The Australianness of the English
Claude: Nation and Empire in the
Art of John Glover
Ian McLean

The recent exhibition of John Glover's art, *John Glover and the Colonial Pictorial* (Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 2003), curated by David Hansen, 
provides an opportunity for not only the revaluation of Glover's art but also the discourses of nationalism and empire that have largely determined thinking about Australian art until now, and are currently reorganising it under the rubric of postcolonialism. Glover's art is uniquely placed as a window on the aesthetic imperatives of nationalism and the relationship between empire and settler art—particularly between English art and its Australian colonial offspring. Glover is the most accomplished and famous European artist ever to have settled permanently in a colony, having developed a considerable reputation during his first sixty years in England before migrating to Australia in 1830. Further, Glover is the only artist to have earned the reputation for inaugurating two national schools of art. Early nineteenth-century English critics claimed he was the first artist to properly picture the British countryside and in the process create a genuine British school of art. In the late twentieth century, long after the British had forgotten their initial infatuation with Glover and fallen for Constable instead, Australian curators claimed Glover was the first artist to have mastered the look of the Australian bush, and so laid the foundation stone for a genuine Australian school of painting.

Because Glover is an exemplar of both English and Australian art, he can also be considered an artist of empire, especially given the current interest in those eighteenth and nineteenth-century English artists from Hodges to Baines (not to mention a host of European orientalists and earlier Dutch and Spanish artists) who are moving between worlds in their picturing of empire reshaped European art. This raises an
obvious question: what is it about Glover’s aesthetic that simultaneously lent it to
two very different, even contradictory things—the imperial and global demands of
empire and the genius loci of nationalism (and two nationalisms at that)? A study of
the reception of Glover’s work demonstrates that Glover’s naturalist aesthetic was
easily exploited by the myth of genius loci that underpinned both early nineteenth-cen-
tury English and late nineteenth-century Australian nationalism: namely the concep-
tion that national identity grew organically from the local soil as if ordained by Nature
itself. At the same time, Glover’s commitment to the picturesque and the style of
Claude provided his art with an aesthetic template through which empire could pro-
fess its European values.

Proceeding from this starting point, my argument is in two main parts. The first,
"The Australian Glover", outlines the key historical moments in his reception by
Australian art historians as he progressed from an artist of Englishness to one of
Australianness. The second part, "The English Glover", uses the key points that fea-
ture in the critical reception of Glover’s English art as a lens through which to examine
the ambivalent affiliations between discourses of empire, Englishness and Aus-
stralianess, and as a tool to unpack the paradigmatic opposition between natu-
ralism and Claude’s neoclassical schemes in Australian art historiography. I will argue
that Glover’s English aesthetic deconstructs, in advance as it were, the myth of
Australian nationalism that arose around it in the late nineteenth century. As a post-
script, I will also suggest that the tension between Glover’s Englishness and Aus-
stralianess made his art ripe for postcolonial deconstruction: that is, for the
unpacking of myths of national identity through the postcolonial paradigms of
hybridity and globalism. If Glover’s Australianism initially created problems for his
place in Australian art, now it potentially opens an even more brilliant career for him
within postcolonialism’s hybrid global domain.

The Australian Glover
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long after Buxton, McCubbin, Roberts, Sherman and Heyden were comfortably
enshrined on their thrones. While Glover had enormous fame in his day, memory of
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sseurs in England and Australia and enjoyed a local reputation in Tasmania, but for
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in the Australian context.

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Proceeding from this startling point, my argument is in two main parts. The first, "The Australian Glover", outlines the key historical moments in his reception by Australian art historians as he progressed from an artist of Englishness to one of Australianness. The second part, "The English Glover", uses the key points that feature in the critical reception of Glover's English art as a lens through which to examine the ambivalent affiliations between discourses of empire, Englishness and Australianness, and as a tool to unpack the paradigmatic opposition between nationalism and Claude's neoclassical schema in Australian art historiography. I will argue that Glover's English aesthetic deconstructs, in advance as it were, the myth of Australian nationalism that arose around it in the late twentieth century. As a postscript, I will also suggest that the tension between Glover's Englishness and Australianness makes his art ripe for postcolonial deconstruction: that is, for the unpacking of myths of national identity through the postcolonial paradigms of hybridity and globalism. If Glover's Claudeanism initially created problems for his place in Australian art, now it potentially opens an even more brilliant career for him within postcolonialism's hybrid global domain.

The Australian Glover

Glover's star role in the pantheon of Australian art is a recent achievement, attained long after Buxton, McCubbin, Roberts, Streeton and Heysen were comfortably ensconced on their thrones. While Glover had enormous fame in his day memory of his art rapidly faded after his emigration and death. He remained known to connoisseurs in England and Australia and enjoyed a local reputation in Tasmania, but for most of the twentieth century he was considered merely a colonial curiosity. This is because his art seemed imbued with English values: for Australians Glover was an artist of empire, out of step with the myth of Australianness that dominated the understanding of Australian art for most of the twentieth century. Steeped in Claudean mannerisms, his paintings were considered too Old World for an authentic Australian art.

If anything, Glover was the epitome of an unAustralian artist. When I was a school student at the end of the 1960s his paintings formed one of the most memorable clichés of Australian art history: their bizarre curvilinear trees seemed laughable grotesque relics of a colonial vision, especially when set against the fresh, light-filled scenes of the Heidelberg School. Glover's moroseness still lingers in some quarters not acquainted with his recent turn in fortune. As every student of Australian art knows, the Heidelberg School of impressionist painters discovered the real Australia by looking more to the genius loci than the regalia of empire. They cut through European neoclassicism to reveal the sui- lent clarity we call home.

A particular set of qualities comprises the category of Australianness in Australian art historiography. Differences with European art and its aesthetic tropes, truthfulness to local ecologies, and the domestication of an alien and even bizarre environment, are the main ingredients for defining a specifically Australian art. They constitute the structural elements of the art myth of Australianness. This "Australianism" understanding of Australian art is more than popular prejudice; it is chiseled into the headstone of official Australian art history. According to Bernard Smith, "it is most confusing to talk about a distinctively Australian form of painting of any kind before 1885. Our colonial painting is essentially a branch of English painting." In 1962 he dubbed the Heidelberg School the "genesis of Australian art"—though as he admitted, this Biblical metaphor was not his. William Moore had coined it as early as 1905.

Terry Smith traced the origins of this art myth of Australian identity to the Heidelberg School's own self-promotion, and particularly to the Australian impressionist Frederick McCubbin's attempt to show that an Australian art exists. By being true to nature—that is, by paying attention to Australia's unique local ecology, its colours, light and forms—McCubbin argued that his fellow impressionists pictured for the first time an Australian sensibility, as if all it took to be Australian was to dispel the picturesque fog of empire, and see the place as it really was. The only "forerunner" he would admit was the Swiss immigrant artist Louis Buvelot. His paintings, said McCubbin, were "t...
Despite the naturalism of his art, until recently Glover had no place within this framework. He was considered part of a ramshackle crew who, for no good reason, ended up in the colonies. In 1954, in the first substantial study of Australian art, William McVey said that Glover's coming to Australia in 1831 "was one of the strangest things in the annals of our art," though he had nothing much to say about his painting. By contrast, he had much to say about Buxton, who arrived in Australia in 1868, naming him "the father" of landscape painting in Australia. Margaret Preston repeated this assessment in 1941 when she said that Glover, who happened upon this continent, quite unexpectedly, was one of "a strange, interesting crowd of artists." She continued: "a French [sic] artist named Louis Buxton may be said to have been the inspiration of the Australian School of Painting." An example of Glover's Australian landscapes did not enter an Australian state gallery outside of Tasmania until 1951 (over one hundred years after his death), and he barely rates a mention in Bernard Smith's first history of Australian art, Place, Taste and Tradition (1945).

Glover's rehabilitation, when it did come, was at the expense of the art myth of Australianism; rather this myth was the key to his new place in the sun. Smith first drew attention to Glover's remarkable naturalism in his book European Vision and the South Pacific (1960). However, Smith was also quick to qualify Glover's achievement, judging him a painter who never fully escaped the European picturesque conventions he was formed within: "we possess in his Australian work a belated example of the Bellamy landscape being accommodated to the scenery of Tasmania." He might render the Tasmanian Fauna "faithfully enough", but invariably "the subject has been invested with the dreamy pastoral poetry of Claude." Similarly, in 1968 Robert Hughes concluded: "Claude's tranquil prospects and serene skies gave him a scheme for his own image of Tasmania." In short, Glover may have possessed an eye for botanical accuracy but the Claudian atmosphere of his paintings lacked the look and feel of the place.

Glover's full rehabilitation did not come until 1977, when John McPhee curated the first considered exhibition of his work. This can be seen as the moment when Glover's place was firmly secured in the general Australian consciousness. As one reviewer at the time remarked, McPhee gives Glover "belated recognition as a painter of more importance [in Australia] than almost anyone else." McPhee's exhibition was memorable for two reasons. First, there is his estimation of Glover's achievement in Australia. McPhee made of Glover not a colonial oddity but an apostle of the patrician whose radical realism broke with colonial lyricism to create a distinctively Australian art. After being exiled to Tasmania, said McPhee, Glover's 'conventional Claudian approach (in the nature of the realist painter's) found a nourishing ground in the Tasmanian landscape and he was able to realize a vision of the landscape that ...'
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Great Australian landscape painters! Men who knew how to paint a gum tree, who knew the Australian palette, the way the bush looks in sunshine, the feeling of the scrub. But who the blazes has ever heard of John Glover?...Who, nearing 80, threw off a lifetime of painting style to simply look fresh at what was around him, and had the guts to paint it exactly like it was.

Now even Glover’s notorious trees seemed Australian. The Bulletin enthusiastically reported: "But there are his masterpieces: great gums writhing like mad snakes against a uniquely pointillist landscape populated by happy, monkey-like natives, a somewhat surreal, somewhat naïve vision, but hauntingly, uniquely Australian." McPhee succeeded in selling Glover’s art because he gave it pride of place in the art myth of Australianness—something journalists and the general public intuitively understood. He drew on Smith’s observations about Glover’s naturalism and on Hughes’s praise for Glover’s ability to domesticate the landscape—what Hughes called a "proper place for white men" in which "the blacks are an error of taste and intrusion." "For the first time," said Hughes, "antipodean nature is really humanized...it has become a friendly world into which the European settler can move without strain." But McPhee also discovered a Glover far more radical than either Hughes or Smith imagined—one who, within a few years of migrating to Tasmania, had thrown off a lifetime allegiance to Claude and indeed a whole tradition of western art to discover the liberty which Australia and the New World promises. In the words of one reviewer at the time: "for the first time in his life, the artist was painting freely; no longer was he bound by tradition that he had unashamedly followed."

Not everyone has been convinced by McPhee’s thesis. In one of the most astute books written on Australian colonial art in recent times, Images in Opposition (1984), Tim Bonyhady concluded that Glover "obviously continues [his Tasmanian paintings] to regard the Roman artist as the paragon of landscape painters", and that "Claude’s idealized Italian landscapes probably appeared to Glover as the paradigm..."
for the pastoral arcadia he perceived in Tasmania.⑩ More recently, Christopher Allen followed the art historians (Smith, Hughes and Boonbady), to also conclude that Glover "had not fundamentally adapted to a new land, but largely reproduced the old."⑩

McPhee might not have convinced the art historians, but he did persuade the curators. Ron Radford and David Hansen, for example, implicitly accept his gist of McPhee's argument. While Radford admitted that Glover's A View of the Artist's House and Garden... (1835) pictures "his rapid transformation" of the land to "his European ideals", he insisted that "it is not an idealised landscape, it is realistic."⑩ But whoever is right, there now is a canvas with which everyone agrees. In his recent history of Australian art, Allen has singled out Bouverie as the first artist to properly domesticate the Australian bush, but he acknowledged a precursor, that painter of colonial properties, John Glover. Repeating Hughes' observation, Allen claimed that Glover was the first Australian artist to suggest "an uncomplicated sense of being at home."⑩ In 2004 Hansen, who has written the most complete and scholarly account of Glover's art, summed up the new consensus.
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One of the abiding myths of Australian art history... is that the Swiss Barbizon-style *plein-airiste*, Louis Bavelot (1814-88) was the first artist to capture the forms and colours of the Australian bush. This led to an unreasonable dismissal of earlier artists such as...Glover. This work [View of Mills’ Plains (c.1855)] and the closely related Australian landscape with cattle...provide an effective refutation. Refused is not the myth itself (its way of structuring Australianness) but a detail of its narrative. All that changed was that Australianness was insinuated more deeply into colonial history.

The English Glover
Glover’s rehabilitation in the late 1970s was part of a resurgence in Australian nationalism and a rethinking of its mythic narratives. Indeed, McPhee’s thesis revised important aspects of the myth’s narrative of origin. If he did not upset the structure of the myth, his claim that the former artist of Englishness was in fact an Australian patriot cleared some ground for the more radical revisionism that occurred during...
the postcolonial turn that followed in the 1980s and 90s, which emphasised global perspectives of mixed, unknown identities and the hybridity of migrant experiences.

This postcolonial turn makes the relationship between Glover's English and Tasmanian paintings the most compelling issue of his art today. Hansen clearly responded to this new postcolonial critique in John Glover and the Colonial Picturque. Whereas McPherson's exhibition had focused on Glover's Australian art, Hansen brought together substantial numbers of Glover's English and Australian work, and devoted much of his research to the largely ignored English work. His exhibition made it possible to properly assess the relationship between the pictorial conventions of Englishness and Australianness, empire and colony. However, Hansen stuck closely to McPherson's proposition. In a radio interview on the exhibition, Hansen claimed that while in England Glover did not match Constable's ability to distil an identity from the local scenery, in Australia he did.39 To Hansen (then a Tasmanian resident), Glover's Tasmanian views felt like home; they were home to anteriority. The uniqueness of Tasmania's landscape impressed itself upon Glover that he discovered a sense of place that still impresses us. As Hansen wrote in the catalogue: "some elements of the Australian environment remained resistant, intractable, unable to be accommodated within the Picturesque frame, and it is because he embraced these realities that Glover earns his high reputation."40

I don’t disagree with Hansen’s sense of Glover’s importance in the Australian landscape tradition, but I would argue it differently. Glover’s Australian art is not the ace in the pack that first secures the myth of Australia’s genius loci, but the joker who upsets the myth’s foundational structures by revealing its genealogy in Englandness. Glover’s English art is, I will argue, the key to understanding not just why the myth of Australia’s genius loci is an exotic flowering of the English picturesque, but also how the art myth of Australianness was able to construct its difference from Englandness. Seen against his Australian achievement, Glover’s English art is as a means to deconstruct his supposed picturesque of Australianness. If the picturesque of Englandness is a utopian discourse that happily combines naturalism and Claudianism, Australianness is also a utopian discourse, but one caught up in the "science fiction" of settled identity—the fiction being that the exciting of Claudianism to reveal the kernel of empirical truth called naturalism would produce a more scientific or believable account.

The picturesque took root in England because its nostalgia eased the alienation of modern industrial life. Picturing an original paradisical England before the Fall and, at the same time, a Utopia to strive towards, the picturesque was a bane for revolutionary change. Glover, this man...
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However there was an essential difference between Englands and Tasmania: in England the picturesque Arcadia was already lost; in Tasmania it was new, even prelapsarian. Thus Bernard Smith remarked in 1960: “It is not altogether inapprpropriate that Glover should seek to apply Claude’s vision to the Tasmanian scene for he himself saw it as a kind of exotic pastoral Arcadia.” Or as the north Tasmanian art curator Daniel Thomas put it in 1973: “The former painter of artificial pasturals now lived in a real Arcadia, near Dennington in Northern Tasmania.” Hansen quotes the Australian-loving English art historian Michael Rosenthal saying exactly the same thing: “in England Arcadia has to be made; in Australia it is found.”

Not surprisingly then, the Tasmanian landscape impressed upon Glover its “rich and picturesque” qualities: “it is possible”, he wrote, “almost everywhere, to drive a carriage as easily as in a Gentleman’s Park in England.” Admittedly the Australian impressionists left such sentiment well behind. Within fifty years of Glover’s death, they had developed new narratives in keeping with the very different conditions and experiences of mainland Australia; and these narratives quickly gained popular appeal in the nationalism that dominated Australia after World War One, when critics praised Streeton’s paintings for striking “the national chord”: “they point to the way life should be lived in Australia, with the maximum of flocks and the minimum of factories.”

However these distinctive impressionist narratives were fitted to a similar moral vision and pastoral ideology that structured Englishness. “It is doubtful”, wrote Carol Lansbury, “that the bush would have dominated the culture of (Australian) city dwellers if it had not been the theme of English literature for so many years.” No
matter how much they were surrounded by the doughty sitters, but in present of the real bush", "Australians of the times were unexpectedly living in the imagined Arcadian past of England furnished for them in books." From this perspective, Australian landscape art was a culmination of a moral vision that has its origins in the romanticism of the eighteenth century. Thus we might do better to understand the Heidelberg School (despite its distinctive narrative) as a late (Victorian) flowering of the English picturesque, rather than Glover as a precursor of the impressionists. After all, the Heidelberg School was dealing with the same problem that had earlier faced Britain: how to picture a national identity when there was no national tradition of art to draw on; and it followed the same solution by turning directly to the native landscape for inspiration. 

McCubbin famously claimed that prior to his generation, Australian colonial artists "were all imbued with the spirit of Europe." "All these pioneer pictures leave us cold...They might belong to any country, no little are they Australian." Nearly one hundred years earlier the Somerset House Gazette declared of British art:

almost all our landscape painters, previous to Wilton and Gainsborough, looked at their native mountains, woods, and plains, only through the spectacles of foreign masters, from whom their works have no higher pretensions to our approbation, as they will not bear a comparison with the works of one living artist, who regards nature only through the medium of their own spirits."

And this is why the "Somerset House Gazette", that determined advocate of British art, considered Glover their man, praising him "for representing landscape scenery, under a greater purity of atmosphere, with a more fresh and vigorous display of foliage, a more brilliant effect of sun-shine, and a greater extent of aerial perspective, than had been combined in the works of any painter of ancient or modern times." Such criticisms were formative in the development of Englishness because it played to the nostalgia for a pristine pre-industrial Britain; making Glover's English paintings potent emblems of the new "Englishness" that emerged in early nineteenth-century Britain. A similar fulsome and shaped the colonists' sense of self. Australian landscape art was founded not on history (it is too shameful), but the "look" of a landscape, blissfully unaware that this look is a mirror returning the nostalgic gaze of the settler longing for their own picturesque Arcadia.

This "colonial picturesque" flowered in Australia because the settlers wanted to secure the place for themselves and at the same time make it in the image of their colonial past. This need for new climates and new landscapes was reflected in the landscape art of Claude, as Driesch's anecdotal tale shows. But what was it that struck at what whim of nature, which Glover so compellingly and plausibly Australians.

While correctly described as the English landscape art, there was a European landscape painting that developed into the landscape of the Australian colony. Glover's art, as much as it was it is, is a testament to the power of landscape art to transcend the limitations of time and place.
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matter how much they "were surrounded by the drought-stricken, burnt present of the real bush", "Australians of the nineties unconsciously lived in the imagined Arcadian past of England furnished for them in books." From this perspective, Australianness is the culmination of a moral vision that has its origins in late eighteenth-century British nostalgia for an imagined pre-industrial idyll. Thus we might do better to understand the Heidelberg School (despite its distinctive narratives) as a late (Victorian) flowering of the English picturesque, rather than Glover as a precursor of the impressionists. After all, the Heidelberg School was dealing with the same problem that had earlier faced Britain: how to picture a national identity when there was no national tradition of art to draw on; and it followed the same solution by turning directly to the native landscape for inspiration.37

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almost all our landscape painters, previous to Wilson and Gainsborough, looked at their native mountains, woods and plain, only through the spectacles of foreign masters, from which their works have no high pretensions to our approbation, as they will not bear a comparison with the works of our living artists, who regard nature only through the medium of their own optics.39

And this is why the Somerset House Gazette, that determined advocate of British art, considered Glover their man, praising him "for representing landscape scenery, under a greater purity of atmosphere, with a more fresh and vigorous display of foliage, a more brilliant effect of sunshine, and a greater extent of aerial perspective, than had been combined in the works of any painter of ancient or modern times." Such hubris was formative in the development of Englishness because it played to the nostalgia for a pristine pre-industrial Britain; making Glover's English paintings potent emblems of the new "Englishness" that emerged in early nineteenth-century Britain. A similar hubris also shaped the colonists' sense of self. Australianness was founded not on history (it is too shameful), but the "look" of a landscape, blissfully unaware that this look is a mirror returning the narcissistic gaze of the settler longing for their own picturesque Arcadia.

This "colonial picturesque" flowered in Australia because the settlers wanted to secure the place for themselves and at the same time make it in the image of their origin. This necessarily included the assertion of a more independent identity. In this new climate a principal anxiety was how to be of English stock without being English—what the Bulletin called "independent Australian Britons." If the roots of Australian landscape art were in the English picturesque, and especially its more Italianate Claudian manifestations, they were prudently trimmed, and this young Australian branch of English art was grafted onto some mythical indigenous stock. In their Oedipal-like anxiety to displace Englishness and make their own identity, Australians struck at what they considered to be the distinguishing pictorial feature of Englishness: namely its picturesque Claudianism. Australians considered it to be like a great English fog in the eye that prevented colonial artists from depicting the place accurately.

This (colonial) anxiety of influence is particularly evident in discussions of Glover's Australian art—and understandably so, for no English painter admired Claude more than Glover, or brought such a developed picturesque vision to his painting of Australia. Writing about View of Mills' Plains (1833), Radford says:

There is nothing Claudian in the landscape structure or composition although Claude often chose soft afternoon light. Nor does this resemble an English landscape painting. The detailed realism, flattened foreground and central motif of the tree echo the conventions and devices of Jacob van Ruisdael’s seventeenth-century Dutch landscape painting, a tradition with which Glover was perfectly familiar. Dutch realism conventions have been used to depict an unmistakably Australian landscape. It is perhaps the first triumphantly Australian landscape painting, and it remains one of the great works of Australian art.41

While correctly pointing to the heterogeneous nature of Glover’s picturesque style, Radford is also keen to show (after McPhee) that in Tasmania "Glover loosen[ed] the European landscape formulae which had constrained his earlier work. A new natural landscape was now his guide." However, instead of grounding Glover’s Australian art in the look of the new antipodean landscape, Radford’s argument against the Claudianism of Glover’s Australian paintings only further implicates them in European landscape formulae—Dutch realism is substituted for Claudian neoclassicism.

Glover’s relationship to Claude is also central to Hansen’s argument. Hansen at least faces up to rather than wishes away Glover’s undeniable “Claudolatry” (as he aptly puts it). For Hansen it is problematic for two reasons. First, it interferes with an accurate description of place; and second, it sets Glover against the tide of history.

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Hassen also (rightly) points out that the main culprit is Glover's paintings, while his sketches are generally more naturalistic. Thus Hassen assigns "Glover's success (or failure) as an artist is ultimately to be gauged by the distance between the painting and the sketchbook...between the pictorial and the actual...in the dialectical tension between the ideal and the real." This dialectic was "a tension that characterizes his art." As the nineteenth century progressed, says Hassen, "the naturalistic perspective... triumphed" - a is evident in "the panumous discovery of Constable." 44

This bold modernist ideology, which imagines Claudianism and naturalism as opposed ideologies engaged in a fight to the finish, is the architecture of Hassen's argument. After his migration to Tasmania Glover rides the tide of history away from the Claudian picturesque of his English paintings and towards the free naturalism of modernism. Australian pastoralism sheds its picturesque origins (in Englishness) for a modernist vision befitting the essential Australianness of the new nation. The argument has a considerable pedigree, previously being used to great effect in Smith's European Vision and the South Pacific. But it is an argument that reflects the ideology of our times rather than any innate logic of naturalism.

If Hassen (like many of us) feels a tension between the ideal and the real in Glover's paintings, many of Glover's contemporaries believed he had discovered a perfect accord between the two. This is not surprising, as in Glover's time naturalism and classicism were not necessarily considered antithetical in art - indeed the aim was to subsume them. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the empirical nature of the modern was not irrevocably set against the neoclassical values of the ancients, but were woven together into the fabric of Enlightenment thinking. Claude's neoclassical scheme is not anti-empirical. He was an advocate of plein-air sketching. If today some of us balk at his poetic effects, in Claude's day and in Glover's, Claude was primarily admired for his "unassumed imitation of nature" - to quote one of his late seventeenth-century biographers. 45 According to the Savoy Magazine Gazette (c. 1682), Claude was the model for an English art because he was "certainly one of the closest imitators of nature." If eighteenth-century Australian critics derided Claude for the distorted effects of his classical compositional devices, early nineteenth-century English critics praised his paintings in an exact opposite way: they "are as near perfection as art has yet been known to proceed in the imitation of the truth of nature." 46

To follow Claude was, in Glover's time, to be a naturalist, to be a devotee of genius and - which is why Glover was a Claude's disciple.

This difference between these modern and Enlightenment attitudes is evidence of naturalism's essential subversiveness. Naturalism is not a clear glass, but always has an ideological tint, and an energetic push to the extreme climate of post-modern success in Britain.

Glover's painting, here, is an emerging "Panumous" exhibit to the real - its manifesto is the number of English painters of British artists through their travels and travels.

Glover's reputation is based on his credentials that set him apart from his contemporaries - the world of naturalism, and the real. In 1882, he was the most sought after artist, he was the most sought after. He was a master at reproducing this period of art. He was a master at reproducing this period of art. He was a master at reproducing this period of art.

Fig. 3: John Glover
970 x 1375 x 1284
Hansen also (rightly) points out that the main culprit is Glover's paintings, while his sketches are generally more naturalistic. Thus Hansen asserts: "Glover's success (or failure) as an artist is ultimately to be gauged by the distance between the painting and the sketchbook; between the pictorial and the actual; in the dialectical tension between the ideal and the real." This dialectic was "a tension that characterises his era." As the nineteenth century progressed," says Hansen, "the naturalistic perspective... triumphed"—as is evident in "the posthumous 'discovery of Constable.'"

This bald modernist teleology, which imagines Claudeanism and naturalism as opposed ideologies engaged in a fight to the finish, is the architecture of Hansen's argument. After his migration to Tasmania Glover rides the tide of history away from the Claudean picturesque of his English paintings and towards the free naturalism of modernism. Australian pastoralism sheds its picturesque origins (in Englishness) for a modernist vision befitting the essential Australianness of the new nation. The argument has a considerable pedigree, previously being used to great effect in Smith's *European Vision and the South Pacific*. But it is an argument that reflects the ideology of our times rather than any innate logic of naturalism.

If Hansen (like many of us) feels a tension between the ideal and the real in Glover's paintings, many of Glover's contemporaries believed he had discovered a perfect accord between the two. This is not surprising, as in Glover's time naturalism and classicism were not necessarily considered antithetical in art—indeed the aim was to synthesise them. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the empirical verities of the *moderns* were not irreconcilably set against the neoclassical virtues of the *ancients*, but were woven together into the fabric of Enlightenment thinking. Claude's neoclassical schema is not anti-empirical. He was an advocate of plein-air sketching. If today some of us balk at his poetic effects, it is Claude's day and in Glover's, Claude was primarily admired for his "unsurpassed imitation of nature"—to quote one of his late seventeenth-century biographers. According to the *Suffolk House Gazette* (in 1823), Claude was the best model for an English art because he was "certainly one of the closest imitators of nature." If twentieth-century Australian critics admonish Claude for the distorted effects of his classical compositional devices, early nineteenth-century English critics praised his paintings in an exact opposite way: they "are as near perfection as art has yet been known to proceed in the imitation of scenes in nature." To follow Claude was, in Glover's time, to be a naturalist, to be a devotee of *genius loci*—which is why Glover was Claude's disciple.

This difference between these modern and Enlightenment attitudes is evidence of naturalism's essential subjectivity. Naturalism is not a clear glass, but always has an ideological tint. This is evident in the close relationship between Glover's naturalism and an emerging British politics of identity. While Glover's naturalistic style owed much to the example of Claude, its defining character derives from the ideological climate of post-Napoleonic Britain. It is the key to understanding Glover's extraordinary success in England—which was due to the leading role his art played in defining an emerging "Englishness." A critic of Glover's 1822 exhibition wrote: "The water-colours exhibit the greatest proficiency of the British school in this branch of art, which we are peculiarly entitled to call our own." If history painting was indelibly associated with Italy and France, and still-life and genre painting with the Dutch, a growing number of English critics in the early nineteenth century felt that the new generation of British artists (and Glover especially) had successfully claimed landscape for Britain through their truthful depiction of distinctively British scenery.

Glover's reputation in Britain for picturing Englishness rested on exactly the same credentials that McPhee and Hansen claim for his Tasmanian paintings, and that critics from McCubbin to Hughes claimed for the impressionists: namely their truth to nature. In 1813 Ackerman's *Repository* wrote of Glover's *View in Cumberland*: "The utmost truth of nature prevails throughout this performance." (Not being able to reproduce this painting, I have included Glover's *Wellington Early Morning c.1824*.) One critic in 1826 was so moved by Glover's naturalism to doubt his own critical standards:

*Image unavailable due to copyright*
"We are perhaps willing with Nature, rather than with the artist, who has imitated her appearances under peculiar situations which are new to us. Almost tired with being pleased with the varied scenes of Mr. Glover, we become careless to pretend that we are critics."

So what happened when this devotee of naturalism and Claude came to Australia? Did Glover, as McPhee and Hitchen argue, repaint his "Claudian" style on the new continent, or discover the "Australian" bush? It is at least conceivable, Glover clearly had the skills and ambition for naturalistic painting, and he also was attuned to surviving a new land. And, as Hitchen rightly asserts, he set about "getting it right." However, he did this from the emotive viewpoint of an eighteenth-century English settler in an outpost of empire. Instead of turning his talents towards the nationalist ends of twentieth-century Australians, he surely did something more obvious: he turned them towards the ends of the British Empire, and in the process, renewed his life-long allegiance to Claude.

Postscript: Glover and the Postcolonial Picturesque

Until now interest in Glover has focused on his picturing a genius loci. Today, I would suggest, Glover’s art has something different to offer. Glover might appear aloof at uncovering the genius loci, but wherever he does it the place feels the same — allowing us to feel at home everywhere. In this respect Glover’s picturesqueness is a particular fluid and postmodern type of aesthetic.

Glover’s landscapes appear true to place because they are honest, and to this we owe their Claudianism. Glover showed that his natural picturesque aesthetic worked just as well at uncovering the genius loci of Tasmania and England. For Glover, Claude was not simply a paradigm with which to replace a European vision of the Empire. Rather, Claude’s vistas provided an imaginative locus for the psychological and geopolitical displacements of empire and indeed the modern era. McPhee suggested somewhat implausibly that Glover turned away from Claude because Tasmania was never part of the classical world. However, not only was Britain never really part of the classical world, but also the classical world Claude represented was already a foreign country to him, his seventeenth-century patrons, and later admirers like Glover. In Claude’s paintings we find an important source of the romantic aesthetic that was such a feature of empire art and of Glover’s own "colonial picturesque", and it is precisely for this reason that Glover felt at home in Tasmania.

Glover’s last known work is a sketch of a cattle on a mountainside outcrop. Hitchen concludes his essay with an apt description of it: "A Welsh-looking herdsman on an Italian-looking outcrop before a range of Lake District-looking mountains dappled..."
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“We are perhaps cavilling with Nature, rather than with the artist, who has imitated her appearances under peculiar situations which are new to us. Almost tired with being pleased with the varied merits of Mr. Glover, we become cavillers to pretend that we are critics.”

So what happened when this devotee of naturalism and Claude came to Australia? Did Glover, as McPhee and Hansen argue, repent his “Claudianery” as a snake sheds its skin, and discover the Australian bush? It is at least conceivable, Glover clearly had the skills and ambition for naturalistic painting, and he also was attuned to picturing a sense of place. And, as Hansen rightly asserts, he set about “getting it right.” However, he did this from the emotional viewpoint of an eighteenth-century English settler in an outpost of empire. Instead of turning his talents towards the nationalist ends of twentieth-century Australians, he surely did something more obvious: he turned them towards the ends of the British Empire, and in the process, retained his life-long allegiance to Claude.

Postscript: Glover and the Postcolonial Picturesque

Until now interest in Glover has focused on his painting a genius loci. Today, I would suggest, Glover’s art has something different to offer. Glover might appear adept at uncovering the genius loci, but wherever he does it the place feels much the same—allowing us to feel at home everywhere. In this respect Glover’s picturesque is a particularly fluid and postmodern type of aesthetic.

Glover’s landscapes appear true to place because they are homely, and to this we owe their Claudianism. Glover showed that his Italianate picturesque aesthetic worked just as well at uncovering the genius loci of Tasmania and England. For Glover, Claude was not simply a paradigm with which to replicate a European vision of the empire. Rather, Claude’s views provided an imaginary locus for the psychological and geopolitical displacements of empire and indeed the modern era. McPhee suggested somewhat implausibly that Glover turned away from Claude because Tasmania “was never part of the classical world.” However, not only was Britain never really part of the classical world, but also the classical world Claude depicts was already a foreign country to him, his seventeenth-century patrons, and later admirers like Glover. In Claude’s paintings we find an important source of the romantic exoticism that was such a feature of empire art and of Glover’s own “colonial picturesque”, and it is precisely for this reason that Glover felt so at home in Tasmania.

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with Australian-looking foliage.” This is a succinct summary of Glover’s imaginary world as well as the habitats of both the picturesque and empire art. If Hansen had begun his essay on this note, he may not only have discovered Glover as an artist of empire but also realised that Claudianism is a synthetic or hybrid aesthetic wholly suited to the global stage of the colonial project.

Claude has been a convenient scapegoat for Australian art historians, as if he single-handedly is responsible for foisting picturesque formulae on the Australian landscape. However, as a style the picturesque also owes much to Chinese landscape art, and is found across the globe wherever the footprint of empire left its mark. Nor did Glover blindly replicate the picturesque pastoralism of Englishness in Tasmania. As Smith has shown, empire art was rarely this simplistically imperialistic, and not just because the landscapes it conquered resisted its gaze. To the contrary: when the English colonists arrived in Australia many (including Glover) were surprised to discover a country already laid out in picturesque fashion. This was not just due to the Claudian glass stuck in their eye but also to Indigenous landscape management.

The taste for the picturesque, it seems, is not just British, Italian and Chinese, but also Aboriginal. Glover’s Tasmanian paintings can still teach us historians something today: that is, that they should abandon their habit of ascribing the picturesque to an anachronistic and purely Eurocentric mindset, and instead see it as the first truly global style that could readily adapt (as all successful global enterprises must) to local situations. If this is what empire art is really about, then Glover’s picturesque paintings of Wales and Scotland are just as much colonial, just as much part of the art of empire, as his picturesque landscapes of northern Tasmania.

Ian McLean, PALVA, University of Western Australia

NOTES
1 Readers should note my close association with the exhibition. I was on the initial planning committee (with John McPhee and Max Staples) convened by Hansen, and like them, contributed an essay to the catalogue. I would particularly like to thank David and Max for all the fun and ideas we shared over the years in chasing Glover and the picturesque from one Patrons’ guide to the other.
3 Ibid. 223.
4 Frederick McCubbin, “Some Remarks on the History of Australian Art”, The Art of Frederick
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4. Ibid. 87–8.


6. Ibid. 22.

7. This was the Art Gallery of South Australia, as the recommendation of Sir Kenneth Clark.

8. In 1929 the State Library of New South Wales purchased paintings by Glover, well before they had closed state art galleries. They bought Aboriginal Dancing at Brighton Bay, Tasmania (1836), a year after they received Robert Cadell's, taken from the Garden where I lived (1822) from Sir William Dixon.

9. In May, Taste and Tradition. A Study of Australian Art since 1788 (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1946). Smith mentions him twice, first in a quote by the nineteenth-century Polish scientist, Dr. John Chodzko, which is critical of Glover for not being a "sufficient observer of nature" (91), and second in a brief notice that he had come "out to Australia in his old age." (103) By contrast, the colonial painter Conrad Martens is given star treatment, and even Thomas Worthington receives considerably more attention.


11. Ibid. 265.


15. Heinrichs, "He Captured the Gums."


24. Ibid. 60.


27. See Note 27 above.

28. Ibid. 271.

29. "The Rise and Fall of the Australian Art Movement" (3 January 1980).
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6 William Moore, The Story of Australian Art, 2 vols. vol. 1 (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1934) 34.

7 Ibid. 87–8.


9 Ibid. 22.

10 This was the Art Gallery of South Australia, at the recommendation of Sir Kenneth Clark. In 1939 the State Library of New South Wales purchased paintings by Glover, well before any rival state art gallery. They bought Aboriginals Dancing at Brighton Bay, Tasmania (1835), a year after they received Haborouh Thum, taken from the Garden where I lived (1832) from Sir William Dixon.

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13 Ibid. 265.


17 Heinrichs, “He Captured the Gums.”


19 Hughes, Art of Australia 41–2.


24 Allen, Art in Australia, 28.
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42 Glover famously exhibited his work in London in the company of paintings by Claude that he owned.
43 Redford and Hylton, *Australian Colonial Art*, 58.
44 Ibid. 56.
46 Ibid. 45.
47 Ibid. 48.
51 Ibid. vol. IX (May 1833) 58.
54 Hansen, "The Life and Work of John Glover", Ibid. 106.

Southern Domestic and Photographic Heritage

John William Lindt by Catherine de la Boë Thélusson

In the 1860s - what one contemporary called the "golden age" - in the middle of the 19th century, the words "photograph" and "photography" were still unknown to the public. However, Lindt's work was already well known in the field of natural history, and he was a leading figure in the Society of Australian Photographers. His work was designed to help us understand the natural world and its history, and to give us a glimpse of the life of ordinary people in Australia.

From the 19th century, Lindt was able to create a photographic record of the Aboriginal people and their way of life. His work has been described as "the most important contribution to the photography of Australia".

The photographs of Lindt are unique in that they are not only images of the landscape, but also of the people who lived in it. They are a record of a time when the continent was still largely unknown, and the people who lived there were still largely unknown to the rest of the world. Lindt's work is a valuable resource for historians and researchers, and a reminder of the importance of photography in the study of history.

In the 20th century, the work of Lindt was rediscovered and his photographs were reprinted. The photographs were then used to create a series of postcards, which became a popular way of sending images of the continent to people around the world. The postcards were also used to create a series of calendars, which were distributed to schools and libraries around the country.

Lindt's work is a reminder of the importance of photography in the study of history, and the importance of preserving our cultural heritage. His photographs are a valuable resource for historians and researchers, and a reminder of the importance of photography in the study of history.