

Opposites Reconciled: Landscape Description in *Cooper's Hill*

Hiroshi Sasagawa

Professor of English, Chuo University

1. The Purpose of this Essay

Cooper's Hill (1642), a meditative as well as topographical poem composed by John Denham (1615-69), describes not a conventional, pastoralized landscape inherited from classical literature, but a specific, actual landscape, with the poet's thoughts on politics and world view merged into the description. Denham seems to emphasize in the poem the veracity of his thoughts by associating them with the undeniable existence of landscapes. In the political turbulence of the seventeenth-century England, which was caused by the conflict between Charles I and Parliament, he wished for the restoration of peace and order in the country. Though he was a devout Royalist, he did not desire the king to be overbearing, nor a merely palliative compromise between the two powers. He was desirous of *concordia discors* being realized in the society, and his strategy to urge its realization was to show, in a descriptive poem, that the ideal can be found not only in nature but also in society. The purpose of this research is to investigate how Denham, in *Cooper's Hill*, describes landscapes as the reflection of *concordia discors*, and to show the importance of the description of the River Thames as the power of history, which brings about *concordia discors* dynamically.

2. Different Versions of *Cooper's Hill*

Before starting to critique *Cooper's Hill*, we need to consider the fact that this poem was published five times in Denham's lifetime. The first publication was in 1642, followed by the publications in 1643, 1650, 1655 and 1668. The 1643 version is basically the same as the 1642 version, except that typographical errors are corrected probably under the supervision of Denham himself. The 1650 version is also a reprint but lacks the corrections of 1643, which suggests that it was published out of his hands. Actually he was in exile in the Continent at that time. However, the 1655 version, which does not include so many differences from the 1668 version as for them to be considered discrete editions, is different to a large extent from the previous versions. It may safely be assumed, therefore, that, somewhere between 1643 and 1655, the poem was drastically revised. Such being the case, O Hehir posits that *Cooper's Hill* has two different and independent texts, designating the 1642 version as "A" text, and the two versions after the drastic revision as "B" text (O Hehir, 1969: 25-73). We must note that the historical milieu where "A" text was produced is widely different from that of "B" text. Between

1643 and 1655 intervene the defeat of the royalists, the execution of Charles, and the appointment of Cromwell as Lord Protector.

In this paper, quotations from *Cooper's Hill* are, unless otherwise specified, based on the 1668 version, or "B" text, which is now widely read.

3. *Cooper's Hill* as a Topographical Poem

Cooper's Hill was praised enthusiastically by poets and critics in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Obviously, it is partly because of its style, particularly its effective use of heroic couplets. John Dryden, addressing his patron in the preface to his play *The Rival Ladies*, says that *Cooper's Hill* is 'a Poem which your Lordship knows for the Majesty of the Style, is, and ever will be the exact Standard of good Writing' (Dryden, 1962: 100). Pope also refers to 'Denham's Strength' as creating 'the *Easie Vigor* of a Line' along with Waller's Sweetness in *An Essay on Criticism* (Pope, 1963: 155). Although Pope himself does not make clear what 'Denham's Strength' means, Samuel Johnson interprets it as the strength which can 'convey much meaning in few words, and exhibit the sentiment with more weight than bulk' (Johnson, 2011: 79).

However, the main reason that *Cooper's Hill* occupies a crucial position in the history of English literature is that it is widely regarded as a precursor of a long list of subsequent topographical poems. Johnson's critical acumen enabled him to notice the significance of *Cooper's Hill* as a topographical poem.

"Cooper's Hill" is the work that confers upon him [John Denham] the rank and dignity of an original author. He seems to have been, at least among us, the author of a species of composition that may be denominated *local poetry*, of which the fundamental subject is some particular landscape, to be poetically described, with the addition of such embellishments as may be supplied by historical retrospection or incidental meditation. (Johnson, 2011: 77)

What Johnson defines as 'local poetry' here is poetry dealing not with nature in general but with a certain particular landscape. And to the landscape description are added 'historical retrospection or incidental meditation,' triggered by the sight of the landscape. As for the term 'local poetry' employed by Johnson, Robert Aubin suggests with good reason that 'topographical poetry' should be used instead, to avoid the ambiguity in meaning (Aubin, 1936: vii). He uses the term 'topographical' to refer to poetry describing 'specifically named actual localities,' while the term 'descriptive' is used more comprehensively to mean 'depicting nature in general.' As for Johnson's definition itself, it points out the characteristics of *Cooper's Hill*, but the poet's

'historical retrospection or incidental meditation' is too weighty to be subordinated as 'embellishments' to 'the fundamental subject.' But at the same time, it is too much to say, as Theodore Banks does, that nature description is unimportant and 'serving merely as a peg on which to hang ethical and philosophical reflections'(Banks, 1928: 48). The careful reader would find out that Denham's thoughts are so inextricably intertwined with the descriptive part that there is no telling which is 'the fundamental subject' or which is more important.

4. The Collaboration of Sight and Thought

Let us now take a look at the beginning of the poem. Denham begins *Cooper's Hill* with a manifesto for topographical poetry.

Sure there are Poets which did never dream
Upon *Parnassus*, nor did tast the stream
Of *Helicon*, we therefore may suppose
Those made not Poets, but Poets those,
And as Courts make not Kings, but the Kings the Court,
So where the Muses & their train resort,
Parnassus stands; if I can be to thee
A Poet, thou *Parnassus* art to me. (ll.1~8)

Traditionally poets have invoked the muses when composing poems, often referring to Parnassus or Helicon, where they are believed to dwell. However, Denham, at the outset of the poem, declares his breakaway from this tradition, and turns his eyes to a small hill in front of him, instead of the mythologized, well-known, and conventional landscapes extolled in classical literature. He puts an unknown but specific and actual hill above widely celebrated Parnassus or Helicon, because of the former's undeniable existence. Cooper's Hill, on which the poet stands, is located approximately 18 miles west of London, and is only about 220 feet in height. There are no characteristics in particular except that historic Runnymede plain, where Magna Carta was signed, spreads at its foot. Denham here insists that the power of making poetry lies in poets themselves, not in the muses. To support this insistence, he employs the metaphor of kings and courts, saying that the ruling power is not in the courts but in the kings. So, in this metaphor, one may say that the tenor is the relationship between the poet and the muses, and the vehicle is that between the kings and the courts. Interestingly, however, the reader will notice, in proceeding to read the poem, that the tenor-vehicle relationship is reversed, and that the question of where political power should be and

how it should be treated is made the topic of the poem. The reader will find that this poem is intrinsically political.

Standing on the hill, Denham surveys the surrounding areas with his own eyes, with his fancy reading not merely the political and social situation at that time but also a cardinal principle of nature prevailing behind the landscapes. Without his fancy, this poem would be merely descriptive. Without capturing the landscape visually first, his fancy would be groundless and less persuasive.

Nor wonder, if (advantag'd in my flight,
By taking wing from thy auspicious height)
Through untrac't ways, and aery paths I fly,
More boundless in my Fancy than my eie.... (ll.9-12)

The hill is neither too high for the poet to clearly see the landscape beneath, nor too low to detach him from mundane affairs. Its height is 'auspicious' for the promotion of the interplay between sight and thought. The poet on the hill draws up an imaginative map, by segmenting and articulating the landscapes he surveys, attending to their features, picking out points of historical significance, and reading the meanings inherent in them. The landscapes are ingeniously politicized and moralized. Associating the landscapes and his thoughts serves to add significance to the former, and persuasiveness to the latter.

5. Charles as an Emblem of Concordia Discors

Then how does Denham describe the prospect visible from the hilltop? First, he directs his eyes in the east, and St. Paul's Cathedral comes into sight. It is noteworthy that he describes the cathedral as reconciling opposites, because it is so vast and so high as to be seen as a part of both the earth and the sky. And while describing it, Denham extolls Charles I for preserving it. When Charles acceded to the throne, St Paul's Cathedral was so seriously dilapidated that it required extensive and expensive repairs. At the suggestion of William Laud, then the bishop of London, and later the Archbishop of Canterbury, Charles ordered the repairs to be made upon St. Paul's Cathedral, which was considered pivotal for preserving episcopacy. He pushed forward with the permeation of episcopacy to strengthen his rule. On the contrary, Puritans wanted episcopacy to be abolished, and presented to the House of Commons 'Root and Branch Petition,' which sought to eliminate it outright. Denham prophesies that the cathedral will stand secure despite war, time, fire, or zeal, as long as it is preserved by the best of kings, namely Charles (ll. 21-24), but it sounds rather like his wishful thinking. 'Zeal,'

mentioned by the poet as more fierce than any other potential factor of ruin, alludes to the Puritan's religious enthusiasm and their 'Root and Branch Petition.' Denham describes St. Paul's Cathedral as symbolic of its patron, Charles.

At the foot of the cathedral, the City spreads bustling with people and activity, but it is described as rather ominous. The crowd there are working restlessly and hastily, 'Some to undo, and some to be undone'(l.32). Here is an ironic expression of the Puritan doctrine of predestination, according to which some people are destined to go to heaven and others to hell, and nothing can be changed by anybody's effort or will. And the cathedral surrounded by the City parallels Charles threatened with Puritan zeal. London is a place where a power game is played between the king and the Puritans.

Next, Denham, turning his eyes in the opposite direction, looks at the hill and castle of Windsor, which he associates again with Charles, the dweller there.

Windsor the next (where *Mars* with *Venus* dwells.
Beauty with strength) above the Valley swells
Into my eye, and doth it self present
With such an easie and unforc't ascent,
That no stupendious precipice denies
Access, no horror turns away our eyes:
But such a Rise, as doth at once invite
A pleasure, and a reverence from the sight. (ll.39-46)

Unquestionably, 'Mars' refers to Charles, and 'Venus' to Henrietta Maria of France, his wife. What is emphasized here is that Windsor hill shows almost contradictory appearances. It impresses strength as well as beauty on the people who see it. It is majestic and imposing as well as approachable. But these opposing characters are unified in Windsor hill, which is treated as the emblem of its mighty master, Charles (l.47). Here it is worth considering closely the structure of the two lines within the parentheses.

... where *Mars* with *Venus* dwells,
Beauty with strength....

As Wasserman astutely observed, this couplet shows *concordia discors*, or harmony in discord, not merely in its meaning but also in its linguistic structure (Wasserman, 1959: 57-58). Needless to say, 'Mars' corresponds to 'strength,' 'Venus' to 'Beauty,' but, comparing the second half of the first line, 'Mars with Venus dwells,' and the first half of

the second line, 'Beauty with strength,' we notice that the order is intentionally transposed. The same thing occurs as regards the number of syllables of each word. In the first line, a monosyllable 'Mars' comes first, then a disyllable 'Venus,' whereas in the second line, a disyllable 'Beauty' first, then a monosyllable 'strength.' The hemistich in the first line, 'Mars with Venus dwells,' occupies the second half of the line, whereas the hemistich in the second line, 'Beauty with strength,' the first half of the line. And as a whole, these two hemistichs make up a line. And the two lines, of which these hemistichs are the part, make up an ordered couplet. So we can safely say that this chiasmic structure suggests a harmony in discord, in the respect that differences are unified as a whole.

The imagery of Charles as having opposite characters in harmony is stressed again when Denham, through the Order of the Garter, likens him to St. George, who is at once a soldier and a saint(l.110). Throughout this poem, Charles is described as an embodiment of *concordia discors*.

6. Three Crowns

However, Denham cannot confine himself to the ideal state. His mind is inclined to the ideal state, but his eyes lead him to the ruin of an abbey, which represents violence and destruction as the opposite state of *concordia discors*. He writes, 'my fixt thoughts my wandring eye betrays'(l.112). His eye and thoughts, struggling with each other, function as checks and balances, and keep him from idealistic solipsism.

What he sees is the ruin of Chertsey Abbey on St. Anne's Hill. The Benedictine foundation built in the seventh century was dissolved by Henry VIII in the sixteenth century. The destruction was caused, Denham asserts, by religious inertia, while the current threat to peace and order is excessive religious zeal by Puritans. 'Is there no temperate Region can be known, / Betwixt their Frigid, and our Torrid Zone?' he complains(ll. 139-140).

So far, the poet has described three places of political or historical significance: the City, Windsor, and St. Anne's Hill. The careful reader would note that the word 'crown' is deliberately used in the description of each place;

My eye, which swift as thought contracts the space
That lies between, and first salutes the place
Crown'd with that sacred pile....(ll. 13-15, the City)

A Crown of such Majestick towrs doth Grace
The Gods great Mother, when her heavenly race

Do homage to her....(ll. 59-61, Windsor)

But my fixt thoughts my wandring eye betrays,
Viewing a neighbouring hill, whose top of late
A Chappel crown'd, till in the Common Fate,
The adjoining Abby fell....(ll. 112-115, St. Anne's Hill)

The poet sees the City 'Crown'd' with St. Paul's Cathedral. Windsor Castle stands like 'A Crown' on the earth deified as Cybele, 'The Gods great Mother.' Chertsey Abbey 'crown'd' the top of St. Anne's Hill, but now remains as a witness to the impermanence of all worldly things. The repetition of the word 'crown' implies that the poet proposes three states of kingdom to the reader: the king threatened by his subjects' zeal, the king embodying *concordia discors*, but detached from his subjects, and the king having too much power and oppressing his people.

Flowing through, or at the foot of, all these places, the Thames relates these three states of kingdom to one another, and incorporates them into the theme of this poem: how a country should be ruled in peace and order.

7. The Thames and the Power of Harmonizing Opposites

The Thames flows right below Denham's eyes, nearer than Windsor or St. Anne's Hill, to say nothing of the City. So he could start the landscape description with the Thames. However, he chose not to, because he preferred to put the description of the Thames after that of the other three places, making the motif of the Thames more comprehensive than those of the three. They bring the importance of the Thames into prominence and are subsumed into the Thames motif. The introduction of the imagery of the Thames flowing into the sea expands the scope of the poem, and makes the landscape description assume not only political but also moral aspects. The reader is encouraged to enlarge his horizon.

My eye descending from the Hill, surveys
Where *Thames* amongst the wanton vallies strays.
Thames, the most lov'd of all the Oceans sons,
By his old Sire to his embraces runs,
Hasting to pay his tribute to the Sea,
Like mortal life to meet Eternity. (ll. 159-164)

The above quotation induces the reader to think about life, the flow of Thames

overlapping with the course of life. This is a typical example of the exquisite fusion of landscape description and thoughts. 'It is one of the greatest and most pleasing arts of descriptive poetry,' to quote Joseph Warton, 'to introduce moral sentences and instructions in an oblique and indirect manner, in places where one naturally expects only painting and amusement.' Warton thinks that it is this device that is 'the very distinguishing excellence of *Cooper's Hill*' (Warton, 1973: 387).

What needs to be noted here is that the Denham's mind does not have a lopsided propensity toward his thoughts. He does not deviate from the actual landscape in front of him, because it is his strategy to make his thoughts convincing by associating them with specific landscapes as undeniable, objective existences. It is for this reason that he exerts himself to demythologize the landscapes and then to emphasize the objectivity of their description. He does not resort to mythological landscapes. He contrasts the Thames as an actual river with the Tagus or the Pactolus, both of which are traditionally mythologized and believed to yield gold (ll.165-170). He also maintains that Narcissus would not have drowned in the Thames as it is so transparent that he would have seen not his face but the bottom of the river (ll.213-216). This denial of mythologization would remind the reader of the opening part of the poem, where the poet rejects mythologized Parnassus and Helicon. What he does in this poem is the rejection of mythologized landscapes and the stressing of the actuality and objectivity of landscapes unfolding before his eyes, which helps to make persuasive his thoughts they bring to him.

He says that the Thames, unlike the Tagus or the Pactolus, does not produce gold at all, but instead, it brings wealth to its shore. Furthermore, the wealth is not confined to its surroundings, but dispersed all over the world by overseas commerce.

Nor are his Blessings to his banks confin'd,
But free, and common, as the Sea or Wind;
When he to boast, or to disperse his stores
Full of the tributes of his grateful shores,
Visits the world, and in his flying towers
Brings home to us, and makes both *Indies* ours;
Finds wealth where 'tis, bestows it where it wants
Cities in deserts, woods in Cities plants.
So that to us no thing, no place is strange,
While his fair bosom is the worlds exchange. (ll.179-188)

Denham stresses how much prosperity a country can enjoy with the help of overseas

commerce. What has to be noticed is his assertion that export-import trade brings not just prosperity but also a harmony in disorder, namely *concordia discors*. International trade can connect both West and East Indies to England, in which they are unified. It can join places where there is much wealth to ones where wealth is lacking, and thereby can spread the wealth all over the world. Nature is brought into city, and city into nature by the Thames, which, with the function of combining heterogeneous elements harmoniously, becomes the centre of international commerce.

It is worth noting that just after the lines quoted above, Denham inserted the following lines in his own hand in the 1668 edition.

Rome only conquerd halfe the world, but trade
One commonwealth of that and her hath made
And though the sunn his beame extends to all
Yet to his neighbour sheds most liberall
Least God and Nature partiall should appeare
Commerse makes everything grow everywhere

What is claimed in this holograph interpolation is that commerce is more effective and expansive than conquest by power, and that confirms his assertion in the previous lines that the Thames will bring riches to us. Why did Denham interpolate these lines? I infer from the international situation at that time that this interpolation is not irrelevant to the fact that Dutch attacked the English fleet in the Medway in 1667, a year before the publication of the 1668 edition. It was during the Second Dutch War, and England was competing with the Netherlands for commercial supremacy in international maritime trading. Several English warships were captured or destroyed in the Medway and the Thames was blockaded. The incident devastated all the English, including Denham. During the war, international trade decreased, and people suffered from lack of commodities. And this fact might have directed his attention to the importance of international trade. The rule of force only causes friction and disorder, but international trade brings about prosperity and order. In the age of Anglo-Dutch trading rivalries, Denham insists on the necessity of expansion of maritime activity.

Another thing we should notice about the description of the Thames is that it is not just the symbol of *concordia discors*, but has the function of bringing it about dynamically. The Thames can create the state of *concordia discors* where it is absent, bringing together heterogeneous components. In this respect, the Thames is different from Charles, though both are used as the symbol of *concordia discors*. The *concordia discors* represented by the imagery of Charles is static, like a picture. This stasis of the

concordia discors implies that it cannot be restored once it has been broken, whereas the dynamism of the Thames enables *concordia discors* to be restored, even if it has been broken. And this dynamism of the *concordia discors* inherent in the Thames is exquisitely and subtly expressed in what is called the ‘Thames Couplet’(ll.191-192), the most well-known lines in this poem.

O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme!
Though deep, yet clear, though gentle, yet not dull,
Strong without rage, without ore-flowing full. (ll.189-192)

It is not until 1655 that these lines appeared in *Cooper's Hill*. They were not included in the 1642 version, which means that they were added after the execution of Charles. The corresponding part in the 1642 version is as follows;

O could my verse freely and smoothly flow,
As thy pure flood....(ll. 219-220)

In these original lines, Denham did not declare the Thames to be his own theme, though he said immediately after them that it should be the theme of poets in general(‘...thy purer streame / Should...be the Poëts Theame.’ ll.221-222). It is obvious that the revision made the lines much more impressive.

The ‘Thames Couplet’ conveys that opposing features are harmonized in the river, and that the harmonization is achieved not statically, as in the description of Charles, but so dynamically as to make us believe that *concordia discors* is restorable after temporary disorder. And this dynamism inherent in the Thames promotes the international trade mentioned above. John Dryden was the first to attract people’s attention to the excellence of the ‘Thames Couplet.’ ‘I am sure,’ he writes, ‘there are few who make Verses, have observ’d the sweetness of these two Lines in *Coopers Hill*...And there are yet fewer who can find the Reason of that sweetness’(Dryden, 1987:321). M. H. Abrams also referred to the ‘Thames Couplet,’ saying ‘In these lines the metaphysical wit has been tamed and ordered into the “true wit” which became the eighteenth-century ideal’(Abrams, 1984: 86).

Then, let us take a close look at the ‘Thames Couplet’ from a prosodic standpoint.

Though déep, yét cléar, / though géntle, yét nót dúll,
Strong without ráge, / without ore-flowing fúll.

As for the first line, both the first and the second hemistichs combine opposing features with adversative conjunctions ('though' and 'yet'), following the same style. But at the same time, the first and the second hemistichs are different in that the latter includes 'not.' Besides, the first hemistich has only four syllables, while the second six. So in the first line, the first and the second hemistichs have the same style, making a harmonious whole, though including differences. Similarly, in the second line, the first and the second hemistichs are the same in combining opposing features and using adversative preposition('without'), but different in the word order and the number of syllables. In the first hemistich, the without-phrase comes second, while in the second hemistichs the without-phrase comes first. So the second line, 'Strong without rage, without ore-flowing full,' has a chiasmic structure, as in the description of Windsor Hill. However, we can see that this chiasmus is more effective, because this structure here suggests trading activities, that is, the going out and the coming in of goods, the import and the export, whose importance in the development of a nation was stressed in the previous lines. This structure can be said to be a linguistic expression of trade. As for the couplet as a whole, it consists of two lines which are of the same style, though having differences, and each line has again two hemistichs which are of the same style though having differences. They are, as a whole, harmonized into a so-called heroic couplet, each line having five iambic feet, and being rhymed with each other at the end. So we can safely say that this couplet reflects linguistically as well as semantically *concordia discors*, where not homogeneous, but heterogeneous elements are unified harmoniously. One more thing I need to mention about this couplet is that the second line has an anomaly at the beginning. According to the meter, an unstressed syllable should be followed by a stressed syllable, but here the stressed comes first. By this inversion of stressed and unstressed syllables, we notice that the word 'Strong' is highlighted, and hence the feature (strength) is thought to be a dominant one. This implies that the Thames representing the state of *concordia discors* has a strong power, unlike Charles.

8. The Meandering Thames, or the Dynamism of History

Now the poet's eyes are turned to Windsor Forest, through which the Thames flows. There, his mind reads discordant elements united by the power of Nature.

While driness moysture, coldness heat resists
 All that we have, and that we are, subsists.
 While the steep horrid roughness of the Wood

Strives with the gentle calmness of the flood.
Such huge extreams when Nature doth unite,
Wonder from thence results, from thence delight (ll. 207-212)

What is described here is the striking contrast between the calm Thames and the rough Windsor Forest. Based on Empedocles's theory of nature, Denham contends that not only our possessions but our being as well is under the influence of conflicting elements, and the state of conflict is represented symbolically in the view of Windsor Forest and the Thames. However different the elements may be, Denham says, Nature can unite them, which brings us wonder and delight.

It is noteworthy that the function of the Thames here has shifted from that in the Thames Couplets. In the 'Thames Couplet,' as I have said earlier, the river was not only the state of *concordia discors* but also the power of producing it. However, here, it is degraded to one of the conflicting components making up *concordia discors*. Later in this poem, Denham uses the image of the Thames to represent the populace, with which Cooper's Hill as the king is expected to make up *concordia discors*. Obviously what the Thames represents in the poem is redefined. Wasserman thinks this redefinition to be unfortunate for the artistry of the poem, as it is an inconsistency in the Thames imagery (Wasserman, 1959: 70-71). However, it seems to me that this alteration of the meaning of the Thames does not depreciate the value of this poem. Indeed the meaning of the Thames changes in the course of the poem, but the Thames is always described as conducive for *concordia discors*, whether it functions as part of *concordia discors* or the power of *concordia discors*. It appears to be unstable, but it is dynamically stable, as the Thames Couplet defines the Thames as dynamically improving. As a river changes while flowing, but the river itself continues existing, so the meaning of the Thames changes, but it continues contributing toward making *concordia discors*. The function of the Thames in *Cooper's Hill* is fluid, flexible, and dynamic, like a real river. This fluidity contrasts with the stasis of the image of Charles.

These considerations direct attention to the concluding part of *Cooper's Hill*, where a river metaphor recurs.

When a calm River rais'd with sudden rains,
Or Snows dissolv'd, oreflows th'adjoyning Plains,
The Husbandmen with high-rais'd banks secure
Their greedy hopes, and this he can endure.
But if with Bays and Dams they strive to force
His channel to a new, or narrow course;

No longer then within his banks he dwells,
First to a Torrent, then a Deluge swells:
Stronger, and fiercer by restraint he roars,
And knows no bound, but makes his power his shores. (ll. 349-358)

Denham warns here that, though it is acceptable to make banks higher against a swollen river, people will be seriously damaged if they try to change the course of the river by force. Then what does the river stand for? The fact is that these lines were originally not the concluding part, but preceded the part which says explicitly that neither kings nor their subjects should go to extremes, in the previous versions. So, in that context, the river obviously stands for a king. But put at the end of the poem, these lines begin to function as a conclusion of the whole poem. Therefore the river here can refer the reader back to the one in the 'Thames Couplet,' which deals with the dominant theme of this poem. Hence, the river here can be construed as *concordia discors* itself, or the power of bringing it about. We can say that the meaning of the river can change as flexibly and fluidly as if an actual river flowed.

After surveying Windsor Forest, Denham's eyes focus on Egham Mead, which then prompts him to tell an allegory of a stag hunt (ll. 241-323). In the allegory, we are shown a king hunting a fully grown male deer. The stag runs away and resists, until at last, when he is driven at bay, and sees the king, he 'begs his Fate' and is killed voluntarily. The 1642 version, which was written before the execution of Charles, showed explicitly that the king was Charles himself, with the stag being obliquely associated with the Earl of Strafford. But in the 1655 version, which was written after the execution of Charles and the appointment of Cromwell as Lord Protector, the name 'Charles' is suppressed, and the general word 'the King' is used instead. With this revision, the passage becomes susceptible of another interpretation; the king as a hunter is Cromwell, who acquired as much power as the king, and the stag Charles. What we should notice is that this revision can be thought to be calculated equivocation, and Denham did not rub out the previous expression completely, while deleting the name of Charles, so that the previous meaning might still appear. So this rewritten part, or the palimpsest, shows the hunter can always be the hunted. This is the dynamism of history, which corresponds with the dynamism of the Thames. What this implies is that, even if *concordia discors* should be lost temporarily, it can be restored in the long term. This is why Denham refers to Magna Carta immediately after this stag hunt allegory.

Denham writes that there was another hunt, which was more serious than the hunt above. What he refers to is the fact that Magna Carta was in danger of being rescinded after being agreed on. Denham compares Magna Carta to 'Fair Liberty pursu'd, and

meant a Prey / To lawless power'(ll. 325-326). In the history of England, there were times when kings were too strong. There were also times when the populace was too strong. Reviewing the history of England in retrospect, Denham recognizes the value of Magna Carta, by which the king and his subjects can be unified harmoniously like *concordia discors*, so he prays that Magna Carta may be respected and obeyed again, believing in the dynamism of history

In the political and social disorder, Denham longed for peace and order to be restored in the country. At first he expected King Charles to restore peace, and idealized him as an embodiment of *concordia discors*. Charles was described as an ideal being unifying opposing features throughout the poem, and Denham saw in Charles the ideal state of a country. However, the execution of Charles might have awakened Denham to the fragility of such static *concordia discors* as was represented by the imagery of Charles. Moreover, the *concordia discors* represented by the imagery of Charles does not involve the populace. So once the people acquire too much power, it cannot help being threatened. Denham became conscious how precarious the *concordia discors* was. Indeed Charles as an ideal leader was executed by people with too much power. Then, by revising the poem, Denham shifted the focus from Charles to the Thames, and tried to detect the dynamic *concordia discors* in it. The imagery of the River Thames is crucial because it is described, linguistically as well as semantically, as the power of history, which brings about *concordia discors* dynamically.

«Note»

For quotations from Cooper's Hill, I used Brendan O Hehir's *Expans'd Hieroglyphicks: A Critical Edition of Sir John Denham's Coopers Hill* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

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