



Romanticism on the Net

“Moral Electricity”: William Daniell’s *Voyage Round Great Britain* and Early Topographical Representations of the Isle of Skye and the West Highlands

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Abstract

This essay addresses visual and letterpress representations of the West Highlands and Islands in William Daniell’s *Voyage Round Great Britain* (1814–25), a patriotic celebration of the defensive coastal ramparts that had protected the nation from Napoleonic invasion. It describes Daniell’s career as an aquatint artist in India, his travels round Britain’s coast “sailing on horseback,” and the relationship between the plates and the letterpress text in relation to contemporary topographical art. The essay then turns to Daniell’s travels in the West Coast of Scotland in 1815, contrasting his georgic view of coastal improvements with the socioeconomic crisis afflicting the Scottish *Gàidhealtachd* in the postwar period. The influence of Thomas Pennant’s artist Moses Griffith, and of Walter Scott’s poetry and *Pharos* cruise are considered in relation to Daniell’s visual representation of Hebridean coastal scenery, and his notion of “moral electricity,” the transport revolution that has galvanised the nation. Daniell’s evasive account of Highland sheep clearances, and his dedication of his fourth volume to the Marchioness of Stafford, are compared with the critical strictures of earlier travellers like Pennant and Johnson. A final section considers a change in tone in which Daniell’s georgic idiom of improvement is replaced with the aesthetics of the sublime in his representations of “the lakes of terror” Lochs Scavaig and Coruisk in Skye. Owing a large debt to Scott’s *Lord of the Isles*, these images of the loch and mountain sublime serve to inculcate a disciplined, imperial masculinity. Daniell’s aquatints with their accompanying text provide important insights into the importance of Scotland’s coasts for early nineteenth-century improvement, as well as foreshadowing some of the ambivalent social, economic and environmental consequences that followed.

Biographical Note

Nigel Leask is Regius Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Glasgow. He has published widely on British and especially Scottish Romanticism, with a special emphasis on travel writing, empire, and “improvement.” He edited *Robert Burns’s Commonplace Books, Tour Journals and Miscellaneous Prose* for the *Oxford Edition of the Works of Robert Burns* (2014). His latest monograph, *Stepping Westward: Writing the Highland Tour 1720–1830*, was published by Oxford in 2020 and was shortlisted for the Saltire National Book Awards 2022. He is coeditor of *Old Ways and New Roads: Travels in Scotland 1720–1832* (2021).

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1. The 308 aquatint plates and accompanying text of William Daniell's monumental eight-volume *A Voyage Round Great Britain* (1814–25) depict a clockwise circumnavigation of Britain from Cornwall via Wales and through the Hebrides to Shetland, returning down the east coast to the point of departure. In the introduction to volume 1, a collaboration with letterpress-writer Richard Ayton (whose departure from the project after the second volume is discussed below), the authors complained that “while the inland counties of England have been so hackneyed by travellers and quarts, the Coast has been most unaccountably neglected, and if we except a few fashionable watering places, is entirely unknown to the public” (1: xxviii).¹ The book is both a paean to the new transport revolution the effects of which Daniell likens to “moral electricity,” and a patriotic celebration of Britain's coasts, the defensive ramparts which had protected the nation from Napoleonic invasion. It is significant that Ireland, the “sister isle,” politically united with the rest of Britain in 1801, is excluded. Daniell originally intended to make the whole journey by sea, but this proved impracticable, and it was in the end completed by road, boat, and on horseback. The introduction explains that during his six summer journeys round Britain's coasts between 1813 and 1823, travelling by boat proved difficult. Despite the advantages of a small rowing boat for offering close-up perspectives on coastal features, bad weather often made this a hazardous enterprise. As a result, the artist had frequently been forced to “sail on horseback” or “scud in a gig” (1: xxix–xxx). Overcoming these physical challenges, Daniell's upmarket *Voyage* emerged as one of the most celebrated domestic topographical publications of the Romantic period, its calm, descriptive aquatints providing a masterly depiction of the dramatic scenery and soft pewter light, as well as human settlements and

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improvements, around Britain's coasts.

2. Every autumn during the years of the project, Daniell would return to his London home at 9 Cleveland St., Fitzroy Square, where in his print workshop he made aquatints based on his field drawings. The intaglio process, using acid incised into a copper plate, was so complex that each required at least eighteen hours work. In the introductory material to the 2006 edition of *Daniell's Scotland*, Elizabeth Bray explains that after the initial printing, using pale grey and sepia rather than black ink, "delicate colour washes were applied by hand to the finished picture by colourists, copying a master by Daniell himself. They faithfully reproduced the azure of a sky, the sea's many moods, the fresh green of the turf grazed by sheep. (1: x). As mentioned above, the letterpress for the first two volumes of *A Voyage* was the work of Richard Ayton, a failed barrister living on the Sussex coast, but the two men parted company at Wigton, the remaining text from volume 3 to the end being written by Daniell himself. Daniell claimed that Ayton's departure was prompted by a need to "condense and abridge the narrative, in order to make room for a greater proportion of engravings" (I, 61), although the risks that Ayton's diffuse and often radical comments might alienate wealthy purchasers was probably the main reason. In one of the few scholarly studies of *A Voyage*, Andrew Kennedy suggests that Daniell's letterpress for volume 3 deliberately counteracts the social criticism passages written by Ayton in the preceding volumes, such as his observations on the effects of economic depression on the inhabitants of Gatehouse in Wigtownshire near the end of volume 2 (Kennedy, *British Topographical Print Series* 184).² *A Voyage Round Great Britain* was published in eight volumes (the first four by Longman, before Daniell took over as sole publisher of volumes

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5–8), the high cost of which reflected the quality of the publication. To quote Kennedy, “Initially the prints plus text were sold in issues of two prints plus text, and cost ten shillings and sixpence,” but “after Ayton’s departure the issues contained three prints plus reduced text and sold for the same price. Volumes 5 to 8 were published as complete volumes, each costing £7.12.6. The complete set of eight volumes was priced at £60” (Kennedy, *British Topographical Print Series* 157).³

3. The appearance of Daniell’s *A Voyage* represented a significant development in travel publications about Britain in the romantic period, reflecting increased public demand for high quality topographical engravings. As I have argued in *Stepping Westward*, it was also an indicator of the exhaustion of the miscellaneous travel account, modelled on Thomas Pennant’s *Tours in Scotland* published in the 1770s, that had reached its apogee in the early 1800s, and its replacement by the newly popular topographical series (275). New printing technologies like aquatint allowed the softer tones of pencil, wash, and watercolour to be reproduced in print and made engravings more affordable, reversing the priority of text over image in Scottish publications by the likes of Thomas Pennant, Thomas Garnett, or John Stoddart. Originating with Paul Sandby’s *Virtuosi’s Museum* (1778–81), and in Scotland developed by Charlies Cordiner and John Claude Nattes, the engraving/letterpress format had reached a new level of sophistication by the time of Turner’s involvement in Sir Walter Scott’s *Provincial Antiquities and Picturesque Scenery of Scotland* (1819–26; Finley 23–25).

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4. Most topographical publications had focused on urban sites, inland estate landscapes, and antiquities, although in 1796 John Boydell had projected an aquatint series entitled *The Principle Rivers of Great Britain*, commissioning Daniell's friend Joseph Farington to depict the river Forth and Clyde.⁴ Closer to Daniell's conception was W. B. Cooke's *Picturesque Views on the South Coast of England* (1814–26), for which J. M. W. Turner was the star contributor.⁵ As Sam Smiles indicates, Turner was fully aware of the risks run by an ambitious artist in contributing to topographical publications: Henry Fuseli, in a lecture to the Royal Academy, had dismissed topography as “the tame delineation of a given spot,” insisting that the landscapes of masters like Titian, Claude, Rembrandt and Wilson “spurn all relation to this kind of map-work.” William Daniell's reputation as a topographical artist was already assured by the success of his luxurious folio *Oriental Scenery* (1795–1808), and by the more modest *A Picturesque Voyage to India* (1810), the fruits of a collaboration with his uncle Thomas Daniell, whom he had accompanied to India in 1785 at the age of fourteen, and with whom he had spent a formative decade travelling and drawing in South Asia.⁶ But he too was conscious of the stigma attached to topography. In 1812, when he was unsuccessfully nominated for membership of the Royal Academy, even Farington wrote dismissively that “[Daniell] is most known as an Engraver in Aquatints, a low branch of that art” (Garvey 19).⁷ But in 1822, on account of the celebrity of the Indian aquatints, as well as *A Voyage Round Great Britain*, Daniell was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy, beating John Constable by six votes. He had taken on the art establishment and won.

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5. But why should an artist who had made his reputation depicting exotic views of colonial India choose to dedicate the peak of his career to Britain's coastal scenery? As Kennedy has argued, to understand *A Voyage Round Great Britain*,

one must situate it in the context of colonial ventures, not only [Daniell's Indian] travels with his uncle, but the ventures of others. Why, for example, should Daniell treat Britain, a moderately-sized island, as though it were a continent needing to be circumnavigated? In 1802–3, Matthew Flinders, following Captain Cook, had mapped the coast of Australia. Daniell had refused to travel with Flinders as expedition artist, yet here he was, a domesticated Flinders, much of the time “sailing on horseback,” constructing an epic narrative out of [six] summer excursions. (Kennedy, “Lighthouse” 45)⁸

In addition to patriotic motives, Daniell clearly aimed at filling a gap in the market. Although he decided to drop the term *picturesque* from his title, he sought to depict the “boldness and picturesque beauty” of Britain's coasts, as well as “the manners and employments of people, and modes of life, in its wildest parts” (1: xxviii).

Daniell's Highlands and Islands

6. Daniell's declared interest in picturesque scenery helps explain why 157 of his views (over half of the 308 total) represented Scotland's coastline: of these, 123 depict the Western and Northern Highlands and Hebrides, compared to only fifty-two dedicated to England's south

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coast. In the opening sentence of volume 3, Daniell describes the West Coast of Scotland as “one of the most picturesque in the whole circuit of the island” (1: 61). Justifying his “discretionary licence” in dedicating fourteen plates to the “romantic islands” of Skye and Raasay alone, Daniell employed some rather xenophobic special pleading: “To stipulate for a succession of views in the ratio of one for a given number of miles might well accord with the taste of a committee of Dutchmen, and that rule of procedure might possibly serve as well as any other for the coast of Holland: but it would be wholly inapplicable to the maritime boundaries of Great Britain” (1: 183). The remainder of my essay will focus on some of the views, and accompanying text, from Daniell’s tour of the West Highlands and Islands, and especially the Isle of Skye, during the third and longest of his coastal voyages between July and October 1815, published in volumes 3 and 4 in 1818 and 1820 respectively, although the text was written subsequent to the tour in 1818 (Kennedy, *British Topographical Print Series* 20–21).

7. What is less clear from Daniell’s now-iconic portrait of the late Georgian Highlands and Islands is that for all its picturesque attractions, the region was in the grips of a severe social crisis. Despite Daniell’s fulsome praise of “moral electricity,” Enlightenment improvement schemes to realise the cornucopian promise of the region were clearly on the rocks. The postwar depression of 1815–1830 saw the winding down of the old Highland cattle economy, as well as the failure of the newer kelp and fishing industries, exposing the fragility of development schemes in peripheral areas, with desperate consequences for many Gaels. Southern visitors, whether tourists, sportsmen, geologists, or artists like Daniell, poured into the region, benefiting from the “second transport revolution” initiated

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by the Commission for Highland Roads and Bridges after 1803, especially improved roads, bridges, ferries, and the rapid development of steamboat transport. Steam power made some of the “remote” Hebridean sites popularised in Walter Scott’s *Lord of the Isles* (1816) and in the geological publications of Robert Jameson and John Macculloch easily accessible from Glasgow or Oban, a fact which Daniell capitalised upon: Daniell’s plate 17 (2: 17) depicts a steam packet, possible *The Highland Chieftain*, on the Clyde near Dumbarton.

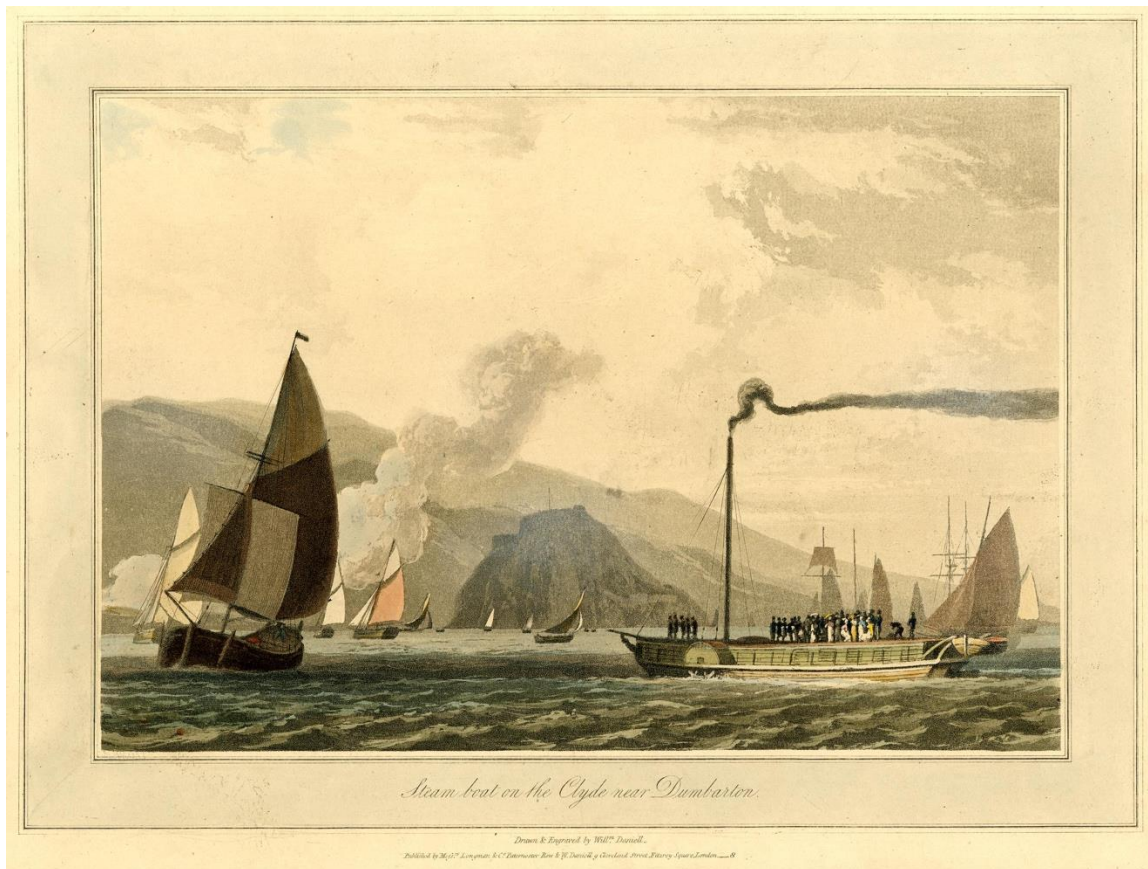


Fig. 1. William Daniell, “Steamboats on the Clyde near Dumbarton.”

Daniell’s image shows a party of chilly male and female tourists clustered on the deck of a Clyde steam packet admiring the view of Dumbarton Castle. Some travellers, like John

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Bowman in 1825, found that viewing the shores from a steamboat enhanced the prospect: “[A]s the vessel alters her course . . . the grouping of the scenery is perpetually changing giving the idea of enchantment” (38). Others, like the poet John Keats, travelling with Charles Armitage Brown just a year or so after Daniell, complained that “steam boats on Loch Lomond and Barouches on its sides take a little from the Pleasure of such romantic chaps as Brown and I” (Keats 183). But as steam-conducted tourists poured in, hungry Gaels poured out, cleared from inland glens or fleeing from congested coastal settlements, seeking employment in Lowland cities or cheap passage across the Atlantic.

8. All these developments were interconnected, and Walter Scott’s shadow loomed over them all. Scott is the dedicatee of Daniell’s volume 3 (published in 1818), and a set of manuscript notes in Scott’s hand, preserved in the National Library of Scotland’s copy of Daniell’s *A Voyage*, indicates that just a year after his own *Pharos* cruise around Scotland’s northern and western coasts in 1814, he had offered “a series of helps and hints to the artist which recycle his [Scott’s] original northern material in a different and thoroughly practical way” (Brown xxii). Contrary to Daniell’s tour, Scott’s *Pharos* voyage had been anti-clockwise, circumnavigating Scotland’s coasts from Leith, via Orkney and Shetland, and returning through the Western Isles to Greenock and Glasgow (the final leg on board a steam packet from Port Glasgow to Broomielaw). It inspired his 1815 verse romance *The Lord of the Isles*, the notes of which quoted long passages from the *Pharos* journal: as we will see, this poem and its commentaries had a major influence on Daniell’s vision of the Hebrides. In addition to suggesting coastal sites for Daniell to illustrate, Scott supplied him with letters

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of introduction to Highland gentlemen, and may have even considered providing letterpress text himself (Brown xxii).⁹

9. Daniell was, of course, not the first artist to represent Scotland's coasts, and in what follows I compare his vision of Skye and its adjacent coastal regions with that of some earlier travelling artists, notably Thomas Pennant's artist Moses Griffith, whose engravings graced Pennant's 1772 *Voyage to the Hebrides*. While Griffith was Daniell's major precursor, Pennant's book also featured engravings based on drawings by the Miller brothers and John Cleveley, the artists who had accompanied Sir Joseph Banks on his 1772 cruise through the Hebrides *en route* for Iceland. It becomes rapidly evident that Daniell's concern for representing improvement as "moral electricity" augments that of Pennant and Banks's artists half a century earlier, while at the same time he substantially downplays their interest in antiquities and the ruins of the past. However, in my final section, I turn from Daniell's representation of the West Coast as a landscape of improvement, to explore his sudden shift into the aesthetic register of the sublime, in his account of visiting Loch Scavaig and Loch Coruisk on Skye's dramatic southwestern coast. Here I question Andrew Kennedy's claim that for Daniell "man-made sublimities are in fact superior to those of nature" (Kennedy, *British Topographical Print Series* 159), demonstrating that the natural sublime did play an important role in Daniell's imperialist project. I also examine the role of Scottian "romance" in Daniell's plates and letterpress, following Peter Womack's suggestion that the "negative sublime" associated with wild Highland landscapes was related to ideologies of improvement which on the surface it might seem to contradict (99).

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10. Daniell's aim in the second and third volumes of *A Voyage* was to downplay the social crisis of Scotland's *Gàidhealtachd* by reinventing it as scenery. The aesthetic motives of an artist closely relate to the ideological concerns of the travel writer when they too are based on a colonial or imperial vision of Britain. In his introduction to *A Picturesque Voyage to India* (1810), Daniell had both disavowed and declared his imperialist hand in "claiming his part in these guiltless spoliations . . . to transport to Europe the picturesque beauties of these favoured regions" (Daniell and Daniell ii), referring to his aquatints of Britain's newly acquired Indian territories. In this respect, as Kennedy notes, "it is important . . . to reiterate that culture, whether in the form of economic improvement, or in the form of visual representation, is a 'species of conquest' for Daniell" (*British Topographical Print Series* 187). Daniell's Scottish views are a fitting sequel to his other, now more celebrated, paean to imperial order in India. Scotland's coasts were a major focus for improvement, especially in the Highlands and Islands, where economic activity was shifting from inland glens to coastal fisheries, kelp stations, and new settlements to rehouse tenants from the hinterland, cleared to make way for sheep. Coasts had never been so important (Leask, "Penetrat[ing]").

Improvement as "Moral Electricity": Daniell at Liveras House, Isle of Skye.

11. Daniell's aquatints in *A Voyage* are arranged in the order of a clockwise circumnavigation round the coasts of Scotland, so his letterpress is obliged to connect them by means of an itinerary maintaining the geographical fiction of such a progress. This is no secret: at one point, he seeks permission from his reader "to suppress, at discretion, these occasional

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deviations, in order that the various objects of the tour may, as far as is practicable, be presented in their geographical order” (1: 189). His actual, far messier, coastal itinerary can be reconstructed from the dates attached to a series of fifty-eight drawings of coastal views for this section of his voyage made in a “Descriptive Album” now held in the British Museum: these were the basis for his published aquatints.¹⁰ For instance, the British Museum list reveals that Daniell actually visited the outer Hebridean islands of North Uist, Harris, and Lewis in late June 1815 previous to his landing on Skye (via the adjacent island of Raasay), rather than postdating his Skye sojourn, as narrated in the published letterpress. This represents Daniell crossing to Skye on the Kyleakin Ferry around July 20, during an unseasonal snow shower, and, at the end of his Skye sojourn, departing across the Minch to North Uist “in a boat belonging to Macleod of Valey” (1: 189).

12. *A Voyage*’s first view of Skye is of the unfinished pseudo-Gothic Armadale Castle, the seat of the absentee Lord Macdonald of Sleat, begun in 1790 to a design by Gillespie Graham on the site of the previous house where the current laird’s father had entertained Boswell and Johnson in 1773 (2: 49). Daniell praised “the pleasing elegance” of Armadale surrounded by forest trees “totally foreign to the stern and rugged aspect which the mind necessarily conceives as belonging to an Hebridean shore.” He is forced to apologise, however, that his representation of the castle is “a pictorial anachronism” to the extent that in 1815, only the first storey had been built (1: 137). Of course, no mention is made of the wave of forced emigration afflicting Macdonald’s estate at this time as a result of high rents, or of (to quote John Garvey) the fact that the “ostentatious extravagance on

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display during the building of Armadale Castle, must have caused deep resentment amongst the tenants who were struggling to survive” (40).

13. Sailing through the narrow shipping strait of Kyle Rhea from the fishing station at Isleornsay to Loch Alsh, Daniell had taken a number of views of a coastal landscape familiar to contemporary readers from Moses Griffith’s contributions to Pennant’s *Voyage to the Hebrides*.¹¹ In Skye, Daniell was consciously following in Pennant’s footsteps. In his narrative, he mentions that bad weather prevented his ascent of Beinn na Caillich “for the purpose of examining a cairn, which Pennant mentions as being the reputed sepulchre of a gigantic heroine, of the days of Fingal, and also of enjoying the wild and extensive view which the mountain commands” (1: 158). At this point he quotes at length, not Pennant’s celebrated description of the view, but geologist Robert Jameson’s account in his *Mineralogy of the Scottish Islands* (1800), a passage itself indebted to Pennant. Pennant’s description had been illustrated by one of Griffith’s most notable views of Highland mountain scenery (“View from Beinn na Caillich”). Due to his coastal focus in *A Voyage*, Daniell makes no attempt to emulate this image, preferring to offer an alternative in the more aesthetically dramatic views of the Black Cuillins, taken during his visit to Loch Scavaig and Loch Coruisk later in July.

14. Daniell’s next stop was Liveras House, near Broadford, where he was a guest of Lachlan Mackinnon of Corry and Letterfearn (1772–1828), who would accompany him for the rest of his tour of Skye as host and guide. The handsome new Georgian villa at Liveras is

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depicted (2: 58), dwarfed by the massive humpbacked shape of Beinn na Caillich with the yawning Coire Fearchair on its north-east face.

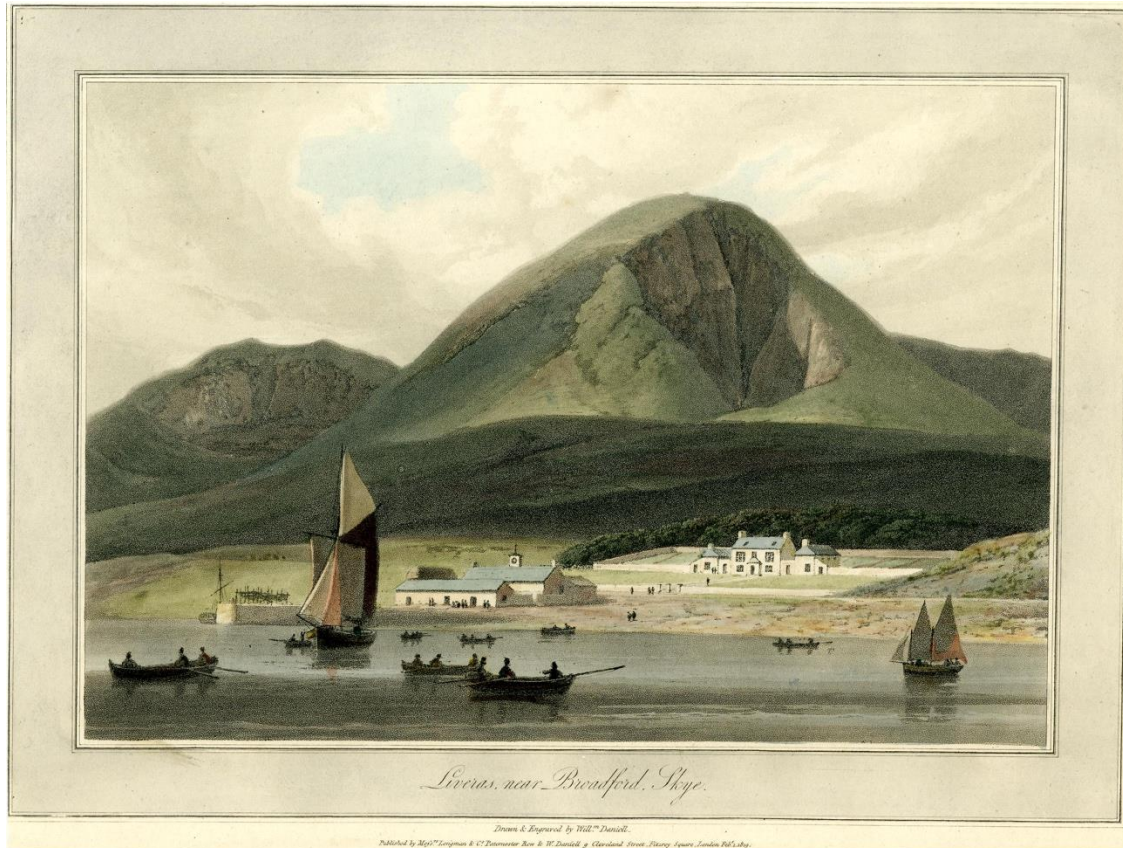


Fig. 2. William Daniell, “Liveras, near Broadford, Skye.”

Nearly half a century earlier, Mackinnon of Corry’s grandfather Lachlan Mackinnon (known as “Old Corry,” a tacksman of Macdonald of Sleat) had hosted Pennant and Dr. Johnson, in 1772 and 1773 respectively. Daniell praised his “kind and hearty hospitality during this visit . . . in every point a worthy counterpart” to that afforded to the earlier travellers (1: 159). Pennant had been enchanted by Coirechatachan, witnessing local women singing work songs at a *luaghadh* or cloth waulking session, and ascending Beinn na Cailleach with one of Mackinnon’s sons (presumably the father of Daniell’s host at

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Liveras). After their frigid reception at Armadale House from the Anglicised Lord Macdonald, Johnson and Boswell had also been delighted by traditional Highland hospitality at Coirechatachan, where the Mackinnons “talked in their own ancient language, with fluent vivacity, and sung many Erse songs with such spirit,” as recorded by Boswell (Johnson and Boswell 134). (He, however, regretted that “though Dr. Johnson was treated with the greatest respect and attention, there were moments in which he seemed to be forgotten” [134].)¹²

15. Like many other Highland gentry families with strong affiliations to the Jacobite cause,¹³ the Mackinnons had built up extensive colonial connections. Several of “Old Corry’s” sons and grandsons held commissions in the East India Company army, his stepson was Governor of Penang, and his daughter Mary’s brother-in-law Sir John Macpherson was briefly Governor of Bengal. Daniell would doubtless have regaled his Highland hosts with stories of his decade in the East Indies (Cameron 134–36). After “Old Corry’s” death in 1789, Lachlan Mackinnon had moved from Corriechatachan, the traditional tacksman’s house in which Pennant and Johnson had stayed, to the substantial new mansion of Liveras, the seat of his extensive fisheries and agricultural activities. This shift from the inland site of Corriechatachan, converted into a sheep walk, to a coastal site on Broadford Bay, epitomises the transition from inland glens to coastal settlements described above. Daniell’s letterpress represents Lachlan as a hero of Highland improvement:

Mr Mackinnon has very extensive concerns in fisheries and the breeding of cattle . . . during the herring season upwards of two hundred boats have been seen at

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one time in the bay; and for the convenience of the vessels engaged in this occupation and in the cattle trade, he has constructed a commodious little pier at a short distance from his mansion. Through his influence, and that of other enterprising capitalists, the commerce and interior condition of Skye are likely to prosper very rapidly. (1: 159)

As Garvey notes, Daniell's aquatint "is brought to life by the presence of many boats and many people on the shore" (61), the busy georgic scene contrasting with the massive shape of the mountain looming behind, and the grey light of a calm but sunless summer's day. The pier represented in Daniell's plate still survives, as does Liveras House itself, until recently, a private hotel known as "Corry Lodge," absorbed into the suburbs of Broadford. For Daniell, the trees planted behind Liveras are another palpable sign of improvement, like those of Macdonald at Armadale, while Mackinnon's garden "displayed the full and unchecked bloom of summer, and the strawberries were already ripe" (1: 161).

16. Also indicative of recent improvements, Daniell praised the new "Parliamentary" road from Broadford to Portree and westward to Dunvegan, as "equal to the best turnpikes-roads in Great Britain," commending Lord Macdonald's enterprise in privately funding a continuation through Kingsburgh to Uig (1: 159). British private enterprise is here favourably compared to the exclusively public funding of infrastructure projects in Napoleonic France, "a very equivocal proof of national prosperity" (1: 159). A "great amelioration" had clearly occurred since the time of Pennant and Johnson's visit to Skye: "The islanders are now an active, intelligent, and industrious race, orderly in their habits, and well-bred in their demeanour." Education has improved the linguistic habits of this

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hitherto Gaelic-speaking island to the point (Daniell claims implausibly), “that if an inhabitant of Skye were conversing in any circle of the metropolis, he would be taken for an Englishman” (1: 160).

17. Such improvements have been facilitated by the new transport infrastructure, enabling the emergence of an imperial Britain from the union of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, a transformation captured in Daniell’s arresting metaphor cited in the title of this essay: “The easy and rapid communication between all parts of the kingdom has produced a sort of *moral electricity* (if we may use so strange a figure), through which the spirit of the national character has diffused itself, to the abolition of all minor distinctions into separate tribes and classes of men” (1: 160, my emphasis). Writing exactly at the moment when Hans Oersted, Andre Ampère, and Michael Faraday were discovering revolutionary new applications for electricity, Daniell’s metaphor plays on the idea of electromagnetic force acting at a distance, unifying and galvanising Britain’s distinct nations, regions, and classes, the “morality” of which lies in the enabling power of her liberal constitution. As Eric Gidal writes in relation to representations of steam transport in *Blackwood’s Magazine*, “A free constitution . . . is like an efficient transport network: each supports and enables a society of economic liberty, at once the product and the cause of a British national character” (281).¹⁴

Daniell, Moses Griffith, and Hebridean Topography

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18. At the opening of volume 3 of *A Voyage*, Daniell complained that “none of the tours in the west of Scotland now extant contain engravings at all worthy of their respective subjects” (1: 61). This was something of an ungrounded claim, at least regarding views of the inland Highland tours, given that publications by Pennant, William Gilpin, Faujas Saint-Fond, Thomas Garnett, John Stoddart, and Alexander Campbell all contained good quality topographical engravings. The anodyne verse of James Crie’s *Scottish Scenery* (1803), the first poeticised account of the Scottish “petit tour,” also provided letterpress for twenty highly worked engravings after the paintings of Charles Walker. But Daniell’s criticism perhaps carried more weight regarding illustrated tours of the Hebrides. There, the aforementioned Moses Griffith, whose drawings and watercolours were engraved nearly half a century earlier by Mazell (and others) for Pennant’s 1772 *Voyage to the Hebrides*, represented his only real precursor. Anne Macleod notes that, in accord with his training, “Griffith’s draughtsmanship is often clumsy when dealing with topography, but he excelled himself in the detailed observation of a single object, such as his botanical, zoological, or antiquarian illustrations” (51). To that extent, Daniell had a natural advantage over his precursor, given his picturesque training and preference for the distant view, in which singular objects were subtly absorbed into the wider landscape. Macleod here perhaps underestimates Griffith’s skills as a topographer, at least to the extent that it influenced Daniell and other contemporary artists. The relationship between Pennant’s text and Griffith’s prints (as well as those of paintings by Joseph Banks’s artists the Millers brothers and Cleveley) is evident in their representation of key topographical sites. The insertion of plates in Pennant’s narrative often evokes a complex relationship with his parallel account of great houses, castles, and antiquities (for instance, the plates of Inverary or Dunvegan

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Castles, or the ruins of Iona), social conditions (the interiors of Highland huts), or scenes of “improvement” (herring boats on West Highland lochs).

19. Regarding castles and antiquities, Daniell is strongly influenced by Griffith in his views of the new or improved castles of Inveraray (2: 24) and Dunvegan (2: 62),¹⁵ as well as his two plates dedicated to Iona (2: 37, 38). Daniell has a particular penchant for the whitewashed Georgian houses of Highland tacksmen, factors, and landowners (like the view of Liveras discussed above, or the new fishing port of Tobermory; 2: 44), as well as lighthouses, harbours, and fishing stations; signally absent are the crowded *taighean-dubha* (black houses) or shieling huts of poor crofters, weavers, and *scalags* that had fascinated Griffith and Banks’s artists in the early 1770s.¹⁶ Even so, many of his coastal views owe a profound debt to Griffith, especially those representing improvement: take for example Daniell’s view of Loch Ranza, Arran (2: 91), which in compositional terms draws heavily on Griffith’s “Loch Ranza Bay.” Griffith’s scene of “taking a basking shark” in the former image has been relocated by Daniell to “Iloransay” (Isleornsay), Skye (2: 50), depicting the capture of seventy-six whales of various sizes, the blubber of which was shipped to Liverpool “realis[ing] the captors a considerable sum” (1: 138). Another instance is Daniell’s “Loch Hourne Head” (2: 56), which owes a distinct debt to Griffith’s “Loch Jurn.”



Fig. 3. Moses Griffith, "Loch Jurn."



Fig. 4. William Daniell, "Loch Hourne Head."

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Pennant's visit to Loch Hourn in 1772 had represented something of an epiphany for the Welsh traveller, in which a loch until recently notorious as a "den of thieves," the centre of the Jacobite MacDonnell of Barrisdale's cattle-raiding operations, had been transformed into a busy scene of improvement, with "the agreeable view of a great fleet of busses, and all the busy apparatus of the herring fishery" (Pennant 342, 344; see also Leask, *Stepping Westward* 132–33). Always seeking to surpass Pennant, however, Daniell's letterpress explains that herrings were now so abundant in Loch Hourn that a shoal recently stranded at the loch head could have filled six thousand barrels (1: 153). Since Pennant's time, moreover, he was pleased to report that the once remote Loch Hourn Head has been connected by road to the Caledonian Canal, and the parliamentary roads to Fort William and Inverness, instantiating the "moral electricity" he makes his theme (1: 153; Kennedy, *British Topographical Print Series* 188).

20. If Daniell sought to rival and outdo Pennant's zeal for improvement as well as surpass Griffith's plates, he also aimed to correct Johnson's elegiac response to social change in the *Gàidhealtachd*, especially the melancholy mood induced in him by Highland scenery.



Fig. 5. William Daniell, “Remains of the Chapel on Inch Kenneth.”

It is true that at times he seems to empathise with Johnson’s mood, as in “Remains of the Chapel on Inch Kenneth” (2: 40), representing the ruined dwelling of Sir Allan Maclean of Brolas (on the left of the chapel) “who, with his two daughters, so hospitably entertained Dr. Johnson and his friend on their visit to this island. . . . It is mournful to see this abode of domestic felicity now abandoned to solitude and decay . . . something truly pathetic, it reminds us of the pastor’s mansion in Goldsmith’s *Deserted Village*” (1: 119). But Daniell’s brief Johnsonian elegy for the old Highland world epitomised by Maclean is soon dispelled as the eye travels across the image, over the flock of cheviot sheep grazing on the eminence, to the plume of smoke rising from the foreshore. His letterpress explains that “the volumes of smoke observable arise from the burning of kelp, which is found in great abundance on the shores of Inch Kenneth.” Daniell inserts a lengthy excerpt from Jameson’s

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account of kelp manufacture, an innovation since the time of Pennant's tour half a century before, further illustrated in the following plate of kelp burning at Gribun Head, Mull (1: 120; 2: 41).

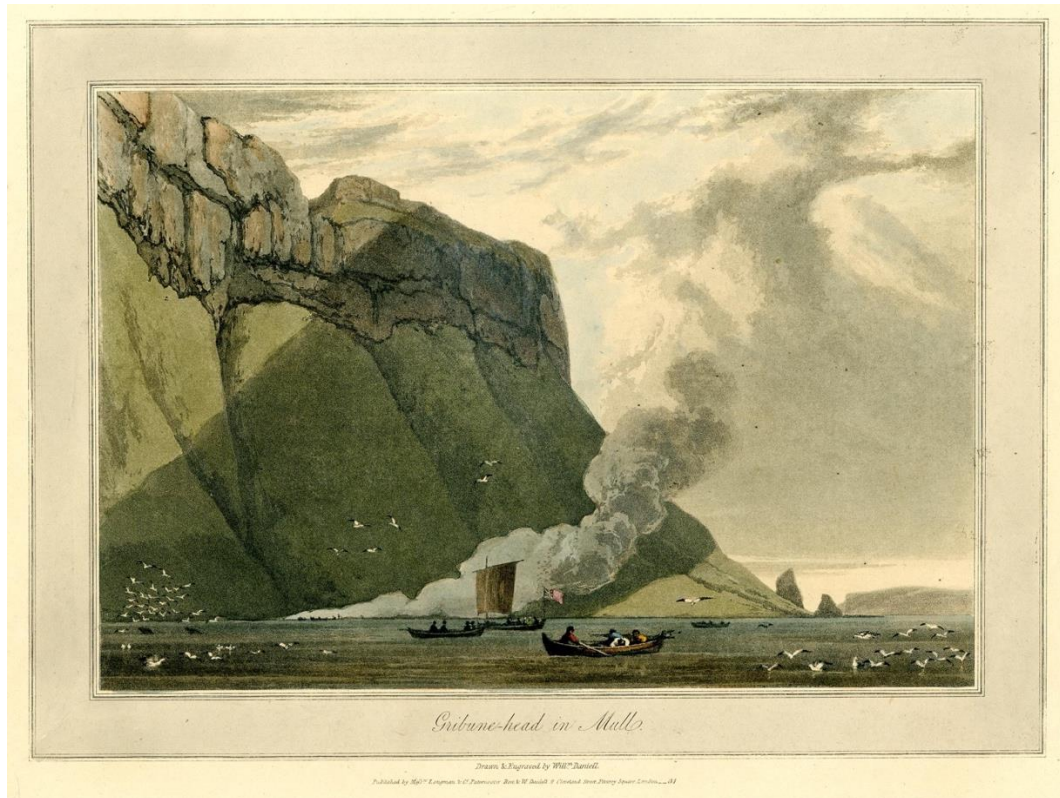


Fig. 6. William Daniell, “Gribune-head in Mull.”

Kennedy notes presciently that Daniell’s “reminiscences of exotic backwardness are . . . invariably counterbalanced by the depiction of improvements in the same, or subsequent plates” (*British Topographical Print Series* 165).

21. These clouds of smoke from kelp burning are a real sign of the contemporaneity of Daniell’s Hebridean coastal scenes, which he insisted added aesthetic value to the scenery: “the smoke arising from which, and spreading along the rocks and acclivities, softens the

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ruggedness of their forms, and produces a very picturesque effect in certain points of view” (1: 95; see also 1: 121 and 147). The manufacture of kelp, the arduous and labour-intensive extraction of alkali from seaweed used in making soap and glass, had begun as early as the 1730s, but peaked during the Napoleonic wars with a maximum production in 1810 of seven thousand tons, bringing immense wealth to landowners in the Outer Isles, Skye, Tiree, and Mull, as well as in Ardnamurchan and Morvern on the mainland. The kelp boom that Daniell here renders “picturesque” required a numerous labour force, which (alongside the spread of the potato as a dietary staple) partly explains the steady population growth in the region: despite evictions and out-migration, this continued to increase until the 1860s. But kelp was a risky speculation, and when the market collapsed after 1815, the “two greatest kelp lords, Macdonald of Clanranald and McKenzie of Seaforth . . . were among the first to lose their lands”; the results were even more devastating for their tenants in Lewis and the Uists, many of whom were forcibly cleared to make way for sheep (Devine 42–43 and 71; Albritton Jonsson 118–20).

22. If Johnsonian elegy for the old Highlands goes up in a puff of kelp smoke on Inch Kenneth, Daniell’s fine view of Loch Duich (2: 53) provides another opportunity to dispel the doctor’s melancholy reflections on Highland landscape. As at Loch Hourne, “a thousand vessels may annually be loaded with valuable cargoes, extracted from the ocean. The source of wealth has of late years been unusually abundant”; he hopes the coming of peace post-Waterloo will further realise these golden dreams. The mountain slopes surrounding Loch Duich “afford fine pasturage for sheep,” the propagation of which, he hopes, will “produce a favourable change on the heath-covered highlands, and will gradually render

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them green and fertile.” Alluding to Johnson’s celebrated characterisation of Highland landscape as a “wide extent of hopeless sterility” in his reflections at nearby Loch Cluanie, Daniell predicts that sheep pastures will dispel any such melancholy thoughts: “[T]he scenes which gave rise to such reflections are daily vanishing from the highlands, where the active and vivifying spirit of improvement has already rescued large tracts from the stern empire of desolation” (1: 148). At the same time, he admits “it is apprehended that this preference will operate in some degree as a check on the population of these districts” (1: 147), an evasive euphemism for the devastating social consequences of sheep clearance already well underway by 1815 in Wester Ross, as in other Highland counties.

23. Daniell’s volume 4 (1820) is dedicated to the Marchioness of Stafford, whose seat at Dunrobin Castle (plate 121) “springs like a fairy palace from the bosom of the ocean . . . well suited to the residence of a northern chief” (1: 265). Appropriately, much of the volume is concerned with improvement in the Northern Highlands, of which the Staffords were Scotland’s most radical, and highly capitalised, promoters. In *Stepping Westward*, I have discussed Daniell’s defence of the Sutherland clearances against Thomas Pennant’s earlier criticism of clearance and mismanagement on the Sutherland estates in Assynt, whose tenants struggled to survive “on the motive of Turkish vassals.” In a sly refutation of Pennant’s criticism, Daniell here excuses landlords who have raised rents and depressed wages, preferring to blame the customary “idleness” of the Gaels (Leask, *Stepping Westward* 280). Yet traversing the “bleak and sterile” wastes of Lord Reay’s estates (absorbed in 1829 into the Staffords’ northern empire) he observed that “the solitary hut of the shepherd is often all that remains of social life, even in valleys which in former times

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were numerously peopled. The inhabitants have been removed to the sea-shore, where they earn their subsistence chiefly by fishing and making kelp” (1: 224–25). Acknowledging that this “may have in some instances produced those murmurings to which men naturally give vent, when they are made to exchange a life of pastoral repose for one of exertion,” Daniell hopes that criticism would subside just as soon as “the peasantry have begun to enjoy the fruits of their industry in the career which has been opened to them” (1: 225). His serene aquatints and evasive prose letterpress signally, and deliberately, refuse to acknowledge the signs of impending crisis in the *Gàidhealtachd* (Leask, *Stepping Westward* 280–81).

24. As I have suggested above, Daniell learned much from his precursor Moses Griffith regarding Hebridean topography, the particular aesthetic qualities and sublime frisson of which he carefully discriminated: “It is this proximity of the high lands to the seas which renders a voyage among the Hebrides so superior in interest to one which extends along a level unbroken coast; it gratifies the eye with a continual though ever-changing contrast, and even the occasional dangers and vicissitudes of such a precarious navigation tend to heighten the enjoyment, or at least render the recollection of it more pleasing” (1: 139). Daniell sought to capture this aesthetic effect by the use of a range of visual techniques unknown to Griffith, especially vertical exaggeration, as Bray writes in the introductory material to the 2006 edition of *Daniell’s Scotland*, “using a telescope to model distant rock formations and geological features powerfully, and to bring them forward so that they dominate the view. He combines this perspective with a bold cropping of his pictures [so that] sometimes the topmost peaks almost burst out of the frame” (1: x). John Garvey

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exemplifies this technique by comparing Daniell's "Iloransay" (2: 50) with a contemporary photograph looking across the Sound of Sleat to the mouth of Loch Hourne and the hills of Knoydart, highlighting the degree of exaggeration. We'll encounter this artistic licence again in Daniell's spectacular views of Loch Scavaig and Loch Coruisk.¹⁷

25. Despite exaggerating the vertical elevation and jaggedness of mountain ridges, Daniell employed a small *camera obscura* and insisted on his concern for topographical accuracy, especially with regard to geology, in accordance with the "empirical" methodology promoted by the Geological Society of London.¹⁸ Tom Furniss has described this new scientific interest in "the rocks," which made "the Scottish landscape, especially . . . the Highlands and Islands, into a core location for the geological history of the earth and the history of geology at one and the same time" (5; see also Klonk 67–100; Macleod 131–50). Part of the contemporary appeal of Daniell's *A Voyage* was his claim to geological accuracy, flagged by his frequent citations of geologists like Robert Jameson and John Macculloch. Daniell offered no less than nine plates of Staffa and its caves that sought to correct the "inadequate" and "erroneous" depiction of its basaltic geology "from the drawings by [Pennant's] servant, Moses Griffith" (2: 28–36). (Pennant's plates of Staffa were in fact mainly engraved from the drawings of Banks's artists, the Miller brothers and Cleveley.) He quoted from John Macculloch's recently published description of Staffa, which he praised for avoiding "hyperbolic comparisons. . . . [It] has reduced the prevalent opinion . . . to a more just and reasonable standard" (1: 96–97). Daniell's "Island of Staffa from the South West" (2: 36) makes a clear geological distinction between the island's sandstone base, its basalt columns and upper layer of alluvial fragments, superseding the

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crude geological speculations of Pennant and Banks and their accompanying visual representations (Macleod 148).¹⁹

26. Despite Daniell's praise for Macculloch, whose pioneering *Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* was published to critical acclaim in 1819, characteristically the English geologist only repaid the compliment with a snipe. In his massive (and deeply prejudiced) *Highlands and Western Islands of Scotland ... Addressed to Sir Walter Scott* (1825), Macculloch recalled that, during a storm off the Assynt coast, near Cùl Beag, "your friend Daniell passed under our stern in the commotion; and made a narrow escape of becoming somewhat more intimate with the sea than was necessary for his aquatintas" (2: 354). Did Macculloch resent the fact that Scott, dedicatee of volume 3 of Daniell's *A Voyage*, had been more attentive to "his friend Daniell" than to himself in supplying letters of introduction and proposals for his coastal project? Appropriately, Daniell's account of Staffa closed with a long quotation from Scott's *Lord of the Isles*, combining Macculloch's scientific view with Scottish romance to supersede the work of earlier travellers and artists (1: 108). Daniell's view of the island was in turn challenged by Turner in his magnificent 1832 painting *Staffa, Fingal's Cave*, in which a sublime, Ossianic radiance veils the details of the basalt columns, counterpoised by storm clouds and a dark plume of smoke from the steam packet *Maid of Morvern*, which had carried the English painter to Staffa in 1831.

Daniell, Walter Scott, and the “Lake of Terror”

27. Walter Scott represents a final thread in the weave of Daniell’s account of Skye in *A Voyage* to be considered in this essay. In his fulsome 1818 dedication of volume 3 to Scott, Daniell wrote that “the present series of views, however humble their merit, will in some degree associate themselves with the vivid pictures which your last great poem [*The Lord of the Isles*] presents of the magnificent scenery of the Isles. To whom then can I dedicate them with so much propriety as to you?” (1: xxvi). Daniell’s letterpress description of key sites on the coastal itinerary (Smowe Cave, Loch Scavaig, Mingary Castle) reads like a series of footnotes both to Scott’s verse and to his *Pharos* narrative, frequently quoting from *The Lord of the Isles*. The text accompanying his plate “Distant View of Cruachan-ben” (2: 43) praises Scott’s “accuracy of local description; it is the accuracy of one who is confident of having observed what he undertakes to describe.” Always the entrepreneur, however, Daniell adds the caveat that “no verbal description, however accurate, can convey a true idea of the original” comparable with his aquatint views (1: 125).

28. The shades of Pennant and Johnson guided Daniell through the Isle of Skye, taking in Liveras, Raasay, Portree, Duntulm, and especially Dunvegan Castle, as far as Talisker: the artist’s introduction to the elderly daughter of Flora Macdonald prompted a flood of Jacobite memoirs concerning “the Prince among the Heather” (1: 162). But it was really Scott who inspired the climax of Daniell’s excursion to the island, travelling by boat to Lochs Scavaig and Coruisk in late July and early August 1815, in the company of Mackinnon of Corry, Macleod of Dunvegan, and other members of the Skye gentry. It is

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noteworthy that the “savage wilds that lie / North of Strathnardill and Dunsbye” (to quote Scott [canto 3, stanza 12, p. 432]), especially the two lochs cradled by the Black Cuillins, were a recent “discovery,” unknown to earlier travellers like Pennant and Johnson. John Macculloch and Scott were among the first outside visitors in 1814; characteristically, Macculloch staked his claim to priority, writing “before my visit, [Loch Coruisk] had never been seen by a stranger, and was indeed known to few of the inhabitants of Skye” (*Description* 1: 280–81).

29. It was, however, Scott’s romantic description in *Lord of the Isles* that had stirred the popular imagination. Scott’s 1815 letter introducing Daniell to John Macleod, twenty-fourth Laird of Dunvegan (whose father Norman had hosted both Pennant and Johnson as a young man),²⁰ recommended that “the very gentlemanlike” artist should “visit the lake of terror which lies at the foot of the Coolin and any thing which your taste may point out in your part of Skye as worthy of the pencil.”²¹ That Scott’s “lake of terror” refers to Loch Coruisk is revealed in his manuscript memoranda for Daniell preserved in the National Library of Scotland copy of *A Voyage*: “Go into Loch Slapin & land at Maccalister’s cave which see—After this do not fail to coast the Island & go into Loch Scavig—it is divided at the bottom of the bay by a small headland, keep the northern side of the head land & land where a torrent breaks down from the land—five minutes walk will conduct you to a most astonishing piece of scenery” (1: xxiv). Daniell made Loch Coruisk the climax of his visit to Skye, as well as one of the aesthetic highpoints of *A Voyage* as a whole.

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30. *A Voyage* describes the party's entrance into Loch Scavaig through the Sound of Soay, noting that "even with the advantage of bright and clear weather, the frowning grandeur of the savage and sterile scene spread a gloom over the spirits, which, for a time, was indescribably oppressive. It seemed that nature had destined this spot for a solitude, which should defy the cheering influence of cultivation, and for ever mock the gladdening smile of the summer's sun" (1: 176). Ironically, having dismissed Johnson's Highland melancholy by holding up the georgic talisman of improvement, both visually and textually Daniell now immersed his reader in a distinctly gloomy iteration of the romantic sublime. Quoting from canto 3, stanza 12 of *Lord of the Isles*, the letterpress identifies with the "impassioned exclamation" of Scott's fugitive king Robert Bruce:

Thus many a waste I've wandered o'er,
Clombe many a crag, cross'd many a moor;
But, by my halidome!
A scene so rude, so wild as this,
Yet so sublime in barrenness,
Ne'er did my wand'ring footsteps press,
Where'er I happ'd to roam! (1: 177)

31. In Scott's poem, Bruce's visit to Loch Coruisk represents a descent into the underworld, where the small fugitive band, at the lowest ebb of their fortunes, encounter the marauder Cormac Doil, and the king survives an assassination attempt while sleeping in Doil's rough tent on the lochside, rescuing the mute page Amadine (later identified as the heroine Edith

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of Lorn) from captivity. It is a place of trial, solitude, and danger, in which, as Tom Furniss has pointed out, Scott conjures sublimity from past geological catastrophe:

. . . primeval earthquake's sway,
Hath rent a strange and shattered way
Through the rude bosom of the hill,
And that each naked precipice,
Sable ravine, and dark abyss,
Tells of the outrage still. (Scott, canto 3, stanza 14, p. 432; Furniss 24)

Briefly invoking the “primitive” Ossianic etymology of the Cullins (“From old Cuchullin, chief of fame”; Scott, canto 3, stanza 16), Scott fashions Bruce’s sublime vision at Coruisk into a harsh metaphor for the trials of kingship:

Raised high ’mid storms of strife and state,
Beyond life’s lowlier pleasures placed,
His soul a rock, his heart a waste. (canto 3, stanza 17)

Yet, for Scott, Coruisk was also a crucible for the rebirth of the Scottish nation, when Bruce’s fortunes begin to turn after meeting up (at the start of canto 4) with his brother and learning that the Plantagenet King Edward I has died and the Scottish nobility have risen to support his claims to the throne.

32. Daniell's plate "Loch Scavig" (2: 65) translates Scott's note (extracted from the *Pharos* journal) describing the Cuillins towering above the loch into a visual idiom: "The tops of the ridges, apparently inaccessible to human foot, were rent and split into tremendous pinnacles" (1: 176).



Fig. 7. William Daniell, "Loch Scavig."

But Scavaig is only the antechamber, it turns out, to the "lake of terror" itself, Loch Coruisk (2: 66), which Daniell's party explore by boat the following day, having camped the night under the waterfall at the head of Loch Scavaig in Macleod's tent, as depicted in the plate.



Fig. 8. William Daniell, “Loch Coruisk.”

Daniell alludes to Scott’s poem when describing his night’s camping (or rather “glamping,” given the “ample supply of cold meats, with wine, and other good cheer”): “[I]t was matter of no small exultation to observe a group of Hebridean chieftains reposing, after the fashion of their warlike ancestors, with a hardihood that would not have disgraced King Robert and his compeers” (1: 178). Yet as already mentioned, at this point the gloomy sublimity and solitude of “the lake of terror” elicits a strange melancholy in Daniell’s narrative: he cites the anecdote of an English tourist who, having arrived at Loch Scavaig, had been forced to turn back by the suicidal thoughts that afflicted him in this “pit of Acheron” (1: 176). Even Macleod’s “cheerful” tourist party, we learn, “partook rather of the *pensieroso* than of the *allegro*” (1: 179).

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33. Uncharacteristically, Daniell the panegyrist of a “moral electricity” that connects distant regions of Britain and diffuses “the spirit of national character” here waxes philosophical on the subject of sublime solitude, and the psychological effects of “rude and sterile grandeur,” extolling the moral benefits of a rigorous asceticism. Although apparently a far cry from the georgic discourse of commercial improvement underpinning *A Voyage’s* earlier account of Skye, Daniell here develops Scott’s interpretation of the mountain sublime as a foundation for a disciplined, imperial masculinity. As the letterpress has it, “A birchen twig and a dark room will sometimes do wonders for the nursery, and there is little doubt that full-grown spoiled children might be reclaimed by similar discipline. For the most inveterate case of this kind perhaps a single winter passed among the wilds of Strathnardill would work a radical cure” (1: 180).

34. Daniell’s two aquatints²² seek to communicate an analogous sublime affect to the metropolitan viewer. As the first ever published aquatint views of Skye’s mountain scenery, they represent a significant aesthetic advance on Moses Griffith’s view of the Cuillins from Beinn na Caillich made half a century earlier. In all three, the human figures, boats, and tents are dwarfed by the massive, jagged ridge of the Black Cuillins towering above them: although this is one of the most magnificent mountain ranges in Scotland, comparison with modern photography shows the extent to which Daniell has employed vertical exaggeration, raising the height of the ridge and emphasising its jagged nature, especially in the first two plates. Despite the human presence, both views (especially 1: 66), convey a sense of solitude, enclosure, even terror, that accords well with the mood evoked by Daniell’s letterpress, and, beyond that, Scott’s sublime verse in *Lord of the Isles*.

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35. As with Daniell's views of Staffa, geological accuracy is not entirely sacrificed to sublime affect. In "Loch Scavig," the boulders in the foreground are marbled to convey the effect of "pudding stone" as described in Scott's *Pharos* journal (quoted in the accompanying text), and as Anne Macleod indicates, "at the top of the picture the peaks of the Cullins are squeezed into the frame" (158), leaving the imagination of the viewer to complete the scene. The view of "Loch Scavig" is punctuated by sunlight, largely absent from "Loch Coruisk," in which only one shaft of morning sunlight gilds "the shivered peaks of the Coolin," casting a pale sheen on the still black waters of the enclosed loch, turning its gloom into "placid serenity." Circling white seabirds set against the black rock adds a powerful effect of solitude to the scene: the letterpress describes how, disturbed in their nests by the unaccustomed presence of boats, their "shrill and discordant screams . . . produced a grotesque though solemn effect, which well accorded with the stern dreariness of the lake and its surrounding rocks" (1: 180–81). Before departing for Strathaird on the return journey to Liveras House, Daniell reflected that "this was no place for luxurious contemplation, and all the homage that nature seemed here to extract from her votaries was to gaze, to wonder, and to hasten onwards" (1: 181).

36. As with Turner's oil painting of Staffa mentioned above, his celebrated watercolour of *Loch Coriskin* (engraved as a frontispiece for *Scott's Complete Poetical Works* in 1833–34) has rather stolen the show from Daniell's aquatints of the same loch, partly as it was singled out for praise by John Ruskin in his 1856 treatise "On Mountain Beauty." Ruskin here redeemed Turner from the stigma of topography or "mapwork" which we saw being

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levelled against Daniell's aquatint art. To quote again from Anne Macleod, for Ruskin, "Turner's wild visions of the Highland landscape were essentially abstractions, containing enough geological detail to convey the skeleton of the terrain but losing all sense of fixed, enduring forms in a great tidal wave of atmosphere and matter" (162).

37. Yet as an artistic response to Scott's *Lord of the Isles*, as well as to the half-century long tradition of Highland travel writing and topography that it absorbed, Daniell's coastal views of Scotland represent a major contribution to a romantic understanding of the Highlands and Islands. Indebted to previous artists and travel writers like Pennant and Moses Griffith, as well as geologists Robert Jameson and John Macculloch, Daniell worked to translate the miraculous workings of what he called "moral electricity" into a visual idiom. *Voyage Round Great Britain* celebrates the infrastructural revolution that was transforming and unifying Britain's constituent nations, connecting them by means of new media, technologies, and modes of transport with her extensive global empire. Britain's coasts had saved "the island nation" from Napoleonic invasion over the preceding quarter century. But looking forward, Scotland's Highland and Island coastlines offered the prospect of new fishing, kelping, and commercial hubs, dotted with lighthouses, customs houses, and coastal crofting settlements. These were designed to accommodate Gaels cleared from inland glens, now transformed into massive sheep ranches, empty of population. Even the sublimity of coastal scenes like Lochs Scavaig and Coruisk on the Isle of Skye, less amenable to economic improvement but newly accessible due to steamboat tourism, offered moral lessons for a stoic imperial masculinity under threat from the relaxing influences of commercial luxury. Daniell's Highland aquatints played a

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foundational role in constructing subsequent tourist itineraries, promoting ideologies of improvement and celebrating “enterprising capitalists” like Lachlan Mackinnon of Corry. They established a canonical vision of the West Highlands, while screening out the plight of ordinary Gaels; in so doing, they highlighted the role of Scotland’s coasts as conductors of “moral electricity” pivotal to national unity and economic development, as well as sites of sublime and picturesque pleasure for tourists from the south.

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Notes

¹ All references are to *Daniell's Scotland: A Voyage Round the Coast of Scotland and the Adjacent Isles, 1815–22*, with introductory material by Elizabeth Bray and Iain Gordon Brown, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, Birlinn, 2006.) Volume 1 comprises Ayton and Daniell's text, and volume 2 the plates. My warmest thanks to John Bonehill, Mary-Ann Constantine, and Anna Pilz for their assistance in the research and writing of this essay.

² In Kennedy, *British Topographical Print Series*, see especially chapter 5, "The Improver's Gaze: A Voyage Round Great Britain 1814–25," pp. 157–95. Daniell also complained that Ayton's letterpress almost never commented on the plates themselves (174).

³ In financial terms, while *A Voyage* was an unsuccessful project for Longman, Kennedy estimates that Daniell made "2800 guineas for the 56 numbers of Vols I–IV, less £400 paid to Ayton." The successful sales of the later volumes (after Longman had pulled out) were helped by his election as an RA (Kennedy, *British Topographical Print Series* 169–70). See also Garvey (22). The high price of Daniell's publication (each part comprised two—later three—prints, plus text, cost ten shillings and sixpence) is evident when compared with that of John Hassell's *Tour of the Grand Junction Canal* (1819), which, writes Kennedy, "sold at two shillings and sixpence per part in the demy octavo format, each part consisting of four engravings and letterpress." He adds "this proved a durable pricing plan that was commonly adopted in the following two decades for steel-engraved octavo publications at the cheaper end of the market" (157).

⁴ The proposal was published in 1797, but the only part of the project to be realised was a two-volume *History of the River Thames* with aquatint plates (London, John and Joseph Boydell, 1794).

⁵ Kennedy suggests that Longman may have seen the publication of Cooke's coastal volume not only "as spur to competition, but as an encouraging indication that they were on the right track" (*British Topographical Print Series* 158).

⁶ For the Daniells in relation to the "Indian picturesque," see Leask (*Curiosity* 166–78).

⁷ Kennedy suggests that "many would have seen the images in the *Voyage* as too prosaic, as lacking in picturesque interest, richness and texture, especially for such a lavish and large-scale publication," compared to a rival publication like Cooke's *Southern Coast* (*British Topographical Print Series* 170).

⁸ This builds on Kennedy's suggestion in *British Topographical Print Series* that "the model of the voyage of discovery, normally used to order and classify lands, resources and peoples prior to incorporation into the imperial periphery, is used here to represent the metropolis of Empire itself" (162).

⁹ For Scott's letter of introduction dated June 1815 to "the Laird of Macleod," see Garvey (93–95); and to Col. Maclean of Ardgour, see Zachs (52–53).

¹⁰ British Museum number 1867,1012.265–323.

http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=725535&partId=1&searchText=voyage&people=127728&object=22909&page=1.

¹¹ In fact, these views would have been taken on the voyage south in August 2015, according to the dates of the drawings recorded in the BM album.

¹² Nevertheless, Johnson here penned a Latin Ode to Mrs Thrale, part of which translates as follows: "I wander amongst clans where the life of a wild people, embellished by no form of culture is filthy and shapeless, and lies hidden in a foul state under the smoke of their peasant dwellings" (Johnson and Boswell 496).

¹³ “Old Corry” had been a Captain in Keppoch’s regiment in the ’45.

¹⁴ Given its ideological resistance to “free circulation, suburban poetics, and liberal economics,” Tory *Blackwood’s* was far more sceptical than the Whiggish Daniell about the national benefits of “moral electricity,” as Gidal demonstrates.

¹⁵ Comparable with Griffith’s plate in Pennant (378).

¹⁶ Even although Daniell’s prose excises the social critique evident in Richard Ayton’s letterpress published with the first two volumes of *A Voyage*, it often struggles to achieve the sort of georgic composure conveyed by his plates. For a study of the “improved” built environment of the Georgian Highlands as represented by Daniell, see Maudlin.

¹⁷ Garvey proposes that “such enhancement increases the visual impact on the reader, and compensates for the fact that he is not viewing the scene in situ” (47–48).

¹⁸ Discussed, but rather overestimated, in Klonk (83–84, 90).

¹⁹ For a detailed analysis of Daniell’s views of Staffa, see Kennedy (*British Topographical Print Series* 189–194).

²⁰ Another Indian connection. John Macleod (1788–1835) was born in India, where his father, Major-General Norman Macleod (1754–1801), served as a Brevet Colonel between 1782 and 1794, fighting against Tipu Sultan. Returning to Britain, he became a radical MP and member of the Friends of the People, but accusations of corruption while in India ruined his career and he died an indebted alcoholic in Guernsey in 1801.

²¹ Dated June 1815, the original letter is in Dunvegan Castle (Garvey 93–95).

²² Or three, if we include “The Coolin, taken from Loch Slapin” (1: 67): unlike the other two, however, this one represents a house, kelp burning, and a sense of connection to the outside world.