Continent, Interrupted: Insularity and Adjacency in William Daniell's Voyage Round Great Britain

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Philip Allott has written: "Britain's oddness is Britain's oldest tradition."[1] Britain's status as an island has often been equated with the oddness, or deployed to explain it, as if that were an unproblematic truism.[2] In his essay "Insular Outsider," the historian Keith Robbins remarked that "insularity is such a fundamental determinant of British history that it is surprising how little attention historians have paid to it. In century after century, we can find expressions of pride in the mere fact of belonging to a 'sea-girt' country."[3] The now uncommon English word "girt," meaning surrounded or enclosed by, is closely related to the word "gird," a verb associated with gripping, supporting, or fastening, and "girth," a noun referring to the circumference of an object. All of these words connote stoutness, heft, or strength; it is not surprising that a "girder" refers to a supporting beam, made of wood or metal, sturdy enough to hold up a building.[4]

A "sea-girt" coast, then, suggested an unbroken protective barrier, its strength amounting to a matter of national security, or indeed forming a guarantee of national integrity against foreign incursion. The single most influential account of British nationalism, the historian Linda Colley's *Britons: Forging the Nation,* emphasizes throughout the binary opposition of Britain and France, Protestant and Catholic, constitutional monarchy and (allegedly) despotism or authoritarianism.[5] Events "on the Continent" were by definition not considered British events.

There is some danger, however, of reporting such attitudes in a way that reifies them or implies that they were inevitable. Caution is particularly important now, following Britain's vote to leave the European Union. It would be easy to point to the apocryphal newspaper headline FOG IN CHANNEL – CONTINENT CUT OFF, or even Shakespeare's verses about a providentially isolated "scepter'd isle," and interpret them as foreshadowings of anti-Brussels rhetoric, and ultimately of Brexit.[6] One obligation of scholarship in the post-Brexit era will be, instead, to critically interrogate ideas about insularity, and identify exceptions and divergent ways of understanding Britain's physical location and special character. My objective here is to complicate our picture of insularity, and of British attitudes toward insularity in particular.

In the summer of 1813, the artist William Daniell (1769–1837) set out from Land's End at the western tip of Cornwall with the intention of walking, riding, or sailing around the entire coastline of England, Wales, and Scotland in a great clockwise itinerary. Longman published the *Voyage Round Great Britain*, describing six separate summers of travel, in eight volumes over a period of eleven years (1814–1825). The historian Alain Corbin, in his influential work

The Lure of the Sea, discussed Daniell briefly, suggesting that his "exhaustive survey of the British coasts" was "driven by a need to circumscribe the nation's territory" amounting to "a hymn to the insularity of a nation that had just overcome terrible trials."[7] Corbin did not adduce any evidence or context for this interpretation of Daniell's work.

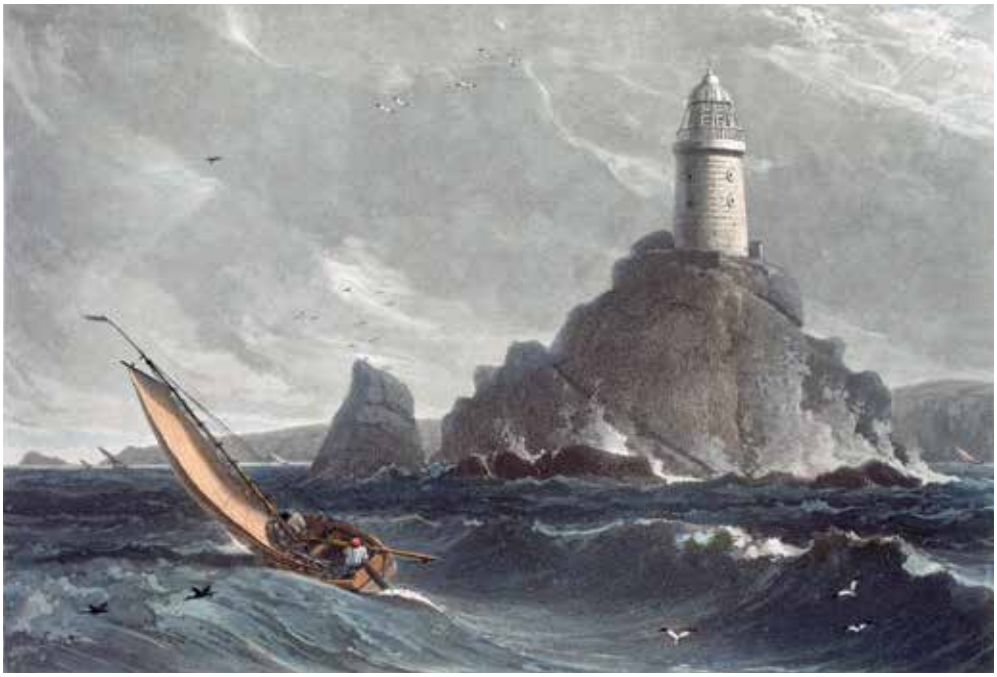
In this article, I will argue that the *Voyage* did quite the opposite, producing a vision of Britain that was anything but inward-looking. Having crossed oceans himself, the artist was unable to forget the ways that water connects, rather than separates.[8] Daniell's Britain was susceptible at every point to outside influences, a series of fragments rather than one coherent island, a European archipelago rather than a truly insular entity. Perambulating around the coastal margins caused Daniell to reflect upon every historical instance of invasion and immigration, along with scores of outside influences, religious and commercial. British history, viewed from the coastline, emerged as not meaningfully insular.[9] Similarly, the sweeping migratory movements of fish and birds across the Arctic, Eurasia, and Africa served to remind Daniell that many of Britain's nonhuman residents were not, in any real sense, British. Daniell's coast was all surface and no interior, more about adjacency than insularity. A sustained, thoughtful engagement with the coastline, then, taught exactly the opposite lesson than the "circumscribed" one suggested by Corbin.

DANIELL IN CONTEXT

Daniell has attracted some attention from scholars, although coverage has been brief and scattered, focusing on disparate aspects of the work rather than considering it as a whole. Local historians draw on a single illustration depicting their region of the coast, for example. Art historians acknowledge Daniell's technical mastery of the aquatint, but rarely consider the purpose behind the project itself. The Tate Gallery re-issued a facsimile of the *Voyage* in 1978; its Introduction, however, emphasized the fresh and witty prose of Richard Ayton, Daniell's collaborator on the first two volumes. Ayton was removed from the project after that, apparently because the publisher wanted more pictures and less text.[10] Daniell lacked his collaborator's sense of humor, and after Ayton's departure, genuflections toward famous writers or "experts" such as Sir Walter Scott became much more frequent. It would be a mistake to conclude that the artist had little to say, however. Daniell was personally responsible for seeing through the bulk of the *Voyage* (volumes three through eight).

There was no clear statement in the first volume about what the artist and his companion expected to find. Was it simply a hunt for novel scenery? The art historian Charlotte Klonk has emphasized the intention "of depicting and noting what had hitherto been neglected" given that "coastal scenes were rarely depicted in the late eighteenth century, and then only in so far as they contained natural curiosities or castles."[11] Daniell's family background did include two prominent artists who gained fame for taking risks and crossing oceans. Indeed, in the company of his uncle Thomas (1749–1840), William himself spent nine and a half years abroad in India and China, and his teenage journey to India extended to Kashmir and the fringes of the Himalayas. It is not difficult to imagine how pacing his own island's boundaries could have appealed to the middle-aged Daniell as a suitably inward-looking sequel to his youthful wanderings on distant continents.

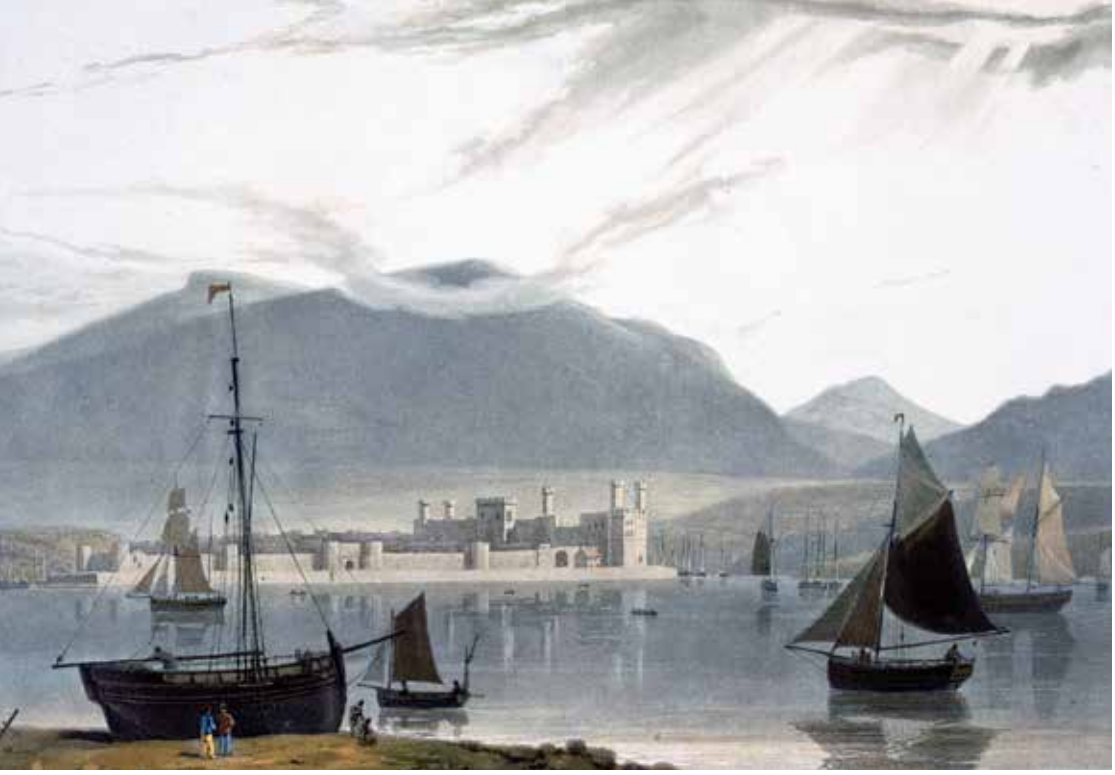
The literary scholar Rachel Crawford does not discuss Daniell's work as such, but she has drawn attention to the introverted "bower poems" that were popular in the period when Daniell first undertook his project. These poems expressed landscape in terms of small,



The Longships Lighthouse off the Land's End, Cornwall, 1814. Photo: Heritage Image Partnership Ltd. / Alamy Stock Photo.

enclosed spaces hemmed in by dense vegetation.[12] For example, in John Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" (1819) we read of "verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways," while in S. T. Coleridge's "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" (1797) the poet glimpsed a broader vista but ended delightfully absorbed in the details of his immediate surroundings: "a deep radiance lay / Full on the ancient ivy… still the solitary humble-bee / Sings in the bean-flower!" In this same period, poets and artists in pursuit of the quintessential British landscape sang the praises of inland precincts like the Lake District and Wales' Wye Valley. Thus, coastal scenery promised novelty in two senses: It was not yet familiar, and pictures of its fresh, wind-swept openness could provoke different thoughts and feelings than contemplating a sheltered bower, vale, or grotto.

My concern, however, is not with situating the *Voyage* in relation to Romantic poetry or the Age of Sensibility, but to draw attention to the scale and ambition of the work – the complete set contained 308 colored aquatint illustrations and 899 pages of text – establishing its status as probably the longest sustained exposition on the condition of islandness ever published in the English language. It also deserves attention as the first in a long line of circumnavigation or circumambulation narratives. This genre is by now a familiar way to approach the British Isles, with well-known contributions by Paul Theroux, Jonathan Raban, and more recently by the photographer Quintin Lake and the historian David Gange.[13] Daniell, however, was the first to conceptualize, elucidate, and execute a journey around rather than a journey within. Despite this, no scholar has written about the overall design of the *Voyage*, or inquired how Daniell's perception of islandness may have matured or evolved in the course of executing the project.



View of Caemarvon Castle from Anglesea, Wales, 1814. Photo: Heritage Image Partnership Ltd. / Alamy Stock Photo.

WALKING THE ARCHIPELAGO

Books based on itineraries, of course, already formed a familiar feature of the publishing landscape. Daniell's *Voyage* seemed well-timed and marketable at first, though subsequent events undermined its appeal. During the Napoleonic Wars, Britons who possessed the money, leisure, and inclination for travel had been – for all practical purposes – barred from the Continent for a generation, unless they visited in uniform. Memories of the Grand Tour remained vivid, however, and left behind an appetite for scenic ruins and rugged landscapes. In 1813, Daniell could have anticipated a market for any writer whose itinerary demonstrated that novelties, particularly these sorts of novelties, still existed within the confines of what some, after decades of war, had begun to call their "island prison."[14] However, peace broke out when the *Voyage* was still at an early stage, unleashing – "like a second irruption of the Goths" – an exodus of tourists headed for France and Italy.[15] This unfortunate timing did not dissuade Daniell from following through and completing the arduous task of circumambulating Great Britain.

To complete his itinerary, the artist had to switch from foot travel to boats to horses and back again, many times in succession. Although coaching enjoyed a golden age in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the mail and passenger routes did not often run along the shore. Therefore, reaching a particular spot on the coast might not be difficult, but actually following the coastline was a logistical nightmare.[16] Daniell had to hire local guides to help him negotiate obstacles such as quicksand, dangerous tides, and deep deposits of shingle (loose rock). On one stretch of the Kentish coast, the locals had improvised "shingle shoes," on the model of snowshoes, to hasten their "tedious and fatiguing" progress along the shore.[17] In many areas of the coast, there were no hotels of any description. The artist could not reasonably expect many of his

readers to follow in his footsteps, at least not until the transportation and hospitality industries had advanced considerably. It is difficult to imagine even short stretches of the *Voyage* as a plausible itinerary for a pleasure-seeking tourist in the 1810s or 1820s. At a cost of £60 for a complete eight-volume set, Daniell's opus should be understood as a resource for the affluent armchair traveler.[18] It was calculated to inspire contemplation rather than imitation.

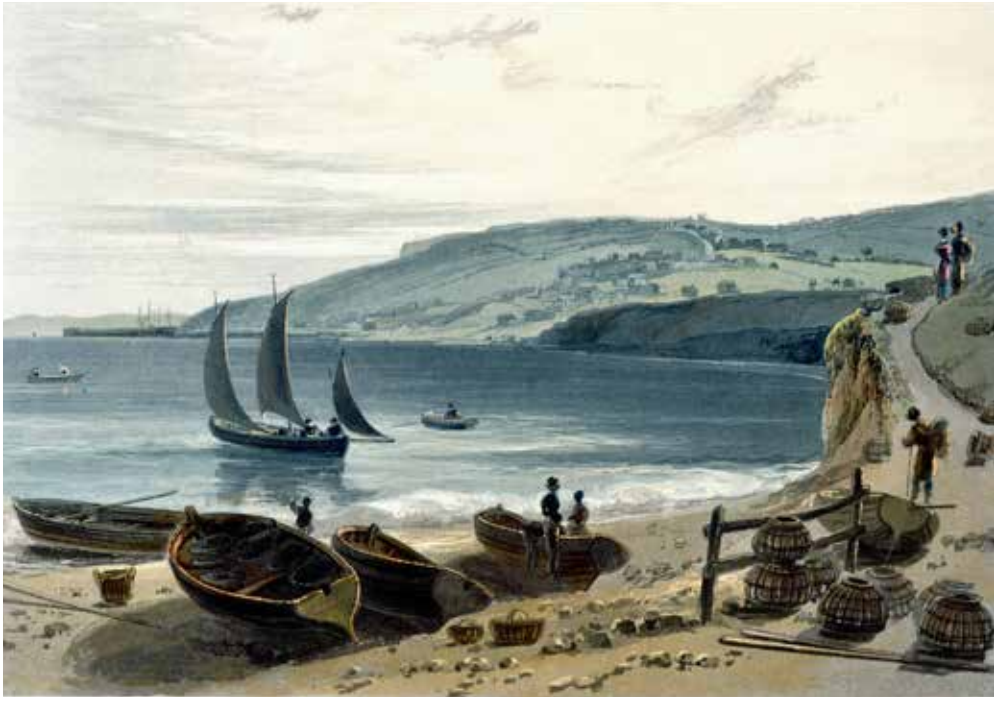
What lessons could Daniell's readers expect to find in the *Voyage Round Great Britain*? The title itself promised readers that they would gain insight into Britain by examining it from every possible (coastal) angle. This, immediately, raised a problem of definition: What was Britain exactly? Daniell included England, Scotland and Wales, but did not segregate them into separate volumes. This boundary-blurring approach resembled that of the influential Welsh travel writer Thomas Pennant, who took the term "North Britain" quite seriously (his *Tour of Scotland* actually began in the English town of Chester and included travel through much of the north of England).[19] The great circular itinerary of Daniell's *Voyage* took this principle even further than Pennant had; volume six, for example, began on the east coast of Scotland, but extended down the English coast as far as the mouth of the Thames.[20] The physical continuity of the coastline, then, was complemented by the continuity of the narrative. This offers one explanation for the exclusion of Ireland from "Britain." In fact, Daniell attempted to add Ireland to the *Voyage* after the eight volumes were complete, but although he spent a month there in 1828 and produced at least twenty-six drawings of coastal locations, none of this material was ever published.[21] This unfinished effort does suggest that Daniell's personal vision of Britain was more complicated than a notion of a single, continuous "home" island.[22]

Daniell's uncertainty about Ireland demonstrated that Britain was not an entity with completely straightforward, natural boundaries after all. Britain's coastline could be considered as a triangle defined by Land's End, the extreme southwestern point, John O'Groats in the farthest north, and the cliffs of Dover in the southeast. Daniell's actual route complicated that picture with a number of sub-itineraries. The artist left the main island to circumnavigate three other good-sized islands: Wight (in the English Channel), Anglesey (separated from Wales by the Menai Strait), and Orkney (just to the north of Scotland). Both Anglesey and Orkney included numerous smaller islets and "stacks," lengthening the itinerary further. The Hebrides, too, included many minute fragmentary pieces of land, some of which – like Iona and Staffa – were so well-known that they, too, became obligatory stops on the *Voyage*. Lighthouses drew Daniell even further afield, sometimes to isolated rocks far out at sea. The Isle of Portland, famous for its quarries, was connected to the mainland only by Chesil Bank, a "bed of pebbles" extending for seventeen miles.[23] Daniell stated that the eccentric, intermarrying inhabitants of the tiny Isle of Portland constituted "a distinct race," undermining the idea of a single island race that included all Britons.[24] Geographically, Britain was not an island, but a fragmented group of islands of varying size.

Once Daniell began complicating his path, a host of possibilities arose, each with their own implications for his definition of what counted as British. He did not follow a consistent method in resolving these problems, or explain his exclusions to his readers. Guernsey and Jersey did not appear in the *Voyage*, probably because they were closer to France than to the English coast (and the population was French-speaking). Yet Daniell himself admitted that the Isle of Man was visible from St. Bee's Head in Cumbria. He could have reached it easily. Should readers have understood Daniell's exclusion of the Isle of Man as a statement that Manx culture was inherently

not British enough? What about the Shetland Islands (omitted), immediately to the north of the Orkney Islands (included)? Daniell characterized Orkney as "the coronet of Great Britain," a reference apparently to the islands' shape and position rather than to any particular merit they might possess.[25] This statement suggested that Daniell was proceeding from a well-defined sense of where Britain started and stopped, complete with a crown (Orkney) that provided a definitive (and ornamental) closure. Yet Sir Walter Scott's memorandum to Daniell – advising him about scenic locations in Scotland – actually included Shetland, along with Orkney, in the proposed itinerary. In fact, Scott supplied detailed instructions about seven or eight particular vistas in these northern islands that deserved inclusion.[26] There was, then, more than a little arbitrariness about what counted as "Britain" in the *Voyage*.

This tension and uncertainty was inherent in Daniell's unusual idea of learning about Britain by systematically examining its entire exterior; it naturally led him to places whose Britishness was open to dispute. What was even more remarkable about the *Voyage*, considered both in terms of Daniell's own generation as well as the longue durée of writings about Britain and Britishness, was that he had removed the island's heart, with unpredictable consequences. What would Britain look like without Oxford and Cambridge? Without a tour of a factory, or a visit to Manchester and Birmingham?[27] Daniell even omitted London (a major port city, and thus arguably a coastal feature). There was no precedent for this. Even Daniel Defoe organized his *Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724-6) as a series of small circular itineraries that encountered the coastline, only to veer back inland



Lyme Regis, from Charmouth, Dorset, 1814–1825. Photo: Heritage Image Partnership Ltd. / Alamy Stock Photo.

again and again. As Pat Rogers has observed, Defoe's interest in the economic power of London (within England) and England (within Britain) led him to undervalue the margins and emphasize the role of "centripetal" and homogenizing forces.[28] Daniell's *Voyage*, in contrast, depicted Britain without any center at all. In consequence, it offered no standard of authenticity against which Daniell – or anyone else – might measure a peripheral region's Britishness.

A NEIGHBORLY ISLAND

The most fundamental myth of nationalism is the coherence of the national unit. It is imagined as something both natural and obvious. On a map, the crisp coastal silhouette appears definitive; indeed, it provides the clearest picture that we can have "of" any nation in its entirety. Daniell's coastal Britain, however, was fragmented, discontinuous, and marked by invasions animal, vegetable, and historical. His close examination of its crumbling, penetrable shoreline in volume after volume only reinforced this picture of incursions and intrusions.

The uncertainty of coastlines drew Daniell's attention on many occasions in the *Voyage*; the sea had retreated in some places, leaving ancient port cities some miles inland. Elsewhere, the sea was in the process of obliterating famous landmarks. On the Isle of Wight, Daniell admired the steep ravines known locally as "chines," but he also noted that the lovely scenery was undergoing an unsettling process of transformation. On its southern coastline, the rocks known as "The Needles" had been sharp, slender, and prominent, rising as much as 120 feet above high-water mark. This imposing formation was, however, composed of chalk, and about sixty years before Daniell visited, having been "undermined" by the sea, the tallest Needle "fell with a tremendous crash." The artist complained that the Needles were now "destitute of any affinity with their name" and now "appear diminutive and insignificant," rather like small teeth protruding above the waves.[29]

The Isle of Wight was itself the product of a similar destructive process; in ancient times, Greek traders had once moved tin in carts across a narrow isthmus connecting Wight to the mainland. It had only become an island within the span of recorded history.[30] The erosion of Wight continued in Daniell's lifetime. He visited the site of a number of spectacular "land-slips." The most extraordinary of these was an entire farm of 100 acres, which had slid toward the shore for two days in February 1799, "until its progress was arrested by a ridge of rocks." Daniell was told that after this event, "rocks and trees shifted their positions… scarcely a square yard of ground remained in its former relative situation."[31] The picturesque chines that Daniell admired were, themselves, evidence of the Isle of Wight's slow, crumbling dissolution.

Thomas Pennant, Daniell's influential predecessor, liked to use an ancient tree – a tangible, organic, continuous growth, rooted in soil and rock – as a metaphor for the British past.[32] Yet the coastline itself hardly presented a picture of permanence or rootedness. Its most obvious non-human inhabitants--fish and birds--did not lend themselves to nationalist fictions either. Daniell was familiar with Thomas Bewick's *History of British Birds,* which (despite its nationally-specific title) expanded the consciousness of its readers to include the arctic and subarctic region stretching across from Siberia and Spitsbergen over to Greenland and Hudson's Bay. The Shetland and Orkney Islands, as well as the Hebrides, formed just the southernmost fringe of this great breeding ground for birds and fish. Bewick explained how "the finny tribes" issued forth from these regions "to restock all the watery world of the northern hemisphere,"

and swarms of birds shadowed them.[33] He also observed that many nominally "British" birds spent part of the year in warmer climes, such as Egypt and the southern parts of Russia:

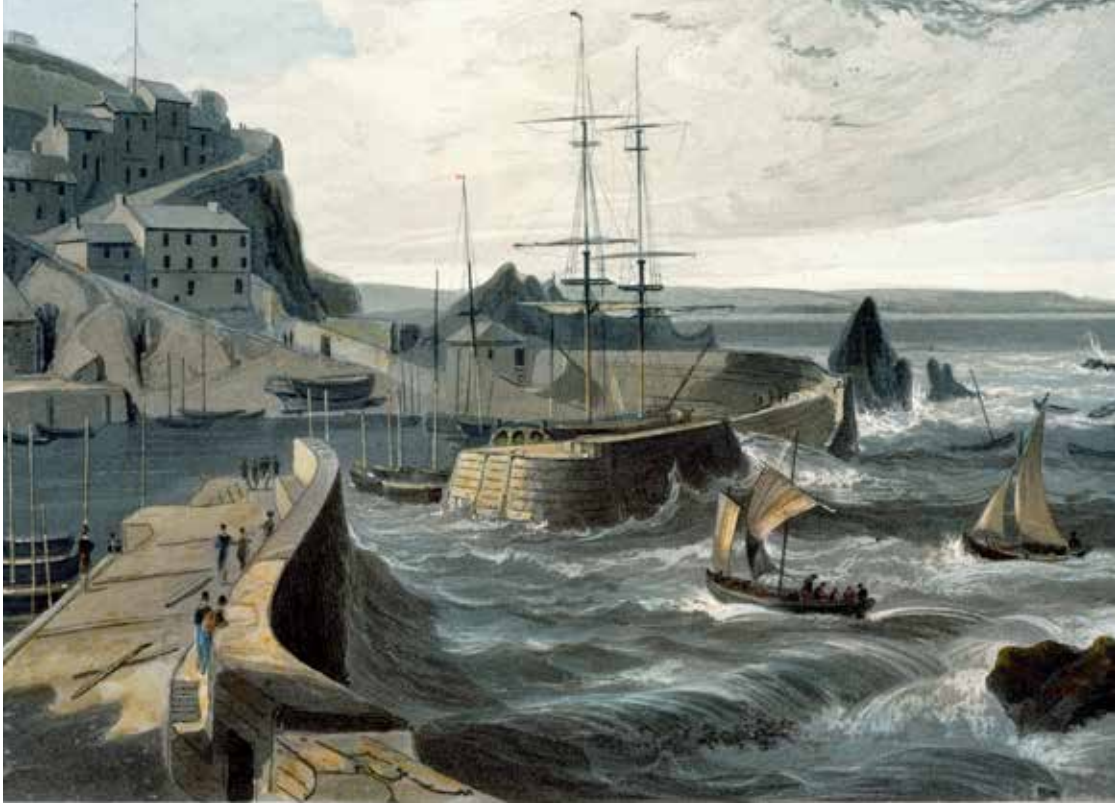
"let the imagination picture to itself countless multitudes of birds, wafted, like the clouds, around the globe, which in ceaseless revolutions turns its convexities to and from the sun, causing thereby a perpetual succession of day and night, summer and winter, and these migrators will be seen to follow its course, and to traverse both hemispheres from pole to pole."[34]

Daniell's little island was connected not only by water, but also by air, to an entire planet teeming with cosmopolitan wildlife. Britain was a resting place, a rendezvous, or at best a breeding ground for most of the coastal birds, who did indeed resemble clouds in their footloose wanderings.

These "foreign" birds first made landfall, of course, on Britain's coastline. Some arrived with a flourish, like invaders. Daniell related how, in the midst of a terrific gale one February, a woodcock made an unexpected assault on the Bell Rock lighthouse, a lonely point some miles offshore from Dundee. Despite its sylvan name, woodcock were (and are) migratory birds; this particular woodcock was about to complete a heroic flight "of perhaps four hundred and fifty miles from the opposite coast of Norway" when it collided with the reinforced plate glass of the lighthouse. The glass was a quarter inch thick, but the bird "went through it like a shot" and even did damage to several of the reflectors inside the lighthouse before it died. It was three o'clock in the morning, and the lighthouse keeper, started awake, imagined that "the whole house was breaking up." During that same great storm, a lighthouse keeper in Orkney experienced a similar avian invasion, but in that case the bird that came crashing through the glass was a wild duck of a species altogether unknown. Daniell observed that "scarcely a winter passes" on the northern lighthouse stations without sightings of this kind, although outright collisions with the windows were, happily, uncommon.[35]

Perhaps the only bird described in Daniell's *Voyage* that exhibited anything like a parochial spirit was the puffin. The artist encountered this "grotesque" fowl in Wales, on a visit to the Skerries, a group of rocky outcroppings more than a mile from shore in Holyhead Bay. They are described in the second volume, when Ayton still supplied Daniell's text. These squat birds dug holes in the ground (deep enough for a man to extend his arm up to the shoulder) to lay their eggs. Puffins had a reputation for being combative; their beaks were likened to a lobster's claw, and they were known to expel rabbits, taking over the holes already excavated by the mammals. Ayton made the mistake of putting a finger within the reach of a captive puffin; he "had a bit of it cut away as cleanly as if it had been done with a pair of scissars."[36] Puffins would "defend their holes to the last extremity," making an enraged bleating noise akin to "the efforts of a dumb man to speak."[37] In a culture that admired the pugnacity of bulldogs, and had just fought a long war to defend the integrity of the homeland, this hearty (if inarticulate) creature would seem to have been a suitable candidate for the British national bird; yet the puffins did not stay. They only bred on the Skerries, defending their turf from April through the twelfth or thirteenth of August each year, upon which "the whole swarm [vanished] on a certain day, to a single bird."[38] Thus, even the irascible, short-winged puffin, with its rabbit-like burrowing habits, came to Britain only for a season.

If insularity meant anything, then, that meaning would have to come from the human experience in Britain; migratory fowl and inconstant coastlines offered no assurances. As Linda Colley has observed, one key factor lending coherence to the diverse regions and peoples of Britain was a shared sense of Protestant mission.[39] While Ireland did not appear in Daniell's itinerary, antiquarian refer-



Mevagissey, Cornwall, 1825. Photo: Heritage Image Partnership Ltd. / Alamy Stock Photo.

ences to early Christianity inevitably brought up monks who had arrived on the west coast of Britain from Ireland, or (like St. Patrick) whose life story crisscrossed the Irish Sea. If Britain was a providentially set-aside Protestant island fortress, why was it honeycombed with the remains of monastic communities? References to Ireland saturated the volumes dedicated to the western coast. Ongoing commercial intercourse and the presence of Irish migrant workers offered pointed reminders of this neighboring Catholic island, never actually glimpsed but always just on the margin of the reader's awareness.

Influences from Ireland were only one example of the frequent intrusions from outside that appeared in Daniell's narrative of human events, which – like his natural history – emphasized discontinuity and a series of collisions between native elements and influences from overseas. The artist never explained why he began the *Voyage* at Land's End, but the attention given to the Phoenicians and their efforts to extract tin from Cornwall suggested that Britain's story properly began, not with Stonehenge or the Druids, but with this intrusion from the ancient Mediterranean world.[40] Daniell was also quick to take notice of even the most vague and attenuated remains of the Roman Empire.

A soft spot for the Romans was not unusual in British travelogues in this era, but the coastal itinerary itself encouraged the artist to take note every foreign incursion, large or small. St. Columba, the Irish founder of the monastic settlement on Iona, and of course Britain's Roman conquerors received generous treatment, in effect as antecedents to the agricultural, industrial, and imperial "improvers" of Daniell's own day.[41] After the Romans came the Saxons and Vikings, who crossed what Daniell called the German Ocean; even the less famous Flemings earned a mention for their settlement in medieval Wales. By volumes seven and eight, devoted to the southern coast of England, conquerors from abroad interrupted the nar-

rative every few pages. Daniell visited Hastings (a town reputedly founded by a Danish pirate), where William of Normandy won his kingdom; Chichester (headquarters of Flavis Vespasian, who invaded Britain under orders from the Emperor Claudius); Southampton, once sacked by "a body of French, Spaniards, and Genoese, who landed from a fleet of fifty galleys," and finally the "humble fishing-town" of Brixham, the exact spot where William of Orange landed in 1688.[42]

When it came time to describe the fashionable seaside resort of Brighton, Daniell – undoubtedly with an eye toward its patron, George IV – was careful to endorse high society's "migrations to the coast" on the grounds that this would familiarize "a nation of islanders with those seas that have been given 'for fence impregnable'…"[43] Just what was impregnable about that fence? After drawing attention to so many examples of coastal intrusion, interruption, and invasion, such language from Daniell must have sounded far-fetched, or even sardonic, to an attentive reader.

Daniell's discussion of the English Channel epitomized the cosmopolitan spirit of the *Voyage.* Eager architects had proposed that a statue of Britannia equal in size to the Colossus of Rhodes should be raised atop the white cliffs of Dover to celebrate the final victory over Napoleon.[44] Daniell positioned his readers on the spot where that statue would have been erected, and offered the subversive suggestion that Britain and France were chips off the same block:

"It may here be observed, that from the great resemblance which the cliffs of Dover bear to those of Boulogne and Calais, geologists deduce an argument in support of the notion that Great Britain was anciently joined to the Continent. On both shores of the Channel the cliffs consist of chalk, with flint intermixed; their faces are rugged and precipitous, as if they had been rent asunder by violence; and their length on both coasts is similar, being about six miles."[45]

Daniell did not let it rest there, but bolstered this argument with a detailed discussion of the depth and composition of the sea floor between Dover and Calais. France – purportedly kept safely at arms' length by the Channel – appeared in the *Voyage* as not merely adjacent, but as Britain's lost geological sibling.[46]

Presenting Britain as more archipelago than island was not meant to alarm his readers. 1066 and 1688, like the Roman occupation, figured as salutary developments, and none could have taken place if Britain had been isolated in some immense empty ocean. British history, for Daniell, was about change rather than continuity with some unshaken primordial past, and broadly speaking his narrative was about improvement rather than loss or decline.

CONCLUSION

Daniell's *Voyage* speaks to tensions that are all too familiar today. How should we discuss the allure of the parochial, and the uneasy relationships of part to whole, in a globalized – or globalizing – world?[47] At a time when the cosmopolitan confidence of world history and oceanic history seem to ring hollow, perhaps Daniell's small bodies of water, his straits and firths, his English Channel, Irish Sea, and German Ocean offer a more plausible picture of an adjacency that is both neighborly and insular at the same time. New conceptual frameworks such as the paramaritime and coastal history also offer an alternative to a focus on deep water, long-distance trade, and extreme mobility.[48]

In the era of Brexit, of course, it is impossible to dismiss the tacit belief in the insular, or the yearning for insularity. Drawing on British literary sources from Daniell's era, Rachel Crawford has noted the concern about the ways that commercial and imperial expansion were

"stretching the epidermis of the nation, making it thinner and more porous, more susceptible to infection from without. An increasing concern with definition thus accompanied the demand for containment, and with containment, contraction."[49]

While Crawford does not quote the term "sea-girt," her reference to the nation's "epidermis" evokes similar concepts about the integrity of the outer margins.

Daniell's *Voyage,* however, presented a significantly different way of conceptualizing Britain's coastline. Indeed, while a coast "line" existed on maps, his exploration of the actual coast showed how it crumbled, chipped and flaked, eroded in sudden landslips of surging mud, or oozed to a whimpering halt in an amphibious mixture of water and dirt. The ocean kept nothing out. It illustrated the absurdity of any suggestion that Britain's shores did, or could, function as a secure epidermis. Yet for Daniell, permeability was no cause for alarm, and adjacency presented opportunities.

What enabled Daniell to think so differently? At the same time as he performed British insularity by completing his epic and arduous itinerary, he complicated the picture with tales of altruistic border-crossers from more sophisticated cultures, beginning with the Phoenicians, Romans, and Irish monks. Surely part of the answer lay in his own earlier voyages. Someone from a family that had earned its living in the service of the British Empire could not easily forget that oceans connect, as well as separate. Watery circulations and migrations could serve as a source of anxiety for some, but Daniell's – admittedly naïve – identification with the good works of the British Empire made it difficult for him to embrace anyone's insularity as a good thing.

If Britain's oddness, in Allott's phrase, is one of its oldest traditions, it is important to bear in mind that there is also a long line of British people who have rejected parochialism, or found ways to reconcile local pride with participation in larger communities. In 2002, Charles Kennedy addressed the annual conference of Britain's third party, the Liberal Democrats, with these words: "I find no contradiction between being a Highlander, a Scot, a citizen of the UK and a citizen of the European Union at one and the same time."[50] If the 52% of the British electorate who voted for Brexit have historical antecedents for their beliefs and concerns, so do the 48% who supported the "Stronger In" campaign and now describe themselves as Remainers. William Daniell serves as an instructive example of a Briton who lived on an island, but had no desire to be part of an "island race."

ENDNOTES

1 Allott 1997.
2 For concepts and debates around British insularity, see Beer 1989; Beer 1990; Robbins 1993; Peckham 2003; Paxman 2000, 34–5, 193.
3 Robbins 1993, 45.
4 Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "girt," "gird," "girth," and "girder." Accessed May 14, 2018.
5 Colley 1992.
6 Helgerson 1992; Paxman 2000, 29.
7 Corbin 1994, 173. For broader context on war's impact on the arts in this period, see Hoock 2003.
8 See Payton 2004, 33: "Cornwall always was, and still is, a window to a wider world… the wide, calm blue sea beckoning enticingly towards Ireland and to Spain."
9 The new subfield of Island Studies is working to complicate considerably our sense of what "insular" might look like, see Baldacchino 2007.
10 Daniell 1978, II, 1.
11 Klonk 1996, 99. For a

different set of antecedents, see however Todman 2017.

12 Crawford 2002, 228. Heringman 2004 is also of interest for Romantic views of landscape.

13 Theroux 1983; Raban 1986; Lake 2017; Gange, forthcoming.

14 Buzard1993, 80.

15 Ibid., 84.

16 Authentic travel was, increasingly, understood as requiring difficulty and some degree of originality; only a tourist would follow in another's footsteps. Ibid., 18–79. For the growing popularity of sea bathing and coastal tourism, see Corbin 1994.

17 Daniell 1978, VII, 37.

18 Tooley 1954, 157. Lithography would soon supplant expensive aquatints, making illustrated books much more affordable. See also Bain 1962.

19 Pennant 1771 uses "North Britain" as often as "Scotland": see for example 78, 83, 92, 120.

20 Daniell 1978, V, 32 is a very rare example of an effort to emphasize differences. It pertains to church steeples, which Daniell, as a self-described "Englishman," found lacking in Scottish scenery.

21 Sutton 1954, 137, 151.

22 For recent efforts to conceptualize "Britain" more broadly, see Kearney 1989; Samuel 1998.

23 Daniell 1978, VII, 88.

24 Ibid., VII, 89. For the concept of an "island race," see Wilson 2003.

25 Daniell, 1978, V, 1.

26 Brown 2006, xxv. In this reprint, the National Library of Scotland created distinctions that Daniell did not; there was no distinct "Scotland" volume in the original Voyage.

27 By the time that Daniell was writing, factory tours had become a staple of travelogues. See Moir, 1964.

28 Rogers 1998, 166. Glendening 1997, 31–3.

29 Daniell 1978, VII, 78.

30 Ibid., VII, 70.

31 Ibid., VII, 77.

32 Pennant 1778, II, 96-7, 139.

33 Bewick 1804, II: xiii.

34 Ibid., II: xv-xvi.

35 Daniell 1978, VI, 18. In Aberystwyth, Ayton took note of a human equivalent to these straying birds, the shipwrecked and miserable crew of "a Portuguese ship from the Brazils": I, 144–5.

36 Ibid., II, 7.

37 Ibid., II, 8, 32.

38 Ibid., II, 8. The eggs of sea birds, once hard-boiled, could travel great distances to market: VI, 11. "Puffin-warrens" became valued rental properties for this reason.

39 Colley1992.

40 Daniell 1978, I, 38-40; VIII, 49–50.

41 For Columba, Ibid., III, 49–55.

42 Ibid., VII, 42, 61, 65, VIII, 20–1.

43 Ibid., VII, 49.

44 Yarrington 1980.

45 Daniell 1978, VII, 30.

46 Bryant 1984, 1. For Bryant's political views, see Mandler 2006, 164.

47 Adelman 2017; Armitage 2017; Purcell 2013.

48 Worthington 2017; Le Bouedec 2002.

49 Crawford 2002, 36, see also 72.

50 https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2002/sep/26/libdems2002.liberaldemocrats3 (accessed May 14, 2018).

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