

*'We declare you independent
whether you wish it or not':
The Print Culture of
Early Filibusterism*

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HOW DID THE MOST VOLATILE CITIZENS of the early republic organize their communications? I don't mean the rural rioters of the Whiskey Rebellion or Shays's Insurrection, rather, that more adventurous, more dangerous group—those soldiers of fortune and partisans of liberty who exported revolution from the thirteen United States, troubled the American territories of Spain, France, England, and the Native Nations, and set up republics or realms by force of arms or popular fiat.

From the 1780s through the 1850s, three generations of men, intoxicated by the doctrines of liberty, or pathologically fixated upon getting glory on the scale of Washington or Napoleon, or simply reveling in the possibility of acting in spaces mental and geographical beyond the constraints of morality and law, formed combinations and conspiracies to set up separate states, new republics, or territorial fiefdoms. During the Narciso Lopez ventures to

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Veniunt annis avacula seris
Quibus Occanus univula rerum

Lacet, et ingens pateat tellus,
Tethyusque novus detegit Orbis

Scena in Mexico

Fig. 1. Atlante Dell'America Contenente le Migliori Carte Geographiche, e topografiche delle Principali Città, Laghi, Fiumi, e Fortezze del Nuovo Mondo (Livorno, Italy, 1777).

ATLANTE
DELL'AMERICA

CONTENENTE LE MIGLIORI CARTE

GEOGRAFICHE, E TOPOGRAFICHE

DELLE PRINCIPALI

CITTÀ, LAGHI, FIUMI, E FORTEZZE

DEL NUOVO MONDO

*Con una succinta Relazione dei diversi Stabilimenti Europei in quella parte
di Globo, e principalmente dei Luoghi, che servono adesso di Teatro
alla presente Guerra fra i Coloni Inglese, e la Madre Patria.*



LIVORNO MDCCLXXVII.

PRESSO GIO. TOMMASO MASI, E COMP.
CON APPROVAZIONE.

Fig. 2. Frontispiece, *Atlante dell'America Contenente*.

Cuba in the 1850s, newspapers coined a name for this sort of adventurer—'filibuster'—derived from the Dutch term *filibustier*—freebooter.¹ It linked the American adventurers with the buccaneers who danced on the bounds of illegality in the Caribbean during the late 1600s. In 1794, because of the campaign by Citizen Genêt, the minister of the French Republic, to incite western Americans and Indians to conquer Spanish Louisiana for France, the United States Congress passed a Neutrality Act. It criminalized as a misdemeanor 'the organization of a military expedition by a person within the United States territory aimed at a foreign dominion with which the United States was at Peace.'² The Act did not deter the practice. The early republic saw a bizarre proliferation of adventures in the wake of Genêt's crusade: William Blount's conspiracy—Aaron Burr's march on New Orleans—The East Florida Revolution³—O'Fallon's Yazoo settlement⁴—The Natchez republic⁵—William Bowles's Muskogee republic (which was also a one-day kingdom),⁶ the Republic of West Florida—The Gutiérrez-McGee venture in Texas. The Act did, however, cause a striking divergence in modes of expression employed by filibusters: one set of adventurers openly declared their projects and ideals, defying the Neutrality Act as a hobble to the international spread of liberty; the other occulted their communications, cultivating

1. Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld, Filibustering in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), xi, 3-4, 53-54, 299, 323.

2. Act of June 5, 1794, Chap. 50, section 5, 1, Stat. 381 384.

3. James G. Cusick, *The Other War of 1812: The Patriot War and the American Invasion of Spanish East Florida* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2003).

4. John Carl Parish, 'The Intrigues of Dr. James O'Fallon,' *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 17 (September 1930): 230-63. I will not be discussing this venture, but O'Fallon was connected with George Rogers Clark at one juncture in a filibuster to deliver the interior to the French.

5. Provoked by a religious conflict between Anglo-Protestants and Roman Catholics in the wake of the Pinckney Treaty in 1796, a Committee of Safety asserted control in Natchez, supplanting the government of Goyoso until the formal installation of United States authority late in 1797.

6. J. Leitch Wright, *William Augustus Bowles, Director General of the Creek Nation* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1967). See also the discussion of Bowles and Alexander McGillivray, in Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 85-88, 205-13.

conspiratorial secrecy. My initial claim today is that when secrecy cloaked a filibuster adventure, the invasion or insurrection was for the benefit of an Old World imperial power, not the United States. Publicity was the hallmark of American nationalist adventures or adventures invoking a cosmopolite liberty.

How did these two cohorts organize their communications? Conspiratorial adventures employed manuscript writing in the forms of secret correspondence among participants and secret plans communicated to the diplomatic offices of governments seen as potential backers of territorial takeovers. They also employed verbal rumor. American nationalist adventurers presented written (later printed) warrants for their actions modeled on the penumbra of texts surrounding the founding of the United States. In the communicative practices of filibusterism—in the communicative culture of the most volatile citizens of the early republic—one discovers the operative horizon of imagined publicity and of secrecy in the early republic.

In the early autumn of 1810, Secretary of State Robert Smith placed a document on President James Madison's desk that proved diplomatically inconvenient: The Declaration of Independence of the Republic of West Florida. Madison wished to annex West Florida to the United States. He had been talking wish into fact in his dealings with the Napoleonic regime in Spain, insisting that the territory had been included in the Louisiana Purchase.⁷ When he was Secretary of State under Jefferson, Madison had sent William Wykoff into West Florida to stir up support for annexation among the Anglo inhabitants. The sentiments that Wykoff unleashed, however, took an extravagantly independent turn.⁸ In the summer of 1810, residents formed secret committees of correspondence, called three public conventions petitioning the Spanish administration for redress of grievances,

7. Richard R. Stenberg, 'The Boundaries of the Louisiana Purchase,' *Hispanic American Historical Review* 14 (1934): 32-33.

8. Wanjohi Waciuma, *Intervention in Spanish Floridas: A Study in Jeffersonian Foreign Policy* (Boston: Branden Press, 1976).

organized a makeshift army, designed a lone-star flag, and on the 23rd of September conquered the Spanish fort in Baton Rouge. On the 26th John Rhea issued the Declaration of Independence.⁹ A month later, a constitution had been fashioned and a copy dispatched to the United States Secretary of State; a president elected (the former United States minister to the French Republic, Fulwar Skipwith); a legislature convened; and plans made to seize Pensacola and Mobile from the Spanish.¹⁰

Madison decided to ignore the existence of the republic and ordered the governor of the Louisiana Territory to intervene with force, for 'a crisis has at length arrived subversive of the order of things under the Spanish authorities.'¹¹ Madison quashed the republic with minimal public outcry. There was no press in West Florida. Every declaration, document, speech, petition, and explanation of the West Florida Revolution took place in manuscript. There were perhaps four copies of the Constitution, of which one survives, and twice as many copies of the West Florida Declaration of Independence; two survive. One cannot ignore a Revolution that reproduces itself in various expressive media. It is not too difficult to ignore a revolution that projected itself in less than two dozen pieces of paper that it had neglected to send to the gazettes.

Some maxims: in the eyes of established power, revolution always appears illegitimate; in the court of world opinion there is

9. Its text appears in Stanley Clisby Arthur, *The Story of the West Florida Rebellion* (St. Francisville, La.: The Democrat, 1935), 113-14. This account suffers from a parochial understanding of the diplomatic context of the outbreak. Isaac Joslin Cox, *The West Florida Controversy, 1798-1813* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1918) is the classic introduction to the revolution and annexation, providing texts of many of the primary materials.

10. The correspondence of the revolutionaries and the proclamations of President Skipwith are printed in 'The West Florida Revolution of 1810, as told in the Letters of John Rhea, Fulwar Skipwith, Reuben Kemper, and Others,' *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 21 (1938).

11. James Madison, Presidential Address to Congress. See 'Madison and the Collapse of the Spanish-American Empire: The West Florida Crisis of 1810' in Robert A. Rutland et al., eds., *The Papers of James Madison, Presidential Series* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1984-), 2: 305-20

no venue, no procedure for determining a revolution's legitimacy or illegitimacy; at best the candid world concerns itself with the question whether a revolution was warranted or not. The American Revolution projected a penumbra of printed texts that supplied warrants¹² for dissolving the political relation between the colonies and Great Britain and asserting sovereignty. The Revolution's literature provided a pattern for any insurrectionary group to stamp its actions as warrantable. The problem with the Revolution of West Florida was that its projectors contented themselves with miming the gestures of virtuous revolution, thinking that copying a warrant was enough. They failed to grasp the larger lesson of the American Revolution. Having a warrant and doing what is warranted simply constitute the first moments in the assertion of sovereignty. One has to advertise that fact to as broad a public as can be invoked, by print and whatever other expressive means come to hand. Some who participated in the short life of the republic learned this lesson. When Reuben Kemper¹³ and his Floridian band joined the 1812 Guitierrez filibuster in Texas, he took with him Florida's lone star flag,¹⁴ and a conviction that the press must amplify their actions in the disputed territory and throughout the continent.

History of the Book scholarship has increasingly asked about the social and cultural conditions that bring certain communications into print, others to manuscript circulation, and still others to oral delivery. In the 2005 AAS Conference of the Program on the History of the Book in America, Sandra Gustafson promoted an exploration of the various performative registers within which

12. A warrant is an assurance, often written, of the reasonable grounds for a course of action, or an authorization for action by a grantor. Alvin Plantinga, the epistemologist, has supplied the current influential philosophical formulation: 'that quantity enough of which, together with true belief, yields knowledge.'

13. Andrew McMichael, 'The Kemper "Rebellion": Filibustering and Resident Anglo American Loyalty in Spanish West Florida,' *Louisiana History* 43 (2002): 133-65.

14. The first Texas Revolution had a green flag. The lone star flag that Kemper brought however imprinted itself on the Anglo population. It was adopted as the flag of the Republic of Texas a decade later. It would enjoy later incarnations in the 1850s Cuban ventures and as the 'bonny blue flag' of Mississippi.

communications operate.¹⁵ We've glimpsed in the West Florida insurrection the ritual repetition of the actions, institutions, and articulations of the American Revolution. The performances show that the *vox populi* spoke the people's will more immediately in West Florida than the Neutrality Act. But what of the filibusters who cultivated secrecy? What were the premises of their ways of communicating? I've suggested that a hush-up meant a transatlantic organization; a publicity campaign, a hemispheric organization. But more than this—if the public filibusters adverted to the power of the *vox populi*, the secret filibusters adverted to the influence of that great counterforce to popular sovereignty, diplomatic policy.

Consider the conspiracy by United States Senator William Blount in 1797. He attempted to organize frontier armies composed of Native Americans, Anglo settlers in Louisiana, and recruits from New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Kentucky to attack Spanish outposts at New Madrid, New Orleans, and Pensacola in order to seize the Mississippi basin and Florida for the British. (The Louisiana Territory came under the jurisdiction of Spain by secret treaty at the end of the Seven Years War in 1763 and remained so until its retrocession to France by secret diplomatic treaty in 1800.) The accidental discovery of Blount's plan occasioned the first impeachment hearing and expulsion in the annals of the United States Senate.¹⁶ Blount's co-conspirators included John Chisholm, prototype of the 'ring-tailed roarer' of frontier literature; Dr. Nicholas Romaine,¹⁷ a

15. Conference: 'Histories of Print, Manuscript, and Performance in America,' June 10–12, 2005. <http://www.americanantiquarian.org/phbac.htm>. Gustafson delivered the 2005 James Russell Wiggins Lecture at the conference. See Sandra M. Gustafson, 'The Emerging Media of Early America,' *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 115 (2006): 205–50.

16. Buckner F. Melton, Jr., *The First Impeachment: The Constitution's Framers and the Case of Senator William Blount* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1998). See also Frederick J. Turner, ed., 'Documents on the Blount Conspiracy, 1795–1797,' *American Historical Review* 10 (1905): 574–606.

17. William B. Eigelsbach, 'The Blount Conspiracy: Notes of Samuel Sitgreaves on the Questioning of Dr. Nicholas Romaine on July 13 and 14, 1797, Before the House Impeachment Committee,' *Journal of East Tennessee History* 66 (1994): 81–96.

New York physician who retained his English citizenship; and James Carey, an Indian interpreter who roamed the Southeast. Each was convinced that the maintenance of the Louisiana territory in the slack hands of enfeebled Spain would lead to French control and a disciplinary dominion that would produce economic mayhem for Anglo settlers of the interior. Each had become disillusioned with the United States government policy in regard to the West: Blount because the prospect of a French takeover of Louisiana threatened a vast landscape of speculative land deals upon which his fortune depended and because the rapprochement with Spain inaugurated by the Pinckney Treaty (1795) appeared to him a guarantee of eventual French control of the Mississippi; Chisholm for denying a petition for citizenship from a group of British settlers in territory of dubious American jurisdiction; Romayne out of an English patriotic disdain for American policy.

Samuel Flagg Bemis once observed that, 'The very nature of an intrigue of this kind is to leave as little documentary evidence as possible.'¹⁸ He was wrong. The *sine qua non* of secret conspiracy is correspondence—whether the cipher letter or the privately conveyed and retained missive. It was the exposure of one such letter between Blount and Carey that brought the secret plan into ruin and Blount's career and fortune into dust. It would also be the infamous cipher letter received by General James Wilkinson, purportedly from Aaron Burr, that occasioned the collapse of Burr's Quixotic attempt to create an independent Western nation extending into Mexico.¹⁹

The secrecy of conspiratorial letters after the passage of the Neutrality Act was a reaction to the openness of letters and missives circulated by Citizen Genêt and his associates enlisting citizens of the

18. Samuel Flagg Bemis, *Pinckney's Treaty* (1926; reprint Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973), 143.

19. Mary Jo Kline and Joanne Wood Ryan, *Political Correspondence and Public Papers of Aaron Burr*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 2:921. The editors argue that the letter was written by Jonathan Dayton. The letter and its cipher are available on the University of Kentucky Law School website documenting the Aaron Burr Treason trial: <http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/trials/burr/burrletter.html>.

United States and others to participate in the armed liberation of Spanish Louisiana. Circulated by the public post and readily open to surveillance,²⁰ these letters sought acquiescence for Governor Isaac Shelby to recruit in Kentucky for the invasion of Louisiana,²¹ commissioned George Rogers Clark to lead an invasion army, and inspired the formation of Democratic-Republican clubs. The French Girondiste ministers, such as the ex-journalist Citizen Mangourit in Charleston, prepared public letters to be read aloud, dispensed letters of marque for America sea captains willing to attack Florida, and composed a letter of address to the Creeks and Cherokees inviting them to overthrow the tyranny of Spanish exploiters:²² 'The liberty that the French have won commands them to love the Indians because they are men and free beings . . . The equality that the French admit was the first gift made to man, where did they find it, Indians? In your institutions . . . who has opposed the equality of free men? The Kings of Europe, the King of France. They treated you as savages . . . The French nation, whose citizens are as innumerable as the trees of your forests and the sands of your rivers, is waging a war without quarter against kings and nobles . . . Friends of equality have joined, are joining, and will join the French Nation in this holy war of virtue against vice. You join also. I have spoken.'²³

Addresses and preparations so public could not escape the attention of the Spanish. Their diplomatic objection to President Washington insisted that toleration of open incitement to war was tantamount to an act of aggression. To avoid war,

20. For the postal system's difficulties maintaining the privacy of correspondence, see Richard R. John, *Spreading the News: the American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 43.

21. Archibald Henderson, 'Isaac Shelby and the Genêt Mission,' *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 6 (1920): 451-69.

22. Richard K. Murdock, 'Citizen Mangourit and the Projected Attack on East Florida in 1794,' *Journal of Southern History* 14 (1948): 522-40. Mangourit composed an open letter to Native Americans urging their rebellion from Spanish rule. This printed text was to be read aloud to various tribal groups encountered by Mangourit's agents.

23. R. R. Palmer, 'A Revolutionary Republican: M. A. B. Mangourit,' *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 9 (1952): 488.

Washington had Genêt recalled and insisted upon passage of the Neutrality Act.

Correspondence could not be obtruded upon the public without the risk of criminal prosecution. In the English-speaking world since the late seventeenth century, revolutions and conspiracies had begun in the treasonous correspondence of a circle of the aggrieved. In the Glorious Revolution, the extra-parliamentary initiatives that led to the bloodless coup removing King James II, were organized by a network whose secret communications and actions were lauded after the installation of William and Mary as monarchs of England. In the Glorious Revolution in America, Jacob Leisler in New York and the Mathers in New England established committees of correspondence. This example was adopted by the patriots of the American Revolution. Sam Adams's communicative methods were particularly interesting. He used the Freemasonic model of dual modes of expression: esoteric communications and actions were entrusted to the Sons of Liberty, while exoteric communications—public statements such as *The Rights of the Colonists*—appeared in print and manuscript as a *Report of the Committee of Correspondence of the Boston Town Meeting, Nov. 20, 1772*.²⁴ Often membership in the two organizations was concurrent.

Correspondence was necessary whether one's insurrection was overt or occult. In conspiracies it was particularly necessary. When incrimination is a prospect, there must exist among the community of plotters vehicles that reinforce trust. For all the practical utility of letters in articulating projects and instructing followers from afar, their greatest utility lay in their incarnation of contractual obligation. Exchanged letters were signed, and thus were mutually incriminating. Theoretically, the potential that one's colleague could expose him imposed a discipline on his concerted actions. Practically, this proved the undoing of many a

24. Harry Alonzo Cushing, *The Writings of Samuel Adams*, 4 vols. (Boston: G. P. Putnam, 1904), 2:350–59. Much of Volumes two and three of Adams's writings transcribes communications to various committees of correspondence.

scheme.²⁵ General James Wilkinson, commander in chief of the United States Army, and correspondent in Aaron Burr's plot, also happened to be a paid agent of the Spanish ministry.²⁶ His loyalty to the providers of a regular 'pension' proved deeper than his investment in Burr's schemes. When Wilkinson had the cipher letter in hand, he forwarded it to Washington, D. C.

The evidentiary character of conspiratorial letters had positive as well as negative valences. They could show potential recruits the conspicuousness of participants in a scheme. Aaron Burr was a potent name to conjure with. So was General Wilkinson. But their greatest power was when they were shown to potential foreign backers. When Chisholm went to England to secure backing for the Blount filibuster, he carried papers indicating who the parties to the adventure were and what they intended. To Whitehall the letters showed the actual existence of a network of actors.

What do conspiratorial letters say? Let us examine Senator Blount's to Carey, April 21, 1797:

Dear Carey: I wish to have seen you before I returned to Philadelphia; but I am obliged to return to the session of Congress, which commences on the 15th of May.

Among other things that I wished to have seen you about, was the business Captain Chesholm mentioned to the British Minister last Winter in Philadelphia.

I believe, but am not quite sure, that the plan then talked of will be attempted this fall; and if it is attempted, it will be in a much

25. The American Revolution was no different than other conspiratorial insurrections in this regard. A richly-developed scholarly literature concerning the secret correspondence of the founders exists, treating matters from cryptography in letter writing to secret diplomacy and espionage. Highlights of this literature include Edmund Cody Burnett, 'Ciphers of the Revolutionary Era,' *American Historical Review* 22 (1917), and Ralph E. Weber's general history, *Masked Dispatches: Cryptograms and Cryptology in American History, 1775-1900* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency, 1993), which details the code used by the Continental Congress to communicate with its agents overseas. For European practices and a discussion of the methods governments used to practice surveillance on mail, see James W. Thompson and Saul K. Padover, *Secret Diplomacy: Espionage and Cryptography, 1500-1815* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1965).

26. Buckner F. Melton, Jr., *Aaron Burr: Conspiracy to Treason* (New York: John Wiley, 2002), 104, 114, 120-22, 139-40.

larger way than then talked of; and if the Indians act their part, I have no doubt but it will succeed. A man of consequence has gone to England about the business, and if he makes arrangements as he expects, I shall myself have a hand in the business, and probably shall be at the head of the business on the part of the British. You are, however, to understand, that it is not yet quite certain that the plan will be attempted; yet, you will do well to keep things in a proper train of action, in case it should be attempted, and to do so, will require all your management, because you must take care, in whatever you say to Rogers, or any body else, not to let the plan be discovered by Hawkins, Dinsmore, Byers, or any other person in the interest of the United States or Spain.

If I attempt this plan, I shall expect to have you, and all my Indian country and Indian friends, with me.²⁷

What is striking about this letter is the allusive pressure of the unspoken here—a constant reminder of the reader's complicity in a 'plan' already shared. There is a blandness, a manner of communicating information (for instance that Chisholm is currently in England securing backing) in veiled, undramatic terms. This, of course, bespeaks that awareness among conspirators of the illegality of what they were doing—guilt guised as prudence.

Genêt's Conspiracy, Blount's Conspiracy, Burr's Conspiracy, and William Bowles's plan for a Creek empire called Muskogee all depended upon an army of frontier adventurers and Native Americans moving against the scattered network of Spanish outposts in Louisiana and Florida. How did they gain recruits for their secret wars? Genêt's tactics—organizing networks of voluntary associations and making popular appeals and reading public letters—had been outlawed. Sending private letters to knots of prospects had little merit. The kinds of circumlocution and allusion in the Blount letter were not designed to inspire a man to grab his long rifle. There had to be an oral performance. Those persons charged with recruiting volunteers were tasked with filling the back country with rumors to provoke indignation and disquiet

27. Melton, *The First Impeachment*, 145.

among settlers and the native population. Romaine in the Blount plot wrote that stories should be spread that the Spanish were on the verge of ceding Louisiana to France. This would 'inflamm[e] the minds of the people in a certain way, so as not to let out any of the plan, and yet put things in such a situation as will make our plan, when it takes place, appear as the salvation of the people.'²⁸ Burr's theory of rumor-mongering went a step beyond that of Romaine and Blount. He floated several contradictory schemes, each suited to the particular audience he found himself with, stirring the widest sense of possibility, but making news gatherers in the center of power incapable of charging him with any particular illegal course of action, because the sum of the record was contradictory to the point of incoherence. He was going to seize Mexico. He was going to march on Washington, D.C., seize the president and the banks,²⁹ he was going to seize Louisiana and set up an independent kingdom, he was going to seize New Orleans and Mexico City and hand them over to the British. When rumors become so inchoate that they seem nonsense, the seriousness of the threat that a plotter poses becomes less credible, defenses less vigilant. The fog of talk enabled Burr to raise a flotilla, field a troupe, advance down the Mississippi, even resist by arms an officer of the government without the President acting on the barrage of epistolary warnings and newspaper tales informing him of Burr's sayings and doings.³⁰

The abundance of contradictory claims eventually proved beneficial to Burr in his trial upon violating the Neutrality Act.³¹ It contributed to the appearance that there was no concerted design, even when his flatboats of filibusters were moving down the waterways of Middle America. Burr was acquitted.

28. *Annals of Congress* 2343, 2352-54 (1797).

29. This rumor, meant to misinform Carlos Martinez de Yrujo of Burr's ambitions on Spanish territories and possibly secure money from the Spanish crown, was floated by Jonathan Dayton, Burr's protégé. Melton, *Aaron Burr*, 92-93.

30. Thomas Perkins Abernathy, *The Burr Conspiracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 26-44.

31. Burr beat the treason charge of his first trial because the prosecution could not procure the two witnesses—stipulated by the Constitution—who could connect Burr with the incident in which his force resisted arrest by an officer of the government.

We know more about the conspiratorial conversation campaigns waged in the public houses of the West than about any other talk in the frontier territories during the first decades of the republic. With Ken Starr profuseness, the Senate hearings on Blount, and the trial proceedings of Aaron Burr³² contain dozens of accounts of Chisholm, or Romaine, or Burr, or some other plotter listening to complaints by locals in a backcountry tavern, and entering the stream of conversation, suggesting that the United States would not long be master and that doings were afoot. If the tavern talk was peaceful, injecting rumors of a Spanish closure of New Orleans, or of a French takeover could stir up angst, which could then be sauced by complaints about the United States government's indifference to securing the port upon which the economic future of the interior rested. The Senate records contain quasi-verbatim transcripts of exchanges. Words spoken at the dark end of the bar could find their way into print—in Congressional proceedings, in court reports, and in newspapers, particularly, but not exclusively—after a smoking letter had brought a plot to light.

Nigel Smith, the great literary historian of the English Commonwealth period, concluded that newspapers—mercuries—came into being to countermand the promiscuous representations of rumor with a firmer account of affairs in the realm.³³ The press did not function in this way, however, in the Blount, Burr, West Florida, or other early filibusters. Correspondents in those areas did not write to editors to voice their misgivings; they wrote to the president or the secretary of state, who as a rule did not share these reports with the papers. What the papers did do with a peculiarly non-partisan zeal was to expose what had been secret, once the secret had been exposed. They operated in a sympathetic

32. T. Carpenter, *The Trial of Col. Aaron Burr*, 3 vols. (Washington City: Westcott & Co. 1808). David Robertson, *Reports of the Trial of Colonel Burr (late Vice President of the United States) for Treason and for a Misdemeanor*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Hapkins and Earle, 1808).

33. Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640–1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 54–69.

tension with the process of investigation and exposure superintended by the United States Senate and courts. The manuscript Senate record was not the basis of reportage. Documents that appeared in the several separate reports published by Congress in 1797 and 1798 did appear in the newspapers.³⁴ What the papers recorded beyond the government account were the comments of members from the floor and the testimonies of sworn witnesses (i.e., the oral examination) supplementary to the findings. The major papers at the seat of government—the *Philadelphia Gazette*, *Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, *Gazette of the United States*, *Aurora*, *Universal Gazette*—provided this with varying amounts of editorial comment and partisan critique while posing numbers of questions not treated in Congress. A network of papers, from New Bern, North Carolina, to Boston, republished the stories from the Philadelphia papers; northern papers—*Boston Gazette*, *Connecticut Courant*, *Independent Chronicle*, *Massachusetts Mercury*, and *Newport Mercury*—were markedly more editorial in their commentary.

What most startles about the newspaper's treatment of secret plots was their entire avoidance of making an independent inquiry. In other realms of public activity—commerce, exploration, military exercises, diplomatic affairs—newspapers sought and published private correspondence. When it came to secret ventures and conspiracies, there was a thoroughgoing reliance on intelligence secured by organs of government. It was as if the publication of secret matters, because of their peculiar tension with the

34. *Proceedings on the Impeachment of William Blount, a Senator of the United States from the State of Tennessee, for High Crimes and Misdemeanors* (Philadelphia: Joseph Gales, 1799); *Deposition of Gen. Elijah Clark, of the State of Georgia* (Philadelphia: Joseph Gales, 1798); *Letter from the Chevalier d'Yrujo* (Philadelphia: Joseph Gales, 1798); *Report of the Committee of the House of Representatives of the United States, Appointed to Prepare and Report Articles of Impeachment against William Blount, a Senator of the United States* (Philadelphia: John Fenno, 1797); *Further Report from the Committee, Appointed . . . to Prepare and Report Articles of Impeachment Against William Blount* (Philadelphia, 1798); and *Further [Supplementary] Report from the Committee* (Philadelphia, 1798). The Articles of Impeachment were published in *Further Report of the Committee, Appointed on the Eighth of July Last, to Prepare and Report Articles of Impeachment Against William Blount* (Philadelphia: John Fenno, 1778); *Further Report of the Managers Appointed to Conduct the Impeachment against William Blount* (Philadelphia, 1798); and *A Bill Regulating Certain Procedures in Cases of Impeachment* (Philadelphia: John Fenno, 1798).

prerogatives of the public sector, was viewed the proper and special concern of the government.

One undertheorized feature of the communication of the early republic is the relation of the secret to the public. Public sphere theorists, even those influenced by the multiple publics models propounded by Lawrence Klein and others,³⁵ usually view the fundamental structural tension of the communicative realm to be that between public and private, with the private understood to comprehend anything from the private conscience of post-Reformation theology, to the personal interest of classical liberal ideology, to the *res domestica* that stood distinct from the *res publica*. When the realm of the secret did come into view as a separate zone of activity distinct from the private, it has appeared as a delusional vapor, haunting the cities and suburbs of the early republic with scheming Jesuits, godless Freemasons, and occult cosmopolites of the Illuminati.³⁶ This bogey spotting seems necessary to republican thinking.³⁷ Since Richard Hofstadter sketched the 'paranoid style' of American politics in the days of Barry Goldwater,³⁸ scholars have invoked the sphere of the secret as a theoretical space governed by fantasies of conspiracies. In truth, where the republic existed most concretely, in the settled seaboard states of the republic, the secret cabal, army, sect, or conspiracy may have been phantasmal. But where the republic was itself phantasmal, in the West, where civil governments, boundaries, and communities were so

35. Lawrence Klein, 'Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions About Evidence and Analytic Procedure,' *Eighteenth Century Studies* 19 (1995): 97-109.

36. David Brion Davis, 'Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature,' *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (1960): 205-24. Bernard Bailyn, 'A Note on Conspiracy,' *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967). Gordon Wood, 'Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century,' *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 39 (1982): 401-40.

37. See Ed White, 'The Value of Conspiracy Theory,' *American Literary History* 14 (2002): 1-31.

38. Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

amorphous as to scarcely merit the name, conspiracy there was concretized, and the secret combination became an enduring structure of political practice.³⁹

Secrecy was also the life blood of diplomacy. The aspirations of sovereign states about territory, and the agreements of nations about their disposition toward other states were matters best preserved in privacy.⁴⁰ The great fear of the people in Florida, Louisiana, and Texas was that decisions about who would rule, who would have trade access to the river systems, and who would adjudicate property claims would be determined regardless of their wishes by closeted men in some European capital. This was the fear that conspirators played upon when rousing westerners to arms, even when the conspirators were in the service of the diplomacy of some foreign power. The conspiratorial filibusters generated an extraordinary secret literature of plans kept in the private archives of various European departments of state. No one in the United States doubted that the secret vaults of Whitehall harbored minister Robert Merry's reports of Burr's proposals and Chisholm's outline of the Blount conspiracy, stashed with other documents such as Francisco de Miranda's proposal for a conquest of Mexico during the Nootka Sound Affair or Sir John Dalrymple's more comprehensive blueprint for conquering Central and South America.

But what of Revolutionary France? Did Genêt's publicity mean diplomatic transparency? Hardly. The foreign office secret archive for the 1790s is astonishingly rich. Le Clerc Milfort, a Spanish agent, who turned French agent in the Creek territory, composed an imposing shelf of plots for the French takeover of

39. Of literary and cultural scholars, Ed White has most creatively taken up the tensions between the discursive worlds and forms of the urban coast and the back country. See *The Backcountry and the City: Colonization and Conflict in Early America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

40. In diplomacy transparency has rarely been deemed a practicable course of action. Despite radical republicans' ideological objections to secret arrangements, the diplomatic practice of the United States from the era of the Revolution always made use of clandestine deals, encrypted messages, and hidden agendas. Walter MacDougall, 'Back to Bedrock: The Eight Traditions of American Statecraft,' *Foreign Affairs* 76 (March/April 1997).

Spanish Louisiana between 1795 and 1800.⁴¹ There is also the anonymous French memorandum addressed to the French minister to the United States that Lord Dorchester in 1787 intercepted in Canada, outlining a French takeover of Louisiana. The Girondist government had a copy of General George Rogers Clark's and Dr. James O'Fallon's plan for a French takeover of New Orleans as early as 1792, conveyed to J. P. Brissot de Warville through Thomas Paine, before Genêt sailed for America. Brissot in that same moment was considering Francisco Miranda's proposal for a revolution throughout Spanish America. Miranda, having failed to garner English support for his liberation of Spanish America, crossed the Channel and intoxicated the Girondistes with visions of a revolution in Hispanic America.⁴² Gilbert Imlay, Joel Barlow, and Thomas Paine—all resident in Paris in 1792—and all sympathizers in the Revolution—contributed their ideas for a French liberation of the interior from Spanish tyranny. Perhaps the most interesting document is an anonymous 1792 plan for a takeover.⁴³ It recommended that Genêt be the provocateur of insurrection, that the various inland settlements at Cumberland, Marietta, and Scioto serve as recruitment centers, and that General James Wilkinson (not Clark) be appointed chief of the expedition. The writer also suggested that H. H. Brackenridge be contacted as a possible leader. This plan is almost certainly the work of Joel Barlow.⁴⁴ The American Jacobin novelist Gilbert Imlay in that same year composed a proposal for a French expedition to secure the interior.⁴⁵ Another American in

41. E. Wilson Lyon, 'Milfort's Plan for a Franco-Creek Alliance and the Retrocession of Louisiana,' *Southern Historical Journal* (1938): 72-87.

42. Karen Racine, *Francisco de Miranda: A Transatlantic Life in the Age of Revolution* (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 2002), 134-37.

43. 'Plan proposé pour faire une revolution dans las Louisiane,' *Annual Report of the American Historical Association* 1 (1896): 945-53. This volume contains texts of most of the French secret archive.

44. Barlow's deep involvement with the ill-fated Scioto land company, his advocacy in other places of a revolutionized hemisphere (a visionary possibility bruited momentarily in the plan), and his connection with Brackenridge strongly argue for his authorship.

45. Gilbert Imlay, 'Observations,' *Annual Report of the American Historical Association* 1 (1896): 952-54.

Paris, Stephen Sayre, proposed an expedition concerted with Miranda's, liberating Mexico and Louisiana simultaneously. It proposed that Barlow himself, Beauspoils (a military officer), and Lyonnet (a former resident of New Orleans) be sent to Philadelphia as a cell to prepare by ideological agitation for Miranda's arrival and a general uprising of Spanish America.⁴⁶ The French government accepted parts of Sayre's recommendation: a cell was established in Philadelphia, but it was composed of four Frenchmen. It immediately began generating propaganda, distributing a broadside address through Louisiana entitled 'Liberty. Equality. The Freeman of France to their Brothers in Louisiana.'⁴⁷ It declared: 'Now is the time to cease being the slaves of a government, to which you were shamefully sold; and no longer to be led on like a herd of cattle, by men who with one word can strip you of what you hold most dear—liberty and property.'⁴⁸

The French revolutionary government's commitment to broadcasting sedition in the Spanish empire explains the Spanish response. In Mexico the institution long tasked with ferreting out sedition—The Holy Office of the Inquisition—was deployed against the infiltration of revolution.⁴⁹ Prohibitions were declared upon Paine's 'The Rights of Man.' Also prohibited was James Puglio's *El Desengagno del Hombre*, a Spanish-language survey of the Paine-Burke controversy prepared by a Philadelphia language teacher in 1794 as part of the propaganda for whatever scheme the French might set into motion. Other titles specifically proscribed during the 1790s were Volnay's *Les Ruines, ou meditations sur le revolution des Empire*; Condorcet's *Esquisse de un tableau historique des progress de l'espirit humain*; Servaign Mereghal's *History of the Revolution*, Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*; Mably's *Des droits et devoirs du citoyen*; and Costi's translation of

46. *Annual Report of the American Historical Association* 1 (1896): 954-57.

47. Archibald Henderson, 'Isaac Shelby and the Genêt Mission,' 451-69.

48. Charles Gayarre, *History of Louisiana* (New York: William J. Widdleton, 1867),

337-41.

49. Jose T. Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Officio de la Inquisicion de Mexico* (Santiago, 1905), 434-44.

Locke's *Treatise on Human Understanding*. The edicts of the Inquisitions were published periodically in the *Gazeta de Mexico*. The verdicts of various sedition trials, such as that of Esteven Morel, who directed a republican circle and was arrested with two trunks of French-language books—were not aired in the *Gazeta*.⁵⁰

The Inquisition, for all its diligence, could not hold back the tide of circumstance that would overthrow the old imperial order. The Napoleonic invasion of Spain, the arrest of King Ferdinand VII, and the prospect of a decapitated empire gave rise to an uncertainty that insured the old political arrangement would not survive. In the summer of 1810, as Napoleon's armies closed in upon the remnants of the royal army on the Iberian peninsula, all of Spanish America was in turmoil. In Mexico it would not be an incendiary pamphlet that would spark revolution, but the preaching of a Catholic priest, Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla.⁵¹ On September 16, 1810, he inaugurated a campaign, which quickly mutated from a call for Catholic purity and loyalty to Ferdinand VII, to nationalist insurrection of creoles and natives against an officialdom dominated by Spanish-born *peninsulares*. Hidalgo dispatched Jose Bernardo Maximiliano Gutiérrez de Lara to Washington, D.C., to secure aid from President Madison. While Gutiérrez was in Washington, Hidalgo's revolution was betrayed by a turncoat ally, leading to his capture and execution by monarchists. Gutiérrez came away from Washington with no concrete promise of support in his plan to reactivate Padre's Hidalgo's rising.

I will not enter the argument as to whether the Gutiérrez-McGee revolt was a duplicitous exercise in America imperialism.⁵²

50. For a history of the bannings, see John Rydjord, 'The French Revolution and Mexico,' *Hispanic American Historical Review* 9 (1929): 61-65.

51. Hugh M. Hamill, *The Hidalgo Revolt: Prelude to Independence* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966). See also, Odie B. Faulk, *The Last Years of Spanish Texas, 1778-1821* (The Hague: Mouton, 1969).

52. Isaac Cox, 'Monroe and the Early Mexican Revolutionary Agents,' Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1 (Washington: American Historical Association, 1913): 199-215. Frank Lawrence Owsley, Jr., and Gene A. Smith, *Filibusters and Expansionists: Jeffersonian Manifest Destiny, 1800-1821* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997). John J. Carter, *Covert Operations as a Tool of Presidential Foreign Policy in American History from 1800 to 1920: Foreign Policy in the Shadows* (New York: Mellen Press, 2000), 29-42.

or a multi-ethnic, auto-dynamic revolution.⁵³ My own sense favors the latter, though it is apparent that Madison's minister to Latin America, Captain William Shaler, on several occasions violated the United States Neutrality Act in favor of Gutiérrez. My interest is in the wholehearted commitment to publicity found among the leaders of the rising—Gutiérrez, August McGee, Reuben Kemper, and Alvarez de Toledo. Because the revolution was a battle with the Mexican monarchists for the hearts and minds of an amorphous population composed of Tejanos, Anglos, Nativos, and French settlers, publicity abounded. Shaler first violated American neutrality when he supplied \$100 to finance printing of four of Gutiérrez's proclamations for distribution throughout the territory:⁵⁴ to 'Officers, Soldiers, and Inhabitants of San Antonio de Béxar,' to 'Compatriots . . . in the Province of Texas,' to the 'people of Mexico,' and to the 'American volunteers—a praise and a promise of honor and riches for service.' The revolutionaries flooded the countryside with pamphlets, including Spanish and English versions of Alvarez de Toledo's *The Friend of Men*, a tract urging civil war and promising American intervention. This piece, addressed to the editor of the republican newspaper, the *Aurora*, was published in Philadelphia in 1811 by Bradford and Inskeep, the favorite printer of political radicals and filibusters.⁵⁵ Other items were published in Natchitoches, apparently funded by 'The Club of Mexico,' a group of New Orleans merchants of republican persuasion who had commercial ambitions in Mexico.

53. J. C. A. Stagg, 'The Madison Administration and Mexico: Reinterpreting the Gutiérrez-Magee Raid of 1812-1813,' *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 59 (2002): 409-49.

54. These proclamations were probably published as broadsides in Alexandria, Louisiana. Richard C. Gronert notes that the first was published in the *Alexandria Herald* as well. 'United States and the Invasion of Texas, 1810-1814,' *The Americas* 25 (1969): 294. This article misinterprets the adventure by erroneously believing that Shaler was a clandestine agent and the filibuster a secretive venture. The Gutiérrez venture was characterized by its wholly public character and Shaler by his role as a credentialed government emissary to the Spanish American states.

55. For the circumstances of this pamphlet's publication, see Harris Gaylord Warren, 'Jose Alvarez de Toledo's Initiation as a Filibuster, 1811-1813' *Hispanic American Historical Review* 20 (1940): 60. n.15.

The idealism of these revolutionary proclamations was belied by Gutiérrez's summary execution of the governor of Texas and other officers after Kemper seized San Antonio—an action that disgusted Kemper and the Anglo contingent of the army, leading to mass desertions. President Monroe, after reading a letter written from Natchitoches by an eye-witness correspondent describing the massacre in the June 2, 1813, issue of the Baltimore newspaper, *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, called Shaler to task for supporting Gutiérrez.⁵⁶

One wonders whether Gutiérrez's issuance on April 16, 1813, of the Texas Declaration of Independence from Spain was a gesture to repair the alienation of Shaler and the Anglo Texans. Gutiérrez knew of Shaler's reverence for the American Declaration and its principles and no doubt had heard of Shaler's communicating the document to the circle of liberal families in Santiago, Chile, while stationed there in 1802.⁵⁷ Whatever good effect the declaration may have had was completely eradicated shortly thereafter by the constitution formulated by a committee of seven Guittierrez appointees.⁵⁸ This document made Gutiérrez a dictator-governor. Shaler then abandoned his neutrality and engineered the removal of Guittierrez as head of the revolutionary movement. Shaler assisted in the founding of the first two Texan papers: the broadside *Gaceta de Texas*, which had a run of one issue, and *El Mexicano*,⁵⁹ both of which contained diatribes against Gutiérrez's actions. A press was carted from Natchitoches to San Antonio and overseen by a cosmopolitan Venezuelan printer. By the end of June 1813, public opinion had been moved enough

56. Stagg, 'The Madison Administration and Mexico,' par. 50.

57. Roy F. Nichols, 'William Shaler, New England Apostle of Rational Liberty,' *New England Quarterly* 9 (1936), 73, details Shaler's time in Chile, where he left a Spanish translation of the Declaration of Independence and an English language copy of the United States Constitution.

58. Garrett, 'The First Constitution of Texas, April 17, 1813,' *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 40 (1937): 290-308.

59. We should note that the change in title moves the question from local self-determination to the national fate of Mexico—not the sort of move that someone would make to prepare the locale for annexation to the United States.

that when Gutiérrez, spooked by a false alarm, ordered the abandonment of San Antonio, the citizenry determined a change was in order. Shaler's candidate for a replacement was Alvarez de Toledo, a Cuban-born Hispanic radical, whose repute depended almost entirely upon his mastery of the pen and the press. Toledo, however, soon demonstrated a lack of mastery at wielding men and arms.

The Texas Constitution was the crucial document of the revolution that occasioned a rupture between the Mexican leaders of the revolt and its American well-wishers. The constitution, which made no pretence of speaking for the people, thus violated the most authoritative construction of political warrant cherished by Americans. As Gordon Wood has indicated, written constitutions were the articulations of the mythically potent, expressive will of the people. As Peter Onuf has argued, the prevailing understanding of state sovereignty in America required that frontier people seeking statehood must articulate themselves as integral territorial communities possessed of distinct and irreducible rights.⁶⁰ A constitution composed by a convention of settler-citizens provided this. Without such a procedure and a compact, no new order under God was declared, no ethnogenesis by fiat, no defensible warrant for political being.

In Anglo-America a written constitution was the social compact of the people. Its authority supplanted unwritten custom and state prerogative. It declared association. The thirteen original state constitutions performed this task primordially, but the creation of polities beyond the thirteen was fraught with legal difficulties because of the competing claims of states for western territories. The model for all filibuster constitution-making was set by the patriots who attempted to form states on the frontier in the 1780s. While Vermont's declaration of its own sovereign status in its 1776-77 declaration of independence and constitution

60. Peter Onuf, 'Towards Federalism: Virginia, Congress, and the Western Lands,' *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 34 (1977): 360-61.

serves as a discursive model, the developed strategy of obtrusive publicity began with the creation of the Free State of Franklin, what is now Tennessee, in 1784.

In that year, when the legislature of North Carolina passed a bill ceding its claims to western lands to the United States as compensation for war debts, a group of settlers in the fertile, western lands of the Watauga gathered together and formed an independent polity. They drafted a provisional constitution and composed a declaration of independence from North Carolina—'A Declaration of Rights' and 'The Constitution and Form of Government'—'agreed to and resolved upon by the representatives of the Freemen of the State of Franklin, elected and chosen for that particular purpose, in convention assembled, at Jonesborough, the 17th December, Anno Dom. 1784.'

The movement to create an independent polity west of the Appalachians was at root a practical matter. One message that the pre-Revolutionary regulator agitations had taught frontier settlers was that seaboard oligarchies were in no great hurry to extend the institutions of civil society into the interior. One had to make one's own order.

The constitution of Franklin evinced a detailed familiarity with several state Constitutions—especially Vermont's, Pennsylvania's, and North Carolina's.⁶¹ Copies prepared by a frontier scrivener were distributed through the general population in manuscript through militia companies, the frontier's most articulate institutions of civil order. (Indeed, they formed the basis of representation in the legislature.⁶²) Franklin asserted its rights and sovereignty against the claims of another state: we 'declare ourselves independent of North Carolina.' North

61. 'The Constitution of the State of Franklin,' Appendix A, in Samuel Cole Williams, *History of the Lost State of Franklin* (New York: Press of the Pioneers., 1933), 339-47.

62. Copies were dispatched to the North Carolina governor, legislature, the United States Senate, and the president of the United States. They provoked a manifesto war with the North Carolina government, a debate within the United States Congress when they requested admission as an independent state, and a model for populations that wished to assert sovereignty outside of the usual provisions of United States government and international law.

Carolina repealed its act of secession. The United States Senate came within a hair's breadth of admitting the state, but declined because of the western separatists in the Kentucky territory. The precedent of persons declaring independence and organizing governments without the superintendence of the United States government risked anarchy of another sort. Franklin's publication barrage nearly secured what its citizens wished. Their isolated situation enabled the Free State to operate as the effective government for three years, despite the opposition of the North Carolina government.

With their independence contested, the citizens of Franklin convened to draft a permanent constitution composed by the Reverend Sam Houston, uncle of the future governor of Tennessee and founder of the Texas Republic. Their response in the face of non-recognition by North Carolina and Congress was to make the voice of the people sound more resonantly through the fabric of government. Houston looked to the most radical of the republican state constitutions in its institutionalization of the people's voice in government—that of Pennsylvania. Like the Pennsylvania constitution, the proposed second constitution of Franklin declared that the people participate directly in legislation. Every bill put before the legislature was to be printed (although there was no press in the territory at that time) and distributed gratis to the voting populace for comment. After the voice of the people had commented, at the next legislative session the bill could be put to a vote.

The convention voted down Houston's draft constitution, not because of its hyper-publicity, but because of its religious and moral requirements for office holders. Franklin was in a state of political turmoil when North Carolina forces marched into it, defeated Governor Sevier's Franklin State militia, and reasserted control over the territory. In 1790 North Carolina again ceded the western territory to the United States government—this time under the federal Constitution. George Washington appointed William Blount governor of the territory.

I began this meditation by pointing to the division between public and secret modes of communication in these early American political adventures. I close by noting that in this literature one encounters the horizons of publicity and—not privacy—but secrecy. In the failed second constitution of Franklin we find a vision of public life in which the press was to be an engine that makes the people co-equal with the government, annihilating the private-public divide. In the rumors, verbal misinformation campaigns, secret letters, and encrypted plans of conspirators, we find that force most inimical to the *vox populi*, the ambition of the adventurer who seeks to force change regardless of the will of the people. The secret conspiracies, once exposed, formed a peculiar spectacle. One wonders why so frequently officers of the government—persons entrusted with high office in the United States—Vice President Burr, generals George Rogers Clark and James Wilkinson, governors Sam Houston of Tennessee and John Quitmann of Mississippi, senators Blount of Tennessee and Adair of Kentucky—did not content themselves with service to the people of the United States, but surrendered to the secret promptings of their imaginations to seek a more dangerous glory of a more ancient and selfish kind. Print culture no doubt played a role in this too, supplying the promises from historical literature of pomp and personal glory that made the idea of harmonizing one's voice with the choir of the people seem insipid. No doubt the old books that preserved ancient vanities made these men put by the solid achievements of the Revolution and like Napoleon dream the old dream of being emperor, autarch, conquerer, and king.

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