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## The “Original” Journals of Katherine Wilmot: Women’s Travel Writing in the Salon of Helen Maria Williams

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This article discusses the implications of a previously unknown Romantic-period manuscript by Anglo-Irish traveler Katherine Wilmot (1773-1824). A later version of Wilmot’s epistolary travelogue of 1801-03 has been valued as an artifact of British experience abroad during the Peace of Amiens for its descriptions of Napoleonic Paris. Yet the newly discovered draft reveals a deeper assimilation within and sympathy towards the radical political and literary networks Wilmot documented, as well as a budding relationship with author and salonnière Helen Maria Williams that is occluded from the later narrative. This article examines the complex choices surrounding authorship for British women abroad in the period by examining a refused invitation that Wilmot submit writing to *The English Press*, the publishing venture of Williams and her companion John Hurford Stone. The article details Wilmot’s evolving writing in terms of Williams’ influence, outlining how British women travel writers reshaped their experiences to meet the expectations of readers at home while also considering the impact of sedition, gendered agency, and political affinity on the production and reception of their writing. (175 words)

Keywords: Katherine Wilmot, Helen Maria Williams, *The English Press*, travel writing, manuscript culture, Napoleonic Paris

Word Count: 11,801

The Royal Irish Academy is home to a medium-sized hardbound notebook with a crimson cover and gilt edges (Figure 1). The notebook contains a manuscript copy of an epistolary travelogue entitled “Kitty Wilmot’s Journal, 1801-1803.” The manuscript documents the journey of Anglo-Irish traveler Katherine Wilmot during the Peace of Amiens.<sup>1</sup> The letters within are addressed to her brother Robert, beginning on 24 November 1801 with the promise to “send ... these sheets of paper for a beginning, and ... every now and then record the events of the day.” Wilmot’s manuscript travelogue captures British experience abroad during the rapidly shifting socio-political period, as well as shedding light on the Mount Cashell family and the Parisian republican circle of Helen Maria Williams, through often-sardonic prose critical of the Revolutionary project. Transcription of the

“Journal” by Katherine Wilmot’s sister Martha in Moscow in 1805 expanded its sociable use.<sup>2</sup> Multiple manuscript copies of the travelogue were used for oratory readings during home tours taken by Wilmot and her sisters through England and Ireland in 1809 and 1810.<sup>3</sup> Additional copies were circulated beyond the family’s possession.<sup>4</sup> In essence, without ever seeing print during her lifetime, the manuscript copy of Wilmot’s epistolary “Journal” documenting the Peace migrates through an extensive network, functioning as a powerful material object signifying international sociability. The travelogue was published in the early twentieth century, increasing its impact as an authentic record of British travelers in France during the Peace.<sup>5</sup> Subsequent publications have appeared containing edited versions or extracts of Wilmot’s epistolary manuscript.<sup>6</sup>

However, new archival proof indicates that the travelogue is not, in fact, a spontaneously generated narrative, the events of Wilmot’s tour having been revised and adapted from an earlier fragmental diary located at Blair Adam House in Scotland. This earlier version provides a distinct contrast to the elegantly transcribed crimson notebook containing her travelogue.<sup>7</sup> The earlier manuscript, labelled “The Original Journals of ‘Kitty’ Wilmot,” is composed of two thick stacks of plain paper, each roughly the size of a quarto and held together with a hand-stitched seam. There is no cover on either volume and no decorative embellishment (Figure 2, Figure 3). On the front of the first volume, which runs to 48 pages, Wilmot has written: “Journal — 1801.1802.1803. Travelling with Lord & Lady Mount Cashel [*sic*] and their family. London. Paris. Florence. Milan. Rome. Naples. &c. & c.”. By way of introduction, Wilmot writes:

I wish I had had the gumption to write a journal of the weeks which I spent with Lord & Lady Mount Cashell in London (54 St James Street) — As so many agreeable circumstances occur’d of various kinds — & we became acquainted with so many curious & pleasant People — However as I omitted doing so there — & have now an opportunity of making myself reparation — by recording *french* [*sic*] instead of *English* adventures — I have tack’d together a few sheets of Paper for the purpose: — & will Every now & then, record the Events of the day — so that like the snail — wherever I crawl may be known by the trail which I shall leave behind me on this Book [*sic*] (BAHC. “Original.”).

Despite Wilmot’s amusing assertion that the initiation of a new writing practice will allow her “like the snail” to be *known* by her writing, the improvised physicality of Wilmot’s “Book” is reflective of its actual “purpose”: crude and informal, the pages contained in her coverless, hand bound stack are an unadorned location for aggregating events and anecdotes. The imagery of the snail also suggests a contrary sense of the danger of discovery, the privacy of the mollusk’s shell into which its entire body can be withdrawn evocative of Wilmot’s hidden writings. This introduction is instantly recognizable as a draft for the introduction to the later travelogue manuscript:

I wish I had had the diligence to write a journal of the ten weeks which I spent in London, with Lord and Lady Mount Cashell/ 54. St James Street/ as so many agreeable circumstances occur’d of various kinds and we became acquainted with such a variety of curious, pleasant and signalized personages: however as I omitted doing so then & have now an opportunity of making reparation by recording French instead of English adventures, I send you these sheets of paper for a beginning, and I will every now and then record the events of the day, so that like a snail where ever I crawl, I may be known by the trail which I shall leave smear’d behind me in this book— [*sic*] (RIA MS 12 L 32 n. pag.)

Wilmot's transition from her private journal to the shared format of the manuscript travelogue instigates a refinement in her vocabulary — “gumption” becomes “diligence”; “people” becomes “personages.” The intended recipient of the text changes as well: in the earlier journal, Wilmot describes “an opportunity to make *myself* reparation by recording” (added emphasis), while in the later travelogue she takes “an opportunity of making reparation” to “*you*” [her brother]. Most interestingly, the anticipated format of the text, as well as its long view goals, shift: while Wilmot's earlier journal modestly notes that she has “tack'd together a few sheets of Paper” in order to occasionally record incidents, her later introduction implies a long term correspondence with a predefined trajectory by promising: “I send you these sheets of paper for a *beginning*, and I will every now and then record the events of the day” (added emphasis). The consequences of these changes are significant: implying Wilmot's emergent intention to share her text with a reading public, however limited.

In what follows, I suggest that these two materially and textually variant manuscripts shed light on the literary influence of networks of British intellectual women participating in salon sociability among radical British writers in Napoleonic Paris. I begin by surveying one sociable influence of particular importance to emerge from the earlier draft, a burgeoning friendship with author and salonnière Helen Maria Williams and her companion, the radical printer John Hurford Stone, as well as interactions with William Godwin and Thomas Holcroft. Williams' salon in Paris had long been a center for Anglophile and international republican sympathizers by the time of Wilmot's arrival in Paris. While Wilmot's interactions with Williams and Stone feature prominently in her earlier journal draft, the relationship is considerably muted in the travelogue. An invitation to publish with William and Stone's *The English Press*, noted in archival marginalia, suggests that Wilmot might have shared Williams and Stone's political sympathies.<sup>8</sup> I argue that this invitation needs to be contextualized in relation to Williams' press struggles under Napoleon's increasingly authoritarian regime during the Peace, investigating whether Williams may have seen Wilmot as a potential ally. Wilmot's refusal to publish is also evaluated in light of the lively concurrent arena of manuscript circulation that provided an alternative to print participation. From here I turn to the stylistic and representational impact of Williams' published travel literature on Wilmot's evolving writing practice while also examining the ways that Wilmot's later travelogue distances her from the cosmopolitan ethics and Revolutionary sympathies that the British public perceive in Williams' writing. I suggest that Wilmot's manuscript reveals the powerful influence of relationships between literary women on the mediation and production of literature intended for British readerships and highlights the gendered and political constraints that influenced their representational choices.

### **Salon Sociability during the Peace of Amiens**

Prior to Wilmot's arrival in France in 1801, a preliminary accord, later ratified as the Treaty of Amiens, was signed between England and France, effectively ending an 11-year period of hostilities that had left France cut off to British travelers since prior to the Revolution. The tenuous peace brought a surge of tourists eager to reinstate the well-worn trajectory of the Grand Tour by traversing the Continent and visiting its key locations. British aristocrats, diplomats, and intellectuals flocked to Paris in the brief years of peace from 1801-03, seeking contact with the cosmopolitan epicenter of the cultural and political sea changes that had taken place over the previous turbulent decade. As Anna Laetitia Barbauld wrote in 1801: “now France lies like a huge loadstone [*sic*] on the other side of the Channel ... Those who know French are refreshing their memories, — those who do not, are learning it; and every one [*sic*] is planning in some way or other to get a sight of the promised land” (2:119-20). James Gillray satirized this sudden disregard for hostility between the

two recently warring nations in his caricature, *The first Kiss this Ten Years! -or- the meeting of Britannia & Citizen François* (1803), which depicts a bedraggled — and titillated — French soldier seducing an overweight Britannia.<sup>9</sup> “Madame, permettez me [*sic*], to pay my profound esteem to your engaging person! & to seal on your divine Lips my everlasting attachment!!!,” the soldier exclaims, while Britannia replies “Monsieur, you are truly a well-bred Gentleman! — & tho’ you make me blush, yet, you Kiss so delicately, that I cannot refuse you; tho’ I was sure you would Deceive me again!!!” Britannia has also let down her guard, leaving her trident and shield out of reach while Napoleon and George III preside in portraits above. Gillray’s caricature underlines the sense that not all British commentators interpreted the renewed friendship as a prudent one, as well as the fact that censure could be forthcoming to members of British society who wished to align themselves with the French.

Such was the dichotomous backdrop of enthusiasm and caution at the time of Wilmot’s channel crossing. Wilmot’s journal entry for her arrival in Paris on the 5 December 1801 relishes the revolutionary spectacle available thanks to the newly opened borders:

At about 4 o’clock we drove into Paris — with all *our eyes flying out of their sockets* at every thing [*sic*] we beheld. The streets struck me as being very narrow & the Houses, some of them *seven* stories high — very handsome — & built of stone. — Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité — Citoyen — Republique — &c. &c. — flitted by my eyes, on all the Publick Buildings — sign posts — &c — as we drove along (BAHC. “Original.” “Sat 5th Decr [1801] [*sic*]”)

Wilmot captures facts deemed worthy of note in this short entry: the heightened excitement of the moment, with all the party’s “*eyes flying out of their sockets*”; the extremely tall and handsome stone buildings, the architectural likes of which she has never seen; and, most importantly, the Republican propaganda emblazoned on the “Publick Buildings,” pronouncing the expected sentiments of “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité — Citoyen — Republique.” Wilmot’s economical three-sentence description of entering Paris is a reaction to her first encounter with the post-Revolutionary landscape as well as its manifestations in society.<sup>10</sup>

The republican fervor filtering throughout Europe in the late eighteenth century had not left the Wilmot family untouched. In March 1798, the family fled Ireland for England amidst the violence surrounding the 1798 Rebellion. A palm-sized notebook, of the sort frequently used by Grand Tour travelers whilst on route, documents the family’s flight. Its dark brown leather cover bears a nearly illegible title: “Matty Wilmot Journal on leaving Cork at the Irish Rebellion Time.”<sup>11</sup> Inside, a twelve-page narrative describes the dramatic event. As Martha Wilmot wrote,

in consequence of the alarm which my Father felt on account of the precarious state of the Kingdom he determin’d that we should quit Ireland; & with only twelve hours warning to break up our comfortable establishment at Cork, & part perhaps forever from the blessing of a home (BAHC. “Rebellion” n. pag.).

The English-born Captain Edward Wilmot, Port Surveyor at Cork, used his naval connections to secure passage for his wife and six daughters to Brampton, where they lived for nearly a year until the violence of the Rebellion had subsided. While it is unclear whether the precaution of evacuation was a necessary step, the sense of danger experienced by the Wilmot family due to the tumult surrounding them was real enough. When, in 1801, Lord and Lady Mount Cashell extended Wilmot an unexpected invitation to join them on the Continent, the offer “realized a dream she had

cherished" to travel abroad (RIA MS 12 L 32, n. pag.).

Stephen, 2nd Earl Mount Cashell, was "a patriotic if not democratic nobleman" without political ambitions (Todd *Daughters* 129). A prominent landowning member of the English Ascendancy in Ireland, he had abandoned his seat in the Irish House of Commons in 1799 in favor of country life after suffering property losses due to arson in the Rebellion (Sadleir vi). Margaret Moore, Lady Mount Cashell, however, harbored different political sentiments from her husband. In childhood, she had been the pupil of Mary Wollstonecraft during her brief period as a governess in Ireland, and Margaret later attributed to Wollstonecraft "the development of whatever virtues I possess" (*Shelley* 1:84). As a young Anglo-Irish aristocrat in Ireland, she opposed her family's interests to support the Rebellion of 1798, later covertly participating in the political dialogues of the Union Crisis of 1799-1800 by writing anonymous anti-Unionist pamphlets and surrounding herself with "complaining ladies with a political agenda" of genteel classical republicanism (Todd "Ascendancy" 105). In Paris, Lady Mount Cashell's connections quickly brought Wilmot into contact with Anglocentric revolutionarily sympathetic circles, many of which Lady Mount Cashell gained entry to through an on-going correspondence and friendship with William Godwin, widower of her former governess. Lady Mount Cashell and Wilmot visited Godwin several times while in London in the autumn of 1801, visits which Lord Mount Cashell was likely unaware of due to his disapproval of Godwin's political sympathies and the association with his infamous late wife, Wollstonecraft.<sup>12</sup> Different leanings in sociable and political sympathies between the husband and wife are apparent in an incident related in a letter sent by the poet, translator, and revolutionary Thomas Holcroft to Godwin in 1802 (Abinger 7:91-2). Having struck up a relationship with the Holcroft family in Paris thanks to a letter of recommendation from Godwin, Lady Mount Cashell initially offered Holcroft's daughter Fanny a position as tutor to the Mount Cashell children (BAHC. "Original." "Tuesday 8th Dec'r [1801]"). She later rescinded the offer, due, in Holcroft's words, to "Lord Mount Cashell having been so repeatedly warned against me as a Democrat tried for high treason, domestic peace required her to part with my daughter" (Abinger 7:91r). Lord Mount Cashell's protection of his family's reputation did not, however, keep his wife and her companion from socialization as a direct result of Godwin's other connections, which likely granted them access to the home of the English author and hostess, Helen Maria Williams.

From the early 1790s, Helen Maria Williams' multi-volume *Letters from France* celebrated the French Revolution for a British readership variably engaged with or appalled by her apparently radical affinities as she declared herself a "citizen of the world," and her Parisian salon later embodied and advocated for what has been described as a feminized "radicalized cosmopolitanism" (*Letters*; Cracian 1). Williams's early *Letters* do not shy away from embracing transformations of society and politics, documenting her shared joy during the Fête Nationale celebrating the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille: "Here the mind of the people took a higher tone of exultation than in the other scenes of festivity. Their mutual congratulations, their reflections on the horror of the past, their sense of present felicity, their cries of 'Vive le Nation' still ring in my ear!" (*Letters* 1:21). Setting up permanent residence in Paris from 1791, Williams used the dual forums of her publications as well as her influential salon to express her Girondist sympathies in the early years following the French Revolution.

Salon culture had, from the mid-eighteenth century, provided sociably acceptable spaces for women to actively participate in supposedly "public" dialogues such as politics, as well as in the dissemination and exchange of literature and culture (Landes). The widespread establishment of "women-headed" salon culture in Europe that placed women at the center of local and international dialogues "despite their frequent marginality in terms of political power" (Schmid 7). While salons

were frequently women-led, they were not specifically the preserve of women (Brown and Dow 9). Indeed, Williams' salon provided a space for both sexes to debate and discuss the public events, arts, and literary cultures of the day within her domestic space. As one male attendee wrote, "I have been three times to Helen Maria Williams's *conversations*. You meet here a very interesting society. Many of the *literati*" (Sandford 2: 90). It was, in fact, from these intersected spaces that Williams' salon took its power by drawing on the established model of the woman-led salon space yet imbuing it with the energy of her unique and evolving ideas of a feminized, radical cosmopolitanism (Favret 275). At the very heart of this diverse cosmopolitan meeting place was the British-born Williams' personal interest and entanglement in the shifting landscape of French republican political values, the likes of which would have given Gillray a perfect target for caricatured satirization.

In both her journal and travelogue, Wilmot clearly outlines that "the events of the day" as well as her participation in Williams' salon in Paris are worthy of documentation. Yet her motivations and methods for doing so are divergent between the two manuscripts. Wilmot's fragmented manuscript journal is reflective of the cultural, social and historical moment, composed as it is amidst the politically and historically important moment of the Peace of Amiens. The earlier manuscript can be aligned with the diary or journal tradition, in which the "self presented lacks an obvious centre and a smooth continuity" (Nussbaum 132). Rachel Cottam describes the apparatus of the personal diary as an "expanding stow", into which the diarist "casts life's materials" in an "attempt to hold ... experience" (267-8). Yet, as Bunker and Huff note, particularly in the study of women's diaries, acknowledging "what is excluded is as important as what is included" (1). Tracked through the absences and occlusions within and fragmentation of the manuscript, it is possible to identify Wilmot's idea of herself as a journal writer, as well as her reservations regarding the documentation of her journey, particularly in comparison with the flowing prose of the later travelogue. As she writes shortly after her arrival:

Here I am! Just come into a strange country! — without understanding hardly a syllable of their language. No body can conceive the vexation of such a situation! — My own language suddenly became a burthen — & my thumb eloquence, the melancholy substitute, for elucidating my mutilated ideas! — I don't know, whether the misfortune does not overbalance, the pleasure of coming abroad (BAHC. "Original." "29th Novr [1801]")

Wilmot highlights her previously conceived notions of her journey: to experience pleasure, and absorb and exchange "ideas". The Grand Tour offered British women travellers a platform, according to Marianna D'Ezio, to "display their linguistic and social skills in spaces devoted to conversation, such as French and Italian salons" (11). Yet for Wilmot, these opportunities for intellectual improvement and sociable exchange produce anguish. While Wilmot's original journal contains several entries detailing her struggles with French amidst the dinners, salons and intellectual events she frequents in Paris, no mention of her low French linguistic ability appears in the later travelogue, the concerns outlined in private having been expunged from public representation. In a subsequent entry, Wilmot continues to focus on the intellectual and social barriers presented by her inability to speak the language: "It is for me alone — to know the irritation of filling my mind on the Chaff of words — at an age when I ought to store it with *ideas*" (BAHC. "Original." "Thurs 17th Decr [1801]"). This deficiency left Wilmot disadvantaged in comparison with her highly educated travelling companion, Lady Mount Cashell, who had benefitted from governesses fluent in French and Italian from a young age. The accomplishment of French fluidity was particularly important as the pair integrated into Parisian culture by beginning to regularly attend Williams' bilingual French and English salon gatherings.

Wilmot's journal entries spanning 1802 indicate a continual proximity to Williams' salon, and a growing friendship with the hostess as well as her longtime companion, John Hurford Stone. As Wilmot notes on 27 January 1802, "Spent a most delightful evening with Miss Williams ... Mr Stone and I had a metaphysical duel" (BAHC. "Original." "Wed 7th Pluviose 27th Jan [1802]"). Stone, a radical printer, was an influential participant at Williams' weekly gatherings and an important figure to the literary culture of Napoleonic Paris. Stone was a married man when he first met Williams in Paris, though from the time of his divorce in 1794 he shared a residence with Williams, an arrangement the two maintained until his death in 1818.<sup>13</sup> Their intertwined lives frequently included mutual affairs through Stone's printing press, a venture begun shortly after his arrival in Paris in 1793. Williams had an active involvement in the business side of the press: in 1803 she was described as a "femme Libraire" (Stern 317). In 1806, she became co-owner by contributing 40,000 *livres* ("Acte de Société" 3: 4371).

From the time of her first mention of the pair until her departure from Paris later that year, Wilmot records twenty-one encounters with either Williams or Stone in her journal, and it is possible they met on further undocumented occasions. This new connection, clearly an important component of Wilmot's formative Parisian experience in her private journal, is subdued in the travelogue later written with her family in mind. Wilmot relates meeting Williams, whose manners she admires, and notes that the Mount Cashell party has "a general permission to frequent these societies twice every week" (RIA MS 12 L 32 67). Later references to Williams and Stone are depersonalized; the anecdotes transform the seemingly impactful relationship Wilmot shares with the pair into an ambiguous series of encounters. The journal entries, however, reveal that Wilmot's relationship with Williams and Stone extends beyond the bounds of the regular visits to Williams' salon noted in the travelogue. Wilmot writes of "walking on the Boulevard" and drinking tea with Williams and Stone, also noting the presence of Joel Barlow (BAHC. "Original." "Wednesday 9 June [1802]"). The numerous visits are related in the fragmentary and brief style typical of the journal, often only comprising one incomplete sentence: "in the even'g Mr. Stone, Miss Williams & I walk'd from 7 till 11" (BAHC. "Original." "Sunday 19th June [1802]"). Where these events are not occluded completely from the later travelogue, details of the persons present are carefully revised. For instance Wilmot records accompanying Williams to the home of the son to the Prince of Condé, "where the famous Le Brun (the French Pindar) recited his own poems" (BAHC. "Original." "Monday 1st Feby (12 Pluviose Lundi) [1802]").<sup>14</sup> When writing of this visit in her later travelogue, Wilmot fails to mention Williams' presence, implying that Lady Mount Cashell alone joined her (RIA MS 12 L 32 73-4). Similarly, Wilmot notes in her journal that she has travelled "2 leagues west of Paris" with Williams, Stone and Barlow to see the ruins of Chateau Meudon. Just after a passing storm she and Stone "ventured to explore our way through the Courts in the Square Pavements which the tufts of grass burst rude & neglected" (BAHC. "Original." "Sat 10 Fructidor: 28th Aug [1802]"). One week later she writes in her journal of returning to Meudon with Lord and Lady Mount Cashell, Williams, Stone and Amelia Opie (BAHC. "Original." "17 Fructidor Sat: 4 Sep [1802]"). Yet in the travelogue entry describing the earlier visit, the members of the party are not named. Instead, Wilmot elaborately describes the chateau with details not included in the journal, praising "the mouldering Turrets and old Iron Gates" which were "lit with a thousand colours by the quick fork'd flashes of Lightning" of the storm on her first visit while excising the presence of her actual companions (RIA MS 12 L 32 117).

### **Censure & Sedition in Napoleonic Paris**

In May 1802 Wilmot writes in her journal that she has received a letter from her brother Robert



“exhort[ing]” her to “keep a journal”; he

talks of the methodising effect it wd have upon my life — which otherwise naturally tends to diffuse itself in vacancy like a bankless stream — Here *is* my Journal! — & a pretty narrative it is! — I wonder Bob can talk to me with such gravity of the possibility of my working up materials into any form fit for Human kind! — save my own poor blind optick. — god knows how powerless I am — But I suppose I deceive him, as I do every one else — with the notion of vivacity & c. — I resemble nothing more than a Brown pot of Mustard — which in itself is odious— But which lends a zest to others of which it is unconscious. — & heaven knows how unconscious I am of affording pleasure to human Being! [*sic*] (BAHC. “Original.” “Sunday 16 May - 26 Floréal [1802]”).

Wilmot’s description of herself as “nothing more than a Brown pot of Mustard — which in itself is odious,” and her own expressive abilities as only capable of “lend[ing] zest to others of which it is unconscious” is not only revelatory in terms of its self-deprecating and comical nature. This assertion also reveals the depth and purpose of her journal writing practice to date, one which she never intended to be “fit for Human kind!” Robert’s request appears from the pages of the hand-stitched and informal journal as a type of turning point: an interjection to her intermittent and privately oriented writing practice, which causes Wilmot to reassess her methods, goals and audience. The request to work up her journal also presents a substantial predicament: to select a definitive opinion of France, and its young Republic, that can be put in writing as authoritative.

The journal also reveals the extent to which Williams’ published writing may hold an influence on and provide a model for responding to her brother’s request. Two months later, in July 1802, Wilmot writes in the journal that she has recently “read Miss William’s tour thro Switzn [sic]” (BAHC. “Original.” “17 Messidor 12 July [1802]”). This is the only direct allusion Wilmot makes to an awareness of her new friend’s extensive body of publications. However, given Williams’ prolific and infamous status as an English author reporting on the events in France, this documented reading experience is quite unlikely to have been Wilmot’s first encounter with Williams’ books. The eight-volume *Letters From France*, published between 1791-96, had made Williams, according to Robert D. Mayo, “perhaps the best-known contemporary author to magazine readers of her generation” (259). The fact that Wilmot does not feel the need to introduce Williams to her audience in the travelogue proves her status as a household name (RIA 12 L 32 66).

Amidst the landscape of the woman-led salons of Napoleonic Paris, the potential influence of Williams’ book on Wilmot’s nascent writerly ambitions and later style stand out as significant. If Williams’ ability to embody the spotlight through both publication and politically minded social engagement proves an inspiration to Wilmot during this period, it is equally possible that the repercussions Williams encountered for these activities provided a cautionary counterbalance for her self-representations in text. The revolutionary sympathies that Williams had expressed in *Letters from France* had provoked public outcry and backlash: she was accused of treacherous disloyalty in Britain in the 1790s, the criticism predominantly juxtaposing her transgressive cosmopolitan political affinities with her womanhood (Blakemore 676). Horace Walpole, for example, famously denounced Williams as a “scribbling trollope” [*sic*] (Griggs 114). In 1793, Laetitia-Matilda Hawkins published the inflammatory *Letters on the Female Mind, Its Powers and Pursuits. Addressed to Miss H.M. Williams, with particular reference to Her Letters from France*, which directed a sustained two-volume assault not only on Williams’ lack of “loyalty” to Britain, but also her choice to enter public political discourse in the first place (110). While Hawkins’ attack on Williams is extreme for the period — the *Analytical Review* dismissed it as a “rant [...] written with much ill temper” — the example makes

explicit the risks faced by women writers who dared to publish controversial public opinions (527). While Williams consistently gathered a cosmopolitan mix of politicians and the literati at her salon, her negative reputation at times held her back from social acceptance. As Maria Edgeworth wrote in Paris in 1802, “Miss Williams we did not chuse [*sic*] to go to see, though many English do” (Colvin 53). Edgeworth’s unwillingness to attend the salon may equally be attributed to Williams’ republicanism as to her long-time companionship with Stone, the man with whom Wilmot engaged in “metaphysical” duels in Williams’ home (RIA MS 12 L 32, n. pag.).

The nature of Wilmot’s discussions with Stone is elaborated in a marginal postscript on the travelogue manuscript’s back cover by her sister Martha in 1870, four and a half decades after Wilmot’s death. The postscript outlines an invitation to Wilmot to publish “some papers” through Stone and Williams’ *The English Press*. Martha recounts an interaction between Wilmot and “the celebrated Mr. Stone” (RIA MS 12 L 32, n. pag.). Stone attempts to commiserate with Wilmot over her inability to speak French by pretending himself unfamiliar with the language as well. Though intended as a harmless ruse, Wilmot is “indignant of having been so duped.” Nonetheless,

her new acquaintance had found her conversation so delightful, that he singled her out in every society where they met, & would fain have induced her to write him some papers for a work he was then preparing for publication, declaring the originality of her remarks, their naiveté, & brilliancy w.d [*sic*] so embellish his book, as to entitle her to share its fame and its profits.

Judging Wilmot’s travelogue, it is, at first, difficult to understand why Williams and Stone might have wished to publish her writing, let alone admit her to their inner circle. The travelogue gleefully dismisses the on-going Republican project as a false idol. “Republicanism” she writes, reminds one of the “Classical Duck who laid a golden egg every morning. While I was in England a Republican Egg was laid every day. But now that I am in the vitals of the Bird, I find no egg at all” (RIA MS 12 L 32 51). While such comments are likely the result of a redrafted representation amenable to her intended recipients, they also may reflect the increasingly disillusioned political sentiments of the Anglophile and international community frequenting Williams’ salon during the Peace, particularly with regard to Republican ideals under Napoleon.

Literary scholarship has tended to associate Williams solely with the early political sentiments of her salon as a moderate Girondin republican space, rather than examining the ensuing transformations of her political sentiments. Craciun takes a more nuanced approach by noting that the salon later acted as springboard for Williams to “plunge” much deeper “into the revolutionary fray” by continually navigating “the shifting tides of French revolutionary politics” (131, 132). She often found herself at the center of controversy long after the Girondists had fallen, most notably with Napoleon. At the outset of Napoleon’s rise to power, Williams’ outlook was decidedly optimistic about his desire to carry the core tenants of the Revolutionary project forward, referring to the new century as a coming “the age of rights” (*Sketches* 2:216). However, she rapidly grew disenchanted with his foreign policies as well as his increasingly totalitarian methods of governing French society as First Consul, including rampant press censorship, censorship of the theatres, and the reinstatement of slavery in the Colonies. Other previously enthusiastic British authors, including Coleridge, Southey and Wordsworth, shared Williams’ disillusionment (Bainbridge 17). When, in November 1801, Williams published her “Ode to Peace” in the *Morning Chronicle*, she “deliberately omitted any reference to Bonaparte, in order to test his vanity” (Kennedy 178). Bonaparte took direct offence, eventually having her papers searched by the police and her mother imprisoned for 24 hours. Government surveillance was routinely conducted on her gatherings, creating palpable

tension. As a visitor wrote of Williams' salon in February 1802, at the height of Wilmot's own participation: "we are told the government keep an exact watch over all who frequent it," while another described it as "chiefly composed of liberal republicans and anti-Bonapartists" (Greatheed 43; Lawless 185-6).

The absence of a written record in which Wilmot professes herself to be aligned with the "anti-Bonapartists" poses obstacles for teasing out her affinities; however, the manuscript evidence in this case illuminates some of the interstices. Stone "found [Wilmot's] conversation so delightful" that he "induced her to write him some papers," the anecdote suggesting that Wilmot's opinions are, at the very least, inoffensive to the climate of government criticism prevalent in Williams' household. In the 1870 postscript, Wilmot's sister notes that she "steadily refused" to publish with Stone, a decision attributed to the fact that her sister "thru' life undervalued her own superior talents".

However, Wilmot may well have had practical concerns for her own safety, autonomy and reputation should she choose to print with The English Press. Stone habitually published authors who had previously been charged with sedition, or who were at the very least embroiled at the center of controversy in Britain. For instance, in 1795 The English Press published Thomas Paine's *Dissertation on the First-Principles of a Government*.<sup>15</sup> Wilmot's personal introduction to "Tom Payne," who repeated "the most elegant" poetry she "ever heard" in his Paris home in March 1802 may have kept the links between sedition and creative practice alive in her mind, while the French government's similarly menacing behavior towards Williams, as well as to the wider press, echoed the British sedition witch-hunts against radicals of the 1790s (RIA MS 12 L 32 89-90). Williams had ceased to write about events unfolding in France following the fracas with Napoleon in 1801. Under new constraints of censorship, it is possible to see how the conversational quick wit and satirical opinions of Wilmot, a sympathetic British woman traveler, might have appealed to the silenced Williams and Stone as an extension of the work Williams was being forced to lay aside.

If the decision not to associate herself with The English Press had anything to do with fear of sedition or imprisonment, Wilmot was perhaps wise not to do so during the brief window of the Peace. Williams and Stone soon found themselves under renewed government pressure with the 1803 publication of *Political and Confidential Correspondence of Louis XVI*, papers which Williams had purchased purporting to be written by Louis XVI. Choosing to work with historical documents as editor, Williams believed she could portray the French Revolution in a more positive light, shifting public opinion away from a renewed interest in the monarchy. The papers, however, were forged, and her efforts infuriated the government. The police seized the expensive print run and opened a case against Stone, Williams and their associate James Smith (Stern 340-41). This frightening experience led Williams to abstain from publishing further until after the battle of Waterloo ten years later, realizing, perhaps, that "Napoleon was too formidable an antagonist" (Kennedy 181). Three years after the censorship proceedings of 1803-04, Stone attempted to realign his press in Napoleon's favor. Temporarily renaming the press "Imprimerie de J.H. Stone," perhaps to disassociate it from the recent frictions, he gained a lucrative contract to print "Droits Réunis," and benefited from state compensation and support.

At the time of Wilmot's association with Williams and Stone, no such reconciliation between The English Press and the government appeared to be on the horizon, and it is not difficult to imagine that Wilmot wished to avoid drawing any notice at all from either the French or the British authorities by such a connection. Ironically, given her refusal to print an authentic version of her own opinions with The English Press, Wilmot's manuscript travelogue is frequently cited as a source

on Williams' salon and movements, though these references do not necessarily reflect the depth of her integration within William and Stone's circle.

The 1870 postscript to Wilmot's manuscript travelogue suggests that she "shrunk from the many efforts made" to bring her writing "into notice" by choosing not to print with The English Press, nor to pursue print publication opportunities for her writing thereafter. It would be a mistake, however, to interpret Wilmot's refusal as a comprehensive decision not to disseminate her writing, particularly given her choice to invest in contemporary practices of publication and circulation through manuscript culture, which she knew would be avidly read by a familial audience.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, Wilmot's textual manufacturing of a framed narrative of experience may be interpreted in two contexts, first, within the range of possibilities presented by the assumed expectation of her familial readers, as well as by the influence of gained experience through her relationship with and the writing of Helen Maria Williams.

### **Manufacturing Experience in Women's Travel Writing**

Eighteenth-century letters functioned as public documents that were often "composed in company, voluntarily circulated beyond the addressee and frequently found their way into print" (Brant 5). The familial readership for whom the letters in Wilmot's travelogue was intended can be understood within this context of communal readership as well as within the framework of the domestic and sociable coterie.<sup>17</sup> The practice of reading familial letters aloud was a common one in throughout the eighteenth century, whether as a method of collective education, or as an aid to conversational sociability (Davidoff and Hall 162). Archival evidence suggests that Wilmot's manuscript travelogue continued to be read aloud for a number of years. Far from being created for merely private familial enjoyment, Wilmot's travelogue and manuscripts like it were treated as literary objects worthy of circulation and central to sociability.

Women-authored travel literature was on rise in the years prior to Wilmot's journey, if quite modestly, with "around twenty travelogues by women" published in Britain between 1770 and 1800, a rise linked to the consumption of travel and geographical texts as a common educational method for young women (Turner 3). In *Mental Improvement* (1793), Sarah Green recommends that young women on the verge of entering society "[d]ivide one morning in the week between the study of geography, and the reading of voyages and travels," as "the one will naturally lead you to like the other, and make your memory retentive of both" (Green 91). Travelogues were viewed as straightforward and rewarding in terms of composition, as the *Critical Review* remarked at the end of the eighteenth century, "Travels are a species of writing which, besides being particularly easy in point of composition, prove highly gratifying to curiosity" (294). Wilmot's travelogue makes use of this "easy ... point of composition."<sup>18</sup> Unlike the previous fragmentary receptacle of her journal, Wilmot's travelogue aims to be a continuous narrative that embeds meaning within representations of experience.

Aspects of Wilmot's revised travelogue take cues from Williams' oeuvre of travel literature. Reiteration of events for her familial readers employs the epistolary travelogue model also taken up by Williams, an eighteenth-century genre that evolved as a response to the political upheavals of the Romantic period by documenting foreign experience.<sup>19</sup> Williams translates her foreign experience into something exportable and comprehensible through the intimacy of the epistolary form, a tactic that creates a sense of understanding and camaraderie: "You, my dear friend" (*Letters* 1: 109). Wilmot stages a similar frame of intimacy in addressing her journal to her brother, whom she periodically addresses as "you," and "my dear Brother" (RIA MS 12 L 32 32). Williams' ability to

capture unfolding moments of history, interpreting and manufacturing events for an audience through the apparatus of her journalistic epistolary style offers Wilmot a model for interpreting the republican sentiments she encounters in Paris. For women readers with an interest in political affairs in the eighteenth century the act of reading “straddle[s] the public-private divide” in its inherent potential to move to from an internalized act to a more political action (Sussman 135). The act of reading one of Williams’ recent books, published four years earlier in 1798, may hold added meaning given Wilmot’s personal contact with the author by providing a tangible blueprint for constructing her own narrative.

Similarities between Wilmot’s manuscript travelogue and Williams’ published writing can also be found in a mutual gendered representation of both form and political spectatorship. As Williams pointed out in *Letters From France*: “While you observe from a distance the great drama which is acting in France, I am a spectator of the representation” (*Letters* 1:3). Williams’ *Letters From France* allows her to generate “a spectacle of her own spectatorship,” as she brings the reader along for every stage of her revolutionary encounter, moving closer towards revolutionary sympathy by presenting the immediacy of key sites and events (Favret 280). Williams’ account of her first visit to the Bastille, for instance, re-enacts the horrors faced by those imprisoned there:

Before I suffered my friends at Paris to conduct me through the usual routine of convents, churches, and palaces, I requested to visit the Bastille; feeling a much stronger desire to contemplate the ruins of that building than the most perfect edifices of Paris ... We drove under that porch which so many wretches have entered never to re-pass, and alighting from the carriage descended with difficulty into the dungeons (*Letters* 1:23-24).

By insisting that she visit the Bastille immediately after arriving in Paris, Williams underlines the importance of recently historicized locations to her British readers. A popular spot for tourists in the years following the Revolution, Williams’ nonetheless gives a sense of intimacy and personal experience through the devise of a murky, stooped, and candlelit tromp through the dungeons. Williams draws on devices popularized by the gothic genre to not only to animate her experience, but to invoke a sense of sympathy with victims who had been tortured by the tyrannical former government. Williams’ exclaims “Good God!” to indicate the emotional outpouring she feels at personally witnessing the Bastille’s “regions of horror,” asserting that only those with “a strong spirit of curiosity” would be compelled to visit there. This juxtaposition of bravery in the face of terror infuses her narrative with immediacy to the recent revolution intended to emotionally stimulate her readers.

Wilmot similarly creates a theatre of sentiment relative to unfolding political history through the selection of specific sites of revolutionary action in her travelogue, often using locations or anecdotes either never noted in her private journal or detailed in a vastly different way. Two different accounts of a visit to the Cathedral of Amiens while en route to Paris provide an example of the transitions that occur between the journal and the travelogue, as well as the potential influence of Williams’ published writing. The incident is recorded in Wilmot’s journal in passing as follows:

We saw the beautiful Cathedral reckon’d I believe one of the finest in France. — I was surpris’d to find it so little injur’d — when those in all the Towns we pass’d thro’ before — lay in mouldering desolation about the streets — with scarcely two stones together. — Many of the Convents exhibited the same melancholy appearance! I don’t think I ever saw so fine a building as this Cathedral, by resigning all the silver & riches at the time of the Revolution the People of Amiens, contrived to preserve *almost* uninjur’d

their lovely Cathedral — for the first time, I saw *Canoniz'd noses & fingers* — the *Original* head of John the Baptiste — relics & c & c. The Alter is a sort of composition — which gives the appearance of floating, fleecy clouds — thro' which Angels are seen & c. On the Alter piece, is the Paschal lamb [*sic*] (BAHC. "Original." "Thursday 3d Decr [1801]").

This first version of her visit to the cathedral is characterized by touristic fascination as well as an appreciation for the local worshippers and their religious customs. Wilmot is pleased to find the building "so little injur'd [*sic*]" despite the revolutionary desecration she has already witnessed elsewhere. She emphasizes that the "People of Amiens" acted shrewdly by "resigning all the silver riches at the time of the Revolution," thereby shielding the cathedral from damage. Thanks to their efforts she is able to enjoy, "for the first time" the "Canoniz'd [*sic*]" Catholic relics in person, noting eagerly that these include "the *Original* head of John the Baptiste." By contrast, Wilmot's travelogue account of the same visit is significantly extended and the tone altered. The second account stresses that the building is a "Gothic Cathedral," and positions her experience as a scene of heightened revolutionary tension in the space following her earlier description:

... On the Altar piece is the Paschal Lamb. I must tell you I never got into such a fright in my life, as on seeing the massy Gates of the Cathedral close upon me. For a moment the high vaulted Aisles, and the grandeur of the columns absorb'd my attention so thoroughly that till I heard a hundred echoes through the Church reverberating the loud shutting of the Iron Gates (which considerably diminished the light), I never observ'd eight or nine men at our heels, gigantic and scowling, and obviously of the very lowest class of the people. All the beauty of the Cathedral was obliterated and nothing but the Murders of the Revolution danc'd before my imagination ... I walk'd up to the Pascal Lamb upon the Altar like a guilty Victim, whose impending slaughter was about to appease the Vengeance of the angry Gods (RIA MS 12 L 32 13).

Here, Wilmot's previous admiration for the cathedral's relics is substituted with "fright" as she distances herself from appreciation of Catholic customs. She draws on gothic convention to position herself as "a guilty Victim, whose impending slaughter was about to appease the Vengeance of the angry Gods." Her earlier appreciation of the actions of the "People of Amiens" is replaced by a fanciful episode that temporarily demonizes them. The revised text invents "eight or nine men" who approach uncomfortably close. She depicts the men as "gigantic and scowling," thereby disparaging the space of the cathedral itself by indicating that common worshippers are "obviously of the very lowest class of people." Unlike Williams, who paints the victims of the Bastille as the object of pity, Wilmot depicts the lowly French residents of Amiens as potential agitators, and places herself in the role of the victim. Realizing the errors of her own imagination, Wilmot acquits the lower class "Executioners" as "poor innocent fellows" and pokes fun at her own "triumphant flow of Spirits." Yet both women draw upon gothic apparatuses of darkness, ancient buildings, violence, and horror to communicate crucial revolutionary sites to their readerships, historicizing and glorifying their own personal experiences as intertwined with the spaces they describe.

Wilmot also echoes Williams' humble protestation to her readers. In the *Letters*, Williams writes: "I am well aware how imperfectly I shall be able to describe the images which press upon my mind ... I shall be able to give you a faint sketch, to which your own imagination must add coloring and spirit" (*Letters* 1:2). Wilmot begins her travelogue with a diffident prefatory letter that states "tis by your exhortation I have attempted to keep a journal," and claiming to "abhor the act of journalising!" (RIA MS 12 L 32 2). Wilmot continues to pepper her writing with regrets throughout

the early pages of the travelogue; an engaging description of the history of the treasures of the Louvre is prefaced by a promise not to “bore” with her comments, as “besides not having the skill, or the eye of an artist, I am not qualified to do anything more than admire” (RIA MS 12 L 32 28). Yet both she and Williams intermingle their contrition with the resolute right to offer unique first-hand experiences and analyses. Prefacing her *Tour in Switzerland*, Williams states that she must “clear” herself “from the charge of presumption,” writing that “it is the present moral situation of Switzerland that justifies the appearance of these volumes” (*Tour* n. pag.). Despite her own repentance regarding her ability to “journalise,” Wilmot is well placed for observing and animating the political moment of the Peace, and she leverages her unique circumstances to claim space on the page. Empowered by first-hand experience, she is able to offer her readers scenes unique to the setting and moment. For example, upon first seeing Napoleon from a window in the “*Thuilleries*” [*sic*], an event not noted in the earlier journal, Wilmot writes in her travelogue:

But we must talk of Bonaparte who we saw ... reviewing his troops just under our eyes, surrounded with his beautiful aides de camps ... Bonaparte rode on a white charger ... He look'd as pale as ashes, & the expression of his countenance was stern severity ... I was more gratified than I ever was by a warlike pageant in all my life (RIA MS 12 L 32 63, 64).

This representation allows her British readers to palpably engage in the moment of first gazing on their recent rival and share in her sense of awe. Such anecdotes of fleeting historical urgency validate her eyewitness experience and choice to document it.

However, Wilmot’s use of eyewitness experience is radically different from Williams in that she utilizes proximity to revolutionary events to offer critique rather than cosmopolitan sympathy. Aligning herself with the sentiments of her domestic reading community, Wilmot exploits republicanism as a prop to highlight foreignness rather than as a sentiment she may identify with. Waking for the first time in France, in Calais, she experiences “a moment of such unfeign’d extacy [*sic*]”, and “imagin’d some metamorphosis was taking place” and jokingly conjectures that her nightcap has been transformed into a “*cap of liberty*” (RIA MS 12 L 32 10). While this assertion is meant to entertain her brother, the professed recipient, along with other potential readers, it also suggests the unique authorial position of participant and spectator granted to her by being abroad. The travelogue’s initial representation of republicanism as an entertaining subject for light mockery swiftly shifts into skepticism and commentary on the moral situation of the French. “Tis nonsense to talk of the french being republicans [*sic*]” writes Wilmot, “I don’t think a spark exists amongst them — they are excessively fond of rank, honours, and every etiquette that can distinguish them from the multitude” (RIA MS 12 L 32 48). Yet Wilmot’s eyewitness experience also details some of the benefits of the aftermath of the Revolution, and the peoples’ general regret for the bloodiness of the Terror:

there is a great independence in the lower ranks of People, *that* I hear is a blessing of the Revolution. I have never met with any creature who did not speak with regret of the past and horror of the events wch were the consequence of political subversion; but remember I have but three weeks experience to quote! (RIA MS 12 L 32 49).

This careful construction of reserved sympathy shows Wilmot’s desire to make her familial readers aware of a broader narrative of republicanism, all while delicately positioning her own opinions by inserting them between pointed critique and authorial disclaimer.

Wilmot's later travelogue frequently mutes encounters with known revolutionary sympathizers. Writing in the travelogue, for example, of repeated visits with Thomas Holcroft in Paris, Wilmot hints at her curiosity about his philosophies, while also adding in a healthy dose of critique:

I feel as if I shou'd *like to say* a hundred bitter things of Holcroft, but I have such a *trick* of not penetrating into people's characters that I don't like to trust myself — He has been here several times, & has entered fully into conversation wch he seems very fond of — a long enquiry into the nature of *Truth* into wch he enter'd eloquently struck me as very good; but I begin to *smoke* a little of the *visionary* on the *Godwinean* System of living *beyond* the term of Man [*sic*] (RIA MS 12 L 32 25-26).

Wilmot's professed uncertainty at her own ability to judge Holcroft's character is correlated to her desire to perform her gender appropriately in the text. At the same time, she uses criticism to align her representation with the non-republican political affinities of her readership. She derides Holcroft as overly "fond" of "conversation" yet provides a caveat that she found his subject matter interesting. Before her readers believe that she has been carried away by radical philosophical sympathies, Wilmot satirizes her own susceptibility to the "*Godwinean* System of living *beyond* the term of Man." Wilmot's mocking tone relating to William Godwin is particularly interesting, given that she and Lady Mount Cashell socialized with him and his family repeatedly while in London (Godwin, "Margaret King"; Abinger 7:56-7). By contrast, Wilmot's earlier journal correspondingly refers to several enjoyable social engagements with the Holcrofts, who, appreciating her intelligence, heaped "*undeserv'd praise*" upon her until she "felt [her] mind *crush'd* to nothing" (BAHC. "Original." "Wednesday Dec'r 16th [1801]"). Wilmot strategically excises details pertaining to these social connections, which would have, in reality, occupied a considerable amount of the women's attention in Paris, while also omitting her personal associations with Godwin.

Such revisionism illustrates how Wilmot's actual experiences are rehearsed, tested, and revised until a coherent narrative acceptable to her readers emerges. Nowhere is this need to reshape affinities and redraft experience more notable than in the dual entries Wilmot writes for the conclusion of her time in Paris. Her original journal entry states:

I feel myself after this residence here — as having pass'd thro' an *existence* ... I feel as if I had a stronger hold in Life, than I had the Day I entered this charming town! ... Altogether Paris has been a school — which has taught me the powers of *Equality* — not indeed in the political sense — but socially speaking in the means of moving all the world by the same spring. — I have been *twitch'd myself* I suppose in the same way. — mais "que voulez vous" [*sic*] (BAHC. "Original." "Thursday 29 Fructidor 16 Sepr: [1802]").

Wilmot's attributes her own personal growth, or "stronger hold in Life" to the social movement and "powers of Equality" she met with in Paris, feelings which have "twitch'd" her into a sense of futurity and progress. Wilmot also notes having formed "the sincerest friendship." Given their repeated and frequent interaction, this is likely to refer to time spent with Williams and Stone. This representation of egalitarian and intellectual bliss is far from the message that is represented to her readers in the travelogue entry covering the same period:

I bid adieu to this charming town with the sensation of having *pass'd thro' a little existence*, & please myself with the idea that I have not liv'd in vain — I reflect on the



variety of novel circumstances which have kept all my character in exercise (RIA MS 12 L 32 120).

The above entry, which was later copied into the manuscript travelogue by her sister Martha for circulation purposes, was tepid enough to make Paris seem an ideal place for moral and intellectual improvement. Yet further comments in the same entry were apparently deemed too overtly Francophobic to be included in the copied text, and is therefore excised through transcription:

If in some instances I appear to estimate the state of Society and manners here too highly, I hope you will have the candour to attribute it to the effect of novelty and of that seductive influence which marks the manners of the French. I know your antipathy to this nation, and when contrasted with the sounder morals of the English I do not wonder at your dislike.<sup>20</sup>

The variations between the two manuscripts allow Wilmot to carry back her experiences of Napoleonic Paris in a palatable form for her British familial readers and underline Wilmot's heightened awareness of the differing political and nationalistic sentiments between home and abroad. While Wilmot's travelogue does not advocate for the same cosmopolitan radicalism espoused in Williams' earlier writing, it draws queues from Williams' representational tactics: her interactions with Williams' salon and writing as well as an awareness of her political struggles and personal reputation impact Wilmot's choices in her text through a seeming reversal of affinities towards a Francophobia that protects her from censure heaped on Williams by British readers. In the same way, the exclusion of her participation in the sociable circles of radical British intellectuals and writers including Williams, Stone, Godwin and Holcroft safeguards her from public affiliation with their viewpoints. Wilmot also protects herself from the attention of the French government through her refusal to submit her travel writing for publication with *The English Press*. The oclusions and repurposed incidents between Wilmot's two manuscripts therefore represent a series of carefully calculated choices. These transformations shed light on the gendered, social and political constraints facing British women travel writers in the Revolutionary period as they grappled with communicating their complicated affinities, experiences and associations.

Figure 1. Royal Irish Academy MS 12 L 32, “Letters of Katherine Wilmot from France-Italy 1801-03,” Moscow, 1805; cover. By permission of the Royal Irish Academy.

Figure 2. Blair Adam House Collection, Wilmot Box 3, “Original journals of ‘Kitty’ Wilmot”; cover.

Figure 3. Blair Adam House Collection, Wilmot Box 3, “Original journals of ‘Kitty’ Wilmot”; binding.

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- 1 The spelling of Katherine Wilmot’s first name has been giving in accordance with the usage in the Wilmot family papers as well as that of the Royal Irish Academy Library. Some twentieth-century publications have used the alternate spelling of Catherine.
  - 2 Katherine and Martha Wilmot spent extended periods in Russia in the 1800s (1805 to 1807 and 1803 to 1808, respectively) as the guests of Princess Ekaterina Dashkova. They assisted the noblewoman in writing her memoirs alongside carrying out their own textual projects, including the copying of Katherine’s Peace of Amiens travelogue. Dashkova’s memoirs were edited by Martha and eventually published as *Memoirs of Princess Daschkaw, Lady of Honour to Catherine II* (1840). The text incorporates a significant body of the sisters’ own travel writing as a supplement, including Katherine’s then-posthumous Russian travel letters.
  - 3 The original manuscript of Martha Wilmot’s 1809 and 1810 Irish tour journals is not extant. A typewritten copy created in the twentieth century is present in the Blair Adam archive.
  - 4 In Bath in 1812, for instance, Lady Stanley wrote in a letter ‘I am now reading two manuscript tours, most entertaining and interesting, written by a Miss Wilmot’, noting that Martha Wilmot loaned the copied manuscript after the women had made a casual acquaintance (332).
  - 5 Thomas Sadleir’s 1924 edition was drawn from one of several extant manuscript copies. Sadleir edited the travelogue from a manuscript held at Woodbrook, Queen’s County in the 1920s, which he compared against the Royal Irish Academy copy finding “almost equal in date, but differing slightly in certain passages” (xv). An Irish Heraldic scholar, Sadleir apparently took an interest in the narrative due to its relation to the life of Lord Mount Cashell, and inappropriately titled the publication *An Irish Peer on the Continent, 1801-1803, Being a Narrative of the Tour of Stephen, 2nd Earl of Mount Cashell, as Related by Catherine Wilmot*. While Katherine did travel as a member of Lord Cashell’s family party as a companion to his wife, the narrative rarely mentions the Earl. Sadleir’s reconstruction of Wilmot’s authorship stems from a gendered and classist early twentieth-century perspective. Yet his edition allowed the travelogue to serve as a reference material on the women with whom Wilmot travelled and shared affective bonds, most notably in Edward McAleer’s *The Sensitive Plant* (1958), a biography of Lady Mount Cashell.
  - 6 Elizabeth Mavor’s *Grand Tours of Katherine Wilmot* (1992) drew on Sadleir’s edition to reproduce fragments from the travelogue as well as her later journey to Russia as a trade book. Wilmot’s Parisian letters have also been used as broad descriptors of the salon of Helen Maria Williams

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and the atmosphere of Anglo sociability in Napoleonic Paris by scholars including Deborah Kennedy and Gary Kelly.

- 7 For the purpose of clarity, Wilmot's early journal draft, or homemade "Book" will hereafter be referred to as her "journal," while the later "worked up" travelogue will be referred to as her "travelogue." Subsequent references to Wilmot's earlier manuscript will be listed as: "BAHC. 'Original'. date."
- 8 The Press also operated, at times, under the moniker "Imprimerie de la Rue de Vaugirard," thanks to the Parisian Street on which it was located between 1793 -1804. Other names include "Imprimerie de la rue de l'Echiquier," 1805, and, between 1807-12, "Imprimerie des Droits réunis," (Stern, 316-17).
- 9 See: James Gillray, *The first kiss this ten years! - or - the meeting of Britannia & Citizen François*, BM Satires 9960:  
[https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1478882&partId=1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1478882&partId=1)
- 10 This description is transposed nearly verbatim within the travelogue as part of a longer description of the traveling party's first hours seeking accommodation at l'Hôtel de l'Europe in Paris (RIA MS 12 L 32 16).
- 11 This notebook provides information on another previously unknown aspect of history of Katherine and Martha Wilmot, and offers an interesting window into amateur women traveler's practices of documenting historically important moments through journal writing.
- 12 Godwin notes seven meetings with Lady Mount Cashell in his diary in autumn 1801, and mentions "Miss Wilmot" specifically on three of these occasions, but does not name Lord Mount Cashell.
- 13 There is no definitive proof that Williams and Stone were romantically involved, though they appear to have been aligned as a couple in the public imagination and did nothing to discourage this impression.
- 14 Wilmot is referring to Louis Joseph Ecouchard, Prince of Condé (1736-1818) and French lyric poet Ponce Denis Écouchard Lebrun (1729-1807).
- 15 Stern suggests that Stone may also have been anonymously involved with Paine's *Age of Reason* by assisting Joel Barlow in using his press for the purpose (325).
- 16 Recent scholarship has increasingly highlighted manuscript culture as a viable alternative to print culture in the Romantic period. Michelle Levy defines 'manuscript culture' as 'a set of social and collaborative practices that had persisted in England from at least the Early Modern period', and noting that manuscript production had long provided an accessible pathway to discourse for women in particular (3). George L. Justice and Nathan Tinker have outlined the continuing vibrancy of manuscript circulation at the end of the eighteenth-century, drawing a continued lineage with Margaret Ezell's vital work on women's manuscript practices of the seventeenth century and those of the late long eighteenth century.
- 17 The concept of the coterie has undergone substantial recuperation in recent decades as a vital locus for cultural and literary exchange in the Romantic period, particularly for women authors. Betty Schellenberg describes a literary coterie as 'a relatively cohesive social group whose

membership may undergo shifts over time, but which is held together as a continuous identifiable whole by some combination of kinship, friendship, clientage', focusing particularly on 'at least occasional geographical proximity' (9). Wilmot's international travels away from the provincial family home in Ireland seem to defy this proximity, modelling a virtual coterie bound together by writing that is sent home.

18 As Turner notes, "[v]irtually all eighteenth-century travelogues took the form of letters or a journal, and could therefore be 'worked up' for publication with minimal effort, especially since the genre's evolving conventions came to associate apparent artlessness with authenticity" (3).

19 Kelly notes that "Williams feminizes the Revolution formally and rhetorically as well as thematically, mainly through use of the familiar letter, well established as a predominately feminine discourse, conventionally seen as informal" (38-9).

20 Wilmot, *Irish Peer*, p. 85; this version was printed in the 1921 edition of Wilmot's journals edited by Thomas U. Sadleir, which was edited from a manuscript in a private collection.

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