

## LOUTHERBOURG, PHILIPPE JACQUES 1740–1812

French painter, stage and costume designer, inventor, occultist and faith healer

Philippe Jacques de Louthembourg's father, a painter for the Court of Darmstadt, hoped his son would become an engineer. His mother advised him to train as a Lutheran minister. Louthembourg decided on a career as a painter and, after his family moved to Paris to foster his talent, he was taught by François Joseph Casanova, Carle van Loo, and Jean-Georges Wille. In 1763 he exhibited his first painting, *Landscape with Figures and Animals*. Denis Diderot's enthusiasm for this work helped launch his career. Over the next eight years, Louthembourg was celebrated as a painter of romantic and picturesque landscapes, and of biblical subjects. He was the youngest person ever to be elected to the Académie Royale in Paris and was nominated as a *peintre du roi* (royal painter).

Despite these successes, in November 1771 Louthembourg moved to London, leaving his wife and children in Paris. He was to return to the continent only once, and never to France. On a number of occasions he denied his nationality, claiming to have been born in Switzerland and that his parents were of Lithuanian stock.

In England, Louthembourg was introduced to David Garrick by a letter from Jean Monnet, director of the Opéra Comique, describing Louthembourg as "un de nos plus grand peintres ["one of our greatest painters"]." Garrick employed him as his chief stage designer at Drury Lane Theatre, for the sum of £500 per annum. From 1773 to 1789, he worked on at least thirty dramatic productions, first under Garrick and then, from 1776, under Garrick's successor Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

Louthembourg played a key role in the transformation of stage scenery from an architectural to a pictorial aesthetic, setting a new standard for theatrical illusion. Rather than relying on a stationary, scenic backdrop, he extended the use of movable painted flats and drop scenes. He integrated scenery, costume, movement, and music to create a harmony of effects. Louthembourg created an unprecedented sense of realism through the innovative use of lighting, sound, puppets, models, perspective and special effects. His widely praised productions included *A Christmas Tale* (1773), *The Maid of the Oaks* (1774), *Selimor and Asor* (1776), *The Camp* (1778), *The Critic* (1779), and *Robinson Crusoe* (1781).

Audiences often encountered scenery at Drury Lane that recalled the sublime landscapes to be found in Louthembourg's work as a painter. While at Drury Lane, Louthembourg's experiments with the theatrical representation of landscape culminated in the pantomime, *The Wonders of Derbyshire* (1779), which drew on sketches he had made during a visit the previous year to Derbyshire.

In 1781, after quarreling with Sheridan over his salary, Louthembourg left Drury Lane. He returned to the theater only once, in 1785, as chief designer of John O'Keeffe's *Omai, Or, A Trip Round The World* (1785). This remarkable spectacle functioned both as pantomime and travelogue, as well as exhibition. Its extensive scenery and costumes—including a procession of about eighty people, representing thirteen ethnic groups—were based on drawings by John Webber, the official draftsman and landscape painter on Captain James Cook's third voyage to the

Pacific. *Omai* became the most popular theatrical production of the decade, helping to establish popular interest in exotic peoples and landscapes, while celebrating England's role in the European exploration of the Pacific.

On February 26, 1781, soon after leaving Drury Lane, Louthembourg opened the *Eidophusikon; or, Various Imitations of Natural Phenomena, represented by Moving Pictures*, first in London's Leicester Square and then, from 1786, in the Strand. On a small stage, approximately six feet wide and eight feet deep, Louthembourg created landscapes, accompanied by realistic sounds and lighting effects, that seemed to be in motion. The spectator watched, for example, dawn break over a view from Greenwich Park up the river Thames. Clouds, painted on linen attached to large frames moved diagonally by a winding machine, passed naturally across the sky. In another scene, Satan and his troops were depicted on the banks of the "Fiery Lake," as Pandemonium rose from the deeps, gradually changing color from sulphurous blue to a lurid red, then a pale light, and finally to shades suggestive of "a bright furnace." The *Eidophusikon* quickly became one of the most popular entertainments in London, numbering among its patrons both Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough. It has been claimed as a precursor of the panorama, the diorama, and the cinema.

After moving to London, Louthembourg had extended his interest in alchemy to mesmerism and the mystical doctrines of Emanuel Swedenborg. In 1786 he met the magician and freemason "Count" Cagliostro, who instructed Louthembourg in the occult sciences. When in June 1787 Cagliostro returned to the continent, Louthembourg followed him. Six months later, they quarreled and Louthembourg challenged Cagliostro to a duel. Early in 1788, Louthembourg returned to London, where he and his wife set up as faith healers, working from their house at Hammersmith Terrace, Chiswick, apparently attracting thousands of patients. They claimed to deploy for therapeutic purposes the influxes that, according to Swedenborg, flow from heaven to earth. A list of their cures was published by a believer, Mary Pratt, in 1789. In the same year, a mob attacked their house and their public practice was abandoned, although Louthembourg used his healing powers in private until at least 1804.

Louthembourg's interest in the occult influenced some of the twenty-two pictures and approximately seventy-one vignettes that he produced over the next ten years for the publisher Thomas Macklin's six-volume edition of the Bible. During this time, Louthembourg became a scholarly recluse, extending his knowledge of the Kabbalah and studying his library of rare religious books. Louthembourg's designs for Macklin include studies in the apocalyptic sublime, such as *The Vision of the White Horse* (1798) and *The Angel Binding Satan* (1792). Louthembourg's work as an illustrator also included plates for John Bell's edition of Shakespeare (1786–88) and the publisher Robert Bowyer's edition of *The History of England* by David Hume (1806). In the early nineteenth century, he published two collections of engravings, *The Picturesque Scenery of Great Britain* (1801) and *The Picturesque and Romantic Scenery of England and Wales* (1805).

Throughout the various phases of his career, with a brief lull in the late 1780s, Louthembourg continued to paint in a variety of genres, producing pastoral scenes, topographical studies, portraits, landscapes, shipwrecks and battle scenes. His battle pictures, including scenes from contemporary history such as the *Battle of Camperdown* (1799) and the *Battle of the Nile* (1800) led to his appointment in 1807 as historical painter to the Duke of Gloucester. His representations of the natural sublime, such as *An Avalanche, or Ice-Fall, in the Alps* (1803) exerted a strong influence on J. M. W. Turner and, more broadly, on Romanticism. In paintings such as *Coalbrookdale by Night* (1801), the landscape of the industrial revolution is portrayed as a sublime of terror.

Modern studies have tended to foreground one aspect of Louthembourg's career at the expense of the others. There is little doubt, however, that it is the cross-fertilization of entertainment, commerce, painting, theater, and the occult that was the catalyst for Louthembourg's prolific genius.

PETER OTTO

### Biography

Born in Strasbourg, October 31, 1740. Family moved to Paris, 1755. Married Barbe Burlât, January 10, 1764; elected to the

Académie Royale and nominated as *peintre de roi*, 1766. Moved to London, leaving his wife and children in France, November 1771; became stage designer for David Garrick's Drury Lane Theatre, 1773. married Lucy Paget, May 1774. Became full member of Royal Academy 1781; *Eidophusikon* opens in Leicester Square, February 26, 1781. Met Alessandro Cagliostro, 1786, whom he followed to Europe, 1787. Opened a practice as a faith healer, 1788; appointed historical painter to the Duke of Gloucester, 1807. Died March 11, 1812.

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## LOVE, ROMANTIC

Love, one of the most basic tenets of the Romantic movement, given its emphasis on individuality and freedom of imagination, defies homogeneity. Literature, as its formative agent, celebrated it as the historically changing core of bourgeois intimacy. Love, intricately linked to creativity, represents a prefiguration of utopian possibilities for the individual defying all limiting norms. Romantic love reached its highest form in German literature at the turn of the nineteenth century. With this construct, the Romantics attempted to solve one of the pressing issues of Western thought since René Descartes: the integration or fusion of the sensual and spiritual forces of life. The strict separation of reason and the material world, of reason and the senses, had relegated feelings and passions as merely material functions of the body, resulting in the divorce of love from desire. Madeleine de Scudéry's *Clélie* (1660) exemplified the celebration of the purely spiritual aspects of love in a union of souls. Novels such as Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux's *La Vie de Marianne ou les aventures de madame la comtesse de \*\*\**, (■■■ *Marianne*, 1731–42) and Pierre Ambroise François Choderlos de Laclos, *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (*Dangerous Liaisons* 1782) resist the metaphysical dimension of love and focus instead on the refined art of seduction. After the conquest, women lose their appeal. Women like the Marquise de Merteuil in *Liaisons dangereuses* repay the callousness of men by becoming just like them. Here, passionate love and marriage are seen as mutually exclusive.

While the English courtly culture remained influenced by the French model well into the eighteenth century, the middle class formulated a domestic moralizing model of love. Under the influence of Puritanism and moral sense philosophy (Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, and especially Francis Hutcheson), love, friendship, and enthusiasm, as the noble traits of man, form the basis of the companionate marriage, which is

based on love as a unique form of friendship. Moral sense theories (that is, the faculty of perceiving moral excellence, considered to be inborn and natural) devalued passion, especially the sensual/sexual side of love, as animalistic and selfish. The new concept of chaste love became the dominant concept in George Lillo's *Merchant of London* (1731), Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740–1741), and Oliver Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* (1766). Richardson warned of passion, of seduction, of a marriage based on passion, and of parents' undue influence over their children's choices. He celebrated female virtue, domesticity, and marriage based on respect and friendship.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, the English influence made itself felt in France. In Antoine-François Prévost d'Exiles's *Manon Lescaut* (1728), Manon transforms her strong passions into a more complex kind of love, and in Françoise de Graffigny's "Lettres péruviennes" (1747), in which the pain caused by unrequited love makes women more aware of the strength of their love and that their capacity to love is greater than that of men. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse* (*Julie, or the New Heloise*, 1761) is the most prominent novel exemplifying passion tempered by sensibility.

In Germany, the sentimentalism of Richardson and Rousseau's wavering between friendship and love, mysticism and enlightenment, come together. In novels such as Christian Fürchtegott Gellert's *Leben der schwedischen Gräfin von G.* (*The Life of the Swedish Countess of G.*, 1747) with its striving for virtue and perfection, as in Sophie LaRoche's *Fräulein von Sternheim* (*The History of the Lady of Sternheim*, 1771) the goal of marriage based on friendship was not passion but common organization of a household and its domestic duties. The cult of sensibility (*Empfindsamkeit*), dominating German literature and culture in the middle of the century, created a new interpersonal value system