

INTRODUCTION

William Duane was the only eighteenth-century radical to have a press career spanning the nations of Ireland, England, India and America. He crossed the Atlantic and Indian Oceans many times and had three changes of nationality. If anyone can lay claim to being a ‘Citizen of the World’, it is Duane. His transnational identity – a composite one based on the different cultural worlds he inhabited – complimented the internationalist political ideology he came to embrace: Painite radicalism. The means by which he expressed his radicalism was the burgeoning print culture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The years in which William Duane lived – 1760 to 1834 – were turbulent for Europe, the Americas and India. The background to his life includes the Seven Years War, the American War of Independence, the Anglo-Mysore Wars, the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the War of 1812 and Bolivar’s War. All of these conflicts touched on Duane or his immediate family and were the subject of the numerous newspapers that he published. He appears as a fleeting presence in the campaigns of the London Corresponding Society (LCS) in the 1790s and went on to play a significant role in the early Republican press in America. He emerged from the radical underworld of the British Empire to become a correspondent of the third American president – Thomas Jefferson – and a scourge of the Federalists.

Duane should be of interest to historians of imperialism and republicanism because of his double career: in empire from 1760 to 1795 and in the early American Republic from 1796 to 1835. His life covers a number of important, but contested, transformations in the eighteenth century. He was born into a British imperial world that spanned the Atlantic ocean and stretched from North America down to the West Indies and across to the British isles. During his life, Britain lost most of its North American possessions but consolidated and extended its power in South Asia until India became the main focus of British imperialism. Historians have traditionally termed this as a shift from the first British Empire to the second. P. J. Marshall, however, has cautioned against this view of empire. In *The Making and Unmaking of Empires* Marshall argues that the rise of a British Empire in India should not be studied in isolation from

