2 were placed under "banish" and "gladly," respectively. The reversal was not made, however, in the Br. or in any of the editions, showing that Milton probably decided after all not to change the word order even though the device of having the modifier follow the word it modifies is common in Milton. The deletion of "suspition" is an instance

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[103]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 758.

of Milton's correction of his spelling.[104]

Lines 422-423 gave Milton a good deal of trouble. The original version went:

421 she that has that is clad in compleat steele
422 & may (upon any needfull accident
422a be it not don in pride or wilfull tempting)
423 walk through huge forrests, & unharbour'd heaths

This version was changed then by deleting "wilfull tempting" and substituting "presumption." Unsatisfied with this, however, Milton struck out all of 422 and 422a and in place of 422 wrote: "and like a quiverd nymph wth arrows keene." 422a was not replaced at all, but was used later. 423 was next changed from "walke" to "trace," but since "may" was cancelled when 422 was cancelled, this sentence was incorrect. "May" was therefore written in the left margin before "trace" and "through" was cancelled, leaving "may trace huge forrests. . . " The word "may" had been written immediately before 422a, but since I cannot so distort that line that "may" will fit, I believe that the writing of "may" in that place was a mistake. Milton intended to write it before 423 but simply placed it a line too high, then deleted it and rewrote it before the correct line.

In 424, Milton started to write " . . . & perilous sandie wilds," but reconsidered before he had written more than "& pe," and wrote instead, "& sandie perilous wilds." The disposition of the terminal "s" and the initial "s" of "perilous" and "sandie," respectively, would tend, in the first version, to make the reading "perilousandie." The reversal of order of the two avoids this fault.

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[104]The 1637 edition reads, line 417, "Vnlesse the strength of heav'n, if meane that?" omitting "you" between "if" and "meane." This is, no doubt, an error in printing, for the MS., Br., 1645 and 1673 all include "you."

The change from "aw" to "rays" in 425, "where through the sacred rayes of chastie," is better for two reasons. First, the hiatus of "aw of" is avoided, and second, the "rays of chastitie" refers back to the "radiant light" of virtue in 374.

Of the change from "shall" to "will" in 427, "will dare to soile her virgin puritie," Miss Lockwood says, "There are two . . . corrected verbs which strike responsive chords of sympathy from all those who would write and speak English with accuracy. In Comus 427 he sets down first 'shall' and then substitutes 'will.' In the last two lines of Circumcision the same thing occurs . . . He evidently was unconscious in his precise use of these two difficult words. Those perplexing small words in our language which cost most of us so much blue pencilling, gave Milton singularly little trouble . . . "[105]

After 429 Milton wrote a line which was retained in Br. but deleted before the 1637 edition:

429 by grots, and cavern's shag'd wth horrid shads[106]
429a & yawning dens where glaring monsters house

This picturesque and melodramatic line went the way of the others Mr. Lewis noted.[107] Milton felt he had here gone beyond reason, beyond what even the "sacred rays" of chastity could warrant. The greatest extravagance of an extravagant passage was deleted to subdue the tone and make the extraordinary potentialities of virtue imaginable rather than purely fanciful.

In the next line, 430, Milton wrote "unblensh't majestie," deleted "majestie," and then rewrote it. He had probably intended to substitute

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[105] Lockwood, p. 202.

[106] Br. reads: "~~shey~~ shag'd."

[107] Ll. 403a - 409e, 384 - 385, 356a - 356c.

something such as "brightness" but decided that the first "inspiration" was the better. The rich suggestiveness of "majestie" makes it much better than "brightness" or any other word (such as "awfulness," "purity," "virginity," or "virtue") he could have used. The next line is the reworked 422a: "bee it not don in price or in praesumption." The meter is here more perfect than in the original and is used here with greater effect than before.

In 432 we find Milton hesitating between strong statement and exact statement. The first version was exact statement: "Some say no evil thing that walks by night" [has hurtful power over true virginity]. The second version was strong statement: "Nay more no evil thing, etc.," and this is the Br. reading. But Milton finally reverted to the exact statement and the editions read "Some say."[108]

In 433, the MS. reads, "in fog, or fire, by lake, or moorie fen," but Br. and the editions read "moorish fen." Evidently the change is Milton's since it is consistent in these versions, but Milton failed to mark it in the MS. The form "moorish" is more correct than is "moorie" and this we may accept as the reason for the change. In the next line, 434, Milton substitutes one image for another: "Blue meagre hagge" is substituted for "Blue wrincl'd hagge," which had been changed from "wrincled" to "wrincl'd" by a marginal insertion in order to avoid the accented "-ed." The substitution of "meagre" gives a different image from "wrincl'd" -- the first pictures a lean, ravenous, and horrid figure while "wrincl'd" gives us a picture of a merely horrid one.

437, the last of these descriptive lines, originally read, "has power

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[108]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," pp. 756-757.

over true virginity," but though the line is decasyllabic, it is not a good line either in music or in substance. The insertion of "hurtfull" between "has" and"power" gives the line substance, and the change from "over" to "o'er" and then to "ore" (Milton's preference in the spelling of this contraction) after "hurtfull" has been added rectifies the meter. 1645 and 1673 substitute "Hath" for "has" in this line, probably Milton's revision though unnoted in the MS. "Hath" is used, perhaps, to elevate the plane of the debate from the personal to the impersonal and academic, or, more likely, as the emphatic form of "has."

Line 442 was written as a marginal, parenthetic appositive, insertion,

441 hence had the huntress Dian her dred bow.
442 faire silver-shafted Q. or ever chast
443 wherwith she tam'd the brinded lionesse

The result is a suspension separating "bow" from its modifier in 443.[109] The 1637 reading of 443 is obviously a printer's error, for it goes, "Wherewith we tam'd the brinded lionesse." It would seem that the copyist of the Br. version was not the only one who sometimes misunderstood the sense of the text.

In 448 we see Milton striving for the correct epithet. He wrote first, "that wise Minerva wore, aeternall virgin," but being dissatisfied with the implication that her virginity had never been tried, he deleted "aeternall" and substituted "unvanquisht," a term representing the failure of attacks as well as the attacks themselves. The v-alliteration of "Minerva . . unvanquisht virgin" was unsuitable to Milton's ear, however, so "unvanquisht" was deleted and "unconquer'd," a word equivalent to"unvanquisht" in its representation, was written in.

Of 449, Mr. Diekhoff says, " . . . we shall be hard put to explain

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[109] Ibid., pp. 761-762.

the cancelled 'freezing' at the beginning of the line, unless it represents hesitation between 'freez'd' and 'freezing'."[110] This seems the only possible explanation since "freezind" stands at the beginning of the line indicating that the line might have been "freezind [or freezing] wherwith her foes to congeal'd stone."

Line 452 was revised to replace a line filler with substance. It first read "wth suddaine adoration of her purenesse." But the filler "of her purenesse" was replaced by "of bright rays," a filler surely as bad as the first. This in turn was replaced by the almost magic phrase "and blank aw." The improvement is obvious.

Line 454 was changed from "that when it finds a soule sincerely so" to "that when a soul is found sincerely so" for two reasons: first, the unbearable hiss of the s-alliteration of the first version was somewhat alleviated by the change in position of the alliterating words; and, second, the obscure reference of the pronoun "it" (to either "heaven" or "chastitie" of 453) is avoided, Milton preferring the passive to the weak reference.[111]

Line 456 is a marginal insertion.

455 a thousand liveried angells lackey her
457 and in cleere dreame & solemne vision
458 tell her of things ^that no grosse eare can heare
458 driving farre off each thing (of sin and guilt

The result is a separation of the dependent clause from the independent, a suspension not uncommon in Milton and, as here, often used very effectively. "That" was inserted in 458 to make the line decasyllabic, the addition being a completely harmless filler.

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[110] Ibid., p. 771.

[111] Ibid., p. 758.

In 460, "begins" was changed to "begin," resulting seemingly in a grammatical error, for the subject of "begin" is "converse" which requires a singular verb. If "converse" is to be thought of as plural, however, as we may suppose it to be by its modifier "oft" in "oft converse" (i.e., "frequent conversations"), then "begin" is the correct form.

Line 462 would seem to uphold the thoery that the MS. is a transcript of an original: "and turnes ~~by~~ it by degrees to the souls essence." The cancelled "by" might be a copying mistake and support the transcription theory, or it might indicate that Milton thought he had already made clear what was being changed into the "souls essence" -- the "outward shape" of line 460. The transcription theory here seems to account best for the correction.

The change in line 465 Mr. Diekhoff accounts for under the section on line-fillers.[112] The change is from "& most by the lascivious act of sin" to "& most by lewd & lavish act of sin." The Br. version shows an intermediate form, "and most by lewde lascivious act of sin." This form is implicit in the MS., not explicit as is the completely revised form the editions follow. The MS. shows:

& most by ~~the lascivious~~ lewd & * act of sin *lavish

"the" being deleted first and replaced by "lewd &" to go with "lascivious," thus partly giving substance to the line, providing alliteration, and wholly correcting the halting meter. This is the Br. reading. Before the 1637 edition, "lascivious" was deleted and "lavish" substituted by being written in the margin and starred and its place in the line also being starred rather than the word being written in after "lewd &." The editions follow the fully corrected MS. reading and have one change

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[112]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 762.

of their own: "& most" is changed to "But most." This change makes lewdness and lascivicousness the greatest cause of defilement of the soul, an aspect they had not held so emphatically in.the MS. version.

Line 468 was first written, "imbodies, and imbrutes till she loose quite," but the numbers 2 and 1 were written under "loose" and "quite," respectively, to indicate their transposition. Br. and the editions transpose as indicated. Surely this change is made to put the stress upon the important syllable, though the line as originally written contained a device quite common in Milton — that of having the modifier follow the word upon which it depends.

Milton changed line 471 from "oft seene in charnel vaults & monume[nts] " to "oft seene in charnel vaults, and sepulchers," perhaps because he preferred the connotations of "sepulchers" to those of "monuments." So says Mr. Diekhoff,[113] and I am much inclined to agree with him; with this addition only, that the sound of "sepulchers" fits the context much better than does the sound of "monuments" with it many nasals.

The MS., Br., and 1637 readings for line 472 are, ignoring punctuations, etc., "hovering, & sitting by a new made grave," but 1645 and 1673 substitute "Lingering" for "hovering." "The result is a word in better harmony with 'sitting' in strict logic, and an addition to the already heavy l-alliteration of 'loath,' 'leave,' 'lov'd,' and 'linkt.'"[114] Mr. Diekhoff relates this change to that in line 214 where "hov'ring" was substituted for "flittering": "Since both of these revisions involve the word 'hovering,' since both appear in print for the first time in

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[113] Ibid., p. 755.

[114] Ibid., p. 768n.

in 1645, and since one of them is not in the MS. at all and the other not in Milton's hand, it is impossible not to suggest that they are somehow related."[115]

The deletion in line 476 does not change the reading of the line at all since the stage direction is the part deleted. Milton had written "Hallow within" in the margin, intending, no doubt, to have the call follow the elder brother's speech which ended, "to a degenerate, & degraded state." But he changed his mind and inserted the younger brother's speech, "how charming is divine philosophy, etc.," and deleted the stage direction. When the first line of the younger brother's speech was written, however, the stage direction was in the way and "philosophy" was written "philoso^{phy} ~~Hallow within~~."

A mistake in copying in the Br. version makes line 479 even more obscure than it is in the MS. version. To see this, however, we must read 478 with 479. The MS. version is

478 . . . musicall as is Apollo's lute
479 and a ppetual feast of nectar'd sweets

The sense of 479 is, "and is a perpetuall feast of nectared sweets," and though the sense is obscure in the MS. version where the feast seems "musicall," the Br. reading makes it even more obscure by omitting "a." It would seem that this small article could make little difference in the syntax of the line, but it is definitely necessary.

In 480, the MS. reads, "l Brother. list bro. list, me thought I heard," then "bro." and "me thought" were deleted and "I heard" was changed to "I heare." The deletions were made to make the line decasyllabic which otherwise had fourteen syllables. "I heard" was changed

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[115] Ibid., p. 768n.

to "I heare" to make the action of hearing suitable with "list, list," for why say "list, list" when the sound has already faded away? The second brother's speech shows that Milton did not completely correct the time element, for the line goes, "mee thought so too . . . " The key words here are "mee thought" which should have been changed to "mee thinks" when "heard" was changed to "heare." Perhaps Milton thought the inconsistency would not be noticed, and it probably never has been.

In line 483, Milton wrote "either ~~either~~ . . . " Miss Lockwood says, "Milton seldom slipped into the mechanical fault of writing a word twice, of repeating a word, but his absent-mindedness is sometimes clearly in evidence."[116] She then cites this line (and others) as an example. This seems to me, however, to be even clearer evidence that the Trinity MS. is a transcript of the original draft, and the repetition is no more than a copying error.

Line 485 gave Milton a good bit of trouble. He first wrote, "some curl'd man of y^{e} swoord calling to his fellows," then deleted "curl'd" and substituted "hedge" as being the more suitable description of an outlaw who frequented these woods. "Curl'd" suggested too much refinement for an outlaw, and would probably have been better applied as a description of the two brothers. But the halting meter of the line was not changed at all by this substitution, so "hedge man of y^{e} swoord" was deleted, and in the left margin was written "some roaving robber" to be substituted. This phrase has none of the bombast of the first two phrases, and it also corrects the meter a good deal though it does not make it perfect.[117] In 486, "heav'n keepe my sister. yet agen, agen & neere,"

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[116] Lockwood, p. 203.

[117] The phrase "some roaving robber" has a large X drawn through it, but it is the reading of Br., 1637, 1645 and 1673. Perhaps Milton thought of restoring "some hedge man of the swoord" and then thought better of it.

"yet" was deleted simply because the meter would be bad if "yet" were allowed to stand.

The MS. shows the compression of three lines into two in 488-489:

488 if he be freindly he comes well, if not ~~a just Defence is a~~
488a ~~had best looke to his forehead~~ he may chaunce scratch his forehead. heere be brambles
489 defence is a good cause & heav'n be for us

The order of revision was: (1) "a just Defence is a" deleted; (2) "had best looke to his forehead, heere be brambles" written on the next line; (3) "had best looke to" deleted and "he may chaunce scratch" substituted; (4) "defence is a good cause & heav'n be for us" written in the third line; and (5) "he may chaunce scratch his forehead" deleted. The final reading, then, is:

488 if he be freindly he comes well, if not heere be brambles
489 defence is a good cause & heav'n be for us

If line 488a had been allowed to stand, the brother's speech would have been almost as boastful as an epic hero's. "Had best looke to his forehead" was boasting enough, but the over-confidence implicit in the understatement, "he may chaunce scratch his forehead," was too much. Moreover, it did not suit well with the lack of confidence in his <u>own</u> abilities the brother shows in "& heav'n be for us."

Line 491 in the MS. reads, "come not ~~too~~ <u>neare</u>, you fall on ~~pointed~~ iron stakes else." "Too neare" was deleted and then reinstated by the line under it. It was probably deleted to correct the meter; but the deletion did more harm than good, because it not only did not correct the meter, but made the line so abrupt as to be terrible. "Too neare" was therefore restored, and "pointed," the word which was really at fault, was deleted and "iron" substituted. This substitution, if "iron" is pronounced as a monosyllable, makes the meter perfect.

In 496, "dale" was substituted for "valley" for two reasons: "dale"

is much the more suggestive word, and it makes the meter perfectly iambic pentameter--"and sweetned every muskrose of the dale."

Lines 497-499 must be considered together:

497 how camst thou heere good shepheard, hath any ramme[118]
498 slip't ~~from his~~ ~~leapt ore the penne~~ the fold or young ~~ki~~ kid lost his damme
499 or straggling weather ~~hath~~ the pen't flock ~~flock~~ forsook?

In 498, the change from "his penne" to "the fold" to "his penne" and to "his fold" indicates Milton's trouble not only of deciding which word was best, "penne" or the more Biblical "fold," but also of the best modifier, "his" or "the." "The fold" was his final choice, as indicated in Br., 1637, 1645, and 1673, but it is not so indicated in the MS. where "his fold" is the final reading. Miss Lockwood cites the change from "leapt ore the penne" to "slip't from the fold" as Milton's feeling it "necessary to substitute for words thin in imaginative content those rich in suggestion."[119] "Or" was inserted between "fold" and "young" to make the line decasyllabic; and "ki" was deleted and "kid" written immediately after as though Milton had decided to use another word but thought better of it; or perhaps this is no more than a copying error from the original, if the MS. is a copy.

In 499, "hath" was deleted because it was unnecessary since "hath," the helping verb, was used in 497 and the thought is clear without the repetition in 499; and the line is made decasyllabic by the omission of "hath."

In 512, Milton wrote "what feares, good shep . . . " then deleted "shep." for "Thyrsis." Milton preferred to use this name for the spirit to avoid too much repetition of "shepheard" and to show more plainly

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[118] Br. omits "thou" making it necessary to pronounce "camst" as "camest." This is, no doubt, a copying error due probably to inattention on the part of the copyist.

[119] Lockwood, p. 203.

that the brothers were fooled by the spirit's disguise. Milton seems almost to have fooled himself, for at the beginning of the next line, Thyrsis' speech, he wrote "Shep." then deleted it for "Dae." (i.e. Daemon). Thyrsis says, "Ile tell you . . . "; this is the reading of the MS., Br., and 1637, but 1645 and 1673 read "ye." The change was made no doubt to indicate that Thyrsis was speaking to both brothers rather than only to the one who asked the question.

Line 519, "for such there be, but unbeleife is blind," is written in the margin as an afterthought. It serves to ease the abrupt change of thought from 518 to 520, and is also an echo of 513-514:

> . . . Tis not vaine or fabulous
> (though so esteem'd by shallow ignorance)

In 523 where the demon describes Comus, he says that Comus is "deep skill'd in all his mothers witcheries." The line originally read "enur'd in all his mothers witcheries," then "enur'd" is deleted and in the margin is written "deep learnt." "Learnt" is then deleted and "skill'd" substituted. The completely corrected reading is more in keeping with line 63 in which the demon says that Comus "excells his mother at her mightie art." Mr. Diekhoff says the substitution is "an excellent example of Milton's care for exact diction in its recognition of witchcraft as a skill, an 'art,' as it were, instead of a science."[120]

In 528, "and the inglorious likenesse of a beast," Milton wrote "makes" in the margin and marked it for insertion between "and" and "the." This was deleted, however, when in the margin before the next line he wrote "fixes insteed." The construction of the clauses is improved very much. The first version reads:

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[120]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 754.

528 and makes the inglorious likenesse of a beast
529 unmoulding reasons mintage
530 characterd in the face . . .

the sense is unclear because the syntax is faulty. The second version lacks nothing:

528 and the inglorious likenesse of a beast
529 fixes insteed, unmoulding reasons mintage
530 characterd in the face . . .

The meter of 528 is correct, and the length of 529 is changed from heptasyllabic to decasyllabic. The new place for the verb "fixes" makes the construction logical, and "fixes" is certainly a superior word here to "makes."

Milton was striving for poetic suggestiveness when he changed line 531 from "tending my flocks hard by i'th pastur'd lawns," to "tending my flocks hard by i'th hillie crofts."[121] And the change from "brows" to "brow" in line 532 is made because "crofts" needs the plural verb.

Lines 537 and 538 have two corrections which may suggest that the Trinity MS. is a transcript, and has also one spelling correction:

537 yet have ~~they~~ they many baits, and ~~gil~~ guilefull spells
538 to' inveigle & invite th' unwarie ~~spell~~ sense

The repetition of "they" may be interpreted as a copying error or as an intended revision in which some other word was to be substituted for "they." If such a word as "he," referring to Comus, were to be substituted, "have" would necessarily become "has," but that "he," or any other singular pronoun, was to be substituted is doubtful since the pronouns in the three preceding lines are all plural, referring to both Comus and his rout. The deletion of "they" seems, therefore, to be an error in copying. The deletion of "gil" is no more than a spelling correction. The very appearance of "spell" in line 538 suggests that it is due to a copying error. The deletion, indicating

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[121] Br. reads: " . . . hillie ~~flocks~~ Crofts," a copying error.

that Milton caught the mistake probably as soon as he wrote it or at least when he re-read the mask, and the correct words being written after the deleted "spell," is, I believe, a pretty piece of evidence in favor of the transcription theory.

In 545, Milton had trouble characterizing the honeysuckle. He first wrote "suckling honiesuckle," a bad characterization and a worse pun; he then deleted "suckling" and inserted "blowing," which was in turn deleted for "flaunting," then "flaunting" gave way to "blowing," and finally "blowing" was deleted for "flaunting." Mr. Diekhoff says, " 'Suckling honiesuckle' is of course impossible. 'Blowing' . . . had the virtue of echoing the b's of 'banks' (543) and 'began' (where it is in the arsis) at the end of 545. The f of 'flaunting' anticipates that of 'fit' in 546 and the important f-alliteration of 'fancie' and 'fill' in 548, as well as echoing the cognate sounds of v in 'ivie' and 'interwove' (544)."[122]

The next two lines were marked in the MS. for reversal:

545 . . . . & began
547 2 to meditate my rurall minstrelsie[123]
546 1 wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy
548 till fancie had her fill, but ere ^&the close

The Br. version and the editions all transpose them as indicated. The transposition results in a suspension quite typical or Milton. The transposition also brings "melancholy" into alliteration with "meditate my . . . minstrelsie."[124] The substitution of "a" for "the" in 548 changes the meaning of "close." If "the" is left standing, "close" means the end of his song; if "a" is substituted, "close" means the first note, or the first closing of the hole in the pipe.

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[122] Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," pp. 766-767.

[123] 1673 reads: " . . . meditate upon my, etc.," the change, no doubt, being the printer's.

[124] Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 767.

"Ere" the close" means that the song was interrupted; "ere a close" means that the song was not even begun.

In 551, "cease" was changed to "ceas'd" and "listen" to "listened" to put the action in the past tense where it rightly belonged.

Line 553 in the MS. reads, "gave respit to the drousie flighted steeds," but Br. and the editions read "frighted." The replacement means more than does "flighted," and in this context it is even more meaningful. For the steeds, which pull sleep's chariot, Milton, or Thyrsis, would have us believe, were frightened by the "barbarous dissonance" of the celebration of Comus and his followers.

Of lines 555-556, Mr. Diekhoff says: " . . . Milton is doing the impossible and creating music by means of a sustained s-alliteration . . . "[125] The lines read:

555 at last a soft & sollemne breathing sound
556 rose like a steame of rich distill'd pfumes

But they were not thus from the beginning. The MS. shows them like this:

at last a ~~soft~~ *still soft* & sollemne breathing sound *sweete *soft
rose like ~~the~~ *a softe steame of *soft distill'd pfumes ~~slow~~ *slow rich

In 555, "soft," the first choice, was retained after experiments had been made with "still" and "sweete," but the revision was not done all at one time. The Br. version reads "sweete," the third revision, and not until sometime before the 1637 edition was "soft" replaced in the line, for the 1637 version is "soft." In 556, "the softe" was cancelled and "a" substituted, and with the coming and going of "soft" in 555, "softe" was restored and deleted in 556. The Br. version of 556 is: "rose like the softe steame of distill'd pfumes," the original reading of the MS. After the Br. version was made, and before the 1637 edition, this line was again revised. "Slow" was inserted to come

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[125]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 766.

before "distill'd" and was also written in the margin. The line now hissed: "rose like a steame of slow distill'd pfumes"; Milton therefore cancelled "slow" and substituted "rich" which breaks the rapid sequence of the s-alliteration and provides a relieving r-alliteration with "rose."[126]

Line 560 in the MS. reads: "still to be displac't, I was all eare." but "so" was inserted before "displac't" to make the number of syllables and the accent correct and, possibly, to echo the s-alliteration of the preceding passage, which alliteration is by no means found only in two lines, but extends over six lines (552-557).

In 563 and 572 the Br. version differs from the MS. in two words, and the only reasons seem to be that the copyist could not read Milton's hand and that the copyist did not understand what he was copying. In 563, "too well I might pceave it was y^{e} voice," the copyist wrote "two"; in 572, "for so by certaine signes I knew," the copyist wrote "know." For this last mistake Milton's writing may be to blame, for the "e" is turned sideways and does look like an "o". For the substitution of "two" for "too," the copyist's ignorance seems to be to blame.

In 574, Milton substituted, with judgment, "aidlesse" for "helplesse" in "the aidlesse innocent Ladie his wisht prey." The Lady was not helpless, but she was aidless. Milton wished to convey the meaning that the Lady was without other aid, not that she was insufficient in herself to withstand Comus' temptation. After "prey" in this line, the words "who tooke him" are written and cancelled. They were cancelled because they were supposed to begin the next line, for 574 was already complete. But when Milton came to write 575, he did not use "who tooke him," but wrote "who gen," cancelled it, and wrote "who gently askt if he had seen such tow." Perhaps "who gen" was

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[126] Ibid., p. 767.

cancelled because Milton was considering using,

> who tooke him for some neighbour villager
> and gently askt if he had seen such tow.

He decided against this plan, however, wishing to suspend the thought for the effect to be gained thereby; he wrote:

> 575 who gently askt if he had seen such tow
> 576 supposing him some neighbour villager

The suspension is slight, but the lines are more effective than the ones I have conjectured that Milton started to write.

Line 580 was revised to keep it from being plain prose. Milton first wrote "and this," probably intending to follow it with "is all I know." Inversion would not have made this line into poetry, so the beginning was deleted. The replacement material is inverted and is poetry: "but furder know I not."[127]

The projected reading for 590 was probably, "surpris'd by unjust force, but not enthrall'd and harm'd," for "and" is written and cancelled after "enthralled." The line was decasyllabic without "and harm'd," so "and" was cancelled and harm'd" was not written at all. I conjecture that "harm'd" was to be written also because the next line reads: "Yea even that w^{ch} mischeif ment most harme."

Line 594 has "till all to place" written at the head of the line and cancelled, followed by "& mixe no more wth goodnesse." Milton had probably first started to write:

> 593 but evill on it selfe shall back recoile
> till all to place & setled to it selfe
> it shall be in aeternall restlesse change
> selfe fed, & selfe consum'd . . .

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[127]The form of "furder" varies in the editions. Br. reads "furder," Milton's preference; 1637 reads "farther"; 1645, "furder"; and 1673, "further." The printers got out of hand in 1637 and 1673. In 581, Br. reads "you" where the MS. and editions read "yee," or "ye."

Milton gained a slight suspension and more striking imagery by writing instead:

> 593 & mixe no more w^th^ goodnesse, when at last
> 594 gathered like scum & settled to it selfe
> 595 it shall be in aeternall restlesse change
> 596 selfe fed, & selfe consum'd . . .

In 605, the MS. reads, "harpyes & Hydra's or $\overset{\text{all}}{\wedge}$ the monstrous buggs." "All" was inserted for the meter. The Br. version and 1637 edition read the same as the MS., but 1645 and 1673 substitute "forms" for "buggs." Mr. Lewis says of this change: "We must naturally remove from our minds the ludicrous associations which the earlier form has for the modern reader. These are the 'bugs to frighten babes withal' of Spenser. When this has been done, the passage falls into line with the general trend of the alterations. The more forcible, native word, the word that draws attention to itself, is erased in favour of the comparatively colourless loan word. Not so would Donne or D. H. Lawrence have chosen."[128] Most of this criticism is true, but as I said before, Milton was working for a unity of tone, and such a word as "buggs" violated this tone.

In 607, Milton wrote, "and force him to release his new got prey" but cancelled "release his new got prey" and substituted "restore his purchase back." By this change was the line-filling phrase avoided, and the new line gains much in meaning by the use of the word "purchase" which was commonly applied to illegal gains.

Lines 608-609 read in the MS. (and Br. and 1637 follow it),

> or drag him by the curls & cleave his scalpe
> downe to the ~~hipps lowest~~ hips . . .

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[128]Lewis, p. 174.

"Hipps" was deleted and "lowest hips" substituted; but "lowest" being superfluous and adding two syllables to an already full line was cancelled leaving "hips," the first "inspiration." In the 1645 and 1673 editions these lines read,

> Or drag him by the curls, to a foul death,
> Curs'd as his life . . .

Mr. Diekhoff cites the alteration here as being better for the poem because of the extravagance of the first version.[129] Mr. Lewis says: "There is no question which reading has the more 'punch' in it. Both are full of energy; but the one is physical energy, demonstrated by the actor, the other is moral. Again Milton moves away from the theatre."[130]

The Br. reading of 610 is another instance of the copyist's error. He wrote "the Courage" where Milton had written "thy courage." No reflection on the copyist's understanding is in order here, since the error is no more than a mere mistake in writing.

Milton wrote in 611, "but heere thy swo ~~steele~~ swoord can doe the ~~little stead small availe~~" and "swoord," uncancelled, is written in the left margin. The order of alteration made the lines read thus in the different stages:

(1) but heere thy swo steele can doe the little stead
(2) but heere thy swoord can doe thee small availe
(3) but heere thy steele can doe thee little stead
(4) but heere thy swoord can doe thee little stead

While Milton had trouble deciding between "swoord" and "steele" (and chose "swoord" as more appropriate though less colorful), he had little trouble deciding between "little stead" and "small availe." The

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[129] Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 751.

[130] Lewis, p. 174.

s-alliteration was unaffected by any of these changes except for the disposition of the "s"'s — both "small" and "stead" are accented. The only explanation, it seems, is that "little stead" is somewhat stronger statement, and in this case more exact statement, than is "small availe."

Lines 614-615 first read:

> he wth his bare wand can unquilt thy joynts
> & crumble every sinew . . .

In 614, Milton deleted "unquilt" for the more exact but less colorfull "unthred"; in 615, he wished to make sinew plural to match "joynts," and he had only to change "every" to "all thy" and add an s to "sinew" to complete the revision. The revised lines read,

> he wth his bare wand can unthred thy joynts
> & crumble all thy sinews . . .

The reason for the revision in 627 is implicit two lines further on in the text. 627 first read, "& shew me simples of a thousand hews," then "hews" was deleted and "names" substituted," . . . avoiding an illogical suggestion," says Mr. Diekhoff, "since the particular 'simple' in question, though in other climes it bears a bright golden flower, is but a 'small unsightly root.'"[131]

Lines 632-637 are omitted in the Bridgewater version of Comus. These lines are the ones which describe the growth of this particular "simple," and are perhaps left out to avoid an implied insult, however unintentional, to the country of Wales and thereby to the persons before whom Comus was acted, the new President of Wales and his family. Lines 636-637 are marginal insertions in the MS. and their development was thus:

> & yet more med'cinall then that ancient Moly,
> that Mercury to wise Ulysses gave

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[131]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 754.

In 637 "that" was deleted and replaced by "w^{ch}," the more correct usage, and "Mercury" was replaced by "Hermes once." In this last revision Milton was obviously getting his mythology exact, and since "Hermes" lacked a syllable to replace "Mercury," "once" was added to fill out the line, being in this case a harmless filler. The addition of "once" here made "ancient" superfluous in 636; "ancient" was therefore deleted and "is it" was inserted after "med'cinall."

The first version of 648 read:

> 647 . . . if you have this about you
> 648 (as I will give you as we goe) you may

The phrase "as we goe" was not suitable, however, since "as" was repetitive; Milton therefore deleted the phrase and substituted "when on the way." But this too was unsuitable because of the internal rhyme — "(. . . when on the way) you may." The solution to the problem consisted of combining the two trial readings into the suitable final one: "(as I will give you when we goe) you may."

Line 649 first read, "boldly assault his necromantik hall," but was altered to read "boldly assault y^{e} necromancers hall." The sound of the second version is much better, and the modifier "necromantik" which had originally modified hall and seemed to attribute some supernatural power to the edifice itself, was made a noun to apply to the real "magician," Comus.

Lines 650–653 in the MS. read:

> where if he be wth ~~suddaine violence~~ dauntlesse hardyhood
> & brandish't blade rush on him, breake his glasse
> and ~~poure~~ shed the lushious ~~potion~~ liquor on the ground
> but and sease his wand . . .

The two h's of "hardyhood" echo that of "hall" in 649 (discussed above), and the change is made for the sake of that alliteration. In 651, the

plural "blades" is changed to the singular "blade" with much improvement in sound, but "blade" is used here to epitomize the idea of dauntlessness, since the demon had said before that "thy swoord can doe thee little stead." In 652, "shed" replaces "poure" and although it does not alliterate, it echoes the "sh" of "brandish't," "rush," and "lushious." "Liquor" replaces "potion" substituting an l-alliteration ("lushious liquor") for a p-alliteration ("poure . . . potion"). "And" in 653 is replaced by "but" thus emphasizing the importance of obtaining Comus' wand, and also perhaps because the two lines preceding had begun with "and" and Milton wished to vary the construction a bit.

In 656, Milton marked "they will" for transposition, the inversion being not uncommon in Milton's style, and the accent is placed on the important word, the verb. Br. and the editions transpose as indicated. In 657, the first brother says, in the MS. version, "Thyrsis lead on a pace I follow thee," and Br. reads thus. The editions, however, all read " . . . Ile follow thee," thus putting the action in the very immediate future, not in the present. Line 658 originally went: "& good heaven cast his best regard upon us." But this version is no more than line-filler, and bad at that. Milton deleted it and substituted, "and some good angell beare a sheild before us," making the passage more effective by having the brother ask for what he unknowingly has already.

Line 661 was revised to avoid an inconsisteney:

661 and you a statue, fixt, as Daphne was
662 root-bound . . .

Of course "as Daphne was / root-bound" refers to "fixt," but this is not explicit by the construction which makes "as Daphne was" refer to "statue." This confusion Milton would not allow, so he deleted "fixt" and substituted "or," making the sense clear.

In 662, the last half of the line is deleted:

root-bound, that fled Apollo. ~~Why doe ye frowne~~

and in the margin are written the rest of 662 and lines 663-666 (which are reworked from the deleted lines after 755):

662 La. ~~foole thou art over proud~~ doe not boast
663 thou canst not touch the freedome of my mind
664 wth all thy charmes although this corporall rind
665 thou has immanacl'd while heavn sees good
666 Co. why are you vext Ladie, why doe ye frow[n]

"Thou art over proud" was deleted because it made line 662 too long, and its replacement falls into the compass of the meter better, though not perfectly. In 666, we see the phrase reappearing which had been deleted in 662: "why doe ye frow n ." It was necessary to reuse this phrase to keep the continuity of this marginal passage and following lines:

667 ~~heere frow~~ heere dwell no frowns$_{\wedge}^{n}$or anger . . .

Milton had no doubt started to write, "heere frowns dwell not, or anger," an inversion typical of Milton, but not up to standard in this case. "Or" was changed to "nor" in keeping with "no," since this sentence is a negative construction.

In 669, Milton wrote, "that ~~youth & fancie~~ fancie can beget on youthful thoughts." The deletion was made because the line was too short if this construction was used. The revision retains both of the deleted words, but in different positions and in a different form for one. "Beget on" was changed to "invent in," then "beget on" was restored. The restoration was judicious for "beget on" is more poetically suggestive, as Milton wished, and more sexually suggestive, as Comus wished.

In 670, Milton wrote, "when the briske blood ~~return~~ grows lively & returnes," then deleted "briske" and substituted "fresh." This substitution breaks up the explosive alliteration of "briske blood." "Return"

was deleted because the structure ". . . return[s] and grows lively" reverses the logical order of action. The next line, 671, utilizes "briske" which even in this position alliterates with "blood" as well as with "budds": "briske as the Aprills budds in primrose season." The s on"Aprills" was deleted since it is absolutely unnecessary.

After 671 in the MS., a marginal note is inserted which says, "that w^ch follows heere is in the pasted leafe begins ~~poore Ladie~~ and first behold this &c." "Poore Ladie" was deleted here for two reasons: the line beginning thus was deleted after this note was first written (after which "and first behold this &c." was written in the note), and Milton decided on second thought to use all the passage on the pasted leaf here rather than use the first seven lines elsewhere (as will be noted when that part is studied).

The pasted leaf consists of thirty-six lines, part of which appear in the Br. version, and all except one of which appear in the editions. This pasted leaf version is a re-working of the twenty-two lines which are deleted in the MS. text after 755. The pasted leaf first (it too was revised) read thus:

672 and first behold this cordiall julep heere
673 y^t flams & dances in his crystall bounds
674 w^th spirits of baulme, & fragrant syrops mixt
675 not that Nepenthes w^ch the wife of Thone
676 in AEgypt gave to Jove borne Helena
677 is of such power to stirre up joy as this
678 to life so freindly or so coole to thirst
678a poore ladie thou hast need of some refreshing
688 that hast bin tir'd all day w^th out repast
689 & timely rest hast wanted, heere faire virgin
690 this will restore all soone. La. t'will not false traitor
691 t'will not restore the truth & honestie
692 that thou hast banisht from thy tongue w^th lies[132]

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[132]Br. reads: "thy ~~thoughts~~ tongue." The copyist anticipated incorrectly.

693 was this the cottage & the safe abode
694 thou toldst me of? what grim aspects are these
695 these ougly headed monsters? mercie guard me!
696 Hence w^th thy ~~hol broud opiate foule bpud~~ enchantments foule deceaver
697 hast thou betrayd my credulous innocence
698 w^th visor'd falshood & base forgeries
699 and wouldst thou seeke againe to trap me heere
700 w^th lickerish baites fit to ensnare a brute?
701 were it a draft for Juno when she banquets
702 I would not taste thy treasonous offer, none
703 but such as are good men can give good things
704 and that w^ch is not good is not delicious/ (705) to a well
705 Co. O foolishnesse of men &c. (govern'd & wise appetite

The revised version adds lines 679–687 as a marginal insertion, the lines being written thus:

(679) why should you be so cruel to yo^r
selfe, (680) and to those daintie lims
which nature lent (681) for gentle
usage, and soft delicacy, (682) but
you invert the cov'nants of her
trust, (683) and harshly deale like an
ill borrower (684) w^th that w^ch you
receav'd on other terms (685) scorning
the unexempt condition (686) by w^ch all
mortal frailtie must subsist
(687) refreshment after toile, ease
after paine, (688) that have bin
tir'd &c.

Line 678a "poore ladie, etc.," becomes superfluous by this addition and is deleted. But these lines were written after the Br. version was made, so Br. retains 678a and does not contain 679–687. The revised version also shows changes in lines 688 and 689 which are not recorded in the Br. version and which were obviously made after the Br. version was copied. In 688, the revised MS. substitutes "have" for "hast," in 689 "have" for "hast" again, and also "but" for "heere." "Have" replaced "hast" in both cases because with 678a and its "hast" deleted, there was no longer any excuse for "hast" being retained in either line. The substitution of "but" for "heere" in 689 is necessary because of the addition to the argument of Comus (679–687). In the original version

"heere" was correct, for Comus was offering the Lady the "cordiall julep," but the interposing lines of the revised version almost lose the action, and "but" is necessary to remind us of the action.

Line 696 was revised from "hel brewd opiate" to "brewd enchantments," Milton preferring the exact statement to the very strong and extravagant statement. Lines 697-700 were omitted in the Br. version, not because they were unwritten when it was copied, but, perhaps, because the speech was too long for the lady.

We must now skip over to lines 755 and following and compare the twenty-two lines which are deleted there with the pasted leaf version. Line 672 in the pasted leaf reads, "and first behold this cordiall julep heere"; the deleted version reads "and looke upon this cordiall julep." The difference in the reading of the two lines is due to the context -- each is suited for that which it occupies. The next five lines are the same in both versions. Line 678 is the pasted leaf merely -- transposes "freindly so" as indicated in the deleted version, a judicious change, for the line, "to life freindly so, or so coole to thirst" is absurdly constructed. Line 688 is the same in both versions; line 689 is the same also, though it is revised in the deleted version: "& timely rest hast wanted heere ~~sweet Ladie~~ ~~fairest~~ virgin." "Sweet Ladie" seems out of order in any of Comus' speeches. "Fairest virgin" was changed to "faire virgin" to correct the faulty meter.

The first half of line 690 is the same in both places; the last half in the pasted leaf reads, "t'will not false traitor," while in the deleted version it reads, "stand back false traitor." The reason for the difference is that this line in the pasted leaf version is preceded by the lines which make the difference necessary. Then follow four lines

in the deleted version which are placed at 662-665 as a marginal insertion, and which, therefore, are not included in the pasted leaf version.

Line 693 of the pasted leaf is the same as in the deleted version, but the next ten lines in the deleted version are counterparts of 694-704 in the pasted leaf, but they are not exactly the same. Milton gave them form in the pasted leaf, but they are chaos in the deleted version. There is no reason to reproduce these lines here, as they may be easily inspected in the facsimile. Let it suffice to say that the form these lines take in the pasted leaf version are not so extravagant and bombastic as those in the deleted version.

Let us now return to line 707 which reads in the MS. " . . . those budge Doctors of the stoick ~~gowne~~ furre." The obvious reason for the alteration is that "furre" suggests the attitude of endurance of the Stoics.

Line 712 first read, "covering the earth wth odours, & wth fruits," then "& flocks" was written at the end of the line and "& wth" was deleted. The addition of "& flocks" made the deletion of "& wth" necessary if the meter was to be correct.

Lines 713-714 first read thus:

> cramming the seas wth spawne innumerable
> the feilds wth cattel & the aire wth fowle

"Cramming" was then deleted and "thronging" substituted in 713, and 714 was completely deleted and replaced by "but all to please & sate the curious taste." Miss Lockwood says, "Comus 713 has first 'cramming' instead of 'thronging,' and this impossible thought is followed by the still more impossible idea, expressed in a fortunately erased line [714]."[133]

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[133]Lockwood, p. 203.

It might also be said that 714 as it was first written became only filler when "& flocks" was added to 712, and the filler was replaced by a line of some substance.

In 717, "to deck her sons . . . " was the first version reading; then "to deck" was deleted and "to adorne" was substituted and deleted for "to deck." Milton preferred "to deck" because it connoted a type of extravagance which "to adorne" did not, and surely the more extravagant is to be expected from Comus.

Milton revised line 721 twice: "should in a pet of temperance feed on ~~pulse fetches~~ pulse." "Pulse" was replaced by "fetches" which alliterated with "feed," but the alliteration could not overcome the weakness of "fetches." The more vivid "pulse" was therefore restored, Milton returning to his first "inspiration."

Line 726 is a marginal insertion and a very effective addition to the thought of this passage:

725 and we should serve him as a grudging maister
726 as a penurious niggard of his wealth

The addition of 726 produced a suspension which caused 727, as it was first written, to be ambiguous in its reference:

725 and we should serve him as a grudging maister
726 as a penurious niggard of his wealth
727 living as nature's bastards not her sons

"Living" of 727 refers to "we" of 725, but with the addition of 726, "living" may refer to "his" of 726 and to "maister" of 725. The vagueness of reference was corrected by changing "living" to "& live for." But the similtude was made clearer by the deletion of "for" and the substitution of "like."

Line 730 is a marginal insertion and an extraordinary line. Its effect on this passage is to heighten Comus' extravagance by adding vivid

images to his speech. The line reads, "th' earth encumber'd & the wing'd aire dark't w^{th} plumes." It fits into the context perfectly.

Lines 732-735 are much corrected. The images of the originval version, while very good, do not compare with the images of the revised version. Milton's work here did not consist of changing the images, but rather of compressing them and vivifying them. The best way to see this is by comparing the passages

732 ~~the sea orefraught~~ the (sea / orē orefraught would heave her waters up
732a above the shoare and th'unsought diamonds
733 would so be studde the center w^{th} thire starrelight
734 were they not taken thence that they below
735 would grow enur'd to day . . .

The deletion in 732 was caused by Milton's conjecture that "the orefraught sea" was perhaps better than the construction so typical of him. The version, as shown in the MS., reads,

732 the sea orefraught would heave her waters up
732a above the shoare and th'unsought diamonds
733 would so be studde the center w^{th} thire starrlight
733a and so emblaze the forehead of y^{e} deepe
734 were they not taken thence that they below
735 would grow enured to day . . .

This version adds the line after 733, but no other changes were made. The Br. version shows a transitional stage in the revision of 733-734. It compresses 733-734 into one line: "would soe emblaze with starrs, that they belowe." The final version in the MS. changes much:

732 the sea orefraught would swell and th'unsought (diamonds
733 would so emblaze the forehead of y^{e} deepe
734 and so bestudde w^{th} starres y^{t} they below
735 would grow enur'd to light . . .

Lines 732 and 732a of the original have been compressed into one line by deleting "heave her waters up" and substituting "swell" and by deleting "above the shoare." The original line 733 is deleted and 733a replaces it, "and" in 733a being changed to "would" since the verb has been deleted

with 733. "Were they not taken thence" in 734 is deleted and replaced by "and so bestudd wth starres." In 735, "day" is deleted and "light" substituted, the more general term replacing the limited one.

The Br. version of Comus omits lines 737-755, "List Ladie . . . you are but young yet." Perhaps this passage was not included because Comus' arguments in this passage are almost overpowering. The lady defends virginity fiercely, but she (and Milton), at the time of the Br. version was written, cannot refute the arguments of this passage. The lady is supposed to have the better argument, but if this passage had been allowed to stand, she should have been defeated — simply because Milton himself had not yet found the solution. This will be elucidated later when the time is ripe. Let us remember this passage on that account.

One word in line 737 gave Milton some trouble. He first wrote, "list Ladie be not coy, nor be not cozen'd," then deleted "nor" and substituted "and," which was then deleted and "nor" restored. This is in reality a "neither — nor" sentence, and Milton's grammar was correct the first time. Indeed, he probably knew it was correct, but disliked the n-alliteration of "not — nor — not." He, therefore, broke it up by substituting "and." He then decided that he preferred the correctness with its attendant alliteration to the incorrectness, and restored "nor."

We find Milton substituting a fresher expression for a filler in line 744: "it [beauty] withers on the stalke & ~~fades away~~ with languisht head." The image is also much improved by this revision.

If Milton had allowed line 749 to stand as first written, we might well accuse him of using a vulgar (in the strict sense) description: "they had thire name from thence, coarse beetle ~~bre~~ brows." "Beetle brows" is the objectionable description; "bro" was deleted because Milton thought

he could perhaps find a better term. When it did not come, he wrote "brows." "From" was inserted to fill out the line to decasyllabic length, and in this case the filler is harmless. Let us return to the case of the vulgar description. Milton is probably the last person we should expect vulgarity from. And he does not disappoint us, for "beetle brows" is deleted as unsatisfactory and "complexions" substituted. Perhaps "complexions" is not so "colorful" as is "beetle brows," but it is not so base, either.

Line 755 begins the long passage which was deleted and used elsewhere, as has already been discussed. This line read, "thinke what, & looke upon this cordiall julep," but "& looke . . . julep" was deleted when the lines following it were deleted. It was replaced by "& be advis'd, you are but young yet." The substitution was a necessary one and any other conjecture would be superfluous.

The revision in 758 is a minute one, but it shows Milton's meticulousness. He had written, "would thinke to charme my judgement as my eyes" and so reads the Br. version. Before the MS. was sent to the printer for the 1637 edition, Milton changed "my eyes" to "m$\bar{y}$e eyes," the expansion mark indicating that the word was to read "myne," or as the editions printed it, "mine." The reason for the revision is obviously to rid the line of the <u>hiatus</u> of "my eyes."

"Not" was inserted before "charge" in 762 in the MS. because in the rush of composing, or more likely copying, it had been omitted by accident. The word is necessary to the line, for surely the Lady would not say, "impostor doe charge most innocent nature." The copyist of the Br. version anticipated the thought of this line and wrote, " . . . doe not ~~thinke~~ charge . . . "

Lines 763 and 765 were revised together, 763 causing the revision of 765. In 763 the reading was originally, "as if she ment her children should be riotosus." "Ment" was replaced by "would," a different form of the verb "wills." Then this change made possible the change in 765, "~~intends~~ means her provisions only to the good." The deletion of "ment" in 763 allowed "means" to be used here. "Means" was substituted because it is synonymous with "intends" and fits the meter better.

The Br. version of line 777 differs from the MS. only in its reading "feasts" instead of "feast." This is no more than a copying error and the sense of the line is unaffected by the plural.

Line 778 first read "but wth a sottish base ingratitude," then "a sottish" was written over and changed into "be sotted." The change was made evidently for the alliteration obtained by "but . . . besotted base . . . "

Lines 779-806 of the editions do not appear either in the Trinity MS. or in the Bridgewater version. Mr. Lewis says, " . . . in this passage . . . the whole of the Lady's exposition of the sage and serious doctrine of virginity appears for the first time in 1637, with a consequent addition to Comus' reply. This constitutes the most important single addition made in the composition of Comus, and it is one without which the tone of the mask would be different. Characteristically, it is an alteration not in the dramatic, but in the gnomic and ethical direction."[134] Mr. Lewis is correct as far as he goes. Mr. Tillyard,[135] too, believes that this passage, and others, are significant to the

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[134] Lewis, p. 174.

[135] E. M. W. Tillyard, "The Action of Comus," Studies in Milton, (New York, 1951), pp. 82-99.

interpretation of the debate between the Lady and Comus, and he believes that the revised epilogue of the 1637 edition (and the 1645 and 1673 editions) gives the solution to what is otherwise a stalemate. This passage, as well as lines 737-755 which were omitted in the Br. version, will be elucidated therefore when we study the two versions of the epilogue. The only variations in this passage among the editions are found in lines 780 and 781. In 780, the 1637 text reads "enough," 1645 reads "anough," and 1673 reads "anow." The 1645 spelling is probably the one Milton preferred; the 1637 and 1673 readings are changes due, I believe, to the printers. In 781, the 1637 edition reads, "Arme his profane tongue with reproachfull words," but 1645 and 1673 read "contemptuous" instead of "reproachfull." The change is a judicious one, for Comus was indeed "contemptuous" of the serious doctrine or virginity rather than "reproachfull" of it.

The Trinity MS. shows much change in lines 806-810. The passage as first written read thus:

806 . . . Co. Come ~~y'are too morall~~ no more
807 this is meere morall stuffe the very lees
808 & setlings of a melancholy blood
809 but this will cure all streit, one sip of this
810 will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
811 beyond ye blisse of dreams . . .[136]

The change in 806 from "y'are too morall" to "no more" not only corrects the faulty meter, but the abruptness of "Come no more" expresses superbly Comus' contempt for the Lady's "morall stuffe." "Come y'are too morall" has none of this "punch." The next stage of development of this passage shows alterations in 807 only:

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[136] "ye blisse" is inserted obviously because it had been accidentally omitted when the line was written or copied. The line makes no sense without it, and it cannot, therefore, be counted a revision.

807 your morall stuffe the very tilted lees
808 & setlings . . .

The change here leaves out the verb "is" which is to be understood. "Tilted" is inserted above the line and is no more than a filler to make the meter correct. The final stage of revision produces more change than any or all the previous revisions of this passage:

806 . . . Co. Come no more
807 this is meere moral bable, & direct
808 against the canon laws of our foundation
809 I must not suffer this, yet tis but the lees
810 and setlings of a melancholy blood
811 but this will cure all streit, one sip of this
812 will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
813 beyond y^e blisse of dreams

Line 807 in this version closely resembles that of the first version. Line 808 in this version is completely new as is the first part of 809. The last part of 809 is similar to the last part of 807 of the first version, and 810 in the final version is the same as 808 of the first. All these new lines, 807-810, are written in the margin and the original 807 and 808 are deleted in the main column of the text. Miss Lockwood overlooks or ignores the fact that the revision of this passage was not done at once but in steps. She quotes lines 806-808 as reading, "come y'are too morall this is meere morall stuffe the very lees and settlings of a melancholy blood."[137] Milton, however, never repeats the same word (i.e. "morall") in two consecutive lines without better excuse than he has here. It is obvious, therefore, that Miss Lockwood was careless in her scrutiny of this passage. Moreover, she says, "In this passage the change seems to me for the worse, certainly more technical. As is sometimes the case, he would better have kept his first inspiration."[138]

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[137] Lockwood, p. 204.

[138] Ibid., pp. 204-205.

She is obviously speaking of line 808, "against the canon laws of our foundation" when she says that this new version is more technical than the first, for the other lines are substantially the same. It is true that 808 is technical — to us, but most of the people of England in Milton's time surely understood what was meant by "canon laws." The line, and the passage, therefore, cannot be condemned for its technicality, and besides, the line is one of considerable substance and weight. I cannot, therefore, agree that the first inspiration was the better.

In line 814, Milton wrote "what have you let the false enchaunter spasse scape." The word "spasse" is unknown to me, and I conjecture that perhaps the true reading is "enchaunters passe." If so, the "s" was deleted because it was a mistake, and "passe" was deleted because it not not convey the correct meaning — escape. The Br. version of this line differs from the MS. by reading "left"[139] or "lest."[140] In either case, the copyist did not understand what he was copying.

The alteration in line 816, "w^{th}out his ^{rod} revers't" is cited by Mr. Diekhoff as being a "slight improvement (where only slight improvement-is called for) in . . . exactness."[141] This is a plausible explanation, for this is the first hint we have had that either "rod" or the "mutters" must be reversed. Thyrsis had said nothing previously to this effect — he had only warned the brothers to sieze the wand. The alliteration obtained by the change ("rod revers't") must not be overlooked, however.

In 818, "we cannot free the La. that sits heere," "sits" replaces

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[139]"Left" is the reading given by University of Illinois Facsimile, p. 332

[140]"Lest" is the reading given by the Columbia Milton, p. 557.

[141]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 754.

"remaines." The substituted word is the more exact description of the Lady's position, and also since it is a monosyllable it fits into the meter better than does "remaines."

The original reading of line 821, if not prose, is certainly not poetry: "there is another way that may be us'd." The new version reads, "some other meanes I have that may be us'd." This is not a wonderful improvement, but the poetic effect of the revised reading is somewhat better than the prose effect of the original. The Br. version follows the corrected MS. reading, but the editions read "which" for "that." The change is in keeping with the new MS. reading, for "that" goes with "way" of the original while "which" goes with "meanes" of the revision.

In line 826, Milton wrote "Sabrine is her name a virgin goddesse," deleted "goddesse" and substituted "chast," and deleted "chast" and wrote "pure." Milton's first inspiration, "goddesse," was unsuitable because Sabrina was not a goddess; "chast" was unsuitable because in this context which tells of Sabrina's flight from the "mad psuite" of her stepmother, "chast" might be misinterpreted by the audience as "chas'd." "Pure" solved both of the problems.

The 1673 reading of 829 is, "The guiltless damsel . . . " All other versions read "she" rather than "The," and the 1673 version is evidently a printer's error.

In line 831, Milton first wrote "commended her faire innocence to the floud," then deleted "floud" and substituted "stream," which was in turn deleted and replaced by "floud." One image is substituted for another more in keeping with the circumstances of Sabrina's flight from her enraged stepmother. Something of Ruskin's "pathetic fallacy" is in evidence here, but it is harmless. "Floud" also alliterates with "faire" and with

"flight" and "flowing" of the next line (832).

Lines 834 and 835 were corrected together. They first read,

834 held up thire white wrists to receave her in
835 and bore her straite to aged Nereus hall

The insertion of "straite" was made to fill out the line to decasyllabic length. The filler is harmless. Line 834 was corrected to read "pearled" for "white," and "to receave" was deleted and replaced in turn by "& carie," then "& take," and finally "& took." The change from "white" to "pearled"[142] substitutes a much fresher word for one which was somewhat worn. Both "& carie" and "& take" were deleted because they are not in the correct tense while "& took" is. In 835, "and bore" is deleted and replaced by "bearing." A dependent clause is thereby changed into a participial modifier. The line breaks up what was coming dangerously close to sing-sing:

833 the waternymphs that in the bottom playd
834 held up thire pearled wrists & took her in
835 and bore her straite to aged Nereus hall

The substitution of "bearing" changes the meter just enough to avoid monotony.

In 846, speaking of the

845 . . . ill luck signes
846 that the shrewd medling Elfe delights to make

Milton had first written "leave" and deleted it for "makes," and then deleted the "s" on "makes." The substitution of "make" blames the Elfe not only for leaving the signs but also for making them, the latter being the more blameworthy. The "s" was deleted on "makes" because it was a

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[142]The Br. reading is "peackled" meaning "spotted" or "speckled"; again the copyist misunderstood the text and wrote a word which gives a very different image from Milton's "pearled."

mistake in the first place. After 846, the MS. has a line which is undeleted but which is not included in the Br. or the editions: "and often takes our cattell wth strange pinches," (in which "wth" was deleted and restored, Milton probably intending to substitute "by" or "in" but thinking better of it.) Mr. Lewis' comment on this line is very good: "It might have come out of A Midsummer Night's Dream. It belongs to the fairy world of real popular superstition; it breathes a rusticity which has not been filtered through Theocritus and Virgil, and a supernatural which is homely — half-comic, half-feared — rather than romantic. But Milton has gone as hear that world as he chooses to go, in the preceding lines; anything more would be out of the convention in which he is writing. He can just venture on the 'urchin blasts'; 'pinches' oversteps the line drawn by literary decorum. He therefore cancels the verse."[143] Everything in this commentary is good except the last sentence: the line was not cancelled; it was omitted in Br. and the editions. The next line, 847, "which she wth precious viold liquors heales," was also omitted in Br. but not in the editions. Perhaps, Milton thought, when the Br. version was made, that both verses should be omitted but later decided that line 837 did not necessarily depend upon the line preceding for its sense but could depend on lines 844-846.

The alteration in line 839 breaks up an l-alliteration and the substituted word is more suitable in the context. The first version read,

848 for w^{ch} the shepheards at thire festivals
849 carroll her goodnesse loud in lovely layes

Then "lovely" was deleted and "rustick" took its place, substituting "as genuinely qualifying adjective for a mere line-filler."[144]

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[143]Lewis, p. 174.

[144]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 768.

Line 851 first read, "of pancies & of bonnie daffodils," then "bonnie" was marked out and "gaudie" substituted. "Bonnie" evidently did not express Milton's feeling about the flower, and, too, it is merely another line filler. But "& of" was as much line-filler as was "bonnie," so they were deleted too and replaced by "pinks &." The verse is now filled up with words of some substance: "of pancies pinks & gaudie daffadils."

Line 853 was revised much before it said exactly what Milton wished. It first read,

852 . . . . she can unlock
853 each clasping cha$^{r}_{\wedge}$me & secret holding spell

then "secret holding spell" was deleted and replaced by "melt each numing spell." Next, "melt each" was replaced by "thaw the" and "each clasping" was changed to "the clasping." When one "each" was deleted, the other "each" had to go also. "Secret holding spell" was deleted because it was prose-sounding; "melt" was deleted for the same reason, though it sounds better than the first version; the final version is best, and "thaw" is simply a more suggestive word than is melt. The two "each"'s were deleted because they suggest that perhaps <u>many</u> spells held the Lady; "the" makes it explicit that no more than <u>two</u> spells held her.

"Aide" was inserted above the line in 856, "to aide a virgin such as was her selfe" simply because it had been omitted accidentally in writing, or copying.

We find a line-filler, "in honourd vertues cause," deleted, and a somewhat better phrase, "in hard distressed need," substituted in line 857 in the MS. The Br. version is even better because it avoids the strained trisyllabic "distressed" by substituting "besettinge." In Br. this phrase is enclosed in parenthesis, probably to show that the phrase

did not modify "her selfe" (Sabrina) of the preceding line. The editions omit the parentheses but retain "besettinge."

Line 858 first read, "and adde the ~~power~~ call of some strong verse." Then "strong," a pure line-filler, was replaced by "adjuring," a much more powerful word; and in accord with this change "call" was deleted and "power" restored as being more suitable with "adjuring."

In the song Thyrsis sings to call up Sabrina, Milton wrote, 860, "Listen virgin where thou sit'st," then deleted "sit'st" for "art sitting." If "sit'st" had been suffered to stand, the verse would have become doggerel, and the rhyme word (862) would have to be "knit'st," which would make doggeral of another verse. "Art sitting" and "knitting" are infinitely better. When "art sitting" was substituted, "virgin" was also deleted because it made the meter limp. The rest of this song is uncorrected except for line 863 where Milton wrote, "t^{r}aine" and deleted it and wrote, "traine." This is only a correction of a spelling error, or rather a copying error.

In the M., lines 867-889 are spoken by Thyrsis, but in Br., Thyrsis, the elder brother and the younger brother have the passage divided among them. Thyrsis says lines 867-870, and 883-889; the elder brother says lines 871-872, 875-876, and 879-882; and the younger brother says lines 873-874, and 877-878. The reason for this variation is probably that it was better theatre to have three persons speak rather than have one person speak while two persons stood mute and unemployed.

Lines 869-874 of this invocation are written in the margin of the MS., and the addition contributes much to the beauty of the passage. The addition seems to have given Milton little trouble in the composition, for only one line has a deletion: in 871, "wrincled" is cancelled and immediately rewritten. This additional passage was surely composed after

the MS. was copied, if we accept the belief that it was copied because Milton surely would not have omitted the passage in copying from the original even if the passage had been marginal there. He was not so careless as that. Perhaps this addition was made at Lawes' suggestion so that the whole invocation would be long enough to divide up as the Br. version divides it.

Lines 879-882 in the main column are crossed out by a large "X" but the lines are retained in Br. and the editions. The reason for the deletion may well be that since these lines describe the Sirens, Parthenope and Ligea, Milton was hesitant about using them because he did not wish to suggest that either the Lady or Sabrina were comparable to the Sirens — except perhaps in beauty. The passage was too good to be omitted, however, and they were included in all other versions.

Lines 883-884 are marginal insertions and do their bit in adding to the beauty of the whole invocation.

In 886, "from thy corall-paven bed," "paven" was originally "paved." But "paved bed" is unsuitable because of the "-ed" sounds following in such quick succession.

Line 893 of Br. gives a variant spelling: "azur'd" for "azurne." The mistake is obviously the copyists. The MS. version of 894 shows two spelling corrections by Milton: "turquis" is deleted for the spelling "turkis" and "emrald" is deleted for "emrauld."

The next line, 895, first read, "that my rich wheeles inlayes." The second and final reading is, "that in the channell straies." While the image of the second is more vague than that of the first, it is also the fresher and more mystically beautiful image, excuse enough for its being.

Lines 897 and 898 in Br. give variant readings, both errors by the copyist. In 897, Br. reads, "thus I rest my printles feet"; the MS. reads "set" instead of "rest." In 898, Br. reads, "ore the Couslips head"; the MS. has "velvet" after "couslips."

In 899, "not" is inserted after "bends" probably because it had been omitted accidentally since it is necessary if this line is not to contradict line 897 thus:

897 thus I set my printlesse feet
898 ore the couslips velvet head
899 that bends as I tread

It is obvious that "not" is indispensable.

In 900, Milton wrote, "Gentle swaine at thy ~~behe~~ request." He had started to write "behest," but realizing that the invocation was in reality a plea rather than a command, "behest" was deleted before it was completely written and the correct term, "request," written instead.

The alteration in 904 seems to be a simple case of preference of one synonym for another: "Charmed" is preferred to "mag[ic]." No other reason is discernible.

Lines 907 and 911 afford two more instances of the Br. copyist's errors. In 907 where the MS. uses the singular "enchanter," Br. reads unnecessarily, "inchaunters." In 911, the MS. reads, "thus I sprinckle on thy breast," but Br. reads "thus I sprinckle on this brest," making Sabrina, it seems, sprinkle her drops on her own breast rather than on the Lady's.

In line 910, "Brightest ladie look on me," "Brightest" replaces the deleted "vertuous." Perhaps Milton felt that by this time the epithet "vertuous" when applied to the Lady was becoming a bit worn. "Bright" is a refreshing change.

Line 921 first read, "To waite on Amphitrite in her bowre," but since this is a pentameter line while the rest of the passage is tetrameter, Milton made this line fit by deleting "in her," changing "on" to "in," and adding an "s" to "Amphitrite."

In 924, one image was substituted for another when "crystall" was deleted and "brimmed" substituted in "may thy brimmed waves for this." The word "brimmed" also anticipated the next two lines which speak of the "full tribute" from a thousand streams.

In 927, "that tumble downe the snowie hills," "the" replaces "from." The change is the displacement of one connective by another which implies the hills are those of Wales rather than the hills of, say, England or Scotland. The implication is appropriate enough since the setting of the mask is Wales.

Lines 938-957 are, in the MS. spoken by Thyrsis, but in Br. the elder brother says lines 938-943, and 956-957, and Thyrsis says 944-955. This variation from the MS. was a result probably of the same motive which caused 867-889 to be divided in Br. -- it was better theatre. This division made necessary the alteration of line 938, "Come Ladie while heav'n lends us grace," since the elder brother, who speaks this line in Br., would hardly say "Come Ladie." The line was therefore revised, not without another mistake on the copyist's part:[145] "Come sister . . . "

In line 948 in the MS., "where this night are met in state," "met" replaces "come." "Met" is the more specific verb,[146] and this would seem to be the only reason for the change unless the internal t-alliteration

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[145]Br. reads: "Come ~~Lady while~~ sister while . . . " Happily, the copyist caught his error and corrected it.

[146]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 754.

of "met," "state," "gratulate," (949), and "wish't" (950), may be assigned as a legitimate motive. The revision in 956, "come let us hast the starres grow high" in which "grow" replaces "are," is another instance of the substitution of a specific verb for a vague one. In Br. & 1637, the reading is till "are," but in 1645 & 1673 "grow" replaces it.

Line 957 in the MS. reads, "But night ~~raignes~~ sitts monarch yet in the mid skie." It might seem that Milton had intended to write, "But night raignes yet in the mid skie," thus keeping the line tetrameter as those preceding it are. This conjecture is ruled out, however, on two considerations: (1) the line ends this scene and might be expected to carry a couple of extra syllables to give finality to the verse; and (2) the line begins in the left margin as though it had been intended to be final and longer than the lines preceding. It would seem, therefore, that Milton intended, when he started the line to write, "But night raignes monarch yet in the mid skie." Since "raignes monarch" is redundant, Milton deleted "raignes" and wrote "sitts."

Lines 962 and 963 must be considered together as the alterations in 962 influence those in 963. The first version read:

962 of speedier toeing, & courtly guise
963 such as Hermes did devise

The next version read:

962 of nimbler toes, & such neate guise
963 such as Hermes did devise

The appearance of "such" in 962 naturally called for its absence in 962, but Milton no doubt put off that change until 962 was revised to his satisfaction, and I too shall delay in considering it. The next revision of 962 shows "of lighter toes" replacing "of nimbler toes," and the line is written again in the right margin with an additional alteration:

"court" replaces "neate." These steps make the reading thus:

962 of lighter toes, & such court guise
963 such as Hermes did devise

At last Milton was able to revise 963, and he did so by deleting "such" and "Hermes," substituting "Mercury" and inserting "first" before "devise." The new reading thus was: "as Mercury did first devise." "Mercury" and "first" were substituted for the sake of the meter and for no other reason. They are, happily, good line-fillers. In the substituting of "of lighter toes" for the first two versions, Milton found the right concrete phrase.[147] In the substitution of "such court guise" for the other phrases it replaces, Milton gained the exactness of the second version ("such") and the rich connotations of the first version ("court guise"). It might be added that the first version, "courtly guise" is much better, simply for the rich suggestion of "courtly," than is the second version, "such neate guise."

In 971, "thire faith, thire patience, & thire truth," "patience" was deleted for "temperance," but when 975 was written ("ore sensuall folly & intemperance"), the appearance of "intemperance" there caused "temperance" in 971 to be deleted and "patience" restored.

In 973, "to a crown of Deathlesse praise," "praise" replaces "bays." The change from the concrete to the abstract, from the physical to the moral, is in harmony with the tone of the whole poem. In the left margin before this line is written, "wth" and "to" is deleted. In Br. and the editions, "with" replaces "to." The order of events is thus changed, giving the three young people their "crown" before they arrive home rather than having them receive it after they arrive. The crown, therefore, becomes spiritual or moral, not temporal as it was in the first reading.

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[147]Lockwood, p. 204.

The epilogue to Comus exists in two versions, the first deleted in the MS., the second written on a clean sheet. The first version is the basis for both the prologue and the epilogue to the Br. version of the mask, lines 976-982, 988-996, and 998-999 of the epilogue being transferred to the beginning of the poem, where they are converted, with some alterations, into a prologue. The reason was, perhaps, that Lawes thought it better to begin the mask with a song. The rest of the lines of this version remain as the epilogue.[148] Let us first note the revisions to the first version before we take up the second version and its corrections and compare the two versions.

The first line of the epilogue, 976, reads in the MS.: "To the Ocean now I fly." This reading was necessarily changed when the line was made the first line of the Br. version, and the altered verse reads: "from the heavens nowe J flye." The change was not recorded in the MS. — there was no reason for it to be recorded.

In line 979, "broad" replaces "plaine" in "up in the broad feilds of the skie." Milton evidently meant "plaine" to mean that the "feilds of the skie" were plains, but the position of "plaine" in the verse does not easily allow that meaning; it allows, rather, "homely." "Broad" gets the correct idea across, but it is the inferior word here.

After 979, the MS. has two lines crossed out:

farre beyond y^e^ earths end
where the welkin ~~elsse~~ low doth bend

The lines were deleted because they obscure the antecedent of "ther" in the next line and because they are as yet imperfectly developed. They

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[148]Let us remember that the numbering is that of 1645.

are altered somewhat and used in 1014-1015 and will be noted there.

Line 982 first read, "of Atlas & his daughters three," then "daughters" was deleted and "neeces" substituted, because, perhaps, Milton was unsure as to the correctness of "daughters." He thought, however, that "neeces" would be acceptable in any case. Next, "Atlas" was replaced by "Hesperus," and Milton was sure that he was reputed to have three daughters; "neeces" was therefore deleted and "daughters" reinstated. Perhaps the significance of the Hesperian Gardens, which will be discussed later, was the reason for the change from "Atlas" to "Hesperus" — Milton was dubious of the ability of the reference to the Gardens of Atlas to call up the prevailing allegorical associations connected with the Gardens of Hesperus.

In 990, "about the cedar'ne alleys fling," "cedar'ne" replaces "myrtle." Milton made the change because "cedar'ne" suggest the smell of cedar trees and the next line is thereby anticipated and pointed up: "nard, and casia's balmy smells." This line first read, "balme, and casia's fragrant smells," then "balme" was deleted, rewritten in the left margin, deleted again and replaced by "nard," the name of another fragrant perfume, thus leaving "balme" to be used as the adjective "balmy" replacing "fragrant."

In 992, Milton first described the rainbow as "garnisht," then as "garish," and finally as "humid." The first adjective has little to recommend it — it is too trite. The next is a superlative extravagance in reference to the rainbow. The final adjective is much fresher and much more imaginative.

In line 995, Milton wrote "then her watchet scarfe can shew," then when he wrote the next line he decided to use "watchet" in it: "yellow,

watchet, greene, & blew." To do this, "watchet" in 995 was replaced by "purfl'd," a word of different and richer meaning (an ornamented border) while "watchet" means pale or light-blue. The noticeable internal f-alliteration of "purfl'd scarfe" must not be ignored in considering this change, for many times such a device has attracted Milton's ear.

In 1012, Milton first wrote, "now my message well is don," but realizing that the spirit's activity involved more than a mere messenger service, he deleted "message" and substituted "buisnesse." But "buisnesse" failed also to give the correct shade of meaning, so it was deleted and "taske" was substituted. This word conveyed the correct meaning, but it made the line limp: "now my taske well is don." This problem was resolved by deleting "well" and inserting "smoothly" before "don."

In 1014, Milton marked two words for transposition and also transposed them:

quickly to the ~~earthe~~ (2) greene (1) earths and

The reason for the transposition seems obvious: the first word order suggests that the earth's end is green, and if we think of either north or south as the earth's end or ends, we can see the fallacy. We have no assurance, however, that Milton was thinking of north or south; he seems to be thinking of west, for the next line reads, "where the bow'd walkin slow doth bend," and the spirit previously spoke of the Hesperian Gardens which were always placed west of Europe somewhere in the middle of the Atlantic. The first conjecture, therefore, would seem to be wrong; there is but one bit of evidence left to support it. The Br. reading of this line is "earths greene end," which shows that the revision was not made until after the Br. copy was made; 1637 reverses the order[149] which shows

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[149]The second draft of the epilogue and 1645 and 1673 also transpose these words.

that the revision was made before that time. In this time lapse Milton may have forgotten that he was thinking of west when this line was first written, and when he came to revise the MS. for the 1637 edition, he thought of north (or south) rather than west, and therefore changed the word order. It is left only to be noted that 1014 and 1015 are revised versions of the two lines following 979:

farre beyond y^e^ earths end
where the welkin ~~cloth~~ doth bend

The final versions are much better than the originals both in imagery and in meter.

In 1021, the Br. copyist mistakenly wrote "you" instead of the MS. "yee," thus putting the whole epilogue on a personal basis.

Line 1023 originally read "heav'n it selfe would bow to her;" then "bow" was deleted and replaced by "stoope." This substitution is more effective since it emphasizes the great condescension heaven will suffer to aid feeble virtue.

The second draft of the epilogue follows the corrected first version from 976 to 983, though 983 was changed once in the second draft. Instead of following the first version reading of this line, Milton wrote, "where grows the right borne gold upon his native tree." Then "grows . . . gold" was deleted as though Milton decided to invert the line and make it read, "where upon his native tree grows the right borne gold." If this was the projected reading, Milton's ear and his sense told him how bad it was. He deleted the whole verse, therefore, and copied the line from the first version, "that sing about the golden tree." The second draft adds four lines at this point (after 983) which are not in the first version or in Br. but which are in all the editions. These lines read:

984 along the crisped shades and bowrs
985 revells the spruce and Jocond Spring
986 the Graces and the rosie-bosom'd Howrs
987 thither all thire bounties bring

These lines prepare for the new tone which has been slowly forming and which is soon brought into the open. But the best shall come last.

The second draft follows the first version from 989 to 995 with only one small exception: the second draft adds "that" to the beginning of 989, "that there eternall summer dwells." The addition is made only because a connective is needed to remind us that we are still hearing of the Hesperian Gardens.

The line, "yellow, watchet, greene, & blew" is written and deleted in the second draft. Perhaps Milton felt that it was superfluous, and indeed, the passage loses nothing by the absence of this line.

Line 996 in the first version read, "and drenches oft wth manna dew," but the second draft changes it to a "& drenches wth Sabaen dew," then exchanges "Sabaen" for "Elysian." Milton was working for a word here which would suggest the most, and Elysian was his final choice.

After 996 Milton inserted, marginally, the line which calls our attention to the solution which follows. This marginal parenthetic line is, "(list mortals if yo^{r} eares be true)." It was inserted here to rhyme with "dew" and because this was the only place it could be inserted. The suspension it creates helps emphasize its importance and also the importance of the passage which follows.

The second draft of the epilogue departs most radically from the first version from 999 to 1011. The alteration in the second draft of of line 999 from the first version's "where many a cherub soft reposes" to "where young Adonis oft reposes," causes this line to introduce the long awaited solution. The problem is solved in thirteen lines, but the

preparation for the solution has been gradual and has been carefully and subtly executed. The thirteen lines which give the solution are these:

999 where young Adonis oft reposes
1000 waxing well of his deepe wound
1001 in slumber soft,& on the ground
1002 sadly sits th' Assyrian Queene
1003 but farre above in spangled sheene
1004 celestial Cupid her fam'd son advanc't
1005 holds his deare Psyche sweet entranc't
1006 after her wandring labours long
1007 till free consent the gods among
1008 make her his eternall bride
1009 and from her faire unspotted side
1010 tow blissful twins are to be borne
1011 Youth & Joy: so Jove hath sworne[150]

Mr. Tillyard[151] has made a detailed study of this passage and of the preparatory passages, so I shall give only a resume here.[152] The center of the mask is to be found in the scene in which the Lady conducts the argument with Comus on the subject of chastity. The Lady professedly had the better of the argument, but some of Comus' arguments are left unanswered. The passage added to the editions whic was not contained in the MS. gives the clue to the way the debate is to be interpreted. This passage consists of an added argument by the Lady in favor of the doctrine of virginity, and Comus does not attempt to refute these new arguments. The revised epilogue then solves the problem. This is achieved by adding the Garden of Adonis passage which carries further the significance of the Garden of Hesperus portion. The Adonis passage refers to Spenser's account of the Garden of Adonis.[153] This garden consists of an outer realm

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[150]These lines are included, as indeed the whole draft is, in all the editions.

[151]E. M. W. Tillyard, pp. 82-99.

[152]Michael Macklem, (Love, Nature and Grace in Milton, Queens Quarterly, LVI, 1949, 534-547), also studies the two epilogues and comes to conclusion similar to Mr. Tillyard's.

[153]Faerie Queene, III, vi.

which is the seminary of all created things, and an inner sanctuary where Venus, mistress of the Garden, enjoys Adonis' love. Cupid and Psyche also dwell in Spenser's Garden of Adonis, and Psyche has already borne one child, Pleasure. Milton pushes the time back further, before Adonis has recovered from his wound and before Psyche has borne any children. He also places Cupid and Psyche above the Garden rather than in it, as Spenser had placed them.

The addition to the Lady's argument in favor of the doctrine of chastity would seem to conflict with the Garden of Adonis passage which seems to be opposed to that doctrine. There were, however, two prevailing meanings of the Garden of Adonis; the paradisiac and the erotic. In the deleted lines at the beginning of the mask (4a-4o) the meaning is paradisiac; in the second brother's speech at 393-397 the meaning is erotic. When the epilogue mentions the Gardens of Hesperus, therefore, the significance would naturally be either paradisiac or erotic. The first version of the epilogue contained only the paradisiac meaning. The second version included both meanings. Thus, the Garden of Adonis represents that bounty of God which Comus realizes so well, and that comeliness and order which the Lady advocates. Too, the Lady thinks that she is cast for the part of Belphoebe, a fierce virgin raised in the Garden of Adonis; Comus would have her be a Hellenore, a wanton. Neither of them sees the second meaning in the line Comus speaks when he advocates the life of pleasure: "There was another meaningin these gifts." The other meaning is the middle course — marriage. This is the reason for the allusion to Venus and Adonis and Cupid and Psyche in the new epilogue. Venus and Adonis represent life below the human level and the reproduction of such life; Cupid and Psyche represent human love. Cupid is

"celestial" because the human soul is divine.

Thus, a reconciliation between virtue and pleasure is effected, the reconciliation being just hinted in the epilogue. The Lady's resistance to Comus is not bad, as are Comus' seductions. Her resistance is good, perhaps probational, but she has not reached the final state. Having triumphed as Belphoebe, she may proceed to her true role as Amoret, the pattern of perfect married affection.

Only one other correction remains, and it is a small one. Line 1012 of the second version reads, "But now my taske is smoothly don." The first version does not include "But," and it is added here only because the solution has been given, the subject is changed, and the spirit is preparing to depart. "But" merely marks the transition.

Such are the revisions to Comus. In most cases the revised versions are improvements. The few which are not in themselves as striking as the original versions nevertheless contribute to the improvement of the poem as a whole. Thus was the tone of the mask unified, the theme sustained.

CONCLUSION

The revisions we have studied seem to tend generally in the direction of better poetry, for in almost all cases the revised line is the better line. Milton revised for vividness of expression and image, for greater poetic effect, for more effective tonal coloring, and in many cases for unity of tone throughout the poems. He was meticulous and exacting in the creation of his poetical conceptions, and as a result his poetic conceptions are the better for his careful consideration and general fastidiousness in all matters either great or tiny.

But we have yet to reconcile Milton's definition of "unpremeditation" to the revisions we have studied here (or to the revisions in any or all the poems in the Trinity Manuscript). It must be admitted that most of the revisions are for the better in both these poems. Was Milton's inspiration, or unpremeditation, at fault in the first versions then? Or must we look at this inspiration and unpremeditation in a different light? Surely the latter. Milton's "unpremeditation" can be explained in this way: the structure of a poem or of any given portion of the poem was carefully planned beforehand; his verse then flowed smoothly, though imperfectly, in parcels of ten, twenty — even forty lines until the poem or the portion was completed; then Milton went about to "pencil it over with all the curious touches of art."[154] His unpremeditation, then, was concerned with poems or portions of poems which, though planned beforehand, were composed in a spontaneous or extempore manner; his method in revision was concerned with words, phrases, and lines, sometimes passages, and was not unpremeditation, but, rather, post-meditation, as it were.

Post-meditation does not, however, rule out inspiration, else the

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[154] Reason of Church Government, II, The Student's Milton, ed. F. G. A. Patterson, p. 524.

superior quality of the revisions is unexplainable. Surely inspired words, phrase, and lines are not to be replaced by those of rational origin. The revisions must be considered, therefore, to be as much inspired or more inspired than the originals.

Milton, then, apparently wrote first drafts fluently, as he later dictated them fluently, and then he went about the business of revision. In Milton, consequently, the critical labor that Mr. Eliot speaks of accompanies, precedes, and succeeds the actual composition of a poem. Mr. Diekhoff's conclusion is that "it is to his peculiar habit of composition in long 'unpremeditated' passages that Milton owed his ability to continue writing even after his blindness: . . . if he had not been fluent in the production of a first draft, but (like Keats for example) had written line after line by false starts, hesitations, cancellations, working piece by piece toward a final form instead of writing long passages to be corrected in detail later, he would not have been able to accommodate himself to the method of dictation."[155]

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[155]Diekhoff, "Critical Activity," p. 772.

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TYPIST PAGE

THESIS TITLE: Milton's Revisions to *Lycidas* and *Comus* in the Manuscripts and the editions

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Master of Arts

Thesis: MILTON'S REVISIONS TO LYCIDAS AND COMUS IN THE MANUSCRIPTS AND THE EDITIONS

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Title of Study: Milton's Revisions to Lycidas and Comus in the Manuscripts and the Editions

Number of Pages in Study: 122

Under Direction of What Department: English

Statement of Problem: A study of Milton's revisions to Lycidas and Comus should give us some insight into the creative and critical activities of Milton's mind, aid us in perceiving how Milton fashioned his poetical conceptions, perhaps throw some light on passages which have disputed interpretations, and help us to understand in what ways Milton considered his poetry unpremeditated and inspired.

Method of Procedure: The revisions in words, phrases, lines, and sometimes passages, are studied individually in order to discover reasons for these changes. The organization of the study depends upon the line numbers of the poems, and the revisions are referred incidentally to the headings (1) vividness and clarity, (2) poetic suggestiveness, (3) tone-color, and (4) special consideration of these which do not fall under any of the first three headings.

Findings and Conclusions: The revisions generally result in better expression of ideas and images, often create emphasis by the use of various poetic devices, and in some cases unify and sustain the theme and tone of the poems better than do the original readings. Milton's professed unpremeditation may be reconciled to his practice when we realize that his unpremeditation concerned the overall structure of whole passages while the revisions concerned words, phrases, and lines; and the revisions were a case of post-meditation — pencillings of "curious touches of art" as Milton himself expressed it.

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